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<Name of Agency>

Nutrition Services  
Meals and Meal Service  
Policies and Procedures

< Additional agency information>

<Date created/last updated>  
  
<Agency disclaimer, if applicable>

# Meal Frequency/Scheduling

* 1. Congregate Program
     1. The congregate program shall furnish to eligible senior dining site participants in the Title III-C program one hot meal per day at least five days each week (Monday through Friday), unless authorization is received from the <overseeing agency> to provide meals less frequently.
     2. Meals will be served at <Time>unless prior authorization is received from the <overseeing agency> to provide meals at a different time.
     3. Holiday meals, appropriate to the occasion, are planned as part of menu development.
     4. Birthday party celebrations are held <frequency> at each site and are posted in the newsletter.
     5. <Appropriate staff> coordinate special evening meals according to a schedule, which is pre-approved by the <approver position>. These meals are not counted as Title III-C unless the meal served has an approved menu signed by the agency dietitian.
     6. From time to time, requests are made by others to use the dining area. These requests must be approved and meet guidelines as indicated in the <facility> usage guidelines.
  2. Home-delivered Meal Program
     1. The <overseeing agency> shall provide at least one nutritious, home-delivered meal per day and any additional meals the nutrition project may elect to provide. Meals shall be provided five or more days per week except in rural areas where such frequency is not feasible and a lesser frequency is approved by the state agency.

# Nutritional Requirements

The program shall serve a variety of foods and meal patterns to enhance the nutrient content of meals and increase participant satisfaction.

* 1. Congregate and home-delivered meal programs must operate in accordance with federal guidelines for Older Americans Act funding. Guidelines for meals are based on <agency> and State meal requirements. These requirements are indicated in the contract with the catering vendor.
  2. Congregate meals and home-delivered meals must provide one-third of Daily Reference Intakes (DRIs), as established by the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council. In addition, meals must follow the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
  3. Each meal must meet the State required menu pattern.
  4. A registered dietitian (RD) provides documentation that the meal meets the required nutrition standards.

# Menu Development

* 1. An RD, registered by the Commission on Dietetic Registration and licensed in <state>, employed by the caterer or contracted, develops or reviews, approves, signs, and dates all menus prior to serving and before submitting to the <agency>.
  2. Staff, taking into consideration senior desires, requests, and special events, orders from regular menus or other approved menus as necessary.
  3. Changes or substitutions made to any approved menus shall be authorized by a RD and submitted to the the <agency>.
     1. <Appropriate staff> will be notified of any necessary substitution of food items via an e-mail from caterer.
     2. If a substitution has been made without notification, <appropriate staff> will contact the RD to confirm that the substitution is valid.
     3. Substitutions to the daily menu will be posted for participants.
  4. Program and nutrition staff meet monthly to develop menus.
  5. Menu selections should be based on seniors’ feedback, quality of food items, and special events.
  6. Menus for congregate programs are posted for participants’ information in a readily accessible location in the dining room and are made available on the <city or county> website, local newspapers, and bi-monthly in the newsletter.
  7. A menu for home-delivered meals will be provided at the beginning of each month to home-delivery clients with meal delivery. The menu will also be posted on the <agency> website and provided to the <agency> coordinators.
  8. Menus and menu logs with substitutions indicated are kept on file for one year.
  9. Coffee and tea are not part of the meal program but may be offered using separate funds.

# Food Allergies

* 1. Identifying participants with food allergies
     1. Ask participants about food allergies at initial screening and every <period of time>.
     2. Advise participants to tell <designated person> about any new food allergies as soon as they become aware of the allergy.
     3. Follow <agency> policies and comply with the [Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regarding food allergies](https://archive.ada.gov/q&a_lesley_university.htm) and other medically necessary diets, which may be considered disabilities and have specific requirements for reasonable accommodations.
  2. Food receiving and storage
     1. Check all ingredient labels each time a food is purchased.
     2. Date each food item when received.
     3. Store food items that are intended for persons with allergies in a separate location from the regular inventory.
  3. Keep ingredient labels for at least 24 hours after serving the product.
  4. Prevent cross-contact during food preparation.
     1. Wash hands before preparing food.
     2. Wear single-use gloves.
     3. Use a clean apron when preparing food for an individual with a.
     4. Wash, rinse, and sanitize all cookware before and after each use.
     5. Wash, rinse, and sanitize food contact surfaces including countertops, knives, spatulas, etc.
     6. Designate an allergy-free zone in the kitchen. When working with multiple persons with food allergies, set up procedures to prevent cross-contact within the allergy-free zone.
     7. Prepare food items for persons with food allergies first. Label and store these items separately (e.g., “Gluten-free”).
     8. Use a clean, sanitized cutting board when preparing food.
     9. Use clean potholders and oven mitts to prevent cross-contact.
  5. Prevent cross-contact during meal service.
     1. Set aside food for participants with food allergies from self-service food areas, such as salad bars, before the food is set out.
     2. Use dedicated serving utensils and gloves for items served to persons with allergies.
     3. Label items on the serving line correctly and clearly so that items for persons with allergies are easily recognizable.
     4. Ensure that tables and chairs are cleaned and sanitized before and after each meal and when needed.
     5. Refrain from serving any food or beverage to a participant with a food allergy if there is any question as to whether or not something they are allergic to might be present in that particular item.
  6. Monitoring and Corrective Action
     1. <Designated person> continually monitors receiving, preparation, and serving areas to assess whether food allergy procedures are being followed.
     2. Immediately correct errors and retrain any employee or volunteer found not following these procedures.
  7. Contact emergency services if a participant with the potential for anaphylaxis consumes a food they are allergic to or exhibits signs of an allergic reaction (hives, swelling, difficulty breathing, etc.).

