



# 2030 STRATEGIC PLAN

BUILDING RESILIENCE, DEEPENING IMPACT

Approved by the Board of Directors  
November 3, 2025

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In 2025, Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island, Inc. proudly delivered its 21 millionth meal, a milestone that invites us to look ahead with excitement and purpose. Since 1969, Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island has delivered more than just meals. Through daily safety checks, opportunities for socialization, nutrition education, and personalized support, we've helped older adults age with dignity and independence in the communities they call home.

Across the Ocean State, we've seen our efforts make a meaningful impact. We've expanded our reach into every community statewide, including Block Island, and broadened our services to include pregnant and postpartum women, individuals living with HIV/AIDS, and those managing chronic illnesses. We've built strong relationships within the healthcare sector to create new opportunities and ensure the long-term sustainability of our organization.

Through partnerships with community-based organizations, policymakers, and other key stakeholders, we've championed food as medicine, advanced health equity, and promoted overall well-being for those we serve – all while remaining a tireless voice for older adults.

Our future will not be without its challenges. Federal and state funding has not kept pace with the growing senior population or the rising costs of service delivery. Changes in federal policy, combined with the state's economic outlook, could create a future where demand outpaces available resources and may force us to make difficult decisions that could impact the very people we serve.

In response, Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island, Inc. has launched a bold strategy that will allow us to extend our reach and improve the lives of even more Rhode Islanders. Over the next five years, we will continue to expand our role as sector leaders, ensure sustainable growth, increase mission impact, and drive quality in all that we do. Together, these efforts will propel us toward becoming one of Rhode Island's leading organizations.

We welcome your support and partnership as we move into the next iteration of our work. Together, we will continue to innovate, advocate, and expand our impact, ensuring that every Rhode Islander has access to the nutrition, connection, and dignity they deserve. Thank you for joining us on this journey forward.

In Service,



*Christina Pitney*

Christina Pitney

Board President



A blue ink signature of Meghan Grady, written in a cursive style.

Meghan Grady

Executive Director

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## Acknowledgment

The Board of Directors extends its heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to the development of our 2030 Strategic Plan. This collaborative effort would not have been possible without the dedication and insight of our team, stakeholders, and community partners. We especially thank Jim Berson of Berson & Associates for his expert guidance throughout the planning process. To all those who participated in interviews, shared their perspectives, and helped shape our vision for the future, your contributions were invaluable and deeply appreciated. Together, we are building a stronger, more resilient Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island.

# About Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island, Inc.

Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island, Inc. (MOWRI) established in 1969, works to help food-insecure and socially isolated Rhode Island residents achieve equitable access to live fully healthy lives.

Now in our 56th year of service, MOWRI has grown from a single-program initiative serving 17 homebound older adults in Providence to a statewide organization offering three major nutrition programs and a range of supportive services. Today, we serve more than 3,700 residents across Rhode Island, including those living on Block Island, ranging in age from under one to over 100.

Our programs and initiatives take a holistic approach to addressing the social determinants of health that affect our program participants, helping to reduce their risk of food insecurity and social isolation while increasing their safety and access to care. While we predominantly serve older adults, we have expanded our reach to include other at-risk populations such as pregnant and postpartum women, school-aged children, and individuals living with HIV/AIDS and other chronic illnesses across Rhode Island.

We offer three core nutritional programs: a Home-Delivered Meal Program, Capital City Café Program, and Food Is Medicine. Supportive services include community health worker support, pet food delivery, supplemental grocery delivery and an on-site food pantry.

## Vision

We envision a Rhode Island where all individuals, regardless of age or background, can access the nourishment, connection, and care they need to thrive.

## Mission

To meet the nutritional, safety, and social needs of those we serve so they can maintain healthy and independent lifestyles.

## Values

Our values—**C**ompassion, **A**ccountability, **R**espect, **E**xcellence, and **S**teadfastness (**CARES**)—guide everything we do. We commit our board of directors, team, and volunteers to uphold these principles in every interaction—with one another, with those we serve, and with our broader community.

# Overview of the Strategic Planning Process

MOWRI launched its strategic planning process in the spring 2025, beginning with a kickoff meeting with the Board of Directors in March. Over the next five months, key data was collected, and stakeholder groups were actively engaged to inform plan development.

