



## Nutrition and Aging Resource Center

# Simple Feasibility Studies for Senior Nutrition Programs

This primer is designed to help you understand feasibility studies — evaluations of proposed projects to determine their potential cost and impact before deciding whether to move forward. A feasibility study can be a valuable tool for senior nutrition programs assessing new initiatives or seeking to enhance existing services. Whether you're considering the rollout of a new delivery model, a partnership with local health providers, or a shift to a different congregate meal menu, a well-conducted feasibility study can help you make an informed decision.

### Basics

A feasibility study is an essential tool in program planning and decision-making. It can help staff determine whether a proposed project or initiative is viable, considering factors like cost, resources, impact, and sustainability. Feasibility studies do not have to be complicated; anyone can tailor them to the size and scope of their program's specific needs.

A feasibility study typically examines five dimensions: technical, economic, legal, operational, and time. Put simply, it helps you answer:

- Do we have the technology and resources to start and run this project?
- Can we afford to start and sustain this project?
- Are there any laws or regulations that could be barriers?
- Can we realistically carry out this project with our current staff and operations?
- Can we get this project up and running in a reasonable amount of time?

## Process

Your feasibility study will typically be led by a program manager, coordinator, or lead who thoroughly understands the senior nutrition program's operational and strategic needs. This leader is responsible for study oversight, but each template section should be answered by the team member or department best equipped to answer its questions.

Once the study questions have been answered, review the results as a program or leadership team. If you have an advisory committee, include its members as well. This review meeting allows you to share perspectives to see whether anyone disagrees with or wants to add to the answers already collected. After the review meeting, the final step is to conduct a small decision-making meeting where the study lead presents the final study results, and leadership makes the final evidence-based decision(s) to pursue, park, or abandon the project(s) studied.

## Template

**Project Name:** [Concise but descriptive title]

**Prepared by:** [Name, position]

**Date:** [Date of completion/submission]

### Executive Summary

[Provide a brief overview of the project, including what it intends to accomplish and a topline description of how it will achieve that result. This section should be no more than two pages and may be considerably shorter for simple initiatives or enhancement efforts. The goal is to enable decision-makers to grasp the study's essence and critical points quickly without delving into the full report.]

### Introduction

[Explain the purpose of the study and the full scope of the endeavor under consideration. Detail the project's purpose, scope, and background. Explain how the idea originated and any preliminary findings that led to the feasibility analysis. Demonstrate the need for the project and, if applicable, other projects, partners, or competitors in the space. Define the boundaries and limits of the study to clarify what will and will not be considered. Describe the structure of the document.]

## **Technical Feasibility**

[Use the prompts below to assess whether the technical resources available are adequate for the project. Responses should be detailed and include explanations.]

- What technology and resources are currently available?
- Are there technical skills available among our staff?
- What technology, tools, or skills are required to implement the project?
- Will there need to be technical training or purchases?
- Can the current technology and skills meet the project needs?
- What are the gaps and possible solutions?

## **Economic Feasibility**

[Use the prompts below to evaluate the project's financial viability. Responses should be detailed and include explanations.]

- What is the total cost of implementation (one-time costs and recurring costs)?
- What are the specific costs for resources, staffing, training, and maintenance?
- Are there existing budgets or funding sources available?
- Are additional funds required? If so, list potential sources (grants, donations, etc.).
- What are the expected financial benefits or savings?
- How long will it take to recover the initial investment?
- Can the cost of this project be sustained over time, and for how long?

## **Legal Feasibility**

[Use the prompts below to identify legal considerations that may impact the project. Responses should be detailed and include explanations.]

- What local, state, and federal regulations apply?
- What is the impact of the regulations on the project?
- Do we need any specific permits or licenses?
- How will we comply with existing legal frameworks?
- What potential legal risks are involved?

## **Operational Feasibility**

[Use the prompts below to determine if the project can be implemented within the current operational structure. Responses should be detailed and include explanations.]

- How will the project integrate with current operations and procedures?
- Are modifications to existing processes required?
- Will additional staff be needed, and if so, how many hires?
- Can volunteers be used to meet staffing needs?
- Are current staff capable of adapting to new roles or responsibilities?
- How will the project affect existing services and stakeholders?
- What are the potential organizational risks or tradeoffs if this idea is pursued?

## **Time Feasibility**

[Use the prompts below to examine a realistic project completion timeline. Responses should be detailed and include explanations.]

- What are the major phases of the project?
- When are critical milestones expected to be reached?
- Are there external deadlines for funding or implementation?
- What are the potential delays, and how can they be mitigated?

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

[Summarize the findings and state a clear recommendation based on the feasibility study. Note the significant benefits and risks associated with the project. If the project is feasible, outline the initial next steps towards implementation. If the project is infeasible, suggest alternative solutions or considerations.]

## **Appendices**

[Include supporting documents or data, such as budget details, technical specifications, and stakeholder feedback.]

Last updated: May 2024