

# Age + Action

June 17–20, 2019 | Washington, DC

**ncoa**

National Council on Aging

## The Value of Socialization in the Older Americans Act Congregate Nutrition Program

Bob Blancato, MPA and Meaghan McMahon, MSW | June 19th

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

# National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)

The screenshot shows the NANASP website homepage. At the top left is the NANASP logo, which consists of a stylized 'N' with a yellow star above it, and the word 'nanasp' in a red, cursive font. Below the logo is the tagline 'National Voice. Local Action.' To the right of the logo are social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and Google+, a search bar, and accessibility icons. A dark red navigation bar contains the following links: Home, About Us, Membership, Advocacy & Legislation, Conferences & Events, Corporate Links, Publications, and Contact Us. The main content area features a large photograph of an elderly couple smiling at a table with a meal. Below the photo is the tagline 'National Voice. Local Action.' To the right of the photo is a call-to-action box titled 'JOIN OR RENEW YOUR NANASP MEMBERSHIP TODAY!' with an image of a 'MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION' form. Below this is a 'NEWS' section with the headline 'Join us for "A United Front: A Conversation with Meals on Wheels America & NANASP" - April 30th' and a sub-headline 'In honor of Older Americans Month this May, we're working alongside Meals on'.

**nanasp**  
National Voice. Local Action.

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**JOIN OR RENEW YOUR NANASP MEMBERSHIP TODAY!**

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**NEWS**

Join us for "A United Front: A Conversation with Meals on Wheels America & NANASP" - April 30th  
In honor of Older Americans Month this May, we're working alongside Meals on

National Voice. Local Action.

National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs

# The Retirement Research Foundation

- **Mission:** To improve the quality of life for our nation's older adults.
- RRF is one of the first private foundations devoted exclusively to aging and retirement issues.
- Headquarters in Chicago, IL
- Thank you to our Senior Program Officer Nancy Zweibel, Ph.D.

THE  
RETIREMENT  
RESEARCH  
FOUNDATION

# NANASP 3rd Year Renewal Proposal

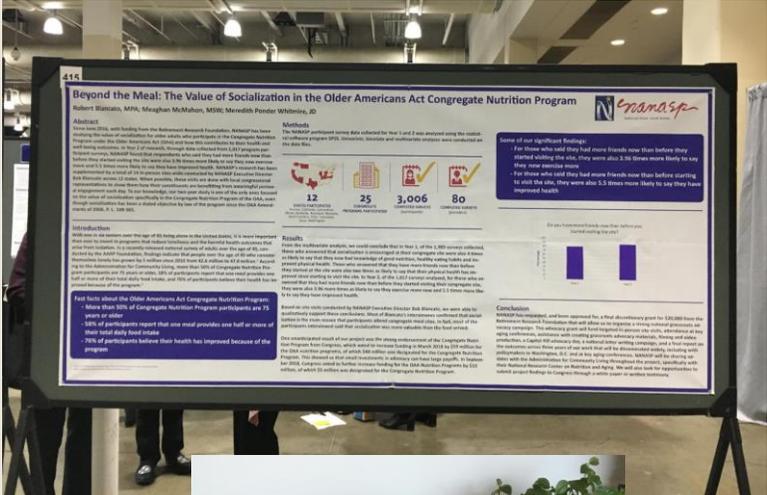
- **Goal:** To take the information collected from our last 2 years of studying the value of socialization for older adults who participate in Congregate Nutrition Programs under the Older Americans Act and **lead a national grassroots advocacy campaign** in advance of the anticipated Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act.

# The Older Americans Act (OAA)

- The three purposes of the nutrition programs of OAA as stipulated in the law are to
  - (1) *Reduce hunger and food insecurity,*
  - (2) **Promote socialization of older individuals,** and
  - (3) *Promote the health and well-being outcomes of older individuals by assisting them to access nutrition and other disease prevention and health promotion services to delay the onset of adverse health conditions resulting from poor nutritional health or sedentary behavior*