The following activities were conducted:

- Individual interviews with all Board members
- Listening sessions with all Board committees
- Individual interviews with all Leadership Team members
- Leadership Team members participated in a self-assessment of health care partnership readiness, using a tool developed by the Aging and Disability Business Institute
- Individual interviews with peer organizations doing similar work across the country
- Individual interviews with key stakeholders including funders and donors, strategic partners, volunteers, state government leaders, and others
- Analysis of recent financial performance using key metrics related to sustainability and growth
- Dedicated workshop with all Board and Committee members at the 2025 Annual Meeting
- Follow-up feedback sessions were held during fall Board Committee meetings
- Team Member feedback session on plan goals, critical success strategies, and proposed initiatives

# Key Learnings & Findings

## FOUNDATION FOR STRATEGIC GROWTH

MOWRI enters the next phase of its organizational evolution with uncommon financial strength, positioning the organization for deeper impact and expanded leadership. Consistent operating surpluses, cash reserves equivalent to nearly two years of operating expenses, and efficient fundraising operations provide both financial security and strategic opportunity. This strong financial position enables the organization to consider more ambitious investments in innovation, infrastructure, and advocacy. At the same time, determining how much of the financial cushion should be preserved versus strategically deployed is a critical consideration for the organization's future. Stakeholders, Board members, and peer organizations consistently agree that MOWRI's financial health should serve as a catalyst, not a constraint, for its strategic ambitions.

## EXPANDING ROLE IN HEALTH, AGING, AND EQUITY ECOSYSTEMS

MOWRI is consistently recognized as a trusted leader at the intersection of food security, health, and aging services. Its "More than a Meal" model is increasingly viewed as a public health intervention. Both internal and external stakeholders affirm that deeper integration with health care systems is essential, though complex. Achieving success in this space will require strategic investments in data collection, outcome measurement, and pricing frameworks to translate social impact into healthcare value. At the same time, stakeholders highlight MOWRI's credibility in delivering culturally responsive services, positioning it to lead not only in delivery but also in policy and equity advocacy.

## INNOVATION AS IDENTITY AND IMPERATIVE

MOWRI is widely recognized as a learning organization. Pilot initiatives in medically tailored meals, perinatal programming, and culturally responsive services demonstrate its ability to adapt to evolving community needs. Board members, stakeholders, and team members affirm that continued experimentation is essential, while emphasizing the importance of prioritization, pacing, and building systems to scale successful models. National peers warn against chasing every innovation; instead, they highlight the opportunity to codify, replicate, and transform pilot initiatives into fundable, sustainable offerings. As expectations of older adults continue to evolve, seeking wellness, convenience, and connection alongside food, innovation becomes not only a differentiator but a strategic necessity.

## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AS GROWTH ACCELERATORS

Relationships are central to MOWRI's future direction. Stakeholders identify opportunities for deeper collaboration with health care systems, stronger connections with municipalities and more care agencies, and strategic alliances that support data sharing and co-design. Board members echo this vision, emphasizing the need for systemic alignment across health and human services. Peer leaders caution that national insurance

contracts remain fragile, suggesting that localized, ground-level partnerships may offer more immediate traction. To capitalize on these opportunities, building structured processes for outreach, lead generation, and business development will be essential, especially as healthcare partners increasingly demand measurable outcomes and consistent quality.

## **TALENT, SYSTEMS, AND CULTURE AS FOUNDATIONS**

To grow and succeed, MOWRI must make intentional investments in its infrastructure. Board members, team members, and readiness assessments consistently highlight the need for modernized technology, strengthened human resource and finance systems, and robust data platforms. Quality must be standardized and embedded across the organization, not reliant on individual commitment. Equally important is leadership depth. Both team members and Board members emphasized succession planning, talent development, and volunteer pipeline strategies as essential to sustaining long-term impact. Volunteerism is evolving, from traditional unpaid roles to hybrid models that combine paid and volunteer contributions. This shift reflects national trends and highlights the need for intentional strategies to recruit, support and sustain a diverse volunteer workforce.

