



2026 Meals on Wheels Client Survey Report

Survey Snapshot

- Paper survey mailed to 866 "ACTIVE" clients in ServTracker
- Total responses to MOWRC: 234 – 27% response rate
- Survey collection methods: Paper survey return (in enclosed envelope) + online SurveyMonkey option – 81% returned paper survey and 19% completed survey online
- Survey timing: April/May 2026

Executive Summary

Meals on Wheels of Ramsey County received 234 responses to the 2026 MOW Client Survey, providing valuable feedback about meal quality, service reliability, health impacts, and client wellbeing. Overall, the results demonstrate exceptionally strong satisfaction with Meals on Wheels meals and service and reinforce the program's role in supporting nutrition, independence, and social connection for older adults and people living with disabilities across Ramsey County.

Clients reported very high satisfaction with meal quality and value, with 95% saying they would recommend Meals on Wheels to a friend. Survey responses also highlight the critical role Meals on Wheels plays in helping older adults maintain their health and continue living independently.

The survey reinforced the importance of volunteers and regular meal delivery as both a nutritional and social support system. Many respondents indicated that Meals on Wheels helps them feel less lonely or isolated, and many clients shared deeply appreciative comments about volunteers, drivers, and staff.

At the same time, the survey identified opportunities for continued improvement, including menu choice preferences, communication around additional services, and continued attention to meal quality and variety.

Key Findings

1. Very Strong Overall Satisfaction

Supporting data:

- 95% would recommend Meals on Wheels to a friend
- 95% agree the meals are a good value
- 95% agree they like the meals they receive
- 87% agree the quality of the meals is good to excellent.

Client satisfaction remains exceptionally strong across Ramsey County providers, reinforcing the importance and quality of Meals on Wheels services. Satisfaction isn't just "fine" but a core strength that we could leverage more in storytelling, fundraising, and advocacy.

2. Meals on Wheels Supports Health & Independence

Supporting data:

- 84% say Meals on Wheels helps them eat healthier foods
- 84% say Meals on Wheels helps them continue living independently
- 80% say Meals on Wheels helps improve or maintain health
- 91% say the meals provide at least half of the food they eat in a day

Survey responses show meals aren't just supplemental but are a primary food source and have significant nutritional impact on clients. Results strongly support the role Meals on Wheels plays in helping older adults age safely and independently in their homes. This is strong evidence for funders and policymakers: Meals on Wheels directly supports aging in place and preventative health.

3. Volunteers Matter

Supporting data:

- 97% say volunteers are always friendly
- 89% say meals arrive when expected
- 60% say Meals on Wheels helps them feel less lonely or isolated

For many clients, Meals on Wheels provides more than nutrition. Volunteers and delivery staff provide meaningful social connection and a regular safety check. This reinforces the importance of volunteers not just as delivery drivers, but as part of the clients' social safety net.

4. Many Clients Live Alone and Experience Social Isolation

Supporting data:

- 71% live alone
- 46% do not have regular internet access
- 60% report the MOW volunteer is often the only person they will see in a day

The survey highlights the importance of maintaining accessible, person-centered services for older adults who may experience social isolation or limited access to technology. The upward trend in solo aging is driven by the unprecedented increase in the older adult population in Ramsey County (and elsewhere) combined with shrinking family networks.

5. Menu Choice & Delivery Preferences

Supporting data:

- 80% say menu options are important
- 72% say they can be home when the meal arrives
- Delivery preferences are mixed:
 - 46% prefer frozen weekly meals
 - 41% prefer hot daily meals
 - 13% no preference

Clients increasingly value flexibility and meal choice. Choice is meaningful to clients and likely contributes to high meal consumption and satisfaction. Preferences for delivery style continue to vary across the client population, with a slight preference for weekly frozen deliveries. Offering multiple delivery models is meeting the varied needs of our clients and demonstrates our commitment to person-centered service.

Opportunities and Future Focus

Communication About Other Services

Only 32% said Meals on Wheels helped them access information about other services, while 30% were unsure. This may represent an opportunity to intentionally strengthen awareness of additional supports and community resources available through Meals on Wheels providers and community partners. Sites should continue to distribute the “Ramsey County Senior Resources” listing updated by MOWRC each year with new and current clients.

Meal Quality Opportunities

Although satisfaction remains high overall, about 14% rated meal quality as just acceptable or poor. Open-ended comments suggest some clients would appreciate greater meal variety, seasoning, freshness, and additional menu choice.

Comparison to Prior Survey (2024)

Major Trends That Stayed Strong

Similar to 2024:

- High recommendation rate remained stable
- Strong volunteer satisfaction remained extremely high
- Clients continue relying heavily on meals for daily nutrition
- High percentage of clients live alone
- Strong health and independence impacts remained consistent

Notable Changes

Meal delivery preference shifted slightly over 2 years toward frozen meals.

2024:

- 49% preferred hot meals
- 37% preferred frozen meals

2026:

- 41% prefer hot meals
- 46% prefer frozen meals

Clients who prefer frozen delivery options value convenience and flexibility. Clients who prefer hot daily meal deliveries value ready-to-eat service and daily social connection.

Client Voices

"I feel fortunate to have this service." – Jewish Family & Children's Service client

"My family appreciates the Meals on Wheels service, as a daily welfare check on me gives them peace of mind and they know I have a nutritious meal, each day." – Keystone Community Services client

"The people who deliver the meals are always very friendly and cheerful. If I have a question I always get the right answer. They make my day seeing them." – Merrick Community Services client

"The volunteers are excellent! I'm on a Renal diet and my recent labs have improved a lot plus I take medication." – Mounds View Public Schools client

"Meals on Wheels has kept us healthier with a balanced diet. We appreciate the quality of the food and the service of everyone who delivers." – Roseville Schools client

"Feel very fortunate to have contact with a friendly face and talking to someone. The meals fill a void. Thank you." – White Bear Lake Public Schools client

"Meals on Wheels has been a Godsend; my mobility has decreased so it makes it difficult to cook a meal with all the food groups included; with the MOW I can still get a good meal." – Amherst H. Wilder client

Closing Statement

The 2026 client survey demonstrates that Meals on Wheels of Ramsey County continues to provide highly valued nutrition, wellness, and social support services to older adults across Ramsey County. Client responses reinforce the importance of maintaining accessible, reliable, and person-centered services that help older adults remain healthy, connected, and independent in their homes.