

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515  
November 25, 2025

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
1036 Longworth Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you finalize the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 appropriations bill for the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, we urge you to provide emergency supplemental funding for the Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Program. Funding has not kept pace with rising demand, resulting in growing waitlists nationwide. Part of the Administration on Aging (AoA) within the Administration for Community Living (ACL) and authorized under Title III-C of the OAA, this crucial program provides grants to states to support nutrition services for seniors.

The OAA Nutrition Title III-C Program includes support for both Congregate and Home-Delivered meals. Congregate meals are provided in senior centers, faith-based facilities, restaurants, and other convenient community locations; home-delivered meals provide a meal and a wellness check at home. Both protect seniors against malnutrition, provide socialization opportunities, and provide timely intervention when health concerns arise for seniors aging in place. Undernourishment in seniors can lead to shorter life expectancy, premature institutionalization, higher disease rates, and extended hospital stays.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, these programs offer nutritious meals that adhere to the current Dietary Guidelines and reduce the use of health care services, prevent nursing home admissions, and generate substantial health care cost savings to taxpayers. By being welcomed into seniors' homes, providing a space where seniors can go for nourishment and connection, and forming personal relationships, community-based providers are able to observe changes to physical and mental health conditions, identify risks before they become problems, address problems before they become health issues, and avert health issues before they become catastrophic and costly. This can mean the difference between independent living at home and a transition to a costly long-term care facility.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living. "Nutrition Services." ACL.gov. Last modified May 1, 2025. Accessed November 20, 2025.  
<https://acl.gov/programs/health-wellness/nutrition-services>

Although the OAA Nutrition Program served 2.2 million older adults in FY21, an estimated 2.5 million low-income, food insecure older adults in need are not receiving OAA Nutrition Program services.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, funding has not increased to keep pace with rising demand and higher costs, so providers are not able to serve all in need. Meals on Wheels America, which works on behalf of the network of thousands of community-based senior nutrition providers, reports that one in three Meals on Wheels programs keeps a waitlist, where the average wait is four months with some seniors waiting more than two years.<sup>3</sup> These growing waitlists reflect the combined pressures of America's rapidly aging population, higher costs for food, fuel, and staffing and volunteer shortages. The crisis of senior hunger and isolation has been further compounded by delays in reimbursement payments because of staff reductions at ACL and the government shutdown.

Investing in the OAA Nutrition Program saves the federal government billions of dollars in healthcare and long-term care expenses. The cost of one year of meals for an individual is financially equivalent to one day in the hospital or ten days in a nursing home, which demonstrates the importance of investing in preventive measures like nutrition services to decrease reactionary and expensive care. For these reasons, we respectfully request the inclusion of emergency supplemental funding for OAA Title III-C in either the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill or a separate long-term funding bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and we look forward to working with you to provide America's older adults with the nutritional support they need to stay healthy.

Sincerely,



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Vern Buchanan  
Member of Congress



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Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress

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<sup>2</sup> Meals on Wheels America, *What We Deliver: 2025 National Snapshot — Sources & Methods*, February 2025. Accessed November 20, 2025. [https://member.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/what\\_we\\_deliver\\_2025\\_national\\_snapshot\\_sources\\_methods\\_feb2025-1.pdf](https://member.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/what_we_deliver_2025_national_snapshot_sources_methods_feb2025-1.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Meals on Wheels America, *The Crisis of Waitlists for Meals on Wheels: Sources & Methods*, July 2025. Accessed November 20, 2025. [https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/The-Crisis-of-Waitlists\\_Sources\\_Methods\\_July2025.pdf](https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/The-Crisis-of-Waitlists_Sources_Methods_July2025.pdf)