We Feed Seniors So They Can Remain Healthy and Independent

North Dakota Senior Service Providers (NDSSP) is a group of agencies that provides services to older adults across the entire state of North Dakota. Older Americans Act Title III Nutrition Programs are some of the services we provide. Funding for this program flows to the state from the federal Administration for Community Living and consists of two primary components:

- **Congregate Nutrition Services** - providing nutritious meals for seniors in a social, group setting
- **Home Delivered Nutrition Services** - providing meals for homebound seniors, also known as Home Delivered Meals and Meals on Wheels

This document provides the highlights and updated usage and cost information for Federal Fiscal Year 2017. Research citations for this “Feeding Grandma and Aunt Edna” document can be found in the “2015 Feeding Grandpa” document available at www.ndseniorservices.org.

Congregate & Home Delivered Meals Are Cost Effective

Many of the chronic health conditions that result in frailty and disability, loss of independence, and reduced quality of life in older adults are preventable through low-cost lifestyle interventions incorporating proper nutrition and physical activity. Clearly these meals save valuable health and long-term care dollars.

![Senior Meals Are Good Business Because](source)


Congregate & Home Delivered Meals Promote Good Health

Nutritional status is closely associated with an older person’s ability to function and remain independent. Hospitalized older adults suffer from many adverse effects when malnourished. Nutritious meals, tailored to older adults, reduce the risk of chronic diseases and related disabilities, prevent nutritional deficiency, and improve health over the long term.
Congregate & Home Delivered Meals
Save the State Medicaid Money

These older adults who participate in our nutrition programs have many of the characteristics that make them nursing home-eligible. In federal fiscal year 2017, 216 of the 5,022 home-delivered meal clients scored with 3+ ADL (Activities of Daily Living) limitations AND were Medicaid eligible. This is a conservative estimate of the nursing home-eligible clients receiving home delivered meals. According to the 2017 Genworth Financial cost of care survey, the average annual cost in a North Dakota nursing home is $127,630. This means the Medicaid cost to the state for nursing home care for these 216 people would have been over $27.5 million in 2017 alone.

Congregate and Home Delivered Meals
Funding is Lagging Behind
Ever-increasing Costs and the
Long-term Aging of the Population

In federal fiscal year 2017 the average full cost to provide a senior meal was $10.63. Below is a chart identifying where the money came from in FFY 2017 for these senior meals.

**Full Cost of a Senior Meal is $10.63**

- Federal: OAA* $2.64
- State* $1.59
- Federal: NSIP (cash in lieu of commodities) $.74
- Local Providers: Required Match $.46
- Local Providers: Additional $2.72
- Program Income (the part seniors donate) $2.48

*IMPORTANT NOTE: The Federal OAA and State monies are the funds that reimburse agencies the unit rate for the meal. These two categories add to only $4.23 a meal and not the unit rate of $4.60 per meal because there was only enough funding for 92% of the meals to be reimbursed at the unit rate in 2017. If 100% of the meals were reimbursed at the unit rate, these two figures would add up to $4.60.
The average cost of a senior meal continues to increase. While the state has provided additional funding in past sessions, it has not been enough to keep up with inflation. In federal fiscal year 2017, a total of 1,082,679 meals (546,424 congregate and 536,225 home-delivered meals) were provided across the state.

For the state contract year ending 6/30/17, there were 70,014 unpaid meals X $4.60 unit rate = $322,064.

*NDSSP is requesting $644,128 in state funds be added to the 2019-2021 biennium budget.*

Currently, agencies are only allocated federal and state funding for a portion of the meals they provide. NDSSP is asking to be treated the same as other Department of Human Services providers. We request that we be paid a basic unit rate for ALL of the Title III meals provided across the state - not just a portion of them. Meal providers need to be able to depend on stable, basic rate funding for food, supply, and staffing costs. We try to utilize volunteers as best we can for our meal programs (1,789 meal volunteers across the state in 2017 who contributed 102,097 volunteer hours), but we still have staffing costs. As our senior population continues to grow, we need to work collaboratively in a proactive way so essential services, such as senior meals, will not suffer as the state budget fluctuates. **These meals help seniors remain in their homes and out of costly nursing homes.**

Take action to save Medicaid dollars and support a basic unit rate for ALL Title III senior meals. Thank you!

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