

Vermont Senior Centers: 2018 Report Summary

Benefits of Senior Centers

- Vermont's senior centers are essential community partners in supporting social engagement and preventing isolation among older Vermonters, contributing to the state's effort to support healthy aging and delay the need for high-cost care.
- They serve over 15,000 older Vermonters annually with nutritious meals, wellness activities, and social opportunities at little or no cost to participants.
- Research shows that participation in these types of activities reduce healthcare costs for low-income and socially isolated older adults.

Participants and Activities

- Each senior center serves 25 to 2,500 older Vermonters annually (often tracked through sign-in sheets or online systems), mostly during the weekdays.
- All centers provide social activities, 92% provide exercise classes, and more than 70% provide health education, arts and crafts, organized trips, health screenings, and recreational events. 88% of centers offer meals at least once a week.

Budgeting, Staffing and Volunteers

- The median annual operating budget is \$101,000 and the most popular reported source of revenue is local town funding.
- All centers reported between zero and six paid staff members, the most common being two staff.
- 100% of senior centers rely on volunteers to help run activities, events and the center overall. Most volunteers are 55 or older.

Challenges and Opportunities Looking Forward

- Many centers are challenged by lack of sustainable financial resources that limits activities they can offer, staff they can pay, and the building they use.
- Others mentioned challenges with transportation, serving a wide age range (50-100), an aging staff and volunteer network and finding time to fundraise. Some worry that fees may deter participation.
- Centers often find success through partnership. Thriving centers collaborate with Area Agencies on Aging, financial institutions, local foundations, farmers, chefs, schools, hospitals and businesses.
- Centers work to appeal to a range of older Vermonters through innovation, by expanding meal choice, diversifying programming and events, and engaging youth.

More Information

- This information is based on a survey conducted by DAIL in Summer 2018. 28 of 46 identified centers responded (61%). For a more detailed report on Vermont's senior centers, visit: <https://asd.vermont.gov/services/vermont-senior-centers>.
- For more information on DAIL's work with Vermont senior centers, contact:
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- For more information about Vermont Senior Centers, contact the Vermont Association of Senior Centers and Meal Providers (VASCAMP):
<https://www.facebook.com/vermontseniorcenters/>