



**Department for
the Aging**

Donna M. Corrado, PhD Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New DFTA Funding Addresses Rising Food Costs

Monies will also offset the expenses of Kosher home delivered meals

NEW YORK—New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA) Commissioner Donna Corrado announced today that \$3.27 million in baselined funding included in the agency’s Fiscal Year 2015 budget will help ease the burden of food costs spent by senior centers and home delivered meal providers throughout the City. The new funding will help bridge the funding gap between what DFTA reimburses providers for food and the true cost of food, allowing the agency to offset escalating food costs through the allocation of an additional 50-cents for Kosher home delivered meals and an additional 25-cents for congregate and non-Kosher home delivered meals.

DFTA’s providers produce 12 million meals annually to older New Yorkers – 4.4 million in home delivered meals and 7.6 million in congregate meals. Over the last 14 years, those meal providers had only received a 35-cents increase for food and disposables. However, from 2008 to 2013 alone, according to the Consumer Price Index, the cost of food has increased by 11 percent. Food cost shortfalls have been felt even harder by Kosher meal providers, which account for approximately 1 million of the 4.4 million in home delivered meals annually. In DFTA’s HDML network, each catered Kosher meals is on average \$1.38 more than non-Kosher catered meals.

“The booming aging population in New York City made food insecurity among older adults a serious issue that I faced, first during my tenure as DFTA Commissioner and even more so today as Deputy Mayor, said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Lilliam Barrios-Paoli**. “Understanding the increased burden our providers face every day in meeting the nutrition needs of our elderly while combating rising food costs, especially when it comes to preparing Kosher meals, I am happy that Mayor Bill de Blasio and City Council were able to work together on securing additional funding to address this growing concern.”

“We are happy to have received this funding to support congregate and home-delivered meals for our seniors,” said **Commissioner Corrado**. “In the past, DFTA’s funding allocation for food costs was not reflective of the true cost of food today. Our providers had expressed concern about the deficits and their difficulty in continuing meal services. The new funding alleviates those concerns and helps increase food security for the elderly in New York City. I want to thank

Mayor Bill de Blasio, Deputy Mayor Lilliam Barrios-Paoli and members of City Council for their recognition of the importance of this increase.”

“With the cost of food on the rise in New York, it’s more important than ever that our seniors have reliable access to nutritious and culturally-appropriate meals,” said **Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**. “The City Council made increased funding for DFTA a major priority during the budget process, and the \$3.27 million baselined for FY15 reflects our city’s strong commitment to older New Yorkers. I thank Council Member Margaret Chin, Chair of the City Council’s Committee on Aging, for her unwavering advocacy on behalf New York City’s growing senior population, as well as Mayor Bill de Blasio and DFTA Commissioner Donna Corrado for providing seniors the support and resources they need.”

“Access to congregate and home-delivered meals is vital for so many of our seniors across the city, and I am proud to have fought hard for this new funding,” said **Council Member Margaret Chin, chair of the Council’s Committee on Aging and co-chair of the Manhattan Delegation**. “Rising food costs must never prevent DFTA from providing this important service, and that burden must never fall to our seniors. With this new funding, we’re making sure those kinds of problems don’t happen, and we’re showing our steadfast commitment to every senior who needs these meals.”

"With this year’s record budget, The Mayor has shown his commitment to our seniors of this great city. The \$3.3 million increase for per meal reimbursements is a major step forward towards ensuring that our senior population continues to receive the quality meal services they deserve," said **Council Member Paul Vallone, chair of the Council’s Subcommittee on Senior Centers**. "As Chair of the Subcommittee on Senior Centers, I will continue to advocate for our seniors to address the needs of our City’s largest growing demographic.”

"In recent years, rising food costs forced Kosher meal providers and the home-bound seniors they serve to make painful choices,” said **Council Member Mark Levine, chair of Jewish Caucus**. “Programs continually struggled to feed their clients and had to cut back on the number of Kosher meals they could provide. Baselineing additional DFTA funding and increasing the reimbursement rate will go a long way toward helping meal providers continue to offer these critical services."

