

## Nutrition Service Standards

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**Background** Area Agency on Aging of Lake and Mendocino Counties (AAA) provides funding for low cost nutritional sound meals, served in strategically located congregate sites and home-delivered meals to homebound individuals that are elderly and/or disabled eligible under the Older Americans Act (OAA). These programs are collectively known as the Elderly Nutrition Program (ENP).

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**Purpose** To promote better health among the older/disabled segment of the population through improved nutrition. The program also focuses on reducing the isolation of old age and providing a link to other social and community services.

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**Policy** The policy of the AAA for Elderly Nutrition Program services is to provide nutritionally balanced meals on a daily basis to eligible individuals at a congregate setting or in their own homes within the boundaries of Planning and Service Area (PSA 26) in Lake and Mendocino Counties, California. It also assists them in maintaining optimal health and independence so that they may continue to reside in the community for as long as possible. The ENP will help address a number of problems faced by these individuals, including poor diets, health problems, food insecurity, and loneliness.

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**Certification** The food production kitchen will have a:

- 1) Valid health permit and a current health inspection certificate.
- 2) Responsible person with valid food safety certificate overseeing the kitchen.

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**Funding**

- Congregate Meals are eligible to receive Nutrition Services Initiative Program (NSIP) reimbursement.
- “Take home” meals from congregate meal sites are not eligible for Administration on Aging (AoA) funding because they are not provided in a congregate setting. The California Department of Aging allows some flexibility for “take home” meals, primarily those for AoA funded congregate meal participants who are assessed to need a second meal or for a regular congregate participant who is unable to attend the meal site because of a brief (three days or less) illness.

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## **Nutrition Service Standards, Continued**

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### **Congregate meals**

- Congregate Meals are eligible to receive Nutrition Services Initiative Program (NSIP) reimbursement.

Individuals eligible to receive a meal at congregate nutrition sites are:

- Any person age 60 or over,
  - The spouse, regardless of age, of any person aged 60 or over; *or*
  - A disabled individual as defined in OAA Section[§] 102(8)(9) who is under the age of 60 and resides in housing facilities occupied primarily by older persons at which congregate nutrition services are provided; *or*
  - A disabled individual, who is under the age of 60 and resides at home with and accompanies an older individual eligible under the Older Americans Act (OAA.)
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### **Home-delivered meals**

Individuals eligible to receive a home-delivered meal are:

- Any person aged 60 or over who is frail, homebound by reason of illness or incapacitating disability as defined in OAA § 102(8)(9), or otherwise isolated; *or*
  - A spouse of a person aged 60 or over, regardless of age or condition, may receive a home-delivered meal if it is in the best interest of the homebound older person; *or*
  - A disabled individual who resides at home with older individuals eligible under the OAA.
  - The eligibility shall be determined by the following criteria:
    - Too frail to travel to a congregate nutrition site
    - Acute illness
    - Convalescing from acute illness
    - Incapacitating due to chronic illness
    - Incapable of shopping and preparing meals.
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## Nutrition Service Standards, Continued

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### Elements to consider

- Elements to consider when determining whether the participant is eligible for a “take home” meal are as follows:
  - Does the client meet the eligibility requirements for congregate meals?
  - The client must complete the Title III C-1 intake process including the Nutrition Risk Assessment. (*A high score on the Nutrition Risk Assessment may be used to justify second meals.*)
  - The client has difficulty preparing nutritious meals for him/herself on days when meals are not served.
  - The client must have participated in the congregate program on the day they take home a meal, and meet the assessment criteria to take a second meal home for later.
  - An eligible client, who has social or behavioral challenges that may impair him/her from attending congregate meals, may be considered for a “take home” meal.
  - All food safety rules in handling and packing the meal must be followed. Meals should be packed in an insulated container to help retain heat/cold. If a client is not going straight home, the meal should first be chilled, and then placed in an insulated container. Clients should be encouraged to transport the meal in an ice chest or insulated bag.
  - “Take home” meals must be accompanied with instructions for safe storage and reheating.
  - To assure that meals meet nutrient standards, all “take home” meals must contain the same meal components as the congregate menu for the day it was prepared.

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NOTE: *Home-delivered meal participants must be reassessed by the contractor not less than once per year.*

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## **Nutrition Service Standards, Continued**

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### **Standards**

Congregate Meals must comply with the following standards:

- The meals are provided in compliance with the nutrition requirements of the OAA;
  - The participant is given an opportunity to contribute to the cost of service;
  - Assurance that the contractor has written procedures in place to ensure significant changes in the meal participant's physical or mental condition or environment is reported, investigated and appropriate action is implemented within one business day following notification of the change;
  - Assurance that sanitary and safe conditions can be provided by the contractor for storing, thawing and heating.
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### **Nutrition risk screening**

The nutrition risk screening questionnaires shall be administered at the congregate nutrition sites, senior centers, homes of the homebound seniors and other community settings that house AAA Congregate Meal and Home-Delivered Meal programs, by social workers, dietitians, nutritionist, nurses, home-delivered meals' coordinators, care providers, congregate site managers/coordinators, other qualified individuals, or seniors themselves. Methods of the checklist administration will include an in-person interview, telephone interview, self-administered with or without supervision and by mail. If the screening survey is done in a group setting at a congregate nutrition site by qualified individuals as approved by the AAA, the session could be counted as meeting one unit of nutrition education services. If the screening is done for home-delivered meal clients, it could be counted toward meeting the home-delivered meal assessment or reassessment requirement provided it be performed by qualified individuals as approved by the AAA.

