

# INNOVATIONS IN NUTRITION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES (INNU) REPLICATION TOOLKIT

## Replication Model D: Erie County (New York) Department of Senior Services: Modernizing the Congregate Dining Program

*Also referred to as “Restaurant Partner Toolkit”*

Note: The term “restaurant” in this document is used to mean any restaurant, retail café, or dine-in licensed food service establishment.

### **How to Use This Toolkit**

Please begin by reviewing the <https://www.grants.gov/> posting for [HHS-2022-ACL-AOA-INNU-0040](#) which outlines requirements for ALL Replication projects. The information contained in this replication toolkit provides specific information and requirements regarding Replication Model D.

This Replication Model Toolkit outlines the required elements within a Replication Project D application for HHS-2022-ACL-AOA-INNU-0040 Replication Grants.

The toolkit specifies proposed application:

- Required elements.
- Components which may or should be customized.
- Areas where flexible approaches are permitted.

Successful applications will outline a proposed project that includes all required elements while also demonstrating that customized and flexible items are planned.

If funded, your project team will receive regular technical assistance from the National Resource Center on Nutrition and Aging as well as consultation with members of the original grant’s project team, as feasible.

All surveys/forms and other materials are intended to be customized by the grantee, and the grantee should review the materials thoroughly to assure the use of customized information including dates, contact names, etc.

If your grant proposal involves any programmatic, policy, organizational, or financial system changes, it is your responsibility to make sure the changes are acceptable and compatible with your state/local policies and requirements.

### **Summary of the Project**

To replicate this project, applications must propose to design an agency-wide – or larger area, such as a statewide or region-wide – document, with associated policies and procedures, to create a restaurant-based meal site which aligns with the project developed by the 2018 Erie County Department of Senior Service’s Innovation in Nutrition Programs and Services grant.

Replicating this project offers an opportunity for congregate meal participants to dine at a participating restaurant that has designated and/or created meals that meet the Older Americans Act (OAA) Title III-C-1 requirements as well as any state/local requirements. These restaurants will serve as an alternative to the traditional congregate meal sites that currently exist.

Applications must address the following:

1. A system to issue proof of eligibility and tracking of the participants.
2. A method of identifying, recruiting, contracting with, training, and evaluating restaurants to participate in the program.

This unique and successful project created training and toolkit materials designed specifically for senior nutrition programs to help them identify how they can play an important role in identifying and supporting alternative ways to provide healthy congregate meals in settings other than traditional sites. This modernization can address needs of older adults who have not traditionally participated in congregate meals by offering ethnic/cultural meals, allowing older adults to dine on their own schedule, allowing older adults to dine with family, offering a choice of venues and meals, and reducing social isolation.

*One participant remarked, "You've changed the lives of the people. They get so excited about going out to eat. Like I said with the transportation, we take the people who normally can't go, and they get so excited."*

*One restaurant partner said, "We have seen a lot of new faces coming into the Bazaar through the Go & Dine program. It is great to see this partnership help local residents and businesses prosper."*

The Restaurant Partner Toolkit includes:

- [Vendor Contract Sample](#) (sample contract between grantee and partner restaurant)
- [Vendor Contract Terms and Conditions Sample](#) (sample statement of services for partner restaurant)
- [General Meal Requirements](#) (nutritional requirements restaurants must follow)
- [Go & Dine Customer Satisfaction Survey](#) (survey on the impact of the program)
- [Isolation Survey](#) (survey evaluating participant feelings of isolation)
- [Participant Registration](#) (form for collecting participant demographics and calculating nutritional score)
- [Focus Group Questions](#) (survey of participant experiences)
- [Diners Guide](#) (guidelines, participating restaurants, and menus)
- [Guide to Working with Restaurants and Grocery Stores for Meals](#)

### Outcomes of the original Restaurant Partner Project:

- Feelings of social isolation decreased among users of the program.
- The number of participants in the congregate nutrition program increased.
- Program expanded the availability of culturally diverse menu choices.
- Allowed the Senior Nutrition Program to expand to ‘hard to reach’ areas.
- Initiated flexible hours and days for the congregate meal program.
- One restaurant saw an increase in older adults coming into the location since the start of the program. Participants made special trips into the restaurant to try the diverse cuisines offered.
- Program increased rapport between the Senior Nutrition Program and local communities.

