

**2026 ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**
WISCONSIN COUNTIES ASSOCIATION

Three stars (blue, red, blue) are positioned below the association name.

Meeting the Needs of the Aging Population: The Role of
County Nutrition Programs

10:30 – 11:30 am



MEETING THE NEEDS OF WISCONSIN'S AGING POPULATION

THE ROLE OF COUNTY NUTRITION PROGRAMS

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Program Volunteer

Barron County Board
Supervisor

Agenda

- Overview of the Older Americans Act and WI Nutrition Services Program
 - Home Delivered Meals (aka Meals on Wheels)
 - Congregate Dining (aka Senior Dining)
 - Other Nutrition-related Services
- Highlight Statewide Data
- Barron County's Best Practices & Highlights
- Part of the solution to the growing aging population

Older Americans Act (OAA)

- No means testing
 - Individuals who meet eligibility criteria (e.g. age 60 and older) can receive services regardless of their income
- No fees charged
 - All recipients must be given the opportunity to contribute toward the cost of the service

Older Americans Act (OAA)

- Title III: Grants for State and Community Programs on Aging
 - Part A – General Provisions
 - Part B – Supportive Services and Senior Centers
 - Part C – Nutrition Services
 - Part D – Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Services
 - Part E – National Family Caregiver Support Program

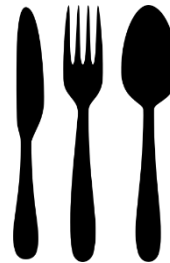
OAA Nutrition Services

- Meals
 - Congregate (community) dining
 - Home-delivered meals (Meals on Wheels)
- Nutrition education
- Nutrition counseling
- Other nutrition services

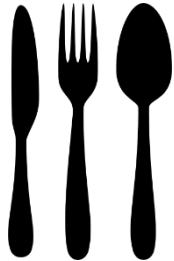
Meals



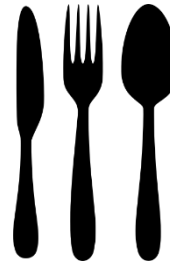
Provided in every Wisconsin county and Tribal nation by 76 nutrition programs



Must be available five days per week within the county or Tribal nation



Meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) and Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs)



Programs conduct a registration and screening process to identify eligible individuals and their need for services

Eligibili ty

- Individuals 60 and older
- Spouses of individuals 60 and older regardless of age
- Programs have the option to expand eligibility to include individuals with disabilities under age 60 who
 - Reside with an older individual (age 60+),
 - Reside in a housing facility primarily occupied by older adults where congregate dining is provided,
 - ~~Volunteer~~ Volunteer for the nutrition program.

Eligibility

- Home-delivered meals (HDMs) are limited to individuals who:
 - Are generally unable to leave their home unassisted;
 - Are unable to independently shop for or obtain food and/or prepare safe or nutritious meals;
 - Lack other meal support in the home or community; or
 - Are unable to consistently access meals at congregate dining centers.

Who is served?

- 46% live in rural areas of Wisconsin with less access to food and healthcare.
- 25% have incomes at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- More than half (56%) of Wisconsin's older adults are living with multiple chronic conditions.

Who is served?

Home Delivered Meals

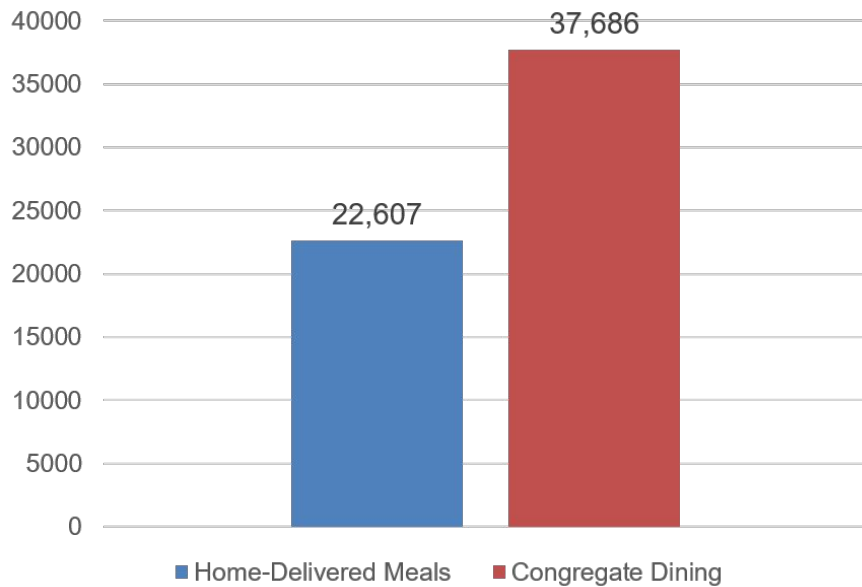
- More than half (54%) live alone.
- One in five report having fair or poor health.
- 21% report they are experiencing decreased appetite and/or weight loss and are at risk for malnutrition.
- 50% are at high risk for poor nutrition.
- Most are age 75 and older.

