



2025-2028 Area Plan on Aging Amendment

3/2/2026

30 Barra Road
Biddeford, ME 04074
(207)-396-6500 or (800)-427-7411 or TTY Dial 711
www.smaaa.org

Table of Contents

Verification of Intent	3
Context: State Plan Amendment in Response to OAA Final Rule	4
Attachment B: Information Requirements.....	4
Shelf Stable, Pick-Up, Carry-Out, Drive-Through, or Similar Meals Using Title III Congregate Nutrition (C-1) Service Funding.....	4
SMAA Area Plan Amendment	7
Appendix A: Request for Direct Service Waiver.....	8

Verification of Intent

The Southern Maine Agency on Aging, hereby submits this Area Plan on Aging amendment, effective December 1, 2025, amending the Area Plan on Aging 2025-2028 as required under the Older Americans Act of 1965. The Plan and amendment were developed in accordance with all rules and regulations specified in the Older Americans Act, 45 CFR 1321 regulations.

Date: _____

Megan Walton
Chief Executive Officer
Southern Maine Agency on Aging

The Area Agency Advisory Council on Aging has had the opportunity to review and comment on this Area Plan Amendment.

Date: _____

Candice Simeone
Chair, Advisory Council
Southern Maine Agency on Aging

The governing body of the Area Aging on Aging has reviewed and approved the Area Plan Amendment.

Date: _____

Anne Dalton
President, Board of Directors
Southern Maine Agency on Aging

Context: State Plan Amendment in Response to the OAA Final Rule

In February 2024, the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL) issued the Older Americans Act (OAA) Final Rule (<https://acl.gov/OAArule>) and updated guidance that all state plans on aging must comply with by October 1, 2025. This includes state plans like the Maine State Plan on Aging 2025-2028 that were approved previously and are not due for renewal for several years.

Starting in January 2025, the Office of Aging and Disability Services (OADS) convened the Steering Committee and the Advisory Committee for the Maine State Plan on Aging to help guide the development of the required amendment. The Steering Committee reviewed the proposed amendment topics and provided their insights and feedback. Once the Steering Committee provided its recommendations, the amendment topic was presented to the larger Advisory Committee for further discussion and additional feedback. This two-step approach ensured that all perspectives were considered in the amendment while reflecting the needs and priorities of older people and their family caregivers in Maine.

In addition to the required content of state plans on aging outlined in [45 CFR 1321.27](#), ACL issued sub-regulatory guidance on the [requirements for amendments to state plans on aging](#) in October 2024. OADS reviewed the Maine State Plan on Aging 2025-2028 and sought input from the Steering Committee and Advisory Committee on the amendments outlined below.

Based on feedback from the Administration for Community Living during the prereview of the proposed amendments, it was suggested that OADS repeal and replace Attachment B: Information Requirements of the existing plan (see page 61) with an updated version found in the "Guidance for Developing State Plans on Aging" (reference OMB # 0985-0083).

The Attachment B: Information Requirements section below details guidance from the Administration for Community Living specific to added meal provision allowances under Title III C-1 funding of the Older Americans Act. Also detailed below is OADS' response to this guidance, amending Maine's State Plan on Aging to allow Area Agencies on Aging to incorporate this guidance into their Area Plans and providing justification.

Attachment B: Information Requirements

Shelf Stable, Pick-Up, Carry-Out, Drive-Through, or Similar Meals Using Title III Congregate Nutrition (C-1) Service Funding

45 CFR § 1321.87(a)(1)(ii):

Title III C-1 funds may be used for shelf-stable, pick-up, carry-out, drive-through, or similar meals, subject to certain terms and conditions:

- (A) Such meals must not exceed 25 percent of the funds expended by the State agency under Title III, part C-1, to be calculated based on the amount of Title III, part C-1 funds available after all transfers as set forth in 45 CFR § 1321.9(c)(2)(iii) are completed;
- (B) Such meals must not exceed 25 percent of the funds expended by any area agency on aging under Title III, part C-1, to be calculated based on the amount of Title III, part C-1 funds available after all transfers as set forth in 45 CFR § 1321.9(c)(2)(iii) are completed;

