



August 3, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chairwoman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor-HHS-Education, and Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor-HHS-Education, and Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Members Shelby and Blunt:

On behalf of our two organizations, the national network of local senior nutrition programs we represent and the millions of older adults they serve, we thank you for your longstanding leadership and support for the Older Americans Act (OAA) Title III-C Nutrition Program. We are sincerely grateful to the Committee for its work to provide much-needed federal funding to our network through annual appropriations and in the critical emergency COVID-19 relief legislation enacted over the last sixteen months. It has undoubtedly enabled senior nutrition providers to respond quickly to wholesale changes in their operations while still ensuring that the basic human needs of nutritious food and human connection were met for millions of older adults.

To continue this vital support and sustain home-delivered and congregate nutrition services that effectively reduce hunger, improve health and well-being, and enable independence, **we urge that a minimum of \$1,903,506,000 for the OAA Nutrition Program be included in the Senate Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS-Ed) Appropriations bill.** This request is also backed by a Senate letter led by Budget Chairman Sanders and signed by 39 other Members of Congress. Building on the President's FY 2022 budget request, the House of Representatives recently passed a funding increase of \$436 million for the OAA Nutrition Program in their FY 2022 Labor-HHS-Ed appropriations bill for a total level of nearly \$1.4 billion (\$1,387,753,000). While this level of funding is significant, we continue to urge a minimum of \$1,903,506,000 to more adequately meet the existing need for nutrition and socialization services. Not only would it help close a growing gap, but it would also have the ancillary benefits of reducing far more expensive healthcare expenditures through unnecessary hospitalizations and premature nursing home care placements.

In addition to annual funding, we also recommend the following policy provisions be considered as you draft and deliberate on the FY 2022 Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriations Bill:

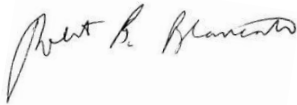
- **Maintain the 100 percent expanded transfer authority within the OAA Nutrition Program between Titles III-C-1 and III-C-2 for FY 2022 that Congress had provided to states and Area Agencies on Aging during the pandemic.** This authority has been effective in allowing local providers to shift to provide appropriate nutrition support based on the specific needs of older adults and pandemic-related guidelines in their communities. As we continue to adapt to the pandemic, we believe

this flexibility is key and will enable community-based organizations to respond accordingly with combinations of home-delivered, curbside or grab-and-go, and congregate meals that meet the needs of the individuals they support. **However, we do not believe that the 100 percent transfer authority within all of Title III of the OAA, as proposed in the Administration's FY 2022 Budget, is needed.** This flexibility has been provided on a short-term basis during the pandemic through the states' Major Disaster Declarations. While needed and valuable during the pandemic, we oppose continuing this ongoing authority beyond the Major Disaster Declarations. This continuation would have the effect of collapsing the programs into one block grant, overriding the Congressional intent of having separate programmatic line-items.

- **Waive the OAA state matching requirement retroactively for the funds provided through the American Rescue Plan Act.** In previous COVID-19 relief packages, the state and local matching requirement for OAA funding was waived - which was critical given the financial strain these programs have experienced - but it remains in place for the American Rescue Plan Act's funding. We deeply appreciate this additional, desperately needed funding and urge you to waive the match requirement retroactively for this particular legislation, as we have learned that it will be helpful in expediting funds to reach local nutrition providers and be spent on behalf of our nation's vulnerable older adults.

Thank you for your action and consideration of our requests and for your ongoing leadership and commitment to our nation's seniors.

Sincerely,



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



Ellie Hollander  
President and CEO  
Meals on Wheels America

Contact Information:  
1612 K Street NW, Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20006  
202-682-6899  
[www.nanasp.org](http://www.nanasp.org)

Contact Information:  
1550 Crystal Drive, Suite 1004  
Arlington, VA 22202  
571-339-1622  
[www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org](http://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org)

cc: Members of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee