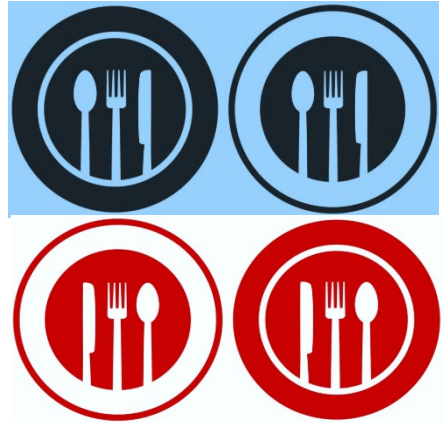


RESTAURANT



PARTNERSHIP GUIDE



South Carolina
**DEPARTMENT
ON AGING**

Revised October 2024

Table of Contents

<u>Background and Purpose</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Restaurant Basics</u>	<u>4-6</u>
<u>5 Step Planning Process</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>Marketing</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Frequently Asked Questions</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>Attachment A: Sample Foodservice Establishment Welcome Letter</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Attachment B: Sample Participant Welcome Letter</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Attachment C: Sample Contract</u>	<u>12-14</u>
<u>Attachment D: Sample Newspaper Press Release</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Attachment E: Sample Restaurant Email</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>Attachment F: Sample Formal Letter</u>	<u>17</u>

Background and Purpose

The information within this guide is intended to assist your agency with developing restaurant partnerships for Older Americans Act nutrition program services. Restaurants, grocery stores that serve ready-to-eat meals, food trucks and hospital dining areas are all included in the definition of “Restaurant Partnerships”. Partnerships may include a meal voucher program, “Pop-up” senior centers, or special event meals.

A separate document, the “**Restaurant Proposal Packet**”, is to assist the potential restaurant partner with providing a cost proposal and to provide the contracted dietitian with further guidance for meal compliance so as to meet the federal and state nutrient requirements (1/3 Dietary References Intakes and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025 as stipulated by the Older American’s Act). This packet, upon completion, is to be presented to the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) by the potential restaurant partner.

Goals:

- To promote the socialization of older individuals.
- To improve health and well-being.
- To diversify meal sites, delivery methods, and food options to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population.
- To assist with reaching communities that may lack Older Americans Act nutrition services.
- To support local restaurant businesses.

Target Audience:

Adults age 60 and older who are in greatest social and economic need with particular attention to:

- Low income older individuals
- Minority older individuals
- Older individuals in rural communities
- Older individuals with limited English proficiency
- Older individuals at risk for institutional care



Restaurant Basics

South Carolina foodservice partners can be found by the following ways:

- Use the GIS Mapping Tool: <https://gis.dhec.sc.gov/foodgrades/>
- Connect with the local Chamber of Commerce
- Survey older adults in the community to find out preferences

Confirm Food Safety Ratings

Utilize the SC Food Grades “Advanced Search” online tool to find specific establishments and review full risk-based food safety and sanitation inspections scores to confirm compliance to SC Regulation 61-25 Retail Food Establishments: <https://apps.dhec.sc.gov/Environment/FoodGrades/>

Business License

Review the South Carolina Secretary of State’s corporate search tool to review the business entities public information. The restaurant must be in “Good Standing”:
<https://businessfilings.sc.gov/BusinessFiling/Entity/Search>

Menus

Meals must meet the 1/3 Dietary References Intakes and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025 by following the most recent SCDOA Minimum Meal Specifications. The SCDOA Meal Pattern approach to menu planning will most likely be the easiest way to reach the guidelines. Menus can be hot meals, “cold” (salads, wraps, etc.) or a combination of both. The menus must be approved by a Registered Dietitian.

Find a Registered Dietitian:

https://www.eatright.org/find-a-nutrition-expert?rdType=url_edit&rdProj=fane_update&rdInfo=fae
(Select “Nutrient Analysis” under “Specialty” to filter your options)

Menu Planning

Offer versus Serve

The nutrition program must offer participants all menu items to meet their requirements, however participants may decline to accept any element of the planned meal.

Choice Menus

Menu choice is encouraged to allow for consumer choice and increased participant satisfaction. Choice menus will comply with menu planning requirements.

Meal Tracking

An efficient process for meal tracking will need to be established (client check-in procedure and confirmation of meal units for example). This process may be accomplished with or without the use of technology, but policy and procedures need to be well defined and all partners must agree to the terms.

Considerations

- For a meal voucher program, determine an “allotment” for the volume of meals allowable per month
 - Example: 15 meals per client per month
 - Meals should not “roll over” if not used
 - Only 1 meal per participant per day unless justification provided as well as advanced approval by SCDOA.

