



THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT NUTRITION PROGRAM (TITLE III-C)

OVERVIEW

The Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Program is a federal program that supports the health and well-being of older adults through nutrition services. The program, originally a Title VI senior nutrition demonstration project, was officially established under its own title (Title VII) in 1972 when it was permanently authorized by Congress. Several years later, the program was authorized under Title III of the OAA – Grants for States and Community Programs on Aging – where it remains today.

The OAA Nutrition Program is comprised of three sub-programs: 1) Congregate Nutrition Services; 2) Home-Delivered Nutrition Services; and 3) the Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP). States and U.S. territories receive federal grants to administer a combination of these nutrition services programs (i.e., Meals on Wheels) in a way that is tailored to the unique needs of the seniors in their communities.

PURPOSE & ELIGIBILITY

The purpose of the OAA Nutrition Program is three-fold: 1) reduce hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition; 2) promote socialization; 3) promote the health and well-being of seniors through access to nutrition and to nutrition-related disease prevention and health promotion services.

The OAA Nutrition Program is available to adults age 60 years and older, with priority going towards seniors with the greatest social or economic need – including seniors who are low-income; are a racial or ethnic minority; live in a rural community; have limited English proficiency; and/or are at risk of institutionalization.

The following table contains descriptions for each of the various sub-programs of the OAA Nutrition Program:

<p>CONGREGATE MEALS (Sec. 331 / III-C1)</p>	<p>Congregate Nutrition Services provide meals to participating seniors and their spouses in a congregate (community) setting. Meals served are required to adhere to federal nutrition guidelines, contain a third of the Dietary Reference Intakes, meet state and local food safety and sanitation laws, and be appealing to seniors. Congregate nutrition services also provide regular socialization opportunities, wellness checks for participating seniors and connections to the community and other services.</p>
<p>HOME-DELIVERED MEALS (Sec. 336 / III-C2)</p>	<p>Home-Delivered Nutrition Services provide in-home meal deliveries up to once per day to participating seniors who are frail, homebound and/or isolated, and their spouses. Meals served are held to quality standards and are required to adhere to federal nutrition guidelines, contain a third of the Dietary Reference Intakes, meet state and local food safety and sanitation laws, and be appealing to seniors. Home-delivered meal services also provide regular socialization opportunities, safety and wellness checks for participating seniors during meal delivery, and connections to other services in the community.</p>
<p>NUTRITION SERVICES INCENTIVE PROGRAM (NSIP) (Sec. 311)</p>	<p>NSIP incentivizes states to serve more OAA-eligible congregate and home-delivered meals by providing additional funds based on the relative number of meals served the year prior to cover the cost of domestically produced foods. States may receive their NSIP grant in the form of funds or directly as U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodity foods.</p>

ADMINISTRATION & FUNDING

By design, the OAA Nutrition Program is a public-private partnership. Through a combination of federal grants and private dollars, state and local aging agencies – SUAs and AAAs – administer OAA nutrition services primarily through contracts with nonprofit community-based organizations (CBOs).

The federal portion of OAA Nutrition Program funds, appropriated through the annual **Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS-Education) Appropriations Bill**, is disbursed by the Administration on Aging (AoA) to states and territories in amounts based on a specified funding formula. SUAs then distribute grants to AAAs and/or providers according to a formula developed by each individual state to reach older adults in greatest economic and social need.

The depiction below illustrates the general flow of OAA Nutrition Program funding and administrative structure:



IMPACT ON SENIORS

The network of thousands of local community-based nutrition providers, made possible by the OAA Nutrition Program, have a profound impact on the lives of millions of seniors each year. Below are just a few of many stories that illustrate how programs like Meals on Wheels deliver so much more than meals alone:



MARY

Mary dedicated her career to helping others as a parent, educator, counselor and probation services coordinator. Several years ago, Mary lost her husband and her son within a month of each other, and a debilitating back injury has made it difficult for her to get out of the house to shop and prepare meals. Despite these hardships, Mary stays positive and appreciates the conversations with Meals on Wheels volunteers. She says, “The service is not just delivering noonday meals, but it is also to provide safety, security and someone to check on you.”



LUTHER

Luther loved his job as a dentist and mentions his contributions to the community proudly. After experiencing a stroke that impacted his health and mobility, he began relying on Meal on Wheels. Thanks to his support system, he has made a substantial recovery and continues to live independently in his own home.



KATHERINE

Katherine was admitted to the hospital and a rehab facility several years ago. She lives alone and was told she could not be discharged unless she had assistance in her home. Luckily, her local Meals on Wheels was able to begin services immediately. If she had lived just a few miles away, the waiting list for meals was six to eight months long. Meals on Wheels is critical for Katherine to maintain her independence, as she says, “I look at Meals on Wheels as my immediate family – taking care of some of my immediate needs, being my friend, and preparing and serving nutritious meals.”

ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	Area Agency on Aging	NSIP	Nutrition Services Incentive Program
ACL	Administration for Community Living	OAA	Older Americans Act
CBO	Community-based Organization	SUA	State Unit on Aging