



Connecting Older Adults with Community-based Resources and Options

## **Fiscal Years 2025-2028**

# **Nutrition Services – replacing Catholic Charities Congregate Meal Sites and Home Delivered Meal Distribution areas Request for Proposals**

**Proposals are Due:** May 28, 2024 by 11:59 pm

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

**RFP Materials available on AgeOptions Grants Portal**

### **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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION	3
A.	AgeOptions and History of the Program	3
B.	Purpose and specific locations for this RFP	4
C.	Goals for Delivery of Services	5
D.	Available Funds	5
E.	Match Requirement	6
F.	Client Contributions (Project Income)	6
G.	Grant Agreement	7
H.	Eligible Agencies	7
I.	Organizational Capacity	8
II.	AWARDS AVAILABLE	9
A.	Background	9
B.	Congregate Meals	10
C.	Home Delivered Meals	12
D.	Catering	13
III.	AWARD TERMS	14
A.	Funding Period	14
B.	Renewal Considerations	14
C.	Funding for Extension Years	14
D.	Termination of Grant	15
IV.	APPLICATION PROCESS	15
A.	Creation of Grants Portal Account	15
B.	Submission of Applications	16
C.	Technical Assistance on the RFP and application	17
D.	Ongoing Technical Assistance	18
E.	Due Dates for Applications	18
V.	EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS	18
A.	Funding Considerations	19
B.	Competitive Applications	20
C.	Summary of Technical Criteria	20
D.	Minimum Requirements	21
E.	Application Format and Evaluation	21
F.	Rejection of Proposals	22
G.	All Applications – potential request for additional information	22
H.	Notification and Appeals Process	22
I.	Debriefing	23
J.	Agreements	23

**1. In addition, these materials are part of this Request for Proposal and are available on the AgeOptions Grants Portal: Requirements for Recipients of Older Americans Act Title III funds, Service definitions and standards, menu standards, appendices, applications and scoring tools.**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **a. AgeOptions and History of the Program**

AgeOptions is one of over 600 Area Agencies on Aging throughout the United States and one of 13 in Illinois. In accordance with the Older American's Act of 1965 and associated regulations, AgeOptions is designated by the Illinois Department on Aging as the Area Agency on Aging for suburban Cook County, Illinois. AgeOptions is responsible for administering federal and state-funded programs and services for individuals aged 60 and older and those who care for them in suburban Cook County.

AgeOptions was established in 1974 as a 501(C) (3) not-for-profit corporation to serve the older adults of suburban Cook County. Governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and counseled by an Advisory Council comprised of older adults and community representatives, AgeOptions identifies the concerns of older adults and those who care for them, develops, and implements programs to meet their needs, and advocates for necessary resources.

AgeOptions submits a three-year comprehensive plan (Area Plan on Aging) to the Illinois Department on Aging (IDOA), which is updated annually. The Area Plan provides detailed information about the growing population aged 60 years and over in suburban Cook establishes service needs and funding priorities. AgeOptions is guided by the Area Plan to fund a network of more than 70 local community-based service providers, working to bring resources and service options to older adults and their caregivers throughout the Cook County suburbs. AgeOptions is submitting a new Area Plan on May 15, 2024, for FY 2025 through FY 2027. All funding under this request for Proposal is contingent upon availability of funding and the acceptance of AgeOptions Area Plan on Aging and annual amendments to that plan by the Illinois Department on Aging.

### **b. Purpose**

The purpose of this Request for Proposals is to solicit grant applications for provision of nutrition services to older persons aged 60 and over in suburban Cook County, Illinois for the following services and **limited to the following areas as outlined in the table on the next page:**

- Title III-C1 of the Older Americans Act, Congregate Meal Services
- Title III-C2 of the Older Americans Act, Home Delivered Meals

Funds are available from the Federal Older Americans Act, State of Illinois General Revenue funds, and Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP). These funds are referred to as "AgeOptions Funds."

Service Area	Program	FY 23 Meals (units)	FY 23 Meals	FY 24 Budgeted Meals	FY 24 meals provided 10/1/23 -2/29/24	
					In-person	To-go
<b>CONGREGATE MEALS</b>						
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Arlington Heights, 1801 West Central Road, Arlington Heights (Wheeling Township)	3,999	4,685	7,966	1,836	1,739
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Calumet City (Thornton Township) _1700 Memorial Drive, Calumet City	13	1,799	1,538	0	1,212
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Clyde Park District, 1909 South Laramie, Cicero (Cicero Township)	11,319	2,973	13,740	3,890	1,508
<input type="checkbox"/> 4	Markham City Hall, 16313 Kedzie Parkway, Markham, (Bremen Township)	2,940	0	2,840	1,319	0
<b>HOME DELIVERED MEALS</b>						
<input type="checkbox"/> 5	Bremen Township Home Delivered Meals		63,609	59,556		29,570
<input type="checkbox"/> 6	Maine Township Home Delivered Meals	59,716 (applicants may propose Maine Township or Wheeling Township, or both)		59,172		22,527
<input type="checkbox"/> 7	Wheeling Township- Home Delivered Meals					
<input type="checkbox"/> 8	Rich Township – Home Delivered		16,915	14,468		7,398
<input type="checkbox"/> 9	Thornton Township – Home Delivered Meals		58,962	55,276		28,935