# Project Timeline

- Year 3 of Grant Begins (July 15, 2018)
- Denver Site Visit (September 2018)
- Wisconsin Site Visit/ Survey Collection (October 2018)
- Poster Presentation at GSA (November 2018)
- North Carolina Site Visit (December 2018)
- Oregon Site Visit/ Survey Collection (February 2019)
- Washington State Site Visit/Survey Collection (February 2019)
- Virginia Site Visit (March 2019)
- Congregate Meals Program Convening (March 2019)
- Poster Presentation at ASA (April 2019)
- Washington State Site Visit (April 2019)



# Featured in Stria News

*“Our work is some of the first to examine the **socialization opportunity** of the program. Other research up to this point has mostly focused on the benefits for the meal itself and nutrition education provided at the site.” (November, 2018)*



Stria @StriaNews · 29 Nov 2018

Social [#isolation](#) is a global crisis for older people. [@nourishseniors](#) is looking at how congregant nutrition programs can improve [#socialization](#) among older adults.



**Combatting Loneliness with Congregate Nutrition Programs - Stria - ...**

Loneliness and social isolation have become a public health crisis around the globe. In a recent national survey, the AARP Foundation found the n...

[strianews.com](http://strianews.com)

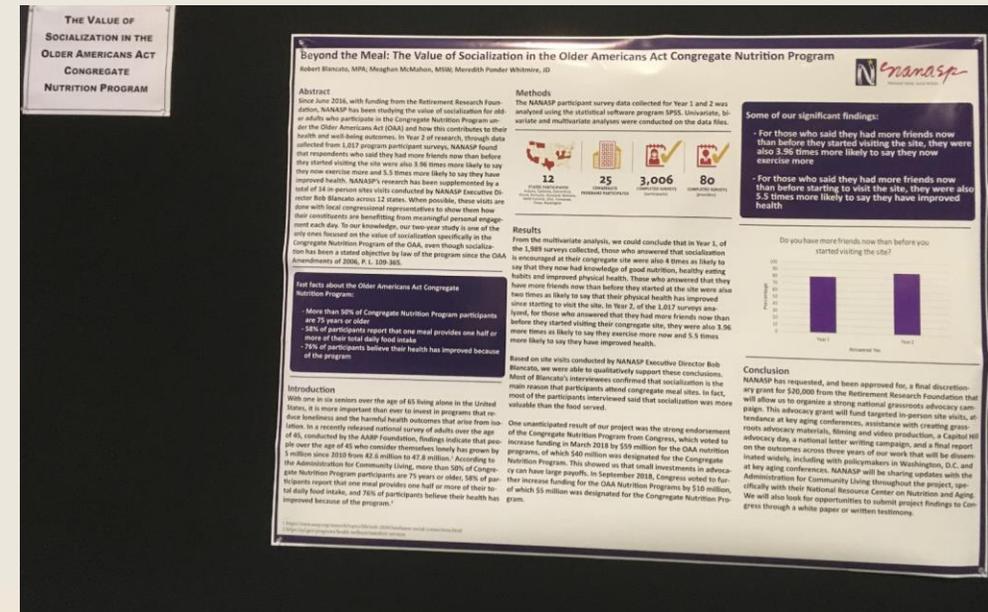
# Congregate Meal Programs Convening

- “Nourishing Partnerships: Creating a Sustainable Future for Community Nutrition and Aging Programs”
- NANASP partnership with the National Resource Center on Nutrition and Aging (NRCNA)
- Thursday, March 28th
- Helping community-based programs navigate the emerging changes in the senior nutrition program business environment
- Has been followed by a virtual summit this month; a second summit and proceedings from the convening to be held/released in July



# ASA Poster Presentation 2019

- “The Value of Socialization in the Older Americans Act Congregate Nutrition Program”
- Wednesday, April 17<sup>th</sup>
- 8:30 – 10:30am



# NANASP 2019 Conference



# Bob's Year 3 Speaking Engagements

- Arizona Aging Summit
- Florida Council on Aging Conference
- FNCE (Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Conference)
- International Council on Active Aging Conference
- Remarkable Integration PRTC AAA Conference
- Se4a Conference
- State Society on Aging of NY Conference
- Village to Village Network Conference

# n4a Conference & Tradeshow

- Monday, July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- 3:15 – 3:45pm
- The Value of Socialization in the Congregate Nutrition Program
- n4a 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference & Tradeshow (New Orleans)



advocacy | action | answers on aging

# Participant Survey Tool Questions

- What is your gender?
- What is your relationship status?
- What race/ethnicity best describes you?
- What do you like best about socializing during the congregate meal program?
- How do you arrive at the congregate meal site?
- How frequently do you receive meals at the congregate meal site?
- Since participating in the program, has your knowledge of good nutrition increased?
- Since participating in the program, are you exercising more?
- Has your health improved since you started visiting the congregate meal site?
- Do you have more friends now than before you started visiting the site?
- Do you believe enough time is allowed for socialization?