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## **Nutrition Service Standards, Continued**

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### **Food procurement**

- All foods shall be of good quality and obtained from sources that conform to Federal, State, and local regulatory standards for quality, sanitation, and safety.
- Food in hermetically sealed containers shall be processed in a licensed establishment. No home-prepared or home-canned food shall be used.
- Food from broken containers, unlabeled, rusty, or leaking cans with side seam dents, rim dents, or swells shall not be used.
- Milk shall be purchased from a reliable source whose standards of quality, sanitation, and safety comply with Division 15 of California Food and Agricultural Code. All milk products used and served shall be pasteurized.
- All food contributions shall meet the standards of quality, sanitation, and safety set forth in this document as well as the “Food Safety Guidelines.” Fresh fruits and vegetables of good quality may be contributed to the program. Prior to use, all fruits and vegetables shall be washed to remove dirt or insecticide residues. Fresh ocean-going and frozen fish may be accepted. The program shall not accept contribution of wild game.
- To the extent feasible all procurements shall be transacted in accordance with these standards. Contractors are encouraged to participate in group food purchasing to the extent allowed by the above standard.
- A comparative cost analysis shall be performed either by the contractor or its group purchasing agent on an ongoing basis to obtain the highest quality food for the lowest price available

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## **Nutrition Service Standards, Continued**

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### **Food production**

Food production and meal service shall be under the supervision of a person trained in food service management and certified according to the California Retail Food Code (CFRC) to ensure Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) procedures are followed.

- All frozen meat, fish, poultry, shellfish, and frozen products containing these foods shall be kept frozen until processing or cooking begins; defrosted in the refrigerator; or defrosted in cold running water of sufficient velocity to flush loose food particles into the sink drain.
- Sulfites shall not be added to fresh fruits, vegetables and potentially hazardous foods at the food production kitchen.
- Ground beef products shall be cooked to heat all parts of the food to at least 155°F for 16 seconds or until meat is no longer pink and juices are clear.
- Potentially hazardous food shall be cooled rapidly from 135° F to 41° F or below within a total of six hours and during this time the decrease in temperature from 135° F to 70°F shall occur within two hours.
- No oil, shortening, or margarine containing artificial trans fat shall be used in meal preparation. Food label shall be maintained for all food or food additives that is or includes any fat, oil, or shortening for as long as the food is stored, distributed, served, or used in the preparation of food.
- Home-delivered meals not assembled for same day delivery shall be packaged within two hours from the completion of preparation; and immediately refrigerated or frozen after packaging.
- Frozen meals produced in the production kitchen which are not commercially prepared shall:
  - Be prepared and packaged only in a central kitchen or on-site preparation kitchen;
  - Be packaged within two hours of the end of food production. At the time of packaging, hot foods shall be at least 140° F and cold foods at 40° F or below;
  - Be frozen as quickly as possible, and assured that they have been cooled to a temperature below 40° F within four hours;
  - Have food temperatures taken and recorded at the end of food production, at the time of packaging and throughout the frozen process. Temperature shall be recorded and kept on file for audit;
  - Be packaged in individual trays, properly sealed, and labeled with the date, contents and instructions for storage and reheating;
  - Be frozen in a manner that allows air circulation around each individual tray;
  - Be kept in a frozen state throughout storage, transport and delivery to the senior participant; and
  - Be discarded after 30 days.

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## **Nutrition Service Standards, Continued**

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### **Production control**

- Production schedules and/or worksheets shall be available in the food preparation area.
  - Food shall be prepared in sufficient quantities to serve all participants. Careful planning shall minimize leftover food and prevent waste.
  - Standardized recipes shall be used to ensure consistency of quantity and quantity and adherence to menu guidelines.
  - Appropriate utensils for correct and consistent portion control shall be available and used at each site.
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### **Sanitation requirements**

State and local health, sanitation and safety regulations, applicable to the particular types of food preparation and meal delivery systems used by the project shall be followed in all stages of food service operations. Meals shall be produced and served at premises, which have valid permits, licenses, or certificates.

