

Organizational Strategy

2021–2025



Strategic Framing

Thirty years ago, a group of neighbors delivered comfort, hope, and health to people dying from one of the worst pandemics of our lives: HIV/AIDS. They understood food and nutrition were often neglected during a health crisis, so they created meals that nurtured as much as they healed. Since 1991, Project Angel Heart has grown to serve more than 8 million meals to thousands of Coloradans.

The spirit of neighbors helping neighbors in times of need remains the heart of our work.

Today, we confront another pandemic with the understanding that the nutrition we provide and the community we build are essential services to people across Colorado. We know severe illness takes a toll on individuals, families, neighborhoods, and communities. Our goal is to strengthen those communities by ensuring the nutritional needs of the severely ill and those who care for them are being met.

We are here to provide a path to health and well-being for those in need and comfort to those near the end of life.

We believe that all people, regardless of their background or circumstances, should have access to meals that improve their health and well-being. Cost should not be a barrier to proper nutrition. We alleviate the stress and uncertainty that surround severe illness by creating and delivering medically tailored meals with compassion and care.

This strategic plan builds off the work of the last 30 years to significantly expand Project Angel Heart's program across the State of Colorado and centers all of our work around the principles of "Food Is Medicine." Each of our goals and objectives are backed by measures that guide our decisions and direction.

This strategy brings us closer to our ultimate goal: making Project Angel Heart's medically tailored meals available to all who need them in the State of Colorado.



Food is Medicine



“Food Is Medicine” is a growing movement that recognizes two equally important principles:

- 1) Proper nutrition can play a therapeutic role in health when included as part of an individual’s care regimen; and
- 2) Medically tailored food must be an integrated component of our healthcare system and easily accessible to those who need it.

According to researchers at the Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation of Harvard Law School, *“Food is medicine interventions include medically tailored meals (also called therapeutic meals), medically tailored groceries (sometimes known as food ‘farmacies’ or healthy food prescriptions), and produce prescriptions. They are typically directed by clinicians through the healthcare system, provided at no cost or very low cost to the patient, and funded by healthcare, government or philanthropy... Medically tailored meals are the highest intensity intervention, necessary for a small but high needs group—those with complex medical conditions who are unable to shop or prepare meals.”*

—Downer, et al. *BMJ* 2020;369:m2482

Independent research, including some conducted by Project Angel Heart, has consistently demonstrated the ability of medically tailored meals to improve patient outcomes and reduce costs to the healthcare system.

Our Purpose

Our vision is for all Coloradans living with severe illness to have access to nutritious food that supports their health and well-being. To that end, we compassionately deliver comfort and support through high-quality nutrition services, including medically tailored meals, while also advocating for the principles of "Food is Medicine."



Our Core Values



Community

Our clients, volunteers, staff, supporters, and neighbors are Project Angel Heart. We seek to foster community and partnership in all we do by recognizing we all have an important role to play in serving our mission.



Excellence

The challenges our clients face require our best work and an openness to change. Our clients trust they are receiving the highest quality of service from us and we honor that by giving our best, most empathetic selves to our mission.



Gratitude

We express our appreciation for the trust our community places in us to use their time and resources responsibly. We are the stewards of their generosity and therefore remain accountable and transparent about the use of their support.



Inclusivity

Our community and our work are made stronger through our diversity. We create space for new people, experiences, and viewpoints and welcome them into our mission. We create paths for inclusion and representation.



Learning

Our best work requires humility, recognizing what we don't know and seeking out the knowledge we need to do better. Our program is constantly evolving to reflect the latest science and evidence.



Sustainability

Our success relies on the hard work of those who came before us and those who follow; therefore, we promote practices that reduce or minimize harm to the environment and each other while establishing systems and procedures that will sustain Project Angel Heart for years to come.

Strategic Pillars



Nutrition

We place nutrition and the principles of “Food is Medicine” at the center of our work.

Objectives

1. Create, produce, and deliver medically tailored meals toward the goal of serving 800,000 meals per year by 2025.
2. Expand and grow Project Angel Heart's home-delivered meal program to serve clients in 75% of the Front Range Urban Corridor by 2025.
3. Expand our services to provide nutritional education and/or counseling to all clients by 2025.
4. Deepen our research into the impact of our food and nutrition services on an individual and community level by completing at least three additional research and evaluation studies by 2025.



Community

We cannot accomplish our mission by ourselves. Supporting Coloradans living with severe illness requires deep, sustained community engagement.

Objectives

1. Engage and sustain a dynamic and diverse community of volunteers and supporters who are empowered to give back through opportunities suited to all ages and abilities.
2. Actively create and participate in civic engagement opportunities that serve the neighborhoods that support and house Project Angel Heart's work.
3. Establish connections and partnerships with other agencies engaged in addressing the social determinants of health to more fully meet the needs of people Project Angel Heart serves.



Advocacy

We advocate for equitable access to health care and nutritious food for individuals living with severe illness in Colorado.

Objectives

1. Advocate for the needs and rights of people living with severe illness in Colorado to access health care and nutritious food.
2. Advocate for expanded inclusion of medically tailored meals as a benefit under Federal- and State-regulated / State-funded insurance programs by 2025.
3. Position Project Angel Heart as the leading voice in Colorado on nutrition and "Food is Medicine" by creating and promoting consistent, high-profile thought-leadership and advocacy.