

PRESIDENT SENDS BUDGET BLUEPRINT TO CONGRESS
INCLUDES DEEP CUTS TO NON-DEFENSE DISCRETIONARY PROGRAMS
SOURCE: MEALS ON WHEELS OF AMERICA

The President sent his Budget Blueprint, also known as the "skinny budget," to Congress today and will release further details in the coming months. This Blueprint focuses on discretionary spending levels for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018, and makes investments in defense programs, paid for through deep cuts to non-defense discretionary (NDD) programs. The NDD portion of the federal budget funds everything from public education and transportation to Older Americans Act (OAA) programs.

Read Meals on Wheels America's full statement on the Budget Blueprint [here](#).

WHAT WE KNOW

The Budget Blueprint serves as an outline providing insights to the Administration's key legislative priorities and agenda for FY 2018, and as in all other years, serves as a jumping off point for negotiations on Capitol Hill. A budget does not have the force of law, and it is ultimately up to Congress, through the budget and appropriations processes, to determine the final funding levels for NDD programs in the coming fiscal year.

WHAT THE BUDGET BLUEPRINT SAYS

You can find an overview of the President's FY 2018 Budget Blueprint [here](#). Below is a breakdown of how this proposal could impact Members if this proposal were to become law:

- **Reductions to NDD Programs:** Proposes \$54 billion in reductions to NDD programs, and the President says, "We are going to do more with less, and make the Government lean and accountable to the people." However, Meals on Wheels and other senior nutrition programs across the nation simply cannot do more with less: The senior population in the U.S. is growing exponentially while federal funding has not kept pace. The gap between those in need and those being served through OAA Nutrition Programs continues to grow, and waiting lists are mounting.
- **Decreases to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS):** Requests \$69.0 billion for HHS, demonstrating a \$15.1 billion (17.9 percent) decrease from current levels. The majority of senior nutrition programs receive funding from HHS, so it would be difficult to imagine a scenario free from harm.
- **Elimination of Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program & Community Services Block Grant:** Proposes to eliminate the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) – which offers low income households assistance with energy costs – and the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), which provides funds to help address community-level poverty. We know many of the seniors you serve rely on LIHEAP for cooling in the summer and heating in the winter.
- **Elimination of Funding for the Community Development Block Grant Program:** Proposes to eliminate the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program – a program run by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). One of the longest-running grant programs in the nation, the CDBG acts as a source of funding to state and local governments nationwide, giving those communities flexibility to steer funds where needed. This program has typically received bipartisan support, though CDBG funding has been cut every year since 2013. Every state works with the money received from CDBGs in their own way, and some local Member programs rely on these grants for significant portions of their annual funding.

- **Elimination of Senior Community Service Employment Program:** Proposes to eliminate the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), which is a job training program for older adults, authorized by the OAA and aimed at helping low-income unemployed individuals find work. The SCSEP helps to support operations for some of your programs.

WHAT THE BLUEPRINT DOES NOT SAY

Here's what is *not* explicitly outlined in the President's budget:

- **Elimination of Meals on Wheels:** Though the budget does call for the elimination of several significant sources of funding for our Member programs nationwide, it does not call for the elimination of Meals on Wheels services as a whole.
- **Specific Funding Levels for OAA Nutrition Programs:** At this time, the President's proposal contains no mention of specific funding levels for OAA Nutrition Programs. The OAA covers 35% of the total cost to provide nutritious meals, safety checks and friendly visits to seniors, and local programs rely on contributions from state, local, private donations and other resources to cover the rest.
- **Specific Funding Levels for Social Services Block Grant / Other USDA Nutrition Programs:** The Budget Blueprint contains no mention of specific funding levels for Social Services Block Grants (SSBG) – a program that provides funding to help states deliver social services – or other USDA Nutrition Programs that our Members care about, such as the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

LOOKING AHEAD

We expect the President's full budget in the coming months, at which point we will have more details on how vital funding for our Members will be affected. However, if the President's budget is enacted, it is difficult to imagine a scenario in which our local programs would not be negatively impacted.

As we move forward, it's up to all of us to continue to make sure that Members of Congress understand the value of our programs heading into the appropriations process. Our programs serve a unique and fast-growing critical need in this country. More than 2.4 million seniors rely on Meals on Wheels programs for nutritious meals, friendly visits and safety checks, and yet 10.2 million seniors are threatened by hunger. Meals on Wheels cannot sustain any further funding cuts, so [urge your Members of Congress](#) to protect and strengthen funding for Meals on Wheels programs in your state and oppose any efforts to cut funding. We are armed with strong evidence of our value to vulnerable seniors and taxpayers as a whole – including individual [State Fact Sheets](#) – so now is not the time to let up or get discouraged.

We will continue to review the President's Budget carefully and share any important additions that arise, and we look forward to working with lawmakers to ensure these cuts are not enacted.

For questions about the local impact, call Gold Country Community Services, Executive Director, Sandy “Jake” Jacobson at 615-4541.