



VASCAMP

Vermont Association of Senior Centers and Meal Providers

VASCAMP Steering Committee:

Deanna Jones (Chair) from [The Thompson Senior Center](#)

Jo Ann Riley from [Castleton Community Seniors](#)

April Cioffi from [The Godnick Adult Center](#)

Melinda Gervais-Lamoureux from Island Pond Community Services

Mark Bradley from [Bugbee Senior Center](#)

Rebecca Isham from [South Burlington Recreation & Parks Senior Center](#)

Nicole Fournier Grisgraber from [Meals on Wheels of Lamoille County](#)

June 27, 2022

VASCAMP MISSION & VISION

Mission Statement

The mission of the **Vermont Association of Senior Centers and Meal Providers** is to advocate for senior centers and meal sites on a statewide level, promote the growth and quality of these centers and strengthen the professional skills of the staff and volunteers at senior centers and meal sites.

Vision Statement

The Vermont Association of Senior Centers and Meal Providers cultivates a unified voice and dynamic network of centers, meal providers, and professionals committed to excellence and responsive to the needs of the state's growing older population.

Role of Senior Centers

- Support socialization and engagement
- Prevent isolation
- Support healthy aging and prevent or delay institutionalization
- Provide meals, activities, and social opportunities for little to no cost for participants



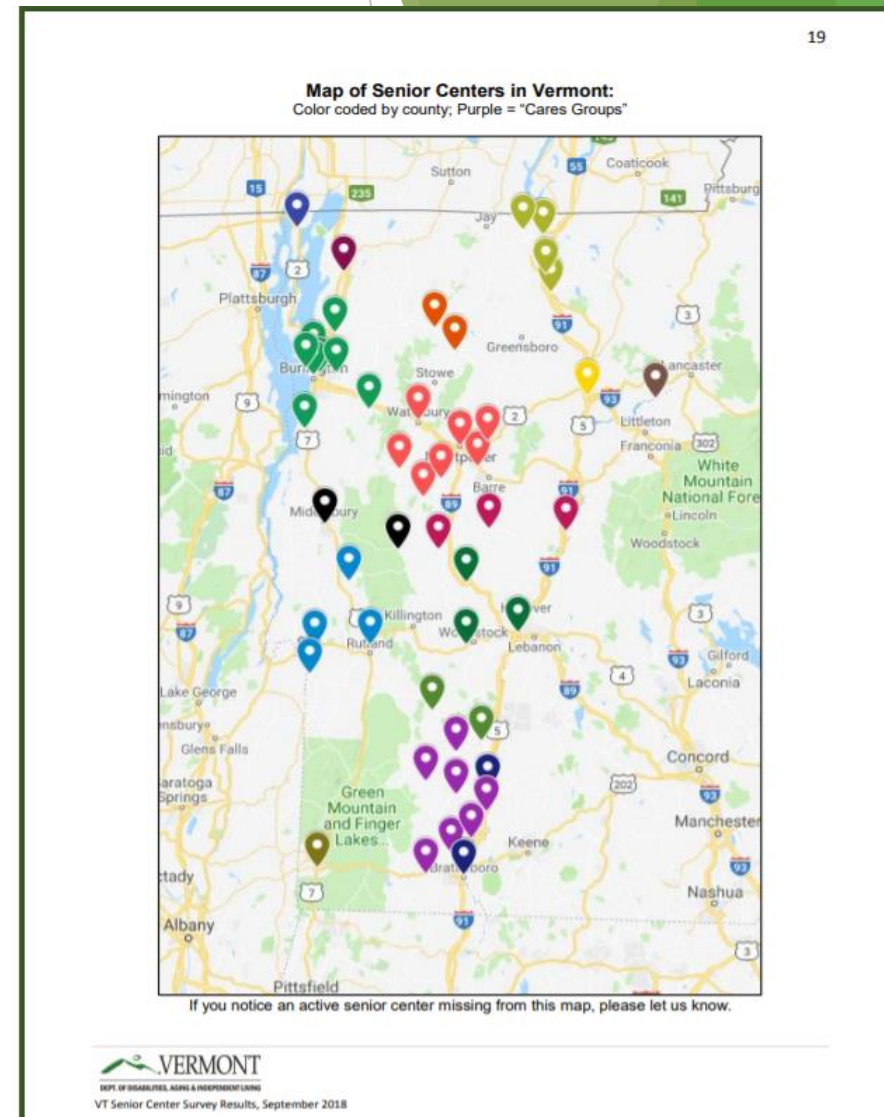
Current Status

- Re-opening for in-person meals and programs varied by site due to covid cases & staffing issues (beginning June 2021)
- All centers are open in some capacity. Many are fully in-person for meals and programs. In-person participation numbers throughout the winter were lower but have climbed significantly in recent months.
- Many centers are continuing to offer a mix of both virtual and in-person programs (hybrid) & take-out meals to meet their participants needs.

