



Dear Volunteer,

Welcome to “Meals on Wheels” sponsored by Berks Encore. For over 30 years, this program has been providing older adults with nourishment, social interaction and a little kindness to brighten their day. Our organization has a proud tradition of volunteerism. It was founded by volunteers, is serviced by a volunteer board and is supported by volunteers like you, who are committed to serving our community. We value the role our volunteers play in the growth and success of Meals on Wheels of Berks County.

Prior to going out on a Meals on Wheels route, you will receive a volunteer application. Please fill out the application and return it to Berks Encore, attn: Development or to the center manager for whom you will be delivering meals. Your route is established according to your general location and availability. Your center manager or route scheduler will arrange for you to go out with a seasoned volunteer the first time to help acquaint you with the delivery process.

As a new Meals on Wheels volunteer, you may have questions concerning the people to whom you are delivering meals or specific problems with route delivery. The staff is always available to assist you with any concerns. We encourage all volunteers to report any unusual circumstances they observe while delivering. We believe volunteers are the eyes and ears of the Meals on Wheels program.

We hope your experience as a volunteer with Meals on Wheels will not be limited to food delivery. Take a moment to become acquainted with the clients you meet. Develop friendships and have fun! We thank you for your dedication, caring spirit and the sharing of your valuable time. We hope you will enjoy your new adventure with Berks County Meals on Wheels.

Your Volunteer Commitment

Please feel free to deliver meals as often as you wish or your schedule allows. All of our volunteers are important to us whether they are able to deliver 1 day per month or 1 day per week.

- If you know there are certain days which prohibit you from keeping this commitment, i.e. appointments or vacations, please notify your route scheduler or the center coordinator as soon as possible. We will need to have time to arrange for substitutes.
- If you would like to switch days with another volunteer, you may do so, providing it is agreeable to everyone. However, please notify the coordinator of any changes.

- If you become ill or have an emergency, please notify your coordinator of the office as soon as possible so a substitute may be found. On occasion, we may find it necessary to call you to fill in for some else.
- Please provide your route scheduler or the center manager with your cell phone number if you have one. It may become necessary to reach you while you are out on the route.

Berks Encore Responsibilities

To provide:

- A calendar of dates you are scheduled to deliver.
- Clean containers in good repair.
- Team sheets with current and accurate information.
- Current directions for your route.
- A Meals on Wheels sign(s) to be displayed in your vehicle window (front or rear or both).
- An ID badge for you to wear while delivering meals.
- Assistance to you at all times during your delivery for emergencies and other questions or concerns.

What are your responsibilities as a volunteer?

- Possess a valid driver's license and current vehicle insurance. *Our insurance company requires that this information be on file with Berks Encore. Initially, you will be asked to provide your name and license expiration date along with a copy of your valid insurance card. Continuing on, please verify your license renewal with the center manager and please provide the center manager with a photo copy of your renewed insurance card. This documentation is required of all volunteers driving Meals on Wheels for Berks Encore.*
- Arrive at the Meals on Wheels site on time. Meals are generally ready for delivery at 10:00 a.m. All routes should be out by 10:30 A. M. unless arrangements have been made with your route scheduler or center manager.
- Pick up the team sheet and hot and cold containers, checking to see if there are any changes or special instructions for that day. Sometimes newsletters, menus or other items need to be delivered along with the meal.
- Be sure to count the number of meals that are in the containers to be sure you have enough.
- Remember to wear your Meals on Wheels ID badge (available through centers) so that clients can identify you. Use your vehicle delivery sign to alert other drivers that you are making deliveries (place in front or rear window).
- Deliver meals and briefly socialize with each recipient. Be friendly, but be aware that you have other meals to

deliver and cannot stay long. Keep in mind that some consumers may be SLOW to answer the door so please wait a reasonable amount of time before you determine a no answer.

