



## POTENTIAL FEDERAL BUDGET CUTS THREATEN MEALS ON WHEELS

March 21, 2017

Dear Friends of Meals on Wheels West,

Last week U.S. Budget Director Mick Mulvaney said, *"Meals on Wheels sounds great ... but to take the federal money and give it to the states and say, look, we want to give you money for programs that don't work -- I can't defend that anymore."*

The facts are that Meals on Wheels programs do work. A Brown University study documents the effectiveness of providing nutritious meals. Our Delivering More Than a Meal program helps reduce healthcare costs. We can feed someone for a year for the cost of one day in the hospital.

<http://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/theissue/research/more-than-a-meal>

Last week Budget Cut stories featuring Meals on Wheels West appeared on KNBC 4, KCBS TV 2, KABC TV 7, KCAL 9, and follow-up stories on KCAL and KCBS TV. The KABC story captures the issues well.

<http://abc7.com/politics/meals-on-wheels-helps-millions-in-la;-faces-large-federal-budget-cut/1805029/>

Thank you to all of our wonderful supporters for their amazing response to this threat to eliminate Meals on Wheels funding. A special thanks to Pretenders Dance Studio who are generous donors, dedicated volunteers and passionate advocates for Meals on Wheels West Their founder, Lisa Gumenick, and her students are featured in a KCBS Channel 2 news story.

<http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2017/03/17/donations-to-meals-on-wheels-soar-after-trump-calls-for-funding-cuts/>

**The reality is that we need financial support of many more local organizations and individuals. Every dollar helps us fulfill our mission of providing healthy and nutritious meals and a daily Wellness Check to our clients, your neighbors.**

In the last three years we have seen growth of more than 50% in the number of clients and meals we deliver. Our funding streams have been unable to meet this growing demand and now, with the threat of losing government funding, we need help even more to continue to serve meals to those in need.

### Federal Funding

It is important to note that this is the beginning of the Budget process and there's a long way to go before the budget is finalized. It is MOW West's responsibility not only to stand up for our programs, but also to clarify about what we know, not what may be projected on social media. I've summarized what we know so far.

**Delivering More Than a Meal**

1823A Michigan Ave, Santa Monica, CA, 90404  
310 394-5133 [www.MealsOnWheelsWest.org](http://www.MealsOnWheelsWest.org)





The Federal funding for Meals on Wheels comes from a few federal budget line items. Community Development Block Grants, which is the item they are eliminating, is one of them. A bigger share comes from the Older Americans Act which is part of the Health and Human Services Dept. The HSS budget will be cut by 18%. We don't know how much MOW programs will be cut ... yet.

**What:** On Thursday, the President sent his Budget Blueprint, also known as the 'skinny budget,' to Congress with a plan to release further details in the coming months. This blueprint focuses on discretionary spending levels for Fiscal Year 2018, and makes investments in defense programs, paid for through deep cuts to non-defense discretionary (NDD) programs, including Meals on Wheels.

**Who this impacts:** For many of our clients, Meals on Wheels is their only source of food and the most reliable way to fight the isolation of growing older alone... 60% of the seniors we serve live alone. Meals on Wheels West will deliver 100,000 nutritious meals in Santa Monica, Venice, Marina del Rey, Pacific Palisades and Malibu this year. There is Hidden Hunger even in the most affluent communities.

**Budget details:** The proposed budget reduces spending for vital programs like Meals on Wheels. Among the cuts, the budget calls for the elimination of the \$3 billion Community Development Block Grant program, one of the sources of funding for Meals on Wheels programs around the country. Details on our network's primary source of funding, the Older Americans Act, which has supported senior nutrition programs for 45 years, has not yet been released. This vital act provides 35% of the total funding for Meals on Wheels. With the Federal Budget proposing a 17.9% cut to the Department of Health and Human Services (HSS) budget, it is difficult to imagine a scenario in which Meals on Wheels critical services would not be significantly and negatively impacted. Currently 139 or 30% of MOW West's clients receive federal funding from the HSS/Older American's Act and other federal programs. The federal funding covers 30% of the cost of the meals we provide.

**Our donors enable MOW West to continue providing meals to those who need them but don't have the ability to pay.**

**The need is growing:** Aside from any proposed changes to federal funding for Meals on Wheels, the need for our services is exponentially growing. We have seen a 50% increase in clients over the last three years. Every day 1000 people turn 65 in California and may need our services one day. Too often the high cost of rents forces people to choose between paying their rent and going hungry at the end of the month. A lack of food results in increased emergency room visits. One day in the hospital is the same cost of feeding one person for an entire year. The impact of MOW West's Delivering More Than a Meal program is that we reduce healthcare costs and enable people to live longer, better lives.

**MOW History:** This budget defies bi-partisan history of supporting Meals on Wheels: Ironically, the month of March honors the signing and enhancement of the Older Americans Act by Richard Nixon on March 22, 1972. Meals on Wheels programs around the country celebrate this historic, bi-partisan bill through the annual March for Meals campaign.

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On Wednesday, March 22 we will be celebrating with our many supporters at our Annual Community Champions Day where we will recognize American Legion Post 283, Pacific Palisades/Santa Monica. Join speakers Santa Monica Mayor Ted Winterer and Malibu Mayor Lou LaMonte at 10:00 AM at The Thelma Terry Building at Virginia Ave. Park, 2200 Virginia Ave Santa Monica CA. Please help us celebrate.

MOW West's staff, volunteers, board and especially our clients are very thankful to all our supporters including the City of Santa Monica, City of Malibu, Los Angeles County, Google, Watt Companies, Providence Saint John's, Pacific Youth Foundation, Santa Monica Rotary Club, Santa Monica Subaru/LA CarGuy, Wells Fargo Bank, USC LA Veterans Collaborative, The Green Foundation, The Carson Foundation and many generous individuals and other organizations that I haven't mentioned.

While we await more details on the proposed budget, we are closely monitoring the situation and will be ready to advocate for home-bound people here in Santa Monica and across the country to maintain this critical source of funding.

Please join us in advocating against these ill-conceived funding cuts. Meals on Wheels programs nationwide are very lucky to have strong bicameral and bipartisan support in Congress. Our local elected officials including the Santa Monica and Malibu City Councils, Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, Assemblymember Richard Bloom, State Senator Ben Allen, Congressman Ted Lieu and Senator Feinstein are very supportive of MOW West. Please reach out and show your support.

Sincerely,

Chris Baca  
Executive Director of Meals on Wheels West

**What can you do to support Meals on Wheels West?**

**CALL PRESIDENT TRUMP:** Switchboard: 202-456-1414 or Comments: 202-456-1111

**CALL YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS:** Assemblymember Richard Bloom: (916) 319-2050

State Senator Ben Allen: (916) 651-4026

Congressman Ted Lieu: (202) 225-3976

Senator Diane Feinstein: (201) 224-3841

**DONATE:** You can donate on the MOW West website. <http://www.mealsonwheelswest.org/>  
or call Kevin at 310 394-5133 x5

**VOLUNTEER:** <http://www.mealsonwheelswest.org/volunteer/> Call Rebecca at 310 394-5133 x2

**ADVOCATE:** Forward this email to share your support for Meals on Wheels West

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