



agewellvt.org  
Helpline: 1-800-642-5119  
P 802-865-0360  
F 802-865-0363  
76 Pearl Street, Ste. 201  
Essex Junction, VT 05452

## COVID-19 UPDATE APRIL 27, 2020

Dear Community supporters,

I would like to provide you with updates from Age Well. Please feel free to share these resources with your networks.

As the largest provider of Meals on Wheels in the state of Vermont, Governor Scott has deemed Age Well as an essential service. We are seeing a significant increase in those needing Meals on Wheels. Age Well has been working to ensure that older Vermonters continue to receive Meals on Wheels and our other vital services.

### COVID-19 IMPACT ON OUR SERVICES SINCE MARCH 10<sup>TH</sup>

**471** - Number of new Meals on Wheels clients that have enrolled (25% increase). As older Vermonters need to self-quarantine at home, our daily meal delivery is a key lifeline.

**59%** of new Meals on Wheels clients scored highest risk for food insecurity. All clients receiving MOW currently have scored a 6 or higher on the Nutrition Risk Assessment (national tool measuring Malnutrition risk) as High Risk for Malnutrition.

**1,111** - Total number of Meals on Wheels clients who rely on *daily* delivery of nutritious food including Senior Housing, apartment buildings, 156 veterans and 112 spouses of veterans.

**10%** - Increase in call volume to the Helpline so far (430 calls per week to 477 per week).

**We are forecasting a 40% increase** in services needed over the next 6 months, which would result in an additional meal production, delivery and storage cost of \$638,054

Age Well's Meals on Wheels are on the front lines every day, focused on keeping older Vermonters safe, nourished and connected. The costs and efforts needed to protect seniors from COVID-19 require additional emergency funds, which is why we have asked federal lawmakers, corporations, foundations and the public to remember vulnerable seniors. We are working hard to continue to deliver a vital lifeline to our most at-risk population and will likely see the need for increased support to rise in the coming months.



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In a time of social distancing, staying connected has never been more important. Older adults in particular are at a higher risk of isolation and loneliness, and it has been that way long before COVID-19 disrupted daily life. There are significant implications of isolation and loneliness, which some argue has becoming the "other epidemic." Research shows that loneliness can have considerable health implications, worse than that of obesity, alcoholism and even smoking.

### HOW TO SUPPORT OUR EFFORTS

Vulnerable older adults are at the greatest risk amid COVID-19. Local Meals on Wheels programs are on the front lines every day, focused on doing all we can to keep older Vermonters safe and nourished. The costs and efforts needed to protect seniors from COVID-19 require additional emergency funds, which is why we are asking federal and state lawmakers, corporations, foundations and the public to remember these vulnerable older adults in our response.

1. **Make a donation:** Your gift of any size goes a long way to help reduce hunger and isolation. [agewellvt.org](https://www.agewellvt.org)
2. **Shop our on-line Auction benefiting Meals on Wheels:**  
<https://www.32auctions.com/AgeWell>
3. **Volunteer:** Volunteers must be 16+ years or older. Information can be found at <https://www.agewellvt.org/giving-back/volunteer> Contact: 802-662-5249 or [emarks@agewellvt.org](mailto:emarks@agewellvt.org).
4. **Spread the word:** Please let your friends, family, and networks know that older Vermonters need their help! Tell them about the ways they can give (the list above!). Follow Age Well's Social Media Channels – [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), & [LinkedIn](#) and share our posts to spread awareness.

### SUPPORT OF OUR EFFORTS

- Businesses have sent referrals to support sending volunteer teams
- Community Partners, Legislators, local United Ways, associations, and grassroots groups have been sharing our information on services
- Local Police and Rescue Departments have been delivering Meals on Wheel
- The Legislature continues to assist to secure hopeful additional funding.
- We have quickly transformed our 'onboarding' process for Volunteers- using video training and additional resources to process background checks
- We have received great visibility through the press: The Age Well press page can be viewed at: <https://www.agewellvt.org/news-events/press>



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### HOW WE ARE ADAPTING TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE 10,000+ OLDER ADULTS WE SERVE IN ADDISON, CHITTENDEN, GRAND ISLE AND FRANKLIN COUNTIES:

Age Well is committed to ensuring the safety of both our clients and our volunteers. Meals on Wheels is still going strong. In light of the COVID-19 virus, we have suspended face-to-face deliveries of Meals on Wheels and instead we are practicing social distancing as we perform our deliveries, which we refer to as “Call, Drop and Observe”

We have collaborated with the State to safely, deliver a week’s worth of meals to individuals that live in senior housing units and apartment building settings as more and more people are testing positive or have been in contact with someone who might have the virus. This is in addition to our regular routes, which continue to be delivered to people’s homes using social distancing and safety protocols. We are also providing follow up daily safety check-ins by a phone call to be sure folks are okay.

