



## **Program Requirements: Catered Meals**

### **Meal Preparation**

#### **SECTION 1: OPERATIONAL SERVICE DEFINITION**

The unit of service is one meal.

#### **SECTION 2: PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

- 2.1 Provider shall furnish complete, freshly prepared meals, in accordance with all Missouri Division of Senior and Disability Services performance standards, as well as any additional standards outlined in this document. Meals are to be prepared for delivery, in amounts ordered, to one or more Community Centers according to a prearranged schedule approved by MARC.
- 2.2 Prepared hot meals shall be provided Monday through Friday and delivered to the Community Center between 9:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
- 2.3 Providers will work with a qualified dietitian to develop menus that conform to the [2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), published jointly by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Each meal should provide one-third (1/3) of the current [Dietary Reference Intakes \(DRI\)](#) as published by the Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine OR follow the meal pattern set by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. These guidelines shall be given appropriate and meaningful consideration in menu planning as well as in the selection of recipes and food items. A summary of these nutritional guidelines can be found below.
- 2.4 All menus must be reviewed and approved by a nutrition professional at least once a year.
- 2.5 The intent of the [Older Americans Act](#) is to include recipients of services in the planning and evaluation of those services. Therefore, the provider's menu process will maximize participants' input in the selection of menus served and provide opportunities for clients to give the provider constructive feedback on the quality, quantity and appearance of the meals.
- 2.6 All menus approved by MARC will be considered part of the provider's "menu bank." From this bank of approved menus, the provider will select a minimum of

22 menus for each calendar quarter. These menus will cover a 21-day regular menu rotation plus birthday and holiday menus. After MARC approves menus for each quarter, the provider shall make no changes or substitutions unless MARC gives approval at least 24 hours in advance.

- 2.7 Newly created and approved menus are encouraged to be added to the selection during the course of the year.
- 2.8 Providers must comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations governing the preparation of food. By the date of contract, the provider, and all staff (paid and volunteer) must be trained, certified and/or recertified by the appropriate local health department in order to have all necessary licenses, permits, and food handler's cards as are required by law. The provider's food preparation facility must conform to all federal, state and city health department requirements.
- 2.9 Providers will use appropriate equipment and procedures to assure that foods being prepared and packaged are protected from contamination.
- 2.10 All foods shall be of the highest standard (Grade A quality) and shall conform to USDA requirements. All meat, poultry, and meat by-products shall come from plants inspected under a federal-approved inspection plan. Procedures used in food preparation shall include techniques for retaining the maximum amount of nutrients.
- 2.11 MARC will not approve payment for meals delivered by the provider that are found to be at improper temperatures (thawed) or damaged, spoiled, incomplete, or otherwise not fit to be served. Frozen meals must be solidly frozen with no evidence of thawing or refreezing. All such meals shall be promptly exchanged by the provider upon phone notification by the client or by MARC.
- 2.12 MARC reserves the right to order items in bulk, as well as complete meal units. Consequently, the provider shall indicate individual prices for raw fruit, desserts, and beverages, in addition to total per meal costs.
- 2.13 Meal orders for weekday service, Monday through Friday, shall be given to the provider on Thursday of the preceding week unless another time has been agreed upon between the provider and the Community Center. On the rare occasions a Community Center orders sack lunches, those orders will be made at least ten days in advance.
- 2.14 Food and supplies shall be counted and signed for by the Community Center Administrator (CCA) or their designee at the time of delivery. Any discrepancies should be noted on all copies of delivery tickets.
- 2.15 A wide variety of funding streams need to come together to pay for all meals prepared under this program. One of them, the [Nutrition Services Incentive Program \(NSIP\)](#) allocates funding to MARC for each meal served to eligible clients through our providers based on an amount determined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The amount per meal is subject to change; currently, MARC receives approximately \$.75 per meal served to eligible

clients, which must be spent on foods produced in the United States. It is up to the provider to ensure this target is met.

Bread and dairy products, which typically account for at least \$.45 per full meal, are automatically deemed to be US-produced. An additional \$.30 of domestically produced foods must be included in the balance of the meal.

The provider shall maintain on its premises for a period of not less than five years documentation verifying that the amount of reimbursement received by the provider from NSIP funds was used to purchase food produced in the United States.

2.16 Providers must make proper provisions to ensure:

- Hot food (as defined by appropriate city or county Health Department) must be delivered and/or served at 140 degrees F or above.
- Cold food (as defined by appropriate city or county Health Department) must be delivered and/or served at temperature not above 40 degrees F.
- Frozen food must be delivered frozen solid with no evidence of thawing.

