



MEALS on WHEELS

WESTERN MICHIGAN

TOGETHER, WE CAN DELIVER.

Strategic Plan

2021

MISSION STATEMENT:

Provide quality nutrition services in a supportive environment to promote the health and independence of older adults.

VISION STATEMENT:

Our vision is a community where no senior is hungry or forgotten

CORE VALUES:

- Client Focused
- Compassion and Empathy
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Outstanding Teamwork
- Transparency and Honesty
- Quality and Excellence

MOWWM History

The Elderly Nutrition Program was established as a part of the 1972 Older American Act to fight senior hunger and isolation. The program provides Federal funding for congregate, and home delivered meals.

Meals on Wheels Western Michigan (originally Senior Meals Program, Inc.) was established in 1984 to address the nutritional needs of older adults in Kent County. The first programs were congregate meals and home delivered meals and the agency operated with a caterer out of Two Fountain Place in Grand Rapids Michigan.

In 1992 Meals on Wheels Western Michigan (MOWWM) moved into its first commercial kitchen at 1279 Cedar Street in Grand Rapids Michigan. The new kitchen allowed MOWWM to begin cooking from scratch to meet the growing needs of older adults.

In 1999, the first Kent County Senior Millage was passed and in 2000 our Senior Pantry dream was funded. The Senior Pantry was one of the first shopping experience pantries in Kent County allowing seniors the dignity of choosing their foods. The pantry moved several times as it grew to its current location at 1984 Fuller in Grand Rapids.

By 2008, MOWWM had outgrown its first production kitchen and administrative offices. MOWWM completed the move to the current location at 2900 Wilson Ave in Grandville, Michigan in December of 2012. MOWWM expanded its service area to include Allegan County in October of 2016.

In 2014, a choice program was created to meet the diverse preferences and dietary needs of our constituents.

In 2019, MOWWM hired a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist to improve the nutrition content of our meals and develop more special diets.

Also, in 2019 MOWWM contracted with Kennari Consulting to assess the organization's fundraising practices. MOWWM has been following the recommendations of Kennari Consulting and has implemented many changes including the hiring of experienced staff. As a result, our capacity to raise revenue through community fundraising has increased.

Between FY 2015 and FY 2020:

- MOWWM has served 31% more seniors
- Home Delivered Meals clients have grown 51%
- Congregate Meals clients have grown 28%
- Senior Pantry clients have grown 6%
- Private Contract revenue has grown 6%
- Fundraising revenue has increased 20%
- Social media interaction has doubled

Background Data:

Our nutrition programs help older adults remain independent in their homes. Research from Meals on Wheels America indicates the cost of providing one year of home delivered meals is equivalent to the cost of one day in the hospital. In Michigan the average cost of a day in the hospital is \$2,400. By investing in home delivered meals there is a significant cost savings to the community and an overall positive impact on the lives of older adults.

MOWWM is uniquely positioned to provide nutrition services to seniors with its 37 years of experience. Together with our valued partners and volunteers we accomplish our mission. Our leadership team has a combined 132 years of experience with the organization. We are the largest program on this side of the state of Michigan. MOWWM is the only program in Michigan that provides seniors with comprehensive choices with a Registered Dietitian on staff to help guide them when needed.

Meals on Wheels Western Michigan Today:

Our mission is accomplished through three main programs designed to meet the nutritional needs of older adults. Services are strategically provided based on a senior's ability to care for themselves. There is no charge for meals, but each participant is asked to contribute a suggested donation toward the cost of their meal or pantry services. However, no senior is turned away if they cannot contribute.

Congregate Meals (Dining Sites):

The Congregate Meals program provides a nutritious lunch along with activities to socially engage older adults. Currently there are 3 dining sites in Allegan County and 13 dining sites in Kent County. To be eligible, a person must be over the age of 60. There are no income requirements. In FY 2020 114,439 meals were served to 1,758 seniors.

