



Connecting Older Adults with Community-based Resources and Options

The Area Agency on Aging of Suburban Cook County, since 1974

Fiscal Year 2025

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Shelf Stable Meals for Home Delivered and Congregate Meal Clients Served by AgeOptions Funded Partners

Diane Slezak, President and CEO
AgeOptions
1048 Lake Street, Suite 300
Oak Park, IL 60301

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

AgeOptions does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with the Illinois Human Rights Act; the U.S. Civil Rights Act; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; The Age Discrimination Act; the Age Discrimination in Employment Act; and the U.S. and Illinois Constitution. If you feel you have been discriminated against, you have the right to file a complaint with the Illinois Department on Aging. For information, call (800)252-8966 (Voice and TTY) or contact AgeOptions at (708)383-0258 (Voice) or (708)524-1653 (TTY)

1. Purpose

AgeOptions seeks one vendor to provide boxes of shelf-stable meals to approximately 45 participating meal site distribution locations throughout suburban Cook County. See Quantities section below for estimated volume.

2. Definitions

- a. **Shelf-Stable meal:** A group of food items providing approximately one-third (1/3) of the Dietary Reference Intake (DRI) for older adults established by the Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences (see **Attachment E -- Menu Standards**). Each meal must provide a balanced and appropriate portion of protein, vegetables, fruit, grains and dairy.
- b. **Unitized meal:** A group of food items meeting the definition of a Shelf-Stable meal and packaged together in such a way that a recipient will understand that the group of food items constitutes a complete Shelf-Stable meal.
- c. **Shelf Life:** Will be defined as the shortest length of time until any food item in a meal box reaches its expiration date. No food item should have a shelf life of less than 180 days. No food item should require refrigeration to safely reach its expiration date.
- d. **Meal Box:** A shipping unit containing a standardized number of meals. For the current AgeOptions Emergency Shelf-Stable Meal Program, each box contains seven (7) complete shelf-stable meals. You may propose different quantities per box as long as the total of meals supplied meets the estimated required range of 42,000 to 98,000 meals. (See item 5, below, "Quantities.")
- e. **Entrée:** The main food item in a Shelf-Stable meal. This item is usually the main source of protein. Examples may include but are not limited to:
 - i. Canned beef stew or chili
 - ii. Vacu-packed pouch of tuna
 - iii. Canned hummus

3. Product Requirements

- a. Required Meal Types:
 - Regular diet meals made up of food items suitable for most healthy older adults.
 - Kosher meals must be certified as Kosher by a qualified rabbinical council.
 - Vegetarian meals should strive to meet the standards for protein through vegetables, legumes and dairy products (**see Attachment E**).
- b. Optional Meal Types:
 - i. Medically tailored meals should be certified by a dietitian to be more appropriate for the medical condition targeted than Regular diet meals would be. Medically tailored meals most requested are diabetic friendly, low sodium and renal friendly.
 - ii. Culturally tailored meals or meal items are designed for people with strong cultural or ethnic food preferences. These might include, but are not limited to: Halal, South Asian, Latin-X/Hispanic, Korean and Chinese.
- c. Each box will contain a specified number of complete shelf-stable meals, packaged in such a way that recipients may quickly determine which meal items make a complete meal. This may be accomplished with individualized packaging, box dividers, itemized menus, a combination of these techniques or in other ways you may devise. Ideally, the components of each box will produce seven complete shelf-stable meals.

- d. Each meal in a meal box must provide at least one-third (1/3) of the daily nutritional requirements based on the Older Americans Act standards for Title III-C Home Delivered Meals. See the Summary Nutritional Standards sheet, below for a brief summary of requirements. For detailed menu standards, see **Attachment E** “Menu Standards.” All menus must be approved by the AgeOptions Registered Dietitian.
 - e. On the outside of each box will be affixed a 4X5 bright orange or yellow label, with instructions outlining when and why to consume the shelf-stable meals. Text will be supplied by AgeOptions.
 - f. The outside of each box will have a printed “packaged on” date.
 - g. The box contents must include a single 8.5X11 insert that includes:
 - a menu of all meals
 - instructions regarding what recipients should do in case of emergency
 Text will be supplied by AgeOptions.
 - h. All meals will meet certain nutrition standards outlined in this proposal and have a shelf-life of at least six months (180 days) as determined by the manufacturer’s estimated expiration dates printed on the individual food items. See **Attachment E** – “Menu Standards” for detailed nutritional requirements, also summarized at bottom of this document.
 - i. Deliveries will be made twice yearly.
 - i. The first delivery will be made in the first week of October 2024.
 - ii. The second delivery will be made in the first week of March 2025.
 - iii. Deliveries do not have to be made to all distribution sites on the same day. Deliveries may occur over a one-week period leading up to the due date.
 - iv. Sites must be notified of delivery dates in advance.
 - j. The selected vendor will be responsible for making deliveries to the grantee locations found in **Attachment D*** – Distribution Sites & Quantities (based on current information; sites and quantities may change).
4. Vendor Program Responsibilities
- a. Identify a primary contact person and a backup for communications with AgeOptions.
 - b. Be flexible when changes to the menu are required.
 - c. Provide price and/or menu changes in a timely manner. Bids on each semi-annual delivery will be solicited as soon as the delivery quantity is determined and submitted to the vendor.
 - d. Promptly advise AgeOptions of any factors, such as financial difficulties or physical plant changes that may affect your organization’s ability to provide contracted services.