# Provider Survey Tool Questions

- How long has your program operated?
- Where is your program located? (Urban/Rural/Suburban)
- Type of program? (Government, Non-Profit, For-Profit)
- How long have you been in your position?
- Average age of participant?
- How important do you believe socialization is to participants?
- Average length of time participants have been attending program?
- Type of socialization activities offered
- Why do participants use the program?
- How many participants live alone?
- Total approximate cost to participant annually?

# Survey Collection Across 3 Years

- More than **3,000 surveys** collected from Congregate Nutrition Program sites
- 90 program provider surveys completed
- 12 states participated
- 25+ programs participated
- 5 Infographics created



# Wisconsin Survey Collection 2018

- 5 counties, 2 Tribes
- 84% of program participants said they believe their site allows enough time for socialization
- 76% of program participants say they have more friends now than before they started visiting the site
- More than 50% were rural locations
- More than 50% the program was part of local government
- Estimated participant age range: 62-80+
- 100% said socialization is very important to participants at their site

# Infographic: Wisconsin

## YEAR 3: BEYOND THE MEAL

### CASE STUDY: The Value of Socialization in Older Americans Act Congregate Nutrition Programs in Wisconsin

The National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP) received a renewal grant from the Retirement Research Foundation in May 2018 to continue its study of the benefits of socialization in OAA funded Congregate Nutrition programs to the health and well-being of older adults. The information below was collected in the Fall of 2018.

—“I love the nutritious meals, activities, speakers and sharing information.”—



5

COUNTIES PARTICIPATED

Columbia, Dane,  
Marquette, Ozaukee and  
Waushara counties



2

TRIBES PARTICIPATED

Menominee and  
Oneida tribes



580

COMPLETED  
PARTICIPANT SURVEYS



10

COMPLETED  
PROVIDER SURVEYS

—“I like talking to others.”—



Wild Rose Community Center  
located at 500 Wisconsin St,  
Wild Rose WI 54984

### SURVEY FINDINGS:

- 84% of respondents said they believe the site allows enough time for socialization
- 76% say they have more friends now than before they started visiting the site
- 40% of respondents said what they like best about socializing is talking to friends they already know, meeting new friends and getting out of their homes each day
- 53% of respondents said their health has improved since starting to visit the site
- 71% of respondents were female
- 30% of respondents married, 40% widowed
- 57% of respondents arrive to the congregate site by car
- 23% of participants say they visit the congregate site almost every day
- 71% of respondents White, 15% American Indian and 1 % African American
- Most providers at the congregate sites indicated that the average age of their site participants is 75 years and older

—“I like getting the scoop!”—

# Oregon Survey Collection 2019

- 134 participants from one congregate site
- 89% have more friends now than before they started visiting the site and that enough time is given for socialization
- 68% said their health improved since they started visiting the site
- 51% of respondents said they visit the site almost every day
- 49% of respondents were female

# Infographic: Oregon

## YEAR 3: BEYOND THE MEAL

### CASE STUDY: The Value of Socialization in Older Americans Act Congregate Nutrition Programs in Oregon

The National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP) received a renewal grant from the Retirement Research Foundation in May 2018 to continue its study of the benefits of socialization in OAA funded Congregate Nutrition programs to the health and well-being of older adults. The information below was collected in the Winter of 2019.

