



MEALS on WHEELS
AMERICA



2025

Annual Report

Message from Our Leaders

In August 2024, we launched our strategic plan to **End the Wait®**, committing to a future where every senior who needs Meals on Wheels receives it.

From the start, we designed this plan to be nimble and adaptable — ready to meet the moment and respond to the evolving needs of our network. Over the past year, that flexibility proved essential. While we made meaningful progress, the challenges grew steeper and the urgency of our mission became even clearer.

The year 2025 brought unprecedented uncertainty and challenges to Meals on Wheels programs, from ongoing threats to federal funding and the longest government shutdown in history to rising costs and growing need. **Yet through it all, our network remained steadfast** — continuing to show up for seniors and communities across the country. At the same time, Meals on Wheels America deepened its investment in bolstering the network so local providers can continue delivering the critical services older adults depend on.

Today, however, the need to End the Wait is more pressing than ever. **Nearly 14 million seniors in the United States face hunger, and 56% report feeling lonely.** Despite tireless efforts from local Meals on Wheels providers, government funding and private donations have not kept pace with the growing demand or the rising costs of food, fuel and operations. As a result, too many seniors are left waiting months — or even years — for help. **Today, 1 in 3 local providers maintains a waitlist, with an average wait time of four months.** Without action, this gap will only widen. We simply cannot afford to wait any longer.

The strength of Meals on Wheels has always come from the powerful partnership between public and private support that sustains our model, working together to care for older neighbors in communities nationwide. In 2025, that spirit of collaboration remained strong, with companies, foundations and individuals across the country stepping up to help fill the gap and meet the moment.

As we look ahead, **we know your support will be essential to all that's still to come**, as it fuels the network that millions of seniors rely on every day and makes it possible to reach more older adults, more effectively, at a time when it matters most.

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



Ellie Hollander
President and CEO,
Meals on Wheels America



LuAnn Oatman
Board Chair,
Meals on Wheels America

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

Together, We Are ...



1,055 senior nutrition
providers strong



Operating in nearly
every community



Collectively serving more than
2 million seniors annually



PEACE OF MIND FOR ROBERT AND HIS DAUGHTERS

Robert went blind at age 54, ending his teaching career and making everyday tasks like cooking or going outside alone dangerous. Living alone in suburban San Antonio, he relied on his daughters for meals, often eating foods like pizza, sandwiches and macaroni.

As his health declined, a caregiver suggested he apply for Meals on Wheels. After six months on the waitlist, he now receives nutritious meals and regular visits from Meals on Wheels San Antonio five days a week.

"My daughters feel good because they know Meals on Wheels provides for me," Robert says. "I thank my lucky stars that we have people who have the ideals to help other people, other human beings like us, who can't drive, who are blind, who are handicapped, who can't go anywhere or are stuck in the house."

Strengthening the Network with Scalable, Locally Led Solutions

Meals on Wheels America awarded more than **\$5.4 million to 392 local providers**, 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 NATIONAL GRANT PROGRAMS:



34,070
Total clients served



13,467
New clients served



11,255
Participating Volunteers



381,610
Volunteer Hours



Throughout the year, we convened the network to explore how we can expand capacity and better serve older adults across a spectrum of needs:

- **Peer Practices Showcase:** Sessions designed by senior nutrition providers for senior nutrition providers, tackling shared challenges and elevating innovative, field-tested solutions.
- **Volunteer Symposium:** Brought leaders together across the network to explore innovative strategies, tools and approaches to recruit, retain and engage volunteers in new and effective ways.
- **Meals on Wheels Annual Conference & Expo:** Convened 700 attendees in person to exchange ideas, strengthen connections and rally around our shared mission to improve the health and well-being of older adults.
- **Meals on Wheels Connect:** Engaged 3,000 people through our online community, fostering real-time connections, knowledge sharing and access to timely news and resources.



MRS. JANIE'S STORY

Mrs. Janie, who has five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, has experienced a lot of joy in her life. Yet, in recent years, the loss of her husband and compounding health challenges left her feeling disconnected from her community and unable to maintain her independence. Her caregivers recommended she try Meals on Wheels. The decision was life changing.

"They make you feel like you're more... you're a friend," Mrs. Janie says.

Mrs. Janie has left an enduring impact on the lives of volunteers and built lasting relationships, like with Claire, whom she helped put on the path to marriage with her husband; Paul, who often brings her a chocolate milk on the side; Joe, who enjoys talking about family; and Sandra, whom she's bonded with over fashion.

