



BY PROVIDING FOOD AS MEDICINE,
WE NOURISH OUR CLIENTS AND BUILD COMMUNITY.

March 18, 2026

Representative Mohamud Noor, Co-Chair

Representative Joe Schomacker, Co-Chair

House Human Services Finance and Policy Committee

Minnesota House of Representatives

Dear Co-Chairs Noor and Schomacker:

On behalf of Open Arms of Minnesota, I write in support of HF 4210. Open Arms has served Minnesotans living with life-threatening illnesses for 40 years, providing medically tailored meals, nutrition counseling, and compassionate care to thousands of clients across the state each year. We know firsthand the difference that targeted, medically appropriate nutrition makes in the health outcomes of older adults and others facing serious illness.

HF 4210 makes meaningful, practical improvements to Minnesota's senior nutrition framework. We are particularly pleased to see medically tailored meals explicitly recognized as a covered nutrition support service for older adults. This is a significant step forward. Medically tailored meals are not simply prepared food: they are individually designed to address the specific dietary requirements of individuals managing chronic and complex conditions. Research consistently demonstrates that medically tailored meal programs reduce hospitalizations, emergency department visits, and overall health care costs. Including them in statute affirms their role as a core tool in the continuum of care for older Minnesotans.

We also support the bill's expanded program goals, which now include coordination with health and long-term care systems and emergency preparedness systems. This language reflects the reality that nutrition programs do not operate in isolation. Stronger coordination between nutrition providers and health systems is essential to reaching the most vulnerable older adults, and Open Arms is committed to being a partner in that work. The new Food Delivery Support Account further strengthens the state's ability to fund nonprofit organizations with demonstrated expertise in delivering food customized to the needs of the populations they serve, which describes the core of what Open Arms does every day.

We urge the committee to advance HF 4210. Thank you for your leadership and for the opportunity to offer our support.

Sincerely,

Leah Hebert

Chief Executive Officer – Open Arms of Minnesota

CONTACT

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612 872 1152

LOCATIONS

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MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF
AREA AGENCIES ON AGING

March 16, 2026

The Honorable Mohamud Noor and Joe Schomacker
Minnesota House of Representatives
658 Cedar Street
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representatives Noor, Schomaker and members of the Human Services Finance and Policy Committee,

On behalf of the Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging (m4a), representing the seven Area Agencies on Aging in the state of Minnesota, I ask you to support additional funding and policy changes to the state's Senior Nutrition Program. Today, I am writing to request your support of House File 4210/Senate File 4508, which clarifies statute language to increase efficiency in nutrition service delivery and provide flexibility for innovation.

HF4210/SF4508 helps meet the growing need for senior nutrition services by modernizing statute language. Changes to the Senior Nutrition Program policy as proposed in the bill would improve efficiency in service delivery and provide greater flexibility for innovation. HF4210/SF4508 clarifies how the funds are administered and how they can best serve older Minnesotans. It would allow for innovative delivery methods such as food boxes, meal kits and other options beyond prepared meals along with other flexible options such as partnerships with farmers, grocery delivery services and collaboration with food shelves.

The proposed modernization of this statute also suggests a change to using the term older adults instead of seniors. This language is more consistent with efforts to re-frame aging. Updated language allows state funds to support medically tailored meals and support needed technology upgrades for our providers to meet compliance requirements efficiently.

Minnesota's area agencies on aging administer Senior Nutrition Program dollars using a comprehensive accountability framework to prevent, detect and correct instances of fraud, waste and abuse. Every dollar is justified, documented and fully traceable to ensure program effectiveness and integrity.

Your support for HF4210/SF4508 represents a commitment to the well-being of Minnesota's aging population. Thank you for considering this important legislation. More information about the bill and our coalition is available on our website: seniorservicesmn.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie Brownell".

Laurie Brownell
m4a President



March 17, 2026

TO: Co-Chairs Noor and Schomacker and Members of the House Human Services Finance and Policy Committee

RE: House File [4210](#) (Fischer) Senior Nutrition Policy Bill

Co-Chairs Noor and Schomacker and Committee Members,

On behalf of the statewide [Minnesota Community Action Partnership](#) network that provides a broad range of services and community support from birth through older adulthood - including senior meals- to all 87 Minnesota counties we express our sincere appreciation to Representative Fischer and your leadership for hearing House File [4210](#), the Senior Nutrition Program Policy Modification Bill.

The new language offered in this proposal is designed to extend more flexibility to senior meals service providers, which yields great efficiency and ability to serve more of our elders with nutritious food. A key element of the legislation is to create opportunities for community-based providers statewide to partner with local farmers for a win-win scenario--resulting in farm fresh produce reaching older adults in need of supplemental nutrition support beyond prepared meals.

