



November 2, 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 the nationwide network of local senior nutrition programs that our organizations 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 through annual appropriations and in critical emergency COVID-19 relief legislation. Such vital funding enabled nutrition providers to respond quickly and ensure that the basic needs of nutritious food and human connection were met for a growing number of vulnerable older adults.

To continue this foundational support and sustain home-delivered and congregate nutrition services that effectively reduce hunger, improve health and well-being, and enable independence, appropriations increases are urgently needed in FY 2022. **We are calling for a minimum of \$1,387,773,000 for the OAA Nutrition Program be included in the final FY 2022 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS-Ed) Appropriations bill. The specific line-item requests are:**

- **Congregate Nutrition Services** (Title III-C-1) – \$515,342,000
- **Home-Delivered Nutrition Services** (Title III-C-2) – \$703,431,000
- **Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP)** (Title III) – \$169,000,000

This funding matches the levels passed by the House in July and would more adequately meet the existing need for 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 brought about 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 deliberate on the FY 2022 Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriations Bill:

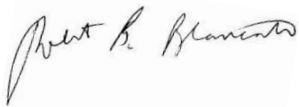
- **Maintain the 100% expanded transfer authority within the OAA Nutrition Program between Titles III-C-1 and III-C-2 for FY 2022 that Congress provided to states and Area Agencies on Aging during the pandemic.** This authority has been effective in allowing local providers to shift to provide appropriate 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% 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. However, the matching requirement remains in place for the *American Rescue Plan Act's* funding. This waiver is currently being considered in the budget reconciliation legislation, but if this provision is not included in a final reconciliation package, we urge you to waive the match requirement retroactively for this particular legislation through the final appropriations bill, as we have learned that it will be helpful in expediting funds to reach local nutrition providers and to be spent on behalf of our nation's vulnerable older adults.

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

Sincerely,



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



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