



Age + Action

June 17–20, 2019 | Washington, DC

ncoa
National Council on Aging

Boosting Contributions at Meal Sites: Insights from a Pilot Program

Keri Lipperini, Elana Safran, Jill Hall / Wednesday, June 19

[#AgeAction2019](#) | [#WeAgeWell](#)

Older Americans Act

Nutrition Program

Keri Lipperini

Director

Office of Nutrition and Health Promotion Programs

June 2019



Investment and Impact

- Modest federal investment, huge impact
- Between October 2017 and September 2018:
 - Served over 850,000 Home Delivered participants
 - Served over 1.5 million Congregate meal participants
 - 75 million meals

OAA Nutrition Program Purpose



Reduce
hunger
&
food
insecurity



Promote
socialization



Promote
health
&
well-being

Title III C – Nutrition Program

- Adults age 60 and older who are in greatest social and economic need with particular attention to:
 - low income older individuals,
 - minority older individuals,
 - older individuals in rural communities,
 - older individuals with limited English proficiency, and
 - older individuals at risk of institutional care.

Nutrition Evaluation Results

- 54% of participants say a congregate meal supplies 50% or more of total food for the day.
- 71% of Congregate and 90% of Home-Delivered meal participants feel the program helps them live independently and remain in their home.
- 68% of Congregate participants felt that the program had improved their health and helped them to achieve or maintain a healthy weight.

And while not the intent of the Older Americans Act:

Congregate meal program utilized less Medicare-funded healthcare.

- Less likely to have hospital admissions
- Less likely to have emergency department visits that led to a hospital admission
- Less likely to have a nursing home admission

Older Americans Act Sec 315

- Local decision

AAA shall consult and determine best way for accepting voluntary contributions.

- Programs shall **not**:

- Means-test
- Deny services to any individual who does not contribute to the cost of the service.

Requirements

- Each participant **given opportunity to voluntarily contribute- noncoercive**
- **Clearly inform** each recipient that there is **no obligation** to contribute
- **Protect privacy and confidentiality of each recipient** with respect to recipient's contribution or lack of contribution
- Establish appropriate procedures to **safeguard and account for all contributions**

After these messages, we'll be right back...



Congregate Meals Donations Project Overview

June 19, 2019

Elana Safran
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Office of Evaluation Sciences



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OES & Behavioral Science

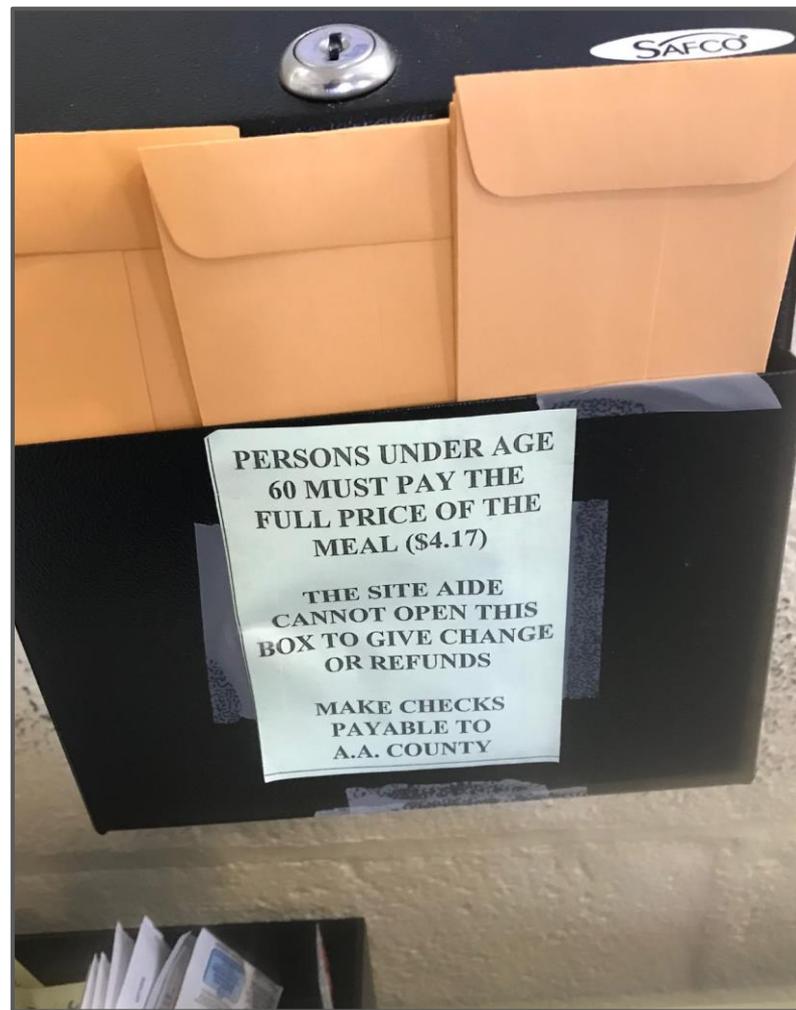
Congregate Meals & Voluntary Contributions —
examples from around the country