Meal Times

For a meal voucher program, participants may eat at any time the restaurant is operating including weekends and evenings. This may assist with marketing your program to the “younger” older adult generation.

Home Delivered Nutrition Clients

Home Delivered Meals participants are able to enjoy the restaurant program by utilizing takeout and/or delivery options.

Voluntary Contributions

Participants are to be given the opportunity to provide a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the meal. A voluntary contribution is a ***gift or donation, freely given, without persuasion, coercion, or legal obligation***. The AAA shall determine the best method for accepting voluntary contributions. A suggested process is to mail voluntary contributions letters to each individual on a regularly scheduled basis in order to collect contributions. Indicate clearly on the communication that “THIS IS NOT A BILL”, and that the contribution is purely a “donation”.

If the individual wishes to contribute towards the cost of the meal in the restaurant, the restaurant must keep these contributions secure and mail them to the AAA. The restaurant may explain the difference between voluntary contributions and tipping the wait staff, if desired. Tips for the wait staff will go directly to the restaurant employees.

Client Registration for Restaurant Program

The SCDOA supports a holistic, person-centered approach to assessments that results in all of the client’s needs being identified, instead of an assessment process where clients are assessed for a specific service. In order to meet the person-centered assessment goal, each AAA shall conduct the full Client Assessment in its respective region prior to registering clients for program.

Meal Cost and Contract Process

Please see the sample contract in Attachment C.

- Foodservice establishments may not charge more than they charge for the general public for meals.
- A best practice is to determine a maximum uniform rate and for interested restaurants to develop menus around this unit cost. Examples below:
 - Meal cost not to exceed \$8 per meal
 - Meal cost not to exceed \$10 per meal if delivery is included
- AAA to reimburse for agreed upon rate per meal (this may include the tip). AAA will not reimburse for staff time, etc.
- Keep the process simple for contractors – long and cumbersome contracts may deter.
- Engage a contracted dietitian service as well as the SCDOA Nutritionist during the process to ensure that the menus meet the federal and State 1/3 DRI nutritional requirements.

Expectations

Restaurants must be in compliance with SC DHEC Regulation 61-25 Retail Food Establishments (see page 4, Confirm Food Safety Ratings).

Restaurants should provide regular training topics to their staff:

Examples:

- Handwashing and Proper Glove Use
- Three Compartment Sink Wash
- Sanitizer Solution Policy
- Understanding the “Danger Zone” Time and Temperature Range
- Time and Temperature Records for Food Production
- Corrective Actions
- ServSafe Food Handler or Food Protection Manager Trainings

Restaurant Relations

Meet with contracted foodservice establishment partners on a regular basis (i.e. monthly) during the first several months to discuss successes and challenges on both sides.

Nutrition Education

SCDOA requires that Congregate Meal Clients receive nutrition education a minimum of six times per year and Home Delivered Meal Clients are to receive nutrition education a minimum of one time per year. The education can be provided to the restaurant in the form of flyers/newsletters and/or information to access online programming. Please see the SCDOA Nutrition Education Guide for more information about nutrition education and available resources for access. Fresh Conversations is an example of one such resource.

Optional: 5 Step Planning Process

1. Initiate a strategic planning process

- **a.** Get a planning team together. This may include nutrition program staff, the SCDOA Nutritionist, etc. This may also include external entities such as local restaurants, current participants, community service providers, senior focused entities, etc.
- **b.** Identify the expertise the team needs:
 - i. Knowledge of the local restaurant landscape.
 - ii. Knowledge of the community
 - iii. Marketing/communications and outreach expertise.
- **c.** Host a strategy session with your team
- **d.** Establish your target population

2. Conduct an environmental scan

- **a.** Identify available restaurants (or grocery stores with kitchens, etc.) and understand regional tastes
- **b.** Identify a range or reasonable meal costs across the local community. Review published menus and call local food retailers.

3. Engage potential vendors

- **a.** Issue a Public Notice outlining the partnership opportunity, overview of the program, and programmatic goals.
- **b.** Find restaurants that services meals within the desired price point or those willing to agree to a mutually beneficial price. See the SCDOA Restaurant Proposal Packet for the nutrition cost proposal to send to a potential restaurant provider.
- **c.** Look to find partners in areas of need as well.

4. Review data collected and contract with identified vendor.

- **a.** Collaborate with identified partner and negotiate a mutually beneficial contract

5. Develop implementation procedures and launch partnership

- **a.** Review and finalize all product and programmatic specifications outlined in the contract.
- **b.** Establish bi-weekly or monthly meetings with your partners to ensure continued communication as collaboration advances.
- **c.** Establish an implementation procedure for data management.