— “Coming to MOW gives me sense of purpose and a chance to volunteer.” —



**CONGREGATE SITE**  
**Elsie Stuhr Center**  
5550 SW Hall Blvd, Beaverton, Oregon



**134**  
COMPLETED  
PARTICIPANT SURVEYS

— “My hot meal for the day.” —



From left to right: Representative Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) told participants of her new role as Chair of the Subcommittee which will renew the Older Americans Act, Helen, a congregante meal participant and Bob Blancato, the Executive Director of NANASP

### SURVEY FINDINGS:

- 49% of respondents were female
- 89% say they have more friends now than before they started visiting the site
- 63% of respondents white, 11% African American, and 8% Asian/Asian American
- 35% of respondents said what they like best about socializing is talking to friends they already know, meeting new friends and getting out of their homes each day
- 89% of respondents said they believe the site allows enough time for socialization
- 68% of respondents said their health has improved since starting to visit the site
- 41% of respondents were single
- 31% of respondents arrive to the congregante site by car
- 51% of participants say they visit the congregante site almost every day

— “Eat more veggies here. Food is good and correct size.” —

# Washington State Survey Collection 2019

- 104 participants total from two congregate sites
- 91% of respondents said they had more friends now than before they started visiting the site
- 97% of respondents said enough time is given for socialization
- More than half of respondents were female
- A third of respondents were widowed
- 81% of respondents arrive at the site by car
- Half of respondents visit the site at least a few times each week

# Infographic: Washington State

## YEAR 3: BEYOND THE MEAL

### CASE STUDY: The Value of Socialization in Older Americans Act Congregate Nutrition Programs in Washington

The National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP) received a renewal grant from the Retirement Research Foundation in May 2018 to continue its study of the benefits of socialization in OAA funded Congregate Nutrition programs to the health and well-being of older adults. The information below was collected in the Winter of 2019.

*"I enjoy helping others and talking with attendees."*



**2** CONGREGATE  
SITES

**Twin Cities Senior Center**

2545 N. National Ave Chehalis, WA

**Olympia Senior Center**

222 Columbia Street NW Olympia, WA



**104**  
COMPLETED  
PARTICIPANT SURVEYS

*"Always looking for a date!"*

### SURVEY FINDINGS:



- 55% of respondents were female
- 50% of participants say they visit the congregate site a few times each week
- 91% say they have more friends now than before they started visiting the site
- 27% of respondents said what they like best about socializing is talking to friends they already know, meeting new friends and getting out of their homes each day
- 97% of respondents said they believe the site allows enough time for socialization
- 53% of respondents said their health has improved since starting to visit the site
- 34% of respondents were widowed
- 85% of respondents were white
- 81% of respondents arrive to the congregate site by car

*"I try to make friends and keep them."*

# In-Person Site Visits Year 3

Executive Director Bob Blancato has conducted the following site visits so far:

- ▶ **Volunteers of America Colorado Branch**
- ▶ **Wild Rose Community Center, WI**
- ▶ **Duplin County Services for the Aged, NC**
- ▶ **Elsie Stuhr Center, Beaverton, OR (with Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici)**
- ▶ **Twin Cities Senior Center and Olympia Senior Center, Washington State**
- ▶ **St. Martin de Porres Senior Center, VA**
- ▶ **Whatcom Council on Aging, Bellingham, Washington State**

# Colorado

- September 2018
- Part 1: Visit with VOA staff who operate 30 congregate nutrition sites in Denver Metro area
- Part 2: Visit to the Eagle View Center for Active Adults
  - *Met by Alexandra Alonso, community liaison and constituent advocate for Senator Michael Bennet of Colorado*
  - *25 older adults, unanimous agreement that socialization was main reason they attended*



# Wisconsin

- October 2018
- Rural Site
- Of the 20 older adults, all but one, cited socialization as they main reason they attend the program
- Dorothy the Volunteer (12 years)



# North Carolina

- December 2018
- Bob as special guest for holiday event
- All but one person (of the six interviewed) said that socialization was their main reason for attending
- Interview with local reporter

DUPLIN TIMES 7A

## Head of national association visits county seniors

Trevor Normile  
News Editor

KENANSVILLE — Duplin County Services for the Aged held their Christmas lunch party for local seniors last week, and their featured speaker was Bob Blancato, executive director of the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs.

As the program got underway, county Board of Commissioners Vice Chairman Jesse Dowd welcomed the group and the Rev. Joyce Pearsall gave an invocation.

David Rosado, human services director for the Eastern Carolina Council Area Agency on Aging introduced Blancato, saying "There's a place it starts, with us. It's the senior center programs."