Maryland Pilot

Project Overview

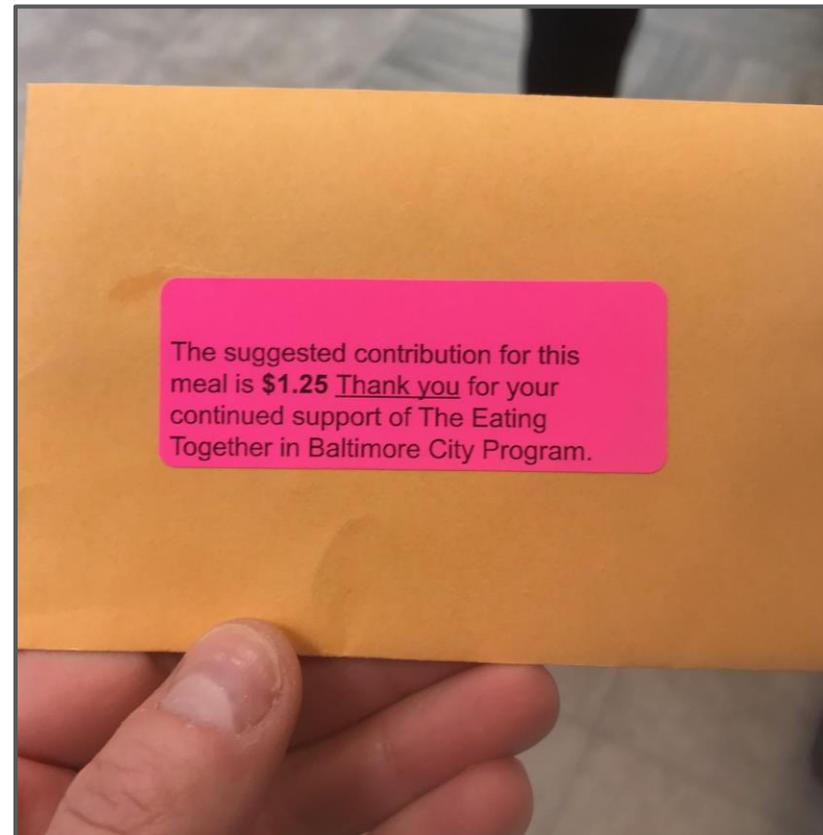
How does this apply to congregate meals donations?

- **Big picture, we want to build evidence about effective strategies to ask for voluntary contributions.**
 - Our goal is to provide AAAs with guidance on how to ask for voluntary contributions, in a way that is effective and easy for site managers to implement.
 - Testing new strategies can help Maryland AAAs and sites adopt proven practices, and can be an example to other states looking for effective ways to increase voluntary donations.



How does this apply to congregate meals donations?

- **We are developing promising strategies with Maryland sites.**
 - We are working with AAAs and sites in Maryland to design and implement different strategies to increase voluntary contributions
 - Based on experience from sites around the country, feedback from your seniors, and research on what works.



How does this apply to congregate meals donations?

- **We will test to find out what works.**
 - We will roll out promising strategies to selected sites, so that we can measure whether donations increase at sites that adopt the new strategies compared to sites that do not (and importantly, without compromising participation).
 - We typically use a randomized evaluation design to learn whether the intervention was effective.
 - Then we make recommendations for future adoption based on project results.



OES & Behavioral Science

What does OES do?

Team members work across government to support in designing an evidence-based program change and testing to measure impact

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Partner with
Federal Agencies
to target priority
outcomes

