

- 1. Implement the Older Americans Act (OAA) Reauthorization Act of 2020, the law reauthorizing the primary piece of legislation supporting nutrition and social services for individuals age 60+ and their caregivers for more than 50 years.** Our nation's senior population is growing rapidly, leaving more seniors at risk of hunger and isolation. Reauthorization of the OAA, including implementation and broad awareness of policy changes established by the new law, is essential to meeting the needs of our most vulnerable older adults and helping them to live independently in their homes and communities.
- 2. Increase federal funding for the OAA Nutrition Program to a total level of \$1,028,753,000 in FY 2021, which is \$92 million (or 10%) above current levels.** This includes the Home-Delivered, Congregate and Nutrition Services Incentive Programs (NSIP) that together exist to reduce hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition; promote socialization; and delay the onset of adverse health conditions for seniors. This funding request reflects the total authorized levels. Federal funding for OAA programs – which, for every dollar spent, are able to secure \$3 from other sources – has failed to keep pace with the demand for services, which has escalated during the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, emergency funding is also necessary to meet the drastically increased need for nutrition services for older adults nationwide.
- 3. Protect and support programs and services that help seniors age independently in their communities, including the Social Services, Community Services and Community Development Block Grants, and Medicare and Medicaid home- and community-based services (HCBS).** These federal programs are critical to local Meals on Wheels providers and their ability to leverage multiple public and private funding sources, especially amid the COVID-19 health and economic crises, to address the unique nutritional, social, financial and health-related needs of an increasingly frail and at-risk senior population.
- 4. Safeguard and grow other federal anti-hunger nutrition programs that provide essential services to seniors.** With 1 in 7 seniors facing the threat of hunger prior to the pandemic, programs that assist older adults in receiving necessary nutrition, such as the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), should be expanded and protected from cuts or structural changes that would reduce access or benefits and increase food insecurity.
- 5. Establish incentives and eliminate barriers for healthcare plans and providers to expand coverage of nutrition services served by a community-based organization.** Community-based senior nutrition providers offer more than just a meal. The combination of nutrition, opportunities for safety checks, socialization and connections to other critical community services all help support the health and well-being of older adults, thereby reducing Medicare and Medicaid expenses. For about the same cost as one day in the hospital, or 10 days in a nursing home, a senior can receive Meals on Wheels for an entire year.
- 6. Enhance charitable giving incentives and assistance for 501(c)(3) organizations under the tax code.** A true public-private partnership, Meals on Wheels programs rely on their charitable standing – for both revenue from private donations as well as savings from their exempt status. Now more than ever, public and private funds are critical to help nonprofits serving as lifelines within their communities survive the economic challenges brought on by COVID-19. As federal funding provides only a portion of the full cost of vital nutrition and social supports to our nation's at-risk seniors, a tax code that protects nonprofit status, revenue through charitable giving incentives and the volunteer base is critical to the success and sustainability of the aging services network.

For additional information and ways to take action, visit [www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/advocate](http://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/advocate).