

Priority services – Countywide

Nutrition Services: Congregate Meals, Home Delivered Meals, Food Deliveries (Meal Kits), Emergency Meals	
DEFINITIONS: See below	UNIT OF SERVICE: Each meal served or delivered to an eligible participant; or the number of meals that can be prepared from each Meal Kit box

The following definitions and standards are applicable to all nutrition grantees unless otherwise specified. Standards that are applicable to Congregate programs are labeled ‘C1’; standards that are applicable to Home Delivered Meals programs are labeled ‘C2’; standards that are applicable to Meal Kit grantees are labeled ‘Meal Kits.’ Standards applicable to Emergency Meals are labeled ‘Emergency Meals’ and are applicable only to C1 and C2 grantees.

Table of Contents

PROGRAM DEFINITIONS..... 1

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS..... 3

PARTICIPANTS 10

PROGRAM OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT 14

FOOD SERVICE OPERATION 19

PHYSICAL FACILITY REQUIREMENTS..... 23

PROGRAM DEFINITIONS

MEALS

Congregate Meals

C1 The provision of one hot or other appropriate meal to eligible participants on at least a five-day a week basis, served in congregate settings. Exceptions to the five-day a week program may be granted. Sites must be open to the public and appear welcoming to outside participants.

**Home
Delivered Meals**

C2 The provision of hot or other appropriate meals to eligible participants on at least a five-day a week basis and delivered to the participants’ homes. Meals may be delivered fewer than five days per week, but some daily contact with the client must be offered. Meals must be delivered directly to the participant. Meals must not be left outside the participant’s door or delivered to someone other than the participant.

Meal Kits

The provision of raw, frozen or packaged food items, accompanied by recipes that will guide participants in preparing meals from the food items. Meal Kit deliveries will be made every other week, supplying enough food to make two meals a day for fourteen days using the recipes provided to meet the nutrition requirements of the Older Americans Act. Participant eligibility must be assessed and determined by an Assessor agency. Food must be delivered directly to the participant. Food must not be left outside the participant's door or delivered to someone other than the participant.

Special Diets

Medical: If the nutrition grantee receives approval from AgeOptions, they may provide Special Diets - Medical to clients following an assessor's referral due to medical reasons, to accommodate a disease or clinical condition, to eliminate or restrict certain nutrients or substances (e.g., sodium, cholesterol, gluten) or to increase certain nutrients or substances (e.g., potassium, calcium) in the diet. The Special Diets-Medical offered must include but are not limited to: renal, diabetic, vegetarian, gluten free and pureed diets. Specific to Meal Kits: grantees may offer food items and recipes that address special diet - medical needs.

Cultural: A nutrition grantee may provide meals that are sensitive to cultural backgrounds of older people, including religious, linguistic, or ancestral traditions and requirements. The primary goal of providing such meals is to increase participation by minority older adults. Specific to Meal Kits: grantees may offer food items and recipes that address special diet - cultural needs.

**Second Meals and
Weekend Meals
C2, Meal Kits**

For Home Delivered Meals: if the nutrition grantee receives approval from AgeOptions and if the client is high nutrition risk based on the Assessor's assessment of the client (a score of six points or above on the Nutrition Risk Assessment Tool), the nutrition grantee may provide weekend meals and/or second meals to a client. The weekend meal may be delivered on the weekend or as an extra meal on a previous day. For Meal Kits: second and weekend meals are included in the menu and food equivalency.

**Emergency Meals
C1, C2**

Congregate and Home Delivered Meal nutrition grantees must offer each program participant shelf-stable Emergency Meals to be used in the event of a meal site closure. A box of Emergency Meals will be provided annually, to be kept on hand, in the participants' homes. The boxes will contain packaged food items with a minimum shelf life as close to one year as possible. Examples might include canned tuna, fruit cups, powdered milk, granola bars, etc. The food items will be grouped (physically separated or listed together on printed menus) to provide individual meals that come as close as possible to meeting the program Nutrition and Menu Standards.

Emergency Meals should follow Menu Standards as closely as possible.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Eligibility

C1

A nutrition grantee must serve persons:

- Age 60 years and over,
- The 60+ participant's spouse regardless of age, if the eligible spouse is or has been an active participant of the program. Individuals who are disabled and under age 60 if they reside in a housing facility for older adults and persons with disabilities at which congregate nutrition services are provided.
- Individuals with disabilities who reside with a person over 60 in a non-institutional household are eligible for a meal.

If special interest groups, such as faith-based organization, social organizations, and homes for the elderly, senior housing developments, etc. are operating a congregate program, participation may not be limited to their own membership or otherwise show preferential treatment for such membership. Grantees must demonstrate and verify that their programs are available and accessible to the general public. e.g., if a proposed site is co-located with an Adult Services Center, there should be a separate entrance and area for dining. If a site is proposed in a Senior Housing facility, the program must be open and inviting to any older adult (not just residents).

A Congregate meal client may purchase a meal for a homebound spouse or for the weekend if it does not deprive another older person of a meal. These meals must be purchased at full price and will not be counted as a Congregate Meal unit of service. (A "spouse" is a person of same-sex or opposite-sex who is lawfully married under the law of a state, territory, or foreign jurisdiction).

Guests and staff under age 60 may be offered a meal if it does not deprive an older person of a meal. Staff or guests must pay the full cost of the meal, exclusive of in-kind. If a meal is offered to a staff person, it should be offered as a fringe benefit and be included as employee fringe benefit costs in the budget. Employees are responsible for any tax liability on the value of the fringe benefit. Meals served to staff, volunteers, and/or non-eligible guests under the age of 60 will not be reimbursed by AgeOptions.

A congregate meal grantee may provide OAA-funded meals to any Adult Day Services (ADS) participant on days when the ADS participant is not attending ADS; and in addition, may provide OAA-funded meals to a private-pay ADS participant on any day, including when the ADS participant is attending ADS.

Private-pay ADS is defined as not funded through CCP or CACFP.

C2

A nutrition grantee shall serve persons age 60 years and over, who are assessed by Care Coordination Unit (CCU) or a Managed Care Organization (MCO), herein referred to as “Assessor,” and deemed eligible due to frailty and/or being homebound for periods of three days or more due to acute or chronic illness, incapacitating illness or are otherwise isolated and unable to shop for or obtain meals.

