

**Nutrition Services Stakeholder Meeting
August 12, 2025**

Attendance: Erin Estey (ADS-BOA), Shana Brierley (ADS-BOA), Cassandra Norfleet-Johnson (DSS), Carolyn Lyons (DSS), Jessica Rusate (DSS), Allison Hughes (CT Dept of Ag), Alison Dvorak (Senior Resources), Christopher Blancarte (Senior Resources), Kathy Chase (Senior Resources), Claudia Mejia (Senior Resources), Ellen Torgerson (AASCC), Robyn Harper-Gulley (NCAAA), Maria Buontempo (AASCC), Jose Carchi Maposito (WCAAA), Anthony Sanchez (WCAAA), Denise Andreas (SWCAA), Laura Palmieri (RW Solutions), Rose Booker (RW Solutions), Gariann Chiarella (New Opportunities, Inc), Katrina Bresnahan (CAFCA), Lorri Lennon (CRT), Claude Trapp (City of New Haven), Evan Dantos (Robinson + Cole)

Public Comment

None.

Older Americans Act Reauthorization

E. Estey advised that the Older Americans Act (OAA) has still not been reauthorized, and at this time, there is no indication of when that will be done. The bill has been reintroduced with no changes from the version put forth last year, but it appears to be low on the priority list to address. The state is still able to receive OAA funding without the Act being reauthorized.

Federal Funding

E. Estey advised that at this time, it appears that there will be flat funding for OAA programs in FFY26, so providers should keep this in mind when budgeting. The OAA is largely untouched with the reorganizations at Health and Human Services (HHS), though it appears that the Administration for Community Living (ACL) will be rolled into the Administration for Children, Families, and Community (ACFC). All of the Regional Administrators, budget staff, and research and data teams from ACL have been terminated through a Reduction in Force. BOA staff have an email address with which to contact ACL for technical assistance, though how robust that technical assistance will be remains to be seen. The National Survey of Older Americans Act Participants (NSOAAP) was canceled this year, and there has been no word on the State Performance Report (SPR).

Home Delivered Meal Food Safety

S. Brierley reviewed the policy that home delivered meals must be handed to a person and may not be left outside the home, even in a cooler. BOA's position is that there is no safe way to do this and there is too much risk of foodborne illness to allow for it. Advised that meals may be handed to meal recipient, family member, aide, etc, but may not be left unattended.

E. Estey advised that ice packs in coolers are not cold enough to bring the meal through the danger zone if delivered hot, especially not knowing when individual may return and eat meal. Meals delivered cold are less likely to have issues, but there is still too much risk and too many variables. Older adults are considered a vulnerable population when it comes to food safety, so extra care should be taken.

D. Andreas asked about consumers who go out to dialysis multiple times a week, as SWCAA does have a cooler policy that they are looking to refresh. E. Estey advised again that there is no safe way to do this, and that providers can explore an alternative option such as a 5-meal box delivered once per week on a

day that the consumer is known to be home. E. Estey stated that BOA is happy to help providers troubleshoot and talk through options, but officially, meals are not to be left and must be handed to a person.

BOA has considered many options and hasn't been able to come up with one that will be safe *every time*.

Congregate Site Monitoring Visits

S. Brierley explained the process for congregate site monitoring visits conducted by the BOA, which primarily look for health and safety compliance including, but not limited to: handwashing, hair and beard restraints, temperature logs, cleanliness. Per S. Brierley, BOA and AAAs should monitor congregate meal sites once every two years and BOA would like to coordinate visits more closely with the AAAs to ensure that efforts are not duplicated and BOA and AAA visits are not done too close together.

D. Andreas asked for clarification as to whether the visits are every two years for BOA and AAAs combined, and S. Brierley advised that it applies to both BOA and AAAs – each party is supposed to monitor every site within a two-year period. S. Brierley advised that she will share with the AAA and ENP when she has done a site visit, and the AAA is welcome to do the same with BOA, especially if there are areas of concern on which the AAA would like her to follow up. D. Andreas asked if monitoring visit summaries are needed, and S. Brierley said that it's not necessary unless there is an area of concern – otherwise, the AAA can just send her the name of the site that was monitored.

Both S. Brierley and E. Estey emphasized that the purpose of sharing the site visit information back and forth is to avoid duplication of efforts, and to support the AAAs and ENPs when there are concerns.

Nutrition Education Tracking

E. Estey explained that for FFY2022, ACL changed how Nutrition Education (for both Home Delivered Meal and congregate consumers) was reported as part of the State Performance Report (SPR). Previously, any time that nutrition education was done, the session would be recorded to the individual in the state's database, WellSky A&D. Therefore, the number of units would be higher (assuming that each consumer received nutrition education more than once in the year). E. Estey acknowledged that when the reporting was changed and BOA presented the change to the stakeholders, it was confusing, and there is still some confusion about proper reporting.

