

Michaud Announces Release of Stimulus Funding for Senior Nutrition Programs; Maine to Receive \$485,000

Wednesday, March 18 2009

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Congressman Mike Michaud announced that Maine is receiving \$485,000 from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to provide meals to seniors. Overall, the stimulus package contained a total of \$100 million for meals and nutrition services in order to help older Americans maintain their health and independence. This stimulus funding is in addition to a \$78 million increase in funding for the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) recently passed by Congress for Fiscal Year 2009.

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“There is a huge unmet need, and this funding will help us get more meals out to seniors who need them,” said Michaud. “During these extremely difficult times, this funding is welcome news and will help make sure Maine seniors get the help they need by improving our local agencies’ ability to provide meals through community dining rooms and home delivery. It will also help reduce or eliminate waiting lists for meals for seniors all across the country.”

The federal funding is distributed to states, which then use an intrastate formula to distribute funds to area agencies on aging for use in their communities.

“These additional dollars allow us to reach rural Maine’s most vulnerable citizens,” said Muriel Scott, CEO of Spectrum Generations. “Not only will we be able to deliver nutritious meals to isolated seniors and handicapped individuals but we will also be able to provide other services to support them.”

Spectrum Generations is the Central Maine Area Agency on Aging and more information can be found on their website: www.spectrumgenerations.org.

Of the \$100 million for programs supported by AoA, \$65 million will support Congregate Nutrition Services provided at senior centers and other community sites, \$32 million will fund Home Delivered Nutrition Services delivered to elders who have trouble leaving home, and \$3 million will go to Native American Nutrition Programs. According to the AoA, the stimulus funding alone will provide 14 million meals nationwide over the next two fiscal years.

Attached is a FAQ sheet provided by the Department of Health and Human Services for help with additional questions about the nutrition funding.

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THE AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009 (ARRA)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is ARRA?

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The legislation contains key investments that will prevent the loss of health coverage, promote prevention programs and lower health care spending for our nation during these challenging economic times. To help older Americans maintain their health and independence, the legislation includes \$100 million for meals and nutrition services under the Older Americans Act (OAA) as specified below:

- \$65 million for congregate nutrition services under Title III;
- \$32 million for home-delivered nutrition services under Title III; and
- \$3 million for Native American nutrition services under Title VI.

2. How will ARRA help older adults and local communities?

These funds will assist communities and the national aging services network hit hard by rising food costs at a time when demand for services is increasing due to the economic downturn and the growing number of older adults. The funds will provide meals to seniors in need of food, restore nutrition services that have been cut and restore positions which may have been eliminated or reduced.

3. When will the ARRA nutrition funds be made available to States and Native American grantees?

Awards to States will be made in March, however; States will not be able to draw down funds until they sign and return the governor's certification of ARRA funds usage.

As for Tribes, our first priority is to issue the regular Title VI grants to the Tribes by April 1, 2009 to ensure continuation of their program. Shortly after those grants are awarded, we will be issuing the ARRA grants. Once awarded, Tribes will not be able to draw down ARRA funds until they sign and return the Tribal chair's certification of ARRA funds usage.

4. How will ARRA funds be distributed to States and Title VI grantees?

The ARRA funds will be distributed to States by a population-based formula that takes into account the Older Americans Act (OAA) Title III interstate funding formula minimums, and the 60+ population of each State. The FY 2009 appropriations will satisfy the OAA statutory formula which, in addition to funding minimums and the 60+ population, includes the FY 2006 hold harmless factor, and the guaranteed growth factor which is phased out over five years.

The ARRA funds will be distributed to Title VI grantees by a population-based formula that is used to distributed OAA Title VI funds. This formula takes into account the number of Native American elders, age 60 and older, within a

grantee's service area, as defined by the grantee in their approved Title VI grant application.

5. What is the time frame for expenditure of the ARRA funds?

While funds are appropriated for a two-year period, AoA will obligate all of the ARRA funds as soon as possible. Consistent with the intent of the legislation, the timely obligation of funds by State and Tribal programs is imperative in order to address reported funding cutbacks, impending program closures and waiting lists throughout the country.

6. Will State match (non-Federal share) be required for the ARRA funds?

Non-Federal share requirements that mirror the Title III-C match requirements, i.e., 15%, will be in place for ARRA funds. Technical assistance will be provided to assist States in reaching match requirements through both cash and in-kind sources. There is no specific requirement for cash match or for a percentage of the non-Federal share to come from State sources.

To be used as match for ARRA funds, in-kind contributions must meet the same grant requirements as cash match for OAA funds. The contribution must be verifiable and the records must show how the value of the in-kind contribution was determined. That valuation must be reasonable and is subject to audit. Examples of such in-kind contributions include, but are not limited to:

- • volunteer services;
- • donated time of employees of other organizations;
- • donated supplies and loaned equipment;
- • utilities; and
- • space.

7. Will States be allowed to transfer ARRA funding for meals to other OAA programs and/or between the congregate and home delivered allocations?

The purpose of the ARRA funds is to increase the number of congregate and home delivered meals provided to older adults, and required reporting must document such increases. To that end, no transfer of ARRA funds will be permitted.

8. Will the ARRA funds be included in the calculation of maintenance of effort requirements (MOE)?

The ARRA funds are considered to be a one time allocation and will not be included in the calculation of MOE.

9. Will States and area agencies on aging (AAAs) be allowed to use a portion of the ARRA funds for administration?

A reasonable amount of the ARRA funds may be used for administrative purposes, however; the tracking of such use will be stringent and States are to expend the bulk of the funds for meal provision. The Office of Inspector General is charged with tracking the ARRA funds in order to ensure reasonable and allowable costs, accountability and transparency.

10. Can the ARRA funds be used for the purchase of equipment?

The ARRA funds are allocated by Congress to expand the provision of meals, therefore; if equipment is needed in order to provide more meals, States, AAAs and Title VI grantees are encouraged to make such purchases from the regular FY 2009 OAA appropriations.

11. Will the meals provided with ARRA funds count toward the Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP) allocations?

All meals provided with ARRA funds that meet the same criteria as Title III-C and Title VI meals may be counted toward NSIP allocations.

12. What type of reporting will be required for ARRA funds?

While specific reporting requirements are still being finalized, States and Tribes will be required to report ARRA data on a quarterly basis via an on-line, internet based system. This data may include the number of home delivered and congregate meals provided, number of people served, number of jobs created and/or retained, as well as, the amount of ARRA funds expended.

13. Who should States and Tribes contact for additional information on ARRA?

States and Tribes should contact their respective Regional AoA offices with questions and/or requests for additional information.