The nutrition grantee will provide home delivered meals only after the Assessor has determined eligibility for service via an in-home assessment. The Assessor may authorize service prior to an in-home assessment if there are extenuating circumstances, such as recent hospital discharge. The grantee and the Assessor must work together to ensure that an in-home assessment will take place in a timely fashion for all clients. For more detail, see AgeOptions Home Delivered Meal Eligibility Guidelines. A periodic reassessment of the home delivered meal recipient must also be completed at least annually or sooner if circumstances change. The assessment form should include clear eligibility criteria for determining when services are authorized or terminated.

Other eligibility requirements for C2 meals include at least one of the following:

- Persons unable to participate in the congregate meals program;
- Persons for whom no adult is available or willing to prepare the meals;
- Persons who have a special dietary need which can be met by the home delivered meal program.

In all cases, the person must also agree to cooperate in the delivery procedures of the nutrition grantee.

Home delivered meals may be provided to clients that are temporarily “homebound,” including a client who is sick or whose mode of transportation is temporarily out of service.

A spouse (of any age) of an eligible frail and/or homebound individual may receive a home delivered meal if desired and if (1) provision of the meal relieves the spouse of undue stress in the daily care of the client, or (2) the spouse has demonstrated an inability to adequately provide meals for both members due to lack of knowledge, equipment, skill, or capacity. A “spouse” is a person of same-sex or opposite-sex who is lawfully married under the law of a state, territory, or foreign jurisdiction, regardless of whether the individuals are domiciled or reside in a state or territory that recognizes the marriage.

A home delivered meal may be provided to individuals with disabilities, regardless of age, who reside at home with older individuals who are eligible under the OAA.

A home delivered meal may be available to disabled individuals [as defined in OAA Section 102(13)] who have not attained 60 years of age but who reside in housing facilities occupied primarily by the elderly at which congregate nutrition services are provided.

For programs where hot, cold, and frozen meals are available, grantees should use the Assessor's in-home assessment information to determine the most appropriate form of meal delivery by considering the following:

- If the older adult has the proper and adequate equipment (freezer, oven, microwave, and refrigerator) and skills to store and re-heat cold and frozen meals.
- If the older adult has sanitary and safe conditions for storage, thawing and preparation of frozen meals.
- An older adult eligible to receive home delivered meals must not be denied services based on the individual's inability to safely store and prepare a frozen meal.
- If the older adult does not have the capacity to heat the frozen meal, or if family members or others are not able to heat the frozen meal for the older adult, the nutrition grantee must deliver hot meals to the older adult if the older adult resides within a community that receives home delivered meals.

The Assessor and nutrition grantee must follow the AgeOptions "Home Delivered Meal Eligibility Guidelines," available under separate cover.

Meal Kits

A nutrition grantee shall serve persons age 60 years and over, who are assessed by an Assessor agency deemed eligible due to being:

- Homebound for periods of three days or more due to acute, chronic or incapacitating illness;
- Otherwise isolated and unable to shop for or obtain meals;
- Unable to participate in a Congregate Meal program.

In addition, to be eligible for Meal Kits, recipients must be willing and able to prepare meals for themselves, or have available to them an adult who will prepare meals.

The nutrition grantee will provide Meal Kits only after the Assessor has determined eligibility for service via an in-home assessment. The Assessor may authorize service prior to an in-home assessment if there are extenuating circumstances, such as recent hospital discharge. The grantee and the Assessor must work together to ensure that an in-home assessment will take place in a timely fashion for all clients. A periodic reassessment for Meal Kits must also be completed at least annually or sooner if circumstances change. The assessment form should include clear eligibility criteria for determining when services are

authorized or terminated.

IMPORTANT: Unlike eligibility guidelines for both C1 and C2 meals, there is no exception to the age requirement for spouses or people with disabilities living with an eligible Meal Kit recipient. Each person receiving Meal Kits must be 60 years of age or older and complete an individual assessment form.

In all cases, the person must also agree to cooperate in the delivery procedures of the nutrition grantee.

C1, C2

Persons under age 60 who provide volunteer services during meal hours may be offered a meal on the same basis as elderly participants.

All persons eligible for C1 or C2 meals should receive Emergency Meals to keep at home and use in the event of a site closure.

Wait List Management

A Nutrition grantee may reach a limit to their service capacity. This may occur for various reasons including:

- Budget Projections indicating that serving additional patrons will exceed the Grantee's budget for that year;
- Lack of dining space to serve additional patrons during regular hours;
- Limits on kitchen production capacity or necessary storage;
- Lack of sufficient delivery drivers or staff to serve additional patrons.

In the event a Grantee reaches capacity for any reason, the Grantee must notify AgeOptions at reports@ageoptions.org before starting a waitlist. AgeOptions will follow up with the grantee to review potential wait list options, discuss approval, and outline next steps and provide the "Waitlist Spreadsheet" for reporting. The list will include the number of people waiting for service and the reason that a wait list exists (e.g., insufficient funds in grant, driver shortages, kitchen capacity).

Once a grantee begins a waitlist, the grantee must email an updated Waitlist Spreadsheet to reports@ageoptions.org every Thursday by noon.

The Grantee will then prioritize wait-listed clients using the Client Prioritization Tool provided by AgeOptions. The tool uses data provided in a Congregate Meal Registration form, Home Delivered Meal Referral form or the Meal Kits Referral form to prioritize which wait-listed clients are in highest need and should be served first when capacity becomes available. Capacity can increase for a number of reasons, such as attrition among current clients, Nutrition program budget increases, or other service improvements. To use the

Prioritization Tool most effectively, Grantees must obtain from the assessors any required data that is missing from the assessment.

In all cases, Nutrition Grantees should make Care Coordination Units, Managed Care Organizations and other assessor agencies aware of the status of their clients who were referred for meals.

In situations where a Home Delivered Meal client is determined to be ineligible or not prioritized for service, the client should be provided with information about the Congregate Meal Program, including local meal sites and program benefits.

Priority Population

Nutrition grantees must identify and document methods to assure that priority is given and projections are met to reach older persons with the greatest social and economic need, particularly ethnic, minority and limited English speaking older adult populations.

