



Chelmsford Senior Center
75 Groton Road
North Chelmsford, MA 01863

Phone (978) 251-0533

To Whom it May Concern,

Our intention is to request a \$25,000 earmark to support our Senior Nutrition Program and assist with senior food insecurity.

Our nutrition contract with AgeSpan does not include cost escalators, and our attempts to increase the congregate meal reimbursement rate from \$1.16 per meal have been unsuccessful. Our rate for congregate meals over the 11 years since I became Director has had little to no adjustment even as food and supply prices have increased, especially in the past few years since the pandemic. The higher cost of food acquisition for seniors also makes it more likely that they will need the food and nutrition services of the Senior Center.

According to the latest report of the New England Information Office of the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics - published January 2023, food prices reached historic highs. "Over the year, food prices increased 10.5 percent. Prices for food at home rose 12.7 percent." Research by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service from January 2023, assessed: "No food categories decreased in price in 2021 compared with prices in 2020."

All food price categories tracked by the research bureau increased by more than 5 percent, and all food categories grew faster than their historical average rate, egg prices had the largest price increase 32.2 percent, between 2021 and 2022 of any categories tracked, beef and veal prices increased 5.3 percent between 2021 and 2022.

These funds will assist us to maintain this vital program for homebound and isolated seniors through this very difficult time.

Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Debra Siriani

Director of Human Services