



MEALS ON WHEELS: DELIVERING MORE THAN A MEAL

- For more than 50 years, THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT (OAA) has been the primary piece of federal legislation supporting social and nutrition services to Americans age 60 and older. OAA programs are vital for seniors who are at significant risk of hunger, isolation and losing their ability to live independently. Title III of the OAA establishes a grant system to fund programs that address the unique needs of vulnerable seniors.
- Nearly one in six seniors nationwide faces the threat of hunger.
- The number of seniors in Virginia is expected to nearly double by 2030. Locally, the population of older adults in some rural areas already exceeds 50%. The demand for Meals on Wheels is outpacing federal funding.
- Senior hunger leads to other healthcare problems, such as diabetes, heart disease, depression, asthma, and gum disease, among others.
- VPAS can provide a senior Meals on Wheels for 1 YEAR for roughly the same cost as 1 DAY in a hospital or 10 days in a nursing home.
- Meals on Wheels addresses more than senior hunger. A 2016 Brown School of Public Health study showed that those who received daily meals showed most improvement in mental and self-rated health, reduced rate of falls, improvement in feelings of loneliness and isolation, and decrease in worrying about being able to stay in their homes.
 - 77% of meal recipients say the meals help improve their health
 - 85 % of meal recipients say that services help them feel more secure
 - 92% of meal recipients say the meals help them live independently
- Many Meals on Wheels recipients access additional VPAS services to maintain their safety and independence, including in-home assessments, senior transportation, and information and referral services.

Source: *Meals on Wheels America 6/2023*