



## KEY ADVOCACY ASKS

We're here to ask [The Senator/Congressman/Congresswoman] to fund Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Programs, like Meals on Wheels, at a total of **\$854.6M in any final FY 2016 appropriations bill**. This funding request is for all three nutrition programs authorized by the OAA – congregate, home-delivered, and Nutrition Services Incentive Program – and represents the levels included in the President's FY 2016 Budget.

We also urge [The Senator/Congressman/Congresswoman] to support the request for \$20 million for Nutrition Innovation Demonstrations to help implement new nutrition services models, evidence-based research and opportunities to achieve further healthcare savings and reach more seniors in need.

As a Member of Congress on the Appropriations Committee, [The Senator/Congressman/Congresswoman] has the ability to increase the number of nutritious meals we can serve to an ever-increasing number of seniors today. At the same time, [The Senator/Congressman/Congresswoman] will be investing in a stronger fiscal path for our country by reducing future healthcare costs.

## APPROPRIATIONS BACKGROUND

Breakdown of OAA Nutrition Program funding over the last three Fiscal years:

Older Americans Act Nutrition Program	FY 2013 (Year of Sequestration)	FY 2014 and FY 2015 (Same Levels)	FY 2016 (Proposed President's Budget)
Title III C-1, Congregate	\$416,104,000	\$438,191,000	\$458,191,000
Title III C-2, Home-Delivered	\$205,489,000	\$ 216,397,000	\$236,397,000
Title III, Nutrition Services Incentive Program	\$146,718,000	\$160,069,000	\$160,069,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$768,311,000</b>	<b>\$814,657,000</b>	<b>\$854,657,000</b>

*\* Since FY 2011, with the exception of sequestration in FY 2013, federal funding has remained relatively flat. However, given increased operational costs level funding actually represents a cut for our programs.*



## TALKING POINTS

### MEALS ON WHEELS SAVES TAXPAYER DOLLARS

1. Meals on Wheels programs in [State] and across the country are saving significant taxpayer dollars by preventing unnecessary trips to the emergency room, reducing falls and hospital utilization, and delaying or eliminating all together the need for nursing home care. These are costs often incurred by Medicare and Medicaid.
2. There is increasing evidence, including our recently released More Than a Meal research study, demonstrating that Meals on Wheels improves health, feelings of loneliness and isolation, reduces the rate of falls and fear of falling, helps seniors feel more safe and secure, and reduces worry about being able to remain in their own home.
3. Investing in Meals on Wheels is a win-win. We can either invest a modest amount in proper nutrition for our seniors now, or spend significantly more on the adverse consequences that will develop in healthcare costs later. Falls alone cost our nation \$34 billion in direct medical expenses in 2013.
4. On average, a program can deliver Meals on Wheels to a senior for an entire year for the same cost as just one day in the hospital or one week in a nursing home. (*Approximately \$1,600 a year*)

### MEALS ON WHEELS SERVES OUR MOST VULNERABLE, AT RISK SENIORS

1. Of those fortunate enough to receive nutritious meals—as many programs have growing waiting lists—the one meal represents half or more of their total daily food intake. The majority are women who are 75 and older and living alone. They have multiple chronic conditions, such as diabetes or heart disease, take six or more medications daily and are functionally impaired.
2. A senior who receives or requests Meal on Wheels is significantly more likely to report poorer health, higher feelings of depression and anxiety, needing assistance preparing food, having tripping hazards in the home, etc.

### THE ESCALATING NEED

1. Year after year, the gap between those struggling with hunger and those receiving nutritious meals through the Older Americans Act continues to widen, and waiting lists are mounting in every state. Members of our organization responding to a recent survey indicated an average waiting list of 135 people per program.
2. There are 9.6 million seniors—nearly 1 in 6—struggling with hunger. This represents a 56% increase in the number of seniors affected since the start of the recession in 2007, and is only likely to worsen as our population ages.