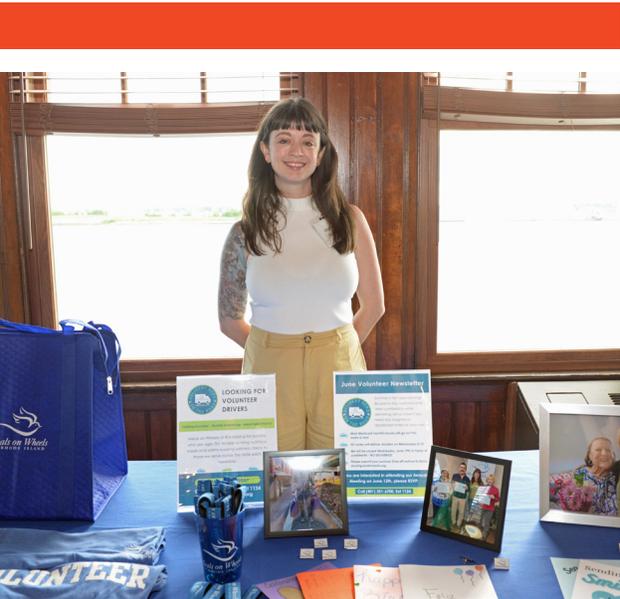




# Volunteer Handbook

Meals on Wheels of RI, Inc.  
70 Bath St.  
Providence, RI 02908  
(401) 351-6700

Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Voicemail is available 24 hours per day  
[www.rimeals.org](http://www.rimeals.org)



Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island (MOWRI) and thank you for your commitment to our mission of meeting the nutritional, safety, and social needs of those we serve so they can maintain healthy and independent lifestyles.

As a MOWRI volunteer, you are joining an exceptional group of caring individuals who help us to deliver “More Than a Meal” to homebound and food-insecure Rhode Island residents across our state.

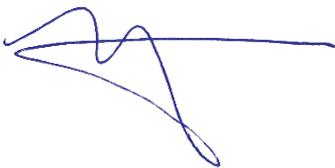
We are proud to have you as part of our volunteer program. We strive to ensure our volunteers have the resources and tools they need to effectively perform their duties and to enjoy a meaningful and rewarding volunteer experience.

We invite you to read this handbook so you have all the information you need, including program service details, guidelines, and key contacts that will ensure you can best serve our clients.

We encourage you to stay connected by signing up for our emails and following us on social media. You are also encouraged to contact us with any questions or suggestions.

Again, thank you. We simply could not do this without you.

In gratitude,



Meghan Grady  
Executive Director



Shana DeFelice  
Programs & Mission Impact Director

***Please keep this handbook as long as you participate in the MOWRI Volunteer Program and reference it when you have questions. To request this handbook in another language, please contact a member of our team.***

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## ABOUT MEALS ON WHEELS OF RHODE ISLAND, INC.

Founded in 1969, Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island, Inc. (MOWRI) is a Food is Medicine-focused organization. Our programs and services work to help our clients realize equitable access to fully healthy lives through increased access to adequate nutrition, safety assurances, and socialization. Our goals are to help our clients experience improved health and to maintain their independence.

### MISSION

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

### VISION

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

### VALUES

MOWRI C.A.R.E.S. are the values that we commit to our team, Board, and volunteers to uphold in every interaction with each other, with those we serve, and with our community: Compassion, Accountability, Respect, Excellence, Steadfastness.

### DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

MOWRI is committed to, and continuously engaged in, building organizational practices that reflect our commitment to diversity, cultural competency, and inclusion.

Our diversity and inclusion policies encompass all identities and characteristics in which people differ from one another, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, age, ability, national origin, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, education, marital status, HIV status, military status, and immigration status.

### IMPACT

In 2024, Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island served more than 420,000 meals to approximately 3,700 Rhode Islanders across all 39 cities and towns. While we primarily serve older, homebound adults, our programs have extended to reach others in need of nutrition and social support. Our programs have meaningful health outcomes: 94% of clients report feeling healthier, 91% are able to remain in their homes, and 82% say we help them manage chronic health conditions. Through daily nutrition, safety assurances, and socialization, we deliver impacts that support independence and well-being.

### ABOUT THE HOME-DELIVERED MEAL PROGRAM

MOWRI's Home-Delivered Meal Program (HDMP) has been in continuous operation since February 1969. The program helps to ensure the physical and mental well-being of older adults and other homebound Rhode Island residents as well as food-insecure populations across the state.

We offer home-delivered meals as the only nonprofit meal delivery program of its kind in Rhode Island, serving clients each weekday in every Rhode Island municipality, including on Block Island.

This program is offered to clients at no cost. Funding for this program is comprised of Federal and State funds as well as contributions from private donors and client donations.

Our "More Than a Meal" model goes beyond just delivering food. It also provides opportunities for social interaction and well-being checks.

### MENUS

Home-Delivered Meal Program clients choose to receive meals from one of the following menus, depending on their dietary needs and preferences:

- General wellness menu
- Asian menu
- Kosher menu
- Latin menu
- Cardiac menu

Program volunteers are responsible for delivering the correct meal(s) and beverage(s) to each client. Volunteers will find it helpful to review each day's menu before delivering meals as clients often have questions regarding the contents of their daily meals.

Client meal choices are included on the daily delivery route sheet that is provided to each volunteer on their scheduled delivery day.

Each client's preferred menu option will be listed on the far-right side of the route sheet, across from the client's name.

Client menus are differentiated with stickers on the film of each meal. The general wellness menu has no sticker, while the other meals will be labeled with colored stickers that identify the type of meal.

Alternate meals are available on any day when a menu item includes a client's food allergy or restriction. Rather than receiving the standard meal option for that day, they will receive an "alternate" meal to accommodate the allergy.

(Second) 2nd meals are labeled as such on days where “double deliveries” are taking place. This “2nd” sticker indicates that this is the second meal in the double-delivery.

The general wellness menu can be prepared and delivered chopped, ground, or pureed to meet the client’s needs. Participants can request these special options by contacting the MOWRI Home-Delivered department.

A monthly meal calendar of each menu will be delivered—generally during the first week of each month—alongside meals, and menus are posted on our website, [www.rimeals.org](http://www.rimeals.org). It is the volunteers’ responsibility to deliver monthly menus along with meals on the day they are attached to your route sheet. A replacement menu can be delivered upon request.

## MEAL STICKER KEY

2nd—labeled by “2nd” sticker

Alternative—labeled by “Alt” sticker

Latin—Purple sticker

Asian—Red sticker

Cardiac—Black sticker

Puree—Green sticker

## MEALS

Each meal you deliver will meet one-third of the daily recommended dietary intake for an older adult. Meals will typically include (1) an entrée, (2) starch, (3) a vegetable, (4) milk or juice, (5) and a dessert or fruit. Meals will be delivered fully cooked and chilled for safety during delivery.

Meals are delivered in two parts. Each client will receive a “main” meal, which comes in a container with the entrée, starch, and vegetables. Each client will also receive a “cold pack,” which contains their milk or juice and dessert or fruit.

We recommend that clients eat the meal on the day it is delivered. If the client does not plan to eat the meal immediately, encourage them to refrigerate the meal. Meals can be refrigerated for four (4) days and frozen for six (6) months.

In certain cases, clients may receive a weekly delivery of five (5) frozen meals in place of a daily-delivered meal. These frozen meals are from the same meal menus as our daily-delivered meals.

## HEATING INSTRUCTIONS

Meals are delivered fully prepared and chilled. It is safe to reheat meals in a microwave or conventional oven. Heating instructions are provided to clients on each month's meal menu.

**Please note: it is not safe to reheat meals in a toaster oven.**

It is helpful for volunteers to understand safe heating instructions for meals as clients may ask for assistance

1. Create a small opening in the film covering
2. Heat time:
  - a. Microwave: High for 1 minute and 15 seconds. Adjust time if needed.
  - b. Oven: Preheat your oven to 350° (175°C). Place the meal on a cookie sheet or oven-safe dish. Position the meal in the center of the oven. Heat for 10 minutes.
  - c. **Do not reheat meals in a toaster oven.**
3. Carefully remove the meal. It will be hot after reheating.
4. Allow the meal to sit for a minute or two, as it will continue to cook slightly from residual heat.
5. Be cautious of steam when removing the film.

## MEAL DELIVERY

Clients are given a window for meal delivery on weekdays between 9:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. It is important that all meals on your delivery route are delivered by 2 p.m. Clients eagerly await their daily meal delivery, as much for the social visit as their meal.

Meals are delivered from 22 meal dispatch sites located across Rhode Island—most meals are delivered from our Providence headquarters—by MOWRI program drivers and volunteers across 80 delivery routes. Most of these routes are delivered by volunteers.

We deliver meals Monday-Friday, year-round, excluding holidays. Clients will receive an “extra” meal prior to a scheduled holiday. A list of recognized holidays is included in this handbook.

Volunteers should adhere to the client delivery route sequence as listed on the daily route sheet as much as practical. This allows clients to receive their meals around the same time each day. Major changes to the delivery route should be avoided whenever possible.

## MEAL DELIVERY PROTOCOLS

These protocols are included in the MOWRI Home-Delivered Meal Program Client Handbook. It is recommended that volunteers remain familiar with these protocols to ensure our clients' safety and satisfaction.

### **CLIENTS MUST BE HOME TO RECEIVE THEIR MEAL**

For their safety and to fully realize program benefits, clients must be home to receive their meal. Volunteers are responsible for confirming that clients are home and safe when delivering meals as part of our “More Than a Meal” service.

Volunteers **are not permitted** to leave a meal in a cooler, bag, or other container if a client is not home to receive their meal. Meals cannot be left at the door or with a neighbor. Each meal delivery includes a safety-assuring wellness check. Volunteers are encouraged to spend a few moments with clients during meal delivery. We hope you enjoy this visit as much as the clients do and develop good relationships with them.

### **CLIENTS MUST CANCEL MEAL DELIVERY IF THEY WILL NOT BE HOME**

MOWRI requests that clients cancel their meal delivery on any day they will not be home. If clients notify MOWRI 48 hours (2 days) in advance to cancel a meal delivery, we can schedule a second meal to be included ahead of their planned missed delivery. See *"Double Meal Delivery."*

### **CLIENT PETS**

Many of our homebound clients have cats and small dogs living in their homes. Pet companionship is especially meaningful for homebound individuals, providing them with a sense of purpose and responsibility as well as affection and comfort.

Clients are asked to safely and securely contain their pets during meal delivery. This is to ensure the safety of our drivers and volunteers. Please never put your hand down, try to pet, or otherwise approach an unknown pet.

### **DOUBLE MEAL DELIVERY**

Meals on Wheels of RI strives to ensure our program clients receive meals in advance of planned delivery closures.

Extra meals, or Double Meals, may be delivered for several reasons, including:

1. In advance of an upcoming holiday closure
2. In advance of a planned closure due to inclement weather
3. In advance of a planned delivery disruption— i.e., a volunteer is not available to deliver the meal
4. In advance of a client's planned absence for a delivery

The second meal in the double delivery will be identified with the "2nd" sticker. Clients will receive notifications prior to each double meal delivery and should direct any questions to MOWRI.

### **EMERGENCY/SHELF-STABLE MEALS**

Once per year, each Home-Delivered Meal Program client receives a delivery of shelf-stable foods that they can use to assemble—without cooking—five complete meals. These meals are meant to be used in case of an unforeseen/unscheduled disruption in program service, such as unpredicted inclement weather.

This box is delivered in the fall, ensuring clients have this resource for the winter season, when we are most likely to be disrupted by weather.

### **SUGGESTED CLIENT DONATIONS**

The full cost of each home-delivered meal is approximately \$10.00. Clients are encouraged

to make voluntary contributions toward this cost. These donations help MOWRI to continue program service and to potentially serve additional clients.

Clients are not required to make donations to participate in the program.

While a \$3.00 donation per meal is suggested, clients may choose to donate an amount that suits them.

See: *Donation Collection*

## PET SUPPLIES

Clients whose meals are delivered from our Providence headquarters meal dispatch site are eligible to receive pet care supplies.

Enrolled clients may receive cat or dog food, cat litter, and other supplies. When a client on your route is scheduled to receive pet supplies, they will be packed separately from the meals. Volunteers are expected to deliver pet supplies when they deliver meals.

If a client expresses a need for their pet, please report this request to the MOWRI team for follow up.

## MEAL DELIVERY OPERATIONS

### MEAL DISPATCH

1. Arrive at the designated meal dispatch site at your assigned time, between 9-10 a.m.
  - a. When picking up meals at the Providence Headquarters, use 189 West Park St. as your destination address. The meals will be lined up and labeled inside the blue double doors.
  - b. For all other meal dispatch sites, please contact your Volunteer scheduler or Coordinator for pickup details.
2. Count meals in coolers/bags and compare the meal count to your route sheet, ensuring that there are enough meals for each client, and that you have the designated meal type for each client on your route.
3. Report any shortage of meals or cold packs to Providence headquarters before you start your deliveries.

### MEAL DELIVERY

4. Deliver each meal to the appropriate client, making sure that each client gets the meal indicated on the delivery route sheet.
5. Be mindful of restricted parking areas. Never park in a fire lane or in any other prohibited spots.
6. Use our bright orange "MEALS ON WHEELS" identifiers.
7. Report all "No Answers" and concerns to Providence headquarters immediately by phone.
8. If a client on your route is a No-Answer, we encourage you to offer the "extra" meal

to any other client.

9. Deliver meal menus, collection envelopes, nutrition education material, pet food and supplies, and other items as provided.

## POST DELIVERY

10. Return coolers and ice packs to the meal pick-up site at the end of the route.
11. Insulated bags and additional ice packs can be provided upon request.
12. If you are unable to give away any extra meals at the end of your delivery route, please return them to your meal dispatch site if there is refrigeration/freezer space available to store the meals, and inform your Volunteer Scheduler.
13. If your Meal Dispatch Site does not have refrigeration/freezer space available to store the meals, please ask your volunteer coordinator for guidance.

## ROUTE SHEETS

Route sheets are printed and packed alongside daily meals. Route sheets are labeled by meal dispatch site, and the route name is listed on the top. It is the volunteers responsibility to ensure they have the correct route sheet before leaving the meal dispatch site.

Route sheets include each client's name, address, and phone numbers. They also list meal types, date of meals, driving directions, and delivery instructions.

It is important to read through the delivery instructions prior to leaving your meal dispatch site to help ensure the delivery goes as the client has requested. MOWRI can change the delivery instructions, so please inform our team of any updates or specific details that can be added.

It is recommended that volunteers use their GPS whenever possible.

## FOOD SAFETY

As a MOWRI volunteer, you are a key part of keeping our clients safe and healthy. Proper food handling during transport and delivery is essential to prevent illness and maintain the quality of the meals.

Deliver meals as soon as possible after meal pickup from your dispatch site and within the recommended delivery window of 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m. If you experience delays, notify MOWRI right away.

*See: Safe Food Handling*

## MOBILE MEALS APP

MOWRI is proud to offer ServTracker by CaseWorthy's Mobile Meals delivery app, an innovative digital version of our route sheets. Through the Mobile Meals app, you can:

- Communicate comments on clients and delivery to MOWRI staff.
- Call the client directly.
- Pull up driving directions-the app connects to your phone's GPS.
- Report when the meal was delivered or report that you could not complete delivery.

This app is free, easy to use, and syncs to your delivery schedule. It also provides a privacy

feature; you cannot log in until the morning of your deliveries, and you cannot access it once you have completed your route.

If you plan to use the app, please inform your Volunteer Coordinator(s) ahead of your delivery date so the app can be synched to your phone number and schedule. The Volunteer Coordinator(s) will also provide login details.

**Please note: volunteers are not required to use the Mobile Meals app, and paper route sheets will always be provided.**

## SOCIALIZATION & INTERACTIONS

MOWRI clients are often older adults and/or individuals with limited mobility, and for some, your visit may be the only personal interaction they have all day. Some clients prefer a quick handoff at the door, while others appreciate a brief visit. Your kindness, attentiveness, and professionalism go a long way to making them feel valued and cared for. Please keep the following guidelines in mind during each interaction.

### 1. Be Friendly and Respectful

- Be sure to introduce yourself upon the first delivery.
- Greet clients warmly and with a smile.
- Address clients by name and be polite and respectful at all times.
- Engage in brief, friendly conversation if the client is open to it; a kind word can brighten their day.

### 2. Practice Active Listening

- If a client wants to talk, listen attentively. Sometimes, a client simply need someone to listen.
- Be patient, especially if a client has difficulty communicating; avoid interrupting or rushing them.

### 3. Maintain Professional Boundaries

- Do not offer medical advice, personal opinions, or favors outside your volunteer responsibilities.
- Keep the conversation friendly, but avoid topics that may be sensitive, upsetting or controversial—e.g., politics, religion, or personal health.

### 4. Support, Don't Solve

- You may hear about problems clients are facing—e.g., loneliness, financial stress, and health concerns. While it's natural to want to help, your role is to listen, not solve.
- If a client shares a concern that seems serious or urgent, report it to your Volunteer Coordinator.

### 5. Cultural Sensitivity

- MOWRI serves individuals from diverse backgrounds. Be respectful and mindful of differences in language, culture, traditions, and personal values.
- If you encounter a language barrier, please follow stated guidelines.

*See: Interpretation Services*

## 6. When a Client Is Upset or Unwell

- If a client appears newly ill/unwell, distressed, confused, or upset, please remain calm and kind. Let them know that you care, but avoid trying to diagnose or solve the situation.
- For any serious concerns, report what you observed to MOWRI promptly.

## SAFETY CHECK

At MOWRI, the health and safety of our clients is our top priority. As part of our “More Than a Meal” model, volunteers play a crucial role in supporting clients’ nutritional needs and their overall well-being through the delivery service’s wellness check.

Please review the following guidelines to ensure the safety of every client you serve.

### 1. Wellness Checks

- Take a moment to observe the client’s condition during each visit. Note changes in appearance, behavior, or environment—e.g., confusion, disorientation, or unsanitary conditions.
- If something seems out of the ordinary, report your observations to your Volunteer Coordinator immediately.
- Do not attempt to provide medical assistance yourself.
- If a caregiver answers the door on behalf of a client, you may ask to see or hear the client yourself. A “hello” from the other room will provide reassurance. You may also ask the caregiver how the client is doing/feeling that day.

### 2. Respecting Privacy and Boundaries

- Knock or ring the doorbell and wait patiently, noting any instructions on your route sheet that may indicate if a client needs extra time getting to their door.
- If there’s no answer, follow the No-Answer protocol.
- Never enter a client’s home unless specifically instructed to do so as part of your role, and only when conditions are safe and appropriate.
- Maintain confidentiality. Never share a client’s personal information with anyone outside of the MOWRI team.

### 3. Emergency Situations

- If you believe a client is experiencing a medical emergency—e.g., unconsciousness, unresponsiveness, severe distress or visible injury, call 911 immediately.
- After contacting emergency services, notify your Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible.
- Stay calm and, if safe, remain with the client until help arrives, but do not attempt to move the client or administer first aid.

### 4. Environmental Awareness

- Be alert to potential hazards around a client’s home such as:
  - Icy steps or walkways
  - Poor lighting

- o Pets that may bite or trip you
- If you encounter safety concerns at a delivery site, inform your Volunteer Coordinator so appropriate follow-up can be arranged.

## SAFE FOOD HANDLING

1. Keep meals in provided coolers or insulated bags with ice packs to maintain proper temperatures.
2. Keep provided coolers or insulated bags securely closed except for when you are taking out a meal to deliver to a client.
3. Deliver meals promptly after pickup and within the delivery window to ensure freshness and safety.
4. Never tamper with or open the food containers.

## NO-ANSWER POLICY

Clients are required to be home and available to answer the door each day for meal delivery. Clients are expected to inform MOWRI if they will not be home to receive a delivery. If a client is not home to receive meals, volunteers are responsible for reporting the no-answer to MOWRI staff by the end of their delivery route.

Failure to report no-answers is in violation of organizational policy and can compromise the safety of our clients. MOWRI will notify the client's emergency contact(s) as a safety precaution and, in some circumstances, may contact the local authorities to conduct a wellness check at a client's address.

### No-Answer Chain of Communication:

1. Volunteer reports to MOWRI
2. HDMP addresses call
3. MOWRI alerts emergency contacts as needed
4. HDMP alerts Volunteer Scheduler & Coordinator as needed
5. MOWRI makes note in ServTracker; volunteers may make an entry in Mobile Meals app if it is being used
6. MOWRI follows up with client and/or emergency contacts as needed

If a client does not come to the door, please continue to call the client as you normally would, using all phone numbers listed on the route sheet and/or Mobile Meals app for the client. If there is no answer or it becomes clear that the client is not home, the volunteer will need to report this via one of the following options:

1. Call our Home Delivered team: (401) 351-6700, ext. 3
  - a. Always leave a voicemail if your call is not immediately answered.
2. Text your volunteer scheduler
  - a. To help make your delivery routes more efficient and reduce unnecessary wait times, MOWRI has introduced a new text message system for drivers. This system allows you to quickly notify our team if a client does not answer the door, so you can move on to your next stop without delay.
  - b. If there is no answer or it becomes clear that the client is not home, send

a text message with the client's name followed by "No Answer" to the appropriate contact number. This quick update will allow you to continue your route without interruption while ensuring our staff is informed in real time.

- c. To use this system, please save the following phone numbers in your phone:
  - i. Daisy Rodriguez—(401) 404-5141 (for all routine "No Answer" texts)
  - ii. Shana DeFelice—(401)-648-1577 (for emergencies or urgent situations only)

### 3. Email your volunteer scheduler

MOWRI's home-delivered program team is not required to call the volunteer to update on client status unless necessary to deliver the meal—e.g., the client did not hear the volunteer but answered the phone when called— and may not be able to update volunteers due to privacy issues.

A client's failure to notify MOWRI that they will not be home to receive their meal on three (3) occasions within a 30-day period may result in a cancellation of service.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the event of a medical, mental health, or safety-related emergency, the volunteer is expected to use their best judgement and is required to call 911 should the situation warrant emergency response.

Once 911 has been contacted, it is mandatory that volunteers call MOWRI to report the incident so it can be communicated and followed up on.

The volunteer should remain with the client until emergency response arrives. Volunteers should never attempt to move a client or to administer first aid.

There have been instances when one of our program drivers or volunteers has arrived at a client's home to deliver a meal where the client is found deceased. This does not occur often due to the no-answer protocols that are in place, which ensures a volunteer does not enter a client's home if the client has not answered their door or phone.

In the rare occurrence that a volunteer should enter a client's home and find that the client is deceased, the volunteer should immediately call 911, exit the home, and wait for emergency response personnel to arrive. In these rare cases, the volunteer should also call the MOWRI headquarters and report what happened.

There are some instances where a volunteer is instructed to enter a client's home without a client answering the door or phone. These limited instances are recorded on the daily route sheet.

## DONATION COLLECTION

Volunteers are responsible for sending collected client donations to the MOWRI Providence headquarters.

Clients receive an envelope in which to put their donation. Volunteers should collect each envelope from clients.

Clients may give you cash or a check when making their donations. All collected money should be either mailed to or brought into our headquarters building at 70 Bath St. Providence, RI 02908.

Volunteers should not open the donation envelopes to check if there is a donation inside or to check for the donation amount.

Volunteers are responsible for deciding how to send collected client donations to the MOWRI Providence headquarters:

1. You may collect all donation envelopes and combine them into a larger envelope and mail this package of donations or bring it into the headquarters building.
2. You may stamp and mail each collected donation envelope individually.
3. When clients indicate that they have placed cash inside the donation envelope, you may choose to deliver this envelope in person.

Clients may also choose to make a donation directly to MOWRI. If a client expresses to you that they wish to make a direct donation, you can direct them to click the "DONATE" button located at the top right of the MOWRI website: [www.rimeals.org](http://www.rimeals.org).

If the client does not have Internet access or expresses hesitation at using their credit or debit card online, you may direct them to mail a check to MOWRI's headquarters. It is not prudent to mail cash, and you may advise clients on this.

## INTERPRETATION SERVICES

There may be times when a volunteer has difficulty communicating with a client due to a language barrier. MOWRI has some clients who do not speak any English. We have several bilingual team members who speak fluent Spanish.

If your client only communicates in Spanish and you do not speak Spanish, please call the MOWRI headquarters and ask to speak to a bilingual team member. The team member can assist you directly.

If your client speaks any language other than Spanish, that you do not speak, and cannot communicate with you in English, please access the MOWRI-provided interpretation line:

1. Dial (866) 874-3972
2. Provide the access code: 716458
3. Indicate the language you need
4. Provide any additional information as requested

Please report any issues with accessing the interpretation line or any other issues communicating with clients to your Volunteer Coordinator.

## COMMUNICATION & FEEDBACK

If the client reports a specific request, i.e. the need to cancel a meal on a certain date, please advise the client to call MOWRI to report this request. Clients should call in any scheduling needs themselves, and volunteers should not offer to report client requests for them.

Volunteers are required to report concerns about a client's health or well-being to MOWRI. In this instance, MOWRI will inform all appropriate parties. MOWRI may or may not follow up with the volunteer.

There will be times when a client to whom you have regularly delivered meals discontinues program service. MOWRI may or may not be able to share the reasons why a specific client is no longer enrolled in our program. In some cases, privacy concerns may prevent MOWRI from sharing the reasons with volunteers.

Volunteers are encouraged to provide feedback about the program and their experience. Feedback helps us to assess program effectiveness and efficiency and make alterations as needed:

1. You may report program or delivery operation feedback whether it is positive or if you are suggesting improvements.
2. You may report client concerns or things you experience with the client that raise concerns.
3. You may report client preferences such as the client needing volunteers or drivers to knock loudly, to ring the bell a certain number of times or to call their phone multiple times to ensure they hear it to answer.
4. You may report if you notice that a client may benefit from a different meal menu than they are currently receiving.

## VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

### ROLE

As a volunteer with MOWRI, you are a vital part of delivering "More Than a Meal" to older adults and other homebound individuals across our state. This section gives you a quick snapshot of what to expect in your role.

Every year, our volunteers make an incredible difference in the lives of homebound older adults across Rhode Island. By giving more than 30,000 hours of service, driving over 300,000 miles, and delivering approximately 300,000 meals, they help to ensure that thousands of individuals receive not only nutritious food, but wellness checks, and meaningful social interaction. Volunteers are the heart of our mission, bringing compassion, consistency, and care to those who need it most.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Deliver meals to MOWRI clients.
2. Ensure safe food handling.
3. Provide a daily wellness check and a moment of social interaction with each client.
4. Report any concerns, including "no answers" or visible safety issues, immediately to

the MOWRI team.

5. Return delivery equipment, such as coolers, after your route.
6. Distribute additional resources such as pet food, nutrition materials, or shelf-stable boxes, when applicable.
7. Assist with suggested donation collection from clients by returning checks/cash to MOWRI team.
8. Be reliable and punctual for your scheduled delivery days.
9. Maintain professionalism, compassion, and courtesy in all interactions.
10. Follow all safety protocols and report any emergencies or concerns.

## TIME COMMITMENT

1. Delivery days: Monday-Friday
  - o We do not deliver meals on Federal and State holidays. See: Holiday Closings
2. Volunteers are scheduled on a weekly or biweekly basis unless otherwise specified.
3. Typical delivery window: 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
4. Pickup window: Arrive at your designated site between 9-10 a.m. as assigned.
5. Average route duration: 2 hours per shift with 10-20 stops.

## ATTIRE & IDENTIFICATION

MOWRI volunteers should dress comfortably and appropriately for weather conditions and to represent the organization as one of our delivery heroes.

The nature of the MOWRI volunteer driver role is that you will be in your car for an extended period of time, making frequent stops to exit your vehicle, and could be climbing multiple stairs during meal delivery.

We recommend wearing sneakers or comparable footwear and loose-fitting clothing that is clean and free of offensive images or language. Volunteers should avoid clothing that is revealing or damaged.

Whenever possible, please wear your MOWRI volunteer T-shirt to easily identify yourself. Volunteers should always wear their MOWRI lanyard and badge.

Volunteers should display the orange volunteer sign on their car dash or an alternative visible location. We encourage you to display your MOWRI volunteer magnet on your car.

## MANDATORY REPORTING

As a MOWRI volunteer, it is possible that you may encounter clients who are suffering from abuse or neglect. In the state of Rhode Island, it is mandatory that any person witnessing plausible forms of abuse make a report of witnessed abuse to the police. As a MOWRI volunteer, you must also report any witnessed abuse to MOWRI staff, who will report to the Programs & Mission Impact Director.

Abuse and neglect can be physical, verbal, sexual, financial, or psychological, and some people may experience multiple forms of abuse concurrently. For more information, please reference Rhode Island General Laws Section 42-66-8.

For more information on the signs of elder abuse, please call the R.I. Office of Healthy Aging at (401) 462-0555.

## **NUTRITION EDUCATION MATERIALS**

MOWRI distributes a one-page health education flyer comprised of topics related to all Home-Delivered Meal Program clients once per month. These flyers are printed and attached to route sheets. It is the volunteer's responsibility to deliver this flyer to clients.

## **VOLUNTEER CONDUCT**

Your cooperation is key to helping MOWRI maintain a safe and secure environment for its team members, clients, and volunteers, including an environment free of violence.

Please keep in mind the following important safety tips:

1. Report any potentially dangerous or unsafe practice to the Programs & Mission Impact Director.
2. You may make such reports anonymously. All reported incidents will be investigated. All parties involved in a situation will be counseled, and the results of the investigation will be shared with them.

MOWRI will not tolerate:

1. Inappropriate behavior directed toward any individual or class of individuals.
2. Speech that involves false or unsubstantiated claims that defame or tarnish the reputation of an organization or individual.
3. Conduct that involves dishonesty, deceit, or misrepresentation
4. Conduct that violates the previously noted expectations.

The threat or occurrence of violence by or between program clients, volunteers and team members is in direct conflict with our mission and will not be tolerated.

All team members and volunteers are responsible for helping to maintain a violence-free environment, and therefore, are required to promptly and accurately report incidents, regardless if physical injury has occurred.

Team members and volunteers also need to promptly report threats of violence or conversations that imply threats of violence, whether made by employees, volunteers, clients, youth, or other individuals.

MOWRI will investigate all concerns promptly in response to workplace violence, including termination of service. MOWRI may contact the police and other authorities for assistance if warranted.

## **GRATUITY**

Volunteers are not permitted to accept cash tips, money or personal gifts of monetary value. If a client wants to give you a monetary tip or gift of monetary value, please suggest that they donate directly to MOWRI.

## PRIVACY PRACTICES

Our privacy practices are designed to ensure the protection and confidentiality of your personal information. We take necessary precautions to safeguard your data for unauthorized access or misuse. Additionally, you have control over your data, with options to access, update, or delete it. Our privacy policy is regularly reviewed to comply with evolving regulations and best practices.

The information we collect only includes what is necessary to support your participation as a MOWRI volunteer, including your name, contact details, background check status, and volunteer availability.

For detailed information on our privacy practices, please visit [www.rimeals.org/privacy](http://www.rimeals.org/privacy)

## SOLICITATION POLICY

MOWRI volunteers are prohibited from soliciting clients. This policy is in place as a protective measure for our clients, who are a vulnerable population. Volunteers found in violation of this policy will be removed from the program.

Please contact MOWRI with any questions or concerns regarding the solicitation policy.

## VEHICLE USE

Most volunteers donate the use of their vehicle to deliver meals. In some cases, mileage reimbursement may be available through grants or special programs. Please speak with MOWRI if you have questions about eligibility.

To drive on behalf of Meals on Wheels, you must:

1. Possess a valid driver's license.
2. Carry current vehicle insurance.
3. Drive a reliable, registered, and roadworthy vehicle.
4. Notify your Volunteer Coordinator immediately of any changes to your license or insurance status.

Volunteers are required to obey traffic laws, including speed limits and parking regulations and be mindful of safety precautions to protect our clients' privacy while delivering meals, including:

1. Do not park in a designated Fire Lane.
2. Do not text, call, or use a phone while driving unless you're using hands-free technology in compliance with local laws.
3. Do not bring passengers with you during deliveries, unless pre-approved by staff.
4. Pets are not allowed in the vehicle during meal deliveries, except certified service animals.

## DRIVING INCIDENTS

In the event of an accident while delivering, call emergency services first if needed. Report any incident, even minor ones, to your Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible. MOWRI is not liable for damage to your vehicle, traffic violations, or other incidents that occur while using your personal car.

In extreme weather (e.g., snow, ice, severe heat), use your best judgment and follow the organization's guidance on whether deliveries are proceeding.

See: *Incllement Weather Policy*.

## TIME OFF & COVERAGE

Planned time-off requests will always be honored. It is the volunteers responsibility to inform their scheduler about any planned vacation requests as soon as possible. With a minimum of 48 hours' notice, we have time to:

1. Find a substitute volunteer.
2. Order double meals if other coverage options are not available.

It is understood that there may be times when you may be prohibited from fulfilling your volunteer shift due to matters beyond your control. It is appreciated that you notify MOWRI as soon as possible in such instances.

An unexpected absence from your scheduled volunteer delivery can result in service delays and the reassignment of team members to cover your delivery route.

If you miss a scheduled shift without notifying staff, this is considered a no-call, no-show. In such instances, your Volunteer Coordinator will contact you to discuss next steps. Repeated no-call, no-show incidents may lead to a reassignment or discontinuation of volunteer service.

It is understood that volunteers may need to take a break from volunteering for various reasons. Volunteer breaks of more than four (4) weeks will require a check-in with your Volunteer Coordinator before you resume volunteering.

We also understand that certain circumstances may require you to stop volunteering with MOWRI. Please know that volunteers are always welcome to return to service at any time. If you are returning to service from an extended break, your Volunteer Coordinator will ensure you are up to date on training and delivery protocols.

## SAFETY

To ensure your safety and comfort while volunteering with MOWRI:

1. Wear comfortable, closed-toe shoes and dress for the weather.
2. Be sure to wear your Volunteer ID badge.
3. We suggest wearing any MOWRI branded gear provided.
4. Turn off your engine and take your car keys with you when delivering each meal.
5. Do not deliver if conditions are unsafe; use your best judgement and do not put yourself in harm's way.

6. If presented with a potentially dangerous situation, leave immediately and inform the MOWRI headquarters by phone.
7. Manage your time to deliver each meal within the delivery window of 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
8. If a client is experiencing a medical emergency, call 911 if needed and stay with the client until help arrives. Immediately call MOWRI headquarters to report the incident.

## CLIENT CONFIDENTIALITY

Our privacy practices are designed to ensure the protection, dignity and confidentiality of our clients' personal information. We take necessary precautions to safeguard their data from unauthorized access or misuse. Personal and sensitive information is to be handled with the utmost care and discretion.

Volunteers are expected to maintain the privacy of their clients by not sharing any identifying information, including but not limited to client names, addresses, phone numbers, medical conditions, and living situations. Please do not photograph clients without their verbal consent.

## PHOTOS, VIDEO & SOCIAL MEDIA

There are times when it is appropriate to take and share a client's photo, but it must always be done in such a way that it respects client confidentiality and complies with our privacy policies.

Volunteers are permitted to take photos or videos of clients only if they have given their verbal consent. Volunteers are not permitted to share these photos with anyone but MOWRI team members.

Please avoid taking photos with any identifying information, including addresses or home interiors. Any photos taken MUST be sent to the MOWRI team so we can gain client consent before sharing them on any of our official platforms.

Do not share any information about clients, their homes, or your delivery locations on social media or other public platforms. Never post route details. When sharing your experience online, keep the focus on your service and the MOWRI mission.

MOWRI may coordinate media efforts or special events that involve client stories. These are always handled by staff, with client consent. Volunteers may be asked to participate in these efforts and may do so if their scheduling allows.

If you have a meaningful story to share, we encourage you to speak with your Volunteer Coordinator. There are many ways to highlight your experience while respecting client confidentiality.

## EDUCATION & ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

MOWRI may offer volunteers educational and engagement opportunities. These opportunities are always voluntary and will be communicated with advanced notice.

Opportunities are published through the volunteer dispatch and may include:

1. Media engagements
2. AAA defensive driving course
3. Lunch and learn sessions
4. Special events

## EXPERIENCE FEEDBACK

MOWRI is committed to the continual evaluation of our work to ensure we are best meeting the needs of the communities we serve and to ensure we are providing an exemplary volunteer experience.

We encourage your feedback on any matters relating to our volunteer program. Volunteers should feel welcome to share feedback at any time by contacting your Volunteer Coordinator.

## ANNUAL SURVEY

MOWRI offers volunteers a feedback survey every summer. This survey allows volunteers to contribute to program evaluation by documenting their experiences and levels of program satisfaction.

The survey is available in both printed and digital versions. Your participation in the annual survey is paramount to our ability to ensure we are best serving our client communities and meeting the needs of our program volunteers.

## RECOGNITION

MOWRI is proud to offer volunteers recognition for their commitment to our mission.

Volunteer recognition includes MOWRI-branded clothing and accessory items, special events, features in our E-News, annual newsletter and annual mission impact report, features on our social media channels, and other opportunities.

## GRIEVANCES

MOWRI volunteers shall have the opportunity to express themselves and seek resolution regarding service grievances in an equitable, non-punitive manner and with no adverse repercussions to the volunteer and/or his/her status for program participation.

MOWRI designates the Programs & Mission Impact Director to serve as its investigative officer for concerns related to volunteer program participation.

The Programs & Mission Impact Director will:

1. Respond to all reported grievances in a timely manner and work with the volunteer to resolve any grievances.
2. Record the essential information in writing. MOWRI will attempt to keep the

complaint confidential to the extent feasible. Disclosure of the complaint may be necessary to complete MOWRI's investigation.

3. Depending on the nature of the investigation, the investigating officer may conduct additional interviews.
4. In conjunction with the Executive Director, the investigating officer will decide as to the course of action, if any, that MOWRI will take. The volunteer will then be informed of the decision.

If the volunteer is reporting a grievance involving the Programs & Mission Impact Director, they may report their grievance to the Executive Director who will serve as investigating officer.

## **DISMISSAL**

While we hope every volunteer experience is fulfilling and long-lasting, there may be circumstances where it becomes necessary to end a volunteer's service. MOWRI reserves the right to discontinue a volunteer's involvement at any time, with or without cause. Reasons may include, but are not limited to, violation of policies, misconduct, safety concerns, or changes in program needs. Whenever possible, we will communicate concerns and offer support or guidance before making such decisions.

Volunteers also have the right to end their service at any time, and we encourage open communication if circumstances change or if the role no longer feels like the right fit. Our goal is to ensure that all volunteer relationships are respectful, safe, and aligned with our mission. We appreciate your understanding and your commitment to serving our community.

## **VOLUNTEER SUPPORT CONTACTS**

For any immediate scheduling concerns, follow ups on no-answers, or any day-to-day suggestions, please contact your Volunteer Scheduler:

Daisy Rodriguez

Email: [drodriguez@rimeals.org](mailto:drodriguez@rimeals.org)

Phone: (401) 351-6700, ext. 100

Text: (401) 404-5141

For onboarding questions, broader concerns, interest in any additional volunteer opportunities, or to join the Volunteer Advisory Council please contact the Senior Volunteer Coordinator:

Renee Mandarano

Email: [rmandarano@rimeals.org](mailto:rmandarano@rimeals.org)

Phone: (401) 351-6700, ext. 90206

Text: (401) 519-6621

For additional support, program concerns, emergent needs, high level client concerns or other needs, please contact our Programs & Mission Impact Director:

Shana Defelice

Email: [sdefelice@rimeals.org](mailto:sdefelice@rimeals.org)

Phone: (401) 351-6700, ext. 102

Text: (401) 415-7081

## ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO VOLUNTEER

### ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Volunteer Advisory Council (VAC) is comprised of members selected from the community at large. The VAC supports volunteer coordinators and the Mission & Impact Director in all program areas including policies, community awareness, volunteer recognition, training and annual evaluation.

Membership of the Committee will reflect the population of the area served, and include interested persons from the community, volunteer stations, and public/private agencies.

Members of the VAC are expected to attend each meeting and provide thoughtful input in each discussion. They may be asked to represent MOWRI in various ways, or act as a "lead" for each volunteer group.

### ADVOCACY

Advocacy plays a critical role in advancing our mission, raising awareness, and influencing positive change in our community and beyond. Occasionally, we may invite volunteers to support our advocacy efforts. These opportunities are always optional but highly valued; no volunteer is required to engage in advocacy, but your voice and presence can make a meaningful impact.

Examples of advocacy support may include:

1. Attending community meetings or public hearings.
2. Sharing educational materials or campaign information on social media.
3. Writing to local representatives or decision-makers.
4. Participating in advocacy days or organized outreach events.

We will always provide clear guidance, resources, and context for any advocacy activity.

### SPECIAL GUEST VISITS

Throughout the year, MOWRI engages elected officials and other partners in public awareness and media campaigns.

These efforts include special visits to clients that are always conducted with client permission and are pre-arranged. MOWRI may ask for your assistance to identify clients for a special visit.

### SENIOR WISH

Each holiday season, we offer this special initiative that brings joy to the older adults we serve. We request specific gift items to be purchased and donated, which are then wrapped and delivered alongside meals during the holiday period.

Volunteers are invited to donate and/or help wrap these gifts in advance—an opportunity to connect with fellow volunteers while making the season brighter for seniors in our community.

## FUNDRAISING

MOWRI must raise a certain amount of our annual operating budget through private philanthropic donations including from foundations, corporations, business, and individuals.

We welcome volunteers to participate in fundraising campaigns and events. We also welcome volunteers to become MOWRI donors through a contribution to our annual fund, attendance at our annual Festival of Meals celebration, or by making a gift during one of our campaigns such as 401Gives.

For more information on MOWRI fundraising opportunities, please contact External Affairs and Mission Advancement Director Amy Garofalo at [agarofalo@rimeals.org](mailto:agarofalo@rimeals.org) or (401) 351-6700, ext. 90195.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

Clients enrolled in the Home-Delivered Meal Program during a planned holiday closing will receive a double-meal delivery prior to the holiday. This "double meal" should be refrigerated and consumed on the holiday. Annually, Meals on Wheels of RI is closed on the following holidays:

1. New Year's Day
2. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
3. Presidents' Day
4. Memorial Day
5. Juneteenth Independence Day
6. Independence Day (Fourth of July)
7. Victory Day
8. Labor Day
9. Columbus Day
10. Veterans Day
11. Thanksgiving Day
12. Day after Thanksgiving
13. Christmas Eve
14. Christmas Day
15. New Year's Eve

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### INCLEMENT WEATHER

MOWRI's inclement weather policy is in place to ensure the safety of its clients, team members, and volunteers. We make every effort to minimize the impact that inclement weather may have on program service.

We may schedule a "double meal" delivery ahead of a predicted weather event. This would cancel meal service on the day of the predicted event AND allow clients to access the same number of fully prepared meals during the week of the event.

There may be times where an unforeseen weather incident results in an unplanned delivery closure. In these cases, we suggest clients make a meal from their shelf-stable food box.

We will do our best to notify you in advance of any changes in program service. Unplanned office/delivery closures are posted through the Rhode Island Broadcasters Association and on our Facebook page.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Depending on a client's city or town of residence, they may be eligible for additional services. Please contact a Home-Delivered Meal Program team member for more information.

Our team can help connect clients to additional resources for maintaining health and independent living. Please contact our office and ask to speak with a Certified Community Health Worker (CCHW) team member.

These organizations also work to help Rhode Island older adults live full and healthy lives:

1. Rhode Island Office of Healthy Aging  
(401) 462-0555  
[www.oha.ri.gov](http://www.oha.ri.gov)
2. Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)  
(401) 462-4444  
[www.adrc.ohhs.ri.gov](http://www.adrc.ohhs.ri.gov)

MOWRI's headquarters is located at 70 Bath Street in Providence.

All program questions and concerns should be addressed to the MOWRI Home-Delivered Meal Program team by calling (401)351-6700.

Meals on Wheels of RI is open:

- Building operating hours: Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- Call center operating hours: Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Additional information about Meals on Wheels of RI, Inc. can be found at [www.rimeals.org](http://www.rimeals.org).