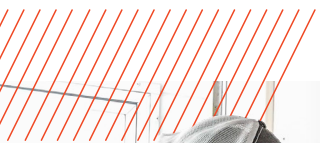
"I'm very blessed to have Meals on Wheels," Mrs. Janie says. "I'm very blessed for all the people it takes to make Meals on Wheels [possible]. It comes from so many people, from all directions, and all [walks] of life."

To strengthen local providers' ability to meet growing demand, we expanded our learning resources to reach more organizations and build capacity across the country:

- **Tools to End the Wait:** As Meals on Wheels providers navigate growing demand, rising costs and insufficient funding, we built on the End the Wait platform to develop a robust library full of resources and templates, equipping local providers to mobilize greater public and private support for their organizations.
- **Social Connection Toolkit:** With older adults spending more time alone than any other age group, addressing social isolation and loneliness remains a critical priority for the Meals on Wheels network. That's why we created the Social Connection Toolkit to equip providers with practical strategies and tools to foster life-changing 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 providers turn data into action – strengthening their ability to make the case for support to policymakers, funders and their communities.
- **Medically Tailored Meals Toolkit:** More older adults are living with chronic conditions, and tailored meals are an increasingly important part of supporting their evolving nutrition, health and wellness needs, leading to improved health outcomes. We added new resources to our Medically Tailored Meals Toolkit to help providers explore, implement and expand their tailored nutrition offerings to serve more seniors.

Together, these resources are helping local providers strengthen operations, expand reach and deliver more impactful services to the seniors who need them most.



THE HEALING POWER OF A MEAL

Barry, a veteran living in South Dakota and a member of the Lakota Nation, was diagnosed with Parkinsons three years ago.

Before Meals on Wheels, Barry, who lives on a fixed income and jokingly describes himself as a terrible cook, survived on a steady diet of microwaveable meals, including pizza and fries. When Barry began to struggle, including experiencing rapid weight loss, his doctor knew nutrition was crucial to managing the disease and suggested he try Meals on Wheels. The meals were a gamechanger.

Thanks to Meals on Wheels Western South Dakota, he's gained 40 pounds and learned to love beets for the first time in his life. "I found out how good [a healthy] diet is and how much of a difference it can make having extra vitamins," Barry says of the nutritious meals delivered to his door.



Sharon and her dog Kali Mae receiving our 15 millionth pet meal

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

We leveraged powerful partnerships to expand reach, unlock resources and scale services for older adults 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 providers nationwide.
- **The Home Depot Foundation**, with their generous support for the Helping Homebound Heroes grant program, continued to enable 20 providers to deliver necessary home repairs and safety modifications that help veteran seniors. In 2025, we celebrated a major milestone – 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 Charities renewed their commitment at our conference for another three years.

- **Caesars Foundation** powered grants that enabled 18 providers 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 providers 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+ providers and waived delivery fees for the month of November for eligible providers in response to disruptions caused by the government shutdown.

These partnerships reflect the power of collaboration to unlock new resources, scale proven solutions and accelerate impact. As the need continues to grow, so does the opportunity to partner in building a future where every senior is nourished, connected and supported.