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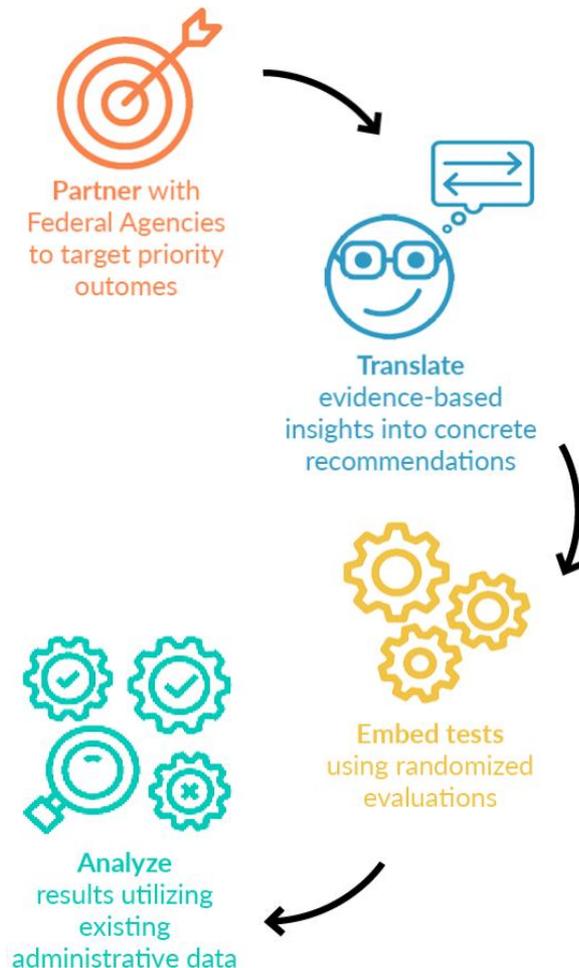
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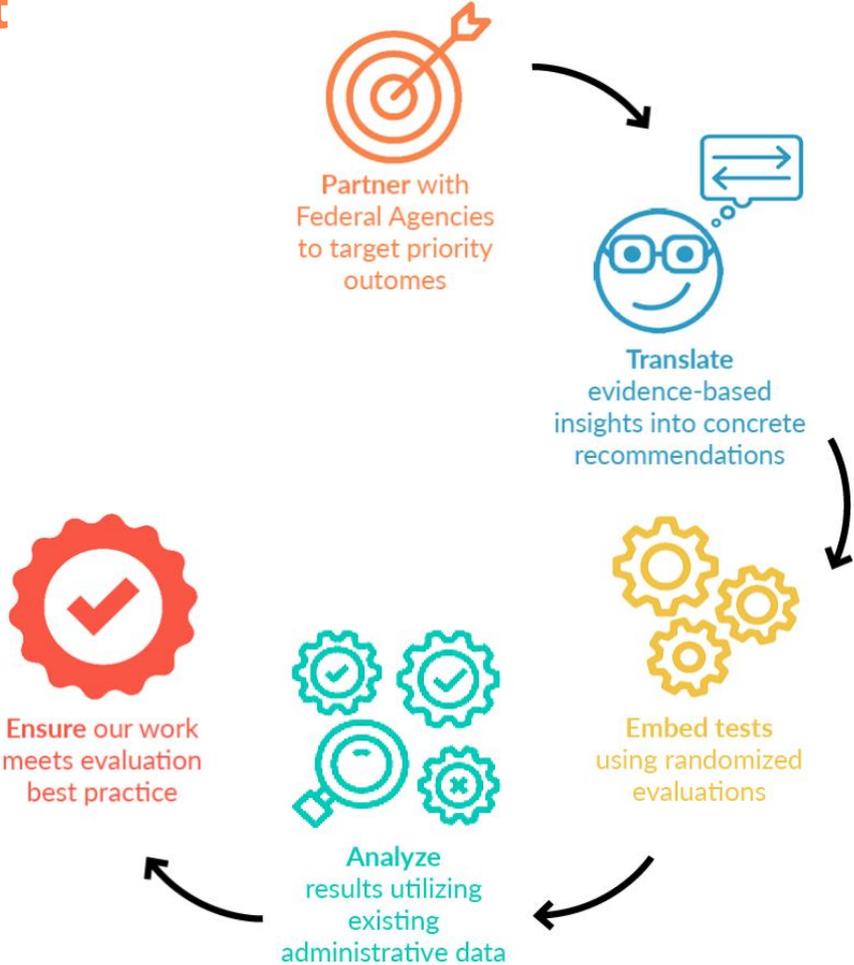
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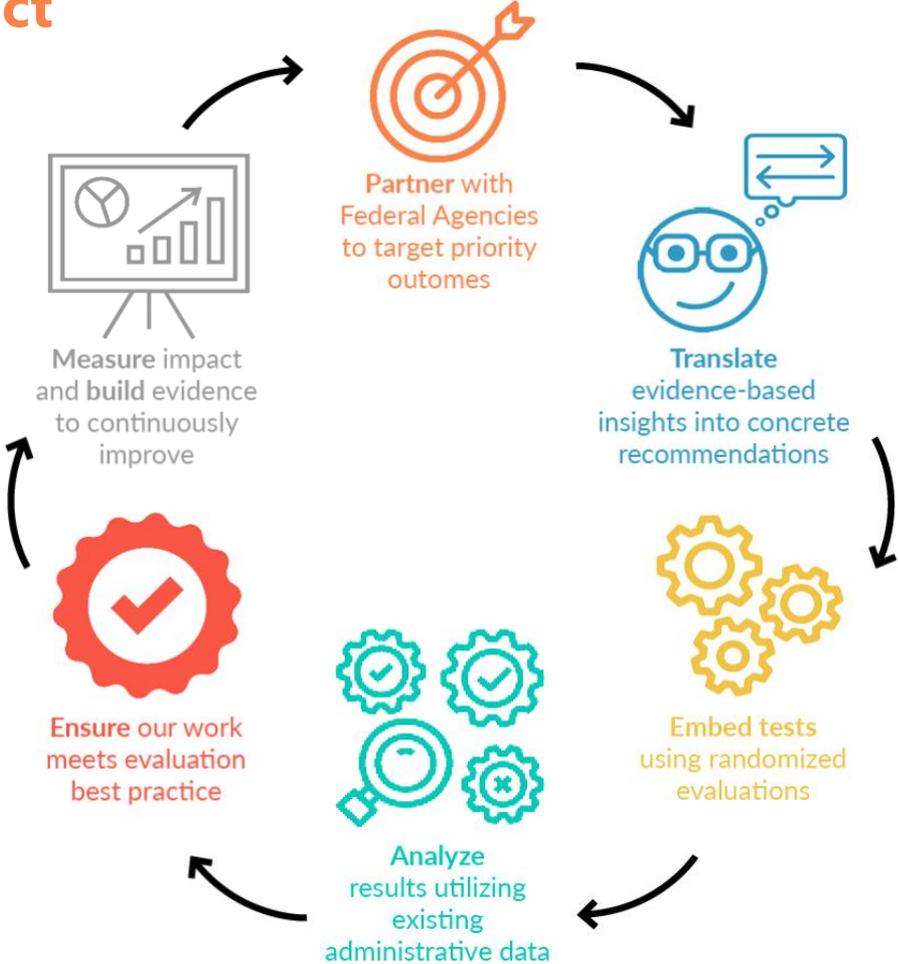
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Anchors

