



State of Connecticut
Department of Aging and Disability Services

February 10, 2023

Dear Municipal Leader:

I am excited to share information about available funding for senior centers. As you may be aware during the last legislative session, the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) was awarded \$10 million dollars in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for senior centers in Connecticut.

The ADS State Unit on Aging (SUA) spent several months engaging in a thoughtful and thorough process of listening to the current needs and challenges of senior centers, researching the eligible uses for these ARPA funds, and following the legislative intent to re-engage people at their local senior centers. From that process we calculated appropriate distribution of these funds.

We want to ensure that all senior centers throughout the state and their staff benefit from these funds. Of the full amount awarded, the majority of \$750,000, or 7.5%, has been reserved for statewide senior center activities. These activities could potentially include a senior center-focused website, a senior center summit event, and/or a media campaign to encourage engagement at senior centers. There was also \$250,000, or 2.5%, reserved for administrative purposes to support this project.

The remaining \$9,000,000 of the funds has been set aside for Connecticut senior centers and is broken down by municipality. All allocations contain two parts: the base allocation and a formulaic allocation. All municipalities receive a base allocation of \$5,000. The remainder of the allocation is calculated using Census data on town demographics, including share of the population aged 60 and older, race/ethnicity status, disability status, poverty status and whether the town is in a rural location. The allocation for each municipality is included in the attached document.

For the purposes of this funding opportunity, the SUA will continue to use the definition of senior center that was previously used in 2020-2021 when Connecticut senior centers had the opportunity to apply for a reimbursement of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding through the SUA. The definition for senior centers is as follows:

Senior centers include municipal senior centers and 501(c)(3) senior centers. For the purposes of this funding opportunity, senior centers are defined as those that provide multiple services including the core services of information, referral, and assistance. Additional services could include nutrition, wellness, educational, social, and recreational activities.

Municipalities with multiple senior centers that meet the funding definition of senior center shall allocate funding to each senior center in the municipality. Information that municipalities should take into consideration when determining this amount for each senior center may include: usership/membership of the senior center, safety needs of users, staff and volunteers of the senior center, current and anticipated needs of the senior center (according to senior center leadership), and annual budget of the senior center. Municipalities without a senior center within town limits are encouraged to partner with neighboring municipalities who host senior centers that serve their town's residents.

These ARPA funds may be used for certain purposes or "eligible uses." These eligible uses fall under two categories of expenditures within "Provision of Government Services."

- (1) "facility improvements" - which could cover a variety of capital improvements including air & HVAC systems, lighting, accessibility features as well as vehicle acquisition, maintenance, and repurposing; and
- (2) "programming" - which could include the acquisition of program registration software, web design renovation capability, extended senior center hours, special or focused entertainment or programming, while also potentially encompassing expanded staff hours to support those programs, when applicable.

We will soon send out a communication, which will include an electronic "Beneficiaries Information Form" created for the purposes of collecting information regarding how senior centers anticipate using ARPA funds to support older/aging residents and users. Upon receipt of this, the SUA will review the information and upon approval of the plan, an agreement will be signed so funds can be dispensed. Periodic and End of Project reporting will be required by entities who receive funds.

Virtual information sessions will be scheduled to address questions pertaining to the Beneficiaries Information Form and the process of completing the form. The SUA anticipates accepting Beneficiary Information Forms on a rolling basis through June of 2024, giving communities ample time to thoughtfully put together plans.

This letter will be shared with senior centers through the Connecticut Association of Senior Center Personnel (CASCP) as well as the five Area Agencies on Aging senior center distribution lists. I encourage you to work with your community's senior center leadership and program staff to identify needs and possible solutions to current challenges, and how these ARPA funds may bolster and support these initiatives.

I look forward to working with you to best utilize these funds and make a positive impact on our senior centers and communities in Connecticut. For questions, please email stateunitonaging@ct.gov. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amy Porter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amy Porter
Commissioner