

## 2026 NATIONAL SNAPSHOT

# Meals on Wheels Funding Explained

For more than 50 years, Meals on Wheels has set the gold standard as an evidence-based public-private partnership that effectively addresses the issues of senior hunger and isolation.



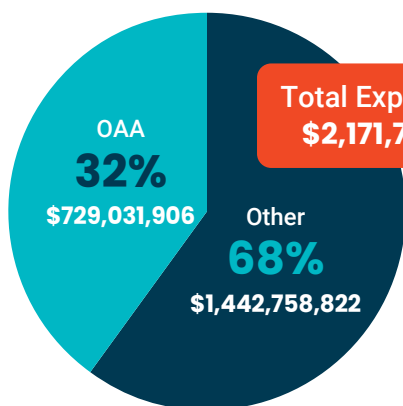
## Federal funding creates the foundation.



**9 out of 10 local Meals on Wheels programs receive federal funding** and for more than 60% of providers, federal funding represents half or more of their total budget.

Meals on Wheels America is the leadership organization supporting approximately 5,000 community-based organizations across the country through federal advocacy, private funding, programming, education, research and more. Meals on Wheels America does not receive or disperse federal funding to local providers.

The primary source for federal funding for the Meals on Wheels network is the Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Program, which covers 32% of the costs to serve over 2 million seniors annually.



### Other

State and/or local sources

Private donations including corporate, foundations and individual contributions

Additional federal funding (e.g., Social Services Block Grant, Community Development Block Grant, Community Services Block Grant)



OAA Nutrition Program funding is distributed from the federal government to states, territories and tribal nations according to formulas based partly on the population of older adults.



State Units on Aging then allocate grants to Area Agencies on Aging based on their own funding formulas.



Finally, contracts for services are issued to community-based providers like Meals on Wheels. The amount of federal funding a provider receives varies by contract.

**But it isn't enough, and seniors are waiting.**



**56%**  
of seniors feel lonely



Only **1%**  
of philanthropy goes  
to aging issues

**Meals on Wheels operational costs are on the rise**



**Gas prices increased 53%**  
from 2015-2025



**Grocery prices increased 30%**  
from 2014-2024

**85%**



of Americans **support federal funding** for home-delivered meals through the Older Americans Act



**1 in 3 Meals on Wheels providers has a waitlist**  
with seniors waiting on average 4 months for meals.



**HELP US END THE WAIT. FUND AND SUPPORT MEALS ON WHEELS.**