



# Motion

A MEALS ON WHEELS PEOPLE NEWSLETTER



**SUMMER 2025**

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Scan the QR code to donate today.



# Letter FROM the CEO

## Showing Up, No Matter What

***“I live on a fixed income. When the rent and bills are paid, there’s not always much left for food. Without Meals on Wheels People, I don’t know how I’d eat the week before my Social Security check.”***

***We hear stories like this every day. That’s what your support makes possible.***

As we begin a new fiscal year, Meals on Wheels People is moving forward with both **gratitude and determination**. While we don’t know what the federal funding for senior nutrition will look like this fall, the reality is that even **proposed funding for these programs remains flat — and far below what’s needed** to meet growing demand in our community.

In addition, massive cuts to Medicaid and SNAP benefits could have significant consequences for older adults. When older adults lose access to essential supports, they turn to us for help, which means more folks requesting more meals just as public funding becomes more uncertain. These programs aren’t abstract budget lines — they’re lifelines for many of our participants.

Plus, rising food and labor costs, combined with the end of

temporary pandemic-era funding, meant we had to **reduce our annual operating budget**.

Let me be clear: Despite the challenges we’re facing, **our commitment hasn’t changed**. We will continue to show up for older adults across the Portland-Vancouver metro area — delivering meals, connection, and care with the same heart and purpose we’ve had for over 55 years.

But we cannot ignore the reality: **Demand is rising, funding is not, and the pressure on our system is growing.**

We’ve never had a waitlist for our meals or services, and we do not want one now. Our ability to say yes when we get a call for help is not luck — it’s years of careful and efficient planning, strong community partnership, and committed supporters like you stepping up. And ensuring we don’t have to start a waitlist takes strategy, resources, and urgency. **We need your partnership now more than ever.**

You’ll see in the infographic on the next page where our funding comes from. What you may not realize is that **every dollar we raise here stays here**, serving your neighbors and strengthening our local community. Meals on Wheels People is not a chapter of a national organization. We’re a **local, independent nonprofit serving local people** — our friends, families, and neighbors.

There’s still so much uncertainty. But here’s what we know: With your help, Meals on Wheels People **will keep showing up**. We will keep fighting for the dignity, health, and independence of older adults. And with your continued support, we’ll keep serving the people who need us most.

With gratitude and resolve,

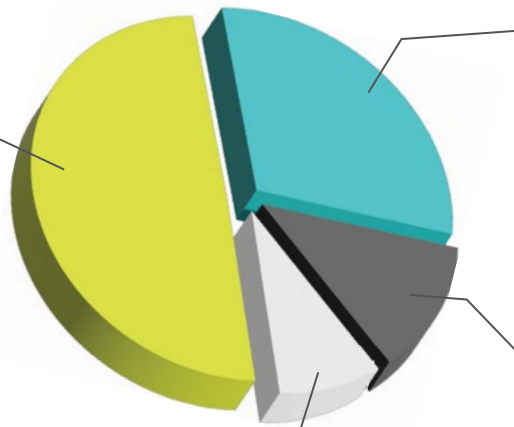


Suzanne Washington  
CEO, Meals on Wheels People

# Where Our Funding Comes From

**49.41%**  
**COMMUNITY SUPPORT**  
*Individual donors, foundations and grants, corporate partners, and board giving*

**8.70%**  
**OTHER INCOME**  
*Investment earnings and miscellaneous revenue*



**29.16%**  
**GOVERNMENT FUNDING**  
*Support from the Older Americans Act (OAA), Medicaid, and local government contracts*

**12.73%**  
**PROGRAM REVENUE**  
*Revenue from The Diner, our Medically Tailored Meals program in partnership with local health systems, and other earned-income sources*

**Every dollar we raise here stays here.** Community support is our largest slice — a reminder that *your* generosity keeps Meals on Wheels People delivering meals, connection, and care with no waitlist.