### **c. Goals for Delivery of Services**

As outlined in the Older Americans Act, the purpose of the Nutrition Program is to:

1. Reduce hunger and food insecurity,
2. Promote socialization of older adults, and
3. Promote the health and well-being of older adults and delay the onset of adverse health conditions through access to nutrition and other disease prevention and health promotion services.

Services are not intended to reach every individual in the community. Programs should prioritize adults aged 60 and older who are in greatest social and economic need, with particular attention to the following groups:

- a. Older adults with low incomes,
- b. Older adults who are a member of a diverse population, (Black and Brown),
- c. Older adults with limited English proficiency or have language barriers,
- d. Older adults over the age of 75,
- e. Older adults at risk for institutional placement,
- f. Older adults who are frail or have a physical or mental disability,
- g. Older adults with dementia and related disorders as well as their caregivers,
- h. Older adults who are isolated due to racial and ethnic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, HIV status or other issues.

In keeping with the intent of the Older Americans Act, the Illinois Act on Aging and the mission of AgeOptions, funds will be awarded in accordance with the following goals and objectives:

- To promote independence and dignity for older people capable of remaining in their own homes, with appropriate help.
- To develop and implement comprehensive, coordinated systems, for home and community-based services. This may be accomplished by collaborating, coordinating, and consulting with other agencies responsible for formulating, implementing, and administering long term care programs.
- To remove social, economic, and personal barriers to independence for older individuals.
- To provide services for the most vulnerable older adults that meet their individual needs.
- To aid the caregiver to help maintain the older person at home.

### **d. Available Funds**

AgeOptions awards will be based on revenue projections for FY 2025. These estimates include funding from the Federal Government and the State of Illinois to suburban Cook County. **Annual Federal and State appropriations and any changes in the Illinois Department on Aging funding formula for the distribution of funds may decrease or increase available revenues for Fiscal Year 2025.**

AgeOptions reserves the right to revise any or all projections and awards based upon the actual award and receipt of sufficient funds to meet legislative, administrative, or judicial rule/order or regulation requiring and/or necessitating a revision or reconsideration of funding decisions.

If another funding source is currently supporting the applicant’s proposed services in the same service area, AgeOptions will not fund the program. Older American’s Act does not allow the funds to supplant other funding.

As of the date of this document, AgeOptions estimates funding for FY 2025 to be:

<b>Program</b>	<b>ESTIMATED AgeOptions Funds (combined Federal/State/ NSIP Dollars)</b>
<b>Congregate Meals</b>	\$235,000
<b>Home Delivered Meals</b>	\$1,340,000

**e. Match Requirements**

Successful applicants must contribute a minimum of 15% in non-federal resources as match. Allowable match sources may include cash, foundation support, the value of in-kind contributions such as volunteer time or donated space, or both. The AgeOptions share of funding may not exceed 85% of the “total net cost” (the sum of AgeOptions funds and match). (2 CFR Part 200 Cost Principles).

AgeOptions will consider lower match levels for applicants proposing to serve communities that are [under-resourced](#) or economically disadvantaged. Applicant’s budget justification must include a thorough explanation of how the proposed area is under-resourced. Some considerations may be:

- The Poverty Rate
- Poverty Concentration (the percent of the total population in in poverty),
- Higher percentages of residents who are Black or Hispanic – this is due to systemic racism in many institutions, including historic and ongoing discriminatory housing policies that kept people from accumulating wealth.

Please see instructions for how to address this request in the budget.

**f. Client contributions (“Project Income”)**

Older Americans Act regulations require that every program participant be offered the opportunity to financially contribute to a service. Typically, participants make a voluntary contribution through methods such as a donation box or by mail. Revenue generated from contributions is intended to supplement and expand the service. These contributions are called “project income”. Awarded applicants will be required to follow our Project Income Guidelines.

Regardless of the contribution, awarded applicants must provide services regardless of an older adult’s willingness or ability to contribute to the service. Client contributions are not included in the “total net cost.”

**g. Notification of Grant Award (Grant Agreement)**

AgeOptions will use a grant system to reimburse successful applicants. A grant will promote partnership and collaboration. Grantee costs will be budgeted by the categories of Personnel/Fringe, Equipment and Supplies, Travel, and Other. During the grant period, agencies may request a revision to re-allocate costs between line items.

Any reference to “grantee” responsibilities will be binding on the applicant organization upon the award of the grant.