## **ADVOCACY, VISIBILITY, AND DIFFERENTIATION**

MOWRI's trusted brand and daily connection with participants offer a powerful platform for influence. Stakeholders and Board members consistently call for a stronger, more consistent public voice in policy discussions and systems change. National peers underscore the growing competitive pressures from for-profit and tech-enabled service providers, reinforcing the need for MOWRI to differentiate through its unique strengths: personal connection, safety checks, and trust. Expanding visibility, storytelling, and thought leadership will be key to solidifying MOWRI's reputation, not just as a service provider, but as a leader in shaping systems and advancing equity.

# Goals, Critical Success Strategies, & Proposed Initiatives

## GOAL 1

**Position MOWRI to deliver comprehensive participant-centered services that promote health equity and drive improved health outcomes.**

### *FOCUS: MISSION IMPACT*

**RATIONALE:** With over 21 million meals delivered, MOWRI has met the nutritional needs of older adults, empowering them to age in place with independence and dignity. Looking ahead to 2030, MOWRI aspires to deepen its impact, expand its services to continue to serve older adults and others, and evolve in response to the changing needs of those it serves.

### **CRITICAL SUCCESS STRATEGIES:**

#### **1. Expand home and community-based services to serve new populations and address social determinants of health.**

##### *Proposed Initiatives*

- Pursue efforts to expand services to people with disabilities and at-risk individuals under age 60.
- Continue to expand presence in existing markets to increase reach and impact (e.g., rural communities, school-age children, individuals living with chronic illness, perinatal populations)
- Pilot segmented private pay offerings tailored to different populations (e.g., caregivers, individuals managing chronic illness or recovering from surgery or illness, individuals who live alone, wellness enthusiasts)

#### **2. Scale healthcare partnerships to achieve measurable health improvements.**

##### *Proposed Initiatives*

- Broaden partnerships with healthcare entities that align with changes in Medicaid and other state and federal health initiatives, to include discharge planning, chronic disease management, and post-hospitalization support.
- Deepen and expand collaborations with health care systems, providers, and payers.
- Continue to position MOWRI as a vital connector for healthcare organizations seeking to effectively engage and support to hard-to-reach populations.
- Assess the potential to standardized health monitoring and referral protocols during meal delivery

#### **3. Strengthen the organization's capacity to innovate and respond to opportunities in the Food Is Medicine space**

##### *Proposed Initiatives*

- Develop and scale medically and culturally tailored meal models in partnership with healthcare providers.
- Develop replicable models and outcome documentation to position MOWRI as a demonstration site for food-as-medicine and aging-in-place strategies.
- Explore providing nutritional counseling as a supplemental service for meal recipients.

## GOAL 2

**Advance MOWRI's long-term sustainability through intentional program expansion, revenue diversification, and strategic financial stewardship.**

### **FOCUS: SUSTAINABLE GROWTH**

**RATIONALE:** Over the past five years, MOWRI has experienced unprecedented growth in revenue. Looking ahead to 2030, it is essential for the organization to sustain and diversify its funding sources to ensure long-term sustainability and continued impact.

### **CRITICAL SUCCESS STRATEGIES:**

#### **1. Grow and diversify revenue streams to extend impact.**

##### *Proposed Initiatives*

- Seek value-based contracts with health insurers in the commercial, Medicare and Medicaid space.
- Grow individual donor, private pay, and philanthropic revenue streams.
- Explore tiered private-pay offerings and employer wellness partnerships to generate earned revenue serving non-eligible but at-risk populations.
- Establish criteria to evaluate and prioritize new programmatic initiatives based on mission alignment, funding sustainability, and organizational capacity.

#### **2. Strengthen our workforce capacity, organizational culture, and strategic partnerships to enable growth**

##### *Proposed Initiatives*

- Invest endowment funding in transformative initiatives and infrastructure that enhance organizational capacity.
- Conduct a workforce gap analysis to assess current and future workforce needs, with a focus on succession planning, mid-level team development, and building a strong leadership pipeline.
- Invest in targeted workforce development initiatives to equip MOWRI with the talent, skills, and leadership capacity needed to support organizational growth, innovation, and long-term sustainability.
- Track population and market shifts to inform responsive growth planning.

