

CONGREGATE NUTRITION SERVICES (Title III – C1)
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING
SERVICE STANDARD

Definition¹

Provision, to an eligible client or other eligible participant at a nutrition site, senior center or some other congregate setting, a meal which:

- Complies with the most recent edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, published by the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Agriculture,
- Provides a minimum of 33 1/3 percent of the daily Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA)/ Adequate Intake (AI), as established by the Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, if one meal is provided per day,
- Provides a minimum of 66 2/3 percent of the RDA/AI if two meals are provided per day,
- Provides 100 percent of the RDA/AI if three meals are provided per day,
- To the maximum extent practicable, are adjusted to meet any special dietary needs of program participants,
- Complies with applicable provisions of State or local laws regarding the safe and sanitary handling of food, equipment, and supplies used in the storage, preparation, service, and delivery of meals to an older individual.

The congregate nutrition site provides opportunities for socialization and recreation that may alleviate isolation and loneliness.

Eligible Population

Congregate Nutrition Services are targeted to persons 60 years of age or older. Priority shall be given to older individuals with greatest economic and social need, with preference to low-income minority individuals and to those older persons residing in rural or geographically isolated areas.² In addition to meeting established eligibility, individuals must be mobile, not homebound, and physically, mentally and medically able to attend a congregate meals program in accordance with written Area Agency on Aging (AAA) guidelines.

Other individuals eligible to receive a congregate meal include:³

- The recipient's spouse, regardless of age or disability
- Individuals with disabilities who are not older individuals but who reside in housing facilities occupied primarily by older individuals at which congregate nutrition services are provided
- At the discretion of the AAA, individuals with disabilities, regardless of age, who reside at home with and accompany older eligible individuals to the congregate site
- At the discretion of the AAA, individuals, regardless of age, providing volunteer services during the meal hours

¹ Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, Section 339

² Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, Section 306(a)(4)(A)(i)

³ Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, Section 339

The AAA shall establish procedures for offering a meal on the same basis as meals are provided to participating older individuals, to other eligible individuals listed above. There is no prohibition against providing services to persons under age 60 with funds from other sources.⁴

Service Delivery Elements

The Area Agency on Aging or service provider must perform all of the following components of the congregate nutrition services:

Program Requirements

Each nutrition services provider must provide at least one hot or other appropriate meal in a congregate setting each day the site is in operation. Additional shelf stable or other appropriate meals may be provided to each participant for days the site is not open.

The nutrition program shall be carried out with the advice of registered dietitians (or other individuals with comparable expertise), meal participants, and other individuals knowledgeable about the needs of older individuals.⁵

Nutrition services providers shall design meals that are appealing to program participants and shall enter into contracts that limit the amount of time meals must spend in transit before they are consumed.⁶

Assessment

- A service-specific assessment using the Uniform Assessment Instrument shall be performed on each potential client or other eligible individual (not a volunteer) that determines whether the individual is eligible for the service, the amount of the individual's service-specific need, and the individual's level of priority for service delivery.
- Uniform Assessment Instrument pages 1 – 3 minimum, and “Determine Your Nutritional Health” Nutritional Screening are required. The AAA may complete additional pages of the UAI. The AAA may develop and use a form (in place of the UAI) to be completed by the senior, when appropriate, as long as all UAI information is collected.
- Federal Poverty should be determined and documented. The Federal Poverty/VDA form may be used.
- Cost sharing does not apply to this service.
- For an individual who provides volunteer services during the meal hours (not a site participant) and receives a congregate meal: the full legal name and service units (collected at least on a monthly basis) must be entered into AIM; the Social Security number is recommended but not required.

Nutrition Screening

“Determine Your Nutritional Health” Nutrition Screening checklist developed and distributed by the Nutrition Screening Initiative must be completed during assessment. The AAA or service provider will develop a written plan specifying how the agency will use the screening results.

