



Title III C 1.5 Meal Box
Program Update
Presentation to OASAC

November 2023

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“This project was supported, in part by grant number 90INNU 0024-01-00 from the Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.”

Title III C 1.5

- AgeOptions is developing a culturally inclusive meal box delivery program
 - Food to prepare 21 meals a week
 - Consumer driven-menus developed using food preferences data
- Addresses a gap in nutrition between Congregate Title III C - 1 and Home Delivered Meals Title III C - 2

Goals

- Overall goal is the modernization of nutrition infrastructure by targeting an unmet need; provide 21 meals per week at a cost less than prepared meals



Additional Goals of Title III C 1.5

- Decrease food waste by providing participants with the foods they like to eat
- Target ethnically, racially and limited English-speaking populations
- Provide medically tailored menus (*Still to be developed – possible diabetic, renal, renal, heart healthful & gluten free*)
- Provide nutritious fresh and frozen foods of proteins, fruits, vegetables
- Influence Title III C funding streams under the Older Americans Act

Population to be served

- When fully implemented, program will:
 - Target persons who are:
 - Challenged in going to the grocery or food pantry,
 - Have the ability and interest in cooking or
 - Have a home care worker who cooks meals
 - Address the diversity of our suburban Cook County communities
 - Halal
 - Korean
 - Latin
 - Black/African American
 - Kosher



Research

Surveys – participants were surveyed during every phase of the program development

Food preferences surveys – inform menus

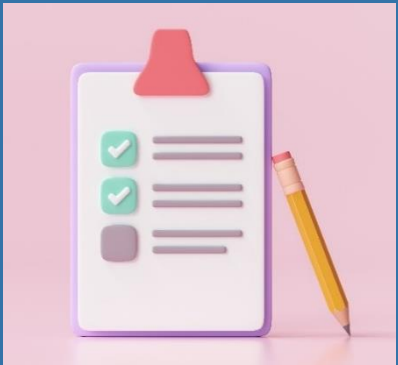
Pilot program surveys – inform development, logistics, and menus

Grocery delivery recipient survey

Surveyed participants receiving 2x monthly deliveries of groceries in response to the Pandemic. These participants are being assessed and transitioned to Title III C 1.5.



Survey of Pandemic Response Grocery Delivery program



- **Over half indicated they were unable to go to the grocery store** on their own or needed a shopping escort.
 - Lack of transportation, limited mobility, and/or limited access to a grocery store are key eligibility criteria for T III C I.5.
- **Over 40 percent reported that they would be “food insecure”** if not receiving a food box.
 - T III C I.5 offers comprehensive nutrition.
- **Three quarters of respondents report they would not be able to eat a well-balanced diet** without the deliveries.
 - T III C I.5 menus meet the same requirements as HDM and congregate meals. Each meal has servings of lean proteins, fiber, fruits and vegetables.
- Participants are **seeking variety in the meal boxes. Grocery boxes generally have the same foods items every two weeks.**
 - Each global cuisine in T III C I.5 offers 4 unique 1-week menus that turn over month to month offering variety week to week.





Three Models Emerged

- **Single Source** provider who can:
 - Source
 - Pack
 - Deliver the Meal Box kits
- **Hybrid model** where food is:
 - Sourced from multiple providers
 - Packed by a community-based agency
 - Delivered by the community-based agency
- **Grocery Store model** where food is:
 - Sourced and packaged by the grocery store
 - Delivered by another entity
- In the hybrid model, storage of food presented a challenge.
- Program was not a good fit for traditional HDM providers as they purchase food in bulk and not in the smaller quantities required for the Meal Box kits.



