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## PRESS RELEASE

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# IL Department on Aging Provides \$7 Million in Meal Assistance for Older Illinoisans

**Springfield** – The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) is distributing \$7 million across the state to meet the growing demand for meal assistance by older Illinoisans impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency.

IDoA distributed the funds, provided through Emergency Assistance Services grants, to the state's 46 Care Coordination Units (CCUs) to support meals programming for older Illinoisans at highest risk for malnutrition and hunger.

Last year, more than 85,000 seniors were provided meals at congregate meal sites and an additional 43,000 seniors received meals delivered to their homes. As a result of temporarily suspending meal service in the 399 congregate dining sites statewide, seniors who previously received meals at these sites are now being included in IDoA's home delivered meal programs. In a one-week period between March 30<sup>th</sup> and April 3<sup>rd</sup>, a total of 178,599 meals were home delivered reflecting an average of 35,000 meals per day. In that same week, a total of 4,907 new referrals for home delivered meals were processed - that's on average close to 1,000 new referrals per day.

"We have been supplying our providers with more dollars to assist them with unmet needs, and we have anticipated that the demand for home delivered meals is going to continue to increase, as we have already seen," said Paula Basta, Director of IDoA. "I would also like to encourage everyone to be mindful of our older family members, friends, or neighbors, and check in to see how they are doing. Find a creative way to communicate with them during this time and monitor their health. As Governor Pritzker said, we are all the first line of protection in our communities." #AllinIllinois

IDoA, our 13 Area Agencies on Aging, and 46 Care Coordination Units are working around the clock to ensure that the services provided - specifically the home delivered meals program that our seniors depend on - will not be interrupted during this ongoing situation. If you or an older family member, friend, or neighbor are in need of any kind of assistance, please know we are here to help you. Please visit our website at [www.illinois.gov/aging](http://www.illinois.gov/aging) or contact our **Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 (hearing impaired call 888-206-1327)**.

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The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966; 1-888-206-1327 (TTY)