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At Senior Services for South Sound, **we believe every senior deserves connection, dignity and care.** From delivering hot meals and providing transportation to offering compassionate memory care through Brighter Days, that belief drives everything we do!

In this issue, we're taking a closer look at the funding that makes this work possible. While a portion comes from the federal Older Americans Act, that support is under threat — and the consequences could be devastating for local seniors. That's why **we're sharing not just facts and figures, but the real-world impact of these programs and the very real need for community support.**

Throughout these pages, you'll see how your donations help fill critical gaps, bring stability in uncertain times and **ensure we never have to say "no" when a senior needs help.** You'll also find easy ways to give, from joining the Sustainers Club to attending our Fall Gala.

Thank you for being part of this work. **Thank you for believing in the power of showing up.** Together, we can make sure no senior is left behind.



The Cost of Care: Why Federal Support for Seniors Matters

Is there anything more fundamentally American than arguing about taxes? Our country was founded as a direct result of the tax revolt that saw tea spilled

in Boston Harbor. Ever since then, the topic of taxes has been profoundly divisive in discussions of American life and politics.

Whether we like it or not, we all pay federal taxes to support various things that fund our nation. One of those things, which is funded by a very, very small amount of your federal taxes, is **the Older Americans Act**, adopted by Congress in 1965. This act essentially sends federal money to the states to pay for supportive services for seniors, such as **Meals on Wheels**. How much money? In 2024, programs funded by the OAA received about \$2.4 billion. That sounds like a lot, but it's just a tiny fraction of a tiny fraction of the federal budget. **It makes up only 0.03% of federal spending, to be exact.**

You may know, since I talk about it a lot, that **Senior Services for South Sound relies on this federal funding for about 50% of our operating budget.**

The federal government is essentially honoring the agreement that our 501(c)(3) tax status provides, saying that we provide a social benefit and one that is performed not to make a profit, but to meet a public need. **This miniscule percentage of your federal tax dollars ensures that seniors have meals and other basic services like transportation available to them.**

I believe this is a use of federal tax dollars that the vast majority of Americans support, from small-town Arkansas, to big-city Pittsburgh and middle-of-nowhere Olympia, WA (to those who don't live in paradise). It's painful and difficult to imagine the impact of these funds being cut, as is proposed in some versions of the current federal budget. It's one thing to acknowledge that 50% of our funding is in jeopardy, but what does that mean?

We feed hundreds of seniors every day all over urban and rural Thurston County and Mason County. Without this funding, or some hard-to-imagine outpouring from our community, **those meals would be reduced or eliminated.** Staffing would be impacted, seniors would not get meals or transportation as they do now, and the ripple effects would spread further.

None of us exist in a vacuum. Simple truth. We here at Senior Services are enmeshed in a beautiful web of local, state and federal tendrils. We have been resilient over our 50+ year history. I trust our local community will continue to see the value in our services and be generous. I hope very much that .03% of the federal taxes my wife and I pay continues to support seniors being fed and being healthy long into the future.



Brian Windrope
Executive Director

When just 0.03% of the federal budget feeds local seniors, every dollar matters. If that funding vanishes, we'll need our community to step up like never before.

Three programs have federal contracts totaling **\$1.53 million** in 2025:



Senior Nutrition Program



Transportation Program



Brighter Days Adult Day Program

Funded for Now. Uncertain for Tomorrow.

Federal support keeps our doors open and meals on the table — but long-term stability depends on donors who believe every senior deserves care.

What does 0.03% look like? It looks like a meal placed gently in a senior's hands by a **Meals on Wheels** driver who knows their name and notices when they don't answer the door. It's a table full of neighbors at **Community Dining**, sharing stories and meatloaf instead of eating alone. It's a ride to a critical doctor's appointment. It's a moment of calm for a family caregiver who knows their loved one is safe and engaged at **Brighter Days**.

These are the everyday ways Senior Services shows up for our community. And these programs are deeply intertwined with the federal funding we've relied on for decades. **When those dollars are in danger, it's not just our budget on the line — it's meals, rides and care for the people who built this community.**

“Ray and Terry were great drivers, good conversationalists and got me there and back on time. It's a wonderful service and I would be lost without it. Thank you!”

— Sue

With the uncertainty we're facing, **we need our local community more than ever.** We can't do it without you. Your donation helps ensure that no senior is left behind, no matter what happens in Washington, D.C.





Our **Senior Nutrition Program** so far in 2025 has delivered **28,971** meals through Meals on Wheels to homebound seniors and served **32,208** Community Dining meals to **1,423** of our neighborhood friends.

Brighter Days has provided engaging activities in a safe environment for **30** community seniors with Alzheimer's and other dementias. Just as important, it's given their caregivers a total of **4,630** hours of much-needed rest since January.



To date, our **Transportation Program** has given **544** rides to **176** seniors, getting them to essential health appointments, grocery stores and the pharmacy. Volunteers have driven a total of **23,783** miles, and we're still counting every day!

**Numbers as of April 30, 2025*

KEEP LOCAL SENIORS THRIVING

Why Your Gift Matters More Than Ever

Federal funding helps power our nutrition and care programs — but local donations keep them strong, stable and resilient.

What Does Donating Do?

Your donation isn't just a stopgap — **it's a statement of care.** When you give to Senior Services for South Sound, you're helping:

“I may never meet the people who donate, but I hope they know what a difference they make. You're the reason I eat well and feel cared for.

— Walter

- Deliver hot, nutritious meals to homebound seniors who can no longer cook or shop on their own
- Keep our volunteers on the road so older adults can get to essential appointments and errands
- Provide compassionate, supervised care at Brighter Days for seniors living with memory loss and give respite to their caregivers
- Respond flexibly to emergencies, rising food costs or a sudden loss of federal support



A Growing Need. A Shared Responsibility.

As our senior population grows, so does the demand for services. **Meals on Wheels** alone has seen significant increases in referrals, and our **transportation** program fills up fast. Meanwhile, the **Brighter Days** program is one of the only options in our area for families balancing work, caregiving and burnout.

These programs don't just serve basic needs; they create connection, safety and hope.

That's why **your support is more critical than ever**. You help us plan ahead. You give us stability when federal dollars fluctuate. And you make it possible for us to say yes when someone calls for help.

If you believe that no senior should go hungry, feel isolated or be left without care, join us. With your help, we can continue showing up every day, no matter what tomorrow brings.

Ways to Give

Consider mailing a check using the envelope included with this newsletter. You can also give online or by calling us at 360.586.6181. Want to make an even bigger impact? Join our Sustainers Club with a monthly gift that supports seniors all year long. You can also leave a lasting legacy through planned giving, such as a bequest in your will or trust. And don't miss our **Fall Gala** on October 11, an evening of art, connection and community at the Olympia Senior Center. To learn more about your giving options, follow the QR code or reach out to our Development Team at 360.586.6181 ext. 110.

“I want every donor to know: you're not just helping, you're lifting people up. I'm one of them. Thank you for seeing us!

— Jeanette



Learn about your giving options

southsoundseniors.org/give



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**Help us ensure no senior
gets left behind!**