⁴ Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended

⁵ Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, Section 339

⁶ Ibid

Care Plan

The Care Plan is optional and may be completed by another department within the Area Agency on Aging. If used, the Care Plan may include nutritional and social needs that can be met through congregate nutrition services. Before the service is delivered, a written individualized care plan may be developed that identifies the service components to be provided to meet the client's assessed need. The plan may be developed with involvement from the client. "Client" may include the individual's authorized representative or family member. The client may be given the opportunity to contribute to the implementation and evaluation of the plan. The plan may be modified to reflect any change in the client's needs. Each plan may include:

- Identified service needs
- Services to be delivered by the service provider or other sources
- Goals and objectives of service to be provided
- Quantity of service units to be provided

Service Confirmation

A service confirmation, which may be in the form of a letter, shall be provided to the participant to explain the service arrangement. The participant shall receive a copy, which includes:

- Service to be provided
- Scheduled days of service
- Information regarding voluntary contributions
- Emergency situations, including severe weather
- Explanation of the Service Termination Policy

Service Termination Policy

Service will be terminated at the discretion of the provider. Written notification of service termination shall be mailed 10 business days prior to the date the action is to become effective.

Reassessment

- A review of the participant's need for services, the amount of services provided and the appropriateness of the care plan (if completed) shall be performed when the participant's condition or situation changes, but at least annually.
- Uniform Assessment Instrument, pages 1 – 3 minimum, and "Determine Your Nutritional Health" Nutrition Screening shall be updated at the same time.
- Federal Poverty should be determined and documented. The Federal Poverty/VDA form may be used.
- Cost sharing does not apply to this service.

Site Location

Congregate nutrition sites shall be as close as possible to the majority of eligible older individuals' residences.⁷

The AAA or provider shall develop written agreements with each agency or organization where a congregate nutrition site is located. The agreement shall include responsibilities and obligations of each party including, but not limited to:

⁷ Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, Section 339

- Sanitation of restrooms and common areas; cleaning, care and maintenance of facility and grounds; pest control; snow removal; obtaining Health Department Permits; fire inspection; insurance coverage of items owned by the congregate program; liability insurance; compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws
- Staffing interrelationships and roles, including responsibility and authority
- Cost or payments to be incurred by either party
- Days and hours the congregate sites will operate in the facility
- Provision for termination of the agreement by either party

Physical Facilities, Accessibility and Equipment

Each nutrition site shall meet minimum requirements related to the physical facility and equipment, including, but not limited to:

- Meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, and if necessary, have a written plan to accommodate seniors with disabilities
- Access to a kitchen or approved work area, for the set-up and dispensing of meals. This includes all equipment necessary to maintain proper food temperatures. If used for the nutrition program, there shall be operating thermometers in the refrigerator and freezer. Approval of the area by the local health department may be requested, but is not required, for sites where food is served but not prepared.
- Separate sinks for hand washing and food service
- Equipment, including tables and chairs for meals and other programs, which are sturdy and appropriate for older persons. The site shall have adequate space to accommodate persons with canes, walkers, wheelchairs, and other assistive devices.
- Door exit signs
- Telephone accessible to staff
- Fire extinguisher(s) in good working order
- Readily accessible first aid kit

Nutrition Education

Nutrition Education: Any set of learning experiences designed to facilitate voluntary adoption of eating and other nutrition-related behaviors conducive to health and well-being.⁸

Information will be obtained from a reputable source or provided by a registered dietitian or other qualified individual. The participant shall be provided with information on a continuing basis, but at least quarterly. Scheduled programs shall be documented as having taken place. At least once a year, food safety information, such as food handling, reheating, and storage, shall be provided.

Nutrition Counseling

Nutrition Counseling will be provided as feasible.

⁸ Contento I, Balch GI, Bronner YL, Lytle LA, Maloney SK, Olson CM, Swadener SS. The Effectiveness of Nutrition Education and Implications for Nutrition Education Policy, Programs, and Research: A Review of Research, Journal of Nutrition Education, 1995; 27(6)277-422.

Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Disease Prevention and Health Promotion: See Service Standard for definitions.

Information shall be provided to the participant on a continuing basis, but at least monthly. Scheduled programs shall be documented as having taken place.

Physical Activity and Exercise

Voluntary participant-appropriate physical activities shall be offered on a continuing basis, with the goal of at least weekly. Daily participant-appropriate physical activity will be provided as feasible. Participants will be advised to discuss the physical activity program with their physician or health care professional.