# Portion Control

* 1. The proper serving utensil shall be used to provide the correct portion size to all participants and to ensure the correct number of meals can be served with minimum waste. Every effort shall be made to minimize leftovers.
  2. Serving equipment shall be touched only by the handles.
  3. Each participant shall receive all the required meal pattern food items. Participants may choose to not have certain items.
  4. The only acceptable reason for altering the pre-determined portion size would be the special request of a participant for less than the standard serving size or for the refusal of an item.
  5. Congregate Meal Program:
     1. If a site is short on the number of servings needed, every effort shall be made to obtain a full meal for all participants in attendance by using a substitute food item of equal nutritive value or an entire meal to meet the menu pattern. Spreading of meals or meal items shall not take place.
     2. Participants shall be offered the opportunity for second servings before non-eligible staff are entitled to purchase individual leftover meal items.
     3. Second servings will be supported under <agency> funding and not counted as a meal for reporting purposes.

# Dining Room Environment

* 1. The <appropriate staff> shall ensure each participant can enjoy meals in an unhurried, pleasant environment. Tables and chairs shall be arranged so participants, volunteers, and staff can easily walk around and obtain or receive meals.
  2. <Appropriate staff> are encouraged to arrange tabletops with eye-pleasing centerpieces and tablecloths or placemats to ensure a pleasant dining environment.
  3. Soft background music may be played during the meal, but sites shall refrain from playing television or videos (unless there is a special program) during meals to limit excessive noise and encourage increased socialization.
  4. Prayer is not officially sponsored by or led by staff. Each participant has a choice whether to pray (silently or audibly).

# Dining Room Serving Styles

Staff will observe a structured protocol when providing congregate meals.

* 1. No part of the meal may be served in a bag or a container other than the standard nutrition plate/tray.
  2. If participants are served at their seats from a serving line using a steam table or other preapproved serving method capable of maintaining safe temperatures:
     1. Trained volunteers or staff will take portioned plates to participants who have signed up for the meal.
     2. Then, guests of seniors that have paid in advance will be served.
     3. Senior aides or substitute senior staff qualify as seniors.
     4. Staff will serve those on the waiting list.
     5. Food service staff will make a call for “seconds.” “Seconds” must be served on a new plate.
     6. All eligible staff (60 years and over) will be served.
     7. Non-eligible staff (under 60 years) that have paid for a meal will be served.
  3. If participants are picking up their meals from a serving line:
     1. Using the same method as above, trained volunteers or staff will serve those unable to come to the serving line for their meal.
     2. Staff will instruct participants on the waiting list to wait until they are called.
     3. Staff will call tables in random order to come to the serving line and pick up a plate.
     4. Staff will call those seniors (aged 50-59) or guests of seniors that have paid in advance. Senior aides or substitute senior staff qualify as seniors.
     5. Staff will call those on the waiting list according to their number on the list to come to the serving line to pick up their plate.
     6. Food service staff will make a call for “seconds.” Participants requesting “seconds” must use a new plate.
     7. All eligible staff (60 years and older) will be served.
     8. All others to include non-eligible staff (under 60 years) that have paid will be served.
  4. If participants have informed the <appropriate staff> that they will be late, lunch may be held on the steam table for them until <time>. Those participants should be taken into consideration after waitlist staff members are served.
     1. Meals can be held on the serving line, not plated, until <time>. After that time, unclaimed food will be removed by the <appropriate staff> in preparation for cleaning. Staff members that have paid for the meal shall receive after <time> as food is being removed from the steam table.
  5. Anyone arriving after <time> who has not given prior notice will not be served.
  6. Food not utilized must be discarded.
  7. Participants may bring their own food and dine with congregate meal participants. Such foods must not require heating, not require storage other than the participant’s carry-all or handbag and be appropriately wrapped to prevent spills.