## A NOTE ON NATIONAL VS. LOCAL

Meals on Wheels People is not a chapter of a national organization. We are a local, independent nonprofit, and we rely on community support to sustain our programs. While we collaborate with Meals on Wheels America, we are not governed or funded by them. When you give to MOWP, you are investing in older adults *in your own community*.

*Quarterly*  
**IMPACT STATS**  
APRIL 1-JUNE 30, 2025



**7,604**  
**individuals served**



**314,105**  
**meals served**



**5,588**  
**Friendly Chats & safety calls**

## SAVE THE DATES

### **Hunger Action Month**

September is Hunger Action Month. Visit [mowp.org/advocacy](http://mowp.org/advocacy) to call your representatives and speak up for seniors.

### **Timbers Fundraiser**

Join us **Sept. 13** for an exciting Timbers match and support Meals on Wheels People! When you buy through our special link,

**\$5 from every ticket goes directly to MOWP!** Visit [bit.ly/timberslovemowp](http://bit.ly/timberslovemowp).

### **Give More 24!**

After a two-year hiatus, the Greater Vancouver Chamber is bringing back this **day of giving for Southwest Washington!** Mark your calendars for **Sept. 25** and help us raise critical funds

to support older adults in Clark County. Visit [givemore24.org/organization/Meals-On-Wheels-People](http://givemore24.org/organization/Meals-On-Wheels-People).

### **Donate Dinner Returns**

Our biggest community campaign of the year is back this November! Stay tuned!

# What's in a Meal? More Than You Think

FOOD IS MEDICINE — AND MEALS ON WHEELS PEOPLE IS DELIVERING IT EVERY DAY

Every year, millions of older adults are hospitalized for preventable conditions made worse by poor nutrition. But with the right support, they don't have to be. Our meals are designed to do more than nourish. They help people manage chronic conditions, prevent hospitalizations, and stay safe at home.

People who receive medically tailored meals experience a **16% reduction in net health care costs**. In fact, **we're able to provide a year** of medically tailored meals for the cost of one day in the hospital. With fewer hospitalizations and emergency visits — **up to 70% fewer emergency department visits, 50% fewer hospital stays, and 72% less emergency transport** — these meals are more than lunch or dinner; they're **cost-effective health care**.

We sat down with **Erica Silveira, MS, RD, LD**, our in-house registered dietitian. Erica brings over nine years of experience — from hospital systems to dialysis centers — and now leads our efforts to ensure every meal meets the specific needs of the seniors we serve.

*Note: This interview has been condensed and edited for clarity. Read the full Q-and-A with Erica and learn more about how food is medicine at [mowp.org](http://mowp.org).*

## Our Monthly Grocery List

What goes into the meals we serve each month?

15,405 lbs of chicken

7,840 lbs of brown rice

5,112 lbs of broccoli

8,955 cartons of milk

12,250 apples



**\$250** buys milk for 125 seniors

**\$50** buys an entire case of apples

**Q:** Why is senior nutrition so important — and different from general nutrition?

**A:** A lot changes as we age. Natural muscle loss means seniors need more protein. Bone loss is common, so nutrients like calcium and vitamin D are even more important. Mobility can decline, which makes shopping and cooking harder. Appetite often changes, sometimes because of dental issues. And isolation or lack of transportation can make things worse. All of this puts seniors at greater risk of malnutrition and hospitalization.

**Q:** What makes a MOWP meal different from just a “meal delivery”?

**A:** All of our meals are heart-healthy by default, with limits on sodium and saturated fat to help manage conditions like high blood pressure. We also offer two types of renal meals: one for people with chronic kidney disease and one for people with end-stage renal disease who are on dialysis. Our kitchen has redone all our recipes to meet these standards and is now adding diabetic-friendly options with specific carb and calorie ranges. Every meal we make is nutritionally balanced and built to support multiple chronic conditions.





