



MEALS ON WHEELS COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND OVERVIEW

The Meals on Wheels COVID-19 Response Fund was created to support the Meals on Wheels network at a time of intense need. Through this Fund, Meals on Wheels America will solicit, receive and distribute funds on behalf of its nationwide network, allowing local Member programs to stay focused on what is most crucial – meeting the critical needs of seniors in their communities.

Because this situation is developing quickly and projected to have a dramatic impact on our programs for months, if not years, to come, the Fund will be structured to retain the flexibility required to respond to immediate, emerging and evolving needs over time.

In the near-term, the Fund will focus on one-time emergency grants to Meals on Wheels programs that will help them address the needs of the vulnerable senior population they serve. The Fund will also focus on pursuing national-level activities that will support the ability of programs to continue operations as the outbreak spreads. These near-term national activities will include:

- Funding for the immediate replenishment and expansion of shelf-stable and frozen meals
- Subsidies to help cover additional costs of transportation and personnel created by the necessary closures of meal sites (previously offered at community-based locations, such as senior centers) and the reduction in volunteers due to an aging volunteer force that is itself at-risk
- Subsidies that will support telephone assurance and other tech-based programs to enable vital check-ins on the well-being of isolated seniors
- Advocacy efforts to ensure that the nation's federal response to COVID-19 includes strong and flexible funding for senior nutrition programs
- Facilitating in-kind and other product distribution efforts to help the hardest-hit communities
- Supporting an online network that connects senior nutrition programs nationwide for sharing of best practices and lessons learned as the situation evolves

- Curating and disseminating timely, current and critical information to programs on how to protect themselves, prevent infection and provide care for those in need as the pandemic progresses
- Enhancing the ability of individuals to find their local Meals on Wheels programs through our website
- Public awareness building to ensure additional emergency nutrition and social support for homebound seniors
- Other needs as they pertain to the specific and unique challenges faced in each community

Meals on Wheels America will continue to work with its Board of Directors, local Member programs, governments at all levels and our business partners to determine how to continue to best prepare and support our network over the course of this crisis. While we do not yet know how much money will be needed to see our network through this time, we do know that, as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, the funding required to meet the unprecedented levels of need will continue to increase as efforts to keep seniors safe remain at a level that is well beyond business as usual for some time to come.