

North Central New Mexico Economic Development District

Non-Metro Area Agency on Aging

Home Delivered Meals

Driver Handbook



Jerry Eagan, Driver, Los Alamos



Ethel West and Ed Dewlen



Ethel West – Volunteer



**Barney Carrillo – Driver
Valencia County**

Welcome to the Area Agency on Aging home delivered meals program. This program assists seniors in your community who are home bound. As a home delivered meals driver, your primary function is to deliver a hot meal for lunch to the homebound participants. Some sites deliver frozen meals for the weekend or evening meal, a cold breakfast for next day service, or shelf stable meals in case of emergencies. Other functions include being a greeter, observer, liaison and sometimes a lifesaver.

The Area Agency on Aging requires that we spend at least one hour orienting each home delivered meals driver. We appreciate your attendance and compliance. During your orientation you will be provided with the essential knowledge needed to perform the duties of a home delivered meals driver. Within a few weeks you will become familiar with your delivery route and the seniors you serve. Other training will be provided as needed.

Remember that food is one of the most basic of human needs. Yet it is something many of us take for granted. Some of our homebound seniors have no family members nearby and have few options for getting groceries into their homes. In most cases the homebound meals recipient lives alone and is lonely, frail and lacks companionship. For those seniors, the ability to receive basic, reliable nutrition may mean the difference between independence and institutionalization.

As a new driver in the home bound meals program, you may find that you have questions concerning the seniors to whom you are taking the meals or specific problems with route delivery. Senior center staff is available to assist you with your concerns. There are no “silly” questions, and we are here to support you.

We encourage all drivers to report any unusual circumstances that they observe concerning seniors on their route. We believe that you are the eyes and ears for our home bound seniors.

We hope your experience as a driver with the home delivered meals program will not be limited to the logistics of food delivery. Take the time to become acquainted with the clients for whom you deliver nourishment and develop friendships. Have fun! Thanks for caring and delivering a much-needed service.

Sincerely,

Jenny Martinez,
Non-Metro Area Agency on Aging

Before beginning your training, let's do some visualization; this will help you get in the frame of mind for some of the situations you may encounter.

Let's all close our eyes. Relax. Take a deep breath. Imagine you have been ill and in the hospital. You just came home yesterday. This morning someone came to help you take a bath and dress. Now you are waiting for someone to bring your meal. Think about what you might be doing while you are waiting. It seems to take longer than you expected and you are getting rather hungry because you didn't have a chance to have breakfast, nor did you have energy to prepare anything. Come to think of it, you're not sure if there is any food in the house for you to eat. Finally, you hear the doorbell ring. It is difficult for you to get up to answer the door. You finally get there and you open the door. Imagine what the person at the other end does when you open the door. Does s/he come in and help you set up your meal? Does s/he hand you the meal and leave? S/he probably asks how you are feeling, tells you they've missed you and are glad to see you. If you do require assistance with meal set up, s/he may come in and provide it for you. Now you sit down and eat the food. It is nice and hot and it is very comforting to you. It is something you really enjoy eating.....

You can now open your eyes.

WHO DOES MEALS TO THE HOMEBOUND SERVE?

Home delivered meals clients are seniors who have requested the meal service and meet the following eligibility requirements.

1. Are 60 years or older.
2. The Director or designated staff must conduct a face-to-face needs assessment that indicates the individual is unable to attend the meal site.
3. Special consideration is given to the frail and those with the greatest economic need.
4. Individuals diagnosed with dementia or another mental condition.
5. Married to an eligible participant.
6. Disabled (as determined by the provider policies) and reside with an eligible individual.

There should not be a waiting list for service for those seniors who directly apply for meals and are found to be eligible. Short-term service is available for 10 days without an assessment for those who are recuperating from serious illness or need meals in the interim. In some cases, service is provided for a spouse or other caregiver who is at risk of being overwhelmed by the responsibilities involved in caring for an incapacitated individual. This determination is made at the program level.

Clients' situations change. Persons recovering from surgery may gradually become better able to provide for themselves.

Client's children may become available to provide care at the noon hour. When this occurs, we take clients off our program to accommodate others in need. The Director or designated staff will visit and assess clients twice a year to determine eligibility.

WHAT ABOUT INCOME AND CONTRIBUTIONS?

Income eligibility is not a criterion for service. All seniors who receive meals are asked to voluntarily share in the cost of the meals by contributing a suggested donation. No one is refused service because of inability to contribute. All donations are to be kept confidential.

QUALITIES AND SKILLS NEEDED FOR THE HOME DELIVERED MEALS DRIVER:

1. A good driving record.
2. Possesses a valid driver's license.
3. Ability to pass a background check.
4. Enjoys working with seniors with physical or mental disabilities.
5. Dependable and punctual.
6. Warmth and caring.
7. Tolerant and the ability to be non-judgmental.
8. Good communication skills and the ability to work with people.
9. Ability to set aside own concerns to focus on the needs of the client.
10. Respectful of the privacy and feelings of others.

