November 12, 2026

The Honorable Russell T. Vought
Director Office of Management and Budget
Executive Office of the President
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Re: Release of Section 32 Funds to Address the Growing Crises of Senior Hunger and Malnutrition and Support American Producers and Local Nutrition Providers That Serve Seniors in Need

Dear Director Vought:

On behalf of Meals on Wheels America, the largest and oldest national leadership organization working on behalf of more than 5,000 community-based senior nutrition programs across the country dedicated to addressing hunger and isolation among older adults through home-delivered and congregate meal services, we urge the Administration to utilize available Section 32 funds to address the growing crises of senior hunger and malnutrition. This action would support American agriculture producers, strengthen community-based nutrition providers, and help more older Americans receive the nutritious meals they need to remain healthy and independent.

Meals on Wheels America appreciates this Administration's focus on improving nutrition and the health and well-being of all Americans, and we applaud the recent announcement of its intent to purchase American-produced agricultural commodities for use by USDA nutrition assistance programs, including school nutrition programs. We respectfully request that the Administration build on this commitment by directing available Section 32 (7 U.S.C. § 612c) funds to help support another vital component of the nation's nutrition safety net – providers of Meals on Wheels services that work tirelessly to provide healthy meals tailored to meet the nutritional needs of the millions of older adults served as part of the Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Program. The use of Section 32 funds for these purposes meets the policy objectives of Section 612c in that Meals on Wheels providers are public or private nonprofit organizations that focus on providing nutrition assistance to Americans in need of good nutrition, particularly vulnerable older adults.

The need for this additional support is urgent. In fact, we believe it is a national emergency, which provides another basis for allocating Section 32 funds to support senior nutrition providers. The rapidly growing population of older adults, increasing demand for senior nutrition services, and rising costs for food and program operations have resulted in chronic funding shortfalls and widespread unmet need in communities across the country. OMB could address this emergency situation by directing that Section 32 funding or FNS discretionary funding be used to supplement senior nutrition services through additional funding for the Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP), which is part of the OAA Title III-C program (Sec. 311 of the OAA – 42 U.S.C. 3030a) and supports the purchase of commodities and food items from American producers to be used for OAA home-delivered and congregate meals for vulnerable seniors.

Currently, one in three Meals on Wheels providers has a waitlist, with many more indicating that they may soon need to start one. Nearly two-thirds of providers with waitlists serve rural areas, and some providers have stopped adding seniors to their waitlists because demand has become overwhelming. The consequences extend beyond hunger and malnutrition. Without access to Meals on Wheels services, older Americans face increased risks of worsening health, avoidable hospitalizations, and premature nursing home placements, outcomes that result in significantly higher costs to seniors, families, and taxpayers.

Despite the growing demand and rising costs, the purchasing power of federal funding for the OAA Nutrition Program has declined in recent years. Notably, funding for NSIP was cut in FY24, with the reduced funding level carried forward since that time. This funding cut has further constrained providers' ability to purchase healthy food from local producers and limits the reach of their services, with millions of at-risk older adults not receiving the nutritious meals they need. Inadequate federal funding will also compromise the ability of senior nutrition providers to comply with the updated Dietary Guidelines for Americans because of higher costs associated with the new recommendations, including the need to serve more whole grains and larger portions of proteins. These higher costs will likely result in fewer meals and seniors being served, exacerbating the widespread problems of waitlists and unmet need.

Please reference the enclosed resources linked below from Meals on Wheels America, which detail the escalating challenges of senior hunger and isolation, rising levels of unmet need due to higher food, fuel and labor costs, the impacts of growing waitlists resulting from chronic shortfalls in federal funding, and the cost savings to taxpayers achieved by Meals on Wheels services.

We respectfully request your support in working with USDA to utilize Section 32 funds to provide emergency funding for supplemental NSIP purchases. This targeted action would

help community-based senior nutrition providers to purchase American-produced foods, serve nutritious meals to more seniors in need, and help address the escalating crises of senior hunger and malnutrition among vulnerable older Americans.

Section 32 is a permanent appropriation established to strengthen agricultural markets and nutrition programs, and its unobligated balances of tariff funds carry forward from year to year. We ask that, rather than rescinding anticipated balances for Fiscal Year 2027, those balances be utilized to support community-based senior nutrition providers that are facing significant financial constraints. This approach would direct USDA funding that has been already appropriated, rather than create new budget authority. It represents a fiscally responsible opportunity to address an urgent national need through an established network of community-based providers. We request your help to direct the release of funds created by Congress for such extraordinary times by leveraging existing authorities available to the Administration.

We urge you to seize this opportunity to put already appropriated funds to good use for American farmers, local senior nutrition providers, and older adults nationwide.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your team to provide more information about the life-bettering services Meals on Wheels providers offer in communities across the country, the concerns about the growing challenges of unmet need, and this important opportunity to direct additional funding to support vulnerable seniors in need, the community-based organizations that serve them, and the American producers helping to feed our country.

Sincerely,



Ellie Hollander

President and CEO

cc: Hon. Brooke L. Rollins, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Hon. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Hon. John Thune, Majority Leader, U.S. Senate; Hon. Charles E. Schumer, Minority Leader, U.S. Senate; Hon. Mike Johnson, Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives; Hon. Hakeem Jeffries, Democratic Leader, U.S. House of Representatives; Hon. John Boozman, Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Hon. Amy Klobuchar, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; Hon. Glenn "GT" Thompson, Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture; Hon. Angie Craig, Ranking Member, House Committee on Agriculture; Hon. Susan M. Collins, Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Hon. Patty Murray, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Hon. Tom Cole, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations; Hon. Rosa L. DeLauro, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations

Encl: The Crisis of Waitlists Fact Sheet
The Case for Meals on Wheels Research Brief
Meals on Wheels Improves Health and Saves Money
Meals on Wheels U.S. Fact Sheet
The Escalating Issue of Senior Hunger and Isolation
What We Deliver: 2026 National Snapshot
Meals on Wheels Funding Explained