



**MEALS
ON WHEELS
OF THE SHOALS**

helping people. changing lives.

A Community Action Agency of Northwest Alabama Program

**MEALS ON WHEELS
OF THE SHOALS
HANDBOOK**

For Volunteers



Community Action Agency of Northwest Alabama

**745 Thompson Street
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Phone: 256-7660**

www.caanw.org



WHO WE ARE

Community Action Agency of Northwest Alabama is a leading non-profit organization in Northwest Alabama that is committed to reducing or eliminating the causes and consequences of poverty. This is achieved through various programs created, as well as through strategic partnership with other non-profit organizations.

Programs of Community Action Northwest:

- Housing Supports
- Fatherhood/Responsible Parenting Program
- Mother's Program
- Meals on Wheels of The Shoals
- Youth Connect
- Home Weatherization and Rehabilitation
- Chance Homeless Program
- Energy Assistance
- GED classes through partnership with NW-SCC
- Gerald Williams Cooperative Gardening Program



For a listing of counties offering the above programs or for more information in general about Community Action Agency of Northwest Alabama visit us online at www.caanw.org

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, that's the only thing that ever has."

-Margaret Mead

"For a community to be whole and healthy, it must be based on people's love and concern for each other."

-Millard Fuller



About Meals on Wheels of The Shoals



Mission Statement

Meals on Wheels of The Shoals enhances the quality of life of homebound individuals by providing nutritious meals, personal contact and related services.



The Community Action Agency of Northwest Alabama's mission is to reduce the causes and adverse consequences of poverty and to empower low-income individuals, families, and communities to achieve self-sufficiency through advocacy, resource utilization, and service delivery.



The **Meals on Wheels of The Shoals** program is a locally funded program that depends on contributions from the community. Our program is supported by the United Way of Northwest Alabama, local churches, city and county governments, individuals, estates and businesses. It is operated by Community Action Agency Northwest Alabama. The **Meals on Wheels of The Shoals** program was created to meet the nutritional needs of the elderly and disabled homebound residents of Lauderdale, Colbert and Franklin Counties. We currently provide an average of 175 nutritional meals daily. These meals are prepared by an outsourced chef and staff at the Shoals Culinary Institute facility.

Over 400 volunteers give time to the program monthly in the Florence, Petersville, Muscle Shoals, Tuscumbia, Sheffield and Russellville communities. These volunteers deliver meals to homebound clients and provide daily social contact to ensure the wellness of the client.



About Meals on Wheels Shoals (*cont'd*)

Since 1976, **Meals on Wheels of The Shoals (MOWS)** has prepared and delivered nutritious meals as well as provided social interaction for many hundreds of vulnerable clients.

Through daily contact with our volunteers, our agency provides the following results to meal recipients:

- Increased independence and social well-being
- Improved quality of life
- Sustained economic independence
- The ability to remain in their home
- The fostering of existing family structures
- Reduced costs to the clients, family & taxpayer
- "In crisis" or vulnerable clients are moved one step closer to stability
- Clients can be helped during times of transition when dealing with traumatic life-changing events such as cancer, serious car accidents and work-related injuries
- Additional client needs are addressed through our many agency programs and through referrals to community providers.



Purpose of the Volunteer Handbook

Welcome to Meals on Wheels of the Shoals! Volunteers are the heart and soul of **Meals on Wheels of The Shoals** and we depend on more than 400 volunteers every year to help deliver Meals on Wheels to our clients in Colbert, Franklin and Lauderdale counties. The Volunteer Handbook is designed to acquaint you with Meals on Wheels of The Shoals (MOWS) and provide you with information about volunteering with our organization. The handbook has been organized by topic to help you find information easily. No handbook can answer all the questions you might have about our policies and programs. We encourage you to talk with your coordinator or the program coordinator if you have questions about the content of this handbook or your volunteer service with MOWS.

Volunteers should carefully review and familiarize themselves with the contents of the Volunteer Handbook as soon as possible, for it will answer many questions about volunteering with MOWS.

Thank you for giving your time and talent to help others. We hope you find volunteering with Meals on Wheels Shoals a positive and rewarding experience.

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."

Dr. Felice Leonardo Buscaglia

Welcome to our Meals on Wheels Program!

To Volunteers,

Thank you for sharing your time with neighbors in need. We are confident this will be a rewarding experience and your time will be well spent. The following is a brief overview of what you can expect from us, what we expect from you, as well as what we expect from our meal recipients.