Community Input

Nutrition grantees must develop and document methods to elicit community input to help support the mission of the program.

Community input may consist of: offering participants in the program opportunities to provide input, soliciting input from non-participants who are 60 and over at community and site events, inviting community representatives to Site Advisory Council meetings, soliciting volunteers, services and monetary support from local businesses and community groups, and initiating joint ventures between community/business groups and the nutrition site/distribution point.

The nutrition grantee should solicit the advice and expertise of individuals, community agencies and community resource organizations that are knowledgeable about the needs of older individuals.

Outreach

The nutrition grantee must develop outreach initiatives to inform older persons about the program and to attract them to the service. The grantee must implement and document the outreach initiatives on at least an annual basis as they will be reviewed by the AgeOptions Nutrition Specialist. Outreach initiatives should include, but are not limited to:

- news releases;
- hosting special events;
- setting up information booths;
- social media ;
- posters and brochures distributed to community locations;

- outreach (sample) meals to attract new diners.

Nutrition Grantees must inform the public of the availability of Congregate, Home Delivered Meal and Meal Kit programs and how assessments for Home Delivered Meals and Meal Kits can be arranged.

Congregate Nutrition Grantees may provide a limited number of meals to outside groups as “outreach” meals, e.g., local park districts, libraries, housing facilities. These meals should be a similar menu to the main site and must be approved by AgeOptions. **The goal of the meals should be to attract participants to attend the main Congregate nutrition site.** Outreach Meals must be used on a very short-term basis and be coordinated with the overall outreach plan.

Additionally, Congregate Nutrition Grantees are encouraged to host special parties or theme days using their existing caterers or other usual sources of meals. They may propose a limited number of “Special Event” meals using a different caterer. Nutrition Program Grantees should include a plan for special parties and theme days as part of their program design submission or quarterly outreach plan.

Coordination with Community Agencies

The nutrition grantee must make every effort to utilize existing social service resources provided by agencies such as health and mental health, public assistance, economic opportunity, legal services, food and agriculture agencies and other social service agencies especially AgeOptions funded programs to assist in outreach and to connect older adults to benefits (e.g., distribute a brochure or flyer from your local AgeOptions funded Aging and Disability Resource Network (ADRN) agency to each new diner, include ADRN brochures or flyers on your resource table or display, invite your local ADRN to present to your diners about their services, coordinate with your local ADRN to feature a short blurb in your monthly menu or newsletter highlighting where your diners can go for any additional help, etc.).

The nutrition grantee, with the consent of the older person, or his or her representative, should alert the Assessor of the need for additional follow-up, or about any conditions or circumstances which place the older person or the household in imminent danger.

Innovation

The nutrition grantee must plan and implement one innovation during each year of the grant cycle. Innovations include but are not limited to: new outreach plan, new program of educational sessions, and/or new program of recreational/social activities, or engaging and stimulating activities at home,

Socialization**C1**

Congregate nutrition programs shall provide opportunities to socialize through the site's program activities on a daily basis. Activities may include, but are not limited to: low-cost day trips, bingo games, card games, crafts, reading or discussion groups, intergenerational programming, etc. Activities that generally are most popular include Bingocize!, Wits Workouts, Illinois Pathways to Health presentations, Blood Pressure checks with local EMTs, Personal Sharing sessions, chair yoga, line dancing, music and movies.

If the grantee is operating a restaurant voucher program, efforts must be made to encourage participant interaction. Sample activities may include, but are not limited to, signing up for a dining partner, scheduling designated days or specific dining times at the restaurant, or hosting speakers or activities in a separate room at the restaurant, if feasible.

Congregate nutrition and restaurant programs are encouraged to develop and implement an activity plan. This plan should reflect the interests of the program participants and have an evaluation process built into the plan.

C2, Meal Kits

Home delivered meal and Meal Kit programs should understand that even a brief interaction with the delivery person can be something recipients look forward to.

Delivery staff should be trained to look for signs of cognitive, physical and emotional decline, as well as environmental hazards in or near the home. Any condition that might appear to pose a threat to the health and well-being of a recipient, or any request for additional services, should be reported to the appropriate Assessor Agency immediately.

Nutrition Education

The purpose of nutrition education is to inform individuals about available facts and information that will promote improved food selection, eating habits, nutrition and health related practices. Nutrition grantees must provide AgeOptions with a written report of the nutrition education provided each fiscal year. Grantees will use the "Nutrition Education Recording Template" provided by AgeOptions and send the report to reports@ageoptions.org by September 30 annually. A copy of the report must be maintained on file and made available for annual review or during monitoring visits. The report should include each date that Nutrition Educations was provided, a brief description of the topic and/or activity, and the number of attendees.

Nutrition education must be performed on, at minimum, a quarterly basis. At least one nutrition education discussion must be focused on identifying the signs of malnutrition and its serious health consequences. Nutrition education methods may include presentations, informational brochures, guest speakers, arrangements for individual counseling on nutrition risk and special diets. Coordination with community resources is encouraged in the provision of nutrition education.

C1

Nutrition Grantees must maintain on file a written plan outlining quarterly nutrition, health promotion or disease prevention, at each Congregate Site, which must be made available upon request, or for review during monitoring visits. This plan must include:

- At least one educational presentation conducted by the AgeOptions Countywide Health Promotion Coordinator grantee once in the FY 2027-2030 grant cycle;
- At least one presentation on the causes and importance of avoiding malnutrition. This presentation will include an annual self-report nutrition risk screening. Nutrition Grantees will then follow up individually with any older adult whose score indicates nutrition risk.

PARTICIPANTS**Participant
Conduct**

Each nutrition grantee must establish a written Code of Conduct for participants; and said Code of Conduct must be provided to all participants. The Code of Conduct must include a process for the suspension and/or termination of service due to client non-cooperation.

**Participant
Confidentiality**

Each nutrition grantee must assure that personal information obtained from an individual in conjunction with the project will not be disclosed without the written consent of the individual concerned. All project records must be maintained in such a manner as to assure confidentiality.

