



**BlueCross BlueShield
of New Mexico**

A Division of Health Care Service Corporation, a Mutual Legal Reserve Company,
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**MEALS on WHEELS
ALBUQUERQUE**

TOGETHER, WE CAN DELIVER.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico and Meals on Wheels of Albuquerque Bring Nutritious Food and Human Connection for Low-Income Seniors and Community Members

Albuquerque, NM (DATE) – Meals on Wheels of Albuquerque received a \$47,385 grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico (BCBSNM) to support the health and wellness of low-income community members and seniors through the Low Income Food and Enrichment (LIFE) program.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Meals on Wheels of Albuquerque experienced a dramatic rise in the number of emergency meals delivered by nearly 430% for its LIFE program, the only meal-delivery service in the Albuquerque area providing specialized meals at no cost or for just \$1.00 a meal for low-income community members.

The LIFE program, which serves between 260-400 locals every year, provides nutritional, home-delivered meals, including meals designed to meet the needs of clients living with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, heart disease and other conditions. Meals on Wheels' Local Harvest program purchases fresh fruit and vegetables from local farms for the meals, helping clients access nutritious foods while also supporting the local economy. The LIFE program also offers clients weekend food boxes and support for their pets, including food, veterinary care, dog walking and mobile grooming.

“Having a companion animal can be incredibly helpful in reducing depression,” said Shauna Frost, executive director of Meals on Wheels of Albuquerque. “Taking care of their pets allows them to be happier, healthier people.”

“We are proud to partner with Meals on Wheels of Albuquerque because they have made a far-reaching impact on the health and wellness of seniors and members of our Albuquerque community,” said Dr. Ann Bay, BCBSNM chief medical officer. “Hunger and food insecurity negatively impact an individual’s mental and physical wellbeing. Meals on Wheels of Albuquerque helps address this by providing a friendly face delivering healthy meals when an individual might not otherwise be able to access food. Supporting the LIFE program is one way that we can make a difference in our community.”

The program helps alleviate financial strain and food insecurity for community members in need. Meals on Wheels volunteers, who deliver the meals, also offer an important source of human connection for homebound clients.

“We hear a lot of ‘thank you for the volunteers and thank you for the friendship,’” Frost said. “We’re delivering peace of mind, safety and friendship. It’s so much more than a meal.”

To learn more about meal service, volunteer opportunities and other programs at Meals on Wheels of Albuquerque, visit <https://mow-nm.org/>.

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About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico:

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico is one of the largest commercial health insurers in New Mexico with 680,000 New Mexicans carrying a Blue Cross and Blue Shield card. Since 1940, BCBSNM has been committed to promoting the health and wellness of its members and communities through accessible, cost-effective, quality health care. BCBSNM is a Division of Health Care Service Corporation, the country's largest customer-owned health insurer. Health Care Service Corporation is a Mutual Legal Reserve Company and an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

About Meals on Wheels of Albuquerque

Meals on Wheels of Albuquerque is a private 501(c)3 nonprofit organization founded in 1972 by a group of women from Presbyterian Churches around Albuquerque. For nearly 50 years, this program has been entirely locally run. We began with 20 clients and 40 volunteers. Today we serve approximately 1500 clients and have over 500 volunteers each year. We delivered 9,400 meals in 1972. Today we are delivering over 150,000 meals a year. Meals on Wheels of Albuquerque provides nutritious meals and crucial social contact each day. Not only do we provide friendship and compassion but we also check the wellbeing of those we serve.

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