The Meals on Wheels Staff Will:

- Maintain a predictable and timely schedule for meal preparation & pick up.
- Provide a map and route sheet that contains the names, addresses & telephone numbers for each location you will be delivering meals to.
- Respond promptly to any questions or concerns you have about the program or those receiving meals.
- Provide additional training when we consider it to be helpful to you and a worthwhile use of your time.
- Provide timely and meaningful information via flyers or other forms of information.



Overview:

Volunteers will be expected to:

- Be prompt and reliable.
- Call or secure a substitute when you are unable to deliver or fulfill your tasks.
- Drive carefully & safely. Follow state seat belt laws and refrain from texting while driving.
- Handle food coolers with care to avoid spills.
- Be courteous and friendly to the recipients, regardless of their temperament.
- Call a member of the **Meals on Wheels Shoals** staff to express any concerns you have about the health or safety of a recipient.
- **Never leave a meal outside.** Due to the extreme temperatures in Alabama and health regulations, we **never** leave a meal hanging on the door or on the porch, etc.
- Mark route sheets if you do not deliver a meal, letting our staff know when you return if there was any concern for that particular day.
- Honor each client's right and privacy by returning clip boards w/route sheets to **Meals on Wheels Shoals** when you finish your route. The information you provide is used to track meals served as well as outcomes for each client.
- If you determine that a client has an additional need (utility assistance, home health care, transportation, heaters/air conditioners etc.) please let us know and we will seek out the appropriate resource to meet that need.
- Talk to others about your experience at **Meals on Wheels Shoals.**
- Please contact the Program Coordinator or Coordinator of Community Development at 256-766- 4330, with any ideas/ recommendations that will improve the services we provide.

Thank you for your commitment to volunteer!

Meals on Wheels Shoals complies with all health, sanitary and food safety regulations. However, once you (or other responsible parties) have accepted the meal, you assume responsibility for proper food handling and storage. Our obligation has been fulfilled.

Meals on Wheels of The Shoals recipients are homebound residents of either Lauderdale, Colbert or Franklin Counties who cannot prepare their own meals and have no one else to prepare meals for them. They are delivered a hot nutritious meal each day Monday through Friday, with additional frozen meals delivered on Thursday & Friday to cover weekend meals. All holidays are covered with additional frozen meals added to deliveries for the appropriate holiday. Meals are available for short term or long term needs. Meals are available to those who are homebound and living alone, without regard to age, income, race, religion, national origin, gender or disability.

Qualifications/Client Requirements:

- Homebound (client does not drive or driving is very limited)
- Physically or mentally incapacitated to the point where meal preparation is difficult, if not impossible
- Lives alone or with another incapacitated person or is alone during the day and is not able to prepare meals for themselves
- Meals on Wheels of The Shoals evaluation must be completed by the MOWS Coordinator or a referral by a physician, social worker, or home health agency. We will call the potential meal recipient to do a telephone interview, review client responsibilities, do evaluation and then begin their service.

Additional Information:

- The age limit is 19 and above.
- Meals are delivered between 11am and 1pm. Meal recipients must be home during these hours to receive meals, unless prior arrangements have been made.
- Meals are provided at no cost.



Holidays & Hours of Operation

Meals on Wheels will be closed on the following holidays (extra meals will be sent prior to a holiday)

New Year's Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King, Jr Day	Columbus Day
President's Day	Veterans Day
Monday after Easter	Thanksgiving Day (Thursday & Friday only)
Memorial Day	Christmas Eve
Independence Day (July 4 th)	Christmas Day

Inclement Weather

Inclement Weather Policy:

- In case of inclement weather/hazardous driving conditions, meals may be delayed or even canceled due to driving/road conditions.
- Please provide updated phone numbers in case of emergencies or weather changes.
- In the event of Inclement weather, we will make every effort to provide our clients with extra meal(s) containing nutritional, non-perishable items such as canned soup, crackers and fruit that can be prepared by the client to replace regularly-delivered meal(s).
- If you have any questions please call **256-766-4330**.



Volunteer Opportunities

Meal Delivery:

Volunteers are needed to pick up and deliver meals to homebound neighbors throughout Lauderdale, Colbert and Franklin Counties. Meals are picked up Monday through Friday between 10:30am- 11am at the designated site in your county.

Delivery takes from 1 to 1.5 hours.

This is a family-friendly volunteer opportunity and great for groups!

Corporate Adopt-A-Route Program:

Companies across the Shoals area have discovered **Meals on Wheels of The Shoals** is the perfect volunteer fit for their employees.