### **Selected Data from the Original Grant**

<b>Participating Restaurants</b>	Erie County	Albany County
Initial recruitment	3	10
Added after 6 months	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>

<b>Participant Data (at 1 year)</b>	Erie County	Albany County
Number of participants	241	129
Number using vouchers	155	118
Total vouchers used	3,848	1,619

### **Replication Requirements, Anticipated Customization, and Flexibilities**

Table: Replication Model D Requirements, Customization and Flexibilities\*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Grant Requirements</b> (Elements that must be included)	<b>Required Customization</b> (Elements that must be included and adjusted to project)	<b>Project Flexibilities</b> (Optional elements; not exclusive)	<b>Application Section</b> ( <b>Bolded</b> sections are required; others are recommended)
Population Served	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60 and over</li> <li>• Targeted populations</li> </ul>	Specific targeted population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food insecurity</li> <li>• Chronic disease</li> <li>• Living alone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Abstract</b></li> <li>• <b>Problem statement</b></li> <li>• <b>Approach</b></li> </ul>
Service Delivery	Older Americans Act Congregate Nutrition Program		HDM (order on-line and pick up)	Approach
Partnerships	Restaurants	Community organizations serving the targeted populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immigrant service organizations</li> <li>• Faith-based organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Abstract</b></li> <li>• <b>Approach</b></li> </ul>

Category	Grant Requirements (Elements that must be included)	Required Customization (Elements that must be included and adjusted to project)	Project Flexibilities (Optional elements; not exclusive)	Application Section ( <b>Bolded</b> sections are required; others are recommended)
Activities and Services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a contractual agreement based on <a href="#">Vendor Contract Sample</a> and <a href="#">Vendor Contract Terms and Conditions Sample</a></li> <li>• Establish and document a variety of options for congregate meal participants to better meet their needs</li> <li>• Periodic nutrition education with participants</li> <li>• <a href="#">Meal requirements</a> for restaurant staff</li> <li>• Develop system to <a href="#">identify</a> eligible participants and track usage of restaurant sites</li> <li>• Create a system to accept contributions from participants</li> <li>• <a href="#">Educate</a> participants regarding the program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any dine-in food service establishment may be recruited</li> <li>• Nutrition education may be presented in any format</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approach</b></li> </ul>
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of project on participants' nutrition, socialization, and health/well-being status</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned evaluation process</li> <li>• Quality assurance</li> <li>• <a href="#">Customer Satisfaction Survey</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Isolation Survey</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequency and method of data collection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Outcomes and evaluation</b></li> </ul>
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact on attendance</li> <li>• Determine increase/decrease in congregate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissemination (webinars, conference sessions, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy/procedure impacts on systems efficiencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Abstract</b></li> <li>• <b>Outcomes and evaluation</b></li> </ul>

<b>Category</b>	<b>Grant Requirements</b> (Elements that must be included)	<b>Required Customization</b> (Elements that must be included and adjusted to project)	<b>Project Flexibilities</b> (Optional elements; not exclusive)	<b>Application Section</b> ( <b>Bolded</b> sections are required; others are recommended)
	meal site participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact on participant donations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number and percent of total new participants</li> <li>Number and percent of improved social isolation scores</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costs and benefits</li> </ul>	
Products	Capstone project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customized Restaurant Partner Toolkit</li> <li>Policies and procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surveys</li> <li>Presentations</li> <li>Evaluation reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abstract</li> <li>Approach</li> </ul>
Sustainability		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue effective policies and procedures developed during the project</li> <li>Schedule for updating the Restaurant Partner Toolkit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring: Review of partnerships</li> <li>Monitoring: Recruitment of new partners</li> </ul>	<b>Sustainability</b>

\*Please refer to [HHS-2022-ACL-AOA-INNU-0040 Replication Grants](#) for requirements which apply to all Replication Projects.

