



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Council on Aging of West Florida responds to President Trump's proposed elimination of programs that fund Meals on Wheels

PENSACOLA, Fla. (March 16, 2017) – Today, President Trump sent his Budget Blueprint, also known as a “skinny budget,” to Congress with a plan to release further details in the coming months. This blueprint, which focuses on discretionary spending for Fiscal Year 2018, includes steep decreases to many non-defense programs, including the elimination of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs, which currently help fund Council on Aging of West Florida’s popular Meals on Wheels program.

Locally, Meals on Wheels delivers almost 130,000 meals to nearly 500 senior citizens throughout the year. Many of these aging adults are homebound and cannot care for themselves like they once could. Meals on Wheels not only provides much-needed nutrition and sustenance, but companionship and a chance for social service agencies to check in with clients.

“Meals on Wheels is a program that serves a vital need for homebound, disabled and vulnerable aging adults,” said John Clark, President and CEO of Council on Aging. “The program is largely comprised of volunteers who donate their time and transportation to alleviating hunger in our senior community. This is not a government agency bloated with bureaucracy whose cuts would benefit the tax-payer; Meals on Wheels is fully dedicated to the client and in fact helps Americans avoid the far greater cost of caring for these individuals in a nursing home or retirement community.”

The highly efficient and popular program needs increased funding and participation, not less. There are almost 500 elderly people on waiting lists in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties who need the services of Meals on Wheels. Nationwide, the need is growing rapidly as well, and federal funding has not kept pace. Meals on Wheels is already serving 23 million fewer meals now than in 2005, and waiting lists are mounting in every state. At a time when increased funding is needed, millions of seniors who rely on the program every day for a nutritious meal, safety check and visit from a volunteer will be left behind.

“The problem with a skinny budget is it is lean on details. So, while we don’t know the exact impact yet, cuts of any kind to these highly successful and leveraged programs would be a devastating blow to our ability to provide much-needed care for millions of vulnerable seniors in

America, which in turn saves billions of dollars in reduced healthcare expenses” said Ellie Hollander, President and CEO Meals on Wheels America.

For more information on how you can volunteer, contribute or speak out for the seniors in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties and across the country, visit coawfla.org.

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About Council on Aging:

Council on Aging of West Florida is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that has served seniors and their families since 1972. Council on Aging of West Florida helps seniors in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties live healthy, safe and independent lives in their own familiar surroundings by providing community-based, in-home programs and services such as Meals on Wheels and Alzheimer’s respite care.

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