



FACT SHEET SOURCES & METHODS

WHAT WE DELIVER: 2024 NATIONAL SNAPSHOT

IT STARTS WITH THE MEAL...

- A. “251 million meals served annually” and “2.2 million seniors served annually (OAA)” are from Administration for Community Living (ACL) data tables. Meals data are from "Table 4a. Service Units Provided Under OAA Title III by Clusters 1 and 2 Services" and seniors data are from "Table 1. Persons Served Under OAA Title III - Estimated Unduplicated Count (Clusters 1-3)". Data include home-delivered meals and congregate meals served by programs that receive funding from Title III of the Older Americans Act. Data are for federal fiscal year 2021. Data released 6/6/2023. Data tables available on the AGing, Independence, and Disability (AGID) Program Portal at <https://agid.acl.gov/>
- B. “73% of programs say demand for home-delivered meals is higher than it was pre-COVID” is from the June 2023 Meals on Wheels America 2023 Member Feedback Survey, conducted by WRMA.

AND DELIVERS ON SO MUCH MORE.

- C. “Services provided” data points are from the Meals on Wheels America 2023 Member Benchmarking Survey, conducted by Meals on Wheels America. Report forthcoming.
- D. **Cost of serving a senior Meals on Wheels for a year** is based on an inflation-adjusted meal cost estimated calculated using the national meal cost averages for congregate and home-delivered meals from *Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs Evaluation: Meal Cost Analysis*, a report prepared for HHS Administration for Community Living’s (ACL) Administration on Aging by Mathematica Policy Research (2015). The estimate both the costs of purchased resources and value of donated resources of a meal, including donated volunteer labor and non-labor resources and is not necessarily reflective of the paid cost. Estimate reflects the estimated cost for one meal per recipient per day, with 250 operating service days per year. To calculate the estimate, we applied the following calculations and information sources:
- We started with base estimates for both congregate and home-delivered meals, using the respective national per-meal cost averages reported in ACL’s *Meal Cost Analysis* report available at: <https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2017-02/NSP-Meal-Cost->

[Analysis.pdf](#).

Congregate meal: \$10.69

Home-delivered meal: \$11.06

- We adjusted those estimates from Jan 2015 dollars to January 2021 dollars using the Bureau of Labor Statistics BLS CPI calculator, available at https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm.

Congregate meal: \$10.69 in 2015 has same buying power as \$11.97 in 2021

Home-delivered meal: \$11.06 has same buying power as \$12.38 in 2020

- We calculated a weight factor for the congregate and home-delivered meal cost averages based on the relative proportion of the type of meal served in 2020 (see “Meals served annually”), then applied each factor to the respective cost average).

Congregate meal: 25,423,590 meals served / 251,251,486 total meals = 10.12%. $\$11.97 \times 10.12\% = \1.21

Home-delivered meal: 225,827,896 meals served / 251,251,486 total meals = 89.88%. $\$12.38 \times 89.88\% = \11.13

- We added congregate and home-delivered components together for an aggregated average per-meal cost then multiplied by 250 service days.
 $\$1.21 + \$11.13 = \$12.34 \times 250 \text{ service days} = \$3,085 \text{ per year}$
- **“Cost of 1 day in a hospital”** is Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) State health Facts website, Hospital Adjusted Expenses per Inpatient Day. Data are for the United States in 2021. Data are from a special data request for the American Hospital Association from KFF. Data available at the KFF State Health Facts website: <https://www.kff.org/health-costs/state-indicator/expenses-per-inpatient-day/>. $\$2,883 \text{ per day}$.
- **“Cost of 10 days in a nursing home”** is from the Genworth 2021 Cost of Care survey. Estimate reflects the daily cost of nursing home care for a semi-private room multiplied by 10 days ($\$260/\text{day} \times 10 \text{ day} = \$2,600 \text{ for } 10 \text{ days}$). Report available at: <https://www.genworth.com/aging-and-you/finances/cost-of-care.html>

- E. **“Of home-delivered meal participants: % say”** statistics are from the 2022 Administration for Community Living (ACL) National Survey of Older Americans Act (OAA) Participants. Figures are from the responses of a nationally representative sample of clients receiving Home-delivered meals funded through Title III of the OAA. Data are from the ACL AGID National OAA Participants Survey Frequency Tables: <https://agid.acl.gov/>

BUT THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES.
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- F. **“The onset of the pandemic saw an influx of emergency funding, doubling support to address increased demand”** is from Meals on Wheels America analysis of Administration for Community Living data. Data available at: <https://acl.gov/about-acl/budget>

- FY 2022 data include appropriated OAA funding for home-delivered meals + congregate meals, reported in FY 2022 ACL operating plan.
 - FY 2021 data include a) appropriated OAA funding for home-delivered meals + congregate meals, reported in FY 2021 ACL Operating Plan and b) American Rescue Plan of 2021 funding for home-delivered meals + congregate meals.
 - FY 2020 data include a) appropriated OAA funding, reported in FY 2021 ACL Operating Plan, b) Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding for home-delivered meals, and c) Families First Coronavirus Response Act (2020) Supplemental Funding for OAA Nutrition Programs for home-delivered meals + congregate meals.
 - FY 2019 data include appropriated OAA funding for home-delivered meals + congregate meals, reported in FY 2019 ACL Operating Plan.
- G. **“Nearly all programs report one or more challenges to serving home-delivered meals to all seniors in their community** data points are from the Meals on Wheels America 2023 Member Benchmarking Survey, conducted by Meals on Wheels America. Report forthcoming.
- H. **“1 in 3 local programs has a waitlist with seniors waiting on average three months for vital meals”** data points are from the Meals on Wheels America 2023 Member Benchmarking Survey, conducted by Meals on Wheels America. Report forthcoming.

MEALS ON WHEELS PROGRAMS ARE READY AND WILLING TO DO MORE... WITH MORE RESOURCES.

- I. **“97% of local programs believe there are seniors in their community who need meals who they are not currently serving”** is from the Meals on Wheels America 2021 Comprehensive Network Survey conducted by Trailblazer Research. Figure includes respondents that said they were serving fewer than “all” seniors in their market who need nutrition services (includes programs that were serving “some,” “many” or “most” seniors). (N=478). Report summary available at: <https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/learn-more/research/member-perspectives-practices-survey>
- J. **“64% are confident that they could serve more seniors, if the new clients came with more funding”** is from the Meals on Wheels America Fall 2022 Pulse Survey conducted by Meals on Wheels America. Figure includes programs that selected “5”, “6” or “7 – Extremely easy” in response to the question “How easy would it be to start serving home-delivered meals to 10% more clients in the next 60-90 days, assuming they came with meal funding?” (N=299). Summary of survey findings available at: <https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/learn-more/research/covid-19-research-portfolio>

FUND AND SUPPORT MEALS ON WHEELS TODAY.