*We received our highest participant satisfaction in five years!*

*95% of participants say the meals taste good.*

*99.8% say staff and volunteers treat them with kindness and care.*

*2 out of 3 home-delivery participants say our meals help them manage their health.*

*At our dining centers, nearly 9 out of 10 say the same.*

**Q:** Can you share an example of how our meals support someone managing a chronic condition?

**A:** Our renal meals for people on dialysis are the one I'm most proud of. They're really challenging. People in end-stage kidney disease need high protein and calories but must limit potassium and phosphorus. That balance is hard to achieve, and they often don't have the energy or support to cook for themselves. Having those meals available is huge.

I recently spoke to a participant with three forms of cancer. Her granddaughter dropped out of college to care for her. When I told her we'd get her meals, she sobbed. She said she goes to bed hungry most nights so her granddaughter can eat. Stories like that are why this work matters.



*\$10 buys 4 lbs of chicken*

**Q:** We often say our meals help people stay at home and out of the hospital. How does good nutrition do that?

**A:** They help people maintain strength and mobility and take pressure off by eliminating the need to shop or cook. That means more energy for managing their health — getting to appointments, taking medications properly. It's about stabilizing people so they can stay safe and independent.

**Q:** What's something most people don't realize about what goes into planning and preparing these meals?

**A:** It starts with our kitchen leaders brainstorming ideas — what sounds good, what feedback we're getting or culturally specific meals we want to add. Then they look at sourcing and cost. Once they build a recipe, I review it to meet nutrition standards. We make adjustments, do a taste test, and if it passes, it goes into the menu cycle. It's a long, thoughtful process — a lot of love and science goes into every dish.



# From 1970 to Today: Unstoppable

A FEW OF THE BOLD, RESOURCEFUL WAYS WE'VE REACHED OUR AGING NEIGHBORS ACROSS DECADES OF CHANGE

*Meals on Wheels People is a force of care and coordination — powered by the unwavering dedication of volunteers, staff, and supporters. For over 55 years, we've shown up for older adults in our community with purpose, creativity, and grit. From delivering meals through record heatwaves and ice storms to adapting routes, recipes, and operations in the face of a pandemic — we've never backed down from a challenge.*

*This is what resilience looks like.*

*This is what your support makes possible.*

The National Archives



## FUELING UP ON KINDNESS

During the 1973 oil crisis, Oregonians had to cope with incredibly long wait times at the pump, staggered fill-up days based on license plates, and often no gas at all at some stations. Meals on Wheels People volunteers were undeterred. “It did not stop people,” says MOWP CEO Suzanne Washington. “They waited in line for gas, rode their bikes, and walked.”



## STYLE MEETS SERVICE

Maybelle Clark Macdonald, right, a community philanthropist and longtime supporter of senior nutrition, delivered meals on foot for many years in downtown Portland — often dressed to the nines, even in the snow. She liked to call it “Meals on Heels.”

The Oregonian



## ERUPTING INTO ACTION

On May 18, 1980, Mount St. Helens erupted and blanketed the city in volcanic ash. Retired MOWP Executive Director Joan Smith and her 2-year-old daughter delivered meals after the explosion. “You had your mask on,” she recalled. “You tried to stir up as little ash and dust as possible, make your deliveries.”



## REVVING UP MEAL DELIVERY

Ester McGinnis co-founded the Southwest (Portland) Loaves and Fishes Program. Once it was up and running, she delivered meals for Meals on Wheels People on a motorcycle well into her 80s. “She believed one person could make a difference and she proved it,” her obituary read. She died in 2019 at 92 years old.

# Bite-Sized News

## DONOR SURVEY

We want to hear from you! Help us improve your experience as a supporter by completing our quick donor survey. It only takes **5 minutes!**



Return the enclosed survey by **Sept. 15, 2025**, or scan the QR code to complete it online.

## DINERS CLUB GROWS

Our Diners Club just expanded with **six new restaurants in Washington County** — making it one of the largest senior dine out programs in the nation! View the full list at [mowp.org/diners-club](http://mowp.org/diners-club).

