

THE MEALS ON WHEELS DONOR DRIVE PILOT

FAQS

Q: What is the Meals on Wheels Donor Drive Pilot?

A: With the full support of our Board of Directors, Meals on Wheels America has developed the Meals on Wheels Donor Drive Pilot to provide participating Member programs the opportunity to either start or expand upon an existing direct mail program in their service areas. The goals of this direct mail program are to find and acquire new, committed donors and to generate a reliable unrestricted revenue stream for all participants. This pilot phase will provide Members with an opportunity to shape the future direction of the program through careful testing and refining before it is offered to the entire Membership by 2021.

Q: What are the benefits of participating?

A: The Meals on Wheels Donor Drive Pilot will make direct mail fundraising accessible to Member programs of all sizes and geographic areas through economies of scale in partnership with Meals on Wheels America. Participation in the pilot stage of the program will give a select group of Members the opportunity to provide feedback and shape the program before it becomes available to the broader Membership. Meals on Wheels America will assume all upfront costs of the pilot and will manage all aspects of the program, requiring no out-of-pocket investment from Member participants.

Q: Why is there a minimum requirement of three years to participate?

A: On average, it takes about three years for a direct mail program to cover all donor acquisition costs and begin netting revenue. As Meals on Wheels America will be assuming responsibility for all upfront acquisition costs, we are requiring pilot participants to commit to a timeframe that ensures all costs are covered.

Q: Who is managing the pilot solicitations?

A: Meals on Wheels America will oversee all solicitations with feedback from pilot participants, including the development of an appeal strategy and content. Meals on Wheels America has contracted TrueSense Marketing, who will conduct and manage these solicitations nationally.

Q: Does Meals on Wheels America already do direct mail?

A: In Fall 2018 and again in Spring 2019, Meals on Wheels America conducted a direct mail test program in a small subset of available zip codes not covered by Member programs to raise revenue for the association and inform the development of a Meals on Wheels Donor Drive Pilot. To ensure that all Member zip codes on record were suppressed and no mailings were sent into Member service areas, we used data from both Member Central and, more recently, the Comprehensive Network Study.

Q: To whom will the mailings be sent?

A: Pilot solicitation and cultivation pieces will be mailed to qualified donor prospects in the service area zip codes of Member participants. Meals on Wheels America will work with TrueSense Marketing to identify the best prospective donors by leveraging various models and rented lists of recipients for new donor acquisition appeals.

Q: How will the revenue from donations be distributed?

A: Meals on Wheels America will distribute sixty percent (60%) of the net proceeds from a participating program's service area zip code to that program. Meals on Wheels America will retain forty percent (40%) of the net proceeds to cover the administrative costs of managing the fundraising program and donor files.

Net proceeds are defined as total revenue minus the operational expenses of implementing the program through our partner, TrueSense Marketing.

Q: What if my service area zip codes overlap with another Member's?

A: In the event that a participating Member shares overlapping service area zip codes with any other Member, Meals on Wheels America will not mail into the overlapping zip codes for the duration of the pilot or until we receive written agreement from all Members involved outlining a mutually agreed-upon plan to manage the overlap.

Q: When can my program expect to begin receiving revenue distributions?

A: Participating Members can expect to begin receiving net revenue distributions once the revenue accumulated from all past mailings is greater than the cost of those mailings plus the next acquisition mailing in their service area. On average, it takes about three years for this "break-even" point to be reached. Once the "break-even" point has been achieved, Meals on Wheels America will begin issuing distribution payments twice a year, in April and September.

Q: How much revenue can my program expect to receive?

A: Revenue estimates will primarily vary by service area. TrueSense Marketing will provide a five-year projection of donors and revenue up front for each pilot participant. The greater the population of prospective donors, the greater the revenue potential. That being said, revenue will increase each year, regardless of the Member participant's service area size as acquired donors continue giving and more new donors are added.

Q: How much will this cost my program?

A: Meals on Wheels America will assume responsibility for all costs to implement and manage the pilot, requiring no up-front or subsequent investment from Member participants. Additionally, Meals on Wheels America will manage all aspects of the program, freeing your staff to engage in other fundraising and service activities.

Q: What will the appeals look like? Will they contain my program's name and brand?

A: Meals on Wheels America will work with pilot participants to finalize the overall design of appeals. Appeals can be customized to reference the city/town of the mail recipient and feature language about local Meals on Wheels services (e.g., meal cost) in her/his area. Due to the legal structuring of the program, appeals must feature Meals on Wheels America's name and logo, and all remittance will be addressed to Meals on Wheels America.

Q: Who will cultivate the new donors acquired through the pilot?

A: Meals on Wheels America will take the lead in cultivating all donors with input from pilot participants. Donor cultivation will primarily be handled through direct mail as this is the donor's demonstrated preferred giving channel.

Q: What about major donors?

A: Meals on Wheels America's Development staff will handle personal stewardship of donors who make large gifts and/or request personal contact. If a donor wishes to establish a relationship with the participating Member directly, Meals on Wheels America will work with pilot participants to determine the best way to facilitate this process.

Q: Where/how is donor data being stored?

A: All gifts will go to a central, independent processing center located in Hagerstown, MD, which will use automation to open, scan and record gifts efficiently. The gift processing center will transmit a data file to TrueSense Marketing, which will upload the donor and transaction information into the donor database that it will maintain for Meals on Wheels America. TrueSense Marketing will provide Meals on Wheels America with a report/file of gifts with each batch deposit.

Q: Who will "own" the donor data?

A: Meals on Wheels America will retain ownership of all donor data accumulated through the pilot to be cultivated exclusively through this program. We will work with pilot participants to explore how local programs can leverage these donors for their own benefit outside the direct mail program (e.g., local events and major gifts).

Q: How will I be kept up-to-date on the status and performance of the pilot?

A: At a minimum, Member participants will receive bi-annual reports on pilot performance results in their service area. Meals on Wheels America will manage and monitor results for the pilot as a whole and for all individual areas.

Q: How can I make sure none of my current donors receive a solicitation?

A: A couple of months prior to each of the two acquisition campaigns per year, participating Members will have the opportunity to submit a file of their active donors directly to TrueSense Marketing to be suppressed from the mailing. Any suppression file names that appear on rented prospect lists will be purged from the mail file prior to mailing.

Q: How do I apply the Meals on Wheels Donor Drive Pilot?

A: If your program is interested in being part of this initial pilot phase, just fill out an online application [here](#) no later than **July 12**. All applicants will be notified in late July.