



Food Insecurity Through the Lens of Meals on Wheels

Every day, Meals on Wheels of Ocean County reaches over 1,000 older adults in their homes and communities — giving us a firsthand view of the challenges that affect access to nutritious food.



2,200+

seniors served
annually

286,000+

meals delivered
annually



What participants tell us

89%

would not have a
daily hot meal
without MOWOC

53%

cannot afford the
voluntary
\$3-per-meal
donation

95%

report improved
nutrition through
consistent, well-
balanced meals

97%

report greater
confidence in their
ability to live
independently



Each year, our drivers travel the equivalent of **12 trips** around the world, delivering Community, Care, and Connection to seniors across Ocean County.



More Than Meals

For a senior living alone, a meal delivery can mean a familiar face at the door, a conversation and someone checking that they're okay.

A nourishing meal

A dependable, well-balanced meal when shopping or cooking has become difficult.

Someone to connect with

A familiar driver who takes a moment to talk and helps seniors feel less alone.

Someone checking in

Our drivers must see each participant, offering peace of mind to seniors and their loved ones.

Burlington County Partnerships Advancing Food Security

Building access, coordination,
and healthier communities

Malikah C. Morris
Deputy Director
Human Services



Expanding Access Through Partnerships

500+

Homebound seniors served
through Meals on Wheels

Partnered with **Zallies Foundation** and
Food Bank of South Jersey to extend
reach to communities facing barriers
to food access

Assisted **Virtua Health** in stationing
Mobile Food Access Programs
throughout Burlington County

Together, these partnerships bring
food resources closer to residents in need



Progress in SNAP for Older Adults

1

Pre-COVID

\$16 per month

2

**During COVID
Emergency
Funding**

\$ 95 per month

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3

Currently

\$95 month/\$1140 per year

Food Security for Older Adults is more than affordability:

1

Affordability

On limited or fixed incomes, with prices rising quickly, can people afford food to not be hungry?

2

Food is medicine

With greater risk and occurrence of chronic conditions, can people get the food that supports their health?

3

Transportation

If someone no longer drives, how do they get to a grocery store?
Does transportation limit them to smaller food stores?

4

Ability

Common health changes like vision, arthritis, balance and strength affect the ability to cook -

Food Security for Older Adults is more than affordability:

5

Social contact

6 pm is the loneliest hour

6

Logistics

How do we bring people to the food or the food to the people?
How many bags of groceries can someone carry on a bus? With a walker?

7

Who is in the household?

64,000 grandparents in New Jersey are raising grandchildren.

Building Food Security Infrastructure

\$75,000

IGrants for local food banks and pantries

Food Security Office

Established to coordinate and advance countywide food security initiatives

Food Security Coalition

Founded to unite community partners around shared priorities and collaborative solutions



Bring Health Home

40+

Community
partners
engaged annually

Program addresses the intersection
of health and housing disparities

Provides lunch and protein to
support participation and
community connection

Food security is strongest when
government, nonprofits, health providers,
and community partners **work together.**





Making It Easier to Connect with Meals on Wheels

We are developing an online intake form that potential participants or their loved ones can complete without needing to call.

An easier first step: Share information about meal needs and circumstances online.

More ways to reach seniors: Hospitals and senior communities can share the form with people who may benefit from our services.

Information for follow-up: Help our staff understand each person's situation before connecting with them.



When a Driver Notices a Need

A familiar face at the door can also be someone who notices when a senior could use extra help.

Our Driver Referral form gives drivers a way to share concerns with the MOWOC office for follow-up, helping connect participants with support beyond their daily meal. Concerns may include:

- Additional food or transportation needs
- Help with bills, benefits or home upkeep
- Loneliness and a need for reassurance calls
- Changes in physical or mental well-being
- Concerns about safety, abuse or neglect
- Help with housekeeping or respite care



Closing the Gap Takes a Network

No single organization can address every barrier facing an older adult.

Meals on Wheels can be a trusted point of entry — but meaningful food security requires strong connections among aging services, healthcare providers, municipalities, nonprofits, community organizations and families.

The stronger the referral network, the less likely an older adult is to fall through the gaps.



Innovative approaches

1

MEND

Brings monthly farmers market to a low-income senior building, serving 65+ people each time

2

Grocery store in senior buildings

Volunteer-led mini grocery selling smaller units – 1 egg, school-size carton of milk

3

Recruit local restaurants

Offer discounts and community seating

4

ROMEO

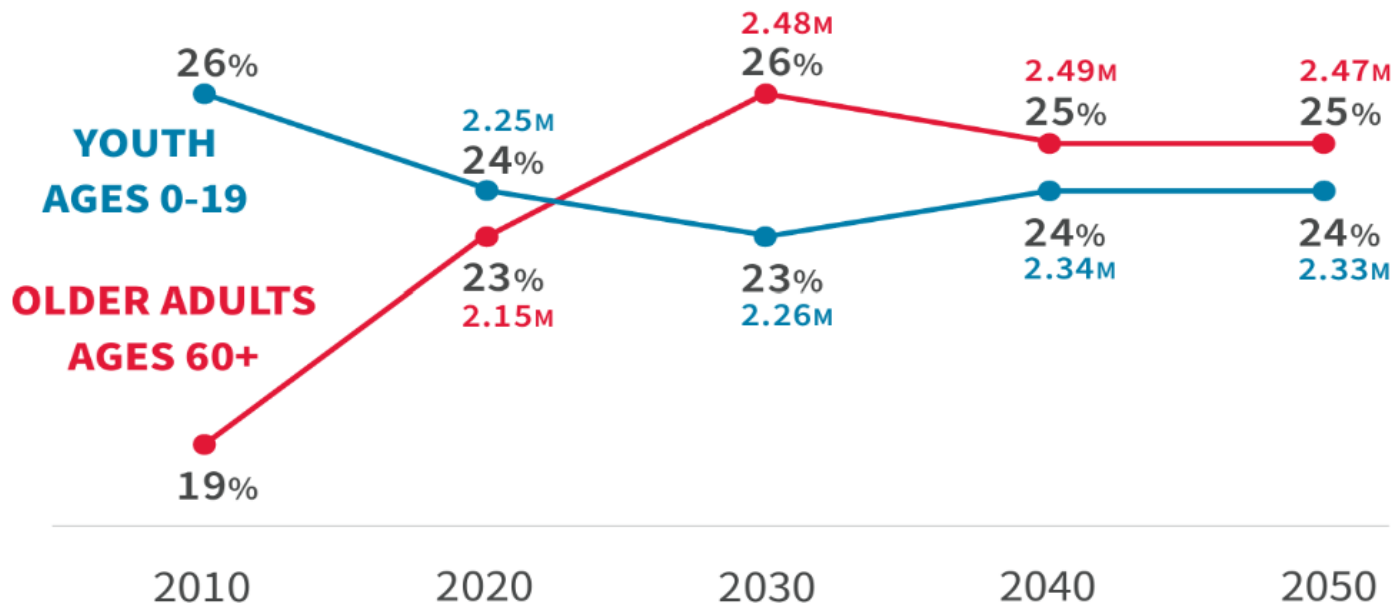
Retired Old Men Eating Out



What does innovation look like?

1. **Healthy food**
2. **Known to be income eligible**
3. **Removes barriers**
4. **Community**

Why now?





**Food is health
&
health is
everything**

Third Annual Garden State
Conference on Food Security



Thank you!

Third Annual Garden State
Conference on Food Security