Participant Input

Nutrition grantees must establish and document methods to solicit information on participant satisfaction with the delivery of nutrition services and quality of menu items served or the Meal Kits and menus provided. Surveys of participants in the program should be performed at least annually using at minimum the Standardized Consumer Satisfaction Questions provided by AgeOptions in conjunction with the nutrition grantees. Grantees will actively respond to

participant input in order to maximize participation and minimize waste. Surveys must be kept on file for review, along with documentation of actions taken in response to the survey results.

The aggregated results of this survey will be returned to AgeOptions by September 30th of each year.

The Illinois Department on Aging is planning a uniform statewide participant satisfaction survey; once it is operationalized AgeOptions will work to limit redundancy with the AgeOptions Standardized Survey.

Site Advisory Council**C1**

Congregate meal grantees must establish a nutrition project council consisting of site participants.¹ The Site Advisory Council will be involved in soliciting input from other participants and providing their own input on site menus, meals, and activities. It is preferred that each site have its own Advisory Council.

Record Keeping

Nutrition grantees shall establish and maintain a record keeping information system that includes, at a minimum, all reporting elements required by the National Aging Program Information System (NAPIS) including demographic data, Nutrition Risk data. In addition, Home Delivered Meal grantees and Meal Kit grantees must also track Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs). Grantees shall use AgingIS or an equivalent system that provides “AgingIS-ready” data. Nutrition Grantees must reconcile their NAPIS reporting with units requested for reimbursement on at least a quarterly basis plus months of August and September. See NAPIS sample data collection forms (Referral forms for C2 and Food Deliveries, and Registration form for C1) in the Appendix.

Grantees are limited to a maximum of 10% missing data for each demographic category, nutrition risk factor, and Activities of Daily Living or Instrumental Activities of Daily Living associated with congregate meals, home-delivered meals and meal kits.

C1, C2

Nutrition grantees will report all Emergency Meals delivered to clients using their regular reporting method and per instructions issued at the time of each Emergency Meal delivery.

Annually, on or about April 1, Nutrition grantees will review their active Home Delivered Meals (HDM) clients and request reassessments for clients whose most recent assessment is more than one year old. Grantees will follow this

¹ A multi-site grantee will establish a Site Advisory Council at each site.

protocol:

1. Using instructions from AgeOptions, generate a report from AgingIS listing active clients and their assessment dates. Highlight clients whose assessments are more than one year old.
2. Send the relevant client information to each appropriate Care Coordination Unit (CCU), or Managed Care Organization (MCO). Request reassessments for the highlighted clients within 60 days, and copy reports@ageoptions.org on each request.
3. If the nutrition grantee does not receive a new assessment within 60 days of the request, the grantee will notify AgeOptions of the delay.
4. AgeOptions will contact the assessor agency to inform them of the clients whose meals will end at the close of the following month unless a new assessment is obtained.
5. If the re-assessment is not received by the end of the month, the grantee will inform both the assessor and client when the meals will be discontinued.

**Participant Contributions/
Project Income**

Nutrition grantees must provide each eligible participant with an opportunity to make a voluntary and confidential donation to the cost of the meal. Each eligible participant must be aware that meals will be provided regardless of ability or willingness to donate.

The following information should be provided to all participants:²

- a. The full cost of the meal at that site/distribution point, exclusive of in-kind.
- b. The suggested contribution for each meal.
- c. Meals will be provided regardless of if the client cannot or will not contribute.
- d. SNAP benefits may be accepted as a form of voluntary contribution.

**Donation/ Project
Income Collection**

Nutrition grantees must develop specific written procedures for collection, handling, counting, and depositing cash donations. Congregate contributions must be kept separate from home delivered meal contributions. Contributions must be counted, logged and signed for by two persons who work/volunteer at the site/distribution point, on each service day. For multi-site grantees - each site/distribution point must have a clear method to identify deposits made for each particular site and service.

² At congregate sites, a sign, with AgeOptions approved language, must be posted in a conspicuous spot near the registration desk that includes all of the information. For home delivered meal grantees and Meal Kit grantees this information should be a part of the initial welcome packet that is delivered to the recipient and with any notices that are sent to the participant regarding donations.

- C1** Congregate nutrition grantees must provide a locked box for participant contributions at each site. The box should be kept locked during service and should not be used to give change for large bills. Envelopes must be available to ensure confidentiality of donations.
- C2, Meal Kits** Home delivered meals and Meal Kit recipients should be given the opportunity to mail donations to their nutrition grantee. Recipients should be provided with a monthly donation letter containing the required information outlined above and a return donation envelope addressed to their nutrition grantee.
- Use of Donations/
Project Income** Contributions/Project Income must be used to increase the number of meals served by the Program and site, facilitate access to meals, and provide other supportive services directly related to nutrition services.
- Nutrition Services
Incentive Program
(formerly USDA
Commodities)** Funding for Title III-C services is partially provided by the Nutrition Services Incentive Program. The nutrition grantee will have methods to assure that NSIP funds are used to purchase only U.S. agricultural commodities and other U.S. grown foods.
- C1, C2** Nutrition grantees will maintain records documenting the purchase of U.S. agricultural commodities and other U.S. grown foods. Nutrition grantees that subcontract with a caterer will include this NSIP requirement in the caterer subcontract. In addition, nutrition grantees must use NSIP funds to increase the total number of meals served. AgeOptions will only allocate NSIP funds to agencies receiving a grant under Title III of the Older Americans Act. NSIP funds shall not be used to offset program costs or as non-federal matching funds for other federal programs.
- Meal
Reimbursement** Nutrition grantees will only be reimbursed for meals served to eligible clients that fall within the work plan. Congregate grantees must use sign-in sheets to verify the number of meals served. Home delivered meal and Meal Kit grantees must use delivery route sheets that clearly indicate which clients either do, or do not, receive a meal or Meal Kit that day. Undelivered and/or waste meals are reimbursable as per the Food Waste section below.
- C1, C2** Emergency Meals will be provided directly through AgeOptions and will not be part of the grantee's budget for an AgeOptions nutrition grant.

PROGRAM OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT**Menu Planning**

Prepared meals and meals specified in recipes supplied with Meal Kits must comply with the menu planning standards based on the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans, published by the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Agriculture and meet the minimum requirements of the Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs) as established by the Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences. The calculated values of these meals may be averaged over three consecutive days to establish compliance with the DRI.