Senior Pantry Program:

The Senior Pantry is centrally located and allows seniors may shop up to twice per month from a healthy selection of foods. To be eligible a senior must be 60 years or older, a Kent County resident and low income (at or below 200% of poverty). Seniors choose from a variety of foods designed around healthy eating from all food groups. In FY 2020, the Senior Pantry program served 2,185 seniors a total of 1,099,300 pounds of food.

Home Delivered Meals:

The Home Delivered Meals program (aka Meals on Wheels) is targeted to the frailest of older adults. To be eligible, a senior must be over 60 years of age, a resident of Kent or Allegan County, homebound and unable to prepare balanced meals. There is no income requirement.

An assessment is conducted within the first 14 days and every six months thereafter to verify eligibility and evaluate other needs the senior may have. Upon identifying other needs, referrals are made to dozens of partner organizations in the community who can address them. Over 1,000 referrals were provided in FY 2020.

Services are tailored depending on how much support a senior has from friends and family. Seniors may receive up to 14 meals per week. Friendly drivers deliver up to three times per week and provide important social connections and a safety check.

A choice program meets the diverse needs of older adult's food preferences and dietary needs. A Registered Dietitian is on staff to assist with healthy meal choices and to provide nutrition counseling.

In FY 2020 MOWWM provided 677,770 meals to 3,642 older adults.

Private Contracts and Services:

MOWWM also has several private contracts with long term care programs and other Elderly Nutrition Programs for congregate meals, home delivered meals and emergency meals. The earned income from these contracts are directed to provide additional congregate, home delivered and pantry services in Kent and Allegan Counties. Private contract revenue amounted to \$1,024,779 in FY 2020.

The Future:

In the United States, the average life expectancy is a record high of 79 years of age. There are 12,000 people turning 60 every day in the United States. According to Meals on Wheels America, nationally, 1 in 6 seniors struggles with hunger. This means that 2,000 more seniors in America each day are facing food insecurity.

According to the US Census, by 2034 older adults will outnumber their children. Because of this, there will be fewer family caregivers to address the growing needs of their parents which will make services provided by MOWWM more important than ever. Today, eight percent of older adults (approximately 7,000) in Kent and Allegan counties live in poverty. There is a projected increase of 56% in total older adults between 2016 to 2034.

MOWWM's growth has outpaced the existing facilities. In 2012 we moved into a facility that houses the food service, delivery and administration. The pantry expanded in 2011, doubling its size. Both locations are at now at or above capacity.

Because of the tremendous growth in the older adult population expected and the fact that MOWWM has outgrown its facilities, MOWWM must adapt now to continue its mission into the future. The MOWWM leadership staff and Board of Directors have identified priorities for the future.

3-5 Year Strategic Priorities

1. MOWWM will strengthen its infrastructure to sustain the growth needed to meet the increasing needs of older adults.

MOWWM plans to:

- Strengthen the MOWWM workforce through training, education and development
- Install a pay structure that will ensure a stable and engaged workforce
- Improve Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts to create an organization that is reflective of our community
- Integrate established core values into the organizational culture
- Continually update policies and procedures to ensure industry best practices are followed

2. MOWWM will grow and diversify funding to meet the growing demand for services without sacrificing quality or turning seniors away.

MOWWM plans to:

- Continue to evaluate and implement best fundraising practices identified for growth and sustainability
- Maintain and build on recent fundraising success
- Identify new revenue streams through social enterprise and private contracts
- Increase volunteer involvement to strategically support organization growth
- Increase community awareness to improve both fundraising capacity and volunteer engagement

3. MOWWM will have facilities that sustain program growth for a minimum of 10 years.

MOWWM facilities need to:

- Have enough storage for shelf stable, refrigerated and frozen foods and supplies to meet increasing future demands for service
- Have space to grow new strategic programs as they are developed
- Be designed for safety and workflow efficiency
- Have a dedicated space for volunteer training, orientation and engagement
- Be designed with multiple dedicated meeting spaces as well as employee centric space
- Have space for innovative educational programs for clients
- Have space for social enterprise that will generate revenue and engage seniors, public, staff and volunteers with MOWWM