



April 20, 2022

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 more than 2.3 million older adults they serve, we thank you for your longstanding leadership and support for the Older Americans Act (OAA) Title III-C Nutrition Program. As you know, these programs serve as daily lifelines, providing hundreds of millions of meals and vital social connection to a growing number of seniors who rely on the OAA Nutrition Program to meet their basic human needs. The critical role this bipartisan legislation has continued to play over 50 years has been made even more evident throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, in which local home-delivered and congregate programs have experienced dramatic and sustained increases in the number of older adults in need of nutrition and social support.

To avoid a damaging services cliff and be able to sustain these nutrition programs that effectively reduce hunger, improve health and well-being, and enable independence for older adults nationwide, appropriations increases are urgently needed in FY 2023. **Accordingly, we are calling for a minimum of \$1,933,506,000 for the OAA Nutrition Program to be included in the final FY 2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS-Ed) Appropriations bill. The specific line-item requests are:**

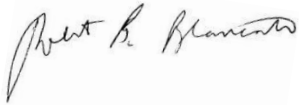
- **Congregate Nutrition Services** (Title III-C-1) – \$965,342,000
- **Home-Delivered Nutrition Services** (Title III-C-2) – \$791,342,000
- **Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP)** (Title III) – \$176,822,000

Funding at these levels would provide a meaningful investment toward addressing the burgeoning demand, particularly as senior nutrition programs simultaneously navigate elevated operational costs; prices for food (up 16% for beef alone) and gas (up 38%); supply chain challenges; and labor shortages. These funding increases 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 and avoidable healthcare expenditures that are brought about through preventable hospitalizations and premature nursing home placements. A substantial increase in OAA Nutrition Program funding is necessary to continue to serve those older adults currently receiving services and begin to address the rising unmet need in the coming fiscal year and beyond.

We also urge that language be included in the FY 2023 Labor-HHS-Ed Appropriations bill that **maintains 100% transfer authority within the OAA Nutrition Program between Titles III-C-1 and III-C-2 for FY 2023**. This authority is imperative to allow local providers to make shifts in their operations that are necessary to deliver appropriate nutrition support based on the specific needs of older adults and in accordance with pandemic-related guidelines in their communities. Such flexibility enables community-based organizations to respond with the combinations of home-delivered, curbside, grab-and-go and/or congregate meals needed by the individuals they support.

Thank you for your ongoing leadership and commitment to our nation's seniors, and your action in 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