



September 14, 2023

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair, Appropriations Committee
United State Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Chair Murray, and Vice Chair Collins:

On behalf of senior nutrition programs collectively serving 230 million meals to 2.2 million older adults each year through the Older Americans Act (OAA), we urge you to pass a clean continuing resolution and prevent a devastating government shutdown before the start of the new federal fiscal year. A shutdown of any length could severely impact our nation's most vulnerable older adults facing hunger and isolation.

As this critical FY 2024 funding process moves forward, we are calling on you to provide **at least \$1,284,385,000 for the OAA Nutrition Program in the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS-Ed) Appropriations Bill**. Increased federal investment is desperately needed to address existing needs, avoid service cuts adding to already existing waitlists, and expand access to more at-risk older adults and their caregivers, particularly those living in poverty and other populations with the most significant social and economic needs. Providing \$1.284 billion for the OAA Nutrition Program for FY 2024 would represent a meaningful investment toward addressing the most immediate demand, given continued supply chain challenges, labor and volunteer shortages, and elevated operational costs, with prices for food and gas remaining a challenge for local providers.

As is, one in three senior nutrition programs currently has a waitlist to deliver home-delivered meals, with older adults waiting on average **over three months** for a meal. To address this service gap, federal OAA Nutrition Program funding would need to increase by 33 percent, which is greater than our appropriations request.

The OAA Nutrition Program exemplifies a public-private partnership that works, has decades of bipartisan support, and is worthy of more significant resources in FY 2024 and beyond. With a total appropriation of \$1.284 billion this year, significant progress would be made toward reducing waiting lists and ensuring more older adults receive the nutrition and socialization they need to live healthier and more independently in their homes, reducing far more costly healthcare expenditures brought about through preventable hospitalizations and premature nursing home placements.

We thank you for your longstanding support and look forward to continuing to work together to strengthen these vital programs and meet our obligation to properly invest in and deliver for our most vulnerable. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or requests.

Sincerely,



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



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cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Appropriations