

# Updated Guidance for Resuming In-Person Service Delivery of the Older Americans Act Programs During the COVID-19 Pandemic

## Appendix A of PM 21-10: Title IIIC Nutrition Programs

The purpose of this document is to provide updated guidance for resuming in-person service delivery of the Older Americans Act (OAA) Title IIIC Nutrition Programs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The State of California is preparing to move beyond the [Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#). On June 15, 2021, the tier-based approach of the *Blueprint* will no longer be in place and California will fully open its economy if criteria are met regarding vaccinations and hospitalizations.

Until the Governor announces that the State has met the criteria to move beyond the *Blueprint*, the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) should continue to follow the current guidance which is to defer in-person nutrition services until after a county reaches Tier 4 (the yellow tier) and, ideally, until a county remains in the yellow tier for several weeks.

Once the State meets the required criteria for moving beyond the *Blueprint*, on June 15<sup>th</sup> or later, it will be at the AAAs discretion to resume in-person nutrition services. The decision will be made at the local level and should be based on state and local public health guidance, along with an assessment of the readiness of the current staff, facility, and older adults at each site where nutrition services are provided. Risk reduction measures should be continued, including masking, handwashing, and physical distancing. Participants who have not received vaccinations should be referred to vaccination sites. Updates regarding the status of the moving beyond the *Blueprint* can be found at [COVID19.ca.gov](https://www.covid19.ca.gov) and [Beyond the Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#).

### Preparation for Moving Beyond the *Blueprint*

AAAs and service providers should ensure plans are in place for resuming in-person nutrition services in preparation for moving beyond the *Blueprint*. Considerations for congregate and home-delivered services include the following:

Congregate services:

- Staff/volunteer training regarding COVID-19 risk reduction measures. Refer to [Guidance for Dine-In Restaurants](#) for suggested topics for employee training and to the CDC [Symptom Screener](#) for guidelines and digital resources.
- Cleaning and disinfecting protocols.
- Reservation system to manage seating capacity.
- Protocols for ensuring hand sanitizer is available for staff and client use where handwashing is not feasible.
- Protocols for ensuring masks are available, as feasible, for staff or clients who arrive without a mask and protocol for those who elect not to wear a mask. Masking protocols will remain in place until adjusted or discontinued per state and/or local public health guidance.

## Updated Guidance for Resuming In-Person Service Delivery of the Older Americans Act Programs During the COVID-19 Pandemic

### Appendix A of PM 21-10: Title IIIC Nutrition Programs

- Refer to California Department of Public Health (CDPH) [Guidance for Use of Face Coverings](#) which also provides guidance regarding individuals who are exempt from wearing a mask in specific settings including: “Persons who are actively eating or drinking, provided that they are able to maintain a distance of at least six feet away from persons who are not members of the same household or residence”.
- Protocols for physical distancing of at least six feet, including seating arrangements. Physical distancing protocols will remain in place until adjusted or discontinued per state and/or local public health guidance.
- Consider additional dining times if unable to seat all participants at one time following physical distancing protocol. Allow sufficient time for cleaning and disinfecting between dining times.
- Consider outdoor dining, if feasible and if desired by participants.
- AAAs and service providers should consult their own outside legal counsel for guidance on risk assessment and regarding questions about requiring proof of vaccinations or use of liability waivers.

#### Home Delivered Meals (HDM) services:

- Protocols for resuming in-person assessments when requirements are no longer waived, including:
  - Initial assessments for new clients
  - Annual reassessments for existing clients
  - Quarterly eligibility reassessments, conducted in the home every other quarter

#### Moving Beyond the *Blueprint*

When the State meets the required criteria for moving beyond the *Blueprint*, it will be at the AAAs discretion to resume in-person nutrition services. The decision will be made at the local level and should be based on state and local public health guidance, along with an assessment of the readiness of the current staff, facility, and older adults at each site where nutrition services are provided.

Continue to follow State and local public health guidance for potential statewide or local changes impacting in-person services. Updates regarding status of the moving beyond the *Blueprint* can be found at [COVID19.ca.gov](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/COVID19.ca.gov) and [Beyond the Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#).

Risk reduction measures should be continued when in-person nutrition services are resumed, including masking, handwashing, and physical distancing. Participants who

## Updated Guidance for Resuming In-Person Service Delivery of the Older Americans Act Programs During the COVID-19 Pandemic

### Appendix A of PM 21-10: Title IIIC Nutrition Programs

have not received vaccinations should be referred to vaccination sites. Vaccine information can be found at <https://aging.ca.gov/covid19/>.

During the transition to in-person nutrition services, temporary accommodations may be permitted, such as:

- Continued meal pick-up or home-delivered meal services for clients who are reluctant or fearful to return to the congregate setting.
- Virtual assessments for new HDM clients who are reluctant to allow others into their home to conduct assessments.
- Virtual quarterly HDM eligibility reassessments for clients who may be reluctant to allow others into their home.

#### Program Flexibilities

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, both ACL and CDA have allowed program flexibilities due to the need for safety precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The program flexibilities are detailed in the [Frequently Asked Questions - Guidance for AAAs for COVID-19](#). The reversing of the program flexibilities will be tied to the ending of the Major Disaster Declaration (MDD). Program flexibilities should continue no more than six months after the Major Disaster Declaration (MDD) ends. CDA will inform the AAAs once the MDD ends and the six-month transition period to reverse the flexibilities begins.

Note that the following program flexibilities have been granted at the federal level and are therefore outside of the scope of CDA authority:

- Offering pick-up or to-go meals for congregate meal participants beyond the transition period to in-person congregate meal services.
- The waiver of the requirement to follow the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) and provide one-third of the Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI) in meals using OAA funds.

Adjustments to these flexibilities will be determined by the Administration for Community Living (ACL). CDA will notify the AAAs when guidance regarding these flexibilities is provided by ACL.