## FRIENDLY TECH VISITS

We recently launched a new pilot program to reduce isolation and help homebound older adults stay connected. **Friendly Tech Visiting volunteers** provide

one-on-one help with phones, tablets, and other basics. You can volunteer at [mowp.org/volunteer](http://mowp.org/volunteer).

## CULTURE ON THE MENU

We've expanded our monthly cultural meal series to include **Luepke Center**. Now diners at both **Tigard and Luepke** can enjoy meals that celebrate cultural traditions and expand access to inclusive, meaningful experiences.

## GOING GREEN

We're proud to be named one of **Oregon's 100 Best Green Workplaces of 2025!** One step we've taken recently, thanks to funding from the Portland Clean Energy Fund: Installing **solar panels and battery storage** at our Westside Resource Center. Learn more about our sustainability efforts at [mowp.org/sustainability](http://mowp.org/sustainability).



## MEALS ON TWO WHEELS

Some volunteers take to their bikes to deliver meals. For many years, Bruce McCormach would load up his bike trailer with meals, fruits, and other essentials and pedal his way through the downtown streets, rain or shine. "Everybody was used to seeing me show up in my bike gear," he says. Now 74, Bruce still delivers meals every week — just by car instead of bike. "It anchors my week. I've got something to look forward to. It's special to me.

A lot of these people I've been seeing for almost a decade. You know these people. You understand their circumstances. You can tell if there are problems. You get attuned to that. That's important. That's part of the job. And part of the reward of doing the deliveries."



## PANDEMIC PROOF

The pandemic forced Meals on Wheels People to rethink its entire way of doing business in a very short amount of time. Not only did the demand for meals increase by thousands, but the nature of the virus also made safely delivering them a difficult undertaking. To limit exposure, deliveries were shifted to once a week. "It's opened up doors to do things differently into the future, which will ultimately serve our seniors better," says MOWP CEO Suzanne Washington.

## BE PART OF THE STORY

Whether you've got an hour a week or a few hours a month, you can make a real difference. Join our incredible team of volunteers and help deliver more than just a meal. Sign up today at [mowp.org/volunteer](http://mowp.org/volunteer).

NO SENIOR WILL GO HUNGRY OR  
EXPERIENCE SOCIAL ISOLATION

OUR VISION IS SUSTAINED AND ENHANCED BY THE  
OUTSTANDING GENEROSITY OF THESE COMMUNITY PARTNERS

MAYBELLE CLARK MACDONALD FUND  
M J MURDOCK CHARITABLE TRUST  
PAUL G ALLEN CHARITABLE FOUNDATION  
ANKRUM MOISAN ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS  
JAMES F & MARION L MILLER FOUNDATION  
LORA L & MARTIN N KELLEY FAMILY FOUNDATION TRUST  
JOHN & BETTY GRAY CHARITABLE FUND  
SHEEP MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY FUND  
DAVE & CHITA BECKER  
The WILLIAM G GILMORE FOUNDATION  
The HENRY LEA HILLMAN, JR FOR  
OCF FOUNDERS FUND OF THE OREGON  
WILLIAM H HUNT FUND OF THE OREGON  
NEVA SUE HAYES FAMILY FUND OF THE  
CHARLES E & SUZANNE CARL  
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& JANET E WYSS  
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R & SUE BERRY AS SVP  
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CHARD  
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FOUNDATION  
& HIRSMANN  
ASSOCIATES  
TAYLOR  
ARDWATE  
GITTE H DRAKE  
ILL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
DECATO MARCH 21, 2021


## Create a Legacy That Feeds the Future

*"We both believe in giving back, and Meals on Wheels People is an organization we trust to care for people, even after we're gone."*

—Vickie Skakel and Bob Vistica,  
volunteers and legacy donors

Join a growing community of supporters ensuring older adults receive the meals and connection they deserve — for generations to come. October is Estate Planning Month. For more information, visit [mowp.org/legacy](https://mowp.org/legacy) or contact us at 503-953-8174 or [plannedgiving@mowp.org](mailto:plannedgiving@mowp.org).

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Donate a meal:  
[mowp.org](https://mowp.org)