



Provider Manual

Program Requirements: Pre-Prepared Flash Frozen Home Delivered Meals

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SECTION 1: OPERATIONAL SERVICE DEFINITION

The unit of service is one meal.

SECTION 2: PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

- 2.1 **Frozen home delivered meals** -- Pre-prepared, flash frozen meals, delivered from a storage facility and/or a caterer's business location directly to the homes of clients (designated by MARC) according to a prearranged schedule determined by MARC.

These flash frozen meals must be prepared in accordance with all Missouri Division of Senior and Disability Services performance standards, as well as any additional standards outlined in this document.

- 2.3 Meals must 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 also 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. 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 in the Appendix.
- 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 Providers will work with a qualified dietitian to develop menus that conform with the [2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), the recommended meal pattern, and the minimal nutritional standards for the client population, and submit these menus to MARC for approval. Each meal should also 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 nutritional value of menus shall be confirmed by nutrient analysis based on the best available data for menu items being planned. The nutrient analysis values supersede the meal pattern. If the acceptable nutrient range values are met, then the nutrient value of the menu will be sufficient as long as no more than one item from the meal pattern is excluded from the menu. All menus approved by MARC will be considered part of the providers "menu bank."
- 2.7 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.

- 2.8 Newly created and approved menus are encouraged to be added to the selection during the course of the year.
- 2.9 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.
- 2.10 Providers will use appropriate equipment and procedures to assure that foods being prepared and packaged are protected from contamination.
- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 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.
- 2.13 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 \$.80 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 \$.40 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.

- 2.14 Providers must make proper provisions to ensure that all pre-prepared flash frozen meals are delivered frozen solid with no evidence of thawing.

- 2.15 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.

SECTION 3: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

All providers are responsible for complying with the following reporting requirements. Information should also be input into all appropriate electronic monitoring systems on a timely basis. Providers should work closely with their MARC Program Coordinator to ensure all reporting is being submitted as required.

1. Units entered every 24 hours into AgingIS, or
2. Contractor must prepare an electronic report containing the identities of all clients and the number of meals delivered to each on all specific days of delivery.
3. MARC Meal Preparation Invoice that corresponds to the above-mentioned report

APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF NUTRITION GUIDELINES

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.