5. Estimated Quantities

Delivery Period	Estimated individual Meals	Estimated number of boxes, assuming 7-meals/box
Delivery October 2024	45,500 – 52,500	6,500 -- 7,500
Delivery March 2025	42,000 – 45,500	6,000 -- 6,500
Total	87,500 – 98,000	12,500 – 14,000

* These quantities are based on FY2024 orders. Totals for the FY2025 program may vary.

6. Contract Extensions

If AgeOptions has funding for future fiscal years, AgeOptions may choose to contract with the successful vendor for up to two additional years (FY2026 and FY2027). For extension years, AgeOptions may offer a cost-of-living increase for food away from home based on the Consumer Price Index.

7. Technical Assistance

If you have questions, please contact RFP@ageoptions.org. Technical assistance is available until **Tuesday, February 27, 2024**, at 4:00 p.m. Central Time (CT). Answers to questions will be shared via email with all applicants through a weekly "Frequently Asked Questions" update. To ensure that all applicants receive answers to FAQ's at the same time, send notice of your intent to submit an application to RFP@ageoptions.org. **You will not receive answers to FAQs until you send notice of your intent to apply.**

Commented [PB1]: Where will the FAQ be published?

Commented [PL2R1]: shared via email. With no web site, not sure how we would publish

8. Due Date

Proposals are due on **Tuesday, February 27, 2024**, by 11:59 p.m., Central Time. Proposals must be sent, via email, to RFP@ageoptions.org

9. Meal Samples

AgeOptions will invite selected applicants to send a minimum of 15 Regular diet sample meal boxes. The variety of meals should be the same in each meal box. Invited applicants must send samples to arrive no later than Thursday, April 11, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. Central Time to:

AgeOptions
1048 Lake Street, Suite 300
Oak Park, Illinois 60301
ATTN: Phillip Lanier
708-383-0258

10. Evaluation of Proposals

All applications will be evaluated on a variety of criteria that will include:

- a. Best (lowest) price per meal box as indicated by Vendor (**Attachment F**).
- b. Compliance, per Menu Standards (**Attachment E**).
- c. Competency (performance history, references, demonstrated ability to provide service, demonstrable capacity sufficient to the project, etc.)
- d. Quality of food items.
- e. Packaging (durability, ease of use, minimal waste, clear unitizing of complete meals).
- f. AgeOptions may seek clarification and negotiate on pricing and scope of service prior to making any final selections.
- g. References supplied by applicant.

11. Summary of Key Dates

Event	Key Date
RFP Issued to Interested Vendors	January 23, 2024
Technical Assistance Available via email: RFP@ageoptions.org	January 23, 2024 – February 27, 2024, ending 4:00 p.m. CT
Applications due to: RFP@ageoptions.org	February 27, 2024, no later than 11:59 p.m. CT
Selected Applicants Notified	April 2, 2024
Sample Meal Boxes Due to AgeOptions	April 11, 2024, no later than 4:00 p.m. CT
Contract Award Date	April 25, 2024

Initial Delivery Date	Week of October 7, 2024
Second Delivery Date	Week of March 3, 2025

Summary Nutritional Standards Sheet
for use with menu analysis for Illinois Senior Nutrition Programs

Nutrient	1 Meal per Day		2 Meals per Day		3 meals per Day	
	Minimum	Check	Minimum	Check	Minimum	Check
Calories (Kcal)	No less than 600 per meal; Average 685 per day for the week		No less than 1235 Average 1370 for the week		No less than 2000 Average 2054 for the week	
Protein	19-21 grams		38 grams		56 grams	
Carbohydrate	43 grams		87 grams		130 grams	
Fat	<26 grams ≤30% calories averaged over one week		<52 grams ≤30% calories averaged over one week		<78 grams ≤30% calories averaged over one week	
Fiber	10 grams average over one week		19 grams average over one week		28 grams average over one week	
Vitamin A (RAE)*	300 mcg		600 mcg		900 mcg	
Vitamin C	30 mg		60 mg		90 mg	
Vitamin E (AT)**	5 mg		10 mg		15 mg	
Vitamin B6	.6 mg		1.2 mg		1.7 mg	
Folate (DFE)***	133 mcg		267 mcg		400 mcg	
Vitamin B12	.8 mcg		1.61 mcg		2.4 mcg	
Calcium	400 mg		800 mg		1200 mg	
Magnesium	140 mg		280 mg		420 mg	

Zinc	3.7 mg		7.3 mg		11 mg	
Potassium	1133 mg		2267 mg		3400 mg	
Sodium	800 mg – 1000 mg or less (900 mg averaged over one week)		1600 mg or less (1700 mg averaged over one week)		2600 mg or less (2400 mg average over one week)	

*RAE = Retinol Activity Equivalent; **AT = Alpha-tocopherol; ***DFE = Dietary Folate Equivalent

Revised August 2021