Congregate Dining

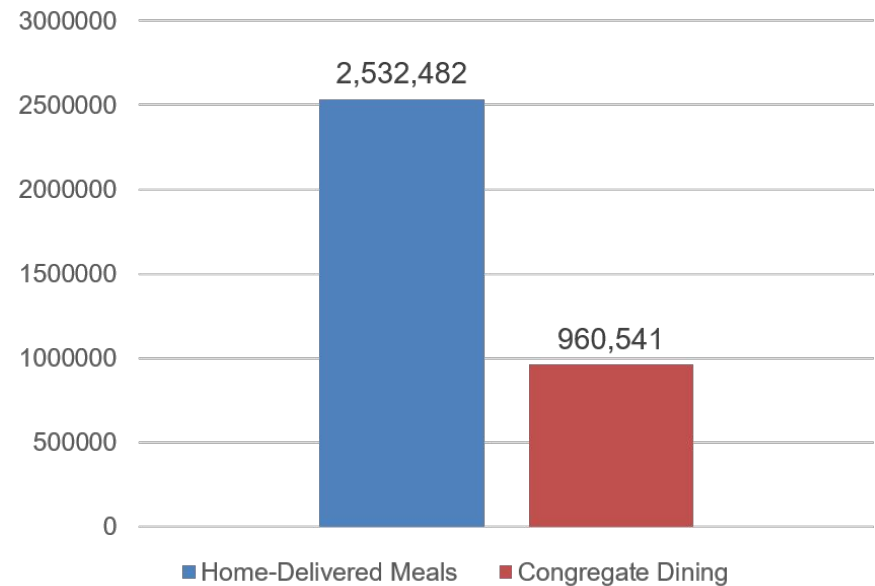
- Almost half (41%) of diners live alone.
- 13% of diners are experiencing food insecurity, or challenges accessing food.
- 16% are at high risk for poor nutrition.
- Most diners are age 65-84.

Who is served?

People

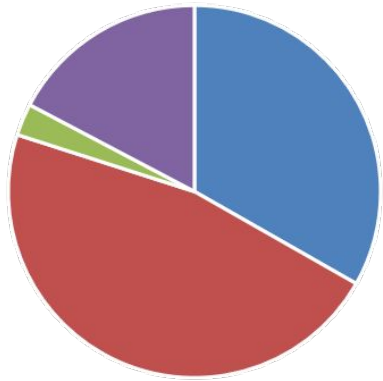


Meals



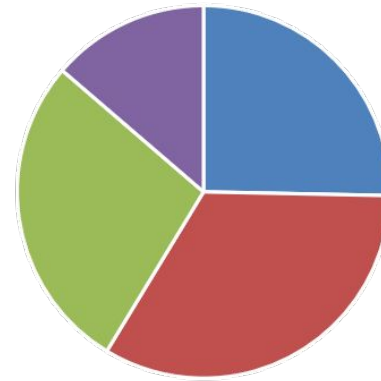
Programs rely on federal, state, and local funding

Home-Delivered Meals



- Federal (Older Americans Act)
- Local (e.g. county tax levy)
- State GPR
- Participant Contributions

Congregate Dining



- Federal
- Local
- State GPR
- Participant Contributions



Congregate dining is a critical nutrition and health prevention program that helps reduce social isolation.