Marketing

Special Events

Special events draw in new members.

- Grand Opening
- Chef Demos
- Special Menu Days
- Fundraisers

Marketing Tools

Newspapers, radio, local TV and community networking

Use technology:

- Facebook page
- Post on agency website
- Create a video or YouTube video highlighting the program
- Promote personal testimonies of participants in the media

Contacts

Make contacts with community leaders:

- Faith Based Organizations
- Local Pharmacies
- Food Banks
- Libraries
- Medical Discharge Planners- hospitals, acute care and long-term rehab

Additional Ideas:

- Send “We miss you” mailings or phone calls to encourage those who have had a meal site recently close down to educate them about new restaurant.
- Consider an upbeat name of the program.
- Be simple and straight forward in marketing.
- Contact home delivered meal clients to encourage possible participation at restaurant (example: home delivered meal participants transition to congregate meals).
- Provide comment cards at restaurants for participants to leave feedback.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can a participant take food home?

A participant can take their uneaten meal home by requesting a disposable container from staff. A best practice would be to date the container and provide safe food handling instructions because older adults are at a higher risk for foodborne illness.

Q. Is carry out allowed?

Under normal circumstances, the OAA allows occasional carry-out meals at congregate sites but not on a regular basis. One of the main strengths of the congregate program is that older adults get together and eat as a community. The socialization that the congregate meal provides may be just as important as the nutritious meal. Carry out defeats that purpose. On occasion, if someone is ill or unable to get to their regular congregate site on a particular day, a carry out meal may be permitted. In a general sense though, carry out is not allowed, but boxing up leftovers to be brought home is allowed.

Q. Are we permitted to define relationships and deliverables with restaurants and bypass formal vendor contracts?

No. A contract must be in place for federal funds; sample contract is attached in Appendix C. Be sure to review and use as your AAA sees fit.

Q. Are we expected to offer this service across all counties, or is this a local decision?

This is up to each AAA. Keep in mind that the goal is to serve more meals and more people. Underserved counties should remain a priority. The AAA should consider their entire region.

Q. Can we serve people under 60?

The same Older Americans Act Title III-C rules apply. See page 127 in the SCDOA Manual of Policy & Procedures for the Title III-C Nutrition Program Eligibility and Prioritization Matrix.

Q: Does the dietitian need to receive recipes from the restaurant to run a nutrient analysis?

Not necessarily. The dietitian can use the SCDOA Meal Pattern method to approve menus used. It is important to take note of serving sizes in this case, and make sure the restaurant uses standardized recipes.

Q: Does the restaurant need to make a new menu from scratch?

No. It would be advantageous to use what the restaurant is already serving. You may need to add certain ingredients to meals that are already being served.

Q. What information do we need to collect from new clients?

Each AAA shall conduct the full Client Assessment in its respective region prior to registering clients for program.

Q. Is Nutrition Education required?

Yes, nutrition education will have the same requirements as typical meal sites. Please see page 6 for more information regarding nutrition education.

Q. How do the voluntary contributions work at restaurants?

This can be up to the AAA. This can be done at the AAA office if vouchers will be distributed there or done via a contribution letter through mail. Please see page 5 and 11 for more information.



ATTACHMENT A: Sample Foodservice Establishment Welcome Letter

Hello,

You are receiving this packet containing information regarding a restaurant voucher program because we are interested in collaborating with you! Enclosed is a brief description about the congregate meal program with [**Area Agency on Aging**]. There is also a restaurant partnership guide containing FAQs.

Please contact [**Director**] at [**Area Agency on Aging**] at [**Email or Phone number**] for more information and a Request for Proposal packet.

Thank you!

ATTACHMENT B: Sample Participant Welcome Letter

DATE

NAME

ADDRESS LINE 1

ADDRESS LINE 2

PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL ADDRESS

Welcome to [NAME OF PROGRAM]. Enclosed is your [MEAL CARD/VOUCHERS to use at RESTAURANT NAME in CITY NAME, SC up to # of meals a month]. Each month, the [# meals will be DESCRIBE PROCESS- automatically loaded on to your card/receive meal vouchers in the mail]. They will not “roll over” to the next month. At the [DESCRIBE FREQUENCY- Example: beginning of each month], you will receive a voluntary donation request letter to help us sustain this great service. An example of the letter is below:

NAME,

THIS IS NOT A BILL

We hope you are enjoying your meals at [RESTAURANT OR PROGRAM NAME]. The [NAME OF AAA] provides these meals with federal, state, and local funding along with voluntary donations from participants.