(C) Such meals are to be provided to *complement* the congregate meal program:

- During disaster or emergency situations affecting the provision of nutrition services;
- To older individuals who have an occasional need for such meal; and/or
- To older individuals who have a regular need for such meal, based on an individualized assessment, when targeting services to those in greatest economic need and greatest social need; and

45 CFR § 1321.27 (j):

If the State agency allows for Title III, part C-1 funds to be used as set forth in §1321.87(a)(1)(i), the State agency must include the following:

- (1) Evidence, using participation projections based on existing data, that provision of such meals will enhance and not diminish the congregate meals program, and a commitment to monitor the impact on congregate meals program participation;
- (2) Description of how provision of such meals will be targeted to reach those populations identified as in greatest economic need and greatest social need;
- (3) Description of the eligibility criteria for service provision;
- (4) Evidence of consultation with area agencies on aging, nutrition and other direct services providers, other stakeholders, and the general public regarding the provision of such meals; and
- (5) Description of how provision of such meals will be coordinated with area agencies on aging, nutrition and other direct services providers, and other stakeholders.

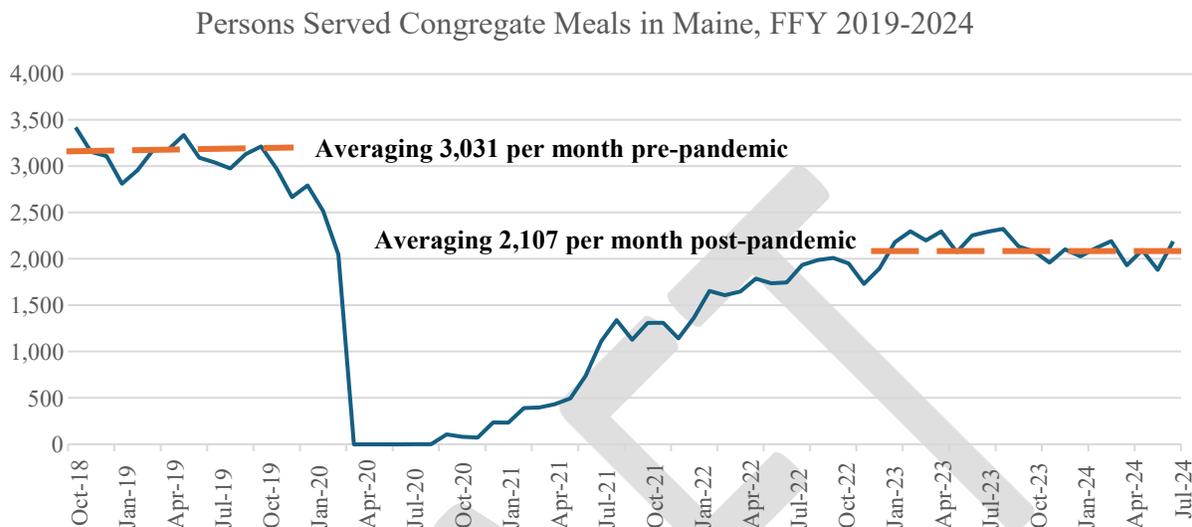
OADS RESPONSE:

OADS amends the current state plan on aging to allow Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) the option to fund Shelf-stable, Pick-Up, Carry-Out, Drive-Through, or Similar Meals using up to 25% of Title III-C1 funds. This amendment seeks to enhance the flexibility of Title III-C1 funds, aligning with the provisions outlined in [45 CFR 1321.87\(a\)\(1\)](#). The primary objective is to better serve older individuals across various contexts, particularly during emergencies, to older individuals who have an occasional need for such meals, and to older individuals who have a regular need for such meals based on an individualized assessment.

Innovative program implementation is encouraged through this state plan amendment. AAAs will be allowed to provide additional meals for the remainder of the week for participants who attend local dining locations. AAAs may also proactively notify registered congregate meal participants about the availability of extra meal options, including shelf-stable meals, before emergencies such as winter storms, ensuring access in critical times. Moreover, AAAs can provide meals as a strategy to build relationships with new participants interested in attending dining locations, thus aiding recruitment efforts.