Rosado promoted the senior center model for improving nutrition and socialization of seniors.

Blancato, who has spent over 30 years working in the field of aging, also

Continued on page 1A

lack in home care, you could end up costing [those programs] a lot of money," Blancato said.

Some of those older Americans agreed to share their experiences in front of the audience.

They included Theodore Williams of Kenansville, who said he valued the friendships he made through the senior center program.

Tanya Pittman of Rose Hill said she is legally blind and cannot safely cook for herself any longer, so the Meals on Wheels program provides her with needed nutrition.

"It's just wonderful," she said in a follow-up interview. "The volunteers are so sweet."

"If you don't eat well,

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Duplin Times photo/Trevor Normile

Seniors join in the "Chicken Dance" during Services for the Aged's 2018 Senior Christmas Program, held last Wednesday. Featured speakers included David Rosado, Eastern Carolina Council Area Agency on Aging and Bob Blancato, executive director of the National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs.

## Head of national association visits county seniors

Continued from page 1A

Also during the program, the seniors ate lunch and joined together around a large Christmas tree for a group-performance of the "chicken dance." Kerry Jo Moringo provided music.

Melisa S. Brown, director, Services for the Aged told the group, "I hope you understand how important our senior sites are," adding a mention of the tumultuous 2018 the county had weathered, hurricane and all, calling them "Duplin strong."

"We knew it all along, but it's definitely been proven it this year."

Trevor Normile can be reached at normile@ncweeklies.com or 910-296-0239.



# Oregon

- February 2019
- Elsie Stuhr Senior Center
- Bob was joined by Representative Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) who told participants about her new role as Chair of the Subcommittee which will renew the OAA
- Helen: congregate meal participant



# Washington State

- February 2019
- First stop: Twin Cities Senior Center
  - *95% said socialization main reason for attending*
  - *Attending for a range of 3 months to 40 years*
  - *Father and son who both visit site*
- Second stop: Olympia Senior Center
  - *20 people in the session*
  - *Half lived alone, more women than men*
  - *90% said socialization main reason for attending*



# Virginia

- March 2019
- To kick off National Nutrition Month
- 10 tables with older adults 80+ years old
- 90% said socialization main reason for attending



# Washington State

- April 2019
- Visit with Julie Meyers, MS, RD,  
Director, Meals on Wheels and More
- Bellingham, WA



Program	FY18 Final	FY19 Final	FY20 Trump Proposed
OAA Title IIIIC Nutrition Totals	\$896.7 million	\$906.7 million	\$906.7 million
OAA Title IIIIB HCBS	\$385 million	\$385 million	\$385 million
OAA Title V SCSEP	\$400 million	\$400 million	0
OAA VI Native Americans Nutrition	\$33.2 million	\$34.2 million	\$34.2 million
Family Caregiver Support Program	\$180 million	\$180.6 million	\$150 million
Senior Corps	\$202.1 million	\$208.1 million	0
Comm. Services Block Grant (CSBG)	\$715 million	\$725 million	0
Comm. Develop. Block Grant (CDBG)	\$3.3 billion	\$3.3 billion	0
Social Services Block Grant	\$1.7 billion	\$1.7 billion	0
LIHEAP (Home Energy Assistance)	\$3.44 billion	\$3.49 billion	0
Elder Justice Initiative	\$12 million	\$12 million	\$10 million
SHIP (Medicare Assistants)	\$49.1 million	\$49.1 million	\$36 million

# Funding for FY 2020

- Less than four months from start of FY 2020
- First votes on FY 2020 have taken place; what has passed for OAA nutrition?
- \$1 billion for OAA nutrition programs! A historic first
  - *\$525 million for congregate meals*
  - *\$305 million for home-delivered meals*
  - *\$170 million for NSIP*

# FY2020 Advocacy

- Work is not yet done, however
- Needs to pass the Senate, differences need to be reconciled, President needs to sign
- So, we need to communicate with our Members of Congress to make sure this happens, and on time -- before October 1

# OAA Reauthorization

- Scheduled for this year
- Developments to date
- Rep. Bobby Scott is now Chair of Education and Labor; Rep. Suzanne Bonamici is Chair of the Civil Rights and Human Services Subcommittee (with jurisdiction over OAA)
- Senate pretty much same, except Sen. Enzi is now Chair of the HELP Primary Health and Retirement Security Subcommittee (with jurisdiction over OAA)
- Hearings have been held and a draft Senate bill has been released for comment