While you are not required to pay for your meals, it is helpful to know that your voluntary donations support the cost of the meals. You can continue to obtain your meals at [RESTAURANT NAME] regardless of your ability to pay. Our greatest concern is for your continued nutritional health.

If you are able and choose to make a voluntary contribution, here is some information that you may find helpful: the average meal costs [\$8.00] to produce [OPTIONAL- “and deliver”]. We suggest a confidential voluntary donation of [\$5.00] per meal. However, we will accept any donation you are able to make. You can send your monthly donation by cash or check to [NAME Agency on Aging]. Please make a notation on the check (memo line) that the donation is for your meals at [RESTAURANT NAME]

Number of meals used in [February:]

Please make your check payable to “NAME Agency on Aging” and mail to:

**NAME Agency on Aging
c/o Finance Department**

ADDRESS LINE 1

ADDRESS LINE 2

EMAIL ADDRESS

If you have any questions, please call NAME at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

NAME

ATTACHMENT C: Sample Contract

DISCLAIMER: THIS IS A SAMPLE CONTACT. USE YOUR OWN COUNSEL TO ADJUST AS YOU SEE FIT.

CONTRACT BETWEEN [AAA/AGENCY NAME] AND [CONTRACTOR NAME]

This Contract, by and between [AAA /Agency Name], an independent 501(c)(3), [Address] hereinafter 'Agency', and [Contractor Legal Entity Name] ("Contractor"), is for the provision meals to older South Carolinians as set forth below.

Term of Contract:

This Contract shall be effective from [EFFECTIVE DATE] until [END DATE]. The Agency shall have no obligation for goods or services provided by the Contractor prior to the Effective Date.

Scope of Services:

- a. Contractor shall provide meals using funding provided by Agency.
- b. Meals shall be made in compliance with the following:
 - i. The contractor shall ensure that nutrition services meet all food safety standards and are in compliance with local health department regulations.
 - ii. Foods shall be kept within the temperature guidelines as established by the SC Department of Health per SC Regulation 61-25 Retail Food Establishments.
- c. If Contractor provides delivery service under this contract:
 - i. Delivery employee shall not be a convicted felon, or have a record on:
 - 1) Dependent Adult Abuse Registry, or
 - 2) Child Abuse Registry, or
 - 3) Sex Offender Registry
 - ii. Delivery employee shall notify Agency immediately if home-delivered meal participant is not at home when delivery is attempted.
- d. Contractor, employee(s), or volunteer(s) associated with Contractor shall not request, solicit, or accept any form of payment. The contractor staff and/or wait staff may accept tips, but this must not be coerced. Voluntary contributions shall not be accepted by the contractor. The AAA will handle all voluntary contributions.
- e. The contractor must have a valid business license and must comply with SC Department of Health Regulation 61-25 Retail Food Establishments. The site is subject for monitoring at any time.

Payment Terms:

The Agency shall pay Contractor \$_____ for each meal provided at a congregate meal site; and \$_____ for each meal delivered to a home-delivered meal service participant. These rates include all applicable taxes, fees, overhead, and all other direct and indirect costs incurred or to be incurred by the Contractor. The (Contractor) shall not charge the (AAA) more than what it charges the public for the same meal during normal operations.

In no event shall the liability of the Agency under this contract exceed \$ _____ [per month/quarter/year].

[The contractor will be provided with a tablet. This is for program use only. If the equipment is lost, stolen or damaged the contractor will be required to pay the agency for the lost, stolen or damaged equipment.]

Terms and Conditions:

Contractor understands the funds provided by Agency may be provided with limiting terms and conditions. Contractor hereby accepts and agrees to abide by all terms and conditions that come from the use of said funds.

Termination:

Termination by Either Party for Convenience. At any time during the term of the Agreement, either party may terminate this Agreement for any reason by giving thirty (30) calendar days' notice in writing to the other party of the intention to terminate [IDENTIFY PROCESS FOR DELIVERY OF NOTICE: EMAIL, MAIL, ETC.].

Termination Due to Default: If either party defaults in the performance of a material obligation under this Agreement and fails to cure such default within thirty (30) days after receipt of a written notice, then the non-defaulting party may terminate this Agreement immediately upon giving a written notice of termination.

Agency May Terminate: In the event of reduction, suspension, discontinuance, or other unavailability of funds provided by the South Carolina Department on Aging, Agency may immediately terminate this Agreement without penalty. In the event, the South Carolina Department of Aging directs Agency to directly provide the services contemplated in this Agreement, Agency may immediately terminate this Agreement without penalty. All outstanding amounts owed will be promptly paid and Agency will work with Contractor to notify Consumers of the change in services.