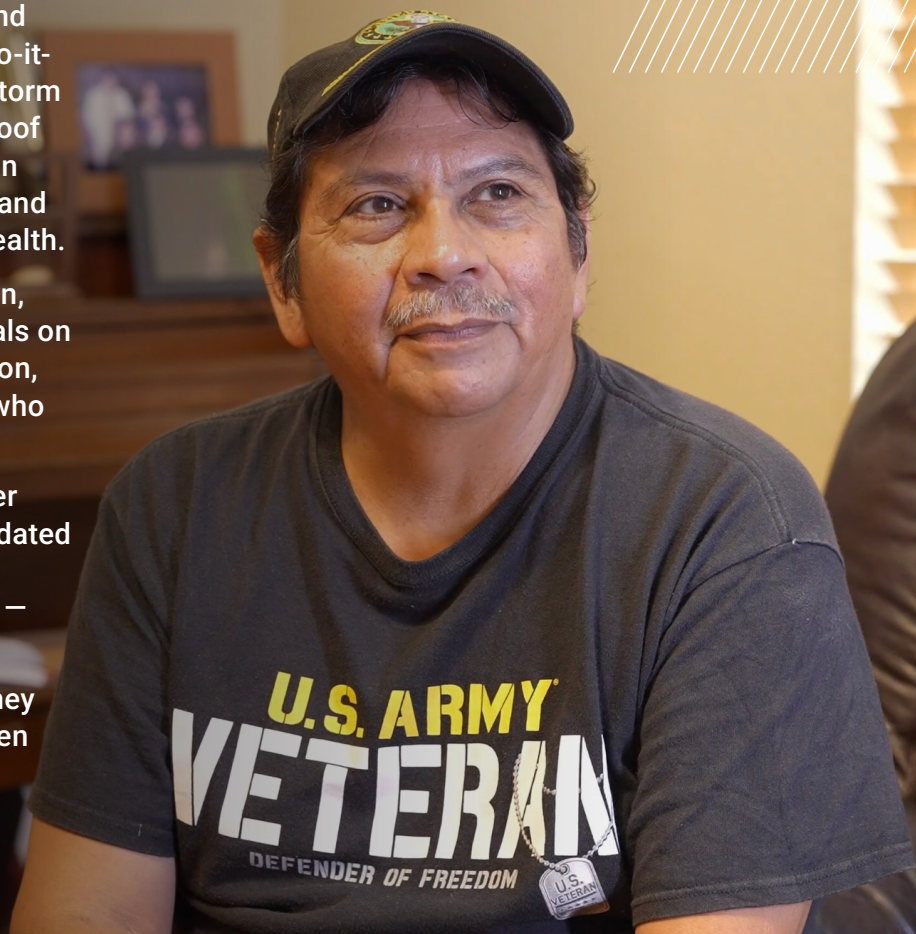
HELPING HOMEBOUND HEROES

Juan Lopez, a 63-year-old U.S. Army and Air Force veteran, has always been a do-it-yourself kind of guy. But when an ice storm sent a tree limb crashing through the roof of his home, the damage was more than he could handle. Water seeped inside, and mold quickly took a toll on his wife's health.

Desperate to make his house safe again, Juan reached out to Central Texas Meals on Wheels and The Home Depot Foundation, which partner to help senior veterans who need home repairs and modifications.

Crews replaced his roof and made other major upgrades, such as replacing outdated windows, installing a new furnace and adding walk-in showers with grab bars — nearly \$40,000 in work.

"I don't know what I would've done if they had not stepped in," Juan said. "It's been such a blessing in our lives."



TWO DECADES OF SERVICE

For Sara, who has been volunteering for Meals on Wheels for 20 years, the seniors she visits feel more like adopted friends and family than clients.

"I can't imagine not having Meals on Wheels," Sara admits. "It gives me more than I give them. I think about my clients all week."

Sara knows firsthand the lifesaving role a volunteer can play in the life of a homebound senior. "You could be the one person who finds out [a client] is having a stroke."

Sara, now 75, says she is in it for the long haul, "I intend to do Meals on Wheels until I can't read my GPS."



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

We leveraged our voice and influence to advocate for the resources and policies local Meals on Wheels providers need to serve their communities. In a year marked by significant strain and driven by federal inaction and growing demand, we worked to elevate the urgency of senior hunger and isolation and ensure older adults remained a national priority.

With each policy challenge throughout the year, we responded with focus and urgency, demonstrating the strength of our network and the work that is happening every day to support older adults to live nourished and connected lives.

- **We highlighted the impact of the Older Americans Act (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 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.



HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. delivering lunch to a Meals on Wheels client

Through sustained advocacy and strong partnerships, we are elevating the needs of older adults on a national stage, protecting critical resources and shaping policies that strengthen communities across the country.

RIGHT WHERE SHE WANTS TO BE

Dawn, 69, lives in a trailer deep in the wilderness about 12 miles from the city of Lead, South Dakota. She loves watching the mornings unfold, seeing local wildlife and spending time with her dog, Barney.

After surviving a stroke and lung cancer and now relying on an oxygen tank that makes cooking dangerous, Dawn depends on Meals on Wheels to stay healthy and remain in her home.

"I was shocked when they said I might receive [meals]," Dawn says, whose distance from town makes qualifying for many assistance programs difficult. She now receives weekly meal deliveries every Tuesday that help her maintain her independence and live at home, close to nature.

"There's nowhere in the world that I would wish to be other than right where I am, and Meals on Wheels helps make that possible," Dawn says.



We advanced and published research and insights 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 providers 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.



MORE MONEY, MORE MEALS

"For years, we were able to avoid having a waitlist," shared Chris Lambert, director of meals at Meals on Wheels Oklahoma City. "Any time someone was eligible for home-delivered meals, we were able to say, 'yes, we'll see you tomorrow.'"