AgeOptions will incorporate all the standards and requirements outlined in this procurement process as well as the applicant’s application (work plan) into a “Notification of Grant Award” (NGA). The grant will contain service delivery, administrative, and financial terms and conditions, and provisions which, when taken together, define the services that the Grantee will provide. The accepted proposal will become a binding part of the grant and the Grantee will be monitored to ensure compliance with the proposal in accordance with AgeOptions requirements and policies set forth in:

- AgeOptions FY 25-27 Service Definitions and Standards
- AgeOptions FY 2025-2027 Title III Requirements,
- AgeOptions FY 2025-2027 Request for Proposals,
- AgeOptions 2025 Conditions of Award and Performance Deficiencies for Grantees Policy.

It is the applicant’s responsibility to read and understand the RFP and associated materials and tailor the application and all activities to ensure compliance.

**h. Eligible Agencies**

Nonprofit and for-profit organizations and government units who have experience providing the services outlined in this RFP can apply. AgeOptions is required to obtain a waiver from the Illinois Department on Aging prior to funding a for-profit

organization. Grantees are prohibited from receiving a profit from the grant award.

All applicants must be registered, be in good standing with the Illinois Secretary of State and have a valid SAM Unique Entity ID (UEI). It is the grantee's responsibility to remain current with these registrations and requirements. In addition, the applicant should not be included on any Debarred/Suspended/Stop Payment/Excluded Parties listings.

**i. Organizational Capacity**

Applicants may apply for services which they have the capacity to provide. AgeOptions will determine capacity for purposes of the award, based on the applicant's submitted proposal and their past performance. Modification of the proposal will only be accepted if requested by AgeOptions.

Applicants must complete all required documents with their proposal outlined in the application portal. Upon receiving a Title III award from AgeOptions, successful applicants must meet the requirements of [2 CFR 200.332](#).

**One application and budget are required for each site/distribution area and each service proposed.**

For example. If an agency is applying for home delivered meals for Wheeling and Maine Township as well as a Congregate site in Wheeling – they would submit 3 separate applications:

- 1) A separate application and budget for Wheeling Township Home Delivered Meals
- 2) A separate application and budget for Maine Township Home Delivered Meals
- 3) A separate application and budget for Wheeling Township Congregate meals

All requirements included in this document are authorized in actual legislative language included in the Older Americans Act and the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. [2 CFR Part 200](#). Any further amendments to the law, actions required by other Federal or State laws, court order, and/or administrative/executive directives, will be binding on all applicants. AgeOptions has adopted as policy all requirements stated in this document and will enforce the same during the grant period, except as directed by the Federal and State governments, or Court of Law.

AgeOptions does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, language, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity, political or other opinion, health status, place of residence, economic and sociation situation or familial status in employment or the provision of services.

Agencies are not permitted to subcontract or assign any part of the work covered under the scope of the agreement without prior written consent of AgeOptions.



Any misrepresentation within the proposal is grounds for disqualification from the review process.

## 2. **AWARDS AVAILABLE**

AgeOptions will only fund Congregate and Home Delivered Meals **in the specific areas identified in this Request for Proposal, to replace the previous grantee, Catholic Charities.** Please refer to the Definitions and Standards for a complete description of each service.

We seek proposals to provide meals in a flexible, responsive to consumer needs and preferences and cost-effective manner. We are interested in proposals that include innovations in meal types, service delivery models and consumer input.

### a. **Background**

Nutrition plays an important role in our lives. What we eat significantly affects our health, quality of life and longevity. Good nutrition is essential in maintaining cognitive and physical functioning. For older adults, proper and balanced nutrition is particularly critical for the maintenance of health, wellness, and independence. Unfortunately, studies show many older adults are not meeting their nutritional needs on a regular basis. Inadequate diets can contribute to chronic health conditions, quicken the advance of age-related degenerative disease, and delay recovery from illness. For diverse older adults who tend to have a higher incidence of chronic disease, inadequate diets can be even more detrimental.

AgeOptions nutrition program is not a stand-alone program but functions as part of a home and community-based service system. Services are to be part of a comprehensive and coordinated service system designed to secure and support maximum independence and dignity in the home environment for older adults (Bernstein & Mumoz, 2012). The nutrition programs' specific purposes are to:

- i. Reduce hunger and food insecurity – On a national basis (56 percent of congregate nutrition service participants and 60 percent of home-delivered nutrition service participants) report that these meals make up one-half or more of their food intake for the day.
- ii. Reduce social isolation - The research indicated that those who had daily meals delivery were more likely to report improvements in mental health, self-rated health, and reductions in feelings of isolation as well as less worry about being able to remain at home (Thomas & Dosa, 2015).