## **FAQ for Replication Model D**

### **1. Restaurant partners are required for this project. What if our local restaurants have limited or no in-person dining due to the pandemic?**

The project's goal is to provide a restaurant-based congregate meal program. During the pandemic, senior nutrition programs should anticipate utilizing strategies that can be scaled up or down, depending on evolving local situations, as well as allowing for changes in the availability of workforce and participants' circumstances. In general, senior nutrition programs are encouraged to plan two steps ahead while also preparing for a step backward, while keeping their staff, volunteers, and participants aware of the possibility of these changes. For further advice on addressing pandemic-related meal site considerations, see [Reopening Considerations](#) (April 2021).

A flexibility for this replication may include providing home delivered meals and allowing for online ordering and pickup, as long as the overall goal of the 3-year project is to provide a restaurant-based congregate meal program.

### **2. Would a food truck qualify as a restaurant partner?**

Food trucks may qualify as a restaurant if group dining is also provided at the same location (e.g., in a park, special event, or has tables around it). A food truck may provide home-delivered meals, in addition to providing congregate meals.

### **3. Can restaurants use existing menu items as options?**

All meals offered through the grant-funded project must meet federal and state nutrition requirements.

### **4. How many choices does the restaurant have to offer?**

At least one meal choice must be offered on the restaurant program. Restaurants may offer different choices on different days or offer multiple choices on a regular basis.

### **5. How does the restaurant report the meals served and who the participants were?**

Applicants should create a system that meets Title III-C federal, state, and local requirements and includes registration, issuance and management of vouchers, as well as a tracking and reporting system for restaurants. These processes should be outlined in the grant application.

**6. How do we know that the restaurant is only accepting payment for meals that meet the standards?**

Your contractual agreement with the restaurant should specify any penalties or actions that will be taken if the agreement is broken. Secret shoppers are a good way to do random checks on restaurants to see if there are violations occurring. Clear policies on how complaints will be handled and investigated will also help keep things running smoothly.

**7. If the restaurant serves culturally specific foods, can the meal requirements be flexible to allow for these meals?**

The program should work with their state and/or AAA to determine what modifications can be put into place. The OAA encourages meals that meet participant needs and preferences.

**8. Can the restaurant restrict the hours vouchers can be used?**

The program should encourage restaurants to allow participants to use vouchers during open hours. However, if the program and the restaurant agree in advance, and restrictions are detailed in the contract and participants are notified when they receive vouchers, then yes, restaurants may put time or date restrictions on voucher use.

**9. We don't allow our congregate meal program participants to take home leftovers. How do we handle restaurant leftovers?**

Restaurants may be licensed under a different code than congregate meal sites. Grant projects should follow federal and state laws that apply to restaurants. Grant projects may want to include information about food safety when vouchers are issued.

**10. Can we restrict the number of vouchers an individual gets?**

Yes. The project may determine how many vouchers each person receives, and the total number of vouchers distributed.

**11. How does a restaurant program impact our regular congregate meal sites?**

Voucher programs are not intended to replace traditional congregate sites, rather they are intended to offer increased choice. A list of traditional congregate sites should be given to all voucher recipients so they are aware of locations where

congregate meals are available if they run out of vouchers.

## **12. Who is responsible for the tip?**

The participant should be given materials that include participant responsibilities, which would include indicating whether a tip is included as part of the voucher and the participant's option to add a tip at the restaurant if they desire. They should also be instructed that they are responsible for the charges for any additional items that are not part of the meal.