

CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date: 12/6/2024

Contact Information

Organization Name: Meals on Wheels of Chester County
Address: 404 Willowbrook Lane, West Chester, PA 19382
Phone: 610-430-8500
Website: www.mowcc.org
Year Incorporated: 1991
FEIN: 23-2636379

ED/CEO Name: Jeani Purcell
ED/CEO E-mail: Meals@mowcc.org
Board Chair Name: Cathie Leister
Board Chair Approval (check here):
Primary Contact Name: Jeani Purcell
Primary Contact E-mail: Meals@mowcc.org

Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

Arts, Culture & Humanities Environment/Animal Welfare Education
 Health Human Services Religion

Mission: To provide nutritious meals and personal interaction to homebound adults in Chester County to help them live independently in their own homes.

Geographic Area Served: Meals on Wheels of Chester County (MOWCC) covers 85% of Chester County. The towns along the main line (Devon, Berwyn, Narberth and Paoli) are covered by Main Line Meals on Wheels.

Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served: MOWCC provides hot, nutritiously balanced meals to homebound adults, primarily seniors and those with disabilities. Annually, MOWCC delivers approximately 100,000 meals to 800 homebound adults in Chester County.

Annual Budget \$671,910

88% of budget for program expenses

10% of budget for administrative expenses

2 % of budget for fundraising expenses

100 % total

0 Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff (7 part-time)

14 Board Volunteers

612 Active Non-Board Volunteers

15,457 Volunteer Hours

Top 3-5 funding sources: Chester County Department of Aging Services, PA State Waiver Program, Wyss Foundation, Campbell's Soup Foundation

Is this grant proposal for: Capacity Building or General Operating ?

If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:

Mission, Vision & Strategy Governance & Leadership Partnerships & Collaborations

Fundraising, Development & Marketing Technology Other: _____

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$5,000

Proposal Summary: Meals on Wheels of Chester County (MOWCC) is a volunteer based nonprofit seeking funds to purchase and deliver hot, nutritionally balanced meals for homebound adults (primarily seniors and those with disabilities).

The first Meals on Wheels program in the U.S. began in Philadelphia in 1954. The Chester County program delivered its first meal in 1971 in the Borough of West Chester. Volunteers from area churches organized the program and delivered meals provided by the Chester County Hospital.

The program spread throughout the county and Meals on Wheels of Chester County (MOWCC) was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 1991. Since that time, the program has grown to 21 chapters that serve different areas of the County. The chapters use different food providers depending on the location of the clients. Meals are purchased from 13 different food providers and delivered to the homes of our clients by approximately 600 dedicated MOWCC volunteers. The volunteers also serve as a consistent and caring point of contact, checking on the well-being and safety of our clients. The main office takes referrals, schedules drivers, and coordinates and manages all aspects of the operation.

MOWCC's main office is in West Chester, PA. There are seven part-time staff members who facilitate all facets of the organization, including management of: client relationships, volunteer recruitment and scheduling, finance and budgets, food provider relationships, fundraising, communications, and office administration, as well as other functions.

MOWCC volunteers deliver hot meals to clients Monday through Friday, throughout the County, and we remain the only service in Chester County that provides freshly prepared, nutritionally balanced, hot meals, as opposed to frozen or pre-packaged meals.

Each of the 13 food providers charges a different price and serves clients living in their area so food is still hot when delivered. A typical route takes approximately one hour and fifteen minutes. Our volunteers deliver the prepared meals in thermal containers and may drive as often as every week, or in some cases once a month. The main office schedules all deliveries.

MOWCC exists to help homebound residents remain in their own homes and live independently, with particular focus on seniors and adults with disabilities.

To qualify, an individual must be:

- Unable to drive or get out of the house on their own
- Living alone or have no help preparing meals during the day
- Unable to prepare meals because of a physical or psychological reason

According to the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), 90% of seniors want to remain in their own homes and communities as they age. For many, the home-delivered meals MOWCC provides are the difference between living independently in their own homes and being prematurely relocated to a nursing facility. Our program helps these individuals maintain their independence with assurance that they have access to nutritious meals. We offer hot, well-balanced meals at an affordable price. Although we ask each client to contribute to their meal price, clients are never turned away if they do not have the financial means to contribute.

MOWCC strives to strengthen and enrich the lives of our homebound neighbors by both providing a basic need, such as food, and illuminating the importance of respecting and caring for our elders. It is estimated that 50% of diseases that impact older Americans are directly related to a lack of nutritious food. The benefits of good nutrition include: increased mental acuity, resistance to illness and disease, higher energy levels, faster recuperation times and overall better management of chronic health issues.