- iii. Promote health and well-being - Among people currently receiving congregate nutrition services, 43 percent are also receiving one or more other Home and Community Based Service (HCBS). Likewise, among people receiving home-delivered nutrition services, 59 percent reported receiving one or more additional HCBS.
- iv. Delay adverse health conditions - Because the prevalence of multiple chronic conditions is higher among congregate and home-delivered program participants than the general Medicare population, the provision of healthy meals, access to lifestyle modification programs and nutrition education and counseling are important to promoting health, modifying risk, helping to treat these multiple chronic conditions, helping to maintain functionality, and reducing health care utilization.

**b. Congregate Meals**: Funded by the Older Americans Act Title III-C1<sup>1</sup> and Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP). **This RFP is limited to former Catholic Charities Congregate sites. AgeOptions will only accept Congregate proposals for the four townships identified: Bremen, Cicero, Thornton, and Wheeling.**

The addresses of the current sites are:

- Josephine Argento Senior Center, 1700 Memorial Drive, Calumet City, 60409 (Thornton Township)
- Markham City Hall. 16313 Kedzie Parkway, Markham, 60426 (Bremen Township)
- Clyde Park District, 1909 South Laramie, Cicero, 60804 (Cicero Township)
- Arlington Heights Dining Program, 1801 West Central Road, Arlington Heights, 60005

[Congregate Meals](#) help to keep older Americans healthy and prevent the need for more costly medical interventions. In addition to serving healthy meals, the program presents opportunities for social engagement, information on healthy aging, and meaningful volunteer roles, all of which contribute to an older individual's overall health and well-being.

The Congregate Nutrition program serves individuals aged 60 and older, and in some cases, their caregivers, spouses, and/or persons with disabilities.

## Program Design Options

1. Applicants may propose a “traditional” dining site which would serve meals five days per week, typically at lunch but other times will be considered.
2. Applicants may operate a program at **multiple locations** (rotating sites) to increase access to the service. If using multiple locations, the total program may not operate more than seven (7) days per week. All program criteria for Congregate Meal Programs must be met and participants must be made aware of meals options at all locations.
3. Applicants may propose congregate meals in a **restaurant setting**. However, to promote socialization, restaurant programs should designate set gathering times, assign staff or volunteers to welcome guests, provide programs, and ideally have a separate dining area.
4. AgeOptions may consider **restaurant voucher programs** (programs that do not require set times of service and staffing at participating restaurants) on a limited basis if a compelling rationale and a high level of local match is provided.

## 5. Productivity and Priority Populations

Applicants should aim to serve at least twenty-five (25) meals to older adults daily at each site. For sites that propose or have a history of serving less than 25 meals per day, AgeOptions may choose not to fund the site or may work with the applicant to develop a cost-effective option. However, our first priority is to reach older individuals with the greatest economic need, older individuals with greatest social need, and older individuals at risk for institutional placement. Priority populations (formerly referred to as “target populations”) may include but are not limited to the following marginalized communities:

- i. Older adults with low incomes,
- j. Older adults who are a member of a diverse population, (Black and Brown)
- k. Older adults with limited English proficiency or have language barriers.
- l. Older adults over the age of 75.
- m. Older adults at risk for institutional placement,
- n. Older adults who are frail or have a physical or mental disability.
- o. Older adults with dementia and related disorders as well as their caregivers.
- p. Older adults who are isolated due to racial and ethnic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, HIV status or other issues.

## 6. Connection with Health Promotion

AgeOptions recognizes the connection between Nutrition services and Health Promotion (Title III-D). AgeOptions will continue to require congregate nutrition sites to host health promotion sessions provided under the Title III-D program.

**C. Home Delivered Meals**– Funded by the Older Americans Act Title III-C2 and Illinois General Revenue Funds and Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP). **NOTE: This RFP is limited to former Catholic Charities distribution points. AgeOptions will only accept Home Delivered Meals proposals for the five townships identified: Bremen, Maine, Wheeling, Rich, and Thornton**

The Home Delivered Meals program serves frail, homebound, or isolated individuals who are aged 60 and over, and in some cases, their caregivers, spouses, and/or persons with disabilities. This program serves much more than food. It provides a safety check, and sometimes the only opportunity for face-to-face contact or conversation that day. The Program also assists clients with accessing additional services and benefits for which they may be eligible and require, helping them to regain or maintain their independence. Care Coordination Units or Managed Care Organizations (Assessing Organization) must determine eligibility and refer the client to the appropriate meal provider.

AgeOptions will fund home delivered meals including regular diet as well as the required five special diets. The current caterer, Hoffman House, offers low sodium, diabetic, gluten-free friendly, pureed, vegetarian, cardiac, Renal, extra low sodium, lactose intolerant, No Vitamin K, and low residue. Applicants may choose to use Hoffman House or another catering or onsite cooking option.

Home delivered Meals service areas are based on township boundaries. Applicants must be willing to service the entire township. We want each township to have access to regular diet home delivered meals and special diet home delivered meals. If an applicant cannot provide both meal types, through a combination of on-site food preparation and/or central kitchen food preparation and/or catered food then the applicant is encouraged to collaborate with another applicant to ensure that both home delivered meal types are being proposed for a township.