# Senate Draft Bill

- Senate draft bill includes some provisions that relate to this work on socialization including:
  - *Ensuring that the definition of a nutrition service provider include a demonstrated record of promoting socialization for vulnerable and older adult populations*
  - *A new report on social isolation including whether social isolation is being adequately addressed under programs including “the role of preventive measures or services, including nutrition services, in addressing the negative impacts associated with social isolation among older individuals”*

# LCAO and the OAA Reauthorization

- Leadership Council of Aging Organizations -- NCOA and NANASP are part
- Also individual group work
- NANASP has made recommendations, including:
  - *Malnutrition screening*
  - *Protecting nutrition dollars*
  - *Greater data collection*

# Administration Principles

- To remove the “right to first refusal” which provides that states must give a “unit of general purpose local government” the right of first refusal to become a new AAA for an area
- To remove the 10 percent limit on funds to be spent on behalf of older relative caregivers (“grandfamilies” and others) under the National Family Caregiver Program (was not indicated what the new level would be)
- To provide an increase in how much states can spend on administrative costs, which is currently capped at \$500,000

# New Look for the OAA?

- Opportunity for new look for OAA from 2 directions
- Azar's emphasis on social determinants of health
  - *OAA has been in this space from the start*
  - *Could generate more Admin interest in the OAA*
- Medicare Advantage and nutrition
  - *An additional funding source for CBOs*
  - *Also could generate more interest in the OAA from CMS*

# Conclusions

- Congregate Nutrition Programs provide more than a meal
- Many older adults are living alone and in isolation
- Increased funding for programs could increase health and well-being for older adults living in the community
- Solid investment of federal dollars
- Connection to the importance of the social determinants of health
- More research and analysis needed

# New NANASP Research Page

The screenshot displays the NANASP website header and navigation. The logo on the left features a stylized 'N' with a yellow star above it, and the word 'nanasp' in red cursive script. Below the logo is the tagline 'National Voice. Local Action.' To the right of the logo are social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and Google+, a search bar, and accessibility icons. The navigation menu is a dark red bar with white text for 'Home', 'About Us', 'Membership', 'Advocacy & Legislation', 'Conferences & Events', 'Corporate Links', 'Publications', and 'Contact Us'. The 'Research' link is highlighted in a darker purple, and a blue arrow points to it from the right. Below the navigation bar is a large image of an elderly woman and a younger woman smiling together. To the right of the image is a sidebar with a 'Research' section highlighted in purple, containing a 'Resource Publications' link and a 'NANASP MEMBERSHIP TODAY!' section with a 'MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION' form image.

