

Government Shutdown

The Impact on Meals on Wheels

Shutdowns of the federal government are dangerous for seniors who rely on Meals on Wheels to deliver nutritious meals and social connection. In October 2025, just a few weeks into the government shutdown, Meals on Wheels America conducted a survey of local providers across the country to better understand the status of their federal funding, the impacts of the current shutdown, and how existing delays have been compounded, putting seniors at risk.

Local Meals on Wheels providers are already feeling the impact of the government shutdown.

Based on 298 Meals on Wheels providers that completed the survey:

- **89% rely on funding from federal sources** (such as the Older Americans Act, block grants, the USDA Nutrition Program and congressionally directed spending).
- **A third (33%) could not maintain services for a month** without federal funding.
- **6 in 10 (61%) have already experienced or anticipate challenges** with delays or disruptions in government funding this calendar year.

If the shutdown continues, seniors will go without meal services.

When asked what area would be impacted first if funding were delayed, local providers most frequently said **home-delivered meals (53%), staff (52%) and congregate meals (46%) would be the first things to be cut.**



“ The constant struggle for consistent, sustainable funding through these shutdowns and threats of shutdowns over the last year has left seniors hungry in our community.

“ We believe we may be forced to cease operations.

Delays and shortfalls in federal funding for the Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Program are an ongoing problem.

- **84% of Meals on Wheels providers** receive funding through the OAA.
- **41% of providers** that receive OAA funding get half or more of their annual senior nutrition budget funding from the OAA.
- **Nearly half (47%)** of providers that receive OAA funding have seen a decrease in that funding in the past year.
- **1 in 5 providers** that receive OAA funding are facing ongoing delays or disruptions in that funding.

“ We submit monthly reports but do not receive the funding on that basis. It has been sporadic.

“ We have not been paid for OAA meals since July.

It's time to End the Wait for federal funding.

Meals on Wheels America is urgently calling on Congress to end this shutdown by passing a funding package that prioritizes seniors.

Take action at:

mealsonwheelsamerica.org/email-congress