Congregate meal programs provide nutritious, balanced meals; socialization and volunteer opportunities; and connection to other community services.

Program Impact

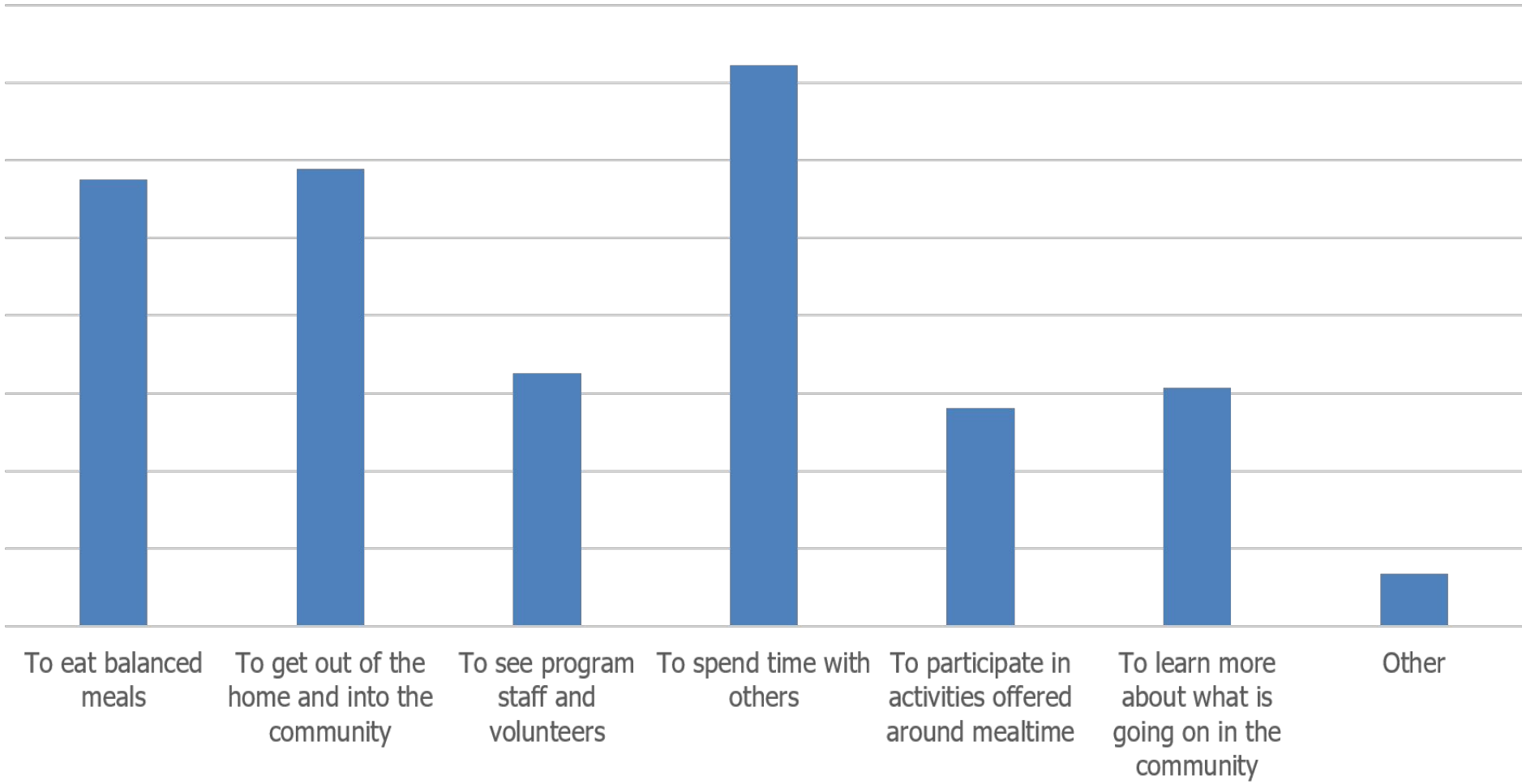


- There are approximately 375 congregate dining centers in Wisconsin.
- Wisconsin's dining centers with the highest participation are in restaurant settings, followed by community and senior centers where there are many other activities available.