Program Design

Significant changes in program design must be approved by AgeOptions. This includes changing delivery schedules, types of meals, food items or menus, location of meal preparation or dining area, changing caterers and changing types of meals served (i.e., 2nd meals, breakfasts, deli bars, etc.).

Offer vs. Serve**C1**

All items on the approved menu must be offered to eligible clients, but may not be served to them if they choose not to take them. Reimbursement of the grantee is not affected in this case.

Schedules**C1**

Nutrition grantees shall assure that congregate nutrition sites are open every day as listed in their work plans, and never close for any days normally scheduled to be open without clear procedures for notification of participants and provision of transportation/referral to another site.

C2

Nutrition grantees shall assure that each home delivered meal site is open every scheduled day as listed in their work plans and never closed for any days normally scheduled to be open without arrangements for the delivery of meals. The client must be able to reach an employee of the nutrition grantee in the event of problems or emergencies.

Meal Kits

Meal Kit grantees shall assure that deliveries can and will be made each day that is listed in their work plan.

C1, C2

Related to Emergency Meals, nutrition grantees shall respond to a semi-annual survey from AgeOptions for meal counts and up-to-date information for

delivery.

Emergency Procedures

Nutrition grantees shall develop written procedures for health, safety, disaster and weather-related emergencies or other situations that may interrupt meal service.

C1, C2

Emergency procedures should address Emergency Meals and describe how the grantee will do the following:

- Distribute Emergency Meals to all C1 and/or C2 clients as soon as possible after receipt.
- Emphasize the “Emergency Use Only” directive to each client and explain that clients will be notified when to use meals.
- Inform clients as soon as possible that site will be closed and they should consume one Emergency Meal.
- Inform AgeOptions as soon as possible that site will be closed, and how many Emergency Meals must be replenished.

C1

Congregate grantees must post the emergency procedures at each congregate site.

Each congregate site must conduct annual fire and tornado safety drills and must document the date and time of the drill; the number of staff, volunteers and participants involved in the drill; the length of time it took to evacuate/respond; and lessons learned.

C2, Meal Kits

Home Delivered Meal and Meal Kit grantees must develop a written plan that describes procedures to be followed in case a participant is found ill or is injured or is not home to take delivery of meal. This plan must be a part of every delivery person's orientation and training.

Project Director

The nutrition grantee must have a project director who is empowered with the authority to conduct the day-to-day management and administrative functions of the program. The project director must have a minimum of three years of demonstrated management and supervisory experience.

Site Supervisor

The nutrition grantee shall have at each Congregate Site and/or distribution site, a site supervisor either paid or volunteer, who is responsible for all activities and will be on-site when the site is serving, preparing or packaging meals or food for AgeOptions programs. The site supervisor shall have a high school diploma or equivalent, and one year experience supervising, leading or directing others.

All staff and volunteers working in the food receiving, storage, preparation and food serving areas, or involved with delivering meals or food, shall be under the supervision of the site supervisor who will ensure the application of hygienic techniques and practices in food handling, preparation, service and delivery.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteer opportunities shall be available in all nutrition grantee programs. To help maintain a solid volunteer base, recruitment and training of volunteers should take place a minimum of once per year.

**Supervision
C1, C2**

The Site Supervisor, or other certified individual, must be present during food service provision to ensure that proper sanitation and safety procedures are followed. All staff working in the food preparation and food serving area shall be under the supervision of a person who will ensure that hygienic techniques and practices in food handling, preparation, service and delivery are being followed.

Food Deliveries

All staff working in the food receiving, storage and packaging areas shall be under the supervision of a Certified Food Protection Manager who will ensure that hygienic techniques and practices are used. Additionally, delivery vehicles and delivery staff will be supervised by the Certified Food Protection Manager.

Job Descriptions

Nutrition grantees must determine tasks to be completed and develop job descriptions for all staff and volunteer positions.

Orientation/Training

Nutrition grantees must have a written training plan describing the content and the subject matter expected to be covered for all paid and volunteer staff engaged in the implementation of the program. Training in sanitation, health, fire and safety regulations must be provided during orientation of staff new to the program and, at minimum, once a year thereafter. The training will include but not be limited to: safe food handling, food borne illnesses, hygienic practices of personnel, equipment sanitation, dish washing procedures, facility sanitation, rules for safe work, and fire and safety regulations.

AgeOptions also suggests that some attention be given to training volunteer and paid staff on aging and aging sensitivity issues. Where feasible, or possible, state or local public health officials should be involved in the development of training materials and programs. In situations where regulations do not exist, or their applicability is questioned, the grantee shall contact the appropriate State agency that establishes fire, health, or safety standards (e.g., State Fire Marshall, etc.)

Training

A. Definitions

“Food handler” means an individual working with unpackaged food, food equipment or utensils, or food-contact surfaces. “Food handler” does not include unpaid volunteers in a food establishment, whether permanent or temporary.

“Restaurant” vs. “Non-restaurant”: Illinois Department of Public Health considers all Home Delivered Meal and Congregate Meal sites to be non-restaurants in regard to food handler training, unless the congregate meal site is located in a restaurant.

B. Training requirements - Employees

Site Supervisors employed by a **restaurant** (as defined in Section 3.06 of the Act):

- Must have an ANSI accredited Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) certification obtained through a course and passing the exam.
- Must have completed ANSI accredited allergen training.

Site Supervisors employed by a **non-restaurant** (as defined in Section 3.06 of the Act):

- Must have an ANSI accredited Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) certification obtained through a course and passing the exam.

Food handlers employed by a **restaurant** (as defined in Section 3.06 of the Act):

- All food handler employees that do not hold a current Certified Food Protection Manager certificate must receive or obtain training in basic safe food handling principles (“food handler training”) (IDPH Modules 1 and 4, see box below for details) within 30 days after employment and remain current with training.

Food handlers employed by a **non-restaurant** (as defined in Section 3.06 of the Act):

- At least one food handler employee must hold a current Certified Food Protection Manager certificate.
- All food handler employees that do not hold a current Certified Food Protection Manager certificate must receive or obtain training in basic safe food handling principles (“food handler training”) (IDPH Modules 1 and 4, see box below for details) within 30 days after employment and remain current with training.