We support the bill's proposed policy changes to technology, delivery systems, and expansion of partnerships to include food shelves, pantries, hospitals, and farmers. Removal of the "only for meals" restriction (from the Older Americans Act) would enable service providers like ours and partners at Lutheran Social Services, Metro Meals on Wheels and others the opportunity to offer delivery boxes and meal kits to the comfort and safety of our older adult neighbors' homes.

We strongly support House File [4210](#) and urge you to move this bill forward for consideration this Session.

Thank you for the powerful work you all do to support economic opportunity for ALL Minnesotans. We look forward to ways that we can partner with you in this critical work to empower our friends and neighbors in Minnesota!

Sincerely,

Lori Schultz

Lori Schultz, Executive Director
Minnesota Community Action Partnership

Support HF4210/SF4508 Advocacy Priorities

Keep Minnesota seniors healthy and lower future costs

Minnesota seniors are in urgent need of your help. One in two older adults is at risk for malnutrition. Food access can make the difference between older adults living independently in their homes and needing more expensive institutional care.

The Senior Meals and Services Coalition is asking legislators to support older adults with:

- Clear policy language that increases efficiency in nutrition service delivery and provides flexibility for innovation **(HF4210/SF4508)**.
- An increase of \$11 million in base funding for senior meals to meet the growing need of our aging population. A one-time increase of \$4.07 million would prevent the reduction of 452,000 meals to more than 6,000 existing meal program participants.



Lowering future costs for taxpayers

The services and support provided through the aging network are some of the most cost-effective ways to support older adults.

The services are targeted to frail older adults with low incomes or living in rural areas, often both.



SENIOR MEALS & SERVICES COALITION

Contact your senators
and representatives and
urge their support.

For the latest updates,
visit

seniorservicesmn.org

Contacts

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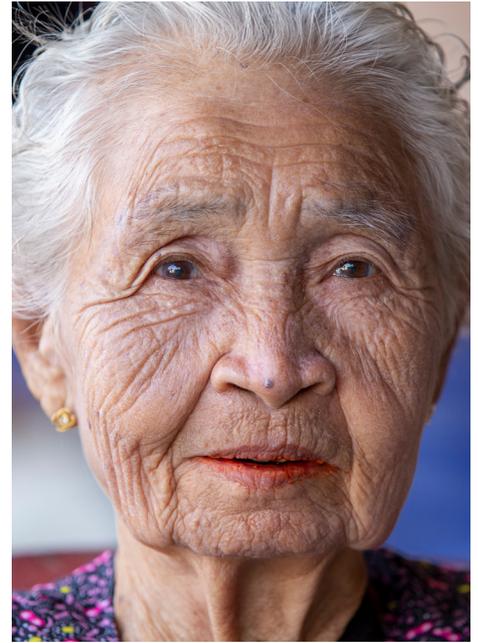
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Sherry Munyon

Capitol Access

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What you need to know

- There are currently **1.1 million** adults age 65+ in Minnesota. **9%** of those older adults are living below the poverty line.
- In federal fiscal year 2025, more than 11,000 older adults receiving home-delivered meals **(58%) were at high nutrition risk.**
- In federal fiscal year 2025, **a full 40%** of those receiving home-delivered meals needed help with three or more Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs) such as medication management, driving and grocery shopping. **These meals are getting into the hands of the people that need them most.**
- The Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging estimates that a one-time increase of \$4.07 million would **cover the cost of 452,000 meals**, a number that meets the projected shortfall of meals that will be served in 2026 compared to 2025.
- Food costs continue to outpace inflation, **increasing 31%** between 2019 and 2025.
- In 2023, the legislature passed and Governor Walz signed a one-time appropriation of \$11 million for senior meals. This funding filled a critical gap for senior meals. **The coalition is now asking the legislature to continue that support with bridge funding to meet the growing demand.**

Join us in raising awareness
of the need to fund
senior meals and services.

Learn more and get latest updates at:

seniorservicesmn.org



MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF
AREA AGENCIES ON AGING

This advocacy effort is convened by the Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging. A voice for older adults in Minnesota.



**SENIOR MEALS &
SERVICES COALITION**

March 17, 2026

The Honorable Mohamud Noor and Joe Schomacker
Minnesota House of Representatives
658 Cedar Street
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Co-Chairs Noor and Schomaker and members of the Human Services Finance and Policy Committee,

On behalf of the more than 40 member organizations that form the Senior Meals and Services Coalition, we write seeking your support for the proposed policy changes to the state's Senior Nutrition Program. Our immediate request is your support of House File 4210/Senate File 4508, which clarifies statutory language to increase efficiency in nutrition service delivery and provide flexibility for innovation.

