



Vermont Association of Area Agencies on Aging

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Vermont Association of Area Agencies on Aging (V4A)

Public Budget Hearing

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I am Mary Hayden, Executive Director of the Vermont Association of Area Agencies on Aging. Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight in support of budget items which impact older Vermonters.

V4A is an association of five area agencies on aging (AAA's) located throughout Vermont. Our mission is to provide advocacy, leadership, and a voice for Vermont's aging network. The AAA's services include Meals on Wheels and Community Meals, Long-Term Care Coordination, Caregiver Programs, Medicare and Health Insurance Counseling and Education, Wellness Activities and Programs, and Information and Referrals for legal and mental health services and benefits such as housing, fuel, and 3SquaresVT.

Budget Requests

1. There are 182,000 Vermonters aged 60+, or 28% of the population. 6% of them received OAA Nutrition Program home-delivered and congregate meals in 2021. It is projected that by 2030, 33% of Vermonters will be 65 and older. Meals providers report increased demand for home-delivered meals. Combined Federal and VT State funding for the Older Vermonters Nutrition Program does not meet current and future needs of older Vermonters. **We have a mounting funding gap.** The total number of FFY21 home-delivered and congregate (community) meals was 1,166,000.¹ The total cost based on the average meal cost was \$13,700,500 with a **funding gap of \$4,212,610**. Vermont must increase its investment in

¹ National Aging Program Information Systems used by the Administration of Community Living (ACL). NAPIS was changed to Older Americans Act Performance System (OAAPS) starting in reporting year FY22. Results from VT's state reporting (OAAPS) are not yet available.

Nutrition for Older Vermonters to create a sustainable and cost-effective plan for the future. **We ask for an investment of \$3 million to begin to address the funding gap.**

# Meals Served (HDM & Congregate)	State Average Cost/Meal ²	Total Cost
1,166,978	\$11.75	\$13,700,500

2. Long Term Care Crisis

Vermont has failed to invest enough resources to ensure a stable system of care for the long term. The long-term care system is currently underfunded by at least \$30 million. We ask the legislature to make a meaningful investment in long-term care services in next year’s budget to ensure older and disabled Vermonters have the services they need to age at home or in the community with dignity and respect.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight about budget initiatives in support of older Vermonters.

² Based on meal provider data for FY2021. Meals cost analysis for 2022 excluded a number of meal sites and therefore has not been included.