Paid delivery drivers:

- All paid delivery drivers that do not hold a current Certified Food Protection Manager certificate must receive or obtain training in basic safe food handling principles (“food handler training”) (IDPH Modules 1, 4 and 5, see box below for details) within 30 days after employment and remain current with training.

The food handler training must comply with the requirements of the Illinois

Department of Public Health's (IDPH) administrative rules. IDPH has approved a "Food Safety on the Go" as a food handler training for Title III nutrition grantees. This training is available at the following web site:

<https://nfsc.umd.edu/extension/food-safety-go>

Training may be conducted on-line with a computer or in a classroom setting (live or remote) with certified food protection managers. Printed materials are also available on the website listed above.

Non-restaurants can create their own food handler training programs and submit to the Department for approval using the application found on the Department's website at: <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/food-safety/food-handler-training.html>

If this is your preference, please consult with the Nutrition Specialist at AgeOptions before proceeding.

Title III nutrition program food handlers must take the training pre-test and post-test exams, which can be used to document that the food handler has completed the required training. If questions are missed, the appropriate sections should be reviewed again. Proof that a food handler has been trained must be available and may be in electronic format. The documentation that food handlers have received the required food handler training should be contained in their personnel files and available at the nutrition site where they are employed.

Food handler training for those working in non-restaurant facilities such as, nursing homes, licensed day care homes and facilities, hospitals, schools, and long-term care facilities, is good for three years. Those working in non-restaurants, not listed above, are not required to take another food handler training unless they transfer to work for another employer. Food handler training for those working in non-restaurants is not transferable between employers.

C. Training requirements - Volunteers

Nutrition program and site volunteers performing food handling duties are not required by the Illinois Department of Public Health to receive the required training as outlined in the Food Handling Regulation Enforcement Act (Modules 1, 4 and 5); however, the Illinois Department on Aging strongly encourages that nutrition programs require their ongoing volunteers to obtain such training.

If such volunteers do not obtain the training based on the Food Handling Regulation Enforcement Act, the nutrition program must provide basic training to volunteers that will include but not be limited to: safe food handling, food borne illnesses, hygienic practices of personnel, equipment sanitation, dishwashing procedures, and facility sanitation. AgeOptions' recommendation for basic training is outlined below:

- Volunteers that handle food: Module 1

- Volunteer drivers: Module 5

If volunteers are not trained using the recommended IDPH Modules, training logs must be kept indicating which volunteers have been trained and what materials were covered. Training plans must be sent to AgeOptions Nutrition Specialist for approval.

Background Checks

The nutrition grantee shall conduct criminal background checks on all staff whose salaries are paid wholly or partially through AgeOptions grants/contracts. The grantee shall also conduct criminal background checks on volunteers participating in AgeOptions funded programs with in-home client contact, and/or access to confidential client information including, but not limited to addresses, social security numbers, financial info, etc. Please refer to AgeOptions criminal background check policy included in Appendix on www.ageoptions.org.

Food Safety at Home

At enrollment and at reassessment in the nutrition programs, grantees must advise participants of safe food handling for food items or meals taken from Congregate Meal Sites or received from Home Delivered Meal or Meal Kit grantees. Best practices include, but are not limited to, adding reminders to the back of menus, placing flyers on tables, displaying the reminder at the sign-in tables, etc.

C2, Meal Kits

Home Delivered Meals or Meal Kit grantees offering frozen or cold re-heatable meals or raw food items of any kind must provide instructions for participants regarding safe meal storage, re-heating and preparation. Information such as contents and expiration dates must be included in writing with the meals at the time of delivery, or in each food delivery. Frozen or cold re-heatable meals or raw food items that have been thawed (if applicable) or have broken packaging should not be provided to participants.

Nutrition grantees must inform participants of the dangers of holding food for long periods without refrigeration. Participants should be reminded of this safety information on a **monthly** basis by the delivery person and/or in writing.

FOOD SERVICE OPERATION**Written Procedures****C1, C2**

Nutrition grantees with on-site meal preparations and/or contracted meal preparations must establish written procedures for all components of the food service operation, e.g., receiving and storage of all food, equipment and paper products; menu planning; meal preparation; storage/holding; meal assembly;

transport; and meal service. These procedures must be kept in a location that is conveniently accessible to staff and volunteers.

On-Site Operations

Nutrition grantees with on-site meal operations shall:

- a. Have written procedures for purchasing all food and supplies.
- b. Have specific written procedures for receiving all purchases from vendors.
- c. Have written procedures for storing food received in either dry, refrigerated or freezer storage areas according to state and local food service establishment requirements.
- d. Have a written or computer-based inventory system that establishes a first-in, first-out system for all perishable foods.
- e. Submit menus to AgeOptions Dietitian for approval, at least four or more weeks in advance of service.
- f. Prepare food following standardized recipes, or provide recipes with Meal Kits, that comply with state and local food service establishment requirements.
- g. Have written guidelines for recording and maintaining temperatures of hot foods at or above 135 degrees Fahrenheit and cold foods at or below 41 degrees Fahrenheit until serving time/delivery. Guidelines must also include procedures for daily recording of temperatures of refrigeration and freezer equipment.
- h. Assure that kitchen staff or food packaging staff has appropriate training and equipment to serve meal portion sizes as listed in the menu, or provide the correct food portions to accommodate recipes provided with Meal Kits.

C1 only

For Congregate meals, the temperature of the food should be checked and documented daily at the time of service and in the case of catered food, at the time of food arrival and at the time of service.

C2 only

For home delivered meals grantees, the temperature of the food should be checked and documented daily both at the end of production and at the time of packaging; and, a sample meal must be tested and recorded at the beginning and the end of the longest delivery route at least twice a month.

C2, Meal Kits

If a nutrition grantee has meal or Meal Kit routes that are longer than two hours, the grantee must check temperatures on a weekly basis at the end of these delivery routes and keep a log of those temperatures. This specific requirement does not apply if the grantee delivers frozen meals, and/or uses a temperature-controlled oven, freezer and refrigerator equipped vehicles that have digital temperature displays.