### UPDATES TO SERVICES DURING COVID-19

#### MEALS ON WHEELS

When delivering to clients, volunteers now to leave meals outside the client’s door. Once volunteers have established contact with the client and they confirm that the client has their meals they ask how they are doing and then move onto the next delivery, so long as they have established verbal contact either through the door or via phone and they know that their meal is outside waiting for them. Volunteers are waiting from a safe distance to see that they do indeed open their door and retrieve the meal.

If the client does not come to the door or they do not have contact with the client after calling them, the volunteer does not leave the meal (as we must ensure that we are adhering to food safety precautions and not putting anyone at risk of foodborne illness). Instead, volunteers’ call Meals on Wheels staff to check in with the client and run a safety check if needed.

**Meals on Wheels (MOW) programs provide a unique service.** MOW is a federally supported program designed specifically to meet the needs of seniors. Those who rely on Meals on Wheels are significantly more likely to report poorer health, screen positive for depression and report recent falls and emergency department utilization.



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Food is medicine and we must provide both quality and therapeutic meals as a preventative measure. The combination of proper nutrition, a safety check and a friendly visit offers wrap-around support that enables seniors to remain healthier, independent and at home, where they want to be. Age Well is proud to be a member of Meals on Wheels of America.

### FRIENDLY VISITOR VOLUNTEERS

Age Well is committed to ensuring the safety of both our clients and volunteers. In light of the COVID-19 virus, we have decided to suspend all face-to-face visits for the next 2 to 4 weeks. Our volunteers have been making calls to check in with clients and stay connected. Volunteers are staying in touch with their clients via phone as their connection to them is more important now than ever. Our Volunteer Department Staff are here to answer any questions or concerns you may have. Please feel free to reach out to the Volunteer Department at 802-662-5249.

### GROCERY AND ERRAND VOLUNTEERS

We have suspended face-to-face visits; however, volunteers continue to grocery shop and run errands for essential items for clients. Clients give volunteers their list via phone or leave a list taped to their door along with their payment so they can shop for them. When volunteers return with their groceries they let the client know that they are leaving them outside their door for them and make sure they get them at their door before they leave. There may be some clients whose mobility issues make it impossible for them to bring in their groceries. If this is the case, an alternate plan is arranged.

### CARE AND SERVICE COORDINATION

Age Well's Care and Service Coordinators continue to work with their clients, though have temporarily suspended non-essential face-to-face visits.

Clients receive phone check-ins weekly, or more often if needed, to assess their needs. Clients who have tested positive for COVID-19 and remain at home receive a daily phone check-in. Our team is working hard to coordinate services and ensure that client's critical needs are met during a time when available services and individual needs can change rapidly. When a visit is essential, such as a critical need for medication or food delivery, our Coordinators are following CDC recommended social distancing and hygiene practices to protect the safety of staff and clients.

Our Community Health Workers and Options Counselors are working remotely and are providing daily phone assistance to older adults who request assistance with identifying grocery shopping services, applying for public benefits, or navigating other short-term care and resource needs.



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### STATE HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM (SHIP)

Age Well's SHIP Counselors are available by phone to navigate insurance questions. They are up to date and available to answer questions about Medicare and other insurance coverage of COVID-19 related medical expenses, including testing. Our New to Medicare Classes are now on-line through a live, interactive webinar. Check out our website for more information about these on-line classes: [agewellvt.org/services/helpline/medicare](https://agewellvt.org/services/helpline/medicare)

### HELPLINE

The Agency Helpline is the aging resource in Vermont for information available Monday through Friday, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm: **The phone number is 1-800-642-5119**

**Topics of expertise include** but are not limited to:

- Caregiver support
- Care and Service Coordination
- Choices for Care
- Home health and in-home services
- Home Meds
- Housing and Transportation
- Legal services
- Long-term care services
- Meals on Wheels and community meal programs
- Medicaid / Medicare and other health insurance
- Mental health services and Support groups
- Nursing and residential facilities
- Prescription assistance programs & Senior Centers
- SSI and Social Security
- 3SquaresVT

### OUR MISSION

To provide the support and guidance that inspires our community to embrace aging with confidence.