

Piece of the Pie: Making The Business Case for Nutrition Services, October 2020

Tip Sheet: Business Acumen Skills and Resources

The purpose of this tip sheet is to showcase the range of resources available across the national aging services landscape to support senior nutrition programs seeking to develop or strengthen their internal and external business-related skills and processes.

How can stronger business skills help senior nutrition programs? Senior nutrition programs (SNPs) are a trusted and vital provider of valuable home- and community-based services to support healthy aging. SNPs are well-positioned to partner with a range of organizations to provide impactful person-centered aging and nutrition services able to optimize the independence, health, and wellbeing of older adults. To remain competitive, expand services to meet the growing need, and continue to serve the increasingly diverse older adult population of today and tomorrow, SNPs can benefit from adding business skills to their professional “toolbox.”

Quality first. When discussing business acumen, there is often a focus on external actions, including new partnerships, fundraising activities, and meeting regulatory requirements. It is also important to work equally – if not harder – on internal systems to ensure your organization delivers high-quality nutrition services including administrative cost management, menu costing and variety, etc. Additional internal and external areas of focus for strong business-minded SNPs may include:



Internal

- Cost efficiency and budgeting – does your organization have a mix of program revenue sources from which to draw? Organizations can rely on the strategic use of staffing patterns, technology systems, volunteer management, etc. to generate needed cost efficiencies.
- Food and service quality – are the meal and other nutrition services offered person-centered and appealing to the diversity of health, wellness, dietary and cultural needs of the older adults you serve?
- Internal procurement systems – what are the timelines that must be considered prior to procurement? Which staff must approve or otherwise be involved or notified?
- Technology systems – does your organization leverage available technological systems to facilitate the delivery of high-quality nutrition services?

- Quality assurance – do clients receive meals with few substitutions that meet their dietary needs? Are meals delivered when they are expected? Are client calls responded to professionally?
- Hiring processes – for your organization is there a sufficient diversity of staffing to support the development, delivery, and management of person-centered, competitive, and appealing nutrition services for the clients you serve? What hiring processes are in place to ensure engagement of a range of staff with varied and complimentary competencies?
- Staff roles and training - is cross-training implemented? Are staff expertise areas sufficient to meet high quality service delivery? For example, a nurse or dietitian may be more expensive but allow the organization opportunities for additional partnerships, funding opportunities and management of complex issues.



External

- Business planning – does your organization have an official written business plan in place? Business plans include your organization’s business objectives, outreach and marketing strategy, financial background, tactics, and opportunities.
- External procurement processes – what processes does your organization use to evaluate, select, and create agreements with external suppliers to support the purchase of needed goods and services?
- Strategic partnership development – which organizations does your organization have formal and informal relationships with to share expertise, resources, and capacities for mutual benefit?
- Billing and payment management – does your organization have the infrastructure and information technology in place to support billing, reporting, and monitoring?



- Competitive/market analysis – how have your clients’ needs changed during COVID-19? What new and ongoing opportunities have arisen among your competitors, partners and general business environment that can be leveraged to expand the services your organization offers, retain new clients, build needed capacity, enhance service quality, and/or grow your revenue?
- Social enterprise development – are there revenue-generating services that your organization can offer that both generate income and social benefit for your community and the clients you serve?

RESOURCE LISTING

Advancing States HCBS Business Acumen Center <http://www.advancingstates.org/initiatives/hcbs-business-acumen-center>

- Aging and Disabilities Information Technology Systems: What You Need to Know <http://www.advancingstates.org/sites/nasud/files/ADS%20IT%20Systems%20Report%200620web.pdf>

Jesse Hill Market <https://vimeo.com/445675850/f6a03c6fb1>

Partnership between Open Hand Atlanta, Atlanta Community Food Bank and Grady Hospital with support from Home Depot and an ACL grant. Food distribution, nutrition education, prepared healthy meals, and management of diet-related conditions for people living in a food desert.

Free Management Project <https://managementhelp.org/> Free management library, videos, online classes and groups, etc.

- Entrepreneurship <https://managementhelp.org/#entrepreneurship>
- Organizational Performance Resources <https://managementhelp.org/#title6>
- Finances and Funding-Non-Profits <https://managementhelp.org/#title24>

National Association on Area Agencies on Aging

Aging and Disability Institute: <https://www.n4a.org/businessinstitute>

- Ask An Expert (FAQs) <https://www.aginganddisabilitybusinessinstitute.org/ask-an-expert/>
- Readiness Assessment Tools <https://www.aginganddisabilitybusinessinstitute.org/assessment-overview/>
- Success Stories <https://www.aginganddisabilitybusinessinstitute.org/category/success-stories/>
- Becoming a Medicare Fee-For-Service Provider: What CBOs Need to Know <https://www.aginganddisabilitybusinessinstitute.org/resources/becoming-a-medicare-fee-for-service-provider-what-cbos-need-to-know/>

National Council on Aging

- Formulating Strategic Business Plans for Health Aging Programs <https://d2mkcg26uvvg1cz.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/MA-Business-Plan-Toolkit.pdf>
- Videos/Webinars (Tim Talks etc) <https://www.ncoa.org/center-for-healthy-aging/resourcehub/community-orgs-and-professionals/professional-resources/videos-webinars-3/>

Meals on Wheels America

National Resource Center on Nutrition and Aging: www.nutritionandaging.org

Issue Briefs: <https://nutritionandaging.org/briefs/>

- Sustainability and Revenue Generation Issue Briefs – Summary and Extended Versions
- Innovation: Part Discipline, Part Creativity, All Possible Issue Briefs – Summary and Extended Versions
- Marketing: Re-Thinking Your Understanding and Re-Assessing Your Strategy - Issue Briefs – Summary and Extended Versions
- Maximizing the Use of Commercial Kitchens for Senior Nutrition Programs - Issue Briefs – Summary and Extended Versions
- Quality Nutrition Services for Senior Nutrition Programs 101 Issue Briefs – Summary and Extended Versions
- Calculating Meal Cost Issue Briefs – Summary and Extended Versions
- Food Service Basics for Non Food Service Program Managers and Staff Issue Briefs – Summary and Extended Versions

White Paper: <https://nutritionandaging.org/white-paper-resource-collection/>

- Urgency to Change – Call to Action for the Aging Network – White Paper

COVID-19 Resources: <https://nutritionandaging.org/covid-19/>

- Partnerships with Foodbanks and Other USDA Programs
<https://nutritionandaging.org/partnering-with-usda-programs-during-covid-19/>
- Senior Nutrition Programs and Sustainability: Establishing a Private Pay Program
<https://nutritionandaging.org/establishing-a-private-pay-program/>
- Step By Step Guide for Senior Nutrition Programs Seeking to Work with Food Retailers
<https://nutritionandaging.org/guide-to-working-with-restaurants-and-grocery-stores-for-meals/>

Innovations in Nutrition Services and Programs Hub

- <https://nutritionandaging.org/innovation-services-hub/>

Non-Profit Leadership Center <https://nlctb.org/>