



To: Senate Committee on Appropriations
Re: SFY24 BAA
Date: January 26, 2024

The Vermont Association of Area Agencies on Aging (V4A) and the Vermont Association of Senior Centers and Meal Providers (VASCAMP) request your support for \$1 million in the SFY24 Budget Adjustment Act for Meals on Wheels. V4A and VASCAMP also support the amendment to Vermont's Global Commitment to Health Section 1115 demonstration that allows home-delivered meals to be a Medicaid-covered service when the meals are part of a participant's service plan of care and meet Vermont's area agencies on aging nutrition requirements in accordance with the Older Americans Act, as passed by the House. V4A and VASCAMP also support \$1 million for the VT Foodbank.

Funding for Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Programs

OAA Title III funding is passed from DAIL to AAAs who contract with 47 meal providers to prepare and deliver home-delivered or community meals in compliance with OAA standards. AAAs and meal providers may also fundraise and apply for grants. Last year, we were grateful the legislature added \$1 million to the base budget for home-delivered and congregate meals for seniors. However, this welcome increase did not provide enough meals for our growing demographic of older Vermonters.

- Last year, the program provided 1,185,564 **nutritious meals** to 16,257 older Vermonters, a 5% increase over the prior year.
- In FFY24, year-to-date, there is a higher number of enrollees than last year. Funding for senior nutrition has not kept pace with the aging population. ARPA funding ends this year.

Based on the average cost per meal and the number of meals served, the gap is growing to nearly \$4 million even after the state's generous support. AAAs and small community meal sites cannot fill that gap through local fundraising. Providing emergency meals and delivery to older Vermonters stranded due to this year's catastrophic flood and power outage events caused more budget shortfalls.

SFY 2024 Budget Adjustment Act Request

- **V4A and VASCAMP request that the Senate Committee on Appropriations support the \$1 million for Meals on Wheels recommended by the VT House in the Budget Adjustment Act.**
- **HungerFreeVT and the VT Foodbank also support this request.**

Thank you for your generous support for senior nutrition programs! Please reach out to V4A and VASCAMP with any questions.

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