



Commit to Connect Office Hours: Resource Recap

Topic: Social Connection and Nutrition

Brief Overview:

Commit to Connect recorded an Office Hours on April 18, 2025 on the topic of social connection and nutrition. Office Hours are in-depth interviews and virtual forums with a subject matter expert for anyone interested in best practices and strategies for improving social connections.

This Office Hours features Kathryn Tucker, a Senior Nutrition Expert within the Office of Nutrition and Health Promotion Program at the Administration for Community Living (ACL) and is moderated by Katie Clark, Policy Analyst (ACL). During the session, Kathryn shares how social connection is a critical part of the Older Americans Act (OAA) Senior Nutrition program. Senior Nutrition programming provides nutritious meals—both in group settings and at home—for older adults and people with disabilities across the country with a strong focus on social connection. Kathryn is also a Registered and Licensed Dietitian Nutritionist with over 25 years of experience in Nutrition and Aging. She has an extensive background in clinical nutrition, school nutrition, senior nutrition, and formerly served as the State Unit on Aging dietitian for the State of Kentucky.

This document provides a list of resources shared during the Social Connection and Nutrition Office Hours.

Resources:

- Title III-C of the OAA authorizes [nutrition services](#) for older adults. One of the main intents of the nutrition program is ensuring socialization and providing an avenue for social connection. Learn more about the [OAA basics and federal requirements](#).
- The [2023 Public Health Advisory](#) issued by the U.S. Surgeon General provides guidance on a National Strategy to Advance Social Connection including tips on ways to strengthen relationships and increase connection.
- The [Nutrition and Aging Resource Center](#) is funded by the Administration on Aging (AoA). Its purpose is to build the capacity of senior nutrition programs funded by the OAA to provide high-quality, person-centered services and to assist AoA and stakeholders in identifying current and emerging issues and opportunities that enhance program sustainability and resiliency. It provides

examples of innovative congregate meals programs, home-delivered meal programs, and partnerships that successfully foster social connection. [Learn more](#) about these programs and find materials that support the tie between social connection and nutrition.

- Congregate meals bring people together, help reduce loneliness, and improve physical, mental, and social health. [The Benefits of Eating With Others: Connecting Nutrition and Socialization for Better Health](#) and [Meaningful Connection and Better Health through Congregant Meals](#) fact sheets shares the benefits of congregant meals and nutrition programs.
- The annual [National Survey of OAA Participants](#) collects responses from up to 6,000 older Americans across the nation who receive services from OAA programs including congregate meals and home-delivered meals. The survey data can be used to help understand the interplay between clients' service use and factors such as health conditions and well-being.
- The [Eldercare Locator](#) is a helpful tool to identify local Area Agency on Aging and learn about Aging Network services.

Innovative Nutrition Programs:

- The [BE WITH program](#) (**B**elongingness and **E**mpathy, **W**ith **I**ntentional **T**argeted **H**elping) is a standardized and manualized warm calling program fostering sincere human connection at a time older adults may need it the most.
- The [Project HELLO \(Helping Elders Limit Loneliness Outreach\)](#) utilized volunteers and matched them with older adults to allow them the opportunity to have conversations and be socially engaged.

Commit to Connect Resources:

- Join the [Nationwide Network of Champions](#) and connect with peers across the country interested in addressing social isolation and loneliness. This free virtual platform hosts an open forum where leaders can engage in discussions, share resources, and find events related to social connection.
- The [Innovations Hub](#) is a public-facing clearinghouse of more than 100 model programs focused on social connection across the U.S., including many nutrition programs.