AgeOptions prefers hot daily delivery of Home Delivered Meals. However, AgeOptions allows the use of frozen or cold meals when the Assessing Organization assessment affirms that the recipient is able to prepare the

meal. Providers must always ensure that if frozen/cold meals are used, the client can manage the meal's preparation. If a client cannot manage frozen meals, the provider must find an alternate option. If frozen meals are provided, the provider must offer a mechanism for a personal contact with the client to ensure their wellbeing daily, Monday through Friday.

Successful applicants will commit to serving the current home delivered meal recipients. AgeOptions recognizes that not all client needs are currently met through this program and that due to funding and logistical issues, waiting lists for meals may occur.

#### **d. Catering/Food Preparation Costs for both Congregate and Home**

##### **Delivered Meals**

Applicants may propose one of the following methods for preparing food:

1. On-site preparation by applicant, or
2. Central Kitchen operated by the applicant and transported to the nutrition site, or
3. Catered from AgeOptions vetted Caterer list.

NOTE: Catholic Charities has a caterer agreement with Hoffman House that may be transferred to the new grantee.

An applicant may use on-site or Central Kitchen food preparation for some meal types (for example, regular diet Home Delivered Meals) and may use a caterer for a different meal type (special diet Home Delivered Meals). Or an applicant may use more than one caterer to allow for variety during the week (for example, Caterer A on Monday/Wednesday/Friday and Caterer B on Tuesday/Thursday).

Nutrition applicants who propose to use a caterer must select a caterer from the AgeOptions "eligible caterer" list, included in the appendices. AgeOptions selected caterers for the "eligible list" after a caterer application process that included tasting receptions and reference checks.

Applicants who propose "on site" food preparation or catering from their organization's central kitchen are exempt from using a caterer from the "eligible caterer" list. It is in AgeOptions sole discretion to determine the agencies exempt from this requirement.

The Grants Portal Application Resources section includes the FY2025 "eligible caterer" list.

### **III. AWARD TERMS**

#### **a. Funding Period**

Awards will be for Fiscal Year 2025 beginning October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025. AgeOptions may extend agreements for grantees in good standing one (1), two (2), or three (3) one-year extensions for FY 2026, FY 2027, and FY 2028 as specified in this document.

#### **b. Renewal Considerations**

Renewals may be granted for each service, each Congregate Site or Home Delivered Meals Service area in the grant, providing the following conditions are met:

1. AgeOptions' determination that the grantee's performance meets service level projections and AgeOptions standards.
2. The continuing availability of Older Americans Act Title III-C funds.
3. The mutual agreement on grant terms between AgeOptions and the applicant.
4. There are no changes in program mandates and/or requirements by AgeOptions funding bodies that would result in a revision of the plan for funding allocations.

Additional extensions will be considered if a Request for Proposal is postponed by AgeOptions in the best interest of the program.

AgeOptions reserves the option to grant exceptions to the above renewal considerations.

#### **c. Funding for Extension Years**

AgeOptions will try to maintain funding at the original levels for extension years and will determine allowable increases or decreases in Federal unit costs based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

**Increase in Funding** - If there is an increase in available funding between extension years for Congregate and Home Delivered Meals, AgeOptions will determine the amount of funds to be made available either by area, by service and/or for targeted populations, using one of the following options/combination of options in awarding those funds:

#### ***For Congregate Meals and Home Delivered Meals:***

1. Eliminate or prevent waiting lists
2. Expand special diets, weekend and/or second meals.
3. Develop new innovations to improve the programs.

4. Award funds to applicants whose applications were approved through this process but not funded due to insufficient funds.
5. Allow Grantees to submit formal requests and rationale to expand current services within the amounts determined available by AgeOptions. Decisions regarding increases shall be made after considering the rationale, overall performance and support provided to the community by the Grantee.
6. Develop special initiatives for distribution of increased funds.

**Reductions in Funding:** If funding to the suburban Cook County region is reduced, and it is necessary to reduce Grantee award levels, AgeOptions will take a multi-pronged approach:

1. Reduce grants to programs that are not serving at their budgeted productivity levels. If there is an unmet need in the area, AgeOptions may fund another grantee to meet the need.
2. For Home delivered meals, decrease client's second and/or weekend meals if the independent assessment agency determines the clients are not at a high level of need for these meals.
3. Reduce home delivered meals in the following order: second meals, weekend meals and/or special diets.
4. Review each grant based on service levels and/or other performance factors to ensure that there will be cost effective service provision which best meets the needs of older adults.

#### **d. Termination of Grant**

AgeOptions reserves the right to terminate a grant with an applicant as outlined in the "AgeOptions Performance Deficiencies of Grantees Policy," due to noncompliance with the standards set forth in this Request for Proposals and/or due to significant nonperformance by the grantee. The grant may also be terminated due to insufficient funds; changes in federal or state mandates; circumstances beyond the control of the grantee such as natural disasters and fires that prevent complying with the terms of the grant/contract. In addition, the grant/designation may be terminated by either party upon thirty days written notice and explanation to the other party. Upon termination, the grantee/designation shall be paid for work satisfactorily completed prior to the date of termination if funds are available.