- Report any problems immediately to the main office or the center- phone number is on team sheet. (See Problems).
- Return all Meals on Wheels equipment to the center. Please let us know if you will be late for any reason.
- If someone is accompanying you and is not an active volunteer, please let the center coordinator know their name. If you know of others who might be interested in volunteering, please give their name to the volunteer coordinator or the center coordinator.
- Safety for all is of major concern. Please use good judgment and observe all traffic laws when delivering meals. The Reading Parking Authority has agreed to allow some leniency within city limits to volunteers WHILE they are delivering meals IF and ONLY IF there is a Meals on Wheels delivery sign displayed in a front or rear window of the car. You may park at a meter without “feeding” the meter or in a loading area. You are not allowed to park at yellow curbs, within 15 ft of a fire hydrant, in an area marked for street cleaning (even if there is someone live parking in the car) or in a handicap spot unless you have a handicap tag or placard. You may not block a street lane – please find a safe place to pull off. If you follow these guidelines and receive a ticket – Berks Encore will do its best to plead your case to the Parking Authority (keep in mind the Parking Authority takes a picture of the car at the time of the infraction). However, Berks Encore is not liable for any traffic violations incurred by you the volunteer.

Expect the Unexpected

Volunteers are the eyes and ears of the Meals on Wheels program. While staff members make the initial home visit, volunteers visit on a regular basis. To this end, it is important that you see the recipient. While your service is mainly to deliver a nutritious meal to our homebound seniors, it is also important to be observant and aware of any problems that need to be addressed. Remember, you may be the only person that client may see all day. If you notice anything that may be cause for concern, please report it to the staff immediately. Please be watchful for any changes in behavior, appearance, cognition or living environment. Report these concerns or changes to the center manager or call the main office at 610-374-3195 x 220.

Most often asked questions

What do I do if a consumer does not answer the door?

Anyone not getting a meal on a given day will be noted on the team sheet, however, sometimes a consumer has left the home for an appointment and would like their meal when they get home. In this case, there may be coolers (2) with freezer packs in them. If so, please leave the hot meal in one and the cold part of the meal in the other. If there are NO freezer packs DO NOT LEAVE ANY PART OF THE MEAL. If there is only one cooler with a freezer pack, PLEASE LEAVE ONLY THE HOT meal, as hot and cold cannot be left in one cooler. If there are no coolers with freezer packs, do your best to determine if anyone is home. If available, the phone number for each consumer is printed on the team sheet. If you are

able, please call the consumer. If still no answer, call the office from your cell phone, from your next stop or as soon as possible. We will advise you as to what to do. DO NOT LEAVE THE MEAL.

If there is a meal from a previous delivery in the coolers, please discard the old meal, do not leave a new meal and notify the office immediately.

What do I do if the consumer is sick, is injured or has fallen?

Do not move the individual, but depending on the severity, you may call 911 and then the main office. Let the individual know that you are getting help and comfort them as much as possible. Follow instructions from the main office and do not leave them until 911 has arrived.

~Note: If two volunteers are delivering together, one may stay with the recipient until help arrives, while the other resume meal delivery.

What happens if I encounter car trouble while I am delivering?

Call the office immediately. We will assist you as we are able and will arrange for someone to finish the delivery of meals.

What is a Team Sheet?

A team sheet is a list of recipients who live in the same general area to whom you will deliver. We do our best with the information available to provide detailed driving directions from one delivery stop to the next, as well as any notes regarding cancellations or other helpful hints such as, "use the back door, put meal in kitchen, individual is hard of hearing, etc." You may deliver in any order you prefer, though we try to list them in a logical delivery order.

- Note: The information on the team sheet is confidential. Please help us ensure our consumers safety by returning the team sheet to the pick-up site. Leave them inside the containers when you drop them off. DO NOT leave them lying around.

What happens in inclement weather?