- The health permits shall be posted at each congregate site and production kitchen.
  - Photocopies of all renewal inspection certificates shall be forwarded upon receipt to AAA.
  - Copies of all sanitation reports shall be submitted to AAA.
  - Dish washing facilities and techniques shall comply with local and State Health Department regulations. Domestic dish washing machines may be used if they comply with sanitation regulations.
  - All new and replacement equipment shall meet or be equivalent to applicable National Sanitation Foundation standards, or in the absence of such standards, be approved by the local health department.
  - All programs shall provide facilities and equipment necessary to properly store or dispose of all waste material.
  - All food waste and rubbish containing food waste shall be kept in tight, non-absorbent, rodent-proof containers, covered with close-fitting lids. Trashcans in food production areas shall be kept covered, except during production time. Waste containers used for storing garbage shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition.
  - Cleaning schedule and procedures shall be posted and followed at all kitchens and meal sites. Cleaning schedules are to include what is to be cleaned, frequency of cleaning, how it is to be cleaned and who is to do the cleaning.
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## Nutrition Service Standards, Continued

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**Leftover meal requirements** Potentially hazardous leftovers shall be discarded unless the procedures outlined below are followed. Potentially hazardous foods are capable of supporting rapid and progressive growth of microorganisms, which may cause food infections or food intoxications. Potential hazardous foods include, but are not limited to:

- fresh eggs;
- most main dishes and gravies;
- cooked vegetables and starches such as cooked rice, potatoes, and beans;
- creamed dishes;
- desserts made chiefly from milk and eggs such as puddings and cream pies;
- Salad dressings with a low acid content.

Foods with a low protein, low moisture, high sugar or salt content, or which are acidic, are not considered hazardous (*e.g.* canned fruit, vinegar-based salad dressings, breads and rolls).

- Site Prepared Leftovers. Leftovers from food which have been prepared at a site shall be handled and used in the following manner:
  - All leftovers shall be covered, labeled and dated;
  - All leftover foods shall be brought to an internal temperature of 40°F within four hours. Hot food should be placed in shallow containers no more than four inches deep, and refrigerated to allow for air circulation around the container;
  - Refrigerated leftover food shall be used within two days. Frozen leftovers held at 0° F shall be used within 30 days;
  - Reheating of all leftover foods shall occur rapidly to an internal temperature of 165° for 15 seconds;
  - Priority shall be given to serving leftovers as seconds to congregate participants; *and*
  - Leftover meals cannot be counted as additional participant meals nor are they eligible for AAA reimbursement.

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## **Nutrition Service Standards, Continued**

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### **Employee health standards**

- **Communicable Diseases**  
All food handlers and servers shall be free of communicable disease. If an employee or volunteer is believed to be ill or a carrier of a communicable disease, he/she shall be restricted from performing food preparation and service activities. Clearance from a physician may be requested by the contractor prior to permitting the employee to return to work.
- **Clothing, Head Coverings**  
All food handlers and servers shall wear clean, washable clothing, close-toed protective footwear, and hairnets, caps or other suitable hair coverings to prevent contamination of foods, beverages and/or utensils.
- **Tongs, Disposable Hand Coverings**  
All food handlers and servers shall use tongs or other implements while serving food. If hand contact with the food is unavoidable, disposable hand coverings must be worn.
- **Tobacco**  
Food handlers and servers are prohibited from using tobacco in any form while preparing, handling, or serving food or beverages. Tobacco shall not be used in any form in any room or space used primarily for the preparation or storage of food. “No Smoking” signs shall be maintained in all such rooms or places.
- **Hand Washing**  
Food handlers and servers shall thoroughly wash their hands prior to beginning work, after using the restroom, and every time hands are soiled. Hand washing facilities shall be provided for employees within or adjacent to the food preparation area(s). These facilities will be maintained in good repair and equipped with hot and cold running water. Detergent or soap dispenser, and single use paper towels or hot air blowers shall be permanently installed at or adjacent to all hand washing facilities. Legible signs shall be posted in each restroom directing employees to wash hands with soap before returning to work.

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## **Nutrition Service Standards, Continued**

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**Client  
grievances and  
complaints**

The contractor(s) shall establish a Client Grievance and Complaint protocol according to the needs of the program and the AAA's grievance and complaint policy.

The policy shall indicate a time frame within which a complaint will be acknowledged. The time frame shall not exceed two (2) working days after receipt of the complaint. The acknowledgement letter will clearly state the grievance levels with the agency.

A written notification shall be issued to the complainant stating the results of the review within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the complaint. If more than 10 working days are required to review the case, a written letter shall be issued to the complainant regarding the proposed timeline of the review decision within 30 days of the receipt of the complaint.

The time frame to resolve a complaint at the contractor level shall be no more than 30 days from the date of receiving a complaint. All notifications to the complainant shall include a statement that the complainant may appeal to the AAA if dissatisfied with the results of the nutrition contractor's review.

The grievance process shall include confidentiality provisions to protect the complainant's right to privacy. Only information relevant to the complaint may be released to the responding party without the consent of complainant. The complainant has a right to remain anonymous but will need to provide an address for written correspondences

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