### **IV. APPLICATION PROCESS**

#### **A. Creation of Grants Portal Account**

AgeOptions widely advertised this Request for Proposals. Interested organizations must create an "Organizational account" on AgeOptions' Grants Portal. The application, budget and required attachments can be found on and must be submitted via AgeOptions' Grants Portal\*.

- Organizations that do not have an “Organizational account” must register with AgeOptions. To register, e-mail [rfp@ageoptions.org](mailto:rfp@ageoptions.org) with the following information:
  - Legal Name of Organization
  - Address (street address, city, zip code)
  - Phone number
  - Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)
  - Full name, title, e-mail address and phone number of the designated contact person

AgeOptions will create your organizational account and send an e-mail to your designated contact person with the log-in information. It is the potential applicant’s total and sole responsibility to assure receipt of the log-in information. **The deadline to register is May 14, 2024.**

*\*If you need a reasonable accommodation, please e-mail [RFP@ageoptions.org](mailto:RFP@ageoptions.org) or contact Paula Bartolozzi, Grants Administrator at 708-383-0258. Requests for reasonable accommodations will be accepted up to seven (7) business days prior to the proposal deadline.*

## **B. Submission of Applications**

After you have created a Grants Portal organization account (see previous section):

1. Complete your “Organization profile”  
Once you have access to your organizational account, you must provide information about the organization and download several attachments.
2. Complete your application(s)  
You will complete a separate application for each Title program you are proposing to provide. (For example, if you are proposing to provide service under IIIB Supportive Services and services under IIIE Caregiver Services, you would complete one IIIB application and one IIIE application.)

For each application you will complete:

- Details
- Narrative responses to questions (an attachment upload)
- Projected demographics of clients to be served
- Budget (Salary & Fringe attachment upload plus webpages)
- Budget justification
- Reimbursement schedule
- Program-specific attachments



The proposal must be submitted using AgeOptions Fiscal Year 2025 application via the AgeOptions Grants Portal.\* Proposals must be complete and legible. The application and all other accompanying documents are available on the Grants Portal – <https://ageoptions.smartsimple.com>. **To receive a log-in, contact [RFP@Ageoptions.org](mailto:RFP@Ageoptions.org) by May 17, 2024.**

*\*If you need a reasonable accommodation, please e-mail [RFP@ageoptions.org](mailto:RFP@ageoptions.org) or contact Paula Bartolozzi, Grants Administrator, at 708-383-0258. Requests for reasonable accommodations will be accepted by May 17, 2024.*

Before submitting a proposal, the applicant shall carefully examine this document (RFP) and specifications. If the proposal is accepted, the applicant will be responsible for all errors and costs associated with the proposal resulting from failure or neglect to comply with instructions and specifications. AgeOptions will in no case be responsible for any of the errors resulting from such failure or neglect.

Applications may be withdrawn by providing written notice to AgeOptions no later than Friday, May 31, 2024. AgeOptions is not responsible for the costs of preparing an application by an applicant and will not reimburse applicants for these costs.

AgeOptions reserves the right to accept or reject any application, in whole or in part, submitted in response to this Request for Proposals. In addition, AgeOptions reserves the right to reject proposals that are determined by AgeOptions to be proposing insufficient costs to cover all or any necessary service components.

The applicant is reminded that the competitive application process is governed by laws and regulations enforced by Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies. If there is an indication of any formal or informal effort by competing applicants to influence proposed costs of services and/or service areas, AgeOptions shall ask appropriate agencies to investigate.

### **C. Technical Assistance Sessions on the RFP and application process**

Please plan to join us for a technical assistance session to learn more about the process on April 18, 2024, at 2:30 via Zoom.

Time: Apr 18, 2024, 02:30 PM Central Time (US and Canada)

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88566037274?pwd=y0zaUGceVbSLhEHesEwpGAmlxe0i5q.1>

Meeting ID: 885 6603 7274

Passcode: 500579

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*To request reasonable accommodations for the Technical Assistance Sessions, please submit your request to [rfp@ageoptions.org](mailto:rfp@ageoptions.org) or 708-383-0258. Requests for reasonable accommodations will be accepted up to two (2) business days prior to the event.*

#### **D. Ongoing Technical Assistance**

AgeOptions reserves the right to issue clarifications and/or changes to any part of this Request for Proposal process. These will be published on AgeOptions Grants Portal. Clarifications and changes will be binding on successful applicants.

All questions about how to create or access an account on the AgeOptions Grants Portal should be directed to [RFP@ageoptions.org](mailto:RFP@ageoptions.org).