The following graph outlines the number of older adults served congregate meals in Maine from federal fiscal years 2019 to 2024. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the monthly average of older adults receiving congregate meals was approximately 3,000. Like many other states across the nation, Maine experienced a complete halt in congregate dining due to the pandemic. Maine's AAAs worked hard to reopen congregate dining locations that wanted to participate in the program. However, several locations have not reopened since the shutdown, despite the AAAs' efforts to recruit new participants and establish new locations, including voucher programs with local dining establishments. The post-pandemic monthly average of older people served is about 2,100, a decrease of about 900 per month. This amendment allows up to 25% of Title III-C1 funds to support Shelf-stable, Pick-Up, Carry-Out, Drive-Through, or Similar Meals to expand and

increase participation in congregate dining programs statewide.



As described in the objective, strategies, and outcomes for Nutrition Services on page 28, meals provided under this flexibility, like any other OAA-funded service, will be targeted to those with the Greatest Social Need and Greatest Economic Need. This will be accomplished through targeted outreach strategies and strategic partnerships with restaurants, many of which currently exist, that serve underserved populations with culturally appropriate meals.

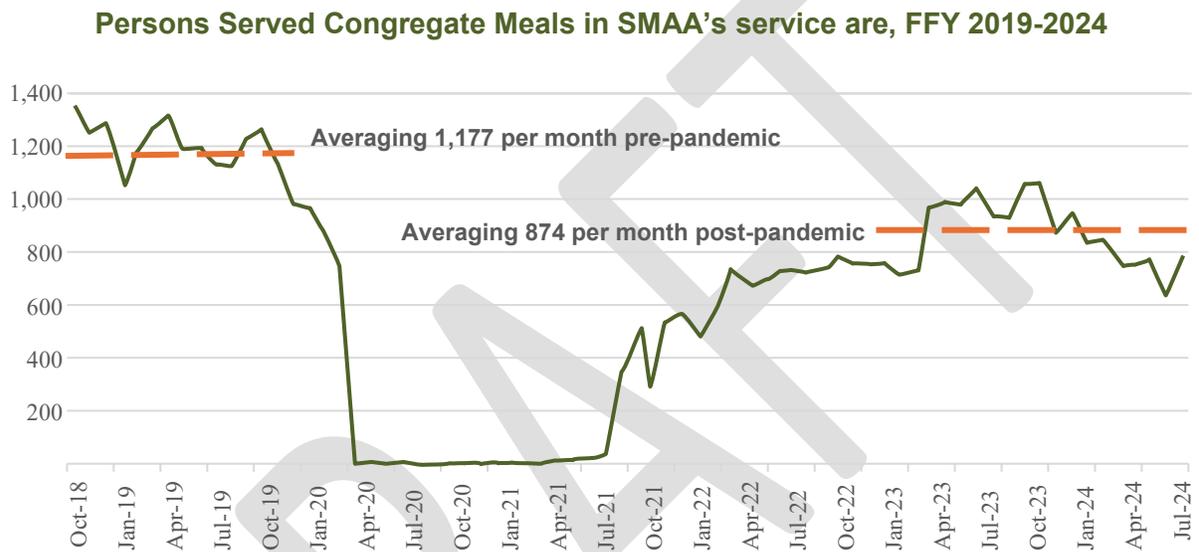
Maine’s Policies & Procedures for the Nutrition Services Program will be updated as part of the voluntary Corrective Action Plan process through rulemaking to address client eligibility.

AAAs in Maine interested in exercising this flexibility by providing such meals using Title III-C1 funds are required to amend their area plan on aging and submit a waiver request to OADS providing the required information (see [45 CFR 1321.27\(j\)](#)).

Overall, this amendment aims to promote a more flexible utilization of C1 funds, empowering AAAs to address the diverse needs of older individuals within their communities effectively. The proposed changes seek to enhance service delivery and outreach while fostering a spirit of innovation at the local level.