Community Services and Public Benefits

Congregate Nutrition Services shall provide a link to other available community services such as health screening, counseling, consumer education, senior employment, preventive health services, food stamps and other public benefits, etc.

Food Stamp Program

The AAA or service provider must assist clients in taking advantage of benefits available under the Food Stamp Program Virginia EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) Cardinal Card. The AAA or service provider may, but is not required to accept food stamps from eligible clients.

Emergency Situations

The AAA or service provider shall have written procedures to follow in the event of weather-related emergencies or other situations that may interrupt service or the transportation of participants or supplies to the nutrition site.

A written plan that describes procedures to be followed if a participant becomes ill or injured, shall be explained to staff, volunteers, and participants and shall be visibly posted (or otherwise readily available) at each congregate site. "911" posted near a telephone, along with the center's address, is recommended. Site staff shall keep limited intake information on file for each participant.

Fire Safety

Fire drills shall be conducted at least quarterly, in accordance with local fire marshal recommendations; documentation is required. During the fire drill, fire exit routes shall be designated and reviewed. Staff shall be knowledgeable about the location and operation of all fire extinguishers at the site.

Removal of Food Items

There shall be a posted policy about food items that participants may, or may not, take home. The sign and printing shall be large enough to be seen and read.

Menu Planning

Meals shall meet the requirements specified above under "Definitions." Each meal shall be reasonably nutritionally well balanced and provide a positive nutrition education model for

participants. Foods high in fiber, calcium and protein should be emphasized. Vitamins A and C with Vitamin A from vegetable-derived sources should be targeted.

Meals shall be adjusted, to the maximum extent practicable, to meet any special dietary needs of program participants,⁹ such as health or medical conditions, or religious requirements. Participants shall be involved in the menu planning process and participant food preferences, including ethnic or cultural food preferences, shall be solicited and considered when developing menus.

AAA approved menus shall be posted in each place of preparation. A weekly menu shall be posted at each nutrition site. Menu substitutions shall have prior approval by the AAA; the AAA may provide a pre-approved list of substitutions.

Drinking water shall be available and located near participants. When feasible, water shall be available at each table.

Medical Foods

If provided, the AAA or service provider shall have a policy regarding the use of medical foods, foods for special dietary uses, dietary supplements, and/or functional foods, that includes: eligibility, involvement of physician or registered dietician, inclusion as an eligible meal, etc.

Sweets Guidelines

See VDA Guidelines For Sweets Served At The Congregate Nutrition Site

Meal Preparation

Congregate meals may be provided on site, by a central kitchen, or contracted through other organizations. Congregate meal sites, central kitchens, and subcontractors are required to follow all applicable regulations and standards of the Virginia Department of Health, Food Regulations. Whether the food service operation is provided by the AAA or contracted out, the final responsibility for overall food service operation shall rest with the AAA.

Procurement

When contracting for meal preparation, delivery of meals, and site operations, all procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner to provide open and free competition. Specifications for bids, and the terms and conditions of the resulting contracts, shall comply with service standards as established by Virginia Department for the Aging.

Food Service Operation

Compliance with applicable provisions of State or local codes and regulations regarding the safe and sanitary handling of food, equipment, and supplies used in the storage, preparation, service, and delivery of meals to an older individual is required.¹⁰ This includes, but is not limited to health, fire and safety codes and regulations; building codes; purchasing regulations; licensure requirements; and any other requirements applicable to each meal preparation site and food service vendor used for the nutrition program.

⁹ Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, Section 339

¹⁰ Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, Section 339

If applicable, the current food permit and/or inspection report, issued by the Health Department shall be posted or be on file. When the local Health Department is able to comply, inspection of the meal site by the local Environmental Health Specialist is recommended, but not required. The Nutrition Director shall maintain copies of all current inspection reports according to AAA record retention policy, but not less than one year.