All questions regarding the Request for Proposal should be submitted via AgeOptions' Grants Portal.

Each week, AgeOptions will publish a summary of the questions and responses to all potential applicants, via AgeOptions' Grants Portal. These summaries will be published up to one week before the submission deadline. After that point, AgeOptions will respond to questions from the inquiring agency as needed and as time permits.

Applications will not be reviewed prior to submission, but reasonable questions on applications, service criteria, standards and service areas will be addressed by an Area Agency staff member upon request and as time permits.

q.

#### **Due Date for Applications**

The proposal must be submitted by 11:59 pm on May 28, 2024. **[Please note the deadline to register for a Grants Portal account – necessary to create an application-- is May 17, 2024.]**

Late and "draft status" responses shall not be accepted and shall automatically be disqualified from consideration. Applicants will receive a confirmation e-mail once they successfully submit an application. Additionally, the status of applications listed in the Grants Portal will change from "Authorized Representative Approval" to "Submitted to AgeOptions." Please verify that you have both received a confirmation e-mail and that the status of the application has changed to "Submitted to AgeOptions" in order to verify your application has been successfully submitted.

#### **V. EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS**

The evaluation of applications will be based on the funding considerations, summary of technical criteria, application format and evaluation, and competition.

## A. Funding Considerations

AgeOptions will only fund services identified in this Request for Proposals for the suburban Cook County service area.

AgeOptions reserves the right to decrease or increase funding levels based upon available funding and/or utilization of resources as identified by AgeOptions prior to and during the grant period. The effective date for such actions shall be the date of notification by AgeOptions. The grantee shall be required to act on such notification immediately.

AgeOptions reserves the right to delay reimbursements to grantee agencies during the grant/contract period in the event payment to AgeOptions is delayed by its funding sources. **NOTE: Due to state and federal cash flow, reimbursement may be delayed up to 90 days. Applicants should have sufficient non-AgeOptions funding reserves to cover grant expenditures.**

Our priority is to assure that program efforts and funding are appropriately targeted to those with greatest social and economic need. AgeOptions requires that proposals prioritize older adults who face barriers to receiving services due to racial, cultural, economic, or other reasons documented by the applicant.

The following circumstances may influence AgeOptions decisions regarding the award of funds:

1. AgeOptions may respond to community needs or established service provider relationships to justify granting a service at variance to some standards.
2. AgeOptions may identify methods for providing services to meet the needs of communities, especially for the low-income racially/ethnically diverse population, and limited English-speaking population.
3. AgeOptions may set aside funds until an appropriate application is received.
4. AgeOptions may negotiate with an applicant to increase or narrow the scope, geographic area, or purpose of a proposed program as needed.
5. AgeOptions reserves the right to transfer funds between Federal Older Americans Act funding sources as permitted under the law that may increase or decrease the total funding available.

Proposals will be evaluated by AgeOptions. Awards will be made to the highest scoring applicants proposing services that meet the criteria outlined in this Request for Proposal and Service Definitions and Standards. Note: Even if an applicant is successful, there is no guarantee that they will receive the full funding requested. In some situations, there may not be sufficient resources to initiate the grant and it would be held until funding becomes available.

An organization may apply for multiple sites and/or to provide both congregate and home delivered meal services from the same location. Each site and each service application will be evaluated separately.

## **B. Competitive Applications**

AgeOptions will attempt to avoid duplicate provision of Title III-C services in the awarding of funds. AgeOptions reserves the right to award funds so there are sites geographically spread throughout suburban Cook County.

1. **Congregate Meals** – When requests for funds are made in the same area to serve the same population by two or more applicants, the applications will be considered in competition. AgeOptions will make award decisions based on the viability of the grant and overall coverage needs of the available service areas. In the case of a tie, the service will be awarded to the current grantee. If there is no current grantee, the final decision will be made by the AgeOptions Board of Directors as advised by the Program Committee. The awarding of funds will be contingent upon availability.
2. **Home Delivered Meals** – If two or more applications are received for the provision of home delivered meals for the same township, AgeOptions will make award decisions based on the viability of the grant and overall coverage needs of the available service areas. In the case of a tie, service will be awarded to the current grantee. If there is no current grantee, the final decision will be made by the AgeOptions Board of Directors as advised by the Program Committee. The awarding of funds will be contingent upon availability.

## **C. Summary of Technical Criteria**

Technical criteria and planning principles outlined in this Request for Proposals will also be considered in determining grant awards/contract levels. Applications will be reviewed to determine if they:

1. Meet the “Requirements for Recipients of Older Americans Act Title III Funds” and Service Definitions and Standards
2. Provide a clear, complete, and accurate portrayal of the applicant organization including work plan, budget, staff costs, and non-Area Agency funding sources. AgeOptions will consider if an agency has made similar commitments in the past but not achieved them in other grant periods.
3. Demonstrate the following:
  - a. Ability to provide the proposed service(s) in a manner consistent with AgeOptions requirements and service standards.
  - b. Assurance that Federal funds will not be used to assume costs previously accrued by the local agency or other funding source.