People are over-reliant on the first piece of information they hear.

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The tendency to do things because many people do the same

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The tendency to do things because many people do the same

Simplification

Limit, group, or streamline the information users have to process to make decisions

OES Portfolio

OES has completed more than 70 evaluations across the Federal government:



**Department of
Agriculture**



**Department of
Defense**



**Department of
Education**



**Department of
Energy**



**Department of Health
& Human Services**



**Department of
Housing
& Urban Development**



**Department of
Justice**



**Department
of Labor**



**Department of
the Treasury**



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**



**General Services
Administration**



**Social Security
Administration**



**United States Agency for
International Development**

Congregate Meals & Voluntary Contributions

Program & Population Characteristics

Characteristic	Congregate meal participants
Annual income-to-poverty ratio	
0	1.8
1 to 50	5.0
51 to 100	23.5
101 to 150	28.2
151 to 200	13.8
201 to 300	15.8
301 and above	12.0
Sources of income	
Full-time or part-time work	16.9
Social Security	96.9
Unemployment compensation	0.5
SSDI or workers' compensation	8.4
SSI	12.3
Pension or retirement fund	49.0
General assistance	2.7
Money from relatives	3.8
Other sources	7.9

27% below FPL

~65% below 185% FPL

Source: AoA NSP outcomes survey, 2015-2016, weighted data.

Status Quo

LSPs vary in their recommended participant contribution for a single meal

	Percentage of LSPs
Recommended contribution	
\$0.00 to \$1.50	30
\$1.51 to \$3.00	39
\$3.01 to \$4.50	24
\$4.51 to \$6.00	4
\$6.01 to \$7.50	0
\$7.51 or more	2

30% recommend < \$1.50
93% recommend < \$4.50

Source: LSP survey, weighted data.

The majority of participants report contributing, are aware of the program's suggested contribution amount.

Characteristic	Congregate meal participants
Participant makes a contribution	80.5
Program has a suggested contribution amount	84.0
Participant feels pressured to contribute to each meal	3.1

80.5% of participants report making a contribution

Source: AoA NSP outcomes survey, 2015-2016, weighted data.

Examples from around the country

Consumer Contributions

The actual cost for providing your meal is **\$6.63**

You have the opportunity to make a voluntary contribution for your meal.

Contributions will be used to expand services.

Your contribution is confidential and the amount you choose to give is your choice.

Services will not be terminated or reduced if you choose not to contribute towards the cost of your service, as you are under no obligation.

Please call (336) 786-6155
ext. 233 for additional information.



* Gary County-Congregate Meals

**Actual cost
of meal**

Boonville, NC

Milwaukee County Senior Dining

Your Contributions Make A Difference

Where The Money Comes From



Where The Money Goes

YEAR	NUTRITION PROGRAMS	ANNUAL COST
2017	Congregate Meals = 242,167 Meals on Wheels = 369,071 Total Meals Served = 611,238	\$ 5,065,913
2016	Congregate Meals = 256,384 Meals on Wheels = 356,529 Total Meals Served = 612,913	\$ 4,869,504
2015	Congregate Meals = 262,179 Meals on Wheels = 339,351 Total Meals Served = 601,530	\$ 4,879,442

How money is spent

WE RELY ON AND APPRECIATE
YOUR PARTICIPATION & SUPPORT.

~THANK YOU!



Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

1

HAMBURGER
BAKED BEANS
CHUCKWAGON CORN
CHOCOLATE MOON PIE
HAMBURGER BUN
KETCHUP/MUSTARD

2

CHICKEN & SAUSAGE GUMBO
STEAMED RICE
OKRA & TOMATOES
WHIPPED SWEET POTATO
SALTINES CRACKERS
LEMON PUDDING

3

SPAGHETTI W/ MEAT SAUCE
TOSSED SALAD
GREEN BEANS
GARLIC BREAD
CRANBERRY CAKE
ITALIAN DRESSING

4

WHITE BEANS & CHICKEN CHILI
SEASONED TURNIP GREENS
SPICED PEACHES
CORNBREAD
FRUIT & GRAIN BAR

5

TURKEY & CHEESE SANDWICH
LETTUCE & TOMATO
BLACK - EYED PEA SALAD
HOAGIE BUN
FRESH APPLE
MAYONNAISE

8

COUNTRY MEATBALLS
GREEN PEAS
PICKLED BEETS
BROWN RICE
FRESH ORANGE

9

HAM & PINEAPPLE SAUCE
ORIENTAL BLEND
WHITE BEANS
WW BREAD
ROYAL BROWNIE

10

BBQ CHICKEN
SEASONED COLLARDS
CHANTILLY POTATOES
WW ROLL
COWBOY COOKIE

11

TACO SALAD
SHREDDED CHEESE
LETTUCE/TOMATO
TRI-COLORED BEAN salad
FLOUR TORTILLA
APPLE JUICE
TACO SAUCE

12

CHICKEN TETRAZZINI
WHOLE KERNEL CORN
COUNTRY COTTAGE
WW BREAD
MANDARIN ORANGE

15

HEARTY PORK STEW
CREAMED CORN
VEGGIES IN STEW
WW ROLL
SPICED APPLES
MARGARINE

16

ROASTED TURKEY
SEASONED TURNIPS
SWEET POTATOES
CORNBREAD
COOKIES & CREAM FLUFF
MARGARINE

17

HAMBURGER
COLE SLAW
BAKE BEANS
HAMBURGER BUN
PINEAPPLE CRISP
KETCHUP/MUSTARD

18

CHICKEN SALAD
BLACK-EYED PEA SALAD
OL'FASHIONED VEGGIE SOUP
WW BREAD 2 SLICES
LIME CITRUS MOLD

19

MEATLOAF/ GRAVY
CABBAGE
GREEN BEANS
WHITE DINNER ROLL
FRESH BANANA
MARGARINE

22

CHICKEN W/ GRAVY
MUSTARD GREENS
CHANTILLY POTATOES
WW BREAD
FRESH ORANGE
MARGARINE

23

HOT DOG W/CHILI
CUCUMBER & ONION SALAD
KERNEL CORN
HOT DOG BUN
APPLE CRISP
KETCHUP/MUSTARD

24

BBQ PULLED PORK
COLE SLAW
BAKED BEANS
HAMBURGER BUN
BREAD PUDDING W/ RAISINS

25

CHICKEN POT PIE
BROCCOLI CUTS
ESCALLOPED POTATOES
BISCUIT
CHOCOLATE PUDDING

26

SALISBURY STEAK
CREAMED POTATOES
GREEN PEAS & ONIONS
CORNBREAD
JOY'S APPLESAUCE COOKIE

29

HAMBURGER
BAKED BEANS
CHUCKWAGON CORN
CHOCOLATE MOON PIE
HAMBURGER BUN
KETCHUP/MUSTARD

30

LEMON PEPPER CHICKEN
BUTTERED CARROTS
ORANGE JUICE
MACARONI & CHEESE
ALMOND COOKIE

31

SPAGHETTI W/ MEAT SAUCE
TOSSED SALAD
GREEN BEANS
GARLIC BREAD
CRANBERRY CAKE
ITALIAN DRESSING

COST PER MEAL: \$4.45

ALL DONATIONS
ACCEPTED



EACH MEAL IS SERVED WITH 1% MILK

THIS MONTHS SPECIAL IS ON OCTOBER 30TH

Your Donation Matters!



The meal you are enjoying today is similar to one from a local restaurant but costs much less. Our suggested donation is \$3.00 yet we are receiving only 96¢ per meal on average, creating a budget shortfall.

We hope that you understand the value and impact of your donation on this program.

Your generosity helps us to meet our expenses and provide more meals to seniors.

