



June 8, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Vice Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
United State Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Chair  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor-HHS-Education, and Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor-HHS-Education, and Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs Murray and Baldwin, Vice Chair Collins and Ranking Member Moore Capito:

On behalf of the millions of vulnerable older adults served by the nationwide network of local senior nutrition programs that we represent, thank you for your longstanding leadership and support for the Older Americans Act (OAA) programs, including funding for the Title III-C Nutrition Program that enables the delivery of more than 247 million nutritious meals annually.

We are reaching out now as appropriations increases are desperately needed in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 to avert the need for service cuts to home-delivered and congregate nutrition programs. As you know, these services not only reduce hunger and malnutrition and improve social connection, well-being and independence but they also decrease overall healthcare utilization and costs for seniors in the greatest social and economic need. **That is why we are calling for a minimum of \$ 1,284,385,000 for the OAA Nutrition Program to be included in the FY 2024 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS-Ed) Appropriations bill. Our specific line-item requests are:**

- **Congregate Nutrition Services (Title III-C-1) – \$616,513,000**
- **Home-Delivered Nutrition Services (Title III-C-2) – \$507,803,000**
- **Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP) (Title III) – \$160,069,000**

Although we estimate that funding would require an increase of about six times over what it is now to reach all those who likely need congregate and home-delivered meals but are not currently receiving them, our FY 2024 appropriations request is modest in comparison. Further, while our network continuously seeks funding from all sectors, the OAA remains the bedrock of support for older Americans struggling with hunger and isolation and cannot be replaced from other sources.

Providing \$1.284 billion in the next fiscal year would represent a meaningful investment toward addressing the most immediate demand for services, particularly as local programs simultaneously navigate supply chain challenges, labor and volunteer shortages, and elevated operational costs, with prices for food still 7.1% over April 2022 and gas 31% above pre-pandemic levels.

This funding request would help to mitigate unmet need and enable more older adults to maintain healthier and more independent lives in their homes, reducing far more expensive healthcare expenditures that are brought about through preventable hospitalizations and premature nursing home placements.

We fully recognize the difficult decisions you face with enacted discretionary spending caps and your bipartisan efforts to ensure every federal dollar is effectively allocated. Without a doubt, the OAA Nutrition Program exemplifies a public-private partnership that works, has decades of bipartisan support and is worthy of greater investments in FY 2024 and beyond.

**The timing and critical need for investing in nutritious meals for our nation's most vulnerable older adults could not be more pressing. Simply maintaining current funding levels is not an acceptable outcome and in fact would represent a funding cut at a time when more resources are woefully needed. As you have each witnessed firsthand, the services provided are lifelines for many and offer the chance to help millions of older adults and their families, and to provide substantial economic relief to our healthcare system. That's why we urge funding for the OAA Nutrition Program in FY 2024 for a total of at least \$1,284,385,000 and are committed to working with you to bring this to fruition.**

The OAA Nutrition Program has been the foundation of federal support for senior nutrition programs for the past 50 years. We have an obligation to properly invest in it and deliver for our nation's seniors.

Thank you for your consideration of our requests. We look forward to continuing to work together to strengthen these vital programs and protect our nation's most vulnerable.

Sincerely,



Robert B. Blancato  
Executive Director  
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cc: Members of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee