

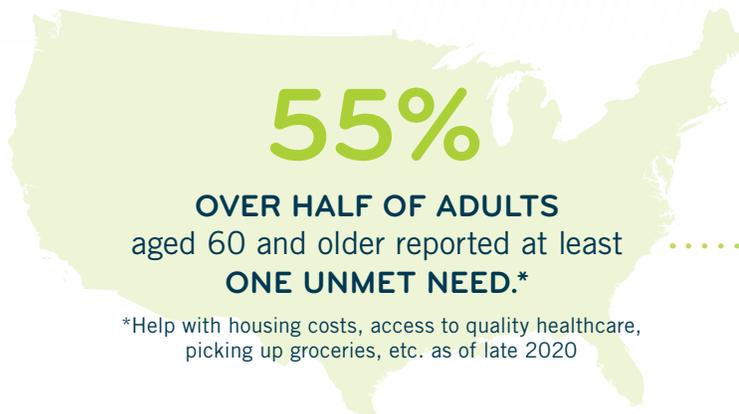
# COVID-19 FACT SHEET



UNITED STATES 2021

This fact sheet presents the latest data collected as the COVID-19 pandemic was affecting the United States in 2020 through mid-2021. The situation may have changed since data collection.

**Many older adults struggled with hunger and isolation before the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic exacerbated these issues and increased the need for services like Meals on Wheels.**



**40%**  
OF OLDER ADULTS

needed help with having enough activities to keep busy at home and/or with **STAYING SOCIALLY CONNECTED** while physically distancing.

**18%**

needed help with **AFFORDABLE FOOD** to meet their dietary needs.

**Senior hunger, social isolation, anxiety and depression rose dramatically at times during the pandemic.**

The proportion of seniors aged 60 and older who sometimes or often **DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH TO EAT** rose from:

**2.8%** —————> **4.9%**  
(2019) (2020)

**A 75% INCREASE**



**1 IN 4 ADULTS** aged 65 and older reported **ANXIETY OR DEPRESSION** during the pandemic.\*

\*This was substantially higher than the 1 in 10 (11%) older adults with Medicare who reported depression or anxiety in 2018.

**Even pre-pandemic, many seniors faced challenges of paying for housing and other necessities, in addition to food.**



In 2018, **53% OF RENTERS** aged 62 and up were cost burdened, meaning they paid more than **30% OF THEIR INCOME** for rent and utilities.

In late 2020, **18% OF ADULTS** aged 60 and older reported needing help with **BEING ABLE TO AFFORD PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS**.



## With help from emergency pandemic relief funding, Meals on Wheels programs greatly increased their home delivery services.

At their highest numbers served during the pandemic, programs reported delivering an average of about

**100% MORE**  
HOME-DELIVERED MEALS



weekly than they were before the pandemic began.

As of July 2021, programs were still serving an average of

**57% MORE**  
MEALS

weekly than they were before the pandemic began.

In November 2020, 4 out of 5 local programs agreed, **"NEW CLIENTS ARE HERE TO STAY."**

## Programs quickly adapted services to safely meet clients' needs during the pandemic.

### CHANGING SERVICES PROVIDED (Nov. 2020)

**98% OF PROGRAMS** said they had reworked one or more areas of service or operation because of COVID-19. **90%** reworked home-delivered meal options and logistics.

### TAPPING LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS (July 2020)

**47% OF PROGRAMS** had tapped local partnerships to help fill gaps, provide emergency meals, etc.

### PROVIDING CONGREGATE MEAL SERVICES IN ALTERNATIVE FORMATS (July 2020)

**47% OF PROGRAMS** were serving congregate meal program clients in alternative formats, such as drive-thru or curbside pick-up.

### DEVELOPING SOCIAL CONNECTION PROGRAMS (Nov. 2020)

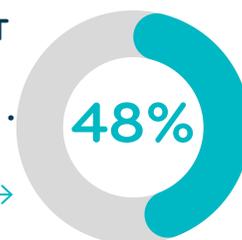
**56% OF PROGRAMS** had at least some clients participating in a service they developed to address social isolation.

## The need is greater than the majority of Meals on Wheels programs can meet without more resources.



In late 2020, nearly 9 in 10 programs said there was an **UNMET NEED FOR HOME-DELIVERED MEALS** in their community.

In 2021, nearly half of programs said they would **NOT BE ABLE TO SUPPORT** their current client base without infusions of funding beyond their typical funding.



## Plus, programs' costs have gone up during the pandemic.

**88% OF PROGRAMS SAID THEIR OPERATIONAL COSTS HAD INCREASED.**

**Meals on Wheels programs require sustained and expanded funding to continue providing existing services to meet the unmet need and to address senior hunger and isolation in their communities.**