



MEALS **on** WHEELS
AMERICA



2025

Membership Impact Report





In August 2024, we launched our strategic plan to [End the Wait™](#), committing to a future where every senior who needs Meals on Wheels gets it. Built to be nimble and responsive, the plan was quickly tested.

2025 brought unprecedented uncertainty — threats to federal funding, the longest government shutdown in history, rising costs, growing demand, increased competition for private dollars and expanding for-profit pressure across the sector.

Despite these challenges, we advanced the work to End the Wait by identifying unmet need across the network. Through interviews with more than 130 members, we learned that eliminating waitlists would require, on average, an additional \$600,000 per provider annually.

While not every provider has a waitlist, all members continue to feel the strain — waiting

for sufficient funding, volunteers and resources to meet rising demand.

Still, the strength of our network shone through. Together, we demonstrated resilience, perseverance and an unwavering commitment to seniors. In one of the most difficult environments in recent history, our collective resolve resulted in a record-breaking 98% member retention rate in 2025. Proof that we all believe we are stronger together. This grit and determination inspires us at Meals on Wheels America to continue advocating relentlessly on your behalf — in Washington, D.C., and nationwide — while pursuing sustainable solutions to the network’s most pressing challenges.

Together, we can ensure every senior who needs Meals on Wheels gets it. Together, we can End the Wait.

Read on to learn how we worked together to End the Wait in 2025 ▶

Together, We Are ...



1,055 members strong

Operating in
nearly every community

Collectively serving
more than **2 million**
seniors annually

We retained 98% of members and welcomed 58 new organizations!

Strengthening the Network with Scalable, Locally Led Solutions

Meals on Wheels America awarded more than **\$5.4 million to 392 members**, including:

- ✓ More than **\$3.6 million in grants**
- ✓ More than **\$1 million** through Subaru of America's 2024-2025 Share the Love Event
- ✓ **Over \$660,000** through gift distributions and pilot program funding including the Core Client Insights and Collaborative Accelerator programs

OVERALL IMPACT ACROSS OUR 7 GRANT PROGRAMS:



Total clients served
34,070



New clients served
13,467



Participating Volunteers
11,255



Volunteer Hours:
381,610

We convened the network throughout the year to explore how we can expand capacity to reach older adults across a spectrum of needs:

- + **Peer Practices Showcase** (January) – Convened 302 attendees for 9 sessions designed by senior nutrition providers for senior nutrition providers, tackling common challenges and sharing innovative solutions.
- + **Volunteer Symposium** (April) – Convened 311 attendees for 5 sessions exploring innovative strategies, practical tools and leadership skills to recruit, retain and engage volunteers in new and effective ways.
- + **Meals on Wheels Annual Conference & Expo** (August) – Convened 700 attendees for 3 pre-conference workshops, 35 learning sessions, 6 networking sessions and 8 keynotes to rally around our mission to

improve the health and well-being of older adults.

- + **Meals on Wheels Connect** (year-round) – Reached 3,000 people on our online, members-only platform to connect senior nutrition providers with others in the network and share timely news and resources.

We also created new and expanded existing learning content to grow our reach to more members and support their capacity building:

- + **Tools to End the Wait** – Times are tough for Meals on Wheels providers due to a variety of challenges such as the growing aging population, rising costs and insufficient funding. Building on the launch of the End the Wait platform, we created an asset library full of resources and templates to help members

rally greater public and private support for their organizations.

- + **Social Connection Toolkit** — Older adults spend more time alone than any other age group, and promoting meaningful social connections and reducing social isolation and loneliness are key priorities for the Meals on Wheels network. That's why we created the Social Connection Toolkit to support members bringing lifechanging moments of connection to seniors across the country every day.
- + **Data to Action Toolkit** — From emphasizing the urgent need for Meals on Wheels services and proving the value to funders, to identifying service gaps or planning for growth, the ability to back up a story with solid data is more important than ever. We created this toolkit to help members prove their impact to policymakers, funders and their communities.
- + **Medically Tailored Meals Toolkit** — More older adults are living with chronic conditions, and tailored meals can help seniors meet their evolving nutrition, health and wellness needs, leading to improved health outcomes. We added new resources to our Medically Tailored Meals Toolkit to help members explore and expand their tailored nutrition offerings to serve more seniors.

