



Vermont
Association of
Area Agencies
on Aging

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Member Agencies:
Age Well
Central Vermont Council on Aging
Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging
Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging
Senior Solutions

To: House and Senate Committees on Appropriations
From: Janet Hunt, Executive Director
Date: August 27, 2020
Re: Vermont Association of Area Agencies on Aging – Response to the Governor’s Recommended FY 2021 State Budget

My name is Janet Hunt and I am the Executive Director for the Vermont Association of Area Agencies on Aging (V4A) which has 5 member Area Agencies on Aging located throughout the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the Governor’s Recommended FY 2021 State Budget as it relates to the work we do for older adults. The Area Agencies on Aging have two focus areas that I want to emphasize for your consideration:

- **The first is with regard to home and community based provider funding increases.** An increase in funding for home and community-based providers will ensure that older Vermonters have the flexibility and the care that they need to age in their homes with dignity and health. These increases are needed for parity with nursing home annual increases. Especially during times like these – now – more than ever – we need to be able to pay our community providers to help care for our older adults, parents and grandparents where they truly want to be; within their own home environments with their families and community members. If this parity issue is not addressed now, we will continue to see a workforce decline within our community provider network and families will have no choice but to institutionalize their loved one in more expensive long-term care settings.
- **Our second area for your consideration is the need to increase the nutrition home-delivered Meals-on-Wheels programs.** As you may well know, these meals, including the delivery of the meal address the reduction of hunger and food insecurity, promote health and well-being, delay adverse health conditions and reduce social isolation. We ask that you increase the funding by \$1million to more adequately cover the costs of providing meals and allow us to continue paying the increased rates through the end of the fiscal year. As we “recover” from COVID, these services are critical to ensure that older Vermonters have the support they need to stay healthy. Extra federal funding has been helpful, but the state of Vermont needs to continue the commitment for nutrition programs for older Vermonters, especially as we see the demand for meals rise.

Thank you again for the opportunity for me to address these two critical requests for your consideration within the state budget.