



Community Table Fund FAQ's

What is the Community Table Fund?

The Community Table Fund is an initiative that ensures eligible older adults in our service area have equitable access to home-delivered meals, regardless of their ability to pay. It protects meal access by covering the gap between what clients can contribute and what is required to provide consistent, reliable service.

Why was this fund created?

The fund was created in response to strong community interest in supporting meal access more directly, as well as the urgent and growing need for our services among older adults across the 44 communities we serve.

How does the meal pricing work?

The standard price of a meal is \$10. We offer a sliding scale based on household income and financial circumstances, which can reduce the cost to as low as \$5 per meal. Approximately 85% of our clients qualify for reduced fees — a reflection of the reality that most of the older adults we serve are living on limited or fixed incomes.

What is the level of need this fund supports?

Because of our reduced-fee structure, there is an ongoing gap between client contributions and the actual cost of providing meals. Currently, this gap totals approximately \$15,000 per month in MWNEI meal discounts across our service area. The Community Table Fund ensures that eligible neighbors continue receiving meals consistently and that we never create a waitlist for services.

Who benefits from this fund?

The Community Table Fund directly supports older adults and homebound neighbors across 44 communities who rely on Meals on Wheels Northeastern Illinois for daily nutrition, regular wellness checks, and the social connection that helps them remain healthy and independent at home.

How is the Fund managed and how is its impact shared?

The fund is a dedicated, pooled source of support that offsets the approximately \$15,000 monthly gap between reduced client contributions and the cost of providing meals. Transparency is central to this initiative: **funds are used only for meal-production-related costs**. Contributors will receive quarterly updates detailing the fund's spend-down and impact, including the number of clients whose access was preserved and how many meals were made possible through donor support.

Can I 'sponsor' a specific client?

Donations to the Community Table Fund support the program as a whole rather than an individual client. This approach protects client dignity and recognizes the wide range of financial circumstances and changing needs across our communities. A pooled fund allows us to respond equitably and efficiently wherever support is needed most.

Does this change the sliding scale program?

No. The sliding scale remains in place. The Community Table Fund strengthens this model by helping ensure it remains sustainable and that financial barriers do not prevent access.

How can someone support the Community Table Fund?

Supporters can make one-time or recurring monthly gifts by [clicking here](#). Monthly giving is especially impactful because it provides steady support that helps ensure uninterrupted meal access for neighbors in need. Even small gifts make a meaningful difference and any amount helps sustain access to meals across our communities.