Compare the value

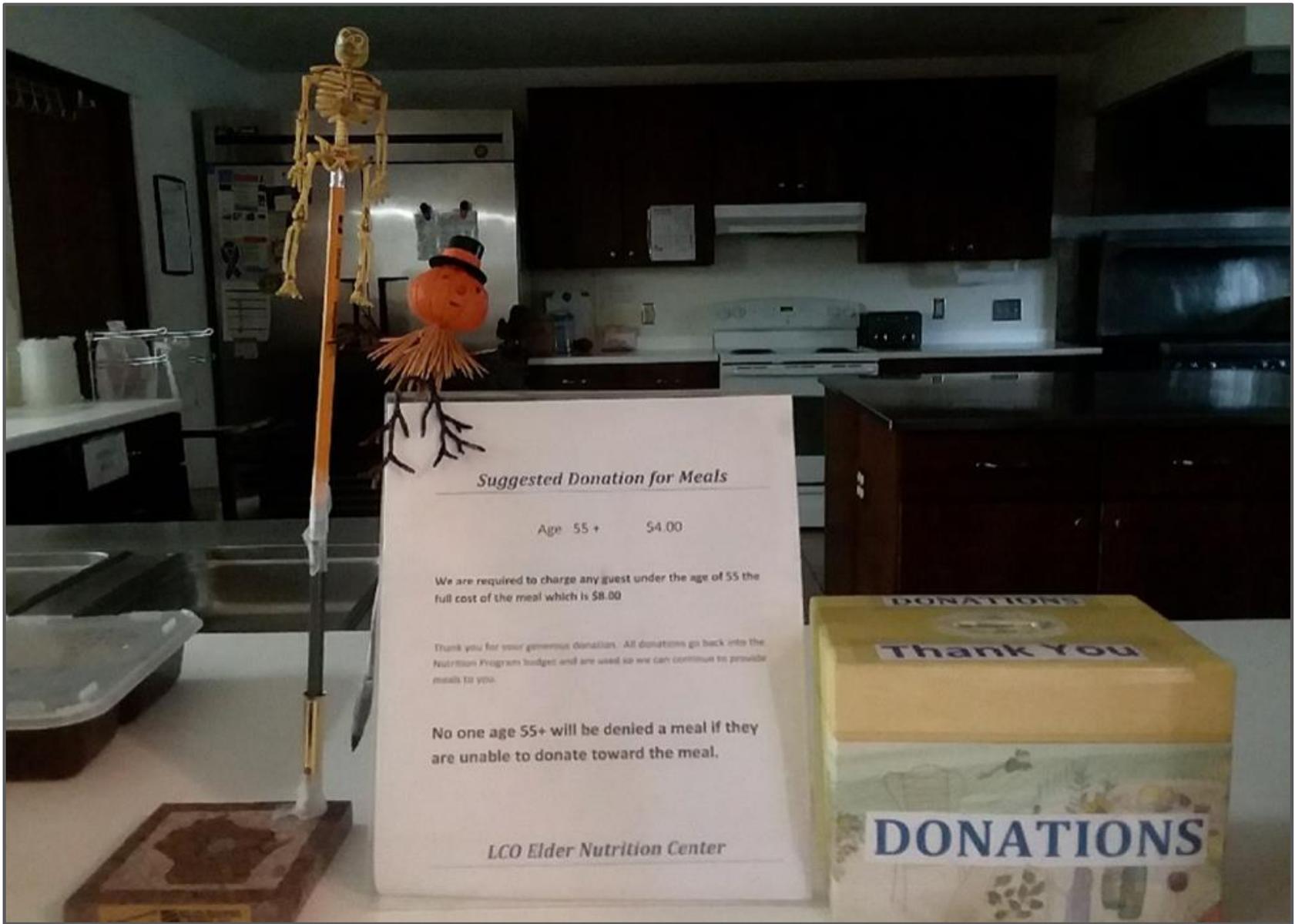
Local Restaurant Prices

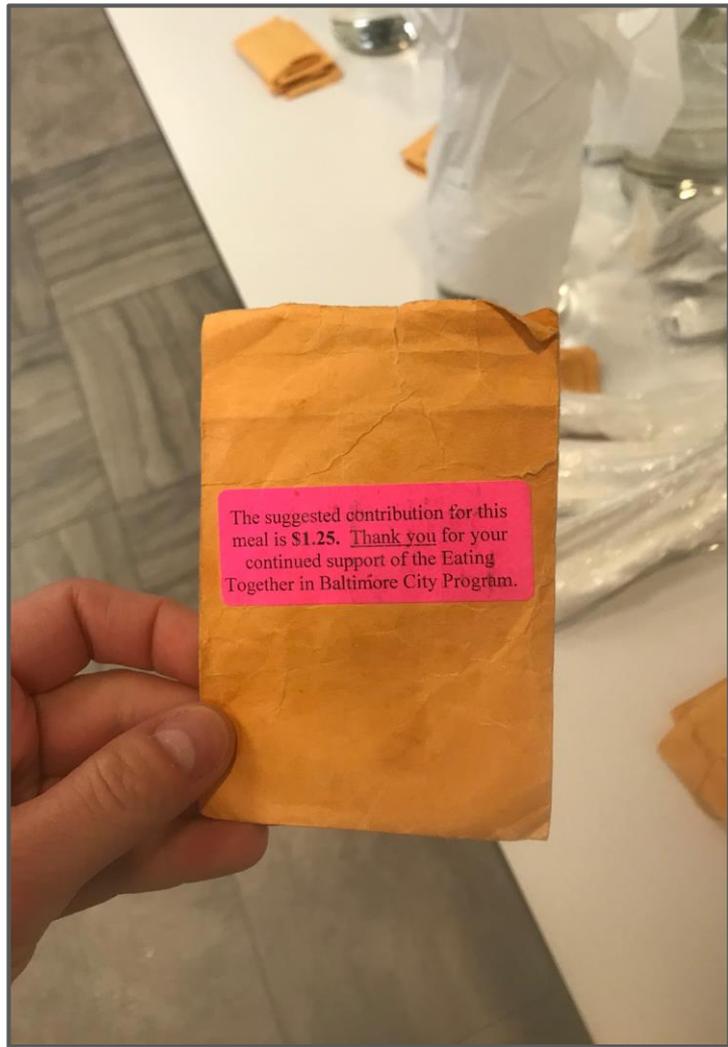
Senior Café Site Suggested Donation

Spaghetti & Meatballs	8.00	
Tossed Salad w/ Dressing		
Italian Bread		
Milk	1.25	
Dessert	2.00	
Sub Total		
Tax	.71	
Tip	2.25	
Actual Total	\$14.21	\$3.00