11. Ability to navigate stairs and easily get in and out of vehicles several times.

12. Does not accept tips, gifts, loans or fees from home delivered meals participants. (Drivers may collect program donations.)

MEAL DELIVERY ROUTINE: All centers have different routines that are specific to their operation and delivery of service to the home bound. Here are a few basic procedures to follow upon arrival to your scheduled shift:

1. The driver will be instructed on where his/her help is needed in the food preparation area prior to the delivery of the meals.
2. Pick up route sheets from your supervisor. Read the route sheet carefully and make note of any changes or special instructions.

Sample Route Sheet

Name of Program
Home Delivered Meals
Route # ()

NAME	RT	ADDRESS	PHONE	BRFST	LUNCH
Paul McCartney	(13)	Abby Road	64-64-64-64	1	1

3. Before entering the food production area, drivers must wash their hands and put on a hair restraint (hair net or center issued baseball cap) and follow proper sanitation procedures.
4. Driver will assist in getting the heat stones and bags ready for packaging. Heating units will be plugged in to reach proper temperature. When a hot shot truck is being used, the driver will start up the vehicle and set the warming compartment to the correct temperature to ensure food is kept at 140 degrees or above. Ice chests or cold units are to be set-up with ice or set to the correct temperature to keep cold food at 40 degrees or below. Milk is to be at 38 degrees or below.
5. If asked to assist in packaging food into trays, drivers shall wear plastic gloves.
6. Prior to leaving the center test and sanitize your thermometer and record temperature of the first meal and the time.
7. Make sure you are wearing your pictured name tag or other means of identification.
8. When you have delivered your last meal record the temperature and the time.
9. Upon returning to the senior center, turn in your route sheet and report to your supervisor any unusual circumstances concerning seniors on your route.
10. Leave your vehicle clean and return heat bags and ice coolers (cleaned) to their proper storage location for the next day.
11. Ensure that instructions for proper storage and reheating are provided to each participant at least monthly (document.

Visit Etiquette:

When you visit each client there are a few things to remember:

1. Introduce yourself, be friendly and call the senior by name. There's nothing like a warm and friendly smile to greet someone who is lonely. You could be the only contact the participant has all day, all week and sometimes all month long. Don't miss the opportunity to make the participant feel good! Put on that smile and ask: "How are you today?" Make them feel that someone cares about them.
2. Ask where they would like the meal to be placed.
3. Take the time to ensure that everything will go well for their meal.
4. Do they need you to open their hot tray or milk for them? Should you put away any of the cold components in the refrigerator? You're the one to decide. Some clients may need help, but won't ask
5. Be aware of the time and that other seniors are also waiting for you and their meals.
6. Encourage the client to start eating while you're still there.
7. Some clients would welcome "chat" time, but schedule requirements do limit time.
8. If client is not home, **INVESTIGATE!** Look around the house and try to glance in the window and call out the client's name. Check with a neighbor and then try to telephone them. Failing all these things, **CALL THE OFFICE IMMEDIATELY** and go on with your route. Never leave the meals.

You should also keep a few things in mind:

1. Be non-judgmental regarding other people's lifestyles or personal habits. Always treat participants with respect.
2. Do not give medical advice or administer drugs of any kind.
3. Personal care is not part of your job e.g. washing, dressing or combing hair.
4. Do not give legal advice.
5. Do not interfere in family problems.
6. Never give out your phone number.
7. Please contact the office if the client has any comments, complaints or concerns.
8. Remember, you are the "eyes and ears" we have with the clients.
9. Your job is to deliver meals, if the client asks you to do other things, please refer them to the office. Staff can follow-up and direct them to other programs that may be of assistance.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Remember that you have the client's trust. Please respect the confidentiality of all the information communicated to you. Protect the dignity of the individual. Do not discuss their living situations, health conditions, financial status or anything you learn about them with anyone but a staff member.

RESPONDING TO SPECIAL SITUATIONS:

You are in the client's home every day and are the best one to recognize changes or problems before they occur. Be on the lookout for any sudden changes in the client or their habits. This could mean a stroke or other problems, perhaps even a difficulty with medication. Note any potential health or safety problems in the client's home. Sometimes they are not able to see these. Does the client suddenly start complaining of aches and pain? Are the clients usually neat and clean and you found they are unkempt? Do they use a walker and the house is cluttered with extension cords and throw rugs. You should immediately report these findings to your site supervisor for follow-up. **Remember, you are the eyes and ears for our home bound seniors.**

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY:

For a home delivered meals driver, common sense and a clear head are the most important things to have. In an Emergency find the nearest phone and call 911, then call your site supervisor for instructions. Always keep in mind these five essential rules:

1. Do not touch the fallen individual.
2. Do not pick up someone who has fallen.
3. Do not touch someone who is on the floor.
4. Do not administer any medication.
5. Call 911.