Food must be prepared, plated and transported with the least possible manual contact, with suitable utensils and on surfaces that, prior to use, have been cleaned, rinsed and sanitized to prevent cross contamination. Effective procedures for cleaning (removing visible dirt and stains) and sanitizing (reducing the number of micro-organisms by using hot water at 171 degrees (77 degrees C) or above, or a chemical sanitizing solution) dishes, equipment, food contact surfaces, work areas, serving and dining areas shall be written, posted or readily available, and followed consistently.

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) must be readily available on any chemicals. Employees must be informed about potentially dangerous chemicals used in the workplace and how to safely use them. Toxic materials, such as cleaners and sanitizers, shall be maintained in the original container, or transferred to a clearly labeled appropriate container.

Health and Hygiene of Food Servers

The AAA or service provider shall have policies and procedures regarding health and hygiene for all individuals who prepare and/or serve food that includes:

- Infectious illness such as diarrhea, vomiting, fever, sore throat, etc.
- Open sores on hands or arms
- Gloves worn over nail polish and artificial fingernails for individuals serving food
- Central kitchens will abide by Virginia Department of Health Food Regulations

Food Safety & Potentially Hazardous Food Items

"Potentially hazardous food" is any food or food ingredient, natural or synthetic, which requires temperature control because it is in a form capable of supporting:

- The rapid and progressive growth of infectious or toxigenic microorganisms;
- The growth and toxin production of *Clostridium botulinum*; or
- In raw shell eggs, the growth of *Salmonella enteritidis*.¹¹

Potentially hazardous food includes:

- An animal food (a food of animal origin) that is raw or heat-treated;
- A food of plant origin that is heat-treated or consists of raw seed sprouts;
- Cut melons; and
- Garlic-in-oil mixtures that are not acidified or otherwise modified at a food processing plant in a way that results in mixtures that do not support growth as specified above in this definition.¹²

¹¹ 12 VAC 5-421-10, Food Regulations, Department of Health, Virginia Administrative Code

¹² 12 VAC 5-421-10, Food Regulations, Department of Health, Virginia Administrative Code

In addition, any food that consists in whole or in part of:

- Milk or milk products;
- Shell eggs;
- Beef, poultry, pork, lamb, fish, and shellfish;
- Tofu;
- Soy protein foods; and
- Cooked rice, beans, potatoes (baked or boiled), or other heat-treated plant foods.¹³

In order to retain maximum nutritional value and food quality, foods shall be served as soon as possible after preparation. The AAA or service provider(s) shall make every effort not to exceed two hours of holding time between the completion of cooking and the serving of the meal and shall minimize, to the extent possible, the length of delivery routes for transporting meals.

Potentially hazardous hot food items shall be maintained at or above 140 degrees Fahrenheit (F) and potentially hazardous cold food shall be maintained at or below 41 degrees F.¹⁴ Fruits and vegetables that are cooked for hot holding shall be cooked to a temperature of 140°F.¹⁵ Frozen foods shall be maintained frozen.¹⁶ If food temperatures are found to be in the temperature danger zone (41 – 140 degrees F) for two or more hours, the food must be discarded (Two Hour Rule)

Potentially hazardous food that is cooked, cooled, and reheated for hot holding shall be reheated so that all parts of the food reach a temperature of at least 165 degrees F for 15 seconds.¹⁷ Food must be reheated within two (2) hours or thrown away, and can only be reheated once.¹⁸ Hot food holding facilities are prohibited for the rapid reheating of potentially hazardous foods.

Temperature checks on potentially hazardous food shall be taken, and documented, on a daily basis with a correctly calibrated food thermometer at the time all food leaves the production area (including the food service vendor's kitchen) and again at the time the meal is served.