#### **3. Invest in technology, data collection, and analysis to drive efficiency**

##### *Proposed Initiatives*

- Support ongoing innovation by investing in modern technologies that streamline operations and elevate service impact
- Strengthen relationships with local universities to advance research initiatives and enhance evaluation capacity.
- Establish organization-wide data collection systems that allow for segmentation and analysis across programs, funding streams, and constituent groups.
- Increase utilization of the Mobile Meals app to enhance participant and delivery driver engagement, streamline service delivery, and improve data collection for program evaluation and care coordination
- Create a data-driven dashboard to track key indicators and inform decision-making across the organization

## GOAL 3

**Embrace continuous quality improvement by regularly evaluating systems, enhancing service delivery, and adopting new approaches to ensure excellence across all operations**

### **FOCUS: QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

**RATIONALE:** MOWRI has evolved from a grassroots community-based organization into a trusted healthcare partner. Looking ahead to 2030, MOWRI must commit to continuous improvement and system refinement, working in alignment with its CARES values to achieve exceptional results in service and impact.

### **CRITICAL SUCCESS STRATEGIES:**

#### **1. Establish a quality improvement program with defined standards, clear accountability, and a focus on continuous enhancement across all operations.**

##### *Proposed Initiatives*

- Adopt a participant-centered model to enhance meal customization, including medically tailored and culturally relevant options.
- Establish standardized, documented, and consistently applied systems that help ensure team member performance and program quality are aligned with mission and goals
- Develop and implement organization-wide quality standards.
- Foster a culture of quality by embedding training, setting clear performance expectations, and promoting shared accountability for outcomes across all teams.
- Review and update our emergency response, disaster preparedness, and continuity of operations plans to minimize disruptions and ensure rapid recovery.
- Engage in regular scenario planning to proactively address a range of potential risks and operational challenges.

#### **2. Strengthen data and feedback systems to identify opportunities for improvement, measure outcomes, and guide communications.**

##### *Proposed Initiatives*

- Develop systems to analyze participant data to improve effectiveness, tailor services, and provide evidence to funders and stakeholders.
- Integrate disengagement tracking for all participants to improve program design and enhance user experience.
- Systematically engage participants and caregivers in defining, measuring, and improving service quality.
- Implement standardized quality indicators and real-time dashboards to guide strategic decision-making and continuous quality improvement.

### **3. Consistently recruit and support volunteers with subject matter expertise and/or a strong commitment to the mission to ensure sustained impact**

#### *Proposed Initiatives*

- Develop and launch a comprehensive volunteer engagement strategy that builds a sustainable pipeline through community focused outreach, flexible role design, and appreciation efforts.
- Explore integrating supportive services such as produce delivery, safety checks, and caregiver communication
- Recruit volunteers who fill composition gaps and subject matter expertise needs.
- Continuously assess volunteer capacity needs and develop succession plans and recruitment pipelines to fill gaps and ensure uninterrupted program delivery.

## **GOAL 4**

### **Establish MOWRI as a statewide leader in advancing policy, systems, and environmental change to improve community health and equity.**

#### *FOCUS: LEADERSHIP*

**RATIONALE:** MOWRI has long been a trusted service provider, serving the largest number of older adults daily across the state. Looking ahead to 2030, MOWRI should leverage its expertise and statewide presence to influence decision-making in nutrition and home- and community-based care, ensuring its voice helps shape policies and practices that promote nutrition, community-based care and health equity.

#### **CRITICAL SUCCESS STRATEGIES:**

### **1. Leverage relationships with policymakers, healthcare leaders, and key stakeholders to drive meaningful policy change and advance shared goals.**

#### *Proposed Initiatives*

- Develop an advocacy agenda focused on aging in place, nutrition security, and uplifting the voices of program participants.
- Advance strategic relationships through regular communication, networking, and active community engagement to strengthen trust and visibility.
- Recruit volunteers for the Board of Directors and committees that fill composition gaps and subject matter expertise needs.
- Continuously evaluate future talent needs for the Board of Directors and develop succession plans and pipelines to ensure continuity of governance and committee leadership.

## **2. Maintain a prominent role in statewide coalitions, policy forums, and convenings to influence key decision-making spaces.**

### *Proposed Initiatives*

- Lead statewide advocacy to safeguard nutrition and aging programs and advance health equity.
- Actively participate in statewide healthcare and policy coalitions and secure formal roles that contribute to decision-making, advocacy, and cross-sector collaboration to elevate presence
- Host roundtables and working groups to convene stakeholders and decision-makers on pertinent topics.