Compared to a restaurant







Baltimore (city), MD



Provider Assurance Form

This is to certify that the opportunity to voluntarily contribute to the cost of services received has been discussed with:

The discussion included informing the client or designated representative:

1. That the contribution is entirely voluntary and that there is no obligation to contribute.
2. That all contributions collected will be used to expand the services(s).
3. That information about the client's participation in consumer contributions shall be confidential.
4. Who the service recipient or designated representative should contact, including the telephone number, if there are questions regarding consumer contributions.
5. The total cost of the service (actual or per unit), if applicable.
6. That service(s) will not be reduced or terminated for failure to contribute.
7. That they have an opportunity to voluntarily decide whether or not to contribute toward the cost of the service and the process by which contributions will be collected.

	Assessment Date	Service(s) Received	Actual Cost/Unit Rate	Notes
1.				
2.				
3.				
<hr/>				
1.				
2.				
3.				
<hr/>				
1.				
2.				
3.				

Agency	Date	Agency Representative Signature
YVEDDI		
YVEDDI		
YVEDDI		

1/2012 d

Maryland Pilot

Maryland Sites

Size of Maryland program:

- **232** sites reporting to us
 - **19** AAAs / counties

Some site characteristics:

- **16%** housing sites (in 8 counties)
- **19%** sites with “ethnic meals” (in 7 counties)
- Most sites serve under 50 meals per week (**38%**) or 51-100 meals per week (**32%**)

Example Table Tents

Eating Together



Thank you for being a part of
the Liberty Senior Center
community!

Your participation helps keep
the eating club a stable part
of our community.

Suggested donation is \$2.50

Relational

Eating Together



All donations add to the nutrition
program budget.

We can expand meal service and
offerings, and directly benefit you
and the community.

Suggested donation is \$2.50

Transactional

Pilot sites — including Baltimore County

Pilot sites:

- ❑ Half-day site visits with OES in March/April to:
 - ❑ Implement intervention materials at your site
- ❑ Review intervention “guide” for other sites
- ❑ Review data collection “guide” for other sites

Participating sites

- ❑ **Interest in learning what works to increase voluntary contributions!**
- ❑ Ability to provide the following data during the full project period, by day / week / month:
 - ❑ Number of meals served
 - ❑ Number of unique participants
 - ❑ Total voluntary contributions
- ❑ Willingness to be assigned to either intervention group
- ❑ If selected for the treatment group, then implement the intervention for approximately 6 months

Project Timeline

- **November-December 2018:** **ACL** collected examples from around the country. **Maryland counties** verified site information. **OES** drafted intervention design.
- **March-April 2019:** **OES** piloted intervention with 3 volunteer pilot sites, and drafted guide for other sites
- **June:** **OES** confirms participation of interested sites
- **July:** **Maryland counties** launch interventions at randomly-selected sites
- **July-November:** **Sites & OES** collect data from sites on: # of meals served, # of unique participants, \$ collected
- **November-December (tent.):** **OES** analyzes data, shares results with relevant audiences

Thank you!

