Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515  

April 27, 2022

Hon. Rosa DeLauro  
Chairwoman  
House Appropriations Committee  
2413 RHOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
1026 LHOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger:

I am requesting $1,322,415 in community project funding for the So Much More than Meals campaign in fiscal year 2023. The entity to receive funding for this project is Wesley Community Services Inc, located at 5508 NW 88th Street, Johnston, IA 50131.

Wesley Community Services Inc operates a Meals on Wheels program that provides nutritious meals to older adults in Polk County facing food insecurity - an estimated 9,000 individuals. The program serves food-insecure adults over age 65 and veterans over age 55. In fiscal year 2022, the Wesley Community Services Inc Meals on Wheels program served 255,863 meals - a greater than 10% increase when compared with the two fiscal years prior. To ensure that program infrastructure can meet rising demand in Polk County, Wesley Community Services Inc is seeking community funding support as part of its So Much More than Meals campaign to build out a new community kitchen, indoor garden, and “intergeneration hub” for older residents to connect. The project site is located at 3206 University Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50311.

The $1,322,415 requested would be used to purchase commercial kitchen equipment necessary to expand operations. Specifically, Wesley Community Services Inc intends to purchase high-capacity coolers and freezers to store food, large stoves and ovens to prepare meals, dishwashers, sinks and basins, and other pieces of equipment required to make a kitchen operate smoothly and efficiently. Fully complete, the new location and facility will house the Meals on Wheels program and allow it to serve approximately 750,000 meals annually, tripling the current capacity limits, and allowing the program to serve more people in more central Iowa communities. This facility will also be the base for the Meals on Wheels fleet of 21 vehicles and training location for more than 250 volunteers. Using taxpayer funds on this project would ensure more older Iowans have healthy, nutritious food - alleviating financial burdens for those on a fixed income, allowing participants to remain in their homes, and preventing hospitalizations. According to studies, hospitalizations decrease by an average of 39% after an individual joins a Meals on Wheels program.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project.

Cindy Axne  
Member of Congress IA-03