IN CASE OF AN ACCIDENT:



Involvement in an auto accident is frightening and traumatic. It is not always a simple matter to remain calm when enveloped in a chaotic and confused situation. If you are driving as a driver for the home delivered meals program, you have the additional concern that the client is waiting for their meal.

Each program has a policy for you to follow in case of an auto accident involving a home delivered meals vehicle. Check with your site supervisor for your program's policy.

Here are a few suggestions:

1. Call the police or 911.
2. Report the collision immediately to your site supervisor and the seriousness of the accident, especially your well being. Your supervisor will need the details of the accident for their records. Your supervisor can also arrange to send someone out to you for the delivery of the remaining meals.
3. Obtain the other driver's personal and vehicle information.

4. Note where the damage is located on the vehicles and the extent of the damage.
5. **DO NOT ADMIT** anything to the other driver.
6. If the police are involved indicate how the collision occurred. If you believe you have caused the accident, **do not admit liability** for it. You are under no obligation to incriminate yourself. Your obligation is simply to cooperate with the police in the reporting of the collision and to exchange the information to the other driver.
7. Your supervisor will need the police report for insurance purposes and to notify the proper officials.

SAFETY FIRST

Always remember that your safety is important to us. Do not venture into any situation, which does not seem safe to you. Be careful when stepping in tall grass—there could be a hole that can twist your ankle. Don't step in slippery oil or grease that may cause you to slip and fall. Do not enter a yard with an unrestrained dog; they have been known to bite drivers. Be careful on sidewalks, steps and other areas you cannot safely negotiate. Report any unsafe situations to your site supervisor.



WHAT ABOUT THE MEALS?

Programs follow the “daily reference intake” (DRI) under the direction of the Administration on Aging. DRI’s are the set of nutrient and energy standards developed by the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Academy of Sciences for persons age 51 and older. The daily DRI for this population includes macronutrients, vitamins and minerals.

Meals served to the home bound are nutritious and meet at least 1/3(33%) of the DRI and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans taking into account specific recommendations for seniors. Food is the primary source for nutrient intakes, and our home delivered meals play a vital role in preventing illness.

The standard lunch meal pattern includes two servings of bread (whole grain or enriched is desirable), one serving of fruit, two servings of non starchy vegetables, one serving (8 ounces) of low fat milk or the equivalent, three ounces of cooked meat or meat alternate and two teaspoons of fat.

The standard breakfast meal pattern (when served in combination with lunch) includes 1 ½ servings of bread or cereal, one serving of non-starchy vegetable (at breakfast, non-starchy vegetable may be substituted with two (2) additional ounces of meat alternate), one serving (8 ounce) of low fat milk or equivalent, two ounces cooked meat or meat alternate and one teaspoon of fat.

Meals throughout the senior nutrition program are becoming more diabetic friendly with carbohydrates being balanced with other foods. Inform your site supervisor when a client requests a special dietetic meal. Most programs only offer a regular meal. Clients needing more food may be able to receive assistance from other agencies.

Drivers shall insure by keeping accurate logs that meals are kept at correct temperatures (140 degrees and above for hot food, 40 degrees and below for cold food and milk at 38 degrees and below) and delivery is done within two (2) hours from taking food from the equipment which cooking/reheating is employed.

THANKS TO YOU, MEALS GET DELIVERED!

We can't stress enough that you are the eyes and ears of the home delivered meals program. If you see anything that seems unusual or anything we should know about or look into, please report it to your site supervisor.

Any suggestions or concerns are important to the program. Please let your site supervisor know how your route is doing. We continually seek ways to improve our programs.

Thank you for becoming part of the meals to the home bound team! Your commitment makes our service effective and reliable. You are truly making a difference in the lives of our seniors in need.



Ethel West and Ed Dewlen

The wheels go round and round and round
As Barney Cheerily drives his van
Down the road, around a corner and over the hill
His destination, as you know, is to
All those wonderful seniors that sit homebound
Barney is their meal deliveryman
Rain or shine; however the winds may blow,
Barney will still be there.

As a little girl she watched for the yellow
School bus
Today, an elderly little lady, she watches
For a very special van
It's not yellow, it's not green, just a nice
Inviting color to all of us
Rain or shine; however the winds may blow,
Here comes Barney, her meal deliveryman.

“Good morning, Mam, and how are you today?
The chicken is hot, the potatoes too
The salads crispy cold and dessert so tasty”
“Thank you Barney, it is good to see you
And have your smiling presence come my way
Stay a minute or two, don't go, don't be hasty”
“Sorry, Barney says, there are other meals to go
But I will be right here again tomorrow”

Rain or shine; however the winds may blow,
The wheels go round and round and round
As Barney Cheerily drives his van
There are women; there are men, all homebound
Waiting for a cheery smile,
A pleasant voice
From Barney, their meal delivery Man!

By: Alma Gregory, Valencia County senior participant
In special thanks to Barney Carrillo!
November, 2005

