

Why does the Community Center need a kitchen?

Of the programs that enable seniors to stay in their homes as they age, one of the most important is the Senior Nutrition Services, provided by the COA&HS.

- **MEALS ON WHEELS:** The Meals on Wheels (MOW) program delivers a hot lunch to homebound, vulnerable seniors who are unable to provide good nutrition for themselves, and who meet certain guidelines. Volunteer drivers provided by COA&HS also provide a daily check-in for those homebound residents.
- **SENIOR DINING:** Senior dining is a congregate, midday meal, currently served at the First Parish on Fridays, where seniors can gather and socialize over a nutritious meal. (The Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs sets the requirements for both Meals on Wheels and congregate dining.)

The meals for both of these services are provided by Minuteman Senior Services under a contract that includes the dining site coordinator and payments to the First Parish for utilizing the space (hall and kitchen). In January to September 2023, COA&HS typically provided of 12 - 18 MOW per day. The average attendance at Senior Dining was 27, with a minimum of 21 and a maximum of 41. Based on these numbers, the COA&HS has established an attendance cap of 50 people for space planning for a Community Center.

In the new community center space, a warming kitchen and table seating area for the proposed daily attendance cap (50) is included. It is expected that Minuteman Senior Services will continue to provide the ready-made meals, but using the new community center space. The kitchen is expected to be about 450 sf to allow for storage, refrigeration, warming, plating and service to participants. Table seating will require the use of a one of the multipurpose rooms, with about 1,000 sf of space. The kitchen will also be essential for other community events.

As Lincoln's population of seniors increases, the new community center will enable COA&HS to increase the number of MOW provided daily, and to increase the number of days when congregate dining is available, to more than once per week. Bringing seniors to the Community Center for the congregate meals will improve the vitality of the COA&HS and it will allow the staff to function more effectively.