



LSS Meals and Utilization of CORE Funding

“SERVING MINNESOTA’S VETERANS IN NEED OF FOOD SECURITY”

[Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota](#)

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Meals and Food Security Division

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CORE Meals Activity Summary

This report summarizes LSS Meals activity under the MDVA CORE partnership for the September 1, 2025 – August 30, 2026 reporting period. LSS Meals received CORE funding to provide home-delivered meals to Veterans and other eligible participants across Minnesota, excluding Hennepin and Ramsey Counties. This report is intended to provide a status update regarding activities during this reporting period.

For the September 1, 2025 – August 30, 2026 reporting period, LSS Meals served 11,055 meals to 258 (monthly client count) Veterans and family members. Because clients are reported by quarter, the combined figure is not an unduplicated annual client count. Q1 (September-November) the team provided 22 clients with 812 meals, Q2 (December-February) the team provided 39 clients with 1,288 meals, Q3 (March-May) the team provided 83 clients with 3,562 meals, and Q4 (June-August) the team provided 114 clients with 5,393 meals.

LSS Meals served clients in 14 counties: Blue Earth, Chisago, Clay, Crow Wing, Dakota, Freeborn, Itasca, Mower, Otter Tail, Pine, Scott, St. Louis, Stearns, and Washington. Q4 activity increased from Q3, with both meal volume and quarterly client counts rising. CORE funding supported meal fulfillment, referral intake, eligibility confirmation, ordering, shipment, invoicing, and utilization reporting. No Grant Agreement Amendments have been necessary during this reporting period.

Challenges/Lessons Learned

The primary challenges were slower referral growth, inconsistent communication at the county-services level, and the three-month limit on client participation. These factors affected both utilization and continuity of service.

- County Veterans Service Officers and other veteran-serving partners need consistent information about eligibility, referrals, and how meals are delivered through the program.
- The three-month service duration can interrupt support for participants who continue to experience food insecurity after the initial service period.



- Monthly monitoring of referrals, active clients, meals, spending, and geographic reach is essential to align growth with available funding.

The key lesson learned is that responsible growth depends on clear partner communication, sustained outreach, and close utilization forecasting so referrals can convert to service promptly and available resources can be used effectively.

Program/Activities on Track

The program is active and positioned to continue through the current grant period. Meal volumes and client counts increased significantly this grant period. This program growth is being managed in alignment with available funding and projected utilization.

The grant program/activity did not expend the total grant award dollars in this reporting period. FY26 Meals spending totaled \$121,605 of the \$150,000 in designated funding this reporting period, which leaves \$28,395 in funding to carry over to the next reporting period. This remaining balance will be combined with the FY27 Meals allocation, resulting in \$178,395 available for Meals services in the next reporting period.

Next Steps

LSS Meals will continue to grow the CORE program through coordinated community outreach, communication, and advocacy with county veteran services and other referral partners. Priorities for the next reporting period include:

- Increasing awareness of CORE meal eligibility and the referral process among county-level veteran services.
- Clarifying that CORE meals are provided through bundled frozen-meal shipments rather than daily volunteer delivery.
- Monitoring referrals, active clients, meals served, counties supported, spending, and remaining budget each month.
- Advocating for continued and increased funding aligned with demonstrated food-security needs among Minnesota Veterans and their families.

As of 8/30/2026, the program has established a multi-county service pathway and demonstrated quarter-over-quarter growth. Continued success will depend on reliable partner referrals, clear communication, and funding sufficient to sustain participation beyond the current three-month service limitation.



About LSS Meals

LSS Meals is a long-standing nutrition service of Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota that helps older adults and other eligible individuals remain nourished, connected, and supported in their daily lives. Across Minnesota, LSS Meals provides home-delivered meals and community dining opportunities through local partnerships, volunteers, and coordinated service networks. At its heart, the program is about more than food. It is about promoting dignity, reducing isolation, and helping people remain in the homes and communities they know and value.

The history of LSS Meals reached back to 1973, when senior nutrition services began within Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota in response to a growing recognition that older adults deserve both nourishment and community support as they age. Over the decades, the program has grown alongside the needs of Minnesota communities, expanding access to meals and adapting its approach to serve people in ways that are practical, respectful, and responsive. What began as a nutrition program has become a trusted source of care and connection for many Minnesotans, grounded in the belief that every person should have the opportunity to live with health, dignity, and a sense of belonging.

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