Our coalition represents Senior Nutrition Program providers, area agencies on aging and other organizations invested in the health and wellness of older Minnesotans. We know firsthand the difference the Senior Nutrition Program makes for thousands of Minnesotans each year. This vital support helps older adults live independently and safely in their homes, avoiding more expensive institutional care. In 2025, more than 16,000 older adults benefitted from home-delivered meals, and over 18,000 had their nutritional needs met through congregate dining services. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of older adults receiving home-delivered meals last year were at high nutrition risk. Forty percent (40%) of home-delivered meal recipients needed help with three or more Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs) such as medication management, driving and preparing food. The Senior Nutrition Program puts meals into the hands of the people who need them most.

Despite the impressive reach of the program, we know the need is much greater. Of the 1.1 million adults age 65+ in Minnesota, approximately 99,000 live below the poverty line. The Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging projects that funding changes to the program will result in 452,000 fewer meals being served in 2026 as compared to 2025. This shortfall is coming at a time when providers are challenged by steep increases in food costs.

HF4210/SF4508 helps meet the growing need for senior nutrition services by modernizing the program statute. Changes to the Senior Nutrition Program policy as proposed in the bill would improve efficiency in service delivery and provide greater flexibility for innovation. HF4210/SF4508 clarifies how the funds are administered and how they can best serve older Minnesotans. It also allows innovative delivery methods such as food boxes, meal kits and other options beyond prepared meals.



**SENIOR MEALS &
SERVICES COALITION**

Minnesota's area agencies on aging administer Senior Nutrition Program dollars using a comprehensive accountability framework to prevent, detect and correct instances of fraud, waste and abuse. Every dollar is justified, documented and fully traceable to ensure program effectiveness and integrity.

Your support for HF4210/SF4508 represents a commitment to the health and well-being of Minnesota's aging population. Thank you for considering this important legislation. More information about the bill and our coalition is available on our website: seniorservicesmn.org.

Respectfully,

Dawn Simonson
President and CEO, Trellis
Senior Meals and Services Coalition Member
www.seniorservicesmn.org

CC: Laurie Brownell
Director, Southeastern Minnesota Area Agency on Aging
Co-Chair, Senior Meals and Services Coalition

CC: Stacy Lund
Director of Food Access, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud
Co-Chair, Senior Meals and Services Coalition



March 16, 2026

The Honorable Mohamud Noor and Joe Schomacker
Minnesota House of Representatives
658 Cedar Street
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representatives Noor, Schomaker and members of the Human Services Finance and Policy Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Trellis, the Area Agency on Aging for the seven-county metropolitan area, in strong support for changes to the Senior Nutrition Program statute and additional funding for senior meals.

Specifically, I ask for your support of HF4210/SF4508 to update Minnesota's Senior Nutrition Program statute and help providers meet the growing needs of our aging population with innovative solutions.

The Senior Nutrition Program is a lifeline for older Minnesotans who are at risk for malnutrition. Food access can make the difference between older adults living independently in their homes and needing more expensive institutional care. In fiscal year 2025, the program provided 2,500,000 home-delivered meals and 669,000 congregate dining meals.

Yet we know the need for senior nutrition is increasing. As the metropolitan region's funding administrator of the Senior Nutrition Program, Trellis hears from provider partners that their senior meals waitlists are growing. Some providers have no choice but to turn people away. This increased need is compounded by rising food costs, forcing providers to be creative in stretching their funding as much as possible. The Minnesota Association of Area Agencies on Aging estimates that 6,100 fewer older Minnesotans will be served in 2026 as compared to 2025.

HF4210/SF4508 helps address the increasing need for senior nutrition by improving efficiency in service delivery and providing flexibility for innovation. The proposed revisions to the Senior Nutrition Program statute will have an outsized impact for older Minnesotans. The updated language expands the types of partnerships providers can create to serve older adults, such as coordinating with health and long-term care systems,

hospitals, food shelves and more. The bill also allows providers to offer not only prepared meals but also fresh produce, food boxes, meal kits, and other innovative delivery methods.

Trellis and all Minnesota area agencies on aging are well-equipped to administer state funding for the Senior Nutrition Program effectively. Our comprehensive accountability framework is designed to prevent, detect and correct fraud, waste, and abuse. Every dollar is justified, documented and fully traceable to ensure program integrity.

HF4210/SF4508 is an opportunity to bring the Senior Nutrition Program statute up to date with the changing needs of communities across Minnesota. It represents a step forward in improving the health and wellness of older adults, which benefits Minnesotans of all ages.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical legislation. If you have any questions, please contact Trellis President and CEO Dawn Simonson at 651-900-8700 or dsimonson@trellisconnects.org.

Sincerely,



Mike Rothman
Chair, Trellis Board of Directors