“Thousands of elderly New Yorkers are dependent on home delivered meals for their main source of nutrition,” said **Council Member Karen Kolsowitz, member of the Jewish Caucus**. “This budgetary increase in program funding will continue to support this critical service.”

"As a Councilmember representing one of the largest population of senior citizens in the city, I am pleased that this year's budget includes new funding for these critical services. This funding will go a long way towards ensuring that our seniors continue to have access to proper nutritional meals both at their centers and in their own homes,” said **Council Member Mark Treyger, member of the Jewish Caucus**. “Increasing food security for our seniors by providing meals is the least we can do for those who worked for their entire lives to provide for their families. I would also like to thank Mayor de Blasio for his understanding of this need and his sensitivity to the cultural values of many families"

"There is a great need for kosher meals in my district and I commend the Mayor for this positive step toward food security for our seniors," said **Council Member Stephen Levin, member of the Jewish Caucus**. "By bringing allocations in line with the true cost of services we will make sure that all senior New Yorkers have access to proper nutrition."

"I applaud Mayor de Blasio for ensuring that all New Yorkers, including kosher observant seniors, have access to food," said **Council Member David Greenfield, member of the Jewish Caucus**. "For years, the rising cost of kosher food has not been covered by the City. I am very pleased that this increase in funding guarantees kosher food to seniors who need it."

"This increase in funding was long overdue," said **Council Member Helen Rosenthal, member of the Jewish Caucus**. "I'm thrilled we secured this money and got it baselined in the budget, so our senior centers -- like JASA Club 76 and DOROT on the Upper West Side -- can continue to do their excellent work distributing kosher meals without worrying about how to pay for them each year."

"There's no such thing as a free lunch, and that's especially true of kosher lunches -- that's why the extra money for kosher home-delivered-meal providers will help ensure the survival of this essential program," said **Council Member Rory Lancman, member of the Jewish Caucus**.

"My thanks to all who worked diligently to ensure DFTA received this essential funding that will offset the expenses of kosher home delivered meals" said **Council Member Chaim Deutsch, member of the Jewish Caucus**. "These meals provide an important service aimed at reducing hunger and promoting the health and well-being of seniors, allowing them to live independently at home."

"UJA-Federation of New York is grateful to the deBlasio administration and the leadership of Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, DFTA Commissioner Donna Corrado, and the City Council for supporting our city's senior population with this valuable funding for culturally sensitive meals," said **Eric Goldstein, CEO of UJA-Federation of New York**. "Home-delivered meals also provide essential social contact for elderly adults who are confined to their homes -- enabling seniors to age safely and in place and helps connect older adults to other services in their community. We praise the administration's ongoing effort to ensure that New York City's seniors have their basic needs met with dignity."

"Citymeals works in a public/private partnership with the Department for the Aging and is supportive of all efforts to bring meals to the City's homebound elderly," said **Beth Shapiro, Executive Director Citymeals-on-Wheels**. "We appreciate the effort of DFTA to help offset the rising cost of food for our meal providers throughout the city."

"Council of Senior Centers and Services (CSCS) has advocated for sufficient funding to provide nutritional meals to older New Yorkers for many years," said **Bobbie Sackman, Council of Senior Centers and Services, Director of Public Policy**. "We are pleased that an additional \$3.3 million was added to keep pace with inflation and ensure that senior centers and home-

delivered meals providers can serve a growing, diverse older adult population. Food security is a cornerstone of healthy aging."

"On behalf of JASA's trustees, staff, and the 43,000+ older adults we serve each year, we are extremely grateful to NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio, DFTA Commissioner Dr. Donna M. Corrado, and the NYC Council for the increase in funding for nutritious and life sustaining meals," said **JASA Chief Executive Officer Kathryn Haslanger**. "JASA serves 1.2 million meals each year to the most frail and vulnerable members of our community. With the additional reimbursement for kosher meals, seniors will not have to compromise their religious or cultural beliefs for basic nourishment. JASA looks forward to our continued partnership with DFTA as we carry on our mission to sustain and enrich the lives of the aging in the New York metropolitan area so that they can remain in the community with dignity and autonomy."

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