Metal stem-type food temperature measuring devices, accurate to + or – 2 degrees F shall be used to assure the attainment and maintenance of proper internal cooking, holding, or refrigeration temperatures of all potentially hazardous foods. Prior to use in a food product, thermometers shall be cleaned and sanitized according to industry standards. Food temperature measuring devices may not have sensors or stems constructed of glass, except that thermometers with glass sensors or stems that are encased in a shatterproof coating, such as candy thermometers, may be used.¹⁹

¹³ Serving Safe Food, Second Edition: Employee Guide, The Educational Foundation of the National Restaurant Association 1996

¹⁴ 12 VAC 5-421-820, Food Regulations, Department of Health, Virginia Administrative Code

¹⁵ 12 VAC 5-421-720, Food Regulations, Department of Health, Virginia Administrative Code

¹⁶ 12 VAC 5-421-770, Food Regulations, Department of Health, Virginia Administrative Code

¹⁷ 12 VAC 5-421-760, Food Regulations, Department of Health, Virginia Administrative Code

¹⁸ Serving Safe Food, Second Edition: Employee Guide, The Educational Foundation of the National Restaurant Association 1996

¹⁹ 12 VAC 5-421-1090, Food Regulations, Department of Health, Virginia Administrative Code

For milk stored in a refrigerator maintained at 41 degrees or below, the temperature of the refrigerated unit may be taken and documented, instead of the milk temperature. The accuracy of the refrigerator thermometer should be verified on an ongoing basis by taking a product temperature.

Each AAA or service provider shall have a written policy specifying the temperatures meals must meet in order to be delivered to program participants. The AAA or service provider shall also have written procedures for handling potentially hazardous food items that do not meet or maintain correct temperatures. This information will be provided to all site managers.

Food Quality

All foods, whether purchased by or donated to the program, must meet the following criteria:

- Food shall be obtained from sources that comply with law²⁰
- Meet or exceed all applicable federal, state and local laws, ordinances, and regulations
- Safe and unadulterated²¹
- Food in a hermetically sealed container shall be obtained from a food processing plant that is regulated by the food regulatory agency that has jurisdiction over the plant²²
- If served, hot dogs, luncheon meat, and soft cheeses (feta, Brie, Camembert, Blue veined, Mexican style) must meet temperature requirements
- Pasteurized shell, liquid, frozen, or dry eggs or egg products shall be substituted for raw shell eggs in the preparation of foods such as Caesar salad, hollandaise or béarnaise sauce, mayonnaise, and egg-fortified beverages and for recipes in which more than one egg is broken and eggs are combined²³

The following foods must not be used:²⁴

- Prepackaged un-pasteurized juice (including un-pasteurized apple cider)
- Raw animal foods, such as raw fish raw-marinated fish, raw molluscan shellfish, and steak tartare
- Partially cooked animal food such as lightly cooked fish, rare meat, soft-cooked eggs that are made from raw shell eggs, and meringue
- Raw seed sprouts (including alfalfa, clover and radish)
- Home-canned foods
- Any foods prohibited under the Virginia Department of Health Food Regulations or updated versions of The Food Code

Administrative Elements

Staff Qualifications

The Director of Nutrition Services shall possess the following minimum qualifications:

²⁰ 12 VAC 5-421-270, Food Regulations, Department of Health, Virginia Administrative Code

²¹ 12 VAC 5-421-260, Food Regulations, Department of Health, Virginia Administrative Code

²² 12 VAC 5-421-280, Food Regulations, Department of Health, Virginia Administrative Code

²³ 12 VAC 5-421-950, Food Regulations, Department of Health, Virginia Administrative Code

²⁴ Ibid

- Knowledge: Biological, psychological, and social aspects of aging; the impact of disabilities and illness on aging; community resources; public benefits eligibility requirements; food and nutrition; safe food handling; and disease prevention and health promotion
- Skills: Management and supervisory principles; transportation scheduling, if appropriate; program planning; establishing and sustaining interpersonal relationships; problem solving.
- Abilities: Communicate with persons with varying socioeconomic backgrounds; work independently.

Job Descriptions²⁵

For each paid and volunteer position funded by Title III of the Older Americans Act, an Area Agency on Aging must maintain:

- A current and complete job description which shall cover the scope of nutrition services staff duties and responsibilities; and
- A current description of the minimum entry-level standards of performance for each job.

Units of Service

Units of service must be reported in AIM for each client receiving the service. Service units can be reported by client on a daily basis, but not aggregated (summarized) more than beyond one calendar month.

