

Overarching Rights/Values:

Self-Determination: All older Vermonters have the right to autonomy, to direct our own lives as we age. As older Vermonters from diverse cultures and backgrounds, we should be able to age with intention, so that aging is not something that just happens to us but something that we actively participate in. Whatever services, supports and protections are offered, older Vermonters deserve dignity and respect, must be at the core of all decisions, and have the right to accept or refuse.

Safety and Protection: All older Vermonters have the right to live in communities, whether urban or rural, that are safe and secure. Older Vermonters have the right to be free from abuse, neglect and exploitation, including financial exploitation. As we age, our civil and legal rights should be protected even if our capacity is diminished. Safety and stability should be sought, balanced with our right to self-determination.

Coordinated and Efficient Systems of Services: All older Vermonters should benefit from a system of services and supports that is coordinated, equitable and efficient, includes public and private cross-sector collaboration at the state, regional and local level, and avoids duplication while promoting choice, flexibility and creativity. Such a service system, including key transitions of care, should be easy for individuals and families to access and navigate.

Goals/Principles:

Financial Security: All older Vermonters have the right to an adequate income and the opportunity to maintain assets for a quality of life as we age. If we want to work, older Vermonters have the right to seek and maintain employment without fear of discrimination and with any needed accommodations, but also retire after a lifetime of work if we choose, without fear of poverty and isolation.

Optimal Health and Wellness: All older Vermonters have the right, without discrimination, to optimal physical, dental, mental, emotional and spiritual health through end of life. Holistic options for health, exercise, counseling and good nutrition should be both affordable and accessible. Access to coordinated, competent and high-quality care should be provided at all levels and in all settings.

Social Connection and Engagement: All older Vermonters have the right to be free from isolation and loneliness, with affordable and accessible opportunities in community for social connectedness, including work, volunteering, lifelong learning, civic engagement, arts, culture and technology. Older Vermonters are critical to our local economies and their contributions should be valued by all.

Housing, Transportation and Community Design: Vermont communities should be designed, zoned and built to support the health and independence of older Vermonters, with affordable, accessible and appropriate housing, transportation and community support options that allow us to age in a variety of settings along a continuum of care, and that foster engagement in the community life.

Family Caregiver Support: Family caregivers are fundamental to supporting the health and well-being of older Vermonters, and their hard work and contributions should be respected, valued, and supported. Family caregivers of all ages should have affordable access to education, training, counseling, respite and support that is both coordinated and efficient.