State of South Carolina
Department on Aging

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Director

PROGRAM INSTRUCTION FOR: VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM FOR: Area Agencies on Aging

SUBJECT: PROGRAM INSTRUCTION (PI) for VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

DATE: August 10, 2026

AAA COMPLIANCE DATE: July 1, 2027

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS	**POLICY NUMBER**
REFERENCE(S): 1321.9(c)(2)(xviii), 2 CFR 200	
RELEASE DATE: July 1, 2026	**AAA COMPLIANCE DATE: July 1, 2027**

Definitions of terms:

Voluntary contributions: donations of money given freely, without pressure or coercion, by individuals receiving services under the OAA. Donations may be given for any services funded by the OAA.

Policy Statement

The OAA allows for consumer contributions which may take the form of (1) an individual voluntarily contributing toward the cost of a service (a voluntary contribution).

Voluntary contributions shall be allowed and may be solicited for all services for which funds are received under the OAA if the method of solicitation is noncoercive. Such contributions shall be encouraged for individuals whose self-declared income is at or above 185 percent of the poverty line, at contribution levels based on the actual cost of the service.

Means testing is prohibited and services shall not be denied because the older individual or family caregiver will not or cannot make a voluntary contribution. South Carolina prohibits cost sharing based on income, although the state encourages contributions from people who can afford to do so.

The method of solicitation must be noncoercive, and the solicitation must be conducted in such a manner so as not to cause a service recipient to feel intimidated or otherwise feel pressured into making a contribution.

Amounts collected are considered program income and are to be used subject to the requirements of the Use of Program Income policy.

SUA Procedure

The SUA is responsible for:

- Monitoring Voluntary contributions for Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and service providers
- Ensuring proper reporting and tracking of Voluntary Contributions
- Ensuring contribution policies comply with OAA and HHS/ACL regulations
- Taking corrective action if coercive or noncompliant practices are found

AAA Procedure

The AAA shall ensure that:

- Each program beneficiary is provided with an opportunity to voluntarily contribute to the cost of the service;
- Each program beneficiary shall have their privacy and confidentiality with respect to the contribution or lack of contribution protected;
- Each program beneficiary shall be clearly informed that the client is not obligated to contribute and that any contribution is purely voluntary;
- Appropriate and professional finance and accounting procedures to safeguard and account for all contributions are established;
- All collected contributions are used to expand the service for which the contributions were given and to supplement (not supplant) funds received under the OAA.

The voluntary contributions system adopted shall be clearly explained to individuals who use the agency's services. The explanation shall be made both verbally and in writing at the time service delivery is arranged. For services provided at a physical location, notices shall be posted in a conspicuous location accessible to clients within the site. Written communication is required for home-based services, Family Caregiver Support Program services, or any other service that is not provided in a defined location. The explanation shall include the voluntary nature of the contribution, confidentiality policies, and procedures showing how contributions are collected and used. The AAA shall ensure that these voluntary contribution requirements are included in service agreements, and each provider's policy shall be retained by the AAA for the agreement period.

> **Note**: When utilizing state funds, voluntary contributions and private pay measures shall follow the OAA requirements. The AAA shall establish guidelines for enacting these measures in its region.

See also: (related/cross-referenced policies and/or forms – use hyperlinks)

Use of Program Income Policy

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