Research has shown that when seniors have the right support, they gain greater quality of life, have fewer hospital stays, and live longer.

In a recent study commissioned by Meals on Wheels America and AARP, Brown University researchers found that home-delivered meals provide health and psychological benefits beyond basic nutrition. Seniors benefit from the daily face-to-face contact with MOWCC volunteers. They reported diminished feelings of loneliness, a greater sense of safety, less worry about remaining in their own homes, and fewer falls and hospitalizations.

Our typical client is elderly and has a degenerative medical/physical condition and lives on a very limited income with little or no family support. When lack of income is combined with frail health, seniors have difficulty obtaining adequate amounts of nutritious food. MOWCC helps seniors remain in their homes with the assurance that they receive healthy meals.

42% of our clients say the MOWCC volunteer is often the only person they see during the day. 96% say that MOWCC improves the quality of their life and helps them remaining living in their own home. 41% of clients said without MOWCC, they would not have enough to eat each day.

Our program also saves tax dollars. It costs less to provide a senior with daily, home-delivered meals for an entire year (approximately \$1,000 in Chester County), than it costs to spend one (Medicare) day in the hospital, or several days in a nursing home.

The majority of our clients are living on a low income, and many are below the poverty line. One of the primary principles of Meals on Wheels of Chester County is to serve homebound adults, regardless of their ability to pay for the meals delivered. To maintain that principle, MOWCC must raise enough money each year to bridge the gap between meal costs and client contributions. Every year, as food costs increase, so does the gap between expenses and client contributions. Our ability to fill the growing need to serve meals to homebound residents is dependent upon the amount of money we raise, as well as our ability to grow our volunteer network to reach a greater number of homebound residents on a daily basis.

Last year in Chester County, total client contributions covered only 35% of the cost of the meals delivered. With the increase of food costs and gasoline, several of our thirteen food providers are increasing the meal cost for next year. For the previous fiscal year, MOWCC's food costs were \$483,153 (a substantial increase from the year before due to food providers raising the cost of meals). Each of the 13 food providers charge a different price. Meal costs range from \$3.00 to \$6.50 across the county and that does not include administrative or operating costs. Since we operate in a large county, it is necessary to spread out the food providers so meals are delivered to our clients while the food is still hot.

Meals on Wheels of Chester County has a strong record of working with other community organizations to fulfill our mission. Our engagement initiatives within the community are designed to grow support for our mission, and to help educate the community about the need to assist homebound adults in their independence. We have established relationships with organizations such as the YMCA, food banks and cupboards, Masons, rotary clubs, chambers of commerce, health equity organizations, and others to develop support in the form of funding, food collections/donations, and volunteer hours.

We have also worked closely with local and regional government officials to convey a greater understanding of our needs as an organization. Each year we designate a day when government officials (including mayors and county commissioners) join our volunteers to help deliver meals and meet some of our clients. We work closely with government officials on an ongoing basis to ensure that funding for human services organizations like MOWCC remains a priority.

In addition, MOWCC has strong relationships with the State Managed Care Organizations (MCO's) chosen to provide in-home care for Medicare and Medicaid individuals. We work closely with the administrators and caretakers within these organizations to ensure that our shared clients' health and nutrition needs are being met.

A grant from Chester County Community Foundation would help cover the cost of meals for the increasing number of seniors who struggle with obtaining nutritious food in our county. The rising cost of groceries, prescriptions, medical care and daily living make it difficult for our seniors to pay bills. Our valuable senior population should not have to choose between paying rent or mortgages, and eating nutritious food to maintain or improve health. Additional funds raised for MOWCC will allow more seniors to remain living in their own homes, while also relieving some of the economic pressures in the County related to a growing aging population.

To achieve our goals and evaluate success, we have a very active board of directors making sure we adhere to our mission, think about the future, and look for ways to improve. Our Strategic Plan Committee reviews the five-year strategic plan quarterly. We have a Governance Committee that reviews our by-laws, policies and board members annually. The staff is reviewed annually by the Personnel Committee. The Finance Committee monitors our monthly treasurer reports and annual audit. We believe we have significant checks and balances to keep our nonprofit on track and focused on the goal to impact sustainable change in the community.

Success is measured by our ability to continue serving existing and new clients in the county and by paying our food providers for all requested meals. Although the Main Office has a reserve account, its purpose is to assist all 21 Meals on Wheels chapters/areas in Chester County, especially in emergency situations.

Our goal is that everyone in the county will know what Meals on Wheels does and how they can help support our mission to respect and care for those who are vulnerable, isolated and homebound. Not only do we strive to eliminate hunger but we also strive to eliminate elderly loneliness and isolation.

Thank you for your consideration and for your support!