

## MEMO

**To:** Area Agencies on Aging and Home Delivered Meal Providers  
**From:** Vermont State Unit on Aging  
**Date:** Monday, March 30, 2020  
**Re:** COVID-19 Home Delivered Meal Participant Eligibility Guidance

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The State of Vermont and the Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living truly appreciate the important efforts the Area Agencies on Aging and Home Delivered Meal Providers across the state are making to ensure older Vermonters have the nutrition they need during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) strongly recommends that any state or local policy that limits eligibility for Older Americans Act funded home-delivered meals should be waived.

Beginning March 30, 2020 the State Unit on Aging has waived this specific eligibility criteria: “unable to leave home without considerable difficulty and/or assistance; and who experience a physical or mental condition making them unable to obtain food or prepare meals on a temporary or permanent basis.”

Home delivered meals eligibility criteria that remain in place:

- Age 60 years or over
- Spouse, regardless of age, of eligible individuals
- Individuals under 60 years of age with a disability, who reside with an eligible individual



**The target population for OAA home delivered meals are those at greatest economic and social need, including:**

- **Low income older adults**
- **Minority older adults**
- **Older adults living in rural communities**
- **Older adults with limited English proficiency**
- **Older adults at risk of institutional care**

**With this temporary change in home delivered meal eligibility criteria, AAAs and meal providers will need to balance increased demands with current resources (funding, staffing, volunteer capacity, etc.) and prioritize clients based on each individual's living situation, capacity, needs and alternative options.**

**The following tools should be used:**

- **Home Delivered Meals prioritization tool (for both new and current clients).**
  - **For example, if a client is prioritization level E (lowest risk), consider other options for securing groceries via family/friends, community volunteers, paid delivery service, etc. in order to ensure that those at higher risk can be served.**
- **Information from program intakes/registrations:**
  - **Need for support with ADLs and IADLs**
  - **Lives alone**
  - **Presence of an underlying condition – heart/lung disease, diabetes**

**Please remember, all people and meals served using OAA funds should continue to be tracked for reporting to the State.**

**If additional questions arise about home delivered meals eligibility, prioritization and or funding, HDM meal providers please contact your AAA and AAAs will work with the State Unit on Aging.**