Program Impact

- 98% of diners rate their overall dining experience as good to excellent.
- Congregate dining programs offer volunteer opportunities for people, many of whom are older adults themselves.
- 99% of diners rate their experience with program staff and volunteers as good to excellent.

The main reason for attending dining centers is to spend time with others.



What people are saying...

- “A place to dine with my SIL who does not get out much. Sometimes Thurs lunch is the only time she gets out all week.”
- “Give[s] me a purpose to get out of bed.”
- “Kept me from staying home alone/being depressed.”
- “I know I'll always eat better and have all my friend[s] here and others who come here to eat.”
- “Mental health has improved so much, better physical health.”
- “My labs are better when we eat here. Fun to see everyone
- “Friendships like family.”
enjoying themselves.”



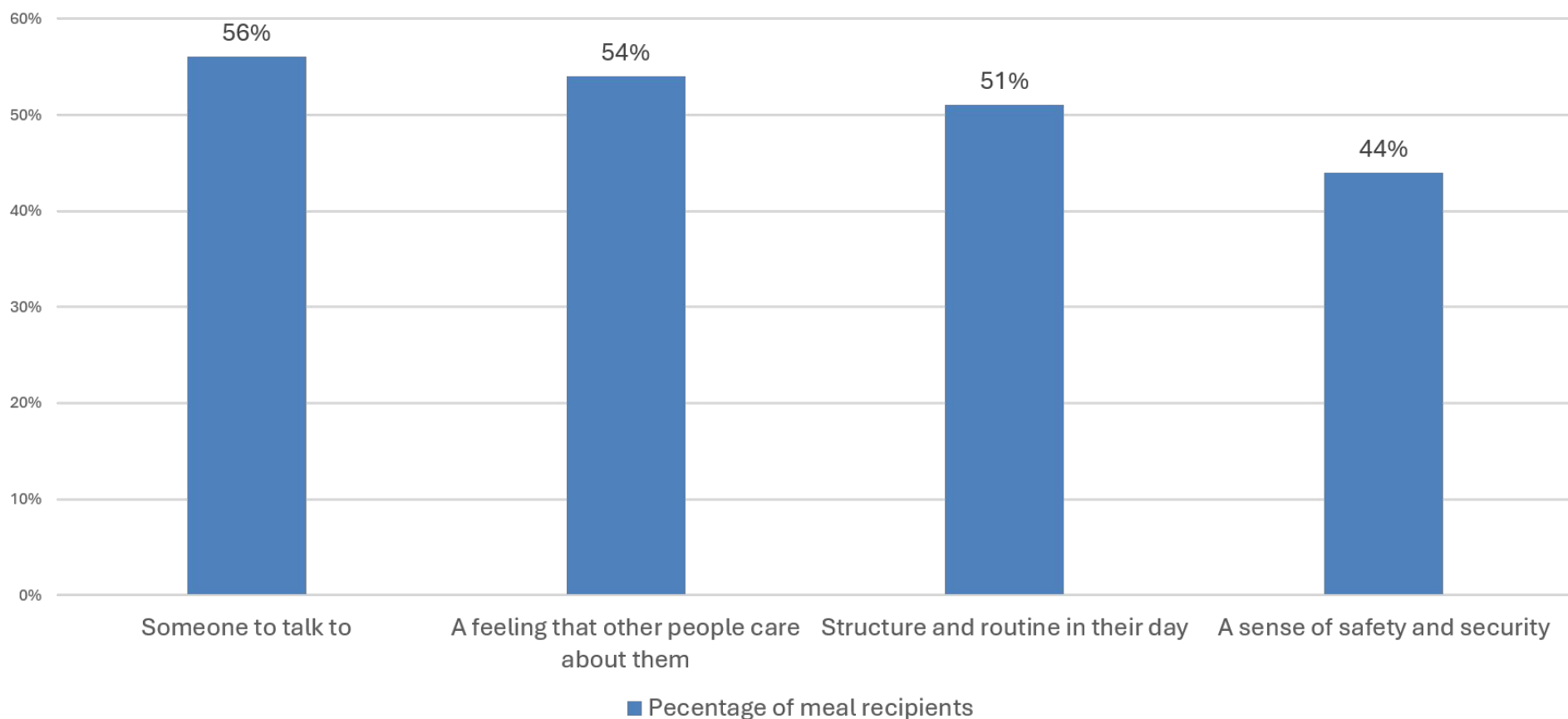
Home-delivered meals help older Wisconsinites stay in their communities.