Elana Safran

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<https://oes.gsa.gov>



Boosting Contributions at Meal Sites: *Insights from a Pilot Program*

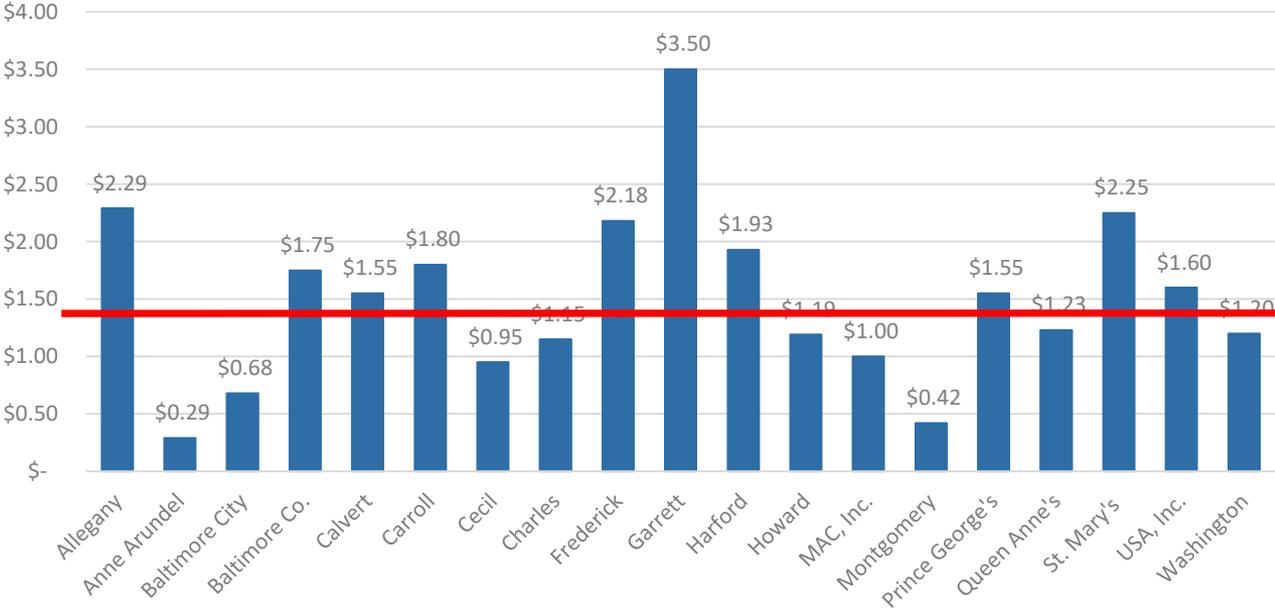


Baltimore County Department Of Aging
Baltimore County, Maryland



In Maryland, average congregate meal donation is \$1.50

Average Donation Per Meal - Maryland Counties FY18



Issues that are being faced in Maryland:

Counties with Low Donations

- Across the state seeing downward trend in number of meals served overall
- Many counties in MD use the same caterer and RFP – still targeted to old style of meal (hot meals with some boxes, soup and salad options, theme meals)
- Participants say they can get fast food for the same price without all the “procedures”
- Do not want to waste food in the meals they don’t like – able to eat only what they want at home
- After paying transportation costs don’t have enough money to pay for the food
- Older participants tell others not to pay the donation at all, or just give a little, because they have already paid their taxes and the food comes from the government

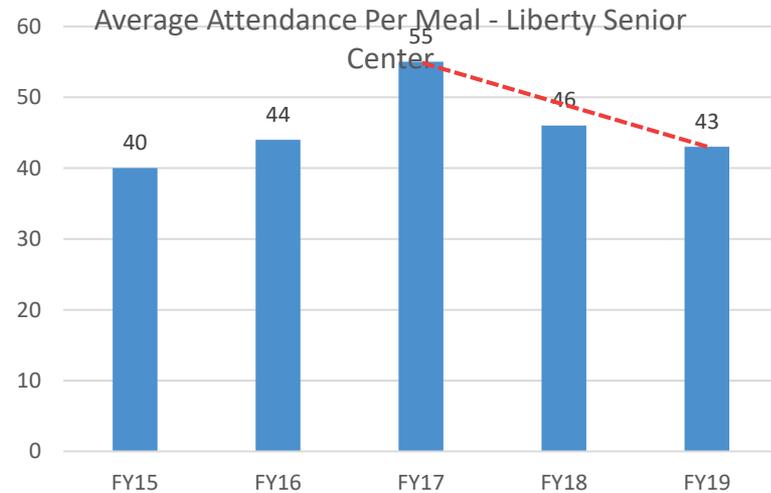
Counties with High Donations

- When meal is included as part of a special entertainment day, people pay more thinking it is paying for the whole program
- Younger seniors are more generous – have expectation that food has a cost
- Ask for full amount, not a suggested donation



Chose Liberty Senior Center to be involved in pilot study because of decreasing donations and participation rates.

Average Donation Per Meal - Liberty Senior Center





What Was Involved in the Pilot?

Focus groups held with participants and non-participants in Eating Together congregate meal program by staff from GSA.





Program attendance and procedures for donations observed.



GSA staff met with senior center staff to discuss reporting formats, intervention methods, and potential challenges with pilot.



Next Steps:

1. We will implement the new interventions at all 36 of our sites and assess which one works best (i.e., relational vs. transactional)
2. We will continue to track trends in donations and attendance very closely to more quickly determine when additional intervention is needed
3. We will share our findings with other jurisdictions in Maryland through the Maryland Association of Senior Nutrition Programs (MANSP) and Maryland Association of Senior Centers (MASC) meetings



Resources

- www.acl.gov
- www.nutritionandaging.org
- www.aginganddisabilitybusinessinstitute.org

Innovations in Nutrition Programs and Services (INNU) Grant Program

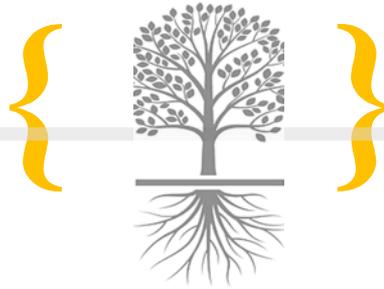
- **Purpose:** To fund innovative and promising practices that enhance the quality, effectiveness, and other proven outcomes of nutrition programs and services within the aging services network.
- **To Date:** Over \$2 million to 11 different organizations
- **FY19 Funding:** currently under review.

Thank you!

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