

Adult Services Division – Older American’s Act Nutrition Programs

Program Overview

[Older Americans Act \(OAA\)](#) services support Vermonters age 60 and older and are designed to help older Vermonters remain as independent as possible and to experience a high quality of life. OAA services are provided through Vermont’s five Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and include case management; nutrition services and programs; health promotion and disease prevention; information, referral and assistance; legal assistance; and family caregiver support. This summary focuses on the OAA Nutrition Programs for people 60 and over referred to as Home Delivered Meals and Congregate Meals.

Home Delivered Meals and Congregate Meals contribute to the food security of older adults and can play an important role in promoting good health, preventing disease, and lowering rates of disability, hospitalization, depression and mortality. According to the [USDA](#), over 8% of Vermont senior households are food insecure; over 17,000 are threatened by hunger, and nearly 40,000 are isolated and live alone. The demand for senior meals is growing. Efforts are being made at the federal, state and local levels to strengthen meal programs and develop innovations in nutrition services.

Staff and Partners

The Adult Services Division (ASD) State Unit on Aging (SUA) manages the OAA and related services. The unit consists of five staff that manage nine different grants, five area plans and the VT State Plan on Aging. The OAA Nutrition Program partners include the VT Association of Area Agencies on Aging (V4A) and its five member agencies:

- [Age Well](#)
- [Central Vermont Council on Aging](#)
- [Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging](#)
- [Senior Solutions](#)
- [Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging](#)

Each agency then works with a network of meal providers who prepare nutritious meals. Meals are delivered by hundreds of volunteers across the state every day.

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Recent Developments and Accomplishments

In 2015, 30,000 more home delivered meals were provided than the year before. The SUA continues to work closely with the AAAs to monitor the growing demand for meals across the state and find creative ways to serve more people with limited funding, including streamlining transportation, closing under-performing congregate sites, increasing local and private fundraising efforts, no longer providing “blizzard bags” for emergencies and encouraging the use of home delivered meals by people enrolled on Choices for Care and Attendant Services Program.

Future Directions

With limited funding, an aging population and growing need, we anticipate that some agencies will need to institute a waiting list in the near future. In preparation, the AAAs have worked closely with SUA staff to develop a nutritional risk screening tool within the home-delivered meals intake form. This will allow the agencies to prioritize meals for those at highest risk of food insecurity and malnutrition if a waiting list is instituted. Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging has been piloting the screening tool and the plan is for all five agencies to use it over the next year.

Results

In Federal Fiscal Year 2015: 4,910 Vermonters received home delivered meals (4% increase). 814,802 meals were delivered to people’s homes (4% increase). 11,095 Vermonters participated in community meals (4% increase), receiving 369,571 meals across the state (4% decrease).

While the number of people served continues to climb, the SUA and the AAAs are interested in better illustrating the real health impact and financial value of home delivered meals. In spring 2016, the five AAAs came together with DAIL to develop statewide program performance measures to help us to better measure success, improve performance, and ultimately increase quality of life for vulnerable older Vermonters. The nutrition program measures that the five agencies have agreed to track are:

- The number and percentage of home delivered meals clients who report they have enough to eat
- The number and percentage of home delivered meals clients who report that meals help manage or improve their medical condition