During the pandemic, they expanded services to meet growing needs among vulnerable seniors. But as pandemic-era federal funding and donations dried up, they were eventually forced to create a waitlist.

"Our greatest barrier to serving additional people is always going to come back to a financial restriction. The more money you have, the more people you're able to serve," says Associate Director Morgan Jones.

Yet, one victory at a time, they are expanding their reach and capacity, with the hope of one day ending the waitlist. "It's one of my favorite calls to make. To call someone and say, 'I know you've been on the waitlist. We've had some space come available in your area, and we'd like to get you started on the program,'" shared Jones.



Through our campaigns, we mobilized support for Meals on Wheels nationwide – raising awareness, engaging new audiences and driving meaningful action to support older adults:

- 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), Lormor 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, helping to expand the workforce needed to serve seniors.
- **More than 34,000 messages** were sent to Congress urging 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 those whose compassion, leadership and commitment are making a meaningful difference in the lives of older adults every day:

- **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 deeply grateful for our partners, supporters and advocates for the role they play in strengthening the Meals on Wheels movement and ensuring no senior is forgotten.

Together, we will carry this momentum forward, expanding our reach, deepening our impact and advancing our efforts to End the Wait in 2026 and beyond.

Financials

REVENUES*

In-kind contributions	\$761,459
Grants and contributions	\$41,036,069
Conference	\$822,269
Program Service Fee	\$1,029,979
Membership dues	\$500,568
Other income	\$92,955
Total revenue	\$44,243,299

EXPENSES

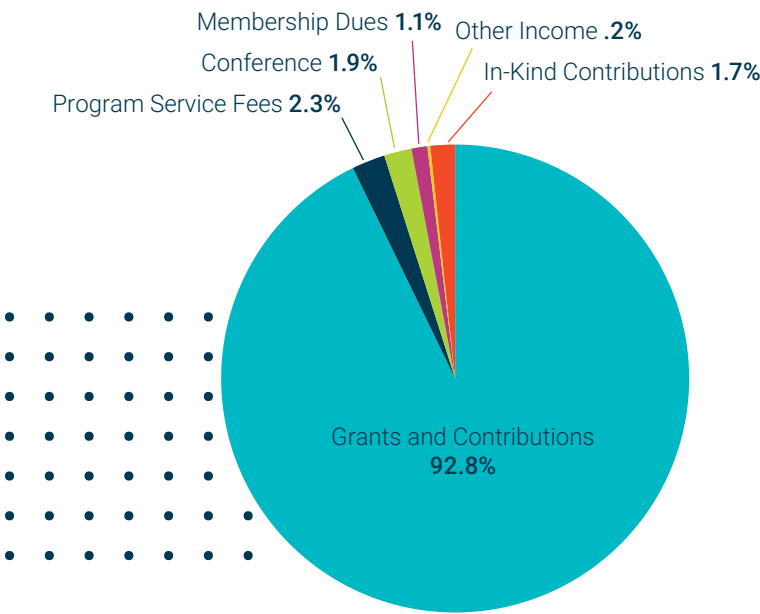
Program services	\$20,404,937
Management and general	\$2,495,204
Development	\$6,508,026
Total expense	\$29,408,167

Change in net assets from operations	\$14,835,132
Investment income (Loss)	\$3,595,300
Change in net assets	\$18,430,432

Net assets, beginning of year	\$36,282,038
Net assets, end of year	\$54,712,470

*While we advocate for federal funding to support local providers, Meals on Wheels America’s own funding is entirely private.

2025 SOURCES OF FUNDS



Board – August 2025

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President and CEO
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Baltimore, MD

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Stephanie Freeman
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Meals on Wheels of Cheyenne
Cheyenne, WY

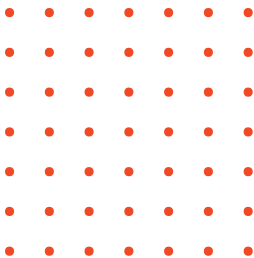
Marvin Irby
Former Chief Administrative Officer
Senior Advisor to the President and CEO
National Restaurant Association
Washington, DC

Derrick Banks Mashore
Founder and CEO
Myers Mosaic Group
Washington, DC

Jennifer Steele
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San Francisco, CA

Lisa Wideman
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Meals on Wheels Western Michigan
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Doug Wright
President and CEO
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President and CEO

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Chief Development and Marketing Officer

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Jennifer Allen
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