A food temperatures log shall be maintained by the provider. Log entries shall include the date, name of menu items, end of meal preparation time and temperature for each menu item, as well as the identity of the individual making the check. Upon request by MARC, the provider will send a fax or email scan of a temperature log page.

Community Center staff have been instructed by the local health department **NOT** to accept meals from the provider that are not at the proper temperatures. The rejected items are to be replaced by the provider in a timely fashion (to comply with congregate service and hot pre-plated home-delivered meals delivery schedules).

2.17 MARC will not approve payment for meals delivered by the provider that are found to be spoiled, incomplete, or otherwise not fit to be served. All such meals shall be promptly replaced by the provider when notified of the problem. The provider can then work with MARC to receive reimbursement.

## APPENDIX for all meal programs:

### **SUMMARY OF NUTRITION GUIDELINES AND PROVISION OF CONTAINERS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES**

Dietary and quality standards and necessary approvals are the same for all meals served through a MARC program funded by the Older Americans Act (OAA). All menus must be approved by a nutrition professional to ensure dietary standards are met. The provider can hire their own nutrition professional, providing documentation to MARC with their credentials and their approval of all menus. Alternatively, providers can send their menus to MARC for approval by a MARC-contracted nutrition professional.

Providers should utilize the **MARC Older Adult Nutrition Program Menu Form** and **MARC Nutrition Program Menu Analysis** to document that all menus are in compliance. The dietary guidelines for all menus follows:

#### 1.1 Contents of Menu:

The menu planning process should design meals that reflect and respect participant preferences, conform to the recommendations of the [2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) and meet the nutritional needs of the participants.

Meals should contain foods that are generally low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat and sodium. The meals should have a variety of protein foods, vegetables, fruits, and grain/whole grain products. The meals should have foods and beverages moderate in sugars. Liquid milk is no longer a state requirement and is not required in federal guidance. Dairy requirements may be met with one-cup equivalent of any of the following:

- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup yogurt
- 1 cup fortified soy milk
- 1.5 oz natural cheese such as cheddar
- 2 oz of processed cheese

Individual daily menus should include a variety of nutrient dense foods distributed among the five food groups (protein foods, grains, vegetables, fruit, and dairy) as recommended by <https://www.myplate.gov>, and include discretionary calories as needed. Each meal should provide one-third (1/3) of the current [Dietary Reference Intakes \(DRI\)](#) as published by the Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine. The Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI) include the RDA (Recommended Dietary Allowances), the AI (Adequate Intake), the EAR (Estimated Average Requirements), the UL (Tolerable Upper Intake Level), the EER (Estimated Energy Requirement), and the AMDR (Acceptable Macronutrient Distribution Range).

#### 1.1(a) Quality:

All foods shall be of the highest standard and shall conform to USDA requirements, in that they are all Grade A quality. All meat, poultry, and

meat by-products shall come from plants inspected under a federally approved inspection plan.

- 1.1(b) Nutrition Requirements for Meals (per Program Policy & Procedure Manual for Area Agencies on Aging, prepared by the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services, updated 10/2023).

**POLICY**

Each Title III C meal provided by an AAA or nutrition service contractor shall meet the requirements in OAA Sec. 339(2)(A) and 19 CSR 15-4.245(6). This applies to both home-delivered meals and congregate meals.

**PROCEDURE**

Nutrition providers shall demonstrate compliance with OAA requirements by using computer nutrient analysis software or a meal pattern.

Per 19 CSR 15-4.245(6)(D), the nutrition professional retained by the AAA shall review and certify that all menus meet the requirements in 19 CSR 15-4.245(6). A sample of this documentation will be reviewed during annual monitoring conducted by the SUA.

Meals created using nutrient analysis shall meet the following requirements. Targets may be met as a monthly average, with the flexibility to be within the acceptable range specified. Acceptable ranges are based on a +/- 10% deviation from the DRI target amount.

Nutrient	Target Value (1/3 DRI)	Acceptable Range
Calories	600 calories	540-660 calories
Protein	17 g	≥ 15.3 g
Carbohydrate	82.5 g	67.5-97.5 g*
Fiber	8 g	≥ 7.2 g
Fat	20-35% of total calories	18-38.5% of total calories
Saturated Fat	< 10% of total calories	< 11% of total calories
Calcium	400 mg	≥ 360 mg
Sodium	766 mg	≤ 1100 mg
Potassium	1000 mg	≥ 900 mg
Vitamin B-12	0.8 mcg	≥ 0.72 mcg
Vitamin D	200 iu	≥ 180 iu

\*Acceptable range based on AMDR 45-65%

Meals created with a meal pattern shall meet the following requirements.