We continued our efforts to further integrate Meals on Wheels into health care and prepare members to enter their own health care contracting work by providing over 17,700 meals to almost 600 clients in collaboration with members and in partnership with Eisai Pharmaceuticals' Magnolia Meals at Home® patient support program, healthAlign and Imperial Health.

We forged and expanded partnerships that scale services in communities across the country:

- + **Subaru of America** continued its support of Meals on Wheels through its Share the Love Event for the 17th year, resulting in more than \$1 million distributed to 306 participating members.

- + **The Home Depot Foundation**, with their generous support for the Helping Homebound Heroes grant program, continued to enable 20 members to deliver necessary home repairs and safety modifications that help veteran seniors. In 2025, we celebrated repairing our 4,000th veteran home.
- + **PetSmart Charities** supports our commitment to reducing isolation and loneliness by ensuring that seniors have the companionship and support they deserve. This year, we celebrated the delivery of our 15 millionth pet meal through this partnership, and PetSmart renewed their commitment at our conference for another three years.



- + **Caesars Foundation** powered grants to help 18 members expand nutrition and social connection programming and supported our first-ever Collaborative Accelerator Initiative, working with six organizations to strengthen their sustainable fundraising and infrastructure locally.
- + **Food Lion Feeds** reached a cumulative giving of \$1 million to Meals on Wheels America and helped more than a dozen members build their infrastructure to serve more seniors in need.
- + **DoorDash** led exciting initiatives to help our network expand meal delivery, including

funding to support free delivery pilots for 30+ members and waived delivery fees for the month of November for eligible members in response to the disruption caused by the government shutdown.

We expanded MORE (Member Offers, Rewards & Expertise), our member discount program, to help members save more, solve more and serve more. In 2025, MORE partners helped members save **\$5.5 million**. The program welcomed 6 new partners:

- + **Bloomerang's** platform for managing donors, volunteers and fundraising helps providers boost revenue and drive supporter engagement.
- + **CARS (Real Estate)** expanded their donation services to include real estate donations to help members build a new fundraising stream and acquire new donors.

- + **Clark National Accounts** leverages the power and scale of its sister company, WebstaurantStore, to offer members exclusive pricing on 500,000+ kitchen and food supply products.
- + **CustomInsight** is the leader in employee engagement and offers their trusted and confidential employee engagement survey for free to eligible members.
- + **Galley's** software empowers Meals on Wheels providers to optimize meal planning to reduce waste and costs, streamline production for greater efficiency and ensure compliance and consistency in every meal.
- + **TRIO Community Meals** supports providers with dependable kitchen management, scalable operations and meals that reflect the communities you serve.

Harnessing Our Influence to Raise Awareness and Drive Change Across Systems, Practices and Policies



With each policy challenge throughout the year, we focused on rising to the moment and acting with swift, intentional action, showcasing the strength of our network and the work that is happening every day to support older adults to live nourished and connected lives.

We engaged in ongoing advocacy to help local Meals on Wheels providers meet the needs of their communities. Local providers faced significant strain this year due to the federal government's failure to prioritize seniors and social services.



- + **We highlighted the impact of the OAA.** Our main priority is ensuring that Meals on Wheels providers can continue to provide the lifesaving meals, social connection and wellness checks that America’s seniors rely on. We are fighting for an Older Americans Act (OAA) reauthorization that protects and strengthens this critical legislation.
- + **We advocated to keep OAA programs together.** Proposed restructuring of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) threatened to dismantle the Administration for Community Living (ACL) and scatter OAA programs. In partnership with ADvancing States, USAging, the National Council on Aging and NANASP, we formed a unified coalition that ultimately kept OAA programs intact under ACL.
- + **We navigated a challenging environment to sustain our federal funding.** We fought cuts to Meals on Wheels funding and ultimately sustained existing funding levels for the OAA Nutrition Program.
- + **We defended Social Services Block Grants (SSBG),** which faced elimination during Congress’s reconciliation process. The SSBG program is a lifeline for many Meals on Wheels providers, and we focused on educating members of Congress on its impact. Our actions were successful, and SSBG was saved.
- + **We celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Older Americans Act.** Working alongside our national aging services partners, we led a coordinated day of action to activate networks across the country in urging Congress to protect and increase OAA funding. This collective effort reaffirmed the essential role of the OAA in helping older adults age with dignity in their own homes and communities.
- + **We focused on visits with local providers.** More than 118 elected and appointed officials visited Meals on Wheels providers this year, offering a powerful firsthand look at the impact of community-based

services. Among the most notable visits, HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and HHS officials visited and delivered meals with Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland. This was a historic moment, marking the first time a cabinet secretary has delivered meals with a Meals on Wheels provider.

