



Nutrition and Aging Resource Center

Quick Tips: OAA Nutrition Program Funding Options

Quick Tips are informal documents about the Older Americans Act (OAA) Title III-C Senior Nutrition Program (SNP). These sheets highlight flexibilities of the federal OAA statute and address common misunderstandings about the OAA. Below each point are links to reference materials and inspiration from successful program projects.¹

| See [Establishing a Fee-for-Service Private Pay System](#) SNP guide.



Voluntary contributions must be used to expand the service to which they were given. For example, contributions given for a congregate meal go to the congregate meal program. Voluntary contributions should supplement, not replace OAA funding. Participants should be able to make contributions confidentially.

[Voluntary Contributions Guide](#) – Key concepts, general guidance, and required and prohibited acts related to voluntary contributions.

[Increasing Voluntary Contributions at Congregate Meal Sites](#) – GSA pilot study.



Reimbursement levels can only be accurately set if the actual cost of the meal is known. The cost of food is only part of a meal's actual cost. Personnel, production, overhead, facility, and transportation costs should all be included.

[Identifying the Total Cost of a Meal](#) – Summary brief for meal cost calculations.

[What Does a Meal Cost? \(Dane County, WI\)](#) – Stakeholder education article.



Knowing participation trends for meals, contributions, and services can help identify unpopular parts of the program. This information can be used to adjust services and increase participation.

[Tips to Keep Those We Serve at the Table \(recording\)](#) and [takeaway sheet](#) – ACL and NCOA webinar from the Power Up Your Congregate Meal Program series (registration/sign-in required).

[Understanding Participants' Monetary Contributions](#) – ACL issue brief.



Local nutrition service providers can engage in “for pay” arrangements to sell nutrition services (meals or nutrition counseling), rent out the kitchen, do private catering, and contract with health plans to provide members with nutrition services.

[Establishing a Fee-for-Service Private Pay System](#) – Senior Nutrition Program guide.

[Tips to Attract New Participants \(recording\)](#) and [takeaway sheet](#) – ACL and NCOA webinar from the Power Up Your Congregate Meal Program series (registration/sign-in required).



Participants have the choice to use SNAP benefits as a voluntary contribution; however, using their limited benefits on a program that does not require payment may not be in their best interest.

[Voluntary Contributions Guide](#) – Key concepts, general guidance, and required and prohibited acts related to voluntary contributions.



Donated foods are not specifically prohibited in the OAA. The OAA directs Title III-C meal providers to follow state and local food safety codes on acceptable food donations. State unit on aging (SUA) policies may provide additional guidelines. Acceptable donated food typically includes fresh fruit and vegetables; undamaged, shelf-stable, canned or packaged foods; and wild game (not including fish) from a licensed processor. SNPs may not accept USDA foods as a donation.

[Partnerships with Food Banks and Other USDA Programs](#)



OAA senior nutrition programs may be eligible recipient agencies for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). This includes projects that operate congregate nutrition sites and projects that provide home-delivered meals. TEFAP-eligible agencies may vary from state to state.

[TEFAP Part 251 Regulation](#)

[Partnerships with Foodbanks and USDA Programs](#)



OAA meal programs may be able to provide Title III-C meals in the Medicaid Waiver programs. Title III-C meals can be provided as long as other assistance programs are not paying for the same meal. Follow SUA requirements for any nutrition standards.

Healthcare Policy and Practice Opportunities for Senior Nutrition Programs

- [Part 1: The Evolving Healthcare Legislation Landscape](#)
- [Part 2: Launching an In-Home Medical Nutrition Therapy Program](#)

Additional Quick Tip Sheets

- [Congregate Meals](#)
- [Home-delivered Meals](#)
- [NSIP](#)
- [OAA Basics](#)
- [SNP Nutrition Guidelines](#)
- [Nutrition Service Reporting](#)

Find more resources at the [Nutrition and Aging Resource Center](#).

ⁱ In many areas the OAA gives SUAs the authority to add other requirements beyond those that are included in the OAA. So certain practices, which might be allowable under the OAA and perhaps included in this document, might be handled differently in some states or local areas. These documents only reflect information about the OAA nutrition program from a federal perspective; state and local variances are NOT covered.