Mills Administration Invests $536,000 in Coronavirus Relief Funds for Meals on Wheels

November 25, 2020

Home-delivered meals to support older Mainers and caregivers during the pandemic

AUGUSTA - The Mills Administration announced today that it will dedicate more than half a million dollars in Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) to extend home-delivered meals to older Mainers and caregivers, ensuring food and nutrition for Maine people staying home during the pandemic.

The Maine Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) investment of $536,000 in federal funding will maintain greatly increased deliveries through Meals on Wheels and similar programs since the spring, when Maine received separate CARES Act funding for these programs. The number of older adults and caregivers receiving home-delivered meals and the number of home-delivered meals has since doubled, to more than 5,500 people and 102,000 meals in the month of October alone.

Maine's Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) have rapidly expanded these programs both through direct delivery themselves and community partnerships. They will use the CRF funding announced today to stretch the initial federal award, allowing them to maintain current levels and extend meal deliveries further into 2021, according to varying schedules based on the need.

AAAs have pre-delivered Thanksgiving meals to recipients throughout Maine ahead of tomorrow's holiday.

"Meals on Wheels has long been a lifeline for Maine seniors, but especially now when so many Maine people are staying home as much as possible to stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic," **said Governor Janet Mills**. "This investment will ensure that meals continue to be safely delivered to their doors by caring neighbors in communities throughout Maine. I wish all involved in this vital work a happy Thanksgiving."

"As people across Maine prepare to safely enjoy Thanksgiving tomorrow, we extend our gratitude to Maine's Area Agencies on Aging and their volunteers, who help Maine seniors to age with dignity and nourishment," **said DHHS Commissioner Jeanne Lambrew**. "This federal funding will bolster their critical work during the winter as we continue to protect Maine's most vulnerable residents against COVID-19."

In addition to providing nutritious food to recipients, Meals on Wheels and similar programming ensures a social interaction and wellness visit to vulnerable adults in Maine. Especially during challenging times, this connection to another caring individual can be a lifeline for older Mainers. Also, caregivers qualify to receive meals during the pandemic, providing them with extra support when getting out to grocery shop can be challenging.

To ensure health and safety, meal delivery volunteers knock at the door of each home and then step back to ensure that the meal is received while maintaining physical distancing.

Credit

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