Termination Due to State Action. This Agreement is contingent upon the approval of the South Carolina Department on Aging which has the right to review and approve all subcontracts between Agency and its Contractors. If the South Carolina Department on Aging or any other state agency refuses to approve this Agreement, Agency may immediately terminate this Agreement. All outstanding amounts owed will be promptly paid and Agency will work with Contractor to notify Consumers of the change in services.

Rights on Termination. Termination of this Agreement for any reason shall be without prejudice to any rights which shall have accrued to the benefit of either party prior to such termination. Termination of this Agreement shall not relieve either party from obligations which are expressly indicated to survive termination, including, without limitation, the obligations arising in this contract. Items include, but are not limited to, returning loaned equipment, technology, software or password access. Parties should act in, "good faith".

Relationship of the Parties:

The parties to this Agreement understand and agree that their relationship is that of independent contractors. Nothing contained herein shall be construed or implied to create a partnership of joint venture between the parties, nor shall either party be considered an agent or employee of the other party.

Execution:

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, in consideration of the mutual covenants set forth above and for other goods and valuable consideration, the receipt, adequacy and legal sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, the parties have entered into the above Contract and have caused their duly authorized representatives to execute this Contract.

[Contractor]

[Agency]

ATTACHMENT D: Sample Newspaper Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[DATE]

[AAA NAME] partners with [RESTAURANT NAME] and local small businesses to expand senior nutrition services during pandemic and beyond

[AAA NAME] Area Agency on Aging is a local agency that provides services to address the needs and concerns of older adults. The agency is one of 10 area agencies on aging in the state of South Carolina. [AAA NAME] covers the [name region] areas of South Carolina, currently serving [number of counties]. Part of the services that [AAA NAME] offers include congregate and home delivered meals.

[AAA NAME] has recently implemented a new program called the [PROGRAM NAME]. The [PROGRAM NAME] is a new, innovative partnership between local Area Agencies on Aging and local food service establishments such as [restaurants, food trucks, cafes, etc.]

A local restaurant, [RESTAURANT NAME], has partnered with [AAA NAME] to provide meals for older adults, age 60+. These meals will be available during restaurant hours [RESTAURANT HOURS]. [AAA NAME] has an extensive menu with available meals covered by the program.

To become registered as a participant for the program, you may contact the [AAA NAME] and be assessed for Older Americans Act services.

Once registered, you will receive [VOUCHERS] in the mail that will need to be present when visiting the restaurant. If you are a restaurant interested in partnering with [AAA NAME], you may contact [AAA DIRECTOR OR NUTRITION PROGRAM COORDINATOR], [CONTACT NAME], directly at [EMAIL OR PHONE #].

ATTACHMENT E: Sample Restaurant Email

Quick Email

Hello [NAME],

I hope this email finds you well. My name is [NAME], and I am the Director at the [AAA NAME] Area Agency on Aging. In partnership with the South Carolina Department on Aging, we received additional funding to pilot an exciting restaurant-partnership program for older adults called [PROGRAM NAME]. The [PROGRAM NAME] works with local restaurants to serve meals to adults age 60+, and the restaurants are reimbursed for their meal cost.

I'm reaching out to ask for your help in marketing the program and connecting with local restaurants. If you know any restaurants that are interested in being a [PROGRAM NAME] site, please reply to this email and I will reach back out to you to begin.

Please let me know your thoughts and if you have any additional questions. I am more than happy to set up a phone call to discuss further.

[NAME]

ATTACHMENT F: Sample Formal Letter

Dear [NAME],

We hope this letter finds you well. Your organization is being contacted as a potential partner for Senior Nutrition Services provided by the [AAA NAME].

Under the Older Americans Act, the Department on Aging receives federal funding each year from the Administration for Community Living. This funding is redistributed to South Carolina's ten Area Agencies on Aging. [AAA NAME] Area Agency on Aging covers the [AREA] area of South Carolina.

The goal is to focus on providing meals to older adults, aged 60+ through partnerships with local restaurants. It is also one of the goals of the program to identify older adults who are food insecure, socially isolated, and located in rural areas.

We are looking for your assistance in identifying restaurants in your community that may be interested in partnering with our organization and senior nutrition programs. **Please respond with any interested restaurants and contact information (Name of Restaurant, Manager Name, Phone, and Email).**

We would be happy to set up a conference or phone call to discuss any questions you may have regarding this program.

Sincerely,

[AAA NAME] Area Agency on Aging