Component	Dairy	Protein	Fruits/Vegetables	Grains
Required amount per meal	One one-cup equivalent	Two to three one-ounce equivalents	One to two one-cup equivalents	One to two one-ounce equivalents
Examples	Examples of a one-cup equivalent: 1 cup milk 1 cup yogurt 1 cup fortified soymilk 1.5 ounces of natural cheese such as cheddar 2 ounces of processed cheese.	Examples of a one-ounce equivalent: 1-ounce lean meats 1-ounce poultry 1-ounce seafood 1 egg ½ cup cooked beans ½ cup cooked tofu 1 tablespoon nut or seed butter ½ ounce nuts ½ ounce seeds	Examples of a one-cup equivalent: 1 cup raw vegetable 1 cup raw fruit 1 cup cooked vegetable 1 cup cooked fruit 1 cup vegetable juice 1 cup fruit juice 2 cups leafy salad greens ½ cup dried fruit ½ cup dried vegetable	Examples of a one-ounce equivalent: ½ cup cooked rice ½ cup cooked pasta ½ cup cooked cereal 1-ounce dry pasta 1-ounce dry rice 1 medium (1-ounce) slice of bread 1 medium (1 ounce) tortilla 1 medium (1 ounce) flatbread 1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal (about 1 cup of flaked cereal)
Additional requirements and explanation	A. The use of nonfat or low-fat products is recommended to control the total fat content of the meal. B. Dairy may include lactose-free dairy options C. Other products sold as "milk" but made from plants (e.g., almond, rice, coconut, oat, and hemp "milk") may contain calcium and be consumed as a source of calcium, but they are not included as part of the dairy group because their overall nutritional content is not similar to dairy milk and fortified soy beverages.	D. Legumes (beans and peas) may be considered part of this group OR the vegetable group, but not both groups simultaneously. E. The use of low-sodium protein products is encouraged.	F. Legumes (beans and peas) may be considered part of this group OR the protein group, but not both groups simultaneously. G. A variety of vegetables from all sub-groups is strongly recommended (dark green, red & orange, legumes, starchy, other). H. The use of no to low-sodium frozen, fresh, and canned vegetables is encouraged.	I. Whole-grains must be offered at least 5 times per week. For meal programs serving less than 5 days per week, half of grains offered shall be whole grains.

## 1.2 Sack Lunches:

MARC may provide an alternative sack lunch when activities are planned away from a Community Center facility at the time that the meal would normally be served. The sack lunch menu must meet the general requirements of the meal plan as follows:

Meat 3 oz. (roast beef or sliced turkey) or 2 oz. meat and one slice (1 oz.) cheese

1/4 cup shredded lettuce (for garnish)

1/2 cup coleslaw or potato salad

1/2 cup fruit serving or fresh fruit

2 slices bread or bread items, such as bun, etc.

8 oz. low-fat fresh or shelf stable milk (or dairy equivalent: cheese or yogurt)

4 vanilla wafers or an equivalent dessert, such as graham crackers, oatmeal cookies, etc.

Individually packaged condiment, such as mustard and mayonnaise

## 1.3 Containers and Equipment:

1.3(a) To complete the meal service, the provider shall provide individually packaged salt and pepper, luncheon napkins, disposable knives, forks and spoons for each meal ordered. Condiments listed on the approved menu shall also be provided in individual serving packets, i.e., salad dressing, mustard, ketchup, etc.

1.3(b) The provider shall provide three-compartment plastic coated plates no less than 9 inches in diameter; 5-inch dessert plates; 6 oz. foam squat cups with lids; 8 oz. Styrofoam cups and other special containers (such as soup bowls) as needed to facilitate the serving of the meal.

1.3(c) All cold food containers shall be designed to prevent seeping, spilling, dripping and leaking.

1.3(d) The quality of disposable items shall be subject to the approval of MARC and shall be no less than a medium grade.

1.3(e) It is expected that the providers shall use appropriate equipment and procedures to assure that foods being transported are protected from contamination and held at safe temperatures.

1.3(f) Steam table pans shall be suitable for placing in a 12 x 20 inch portable steam table opening. Each steam table pan shall be covered with stainless steel or aluminum covers.

1.3(g) Steam table pans and other utensils shall be washed by center personnel and returned to the provider the day following delivery. The Provider shall be responsible for rewashing and sanitizing such pans and utensils before using again.

1.4 Additional Supplies:

1.4(a) The provider will provide daily to each center a minimum of two plastic trash bags (one trash bag for each 50 meals ordered). The trash bag shall be 40 to 45 gal. capacity (20 x 10 x 40), no less than medium weight, with ties.

1.4(b) The provider will provide disposable food grade gloves in adequate supply so as to ensure food safety during meal service.