Contracted Food

Service Operation**C1, C2**

In order to have the highest quality and cost-effective meals, AgeOptions will try to leverage the buying power of our network.

- a. Nutrition grantees who contract with a third-party caterer shall select the caterer from AgeOptions' list of approved caterers.
- b. AgeOptions Nutrition staff will have inspected the contractor's location at least once in a three-year period prior to notification award, to ensure compliance with all local health, sanitary, fire and safety regulations. Up-to-date (less than 12 months old) health and fire department inspection reports must be submitted to and on file at AgeOptions for all contracted food operations.
- c. Notify AgeOptions within 30 days, if a change of contractor for prepared meals occurs during the contract period, or there is a material change in the terms of the contract during the contract period. Provide AgeOptions with a copy of the new contract.
- d. Include in the contract with a selected contractor the following clause:
"This contract will become null and void upon evidence by a dietitian, or local health department that the contractor's operations are not sanitary and/or that meal preparation is not done in a manner that assures adherence to generally accepted health, safety, and/or sanitary standards associated with the preparation of meals."
- e. Assure that hot food items are maintained at or above 135 degrees Fahrenheit and cold food items are maintained at or below 41 degrees Fahrenheit throughout meal assembly, transportation, holding and meal service/delivery.

C2 only

For home delivered meals grantees, the temperature of the food should be checked and documented daily both at the end of production and at the time of packaging; and a sample meal must be tested and recorded at the beginning and the end of the longest delivery route at least twice a month.

C1, C2

Develop specific written procedures for receiving and storing food received from the contractor. Written procedures must include instructions for:

- Verifying food quantities and portion sizes if food is pre-portioned.
- Checking and recording food temperatures at time of delivery to the site and before service or transport to participants if the food is held for longer than five minutes;
- Equipment to be utilized to prepare, store and serve food;

- Steps to follow for foods that arrive above or below temperature, deteriorated food and food shortages.

Food Containers/Utensils

C1, C2 Nutrition grantees must have available for use, upon request, appropriate food containers and utensils for participants with disabilities.

Leftovers

C1, C2 Nutrition grantees should make every effort to minimize leftover food. Unserved leftover foods shall not be taken from kitchens or sites by employees, volunteers or participants. Grantees shall develop a written policy that describes the procedures for handling leftover food at the site/distribution point. Procedures should adhere to generally accepted practices for safe food handling.

Removal of Food

C1 Safety of the food after it has been served to a participant and when it has been removed from the congregate site is the responsibility of the recipient and may be consumed as that participant deems appropriate. Grantees shall post signs that warn participants of the health hazards associated with removal of food from the congregate nutrition site.

Food Waste

C1, C2 Each nutrition grantee must develop a system for controlling and reducing food waste. Per site, the annual waste factor (meals consumed divided by meals ordered or prepared) should not exceed three (3) percent.

Meal Kits

Each Meal Kit grantee must develop a system for controlling and reducing the number of food delivery orders that cannot be delivered and cannot be returned to the distribution point for safe redelivery to other AgeOptions clients. Per site, the annual waste factor (successful food deliveries divided by total deliveries ordered and sent) should not exceed three (3) percent.

Food Recall

In the event that a nutrition grantee receives notification of a food recall, the nutrition grantee must 1) immediately begin interventions to identify and contain the impact grantee; 2) inform AgeOptions of the food recall and interventions within 24 hours of the notification; and 3) provide periodic updates to AgeOptions regarding the progress and findings of the investigation.

If the food recall results in the complaint or report of symptoms of food borne illness, see below “Food Borne Illness.”

Food Borne Illness

In the event that a nutrition grantee receives a complaint or report of symptoms of food borne illness, the nutrition grantee must immediately notify the local health department to initiate an investigation.

The nutrition grantee must inform AgeOptions of the complaint or report of symptoms of food borne illness within 24 hours of the investigative procedures in progress. Periodic updates shall be provided to AgeOptions regarding the progress and findings of the investigation.

Packaging**C2**

Home delivered meals grantees must meet the following minimum requirements for packaging of meals:

- a. All meals packaged at nutrition sites must be individually packaged prior to congregate meals being served, and packed in secondary insulated food carriers with tight fitting lids and transported immediately.
- b. All meals packaged at food preparation centers must be individually packaged and packed in secondary insulated food carriers with tight fitting lids and transported immediately.
- c. Containers must be designed to maintain the integrity and safety of the food. Containers must be appropriately insulated to maintain proper food temperatures. The lids must provide a tight seal.
- d. Hot and cold foods must be packaged and packed separately. Bread and bread products should be individually wrapped.
- e. All food delivery carriers must maintain the proper temperature for the required time that the food will be in the carrier.

PHYSICAL FACILITY REQUIREMENTS**Congregate Site****Location****C1**

Congregate nutrition sites must be located in as close proximity to the majority of eligible individuals' residences (especially those individuals of targeted populations) as feasible. Particular attention should be given to a location in a multipurpose senior center, school, faith-based organization, or another appropriate community facility, within walking distance where possible, and where appropriate transportation to the site is furnished.

Congregate Facility**Requirements****C1**

Congregate nutrition sites must be housed in facilities that are physically safe and accessible structures. The structure must allow for maximum participation of all eligible participants and volunteers. See the Program Accessibility Form for more details. Minimum requirements include:

- a. Parking area within one block.
- b. An entranceway that is accessible on the ground level to persons with disabilities.*
- c. Entrances, exits, doorways, stairways and hallways of good repair and unobstructed.
- d. Sites above or below ground level equipped with an elevator, lift or ramp.
- e. Floors that are nonslip, level and easily cleaned.
- f. Adequate lighting provided to assure safe passage of participants.
- g. Ventilation capable of providing for the health and comfort of participants.
- h. Toilet facilities with at least one toilet accessible to individuals with disabilities (ex. wheelchair bound) and available to all genders.*
- i. Traffic patterns, exits, entrances, hazards and restricted areas that are marked.
- j. Spaces identified as dining, kitchen, and site supervisor's area.

*The *Civil Rights Self Evaluation* form outlines the minimum requirements for handicapped accessibility. All Congregate Meal sites must comply with all requirements of the Illinois Department on Aging Civil Rights Program.