# Dining Room Settings and Packing Procedures

* 1. Congregate Meals
     1. Tableware
        1. Disposable tableware shall be used whenever possible. Disposable items shall be used once.
        2. Napkins, rolled plastic cutlery, and single-wrapped plastic straws shall be provided with each meal.
        3. Volunteers/staff are required to wear gloves and hat or other acceptable hair restraint when they are rolling plastic cutlery.
        4. Upon request, tableware appropriate to the individual’s needs will be made available for persons who are visually impaired or have other disabilities.
        5. When using reusable items such as cups, china, dishes, silverware, cambros, and coolers, the following procedures will be followed:
           1. Dishes, china, and cups must be inspected regularly to ensure they are dry and free from surface scratches, damaged edges, and worn glaze. Items that show damage and wear should be provided to <appropriate staff> for discarding and replacement.
           2. Items that are not stored and sanitized by an approved method will be cleaned properly prior to putting them out for usage. Soiled items will be sanitized using approved methods at the end of the meal.
           3. Cups, glasses, bowls, and plates shall be handled without touching the inside surfaces or surfaces that contact users’ mouths or food/beverage.
           4. Salt and pepper shakers shall be provided on the tables, or individual salt and pepper packages shall be provided with each meal. Individual condiments shall also be offered when appropriate.
     2. Silverware
        1. Stainless steel silverware, knives, forks, and teaspoons shall be touched by only the handles.
        2. Silverware that is not stored and sanitized by an approved method will be cleaned and sanitized prior to usage. Soiled silverware shall be properly washed and sanitized at the end of the meal.
     3. Cambros and coolers
        1. Cambros and coolers should be inspected daily to ensure they are in good repair.
        2. <Appropriate staff> will rinse the containers daily. The <appropriate staff> is responsible for sanitizing the containers.
        3. The <appropriate staff> should inform the <appropriate staff> immediately if items are not in good repair or if it appears that containers were not properly sanitized.
  2. Home-delivered Meals
     1. Packaging
        1. Home-delivered meals shall be packaged by <appropriate staff> on site at <appropriate site> in plastic microwavable trays covered by plastic and sealed with a sealing machine.
        2. Food should be packaged and placed into delivery bags (hot food) or coolers (cold items) quickly, to maintain temperature best.
     2. Delivery bags and coolers
        1. Cold items are packed into coolers with ice and/or ice packs and delivered to pick-up sites.
        2. Hot meals should be placed into delivery bags that have been plugged in for at least ½ hour prior to loading meals.
        3. Coolers and delivery bags should be inspected daily to ensure they are in good repair. The <appropriate staff> should rinse the coolers and delivery bags. The <appropriate staff> is responsible for sanitizing. The <appropriate staff> should inform the <appropriate staff> immediately if items are not in good repair or do not appear to be sanitized properly. When items need to be replaced, the <appropriate staff> should request the purchase of new items from the <agency>.

# Sanitization Procedures

* 1. The sinks and work surfaces shall be cleaned and sanitized before each use.
     1. To create the sanitizing solution: 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) of bleach per gallon of room temperature water or 4 teaspoons of bleach per quart of room temperature water.
  2. Allow sanitized surfaces to air dry. Do not wipe with paper or cloth towels.

# Removal of Food from the Senior Dining Site

In accordance with <jurisdiction> food service safety requirements, all perishable food served but not consumed by participants will be discarded.

* 1. Foods that may be removed by participants are canned fruit, bread, crackers, cookies, desserts, and juice.
  2. The procedure for removing food by dining site participants shall be posted in the dining area, which explains the reason for limiting food taken from the site due to the risk of foodborne illness if perishable food.
  3. Staff will advise all nutrition participants of safe food handling for food removed from the dining site.
  4. Staff shall not provide bags, foil, etc. for participants to take food from the site.
  5. Staff will advise all participants of the nutrition program that neither the <local agency> nor the <overseeing agency(ies)> are responsible for any illness that occurs due to violation of this policy.

# Food Production Procedures

* 1. All food shall be stored, held, prepared, packaged, and transported in a way that ensures the maximum nutrient content and safety of the food.
  2. Storage units must have at least one air temperature measuring device. It must be located in the warmest part of the refrigerated unit and the coldest part of the hot holding units. Monitoring equipment temperatures and documenting temperatures each <frequency> to verify the units are working properly.
  3. Meal handling, production, and delivery functions shall comply with all food service and health requirements established by local, state, and federal health authorities.
  4. <Appropriate staff> must comply with these policies and the <meal site> Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) Policy when receiving, storing, preparing, cooking, holding, serving, and/or delivering.
  5. <Appropriate staff> shall ensure that a current copy of this Policies and Procedures Manual and the HACCP policy is readily accessible at each <meal site> for reference.

# Licensing/Permits

* 1. The <appropriate staff> shall ensure that program staff and their food production/delivery subcontractors have obtained all the necessary licenses, permits, and food handler’s permits required by law.
  2. The current health department license shall be posted in the kitchen or dining area.