Most of us hope to live in our homes as we age. These programs are an economical way to support healthy, independent life for us, our families, and those we care for.

Program Impact

- For approximately 35% of people receiving meals, the home-delivered meal driver is the only person they see on a given day.
- One year of home-delivered meals, including the daily wellness check, costs approximately \$3,500, which is approximately the same cost of one day in the hospital or 10 days in a long-term care facility in Wisconsin.
- 93% of Wisconsin's meal delivery drivers are volunteers.
- 99% of meal recipients rate their experience with program staff and volunteers as good to excellent.

In addition to the meal itself, recipients report that what they value most about receiving home-delivered meals is:



What people are saying...

- “The program helped keep my husband out of the nursing home for all but one year of his life.”
- “Due to low income and cost of food, I know that I will have something to eat.”
- “The volunteers are all a ray of sunshine and make me feel less alone.”
- “My family knows I'm eating healthy and get a hot meal.”
- “Saves son (caregiver) time from shopping and cooking to use that time for my treatments, medications, exercise, toileting (which keeps me out of the hospital). I'm in better health at home with family.”

Barron County's Nutrition Program

- 52 years of serving older adults
- 22 meal delivery routes
 - Home-delivered meals reach every corner of the county Monday-Friday
 - 1 weekend route
- 8 congregate dining sites
- 1 central kitchen
- 250+ volunteers
- Robust community partnerships
- Strong reputation across the county and state

Total Meals Served in 2023 (Title III Meals)

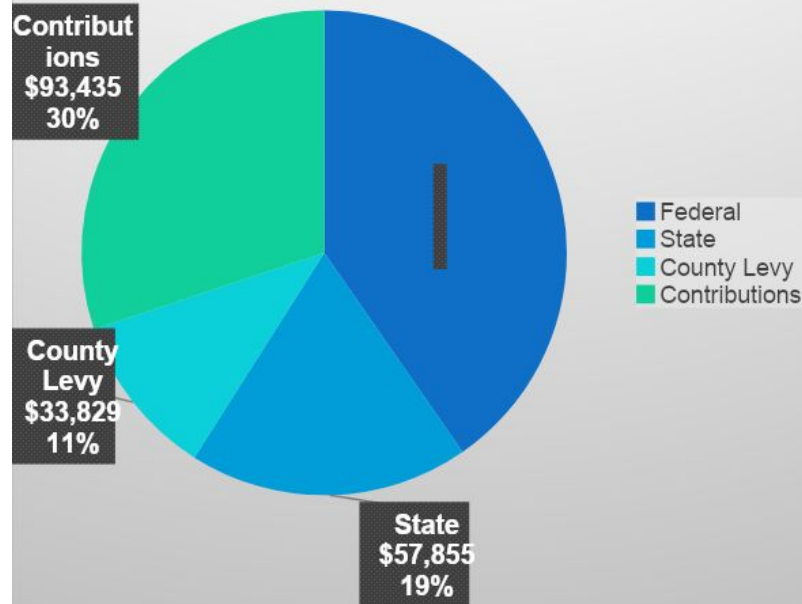
How Barron Compares Statewide

	Program <i>(pop.)</i>	Total	HDM	CONG
1	Milwaukee <i>(924,216)</i>	491,893	326,067	165,826
2	Dane <i>(590,375)</i>	270,815	164,986	105,829
3	Brown <i>(275,803)</i>	119,102	91,344	27,758
4	Waukesha <i>(417,210)</i>	117,003	92,360	24,643
5	Rock <i>(166,472)</i>	113,428	96,130	17,298
6	Winnebago <i>(174,218)</i>	113,378	90,382	18,416
7	Racine <i>(198,919)</i>	95,139	88,287	6,506
8	Eau Claire <i>(109,033)</i>	92,142	81,045	11,097
9	Barron <i>(46,484)</i>	77,439	56,941	20,498
10	Portage <i>(71,943)</i>	69,891	52,278	15,361
11	Kenosha <i>(168,448)</i>	68,175	39,611	22,835
12	Grant <i>(52,446)</i>	55,613	39,448	12,689