Program Eligibility

- Age 60 or older
- Resides in Suburban Cook County
- Frail and/or homebound for periods of three days or more
 - Temporary response to short-term condition; reassessment required
- Isolation
- Inability to use or limited access to transportation or has no reliable source for shopping and transportation
- Unable to participate in congregate meals; not receiving HDM
- Willing and able to prepare meals
- Homecare worker with robust service plan of care
- Limited or no other options to obtain food



Phased-in Implementation

- **Beginning in March 2023 →**
 - Title III C 1.5 offered in **two geographic areas in Suburban Cook County** through our CCU partners:
 - ❖ Northern Suburbs (North Shore Senior Center)
 - ❖ Southwest Suburbs (Pathlights)
 - **53 participants**
 - Initially offered **mainstream diet only**
- **May 1, 2023 - more geographic regions added bringing the total a little over 70 participants**
 - ❖ Kenneth Young Center
 - ❖ Catholic Charities
 - All enrolled participants are offered the Black/African, Latin and mainstream
- **During August & September 2023** – two remaining geographic areas were added
- Top Box, our primary vendor, converted to a traditional nutrition provider October 1st.
- Plans to offer Halal and Korean Cuisines before the end of the grant (12/31/23) period or early 2024



Available Nutrition Programs – Which one is right for your client?

Congregate

Eligibility is 60 years of age or reside in the same household as someone who is 60 years of age.]

Participants receive a daily meal usually at around noon.

Meal meets 1/3 of a person's daily nutrition

Participants are able to attend site usually on their own or through public transportation or if the site provides transportation

In addition to daily nutrition, nutrition site provides activities and opportunities for the participant to eat a nutritious meal with their peers. Most are currently offering grab and go meals.



Meal Box

Eligibility is for persons 60 years of age and/or resides in the same household as someone who is 60 years of age and is challenged in grocery shopping including use of a food pantry and limited or no transportation. Participant has no identifiable individual or reliable source for shopping and transportation. Participant must be home to receive delivery.

Participant should express desire and ability to cook or have a homecare worker with a robust service plan that by providing the meal box, reduces shopping and transportation from the plan of care.

Meal boxes meet 100% of daily nutrition

Meal boxes contain food for 21 meals per week that includes breakfast, lunch, and dinner for the full seven days.

Meal boxes contain dairy, proteins and fresh fruits and vegetables.

Choice of different cuisines – General, Black/African, Latin, Kosher, Korean and Halal. (Not all options are available across suburban Cook County.)

Home Delivered Meals

Eligibility is 60 years of age and/or reside in same household as someone who is 60 years of age.

Participant should be challenged in grocery shopping, transportation, and cooking. Individual should have limited identifiable individual(s) or reliable source

Each meal meets 1/3 of a person's daily nutrition.

Special diets are available.



Programs receiving funding through the Older Americans Act, state and AgeOptions should be directed to persons 60+ years of age with the greatest social and economic need.



Connecting Older Adults with Community-based Resources and Options

	Meal Box Kits	Home Delivered Meals	Congregate Dining
Eligibility	60 and older, challenged in obtaining food, homebound for 3+ days a week, no reliable source for shopping or transportation, ability and desire to cook	60 and older, challenged in obtaining food, transportation, and cooking	60 and older
Daily Nutrition	100% daily nutrition	1/3 daily nutrition	1/3 daily nutrition
Prepared Food?	Unprepared foods, recipients prepare meals using delivered menus	Prepared meal	Prepared meal in public setting
Special and/or Medically Tailored Meals	Available	Available	Unavailable





A meal box kit presents significant cost savings

- Providing a meal of unprepared food costs in the range of \$4.00 to \$6.00 per meal whereas a congregate or home delivered meals costs \$10.00 to \$14.00. per meal





Next Steps

- A remaining deliverable under our grant is a **Toolkit** that will be available for communities to use. We believe our grocery store model can be replicated anywhere in the United States.
- The 2024 **Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act** is an opportunity for advocacy on the federal level for more **flexibility** in how nutrition dollars are allocated and spent.
- Continue to advocate for state dollars that support nutrition in Illinois. Illinois has been most generous in funding nutrition programs.
- We are in process of producing a Youtube video to be used for advocacy purposes.



Future Considerations

- With a social work intern, we are calling all program participants to evaluate the current program.
- While the results are yet to be learned, we anticipate, based on current feedback that participants are receiving too much food. 100% of daily nutrition is a lot of food.
- While there is significant per meal cost savings, the full cost of weekly meal box kit delivery is expensive. Future may result in food for two meals per day, representing 2/3 of daily nutrition.
- Critical to frame the program around meals from the delivery of a food pantry in a box.