Volunteers deliver meals during their lunch hour either once a week, once a month or as their schedule will allow. The program provides great corporate social responsibility with consistency, flexibility and ease. It allows busy people to give back to their community without taking away precious evening and weekend time. Your company is seen as a community partner, while building exceptional employee morale and creating better employee communication and team building.



Meal Delivery Volunteer Job Description in Detail

A meal delivery volunteer brings meals to homebound persons in the community. Meals should be picked up between the hours of 10:30 – 11:00 a.m. Delivery takes from 1 to 1.5 hours. Volunteers can deliver once a week, every other week, or once a month. Corporate and group routes are available. Meals are not delivered on Saturday, Sunday, or certain holidays. Extra meals may be sent prior to the holiday. All meals are provided to our clients free of charge. Please do not accept financial contributions from clients. Gift envelopes are available from the **Meals on Wheels of The Shoals** office should a client wish to make a monetary donation.

*****Note—On occasion you may also be required to deliver additional items such as literature on community resources and/or a quarterly newsletter, holiday gift, etc.***

Below are guidelines to follow when you volunteer for **Meals on Wheels of The Shoals**.

When you arrive at the **Meals on Wheels Shoals** Designated area to deliver meals you will:

- Get your correct route sheet.
- Read over your route sheet for changes or special instructions. *Do not assume that the same people are on your route each time you deliver.*
- Check your meal count prior to leaving the kitchen.
- Load coolers containing meals and milk/juice into your vehicle. (**Meals on Wheels Shoals** will provide containers and coolers. Always keep meals separate from milk.)

When you visit each **Meals on Wheels of The Shoals** Recipient, remember the following:

- Introduce yourself, be friendly and call recipient by name.
- Ask where they would like the meal to be placed.
- Suggest that the meal be placed in the refrigerator if they are not going to eat it right away.
- Our goal is to deliver a hot meal to the recipient so please keep each visit brief.

- Return the delivery containers and completed route delivery.

Be aware of appropriate behaviors of the client/volunteer relationship:

- Do not be judgmental regarding other people's lifestyle or personal habits. Always treat our recipients with respect.
- Do not give medical advice or administer medicine of any kind.
- Do not give legal advice.
- Do not interfere with family matters.
- Please contact the MOWS coordinator at **256-766-4330, ext 6** if you have any concerns.
- Remember that you are the **LINK** we have to the recipients so please keep our staff informed. Your job is to deliver meals. If the recipient asks you to do other things, please refer them to **256-766-4330**. Staff will provide information about possible community resources.
- Please return coolers and sheets to the pick-up spot in your county.

Mark route sheets each day as you deliver meals. If you do not deliver the meal, indicate on the route sheet or please tell staff when you return the bags. Please return clip board containing marked route sheet each day along with coolers. Delivery information is entered weekly and the information you provide is used to track meals served, as well as outcomes for each client.

- **If a client is not home, do not leave the meal unless prior arrangements have been made.** You may give leftover meals to another person on the route to eliminate waste. Please note on route sheet that client did not come to the door so we can check on the client's well-being essential to our funders and all who provide financial support.

- Please do not deliver a meal to an individual unless they are on your route sheet. If there is an individual that you believe qualifies to receive meals, please have the individual, a member of their family or their physician contact the **Meals on Wheels of the Shoals** office.

If there is an **emergency**:

1) call **9-1-1** AND

2) contact the Meals on Wheels Shoals office at 256-766-4330.

If the client has fallen or is bleeding do not try to move them or treat the wound.

- If you encounter an uncommon situation at the client's home, call the **Meals on Wheels Shoals office** at 256-766-4330. We will have information and family contacts for each client and can usually solve a problem quickly. A brief, warm conversation with the person will enable you to evaluate if any additional assistance is needed.
- Do not purchase or give any medications to meal recipients.
- If you are unable to deliver meals on your scheduled day, it is always helpful if you have a friend who can learn your route and substitute for you when necessary. We will provide you with a substitute list that contains contact information for other volunteers that have agreed to serve as substitutes. You can use this substitute list to switch days or ask another volunteer to fill in for you.

If a substitute cannot be arranged, notify the Meals on Wheels coordinator at 256-766- 4330 as soon as you realize you will be absent so that a replacement can be found.

