



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 19, 2020
Re: FY2021 State Budget and older Vermonters

My name is Janet Hunt, and I am the Executive Director for the Vermont Association of Area Agencies on Aging (V4A). I am here today on behalf of the five Area Agencies on Aging to ask that you please consider making the health and well-being of our older Vermonters a major priority in this budget.

First, let us please make sure that older Vermonters have the food that we need. We request an increase in funding for nutrition programs (home-delivered & community-based meals) by \$700,000.00 to more adequately cover the costs and close the funding gap.

Vermont is a state with a thriving food economy, and no Vermonter should be malnourished or go hungry. Vermont nutrition programs for older adults provide over 1,000,000 nutritious meals to more than 18,000 Vermonters each year. Currently, these programs have a funding gap. The average meal cost is approximately \$10 and the average reimbursement is between \$3 and \$6, depending on the service area. With adequate funding, programs can ensure that older Vermonters can stay in our homes, get the food that we need, and receive a safety check from a friendly volunteer.

Second, with regard to home delivered meals under Choices for Care, you are likely aware that according to the Medicaid rules, local funds from non-state sources are not allowable as a Medicaid match; the funds must come from a governmental entity. V4A requests that state funds be appropriated for home delivered meals in the Choices for Care program.

Third, V4A supports annual increases for home & community-based providers to ensure that older Vermonters have the flexibility and the care we need to age in our homes if we wish with dignity and health. These increases are needed for parity with nursing home annual increases.

Fourth, V4A supports any budgetary increases that would come from the passage of the Older Vermonter's Act.

Addressing the needs and funding gaps of older Vermonters will improve the lives of all Vermonters now and in the future.

Thank you for your consideration to older Vermonters.