



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 Appropriations Committee

**From:** Janet Hunt, Executive Director of Vermont Association of Area Agencies on Aging (V4A)

**Date:** February 20, 2019

**Re:** FY2020 State Budget and older Vermonters

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All Vermonters need the same things: food, shelter, community and the ability to receive care. When we have adequate systems of support for older Vermonters, we will improve the lives of all Vermonters.

Most Vermonters want to be able to stay in their homes as we get older. When Vermonters can age in a setting of our choice, we experience better health outcomes, stronger communities, and significant savings compared to costly nursing home care.

- **We ask the legislature to cover the cost of home delivered meals for Choices for Care participants as described in H.187. This is approximately \$200k - \$300k from the general fund.**

The reimbursement rate to the meal sites and programs is significantly lower than the actual costs to prepare and deliver a meal to older Vermonters.

- **We ask the legislature for a 15% increase in the Area Agencies on Aging base general fund appropriation to increase reimbursements to meal providers across the state. This equates to approximately \$650k from the general fund.** This request for a 15% increase will help ensure that older Vermonters can live in their homes, have the food that they need, will not go hungry or be malnourished, and, will get a safety check from a friendly volunteer on a regular basis.
- **We ask the legislature to help older Vermonters choose where and how they live by providing reasonable and guaranteed annual rate increases for home and community-based providers on par with nursing homes as described in H.189.**

# DELIVERING SO MUCH MORE THAN JUST A MEAL IN VERMONT

## VERMONT'S SENIOR POPULATION STRUGGLES WITH HUNGER AND ISOLATION

Senior population	159,643 (26%)
Seniors threatened by hunger	16,603 (10%)
Seniors living alone	47,743 (30%)

## ADDITIONAL FACTORS CAN MAKE SENIORS EVEN MORE VULNERABLE

Seniors living in poverty	16,942 (11%)
Seniors that are non-white racial and/or an ethnic minority	4%
Seniors experiencing falls with injury	12%
Seniors with self-rated health as "fair to poor"	19%
Seniors with a disability	29%

## INADEQUATE NUTRITION AND/OR LIMITED SOCIAL CONTACT HAS DIRECT HEALTH CONSEQUENCES THAT AFFECT THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM AND ECONOMY

Preventable hospitalizations	28%	Hospital readmissions	14%
Total Medicare spending (in billions)	\$1.18		

## OLDER AMERICANS ACT (OAA) NUTRITION PROGRAMS IN VERMONT ARE DELIVERING NUTRITIOUS MEALS, FRIENDLY VISITS AND SAFETY CHECKS TO THE MOST AT-RISK SENIORS

	Congregate Meals	Home-Delivered Meals	Total
Seniors served each year	13,451	5,616	19,067
Meals served each year	353,164	812,423	1,165,587

### OAA CLIENT PROFILE

Live alone	38%	Live in poverty	19%
Live in a rural area	94%	Minority	7%
Women	63%		

## FUNDING FOR THESE PROGRAMS VARY BASED ON THE NEEDS AND RESOURCES OF THE COMMUNITY, AND ARE MADE UP OF FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL AND PRIVATE DOLLARS

	Congregate Meals	Home-Delivered Meals	Total
OAA Expenditures	\$1,348,540	\$1,587,299	\$2,935,839 (45%)
Total Expenditures	\$2,363,311	\$4,106,298	\$6,469,609

## TOGETHER, WE MUST INVEST MORE FULLY IN MEALS ON WHEELS TO ENSURE VULNERABLE SENIORS IN VERMONT CAN REMAIN HEALTHIER AT HOME, AVOIDING MORE COSTLY HEALTHCARE FACILITIES

Cost of serving a senior Meals on Wheels for an entire year	Cost of 1 day in a hospital	Cost of 10 days in a nursing home
\$1,388	\$2,244	\$3,120

## MEALS ON WHEELS PROVIDES A SOLUTION THAT SERVES US ALL