E. Estey shared that nutrition *topics* are now considered the sessions. For example, each AAA and ENP are responsible for presenting at least one topic per quarter for nutrition education. Each of those topics would be one session, regardless of how many times or to how many individuals it is presented. Programs therefore should have at least four sessions/units per year, though some may have more if their nutrition education plan includes more than the four core topics. From that, the number of consumers will be the approximate audience size to whom nutrition education is presented. This may be the number of individuals eating lunch at a congregate site who hear the nutrition education presented, or the number of home delivered meal consumers who receive nutrition education handouts.

Nutrition education *may* be recorded to the individual consumer in WellSky A&D if the AAA and ENP choose to do so, however, when BOA reports as part of SPR, the data contained in the Nutrition

Education Tracking Workbook will be used, as WellSky A&D does not capture the information in a way that can be used for SPR.

K. Chase asked about reimbursement for nutrition education and whether AAAs need to change ENP contracts to pay differently. E. Estey advised that this comes down to the AAA budgeting process, and that the AAAs can ask ENPs for more specific information if they choose. Along this same line, R. Harper-Gulley advised that their AAA, North Central Area Agency on Aging, still wants the information on what congregate sites nutrition education was presented at, or how many home delivered meal consumers received nutrition education, since this does factor into how their ENPs are reimbursed. E. Estey advised, again, that the AAA may ask the ENPs to track nutrition education in a way that works for them, however, the tracking workbook is what the BOA will need to receive quarterly for our purposes, and this can be a distillation of the information that the AAAs receive from their ENPs.

E. Estey shared that E. Torgerson at the Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut does nutrition education for home delivered meal recipients, and does yearly reassessments at the same time, so, for instance, AASCC would still record that reassessment in WellSky A&D and may choose to record the nutrition education at the same time, which is permissible. Other programs may choose to do the same. D. Andreas shared that she does the same and keeps her own tracking spreadsheet of when a consumer was last assessed and when they are due for a reassessment, so she will likely continue to track in the same manner.

D. Andreas asked if there are any changes to how Nutrition Counseling is reported. E. Estey advised that there are no changes – nutrition counseling should still be recorded in WellSky A&D as session unit recorded to the individual.

Programs are welcome to reach out to the BOA for further guidance or troubleshooting if there are any questions.

Nutrition Services Incentive Program and Program Eligibility

E. Estey reviewed Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP) funding and the specific guidelines that go along with this funding source. NSIP funding is a performance-based pot of federal funding that takes into consideration the number of meals served in the state as compared to the country overall. Within the state, each region's allocation of NSIP funds is based on the number of meals served in the region as compared to the state as a whole. The important thing to remember about NSIP, is that it rewards *only* eligible meals served – wasted meals, under age meals, and Eligible No ID meals are not counted. E. Estey advised that it is especially important to confirm consumer eligibility, and to use "Eligible No ID" only in rare one-off circumstances, such as a holiday party at a congregate site where a consumer will be eating only once. Consumers should not received a meal recorded as Eligible No ID on a regular basis, and should complete a Form 5 if eating on a regular basis.

E. Estey advised that, per state regulations, no more than 2% of meals served should be Eligible No ID. D. Andreas asked if this is program specific, or statewide? E. Estey advised ultimately statewide, though all programs should work to minimize the number of Eligible No ID meals served.

K. Chase advised that Senior Resources does not allow their ENPs to provide Eligible No ID meals, and has not received pushback from ENPs. E. Estey advised that this does come down to the individual AAA

and their contract with their ENPs, but that it is always best to confirm client eligibility before providing a meal.

Wait Lists and Prioritization

S. Brierley reminded everyone that if an ENP puts a wait list into place, they need to inform the AAA that oversees the program of that wait list so that they can inform the BOA. E. Estey explained that BOA receives questions from the Office of the Governor and the legislature, and being aware of what is going on across the state, and where wait lists exist, helps to provide the most up-to-date information and highlight the importance and challenges of the program. The intention is not to create problems for a program that has a wait list, it is simply to be informed. The BOA acknowledges that wait lists are a reality given funding constraints, but programs should keep the AAA and BOA informed.

S. Brierley told attendees that if programs have a wait list and need to prioritize, they should be considering OAA priority populations (those at Greatest Economic Need and Greatest Social Need) and High Nutrition Risk.

Other Discussion

A. Dvorak advised that the statewide Nutrition Education Plan workgroup has completed the FFY2026 plan and it will be submitted to S. Brierley for approval. The plan covers all of the AAAs and ENPs in the state.

2025 Meeting Schedule

- Tuesday, November 18 at 1:00pm (shifted for Veteran's Day)