- Eligible Meals (required for AIM) – The number of eligible congregate meals served; see Definitions and Nutrition Services Incentive Program
- Persons Served (unduplicated) - The number of eligible persons who received an eligible congregate meal; see “Eligible Population”

Program Reports

- Aging Monthly Report (AMR) to VDA by the twelfth (12th) of the following month. If the Area Agency on Aging provides this service, this report must be updated and submitted even if no expenditures or units of service occurred.
- AIM client level data transmitted to VDA by the last day of the following month.

Consumer Contributions/Program Income

There must be a written policy on handling of Client Program Income (CPI) and other gratuities and donations.²⁶

Cost Sharing/Fee for Service: An Area Agency on Aging is not permitted to implement cost sharing/fee for service for recipients of this service.²⁷

And/or

Voluntary Contributions: Voluntary contributions shall be allowed and may be solicited for this service, provided that the method of solicitation is non-coercive.

²⁵ 22 VAC 5-20-250, Grants To Area Agencies On Aging, Department for the Aging Regulations, Virginia Administrative Code

²⁶ 22 VAC 5-20-410, Grants To Area Agencies On Aging, Department for the Aging Regulations, Virginia Administrative Code

²⁷ Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, Section 315(a)

For voluntary contributions, the AAA shall consult with the relevant service providers and older individuals in the planning and service area to determine the best method for accepting voluntary contributions. The AAA and service providers shall not means test for any service for which contributions are accepted, or deny services to any individual who does not contribute to the cost of the service. The AAA shall ensure that each service provider will:

- Provide each recipient with an opportunity to voluntarily contribute towards the cost of the service;
- Clearly inform each recipient that there is no obligation to contribute and that the contribution is purely voluntary;
- Assure that the method of solicitation is non-coercive;
- Protect the privacy and confidentiality of each recipient with respect to the recipient's contribution or lack of contribution;
- Establish appropriate procedures to safeguard and account for all contributions; and
- Use all collected contributions to expand the service for which the contributions were given.²⁸

A sign large enough to be seen and read shall be posted about the opportunity to contribute to the cost of the meal and shall include a suggested amount and the cost of the meal for visitors and guests.

Nutrition Services Incentive Program

Congregate Nutrition Service providers receiving Older Americans Act funds may participate in the Nutrition Services Incentive Program (previously USDA commodity food/cash distribution program).

To be counted as an eligible meal, and therefore, receive NSIP reimbursement, the following requirements must be met:

- The person receiving a meal must meet eligibility requirements under Older Americans Act
- The participant or other eligible individual (not a volunteer) must be assessed using Uniform Assessment Instrument pages 1 – 3 minimum, “Determine Your Nutritional Health” Nutrition Screening Checklist, and Federal Poverty/VDA Sliding Fee Scale (unless all information needed to determine federal poverty is documented on UAI). Cost sharing does not apply to this service
- For an individual who provides volunteer services during the meal hours (not a site participant) and receives a congregate meal: the full legal name and service units (collected at least on a monthly basis) must be entered into AIM; the Social Security number is recommended but not required.
- The participant may make a donation, but cannot be charged for the meal, means tested for participation, or asked for a cost-share
- The AAA or service provider shall have a record keeping system that tracks frequency of participation and generate unduplicated count information (match the participant's name with their meal)
- The meal must meet RDA and Adequate Intake (AI) requirements and Dietary Guidelines defined above

²⁸ Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, Section 315(b)

- Snacks, partial meals and second helpings cannot be counted as a “meal” for reporting purposes
- Congregate meals programs are authorized to serve two- and even three-meal a day programs and each meal can be reported for reimbursement purposes.
- Cash disbursements received under the Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP) shall only be used to purchase United States agricultural commodities and other foods for their nutrition projects.²⁹

Agencies are not eligible to receive Older Americans Act funding for meals nor eligible to receive funding under NSIP if the agency:

- Is an adult day care agency that charges for meals in an adult day care facility as part of the total package of services
- Is an adult day care agency that provides meals funded by the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program and reports the same meal to both programs
- Is an adult day care agency that provides meals funded through a Medicaid Waiver program

The meal is eligible if an adult day care provides meals only with Older American Act and matching funds.³⁰

Congregate meals provided to resident(s) living at an Assisted Living facility (previously called Adult Care Residence) and receiving Auxiliary Grant are not eligible for NSIP funding. The Assisted Living must reimburse the AAA for the cost of the congregate meal if Older Americans Act funds are used. The AAA should develop a written agreement with each facility indicating the cost of each meal and specifics about how payment will be made. Each AAA should have a written policy regarding attendance of Assisted Living residents at congregate nutrition sites.

