FACT SHEET SOURCES & METHODS

MEALS ON WHEELS FUNDING EXPLAINED

Note:

- This fact sheet presents the most recent data available on the topic at the time of publication.
- To provide the most accurate and current information, some data may come from different sources than prior iterations of this fact sheet. Because sources, data collection methods, and reporting vary across sources and years, caution should be used when comparing figures from prior fact sheets.
- The data are estimates and have a margin of error. For some data sources, small changes in estimates are common and should not be overemphasized, as they may reflect differences in samples or methodology rather than a meaningful trend. These fact sheets provide a snapshot of the topic, but changes over time should be interpreted with care.

Federal funding creates the foundation.

A. **"9 out of 10 local Meals on Wheels programs receive federal funding"** is from the Meals on Wheels America 2026 Member Benchmarking survey, conducted by Meals on Wheels America.

B. **" and for more than 60% of providers, federal funding represents half or more of their total budget"** are from the Meals on Wheels America 2023 Member Pulse Survey, conducted by Meals on Wheels America.

C. **"The primary source of 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"**

- **"32% of the costs"** is from Meals on Wheels America calculations using data from Administration for Community Living Aging, Independence, and Disability (AGID) Data Portal Data Explorer. Filters: Data Set: State Performance Reports (SPR) (Title III); Years: 2024; Geography: all U.S. Totals, 50 States + DC & Territories; Data Elements: Older Adults Expenditures --> Title III Expenditures --> Congregate Meals and Home Delivered Meals, Older Adults Expenditures AND Total Expenditures --> Congregate Meals and Home Delivered Meals. Data available at: https://agid.acl.gov/data. Accessed 10/14/2025.
- **"Serve over 2 million seniors annually"** is from Administration for Community Living AGID Data Portal Data Explorer. Filters: Data Set: State Performance Reports (SPR) (Title III); Years: 2024; Geography: all U.S. Totals, 50 States + DC & Territories; Data Elements: Older Adults Persons and Units --> Total Persons by Service --

> Congregate Meals and Home Delivered Meals. Data available at: https://agid.acl.gov/data-explorer Accessed 10/14/2025.

D. **"Meals on Wheels America is the leadership organization supporting approximately 5,000 community-based organizations across the country…"** is from the Administration on Community Living (ACL), "Nutrition Services." Last modified on 02/02/2024. https://acl.gov/programs/health-wellness/nutrition-services

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

E. **"Nearly 14 million seniors are threatened by or experience hunger"** is from Meals on Wheels America analysis of data from the December 2024 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement. Data include adults age 60 and older who were categorized as having experienced "marginal food security," "Low food security" and/or "Very low food security." Data available at: https://www.census.gov/data/datasets/time-series/demo/cps/cps-supp_cps-repwgt/cps-food-security.html Retrieved 1/26/2026. Note: you will need statistical software to analyze the data.

F. **"56% of seniors feel lonely"** is from Meals on Wheels America analysis of data from the 2022 Health and Retirement Study (HRS), weighted data. Based on UCLA 3 items: (How often do you feel that you lack companionship / left out / isolated from others?). Includes persons age 60 or older who reported "some of the time" or "often" to any of the three questions. Note: You need statistical software to analyze the data.

G. **"Gas prices increased 53% from 2015 to 2025"** is from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics time series data. Series Title: Gasoline, unleaded regular, per gallon/3.785 liters in U.S. city average, average price, not seasonally adjusted, U.S. city average. Calculations from January 2015 to March 2025. Available at: https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/APU000074714 Data extracted on: November 4, 2025

H. **"Grocery prices increased 30% from 2014 to 2024**" is from Sweitzer, M., U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Food-away-from-home price growth outpaced food at home and overall inflation over past decade. Available at: https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/charts-of-note/chart-detail?chartId=109406

I. **"Only 1% of philanthropy goes to aging issues"** is from Candid's US Social Sector site. Data are based on total grants awarded by U.S. private and community foundations in 2022 and captured in Candid's databases. 1% of total grant dollars awarded by U.S. private and community foundations in 2022 went specifically to serving the aging/seniors population. https://candid.org/explore-issues/us-social-sector/money

J. **"85% of Americans support federal funding for home-delivered meals through the Older Americans Act" and "87% of Americans support federal funding for congregate meals through the Older Americans Act"** statistics are from The John A. Hartford Foundation, Age-Friendly Insights Poll: Bipartisan Public Support for Older Americans Act Programs (2025). Available at: https://www.johnahartford.org/resources/view/age-friendly-insights-poll-bipartisan-public-support-for-older-americans-act-programs?utm_source=The+John+A.+Hartford+Foundation+Email+List&utm_campaign=f0472c9258-AFI_OAA_EAlert&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c762038350-f0472c9258-119134585

K. **"1 in 3 local providers has a waitlist with seniors waiting on average more than 4 months for vital meals"** data points are from the Meals on Wheels America 2026 Member Benchmarking Survey, conducted by Meals on Wheels America.

HELP US END THE WAIT. FUND AND SUPORT MEALS ON WHEELS.