

MEALS ON WHEELS AMERICA AND NANASP ALARMED BY FEDERAL FUNDING CUTS TO SENIOR NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Final federal funding bill for Fiscal Year 2024 cuts \$8 million from senior nutrition programs, representing a worst-case scenario for local programs that already lack adequate funding to meet growing need.

Arlington, VA – March 26, 2024 – Meals on Wheels America President and CEO Ellie Hollander and National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP) Executive Director Bob Blancato today issued the following statement regarding the final FY 2024 funding package, including Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (LHHS) where Older Americans Act nutrition programs are funded:

As leaders of the nationwide network of senior nutrition programs and the millions of older Americans they serve, we find it unacceptable that the funding package signed over the weekend includes a .8% cut – \$8 million – to the Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Program, the primary legislation that funds Meals on Wheels. On the heels of the anniversary of the OAA Nutrition Program, this is unfathomable.

Senior nutrition programs are already experiencing consistently high demand for services, including home delivered and congregate meals, due to a growing senior population, and simply do not have the resources to reach all those in need. As it currently stands, one in three Meals on Wheels programs has a waitlist with seniors waiting an average of three months for vital meals. Funding cuts represent a worst-case scenario for these local programs and the seniors they serve.

Senior nutrition programs desperately need an increase in funds, not a cut to already insufficient funding. With 12 million seniors worrying about where their next meal is coming from, this will make a pervasive problem even worse. This cut will take meals and companionship away from seniors in need and make it harder for local programs to purchase the food used to make nutritious meals.

For more than 50 years, the OAA has set the gold standard for successful public-private partnerships and has always had bipartisan, bicameral support. Senior nutrition programs are proven to save significant taxpayer dollars while improving the lives of older adults. There is no viable alternative source of nutrition and social connection for the growing number of seniors who rely on these services.

Our message to Congress is to step up, and the best way to do that is by properly funding the OAA. To everyone else, senior nutrition programs now need your support more than ever to help fill the gaps left from shrunken federal funding, whether through donating and/or volunteering.

The bottom line is that life-saving programs like Meals on Wheels and the older adults they serve deserve better.

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ABOUT MEALS ON WHEELS AMERICA

Meals on Wheels America is the leadership organization supporting the more than 5,000 community-based programs across the country that are dedicated to addressing senior hunger and isolation. Powered by a dedicated volunteer workforce, this network delivers a comprehensive solution that begins with a meal and is proven to enable independence and well-being through the additional benefits of tailored nutrition, social connection, safety and much more. By providing funding, programming, education, research and advocacy, Meals on Wheels America empowers its local member programs to strengthen their communities, one senior at a time. For more information, or to find a Meals on Wheels provider near you, visit www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org.

ABOUT NANASP

Founded in 1977, the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP) is proud to be a leading organization advocating for policies and programs nourishing older adults. Our 1,110 member programs represent a wide range of essential services providers who support the nutrition, health and life quality of over 4 million older adults. For more information, go to nanasp.org.

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