

**MEALS ON WHEELS SPOKANE  
1222 West Second Street  
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**MID CITY CONCERNS/ MEALS ON WHEELS SPOKANE FORGO GOVERNMENT FUNDING IN 2011**

Spokane, WA - Mid City Concerns/ Meals on Wheels is walking away from government funding after the board of directors determined the sub-contractor agreement required to receive government funded meals contained restrictions that would harm Mid City's ability to raise funds privately.

The decision was made after attempts to renegotiate the proposed sub-contract with Spokane Valley Meals on Wheels failed. Spokane Valley Meals on Wheels was recently awarded the government contract to prepare the meals and administer funds for bus passes to help seniors reach congregate meal sites for the upcoming year. The contract was previously held by the Spokane Regional Health District.

The seniors served by Mid Concerns will continue to receive nutritious meals and other services to help them stay independent, said Mollie Dalpae, the agency's executive director. The only difference is that Mid City is funding those meals with private donations instead of government funding.

Since 1963, Mid City has operated a downtown senior center and the Meals on Wheels program serving the Spokane area. The nonprofit serves meals to 500 seniors every day. More than 750 volunteers and countless donors support the charity. One of several disputed contract provisions stipulated that Mid City could no longer use the Meals on Wheels name in its fundraising materials - a clause that board members felt stripped the nonprofit of its long established identity.

"If we had accepted these terms, it would put our ability to raise money to safeguard our clients against future budget cuts in jeopardy. It's an unfortunate choice that we've had to make but one that will better protect our seniors in the long run," stated Tad Gropp, 2011 board president.

When potential state and federal budget cuts for aging services were announced *one year ago*, Mid City stepped up its fundraising to efforts and started a rainy day fund. Since Dalpae took the helm four years ago, the nonprofit added several fundraisers, including a Valentine's Day Cinn-A-Gram, where volunteers deliver cinnamon rolls, a special mug and other treats for a \$20 donation, a Dine-In Lunch, where boxed lunches are delivered, and the Cotton Classic golf tournament.

The decision to forgo government funding was made so that Mid City Concerns can continue making progress in cultivating supporters knowing that cuts in government funding are on the horizon, Dalpae said.

"The board for Mid City had previously discussed our need to head in the direction away from public funding," said Dalpae, adding, "This was just the final push we needed."

Mid City's success in raising funds privately, and its collaborations with local schools and other charities, has resulted in the addition of services that include free haircuts for low-income seniors, emergency food for seniors and a monthly produce distribution at the senior center. A group of elderly men and women who were going without food to feed their pets, often their only companions, now get pet food delivered to their doorsteps. The nonprofit has added a newsletter and English classes for Russian speaking seniors. Mid City now utilizes interns, who are earning bachelor's and master's degrees in social work helping elderly men and women deal with mental health issues stemming from depression,

anxiety and other conditions such as loneliness, the death of friends and family and other challenges impacting the elderly.

Dalpaie said support from its donors will be crucial in filling the funding gap.

"We are extremely grateful for our volunteers and donors and hope they will continue to step up to protect our frail seniors," she said. "We appreciate the past support from Aging and Long Term Care of Eastern Washington and hope to continue that positive relationship."

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*"Feeding bodies, nurturing souls, saving lives"*