Every attempt is made to deliver Meals on Wheels, but there are times when the roads are not safe. If meals are cancelled, someone from the center will attempt to notify you ahead of time. It will also be announced on WFMZ- Channel 69 News, WEEU 830AM radio, Channel 8 News, facebook, our website www.berksencorepa.org, an email blast (if we have your email) and a "tweet." If you should be in the middle of a delivery and road conditions deteriorate to the point of being unsafe, please return to the center with the undelivered meals. Please do not attempt slick/icy or unsafe walkways or driveways.

Why is the consumer giving me money?

The Meals on Wheels are free to consumers, however, donations are suggested. All contributions are voluntary and confidential. If a client has questions about contributing to the Meals on Wheels program, refer them to our main office.

Volunteers should deliver donation envelopes to each client on their route at the end of the week. If the recipient is able to make a donation, they will put it in the envelope and return it to the volunteer the following week. That volunteer will then return the envelopes they have collected to their pick up site. Because all donations are anonymous, it is not necessary to put the clients name or route number on the envelopes. Please remind them that the envelope you give them is NOT appropriate for mailing and it to be used only to return a donation to the volunteer.

What do I do if the consumer asks me to help them?

Many of our clients are elderly and often ill, but most are eager for your visit. Occasionally, you may encounter a situation that is uncomfortable. While we encourage you to be as helpful as you can with the meals, you are not obligated in any way to perform any services beyond the meal delivery but if you would like to pick up the paper from their driveway or put mail in their box, that is up to you. If a client asks you to give medication or help them out of bed or a chair, please decline. By trying to help, you may subject yourself to injury or liability. If you think the individual requires more assistance, please report it to the Meals on Wheels office.

What about pets?

All pets must be confined or restrained at the time of meal delivery. While we in no way want to discourage pet ownership, we also do not want to endanger our dedicated volunteers. Therefore, any client who fails to restrain a pet during meal delivery is at risk of losing our services and the office should be notified immediately.

Food Safety

- If possible, place food containers in the interior of your car rather than the trunk where exhaust fumes may penetrate the food.
- Between deliveries, keep insulated bags closed and lids on coolers.
- Keep the food in the containers until arriving at the recipient's home in order to prevent spoilage.
- NEVER leave a meal outside the home unless the recipient has left 2 coolers each with a freezer pack in them. If there are no freezer packs, please report this to your center manager or the office immediately. If a recipient is not home and there are no coolers you may give the extra meal to another client on your list.
- If there is only ONE cooler, please deliver the **main (hot) entrée** ONLY. Food safety regulations prevent from delivering the hot and cold into the same cooler.
- If there is a meal left from the day before, please be sure to **REMOVE** and **DISCARD** the meal and notify the office right away. Please do not leave the new meal unless the office says it's ok .
- Report ALL "NO ANSWERS" to the office or the center manager.

Volunteer Safety

It is our policy to do a home visit to each recipient before they begin to receive Meals on Wheels. We follow up periodically after they start. This is done so that we can anticipate any possible danger or problem with delivery. As volunteers, your safety is of utmost importance to us. Under no circumstances, should you venture into any situation which will endanger you or cause concern for your well-being. Things may have changed since our last home visit, so please report anything you consider to be unsafe to the office.

Confidentiality

Remember, you have the recipient'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 Meals on Wheels staff member.

Caution

If a recipient has questions or concerns about Meals on Wheels, wants to cancel meals or wishes to relay a message to us, **please** ask *them* to personally call the main Meals on Wheels Office.

Thank You!

We are indebted to **YOU** for generously sharing your valuable time and energy. Your unselfish efforts as a volunteer are crucial to the continuation of Meals on Wheels. Those who receive meals, their families and friends, the community, and always, the staff of Berks Encore deeply appreciate your service.

Important Numbers

Berks Encore Meals on Wheels office: 610-374-3195 X 220

Berks Encore Birdsboro: 610-582-1603

Berks Encore Fleetwood: 610-944-9242

Berks Encore Hamburg: 610-562-4721

Berks Encore Mifflin: 610-777-5577

Berks Encore Providence: 610-374-9401

Berks Encore West: 610-670-1372