As we start to expand our advocacy work beyond the federal sphere, we spent 2025 more proactively engaging with state associations. Local providers are seeing increased value in uniting at the state level to scale impact within their state.

- + We supported the establishment of Meals on Wheels Indiana and the reactivation of Meals on Wheels Florida, for a total of **13 state associations.**
- + We convened all state association leaders in **quarterly virtual meetings,** and we attended and presented at **four state association conferences** to discuss advocacy and programming initiatives that can have an impact at the state level.
- + At the 2025 Meals on Wheels Annual Conference, a **keynote panel of four leaders** discussed the benefits — advocacy, partnerships, funding streams and more — that state associations bring to their state and local providers.

We conducted and published a variety of research to measure and elevate the impact of the Meals on Wheels network:

- + In collaboration with Brown University School of Public Health and Johns Hopkins School of Nursing, we concluded participant recruitment in our **Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI)** funded study and published articles in peer-reviewed journals.
- + We **updated our suite of fact sheets,** including new fact sheets on how Meals on Wheels saves money and improves health, how Meals on Wheels providers are funded, the growing crisis of waitlists and the impact of federal shutdowns on Meals on Wheels providers.

- + We **presented our research on the growing unmet need for Meals on Wheels and co-chaired a symposium on the PCORI Deliver-EE study** at the Gerontological Society of America's annual conference in Boston.
- + We conducted our **2025 Member Benchmarking Survey** to demonstrate the value and need for Meals on Wheels and published our **2025 State of the Meals on Wheels Network report**.
- + We **fielded a pulse survey** on nutrition services and federal funding delays and disruptions during the federal government shutdown.
- + We **conducted interviews with 134 members with waitlists for our Waitlist Research Initiative** to explore the local context and challenges and assess ways we can best support our network to eliminate all waitlists.

We rallied support for our cause around the country through our campaigns:

- + Released in May for Older Americans Month, the **On Hold campaign** was created to increase awareness of the urgency of the wait that our network is experiencing for funding, volunteers and advocates. Celebrities Taylor Tomlinson (2.4M followers) and Taye Diggs (1.7M followers) amplified the campaign.
- + We made our year-end campaign available to members for the first time ever to help boost fundraising and donor engagement potential. **Silent Night** launched at a particularly impactful time, following the government shutdown and disruptions to SNAP benefits, and was shared on social media by celebrities including Kristen Bell (15.9M followers), Lamorne Morris (1.2M followers), Jerry Rice (838K followers), Laura Benanti (311K followers) and Leeza Gibbons (51.6K followers).
- + **We matched potential volunteers** over 33,000 times with their local Meals on Wheels providers.

- + **More than 34,000 messages** were sent to Congress asking them to fund and protect programs like Meals on Wheels.
- + We secured more than **1.6 billion media impressions** throughout the year and were featured in major national outlets including The New York Times, Fast Company and CNN, among many others.

Meals on Wheels America President and CEO Ellie Hollander was included in Forbes' fifth annual "50 Over 50" list in the Impact category.

We honored role models in the field:

- + **Meghan Grady, Executive Director, Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island**, was presented with the Sister Alice Marie Quinn Award for being an influential Meals on Wheels leader committed to combatting senior isolation and hunger with compassion, love and respect.
- + **PetSmart Charities** was presented with the Driving Force Award for being an exceptional Meals on Wheels America partner committed to impacting the lives of homebound seniors.

We are grateful for our members, the role they play in the greater Meals on Wheels movement and the work being done in each community to ensure no senior is forgotten.

Together, we will further our efforts to End the Wait in 2026 and beyond.

Join Today To Gain These Member-Only Benefits

When you become a Meals on Wheels America member, you gain access to powerful tools, exclusive resources, and a national network dedicated to supporting your success. From advocacy support and funding opportunities to peer learning, marketing campaigns, and national branding – membership helps you grow your impact.

Membership@MealsonWheelsAmerica.org