

Nutrition Services Stakeholders Meeting Minutes
May 24, 2022
1:00 pm

Department of Aging and Disability Services
55 Farmington Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105

Meeting began at 1:05 PM.

Meeting Participants

TEAMS: Jannett Haughton, Lara Stauning - SUA

Kathy Chase – Senior Resources (ECAA), Denise Andreas – SWCAA, Stan Mingione – Estuary Counsel of Senior Inc. (ECSI), Robyn Harper-Gulley – NCAAA, Jennifer Cavallaro - Community Options Unit Division of Health Services, Rick Liegl – Meriden Senior Center, Joel Sekorski - LHNW ENP and CANASP, Michael Hebert – WCAAA, Jennie Hirsch – Foodshare, Giacomi, Daniel R. - SNAP Program Administration Manager DSS, Erin Harkrader – LifeBridge.

Following the welcome and introduction, it was noted that there was a minor correction to the last minutes that was brought to attention regarding the beginning time. The minutes stated that it began at 11:05pm. It should have stated that we began at 11:05am.

A brief update from previous meetings was given.

Discussion:

Updates:

- A brief update of the re-opening status of congregate cafés was given.
Litchfield Hills Northwest ENP: Approximately 75% of meals being served curbside and 25% in house. Most participants are still reluctant to come inside. Participation rate is down and special functions are about 50/50. His largest event had 60 attendees which previously was much larger – over 100. There were about 20 persons lost to attrition.
Eastern Region: Most meal sites are open. However, there are a few that are still serving just “Grab and Go”. A new restaurant program was opened and a new Senior Center site building will be soon.
Meriden: The site used to have about 60 participants but now down to 40. Since the cost of operation about doubled, it was suggested that providers’ budget be doubled to break even.
- Statewide targets being reached is lower than proposed, however in some regions the HDM rate is above. As a result, donations are down which is crippling, as HDM is \$75,000 lower and congregate – \$28,000 lower. This is coupled with caterer cost increases of 6-12% due to food and fuel cost.
- Providers cannot afford salary demands as minimum wage rates are no longer acceptable.
- AAA may offer providers a 3% increase, but providers have seen as much of an increase as 9% from caterers.
- Discussion was held regarding the use of \$3 million ARPA funding through PA 22-118.
 - One idea was to divide ARPA State funds equally and have contracts be revised retroactively so that they can make payment to cover shortfall. However, meal costs are not the same for everyone so this might be a concern. In addition, number of meals served is different per region.

- Meal cost have increased and providers are aware that this cost might not be sustainable and there will be possible be cuts in the future. The meal cost for one provider is \$14.
- Would like to have some flexibility in spending funds. Is currently problematic having to spend all Title III fund first before ARPA funds, and there might not be enough time to spend it all within such limited time.
- Allow for money to be spent where needed and not be too specific.
- The SUA is currently researching the options of vehicle purchase from other states and there is a pending meeting with ACL to revisit the topic.
- Questions arose regarding ownership and who is responsible for vehicles and depreciation.
 - Leasing might not even be an option.
 - One provider mentioned the program has a line-item cost for everything and has built in vehicle/transportation cost into their budget
 - The cost of vehicle must be equitable distributed if other programs are being serviced. One program only services Title IIIC so all the vehicle cost would be from this program.
 - Could there be a separate policy for purchasing vehicle or make special funds available?
- New Legislative Bill – Revised. It was noted that the questions on the Consumer Registration Form 5 are very helpful and one provider currently uses them to prioritize new participants. Providers would like to do reports to know what all the problems are that someone has within their score. Having a baseline would also be very helpful. They were informed that this be one of the goals of the SUA for the Form.

Next Steps

Continuation of vehicle issue at the next meeting.

Proposal for new state funds

Collection of information for amended bill

Meeting dates

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 23, 2022, at 1:00pm – 2:30pm.

The meeting ended at 2.54 pm.