Vermont Senior Center Survey

- 42 Identified Senior Center
 - 3rd year of DAIL Survey, 2021
 - 36 responses received of 42 identified centers

<https://asd.vermont.gov/services/vermont-senior-centers>



Participation and Access

- 92% of senior centers serve between three and ten towns. 8% serve over 15 towns!
- Estimated 11,500 to 15,000 seniors served
- The range of unduplicated older Vermonters served annually at senior centers ranged from 60 to 2,300

Programming Offered

Social events (100%)

Exercise classes (83%)

Wellness education (72%)

Arts and crafts (72%)

Recreational (81%)

Organized trips (56%)

Health screenings/clinics (67%)

Educational speakers (78%)

Online learning/computer classes
(22%)

Cooking classes (19%)

Legal/financial assistance (19%)

Other (22%)

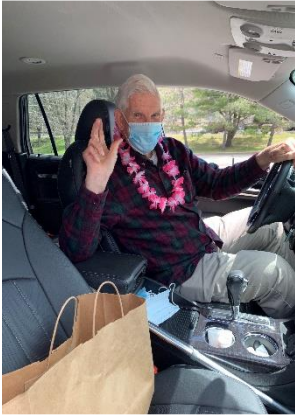
Social Connections through Senior Centers

- ▶ Meals
- ▶ Home-delivered Meals on Wheels
- ▶ Exercise
- ▶ Creative Arts
- ▶ Life-long Learning
- ▶ Social & Holiday Events
- ▶ Brain Games & Physical Wellness
- ▶ Transportation/trips
- ▶ Volunteer Opportunities



https://youtu.be/kwzSd9es_X4

Staying Connected throughout the Pandemic



Staying Connected throughout the Pandemic

- Meals on Wheels an “essential service”
- Dining room meals converted to Curbside meals
- Friendly Check-in & Buddy programs
- Grocery shopping delivery, RX delivery



Staying Connected throughout the Pandemic

- Created Remote Services to Reduce Social Isolation
 - Virtual Senior Centers launched
 - Exercise & Movement
 - Creative Arts
 - Technology support, Language classes
 - Life-long learning, Travel, History classes
 - Phone programs for those without technology

Staying Connected throughout the Pandemic

- Modified one-on-one in-person services continued even when group programs were canceled for things like foot clinics and taxes
- Drive-in, Drive-by, and outdoor programming help to maintain connections
- Varying levels of service throughout the state - this depended on current Covid cases, staff capacity, and community comfort level

Staying Connected throughout the Pandemic

- Senior Centers play an important role in sharing trusted information with older adults
 - Starting March 2020 - Safety education & information
 - 2021 (ongoing) - Vaccination education & support
 - Ongoing pandemic resources and needed referrals
 - Local emergency teams, community partner support, and access

What Senior Centers mean to Older Vermonters



James J. Hasson, 94, flipping through World War II photos at his Cavendish home

The pandemic can seem very different from the long dirt road in Cavendish where James J. Hasson lives. But it is shaping every day of the 94-year-old man's life.

Hasson has lived in this tucked-away wedge of southern Vermont since 1950 in a white clapboard house that abuts Knapp Brook Wildlife Management Area, bounded by woods and the namesake stream.

THE PEOPLE CALLING IN ARE THE ONLY RICHES I HAVE LEFT.
JAMES J. HASSON

(appeared in 7 Days VT, May 2020)

has delivered him four meals each week, and the Reading-West Windsor Food Shelf drops off groceries. He also gets daily check-in calls from one of the senior center's employees, which he finds especially rewarding. "The people calling in are the only riches I have left. I just cherish these phone calls," he said. "They recognize you're a human being."

"Before the pandemic occurred the Senior Center was something to look forward to each week, getting together for projects, learning tai chi, meeting new people, and seeing old friends. Totally enjoyable and worthwhile.

During the pandemic it was a life line. It meant that three times a week I was able to be in a Zoom class where I could see and talk to friends, and also continue with tai chi classes. They also supplied meals-to-go that we were able to pick up. I will never forget the Center workers standing outside in the freezing cold distributing those meals as the cars drove by.

Now that we are back to having in person classes, I have a greater appreciation of the Center and the people who do such great work there. They do so much for so many." (provided by Castleton)

Gaps & Needs

- ▶ Computer literacy, internet access, & devices
- ▶ Capacity, funding, & workforce to:
 - ▶ Increase outreach
 - ▶ Update and modernize buildings & spaces
 - ▶ Plan and host new and diverse programs
- ▶ Transportation