Nutrition Funding – Barron County

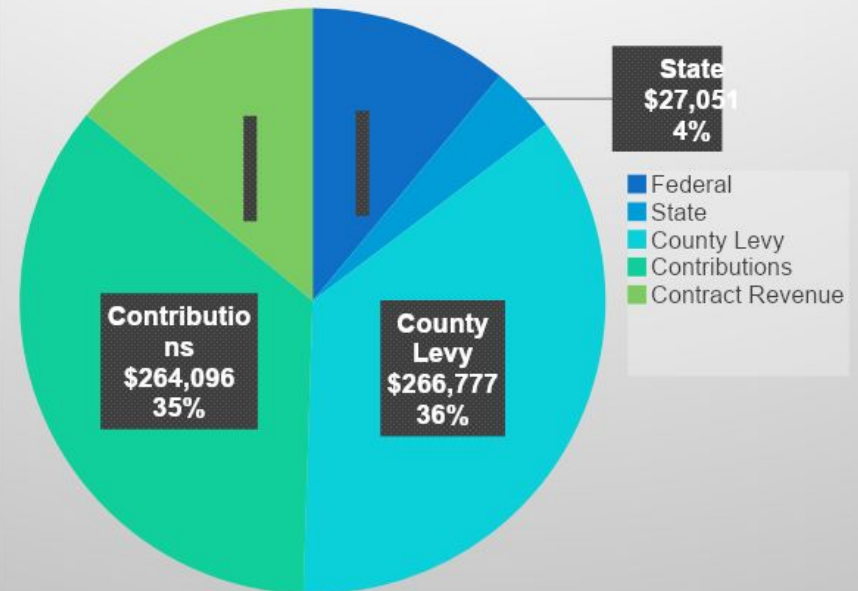
Congregate

TOTAL 2025 REVENUE \$310,292



Home Delivered Meals

TOTAL 2025 REVENUE \$744,658



Community Leaders

March for Meals 2025



County Board Supervisors

March for Meals
2025



State Representatives

March for Meals
2025



Business Leaders

March for Meals
2025



Outcomes

- ❑ Focused outreach on the importance of volunteers and the program
- ❑ Raised awareness about the Meals on Wheels program and how many older adults we serve
- ❑ Recruited Meals on Wheels volunteers to help deliver meals
 - ❑ One was a business who took on a whole route, one week a month in Rice Lake (Dairy State Bank) – **Huge success!**
- ❑ Built relationships and made connections within the community and with our representatives

2025 Volunteer Impact Report

Senior Dining Program

5972
Hours volunteered
at 8 dining sites

21,442
Congregate Meals Served



89,948
Total Meals
Served in 2025



2434
Total Number of Older Adults
Served (unduplicated)

Home Delivered Meals



63,506
Meals delivered

2509 Hours volunteered
delivering meals

13270
Miles
donated



Daybreak Program

2100
Hours volunteered
serving 15 adults
with dementia



Volunteer Hours in Other ADRC Programs

Brain Health, Men's Shed

221

Health Promotions

203

Commodities, Support Groups

131

0 50 100 150 200 250

Total Volunteer Monetary Impact

\$396,710



343
Active
Volunteers in
2025

Men's Shed - From Grant Funds to Community Investment



Outcomes

- ❑ Provides a nutritious, affordable meal
- ❑ Reaches a group of men who have never been to a dining site
- ❑ Brings men of all backgrounds together to socialize, meet new people, form new friendships
- ❑ Exposes men to other ADRC programs and services, and other dining sites
- ❑ Averages 60-70 men each month, and new participants come each month
- ❑ Transportation provided to reduce barriers
- ❑ Recently received grant money just from hearing about us



Dining at 5 Meal – More than a meal, it's an experience



Dining at 5



Lona's Senior Dining – Everyone is welcome at the table



MENU

Senior Dining at Lona's

Available every Thursday 8:00-11:00 AM

#1 Bear Lake Biscuits

Warm biscuit & sausage gravy, choice of bacon or sausage links (2), choice of 100% juice or a whole banana



