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Does Trump's Budget Really Cut 'Meals on Wheels'?

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President Donald Trump's "America First" 2018 budget blueprint includes large cuts to the funding of many government agencies, but would that necessarily affect the operation of Meals on Wheels, which feeds millions of senior citizens?

A number of news organizations reported that Trump's budget cuts funding for Meals on Wheels because of cuts to the Community Development Block Grants program. Washington Post fact checker [Glenn Kessler points out](#), however, that only a few local Meals on Wheels programs are partially funded by the CDBG.

In his [press briefing](#), White House budget director Mick Mulvaney said, "We want to give you money for programs that don't work. I can't defend that anymore."

While several media sources claimed Mulvaney was saying Meals on Wheels doesn't work, Kessler believes, "his comments have been misinterpreted," because Mulvaney was talking about the CDBG, not Meals on Wheels.

CDBG funds regularly go into pork-barrel and business-subsidy schemes with a cronyish flavor, and that's the reason the program has been a prime target for budget-cutters for decades, in administration after administration, added Walter Olson in an [op-ed](#) in National Review.

Meals on Wheels clarified in a [statement](#) that the nationwide network, comprised of 5,000, local, community-based programs, receives 35 percent of its total funding for the provision of congregate and home-delivered meals from the federal government through the Older Americans Act, administered by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living.

Other federal funding sources that support the program operations "may include" the Community Development Block Grant, Community Services Block Grant or the Social Services Block Grant, Meals on Wheels adds. "In addition, programs rely on contributions from state or local governments, private donations and other resources to cover the rest, demonstrating one of the best examples of a successful public-private partnership. Meals on Wheels America, the largest and oldest national organization representing senior nutrition programs across the country,

receives only 3% of its funding from the government, specifically to run the National Research Center on Nutrition and Aging."

Page 21 of the document, titled "America First: A Budget Blueprint to Make America Great Again" and released Thursday, states, "The President's 2018 Budget requests \$69.0 billion for HHS, a \$15.1 billion or 17.9 percent decrease from the 2017 annualized CR level."

Meals on Wheels further explains that the 35 percent of funding that comes from the Older American Act Nutrition Program "could be effected if that 17.9 percent cut to HHS resulted in a cut to programs within."

It adds that its programs would also be affected by cuts to the Community Service Block Grant, Community Development Block Grant or the Social Services Block Grant because some states choose to use those funds to support their Meals on Wheels programs above and beyond the 35 percent covered by the Older Americans Act. But programs also rely on contributions from state, local, private donations and other resources to cover the rest, as public-private partnership.

"The problem with a skinny budget is it is lean on details. So, while we don't know the exact impact yet, cuts of any kind to these highly successful and leveraged programs would be a devastating blow to our ability to provide much-needed care for millions of vulnerable seniors in America, which in turn saves billions of dollars in reduced healthcare expenses," Ellie Hollander, president and CEO of Meals on Wheels America, says in the statement.

How much, if any, of the federal government funds that go to Meals on Wheels will be cut is yet to be determined. The budget will go to Congress next, where many of those details will be worked out.

Cuts to foreign aid in Trump's budget have also been controversial.

A diverse group of Christian leaders and famous Christians signed a [letter](#) sent to House and Senate majority and minority leadership Thursday, urging them to avoid making "disproportionate" cuts to foreign aid programs that work to serve the impoverished, starving and displaced people across the globe.

"As followers of Christ, it is our moral responsibility to urge you to support and protect the International Affairs Budget, and avoid disproportionate cuts to these vital programs that ensure that our country continues to be the 'shining city upon a hill,'" the letter reads, adding that the International Affairs Budget brings "hope to poor, hungry, vulnerable and displaced men, women and children around the world."