Quality Assurance

Congregate meal services shall be provided with the advice of dietitians (or individuals with comparable expertise), meal participants, and other individuals knowledgeable with regard to the needs of older individuals.³¹

Staff Training

- At hiring, staff shall receive orientation on agency and nutrition services policies and procedures, client rights, community characteristics and resources, and procedures for conducting the allowable activities under this service.
- Workers shall receive a minimum of 10 (ten) documented hours of in-service or other training per year based on the need for professional growth and upgrading of knowledge, skills, and abilities. This may include participant donations, safe food handling, taking and recording food temperatures, and what to do if meal temperatures are not in compliance.
- All individuals, including volunteers that prepare and/or serve food will receive training in personal hygiene, hand washing, health policies, and safe food handling.

²⁹ Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, Section 311(d)(2)

³⁰ Administration on Aging, Nutritional Services Technical Assistance Brief Number 2, March 2001

³¹ Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, Section 339

The Director of Nutrition Services and/or AAA designee involved with nutrition services and/or meals subcontractor must receive and maintain certification in safe food handling. Central kitchens will abide by Virginia Department of Health Food Regulations.

Supervision

Consultation and supervision shall be available to all staff providing the service. All staff working in the preparation of food must be under the supervision of a person qualified to ensure the application of hygienic techniques and practices in safe food handling, preparation, and service.

Program Evaluation

The agency should conduct regular systematic analysis of the persons served and the impact of the service. Evaluation may include client satisfaction surveys.

Subcontractors shall be monitored annually. There shall be a written policy that includes: content of monitoring (such as use of VDA Monitoring Instrument), frequency, and corrective action.

Policies and Procedures

The AAA and service provider must maintain, at the minimum, the following policies and procedures:

- Offering congregate meals to other eligible individuals
- Use of Nutrition Screening results
- Service Termination Policy
- Collection, disposition and accounting for program income, including safeguarding and accounting for donations
- Weather related emergencies and other situations that affect service delivery
- Ill or injured participants
- Removal of food items
- Food server health and hygiene
- Required meal temperatures
- Handling potentially hazardous food items that do not meet temperature standards
- Cleaning and sanitizing
- Program evaluation plans, including monitoring of subcontractors
- Medical Foods (if applicable)
- Attendance of Assisted Living residents at congregate nutrition sites

Posted Information

Posted information shall be large enough for participants to read, up to date, and organized. The following information shall be accessible to participants and staff:

- Menu
- Activity and program calendar
- Opportunity for a voluntary donation, suggested amount of meal, meal cost for visitors and guests
- Procedure to follow if a participant becomes ill or injured and/or “911” and address

- Removal of food items policy
- Food permit, if applicable
- Cleaning and sanitizing procedures (posted or readily available)

Service Record

Service documentation that will be maintained according to AAA record retention policy (but not less than one year) includes, but is not limited to:

- Site registration/transportation sign-in sheets that identify participants and volunteers, staff, and guests who receive a meal
- Documentation of physical activity, disease prevention/health promotion, and nutrition education activities, such as activity calendars
- Records of temperature checks
- Current Health Department permit and inspection report, if issued
- Fire Drills

Client Records

AAA and/or service providers must maintain specific documentation that includes:

- Uniform Assessment Instrument pages 1 – 3 minimum (See Service-Specific Assessment for exception)
- “Determine Your Nutritional Health” Nutrition Screening Checklist
- Federal Poverty documentation must be part of the client record. The Federal Poverty/VDA Sliding Fee Scale form may be used.
- Care Plan (optional)
- Service confirmation
- Service reassessment
- Appeal process
- Consent to Exchange Information, if information is shared with other agencies