Facility Sanitation and Safety

Congregate meal sites, Home Delivered Meals distribution points, Meal Kit grantees, contracted food service operators and restaurants must comply with applicable provisions of state or local laws for fire, health, sanitation, safety and building codes, regulations and licensure requirements. Before a site may open for service, current and legible inspection reports must be on file with AgeOptions for public review.³

C2, Meal Kits

Delivery vehicles should be inspected by nutrition programs to ensure that the interiors of the vehicles are clean and maintained for sanitary purposes.

Site Facility Inspections

C1, C2, Meal Kits

On-site nutrition programs or Meal Kit programs and contracted food service operations must be inspected at least once a year by the appropriate local regulating authorities, and must comply with all health, sanitation, fire and safety rules and regulations. Current and legible copies of these reports must be submitted to AgeOptions with the application and annually during the AgeOptions nutrition program onsite review. Grantees are required to keep on file an explanation of action taken to address any points lost on an inspection at their site or at the caterer's facility.

³ Inspection reports may not be more than twelve (12) months old or must be deemed current by local health officials at the time of

On-site nutrition programs and food delivery programs - will be visited and evaluated for health, fire, safe and sanitary conditions by AgeOptions' Nutrition Specialist at least once per year. Grantees are required to submit documentation of actions taken to address any points lost on the inspections to AgeOptions. Contracted food service operations that provide catering services to C1 or C2 nutrition programs will be inspected by AgeOptions no less than once every three years.

Equipment/ Furnishing**C1**

Congregate nutrition grantees shall assure that furnishings and equipment for:

- a. The dining area is strong and sturdy, allow for easy mobility, encourage socialization among participants, and create a bright and warm atmosphere;
- b. The kitchen area is constructed and installed according to state and local food service health and safety regulations for food service operations; and
- c. The site supervisor's area is durable and practical to handle daily operations (e.g., locked files).

Information Technology**C2, Food Deliveries**

Nutrition grantees must maintain at least one generic business email address for the sole purpose of exchanging information with assessors (Care Coordination Units and Managed Care Organizations) about Home delivered meal or food delivery referrals and/or status of current Home delivered meal clients or food delivery clients. "Generic" is defined as an e-mail address that is labelled by purpose rather than by employee name (e.g., HDMReferrals@AgencyXYZ.org) and is accessible by a group of the nutrition grantee's employees. The generic email address must support message encryption to ensure client confidentiality.

Inventory

Nutrition grantees shall develop and maintain an inventory list of all equipment purchased wholly or in part with AgeOptions funds.

Transportation**C1**

Congregate nutrition grantees should provide participants with information on available transportation options. Other site participants should be encouraged to assist in transporting seniors to the site. Grantees must demonstrate special attention to persons whose new or continued participation is dependent on the availability of transportation provided by community resources. A best practice would be that the site sets up carpools or provides discounted bus fares.

Site/Facility Agreement

Nutrition grantees must have a written agreement or letter of support from the organization where a Congregate Site and/or Home Delivered Meal distribution point or Meal Kit distribution point is located or proposed. The agreement or letter of support must be current at the time of application and on file with AgeOptions and should include:

- a. Responsibilities and obligations of each party (including sanitation of restrooms and common areas, snow removal on walkways, care and maintenance of facility, obtaining health department permits, fire inspections, cleaning, insurance coverage of items owned by project, personal liability insurance, and compliance with all federal, state, and local laws). The Congregate, Home Delivered Meal Site, or Meal Kit program agreements may not contain provisions that constitute subcontracting.
- b. Staffing interrelationships and roles with the host organization including responsibility and authority.
- c. Costs or payments to be incurred by either party.
- d. Days and hours the site/distribution point will operate and provide services in the facility.

Note: Facility Agreement or Letters of Intent must be between grantee and the host. Site agreements must be less than eighteen (18) months old at the time of application.

Ideal Congregate Site Factors

In addition to the “Congregate Facility Requirements, C1” listed previously, the following is a list of factors that AgeOptions considers integral to the makeup of the "ideal" congregate nutrition site:

1. **Make socialization as important as nutrition.** Site staff and volunteers will create a sense of community for participants at the congregate meal site by involving participants as partners, promoting connections between participants, getting to know each participant personally and greeting them on arrival.
2. **Offer menu choice and/or cultural sensitivity.** To the extent possible, sites should offer a choice of entrees based on participant input. Significant ethnic populations should be offered culturally appropriate meals. Grantees should strive to increase variety in meals based on participant preference.
3. **Empower participants by welcoming their input and acting on it.** Site Leaders should be responsive to Site-Based Advisory Committee input and results of Participant Satisfaction Surveys. Solicit feedback from participants on menu choices and programming, and provide timely follow-up on participant issues.
4. **Work to make transportation easier.** Sites should engage local public transportation entities to make the site more accessible, especially during meal service hours. Sites should encourage car pooling and provide ample parking.

5. **Improve site's physical characteristics.** Cleaning, painting and adding lights can make sites more inviting. Meals should be served on tablecloths with non-disposable silverware and dishes. Meals should be served to participants at their tables rather than cafeteria style
6. **Create a sense of community and encourage volunteerism.** Involve volunteers in making the site attractive and welcoming for all Older Adults. Create volunteer opportunities to serve food, greet participants, clean up, decorate, etc.
7. **Link site to other services.** Sites should coordinate with other organizations to provide information to participants and ensure that they have access to information about community-based services. Ideally, sites will be located in multi-purpose centers.
8. **Promote and grow the site.** Use every available means of free or low-cost mass media, such as church programs/bulletin boards, local newspapers, store windows and local service organization newsletters.
9. **Provide Leadership.** The Site Manager will be a leader for staff, volunteers and participants. Some examples of how this may be achieved are modeling appropriate and friendly behavior, motivating staff and volunteers, trying new ideas and delegating tasks.
10. **Be active in the community.** The site will actively engage in the community at large by maintaining a visible presence in the community through staff and volunteers; soliciting support from the community; participating in community activities such as advisory boards and events; educating participants about resources available in the community.
11. **Establish sites in high-need areas.** Site should be located in an area with a high number and/or density of older adults. Sites should be especially close to low income, minority and/or limited English-speaking populations.