## **3. Serve as a voice for those who are often unheard by sharing their stories and data to inform, inspire, and influence change.**

### *Proposed Initiatives*

- Leverage participant demographic and outcome data to inform public health policy, support tracking of social determinants of health, and guide statewide planning efforts.
- Amplify public presence by actively engaging with traditional outlets (e.g., print, radio, TV) and emerging media channels (e.g., social media, podcasts, blogs), ensuring broad visibility and public awareness.
- Use insights from internal evaluations and client feedback to inform the development of white papers and policy briefs that elevate participant voices and advance public discourse on food, equity, and aging.

# Performance Metrics

MOWRI will leverage performance metrics as a critical tool to track progress and measure the success of its strategy implementation. By establishing clear, data-driven metrics tied to each goal, MOWRI can evaluate outcomes, identify areas for improvement, and ensure accountability across the organization. This approach means that decisions will be guided by evidence, enabling MOWRI to demonstrate impact, optimize resources, and continuously adapt to meet the evolving needs of the communities it serves.

GOAL	SUGGESTED METRICS
<p><b>Goal 1: Mission Impact</b></p> <p>Deliver participant-centered services that promote health equity and improve health outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of participants reporting improved health/self-management</li> <li>• % of participants reporting reduction in hospital readmissions</li> <li>• % increase in participation from underserved/new populations (e.g. rural residents, under-60 with disabilities, postpartum women)</li> <li>• Number of active healthcare contracts/partnerships with defined outcome measures</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal 2: Sustainable Growth</b></p> <p>Ensure long-term sustainability through revenue diversification and stewardship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of operating budget from non-government sources (e.g. philanthropy, private pay, health care contracts)</li> <li>• Number of months of operating expenses covered by unrestricted reserves</li> <li>• % of team members who report engagement in the Q12 survey</li> <li>• % of positions with succession plans in place</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal 3: Quality Improvement</b></p> <p>Commit to continuous improvement across all operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of participants rating meals and services as "good or excellent" segmented by program</li> <li>• % of programs using standardized quality protocols and real-time dashboards</li> <li>• Annual % increase in active volunteers with subject matter expertise or filling critical functions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal 4: Leadership</b></p> <p>Establish MOWRI as a statewide leader in advancing policy, systems, and environmental change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of policy proposals, coalitions, or task forces where MOWRI holds a leadership role</li> <li>• Annual media mentions, social media engagement, and number of distributed reports, newsletters and other communications</li> <li>• Number of advocacy initiatives or policy briefs that include participant stories or data</li> </ul>

# Monitoring & Reporting

MOWRI will implement a structured reporting and monitoring process to track implementation of its 2030 Strategic Plan. Each goal is supported by critical success strategies and proposed initiatives, with oversight assigned to a designated committee of the Board of Directors—People and Culture, Finance, Development, Modern Workplace, or Mission Impact—to ensure accountability and alignment. Each year, MOWRI’s Leadership Team will establish specific targets aligned with the operating budget, which will also serve as performance measures to monitor progress and assess impact.

## GOAL 1 MISSION IMPACT

Deliver participant-centered services that promote health equity and improve health outcomes

**Strategy 1** – Mission Impact Committee & Finance Committee

**Strategy 2** – Mission Impact Committee & Finance Committee

**Strategy 3** – Mission Impact Committee

## GOAL 2 SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Ensure long-term sustainability through revenue diversification and stewardship

**Strategy 1** – Finance Committee & Development Committee

**Strategy 2** – People & Culture Committee

**Strategy 3** – Modern Workplace Committee

## GOAL 3 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Commit to continuous improvement across all operations

**Strategy 1** – Mission Impact

**Strategy 2** – Modern Workplace

**Strategy 3** – People & Culture

## GOAL 4 LEADERSHIP

Establish MOWRI as a statewide leader in advancing policy, systems, and environmental change

**Strategy 1** – People & Culture & Mission Impact

**Strategy 2** – Mission Impact

**Strategy 3** – Development & Modern Workplace



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