SMAA Amendment to Area Plan

In accordance with the amended State Plan on Aging and guidance above, SMAA amends our current Area Plan on Aging to include the provision of Shelf-stable, Pick-Up, Carry-Out, Drive-Through, or Similar Meals using up to 25% of our allotted Title III-C1 funds. Similar to statewide trends, SMAA has seen demand for traditional congregate dining options fail to rebound to pre-pandemic levels, and we applaud the flexibility for Area Agencies on Aging to provide more client-centered and personalized nutrition service modalities.



Appendix A

Direct Service Waiver Request for 2025-2028: Congregate Dining

AREA AGENCY ON AGING DIRECT SERVICE WAIVER REQUEST FOR 2025-2028

(as required by OADS policy 10-149, Ch. 5, Section 30.09)

SECTION I. (Agency)

12/1/2025

A. AGENCY NAME: Southern Maine Agency on Aging

B. DIRECT SERVICE DESCRIPTION: Congregate Meals for Older Adults, including shelf-stable, pick-up, and carry-out options.

SMAA requests a continuation of the waiver of Section 30.09 of the Office of Aging and Disability Services policy manual in order to ensure an adequate supply of congregate meals in our planning and service area. In addition, we request that this waiver include the following delivery options now allowed in the State Plan on Aging: shelf-stable, pick-up / grab-and-go, and carry-out.

C. SPECIFIC SERVICE NEED:

i. Identify and fully describe the specific problem, requirement, or need that the service(s) is intended to address and makes the services necessary.

The Congregate Meals Program is designed to offer nutritious meals and an opportunity for socialization to older adults who live independently in the community. Social isolation is a well-documented risk factor for depression, poor diet, and consequently poor health. SMAA's networks of contracted and/or self-managed dining sites offer regionally accessible locations for older adults to connect with old friends and make new ones. As such, they are a resource to combat social isolation. Over the past decade especially, we have seen the traditional congregate dining settings become less popular, despite continued food insecurity. Our restaurant voucher program, conversely, has gained traction due in part to increased menu options and timing flexibility. We would like to continue to experiment with additional delivery options more suited to the expectations of today's older adults.

ii. Explain how the Agency determined that the services are critical or essential to agency responsibilities or operations and/or whether the services are mandated.

Provision of a congregate meals program is a requirement of the Older Americans Act for Area Agencies on Aging receiving support from the Act. The seven congregate sites where SMAA staff serve meals also serve as satellite operations and distribution points for meals-on-wheels in the region.

D. AVAILABILITY OF OTHER RESOURCES TO DELIVER GOODS OR SERVICE:

Please explain why:

- i. There is insufficient staffing, experience, expertise and/or resources available within the SERVICE AREA and/or;**
- ii. There are no other resources (local, state, or federal agencies) external to the Agency who can perform the service more efficiently, more cost effectively or with comparable quality.**

Since 1973, it has been necessary for SMAA to participate as one of the direct providers of congregate meal services in our region to ensure availability of services throughout our service area. The Agency directly operates seven congregate dining sites and subcontracts the operation of eight additional sites. In addition, SMAA contracts with four restaurant voucher locations in our service area to offer a flexible, consumer-directed congregate dining experience that expands availability of congregate meals. The traditional congregate dining sites are available for congregate meals one to four days per week, while the restaurant voucher sites are available up to seven days per week.

In April 2024, SMAA publicly requested letters of intent for additional OAA service providers, including congregate dining*. We received no responses for congregate meal service provision but will continue to reach out to other providers regularly to expand availability of congregate meals in our region. Our current subcontracted providers have declined to expand their programs to other locations because of geographic restrictions in their charters.

*Documentation of Request for Letters of Intent:

Home page link: <https://web.archive.org/web/20240428140306/https://www.smaaa.org/>
RFLOI: <https://web.archive.org/web/20240428135720/https://www.smaaa.org/rfp.html>

Signature

Date

SECTION II. (Office of Aging and Disability Services Response)

Click here to enter a date.

A. COMMENT (s): Click here to enter text.

B. REQUEST STATUS:

Approved:

Rejected:

Pending:

Additional Comment(s): Click here to enter text.

Elizabeth Hopkins Date
Director, Office of Aging and Disability Services
Maine Department of Health and Human Services

DRAFT