



Celebrating 60 years of the Older Americans Act—a landmark law that has helped millions age with dignity through programs like Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County, turning 50 next year.

Rallying for the future of the Older Americans Act

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Older Americans Act, the landmark legislation that has helped millions of older adults live with independence, dignity, and support since 1965.

The law laid the foundation for essential services across the nation — funding programs such as Meals on Wheels, transportation, senior centers, caregiver support, legal aid, and more. It has become a lifeline for older adults navigating the challenges of aging.

Thanks in large part to funding from the Older Americans Act, along with state, local, and donor support, Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County has served nearly 10 million meals to more than 75,000 older adults since we launched our program in 1976.

If we want to truly honor the 60-year legacy of the Older Americans Act, we must act with urgency and solidarity to ensure everyone can continue to age with dignity, safety, and support. By protecting and expanding funding for the Older Americans Act, we can ensure older adults continue to receive the services they need to age with dignity and support.

With Congress currently shaping the next federal budget, now is the time to speak up. Deep federal cuts and new barriers to support threaten the very programs that allow older adults to live independently.

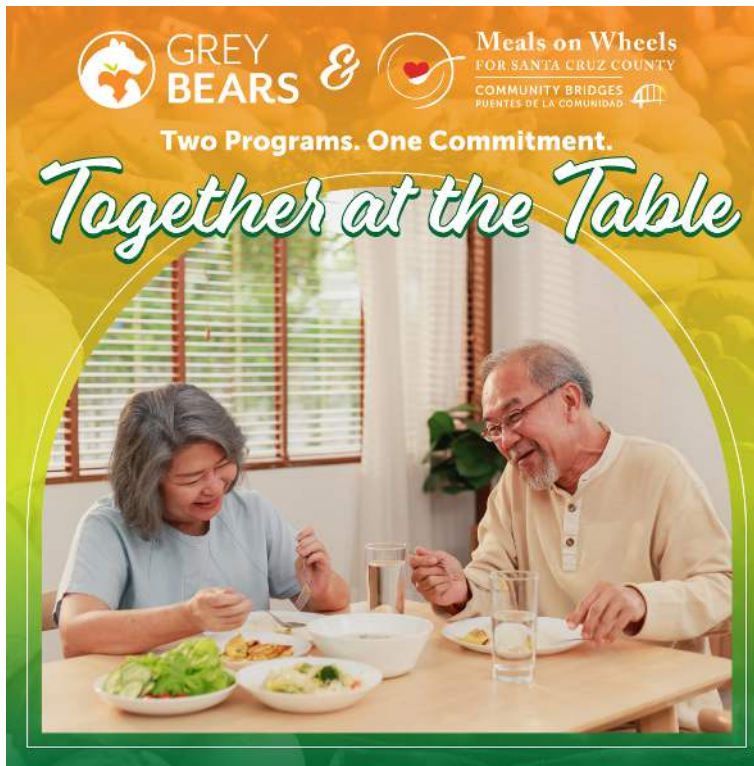
Let's honor the commitments of the Older Americans Act.

Here are steps you can take:

- **Email Congress:** mealsonwheelsamerica.org/aaa-60th-anniversary/#advocacy-embed
- **Call your representative:** Find your representatives at congress.gov/members/find-your-member, then call the United States Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to connect with the people who represent you in Congress
- **Donate:** communitybridges.org/donate
- **Volunteer:** communitybridges.org/volunteer
- **Spread the word about local services for older adults:**
communitybridges.org/mealsonwheels/

It takes all of us — federal policymakers, local leaders, and neighbors like you — to ensure all older adults are seen, valued, and supported. Let's carry forward the legacy of the Older Americans Act for another 60 years and beyond.

Director's note: Strengthening our partnership with Grey Bears to meet rising need



Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County and Grey Bears create a local nutritional safety net for our seniors.

Older adults across Santa Cruz County and the nation face deepening challenges. Nearly 1 in 3 older adults in Santa Cruz County reports being concerned about their ability to afford food, [according to Age Well Santa Cruz County's Community Assessment](#). As food prices remain high and health care costs rise, people are increasingly forced to choose between paying for groceries, medication, or rent — especially in the [nation's most unaffordable rental market](#). Billions of dollars in federal cuts to essential safety net programs like CalFresh and the National Senior Nutrition Program are compounding the crisis.

To strengthen our response to these mounting concerns, Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County is deepening our partnership with Grey Bears. Our organizations are two of Santa Cruz County's longest-standing nonprofits serving the local population of older adults.

We are not waiting for help from elsewhere. Meals on Wheels and Grey Bears are expanding our collaborative efforts to rally community support:

- **Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County** delivers nearly 600 nutritious meals every week to homebound people. Each meal is accompanied by a wellness check — often the only human contact an older adult might have that day. Meals on Wheels also serves more than 200 meals

News & Notes

We're looking for volunteer drivers in Watsonville and the San Lorenzo Valley to help deliver meals and support local seniors.

If you've been thinking about making a difference in your community, now is the perfect time to get involved. Visit

communitybridges.org/volunteer to apply today and start changing lives!

