

## 2026 NATIONAL SNAPSHOT

# What We Deliver

The Meals on Wheels network is comprised of approximately 5,000 community-based providers across the country dedicated to addressing senior hunger and isolation. But with growing demand and rising costs, many seniors are left waiting for nutritious meals and moments of connection. The need has never been greater, but together, we can End the Wait.



## The Meals on Wheels solution starts with the meal...



**244 million**  
meals served annually

### Meal services providers offer:

**98%**  
home-  
delivered

**72%**  
community  
dining

**30%**  
grab-and-go



**2.6 million**  
seniors served annually

## and delivers on so much more.

### Services provided:



**99%** provide **socialization opportunities**



**97%** train drivers to keep an eye out for **senior well-being**



**89%** train drivers to keep an eye out for **safety issues** around the clients' home



**60%** directly **connect seniors to services** in the community when needs are identified



**52%** offer **home repair** and modification services



**41%** provide **pet assistance**

### The impact:



**1 year**

**1 day**

**12 days**

We can serve a senior for an entire year for roughly the same cost as a day in the hospital or 12 in a long-term care facility

### Of home-delivered meal participants:



say the meals help **improve their health**



say the services help them **feel more secure**



say the meals help them **live independently**

## But significant challenges mean millions of seniors are waiting.



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



**DEMAND**



**FUNDING**

Nearly all Meals on Wheels providers report making **impossible choices** due to funding challenges, such as **tapping into reserves to cover increased costs** and adding older adults to waitlists. Funding is receding while community need is not, and **providers are struggling**.

Nearly **all providers report one or more challenges** to serving meals to all seniors in their community, such as:



Lack of funding to pay for meals



Rising food prices



Lack of funding for overhead, administrative and equipment costs



Difficulty recruiting and retaining volunteers



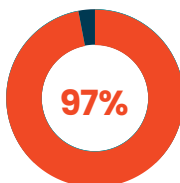
Escalating gas prices



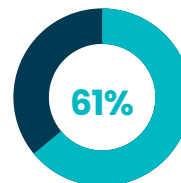
Difficulty hiring and retaining enough staff

## Meals on Wheels providers are waiting, too. Nearly all providers are ready and willing to End the Wait... with more resources.

Reaching all seniors who need meals is constrained by funding and capacity limitations



of local providers believe there are seniors in their community who need meals who they **are not currently serving**.



are confident that they could serve more seniors, **if the new clients came with more funding**.

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