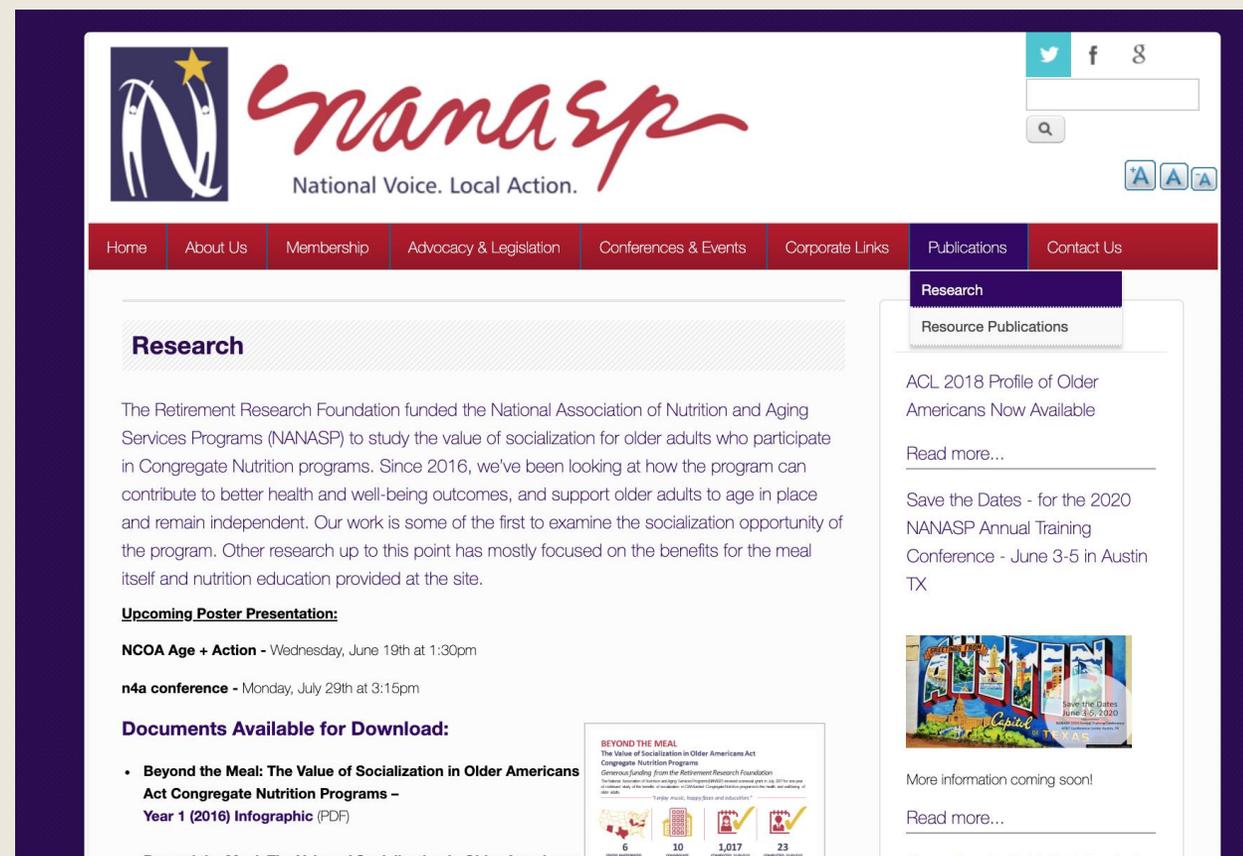
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**Research**  
Resource Publications  
**NANASP MEMBERSHIP TODAY!**  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

# RRF Grant Resource Database

- Webinar Recordings
- Infographics
- Articles
- Survey Tool
- Site Visit Photos
- Presentation Dates



The screenshot displays the NANASP website. The header includes the NANASP logo with the tagline "National Voice. Local Action." and social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and Google+. A navigation menu is located below the header, with the "Research" tab highlighted. The main content area features a "Research" section with a paragraph about the Retirement Research Foundation's funding of NANASP. Below this, there is a section for "Upcoming Poster Presentation" listing two events: "NCOA Age + Action" and "n4a conference". A "Documents Available for Download" section lists a report titled "Beyond the Meal: The Value of Socialization in Older Americans Act Congregate Nutrition Programs – Year 1 (2016) Infographic (PDF)". A sidebar on the right contains a "Research" dropdown menu, a "Resource Publications" section, and two article teasers: "ACL 2018 Profile of Older Americans Now Available" and "Save the Dates - for the 2020 NANASP Annual Training Conference - June 3-5 in Austin TX".

**Research**

**Resource Publications**

ACL 2018 Profile of Older Americans Now Available

Read more...

Save the Dates - for the 2020 NANASP Annual Training Conference - June 3-5 in Austin TX

More information coming soon!

Read more...

**BEYOND THE MEAL**  
The Value of Socialization in Older Americans Act Congregate Nutrition Programs  
Generous Funding from the Retirement Research Foundation  
Congregate Nutrition Programs provide a safe, nutritious, and social environment for older adults. They provide a place where older adults can connect with others, share their experiences, and enjoy the benefits of a healthy meal, happy face and education!

6	10	1,017	23
States	Counties	Individuals	Meals Served

Questions?

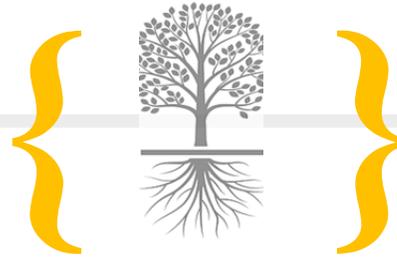
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