



State of South Carolina
Department on Aging

Henry McMaster
Governor

Connie D. Munn
Director

Memorandum for Area Agency on Aging Directors and Council of Government Directors

From: Connie Munn, Director of the South Carolina Department on Aging

Date: March 19, 2020

RE: COVID-19 Response

In an effort to mitigate funding and service delivery concerns during the COVID-19 event, the South Carolina Department on Aging is taking significant steps to address the needs of seniors and vulnerable adults. As stated numerous times in conference calls with the AAA Directors, the number one goal of the Department and Aging Network during this State of Emergency is to ensure seniors and vulnerable adults are being served with limited interruption.

Please note that during this State of Emergency, the South Carolina Department on Aging expects the Area Agencies on Aging to take every measure possible to ensure that their contracted service providers are adhering to the emergency protocols established by the Department on Aging and the AAAs.

This memorandum will outline components of our plan. Changes in policies will be readdressed and/or rescinded once the State of Emergency is lifted.

Forecasting HCBS Needs: SCDOA intends to ask for additional state (HCBS) dollars so we need each AAA to forecast and report to the SCDOA how much additional HCBS funding they may need. Please send your response to Rhonda Walker by Friday, March 20, 2020.

Sanitary Supplies: The SCDOA will allow for the distribution of sanitary supplies to aging clients with need as the Department believes this is a function of III-B Supportive Services (home and personal care). An activity will be created in AIM to capture this COVID-19 service.

Emergency Meals: The Department issued a Program Instruction (PI) on March 13, 2020 detailing how to classify emergency meals provided to group dining clients. In addition, the PI specifically noted how to address meals that are not federally DRI compliant. On March 18, 2020 the Department on Aging agreed to waive the Potassium requirement on shelf-stable meals during the COVID-19 event.

It is highly recommended that any provider who is unable to obtain shelf-stable meals contact Senior Catering to have hot food delivered to the closed sites where it can be plated and delivered to the seniors (it is allowable for the seniors to pick-up meals at the site). We would expect that whatever

steps are taken that it is done so in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order to social distance and limit of social gatherings of 10 or less. This could be done in some areas by rotating staff on different days.

Volunteers: The South Carolina Department on Aging recognizes that both AAA and contracted provider staff could be overwhelmed during this State of Emergency. Because of numerous church, school, and business closings the volunteer pool may be greater than normal. The Department recommends that local churches, schools, and other community organizations be asked to provide volunteers to deliver meals or drive seniors as needed. The question of background checks came up in a conference call with ACL this week. The message was background checks for volunteers are not needed during the emergency. However, everyone is asked to use great caution and judgement if background checks are not used.

Below is guidance from ACL for OAA Disaster Relief which was released on March 16, 2020. We are aware this was sent by N4A to the AAA network, so as SCDOA is affirming to the AAA's to proceed to make the necessary adjustments to continue serving our most vulnerable older population.

For States

Once this Major Disaster declaration request by a State is approved, Section 310(c) permits states to use any portion of the funds made available under any and all sections of the Act for disaster relief for older individuals. In this regard, flexibility is provided for states – without the need for a separate application, transfer request, or request for a waiver -- to use existing allocations already made to them under Title III-B, C-1, C-2, D, and E for disaster relief.

This means that a state may use Title III-B, C-1, C-2, D, and/or E funds for any disaster relief activities for older individuals or family caregivers served under the OAA, which may include, but are not limited to:

Providing drive through, take out, or home-delivered meals,
Providing well-being checks via phone, in-person, or virtual means, and
Providing homemaker, chore, grocery/pharmacy/supply delivery, or other services.

For example, as part of their COVID-19 disaster relief activities, a state may use:

Funding originally allocated under Title III-C-1 to provide take out meals and,
Funding originally allocated under Title III-D to conduct daily phone well-being checks.

In this COVID-19 Major Disaster-declared response for the examples above, the state does not need to submit a transfer or waiver request to ACL. However, the state should be prepared to track:

COVID-19 related expenditures using Title III-C-1 funding and number of persons and meals served and
COVID-19 related expenditures using Title III-D funding and number of person

Thank you for your dedication and hard work to ensure our older vulnerable population continues to receive services during these difficult unsure times.