- While it is necessary to use the client's name when you are delivering meals, avoid use of this and other confidential information when you are not volunteering for **Meals on Wheels of The Shoals**. All Volunteers are expected to show the highest regard for the privacy of each participant by observing strict regulations created by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) which protects the confidentiality of participant information on record with MOWS. Confidentiality is essential to the sound relationship with our participants. It is also a legal and ethical matter of the utmost importance. All volunteers are to exercise great care when discussing participant services. Care should be taken to prevent discussions regarding participant services from being overheard by other participants, volunteers or staff members not involved in such services.
- Your safety is very important to us! If you are uncomfortable delivering to a client for any reason, do NOT get out of your car.
- Volunteers are required to report any on-the-job injuries or accidents to the Director of Community Action Northwest at **256-766-4330** within **24 hours** of the accident or injury.

Each volunteer represents Meals on Wheels of The Shoals and contributes personally to our public image by his/her dress, grooming, manner of communication, behavior etc. Meals on Wheels Shoals prohibits all employees and volunteers from being under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or other legal but intoxicating substances while at work or volunteering.

Frequently Asked Questions of the Program

How does someone sign up for meals? Clients can be referred by a physician, social worker, home health agency or a family member/neighbor. Ms. Eva Graham will contact potential clients and after taking an application usually over the phone, set up an evaluation in the client's home. After the evaluation process and acceptance into the program, clients will begin receiving meals as quickly as possible.

Who can sign up for meals? Recipients must be homebound residents of the area cities in Lauderdale, Colbert or Franklin County who cannot prepare their own meals, and have no one else to prepare meals for them. Recipients must also meet income guidelines. Meals are available without regard to race, religion, national origin, gender or disability.

Do you charge for the meals? We do not charge for the meals we deliver. **The Meals on Wheels of The Shoals** program is a locally funded program that depends on contributions from the community. Our program is supported by the United Way of Northwest Alabama, local churches, city and county governments and businesses.

What information is necessary to enroll? We need basic information such as name, address, telephone number, birth date, emergency contacts and general information to qualify the clients, for example no vehicle, medical status etc., monthly income statement.

What meals are available? We distribute well- balanced, nutritional meals. Menus are reviewed by a Registered Dietitian.

How long can you receive meals? Meals can be short term (two-three weeks) or long term (as long as you qualify).

Will Meals on Wheels make home visits? Volunteers/staff deliver meals Monday thru Friday between 11am and 1pm. Meals are not delivered on weekends

How does Meals on Wheels communicate with clients? We communicate with clients in person, by telephone and U.S. mail. We believe communication is important.

Other Sources of Help:



2-1-1 can offer access to the following types of services:

- Basic human needs (food, clothing, shelters, rent and utility assistance)
- Physical and mental health
- Employment support
- Support for older Americans and persons with disabilities
- Support for children, youth, and families.

One Call—Makes Sense

2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember, **free** to the user, phone number linking people with health and human service needs. Dialing **2-1-1** connects the caller to a specialist who can assess the caller's needs and link the caller to the right solution using a comprehensive database of services — federal, state, and local government, faith-based and nonprofit.

The Vision, Mission and Values That Guide Us



Our Vision

We view ourselves, the Community Action Agency of Northwest Alabama, Inc. as a unified, results oriented, community services partnership committed to increasing economic justice among the people who live in our community. We will accomplish this vision through a capable, dedicated, and compassionate staff implementing carefully chosen programs which reduce the causes and adverse consequences of poverty and increase the self- sufficiency of those being served.

Our Mission

Our mission is to reduce the causes and adverse consequences of poverty and to empower low-income individuals, families, and communities to achieve self-sufficiency through advocacy, resource utilization, and service delivery.

Communities We Serve

- Lauderdale County
- Colbert County
- Franklin County

Contact Information

CENTRAL OFFICE **256-766-4330**

745 Thompson Street, Florence, AL 35630

Sheffield Location: **256-383-3832**

505 N. Columbia Avenue, Sheffield AL

Russellville Location: **256-332-7534**

1001 Washington Avenue SW, Russellville

Volunteer Handbook Acknowledgement

This is to acknowledge that I have received an electronic copy of and have reviewed the MOWS Volunteer Handbook and understand that it sets forth the obligations of my volunteer service with MOWS. I understand MOWS maintains the most current version of the Volunteer Handbook on the www.caanw.org website. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with the rules, policies and standards set forth in the Volunteer Handbook and I agree to comply with all policies and procedures. I understand I should consult the program coordinator regarding any questions not answered in the Volunteer Handbook.

Volunteer (signature) _____ Date _____

Volunteer (name printed) _____

Group Affiliation (name of church/business/club) _____