In the Press

Click the headlines below to read local and national news about Meals on Wheels for Santa Cruz County and older adult services.

- [Health Providers Sound Alarm About OBBBA Cuts](#)
- [Guest Commentary | Community Bridges and Grey Bears work to feed hope](#)
- [Medicare and Medicaid turn 60 – and face historic cuts decades in the making](#)
- [Santa Cruz County employment rates stagnant, population declining, according to new workforce report](#)

each day at in-person dining sites in Watsonville, Santa Cruz, Live Oak, and Ben Lomond.

- **Grey Bears** provides weekly bags of fresh produce and pantry staples to over 4,000 senior households, with neighborhood-based drop-off sites and home deliveries made possible by volunteers — many of them seniors themselves. Grey Bears also serves communal hot lunches five days a week from its mid-county location on Chanticleer Avenue, serving 63,000 meals last year, nourishing seniors and reducing social isolation.

Both of our organizations are calling on the community to get involved.

Here's how you can help today:

Donate to support this local safety net:

- CommunityBridges.org/donate
- greybears.org/ways-to-give/

Volunteer to pack or deliver meals and groceries:

- CommunityBridges.org/volunteer
- greybears.org/volunteer/

Spread the word to connect seniors in need to these vital services:

- communitybridges.org/mealsonwheels
- greybears.org/online-membership-form/

Your support is vital to helping our community weather tough times, so everyone in the region can lead a healthy, thriving life. Please consider contributing your time and voice to help us ensure no one is left behind.

—Dana Wagner, Senior Program Director, Meals on Wheels

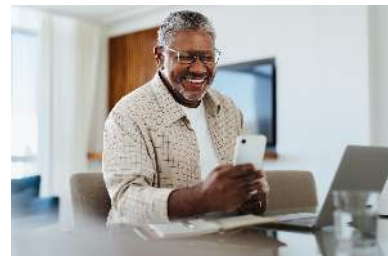
PG&E Launches Match My Payment Program to Help Reduce Overdue Balances

Our partners at PG&E have introduced a new *Match My Payment* program to help qualifying customers pay down past-due energy bills. Through this initiative, PG&E will match eligible customers' one-time payments—up to \$1,000—made toward their overdue balance.

To qualify, customers must:

- Be enrolled in either the [CARE](#) or [FERA](#) discount program
- Have an active residential account with a past-due balance
- Not be enrolled in [PG&E's Arrearage Management Plan \(AMP\)](#).

This program is especially helpful for seniors and low-income households facing financial hardship. Eligible customers can receive one matched payment between now and March 31, 2026.



To learn more and apply, visit PG&E's [Match My Payment](#) page. If you or someone you know is behind on their energy bills, this could be the help they need to get back on track.

[Learn More](#)

Your guide to tomatillos



Tomatillos look similar in size and shape to a green tomato but are covered by a papery husk. Tomatillos taste best when they are green. Remove the husk and rinse the tomatillos before cooking. Add tomatillos to salsa, salads, dressings, and omelets.

Tomatillos are a member of the nightshade (Solanaceae) family, related to tomatoes, and are an important ingredient in Mexican cuisine. Tomatillos have been cultivated in Mexico and Guatemala for several centuries, where they were staples for Mayan and Aztec cultures.

Tomatillos are rich in nutrients that are essential for eye health. Lutein and zeaxanthin are natural antioxidants present in the retina, and they protect your eye from environmental damage. Tomatillos are also a good source of copper, zinc, beta carotene, and vitamins E and C. A combination of these compounds and minerals helps slow macular degeneration, a loss of vision.

Storing and cooking tomatillos:

- **Handling:** Remove the husks and rinse the tomatillo. Tomatillos are generally eaten with the seeds.
- **Storing:** Tomatillos will last up to two weeks stored at room temperature. Refrigerate in husks beyond two weeks.
- **Freezing:** Remove the husks, clean and place in a freezer-safe container. When ready to use, thaw and slice.

—Caren Dix, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist

Tomatillo Guacamole

A spicy, fun twist on traditional guacamole.

Ingredients

- 6-8 serrano chilies, stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped
- 1 bunch cilantro, leaves only, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon coarse salt
- 12 medium tomatillos, husked and washed
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 4 large avocados, halved, seeded, and peeled

Directions

1. Roast the tomatillos by placing the whole fruit in a hot skillet or cast-iron griddle over medium heat and roast, turning occasionally, until quite charred all over and slightly softened.
2. Combine the onion, chilies, cilantro, and salt in a large bowl.
3. Add the tomatillos, a few at a time, mashing and blending with a fork or pestle to a fine paste.
4. Add the avocados and continue mashing and mixing until chunky.
5. Serve immediately as a dip with slices of ripe tomato or tortilla chips.

Source: Cooking with Too Hot Tamales, Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger, 1996

Thank you for your ongoing support. Your kindness is transforming our community.

DONATE

VOLUNTEER

LEARN MORE



Our Contact Information

{{Organization Name}}
{{Organization Address}}
{{Organization Phone}}
{{Organization Website}}

{{Unsubscribe}}