



## CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF AREA AGENCIES ON AGING

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Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County



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ASSOCIATION OF  
FOOD BANKS



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Advancing Human Services  
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May 29, 2024

The Honorable Gavin Newsom Governor  
State of California State Capitol Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Robert Rivas Assembly Speaker  
State Capitol Sacramento, CA 95814

Senate President pro Tempore Senator Mike McGuire  
State Capitol Sacramento, CA 95814

Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel Chair  
Assembly Budget Committee State Capitol Sacramento, CA 95814

Senator Scott Wiener Chair  
Senate Budget Committee State Capitol Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Governor's May Revised Budget Proposing \$111M in cuts to Modernizing Older Californians Act (MOCA) funding, leaving thousands of older adults without meals



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The California Association of Area Agencies on Aging (C4A) and the organizations included here strongly oppose this extreme cut to vitally needed nutrition services for California's older adults. Without this funding, up to 60% fewer home delivered and congregate meals would be provided than during the pandemic, with millions of meals lost over 3 years, increasing the gap between meals provided and an estimated unmet need for 370 million meals<sup>1</sup>.

While we understand that the state budget deficit is significant and must be addressed, it remains important to minimize the damage done to existing programs. The following are examples of damage forecast by specific area agencies on aging (AAAs) if \$111 million is cut from nutrition spending:

- The **Ventura County AAA provided more than 8 million meals to residents during the pandemic** to support them and keep them safe. As the pandemic wound down, the number of people participating in the various programs decreased. **In FY 2023-2024, the AAA will serve a projected 500,000 meals** using the remainder of American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds, Older Adult Resiliency and Recovery (OARR) funding, Older Americans Act and Modernizing Older Californians Act (MOCA) funds. **The MOCA funds were intended to prevent the food cliff from happening post pandemic with the end of federal pandemic funding; with the proposed elimination of MOCA funding only 195,436 meals can be served in FY 2024-2025, a reduction of 329,000 meals (a 60% decrease), with over 1200 people removed from congregate and home delivered meal programs and put on waiting lists.**
- **LA County will face ~ \$18million cut, resulting in approximately 1.9 million fewer meals. If the City of LA is included that number could exceed 2.7 million meals.**
- **San Francisco** has \$2.7 million dollars in MOCA nutrition funding budgeted to support congregate and home delivered meals programs over the next three years. **These funds have already been put into contract with CBOs and would provide an estimated 300,000 meals during this period.** Older adults are the fastest growing population in San Francisco, increasing the demand for meals. Cutting support at this time has a significant impact on a very vulnerable population.
- **Santa Clara County's AAA, Sourcewise, was planning to use MOCA funds to support innovative delivery, such as to-go meals, grocery, and brown bag services, which are critical services to supporting food resiliency in our County. Without MOCA funding, an estimated 30,000 grocery boxes will go unfunded, serving an estimated 3,000 clients, and up to 60,000 to-go meals will be eliminated per year.**
- **Riverside County** estimates that **55,626 home delivered meals and 24,249 congregate meals will be lost without MOCA funding, a 59% reduction.**

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<sup>1</sup> Closing the Meal Gap for Older Californians, Jensen, D., 2021



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- **San Diego County's intent for MOCA Funding is to supply approximately 142,000 to-go meals annually. This has been built into FY 24/25 nutrition contracts. There is no alternate funding to cover these meals.**
- **Orange County is in the process of enhancing nutrition services to provide To-Go and Restaurant Meals options, two meal delivery channels that proved very effective during the pandemic and remain popular as methods to expand meal provision. Contracts are effective July 1st. There are no other funding revenues/streams to provide enhanced nutrition services. Contracts with providers will need amending to remove these services.**
- **Humboldt and Del Norte Counties will lose \$850,251 in MOCA funding over the next 3 years. They will not be able to provide 94,472 meals over that time - 605 meals a week and 121 a day. That means 121 fewer people will get a meal every day. While this impact is smaller than most other AAAs, rural older adults have higher food and transportation costs, so these meals are especially critical to low income older adults across California.**

These are just a few of the likely impacts AAAs and meal programs will face if MOCA funding is cut. **Most damagingly, these cuts will erode California's efforts to address the gap in senior meal demand estimated in a 2021 report *Closing the Meal Gaps for Older Californians* of 370 million meals. If these cuts are enacted, California will lose the significant gains we've been able to make in meeting senior nutrition needs during and post-pandemic.** Since the pandemic, California has implemented a targeted, evidence-based program for senior nutrition. These cuts will eviscerate these efforts and increase the amount of unmet need. For these reasons we oppose the MOCA nutrition cuts and ask the Legislature to do the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Costa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

L. Michael Costa MPP  
Executive Director,  
California Association of Area Agencies on Aging  
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