

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
March 28, 2024

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Older Californians Nutrition Month Highlights the Importance of Healthy Eating and Connection for Older Adults

Sacramento — As Older Californians Nutrition Month nears its conclusion, the emphasis on healthy eating and social connection for older adults has never been more important. Organizations statewide are urged to continue promoting resources supporting older adults' well-being.

"Ensuring access to nutritious food and fostering social engagement are cornerstones of promoting the health and wellness of older adults in our communities," says **CDA Director Susan DeMarois**. "California is actively working to provide older adults with access to low or no cost, nutritious food through meal programs and the ['Seniors Eat Well' CalFresh Expansion](#), among other efforts."

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT: The significance of nutrition for older adults has never been greater. Each year in the U.S., up to half of adults over 65 are at risk of malnutrition, and more than 10 million face hunger. The Older Californians Nutrition Program, funded by both the Older Americans Act and the Older Californians Act, ensures the provision of vital nutrition services for older adults. Since its inception in 1972, the program has been a lifeline for older adults across California. The California Department of Aging (CDA) administers this program in collaboration with California's 33 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and their service providers. Under this program, CDA is not only delivering essential nutrition and well-being services but also investing in infrastructure support. This includes funding for refrigerators, freezers, and delivery vans equipped with warming and cooling devices, ensuring the safe and efficient delivery of fresh food to older adults in need. Nutrition and well-being programs offered in California include:

- The [Congregate Meals Program](#), where participants receive delicious and nutritious food as well as nutrition education and screening to assess nutrition

risk. These gatherings provide valuable opportunities to socialize and form new friendships and support networks.

- The [Home-Delivered Meals Program](#), for those who would benefit from meal delivery due to illness, disability, isolation, or other factors. Participants receive healthy meals delivered to their home along with nutrition education and screening to support their overall well-being.
- The [CalFresh Expansion program](#) provides assistance to local organizations to help older Californians who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or State Supplemental Payment (SSP) to enroll for CalFresh benefits.
- [CalFresh Healthy Living Services](#), offered through many of California's AAAs, provide eligible older adults with resources to support healthy, active lifestyles by teaching them about good nutrition and how to stretch their food dollars.
- The [Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program](#) (SFMNP) provides fresh, nutritious, locally grown produce and cut herbs through Certified Farmers' Markets. Local AAAs distribute the SFMNP Check Booklets to eligible individuals who are aged 60 and older and on a limited income.

[Meal program participants share](#) that the Senior Nutrition Program helps them eat balanced meals five days a week and improve their overall health. Says Maricela Flores of Southern California, "The meals are not only delicious but also packed with nutrition. I've made wonderful new friends, and the staff members' warmth and hospitality have really helped me cope with my depression."

BIGGER PICTURE: For more than 50 years, older adult nutrition services have helped create healthy, strong communities where all members can flourish regardless of age. California's AAAs also provide connections to home and community-based services that can support older adults' independence and overall well-being. To find the AAA serving your community, visit CDA's [Find Services in My County](#) page or call 800-510-2020.

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