



September 6, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Labor-HHS-Education, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Blunt and Ranking Members Leahy and Murray:

On behalf of our two organizations, the national network of local senior nutrition programs we represent, and the millions of seniors they serve, we thank you for your longstanding leadership and support of the Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Program. As you consider appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, we ask you to continue to support these programs by **increasing FY 2020 funding for the OAA Nutrition Program to a total of \$1 billion, as approved by the House of Representatives.** Our specific line-item requests are:

- **Congregate Nutrition Services** (Title III C-1) – \$525,000,000
- **Home-Delivered Nutrition Services** (Title III C-2) – \$305,000,000
- **Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP)** (Title III) – \$170,000,000

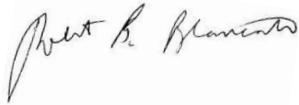
Investments in senior nutrition programs at the federal level generate a powerful return to both seniors and taxpayers alike. With increased funding for meals, more seniors can remain independent at home and in their communities longer and avoid admission to costly, unfamiliar hospital and nursing home facilities, providing a significant offset to major healthcare program expenditures. Last year alone, 94 percent of home-delivered and 65 percent of congregate meal recipients said these programs enable them to stay in their own homes.ⁱ

As local senior nutrition programs strive to address the needs of a rapidly growing older adult population, they are challenged by the compounding issues of rising costs and inflation. Adjusting for inflation, federal funding appropriated for OAA nutrition services actually decreased by eight percent – a value of about \$80 million – between FY 2001 and 2019.ⁱⁱ In fact, the network served approximately 21 million fewer meals to seniors in 2017 than were served in 2005, even though the older adult population grew by 21 million people over that same period of time.^{iii, iv, v} Further, a 2015 Government Accountability Office report found that 8 out of 10 low-income, food-insecure seniors did not receive meals through OAA programs that they likely needed.^{vi} Simply put, current

funding levels remain drastically insufficient to address demographic shifts, rising costs, and the growing unmet need for services for our nation's most vulnerable seniors.

As the Committee and Subcommittee determine appropriations levels for FY 2020, we urge you to allocate, at a minimum, \$1 billion in funding for the OAA Nutrition Program. Now is the time to provide the required resources for these programs to continue to serve our nation's seniors in FY 2020 and in the years to come.

Sincerely,



Robert B. Blancato
Executive Director
National Association of Nutrition and
Aging Services Programs (NANASP)



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ⁱ Administration for Community Living (ACL) Aging Integrated Database (AGID), Data Source: *National Survey of OAA Participants* (2018), available at <https://agid.acl.gov/CustomTables/>

ⁱⁱ AARP Public Policy Institute, *Spotlight 34: Older Americans Act* (Washington, DC: AARP Public Policy Institute, February 2019), available at <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2019/02/older-americans-act.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ ACL, AGID, Data Source: *State Program Reports (SPR)* (2017), available at <https://agid.acl.gov/CustomTables/>

^{iv} ACL, *2016 Profile of Older Americans*, available at <https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/Aging%20and%20Disability%20in%20America/2016-Profile.pdf>

^v ACL, *2018 Profile of Older Americans*, available at <https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/Aging%20and%20Disability%20in%20America/2018OlderAmericansProfile.pdf>

^{vi} U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), *Older Americans Act: Updated Information on Unmet Need for Services* (Washington, DC: GAO, June 2015), available at <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-601R>