#2 The Sunrise

Two-egg cheese omelet (choice of ham or veggie), hash browns, toast, choice of 100% juice or a whole banana



#3 Wild River

One large pancake or one slice of French toast, choice of bacon or sausage links (3), choice of 100% juice or whole banana



#4 Lona's Northwoods

Two eggs, hash browns, bacon, choice of toast or dollar pancakes, choice of 100% juice or whole banana



#5 Bucket of Oats

A hearty bowl of oatmeal w/ brown sugar and raisins on the side, toast, peanut butter, whole banana, 100% juice



Veggies in omelet include: onions, mushrooms, green peppers, and diced tomatoes
Milk is offered at all meals (White or Chocolate) · 100% Juice Options: Orange or Apple
Toast options: White or Whole Wheat · Coffee/tea available upon request.

We're sorry, no substitutions

Updated 4-4-2023

Lona's Senior Dining (Restaurant Model)



Outcomes

- Provides a nutritious, homemade, affordable meal
- Reaches hundreds of older adults, who may have never heard of the ADRC
 - Connects to other resources to keep them independent
 - In-home services, benefits, caregiver resources, dementia education
- It brings people together and creates friendships
 - Socialization is a HUGE component of living well
 - Adds “value” to an older adults life
- Transitions people to the Meals on Wheels program, but keeps them connected

Population Growth – Barron County

Barron County							
	Population Projections				Population Change (%)		
	2020	2030	2040	2050	'20-'30	'30-'40	'40-'50
Population by age:							
20-64	25,229	22,715	22,145	21,610	-10.0%	-2.5%	-2.4%
65-69	3,337	3,510	2,615	2,845	5.2%	-25.5%	8.8%
70-74	2,733	3,310	2,570	2,300	21.1%	-22.4%	-10.5%
75-79	2,024	2,655	2,870	2,140	31.2%	8.1%	-25.4%
80-84	1,210	1,730	2,170	1,690	43.0%	25.4%	-22.1%
85 & older	1,327	1,450	1,905	2,265	9.3%	31.4%	18.9%
Worker ratio:							
County 85 & older	19.0	15.7	11.6	9.5	-17.6%	-25.8%	-17.9%
Wisconsin 85 & older	26.7	22.6	15.4	12.0	-15.7%	-31.8%	-21.7%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration and United States Census Bureau

Population Growth - Statewide

Wisconsin							
	Population Projections				Population Change (%)		
	2020	2030	2040	2050	'20-'30	'30-'40	'40-'50
Population by age:							
20-64	3,391,820	3,196,555	3,172,305	3,146,930	-5.8%	-0.8%	-0.8%
65-69	354,789	382,575	295,545	323,510	7.8%	-22.7%	9.5%
70-74	273,536	352,835	301,315	276,160	29.0%	-14.6%	-8.3%
75-79	182,885	278,890	309,480	239,530	52.5%	11.0%	-22.6%
80-84	121,994	186,815	250,065	214,575	53.1%	33.9%	-14.2%
85 & older	126,813	141,740	206,105	261,210	11.8%	45.4%	26.7%
Worker ratio:							
Wisconsin 85 & older	26.7	22.6	15.4	12.0	-15.7%	-31.8%	-21.7%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration and United States Census Bureau

“Worker Ratio” measures traditional working-age population (20-64 years) compared to the population aged 85 and older

Aging Advocacy Day – 2nd Tuesday in May



Why Nutrition Programs Matter

- We are a prevention program
 - Good nutrition is the key to better health
 - Keep older adults living at home longer
 - 1 year of meals on wheels = the cost of **1** day in the hospital or **10** days in a nursing home
 - Takes burden off caregivers, prevents a crisis
- We reach the most vulnerable throughout the state
- We are links to resources and information
 - Ex: housing, transportation, benefit information, caregiver resources, dementia support, in-home help,

Be a Part of the Solution to the Aging Population

- ❑ Be a “Patti” – Be curious and get involved
- ❑ Find a Joe – Community Champion
- ❑ Pursue grants, try something new
- ❑ Think innovatively
- ❑ Engage the communities
 - ❑ Volunteers are the foundation
- ❑ Focus and share the positives
- ❑ Advocacy is a must



I thank
you!