

ElderNomics Minnesota



One Away Video Advocacy
& Elder Economic Security

NCOA
NATIONAL COUNCIL
ON AGING

**ONE
AWAY**
CAMPAIGN FOR ELDER ECONOMIC SECURITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

One Away Campaign Launches for Elder Economic Security

Campaign Uses Video to Spotlight the Problem, Calls for Change in the Older Americans Act

St. Paul, MN, April 4, 2011 – More than 13 million older adults are economically insecure, living on just \$21,780 a year or less. Every day, these seniors and Boomers have to choose whether to pay for food, housing, utilities, or medical costs. They live one bad break, one accident, or one layoff away from economic disaster.

To spotlight their struggles—and call for change—ElderNomics Minnesota and the National Council on Aging (NCOA) are launching *One Away*, an innovative national advocacy campaign that uses video to allow older adults to tell their own stories. *One Away* videos and stories are available at www.oneaway.org. In the first three-minute campaign video, Maria of New York describes her longing for one bite of steak, Andre of Chicago explains why he felt safer sleeping in his car than in a shelter, and Bettye of Seattle says she has \$62 left per month after rent and health insurance.

Sandra Nathan, senior vice president for economic security at NCOA said, “It’s clear that vulnerable older adults are in desperate need of help and want to be heard.” Bonnie Watkins, a partner in ElderNomics Minnesota added, “*One Away* addresses the economic status of older people at a time when the numbers of people at ‘retirement age’ are increasing dramatically. Older Minnesotans do not have enough money to meet their basic needs. If we don’t address elder economic insecurity, our health and social services will soon be overwhelmed with very expensive problems.”

National Data Show Depth of Problem

One out of three older adults relies on Social Security for over 90% of their income; older workers who lose a job are more likely to face very long-term unemployment; senior credit card debt averages \$10,000; and nearly 6 million seniors are at risk of going hungry every day. In Minnesota, a single elder renter needs \$19,090 to cover housing, health care, food and transportation. However, the median Minnesota woman’s income in retirement is only \$12,691.

“The struggles seniors are facing are all too often overlooked or dismissed,” said James Firman, president and CEO of NCOA. “We need Congress to catch up to the realities of their constituents and develop concrete solutions to make life better for our seniors.” NCOA has also published *A Blueprint for Increasing the Economic Security of Older Adults: Reauthorizing the Older Americans Act*. The federal Older Americans Act (OAA) is scheduled for reauthorization this year. The full paper can be found at www.ncoa.org/EconomicSecurity. Funding for the *One Away* campaign was provided by The Atlantic Philanthropies.

Local Advocacy Partners

Central to *One Away* are local advocacy partners—ElderNomics Minnesota and senior service organizations in 9 other states who are capturing video stories of older adults, coordinating state outreach, and providing a powerful local voice. ElderNomics Minnesota is a partnership of two coalitions: the Minnesota Women’s Consortium and Mature Voices Minnesota.

“The *One Away* campaign leverages volunteer and citizen resources at every level,” said ElderNomics Minnesota partner Lee Graczyk. “We start with grassroots civic engagement, then move on up to a coordinated multi-state national campaign to ensure thoughtful updating of the Older Americans Act to meet the needs of Baby Boomers as well as all elders.” ElderNomics Minnesota will release its own first video on April 22, featuring Minnesota seniors who exemplify the need and desire to stay employed for economic security.

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About *One Away*

One Away is an innovative, national video advocacy campaign that gives voice to vulnerable older adults struggling to make ends meet in today’s economy. The campaign captures real stories of seniors on video—and calls for legislative and policy changes to make it easier for them to get the services and supports they need to live with independence and dignity. Join the campaign now at www.OneAway.org. That site also features pages for each state partner including Minnesota.

About ElderNomics Minnesota

ElderNomics Minnesota brings together two dedicated Minnesota organizations that are themselves coalitions, representing the women’s community (Minnesota Women’s Consortium, www.mnwomen.org) and the elder-advocate community (Mature Voices Minnesota, www.mvmmn.org). We are building community understanding and activism using two new tools: (1) Elder Index research which has established a baseline “true cost of living for elders” that is more realistic than the federal poverty guidelines; and (2) video equipment and grassroots training on how to make short videos as a messaging tool. Please visit <http://bit.ly/eWx4AD> or follow on Twitter @ElderNomicsMN.

About NCOA

The National Council on Aging is a nonprofit service and advocacy organization headquartered in Washington, DC. NCOA is a national voice for older Americans—especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged—and the community organizations that serve them. It brings together nonprofit organizations, businesses, and government to develop creative solutions that improve the lives of all older adults. NCOA works with thousands of organizations across the country to help seniors find jobs and benefits, improve their health, live independently, and remain active in their communities. Among other NCOA programs are Economic Security Service Centers, BenefitsCheckUp.org, and Home Equity and Reverse Mortgage Counseling. For more information, visit www.ncoa.org.