- c. Provide a local share of costs which meets cash match and in-kind requirements of AgeOptions or be granted a waiver to the match requirement from AgeOptions.
- d. Reasonable unit rates compared to the applicant's history as well as the average for the area.

#### D. Minimum Requirements

Applications that do not meet minimum requirements will be deemed unresponsive and will not be considered. Appeals will not be considered for unresponsive applications.

1. The application and all accompanying documents are typed, legible, complete, and on AgeOptions application forms or a reasonable facsimile.
2. The applicant demonstrates the ability to administer programs in compliance with AgeOptions requirements as described in the Request for Proposal (RFP). Consideration will be given to all of the following items:
  - a. Proposed service activities are allowable (see service standards, definitions, and basic requirements).
  - b. Applicant contributes a minimum of 15% in non-federal resources as match **or a justification for a lower match is provided.** (Note: If the justification is not approved, and the applicant is selected to be a grantee, AgeOptions will require an increase of match to 15%). Allowable match sources include cash, the value of in-kind contributions such as volunteer time, donated space. The AgeOptions share earned under the award may not exceed 85% of the total net unless AgeOptions waives the minimum based on the applicant's justification.
  - c. The applicant clearly identifies the match, and it is an allowable source. [2 CFR Part 200 -- Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#)
  - d. The source of the Match (Local Cash and In-Kind) is identified and allowable.
  - e. The application includes a budget justification.

#### E. Application Format and Evaluation

Applicant's proposals will be evaluated in the following categories:

1. Experience
2. Location
3. Experience in proposed area
4. Work plan for start-up of the program
5. Diversity, Racial Equity and Inclusion
6. Budget and Unit Rate

AgeOptions staff will review proposals and determine a “consensus” score for each question and for each service. Each question will receive a numerical score. The consensus points will be totaled for each service.

## **F. Rejection of Proposals**

AgeOptions reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals, to waive technical defects, and to accept or reject any part of any proposal submitted in response to this RFP.

Proposals must be presented in the format and sequence detailed in this RFP. Failure to do so, and/or to respond to specific questions or requirements is sufficient for a proposal's automatic disqualification.

In order to be considered, all proposals must be submitted independently and without collusion with any other contractor.

## **G. All Applications – potential request for additional information**

Prior to a funding decision, AgeOptions staff may:

- Request a special presentation by the applicant(s)
- Conduct a site visit
- Request references
- Interview staff
- Assess community support, additional level of match, infrastructure, and history of providing client centered services, etc.
- Consider AgeOptions experience with the provider, including, but not limited to, history of monitoring and compliance
- Request additional clarification of information
- Or otherwise verify the contents of the Application.

This competitive process may require that applicant provide additional information and otherwise cooperate with AgeOptions. If an applicant does not comply with requests for information and cooperate in a timely manner, AgeOptions may reject the Application as non-responsive to the solicitation. Applying does not entitle the applicant to an award or a contract.

Application forms and instructions, standards, assurances, and the scoring criteria are a part of this Request for Proposals. All requirements of this request are binding with successful applicants.

## **H. Notification and Appeal Process**

Decisions on applications will be communicated to the applicant on or around July 1, 2024. An applicant not satisfied with the application process may file a written appeal as outlined in the “AgeOptions Appeal Procedures.”

An appeal hearing may be arranged with the applicant if questions arise that call for further information to assist the AgeOptions Board of Directors in considering the appeal.

### **I. Debriefings**

Applicants whose applications are not funded may also request a debriefing, which will provide feedback that can assist applicants in developing applications for future funding. Debriefings will take the form of advice to applicants on the strengths and weaknesses of their application in terms of the evaluation and review criteria. Debriefings are not part of the Appeal Process.

Requests for debriefing must be made in writing (via e-mail) and submitted within seven (7) calendar days after receipt of notice. Debriefing requests will not be granted if there is an active appeal, administrative action, or court proceeding. The written debriefing request shall include at minimum the following information:

- Name and address of the requesting party
- Identification of grant program.
- Reasons for the debrief request

Please send requests to:

Paula Bartolozzi, Grants Administrator

[RFP@Ageoptions.org](mailto:RFP@Ageoptions.org)

Subject: Debriefing request

### **J. Agreements**

Revised budgets that reflect actual awards will be due to AgeOptions by August 9, 2024. Please note that successful applicants may be asked to submit an additional or revised work plan, further clarifying certain components of their program(s). Final approval will take the official form of a notification of grant award with AgeOptions. A Notification of Grant Award for signature by the project and AgeOptions will be issued prior to October 1, 2024, subject to AgeOptions receipt of an award from the Illinois Department on Aging. Service shall begin on October 1, 2024. AgeOptions will not pay for any work conducted before October 1, 2024.