



## FAQ BASED ON CALL WITH ACL AND SUA DIRECTORS ON APRIL 22, 2020

This FAQ contains questions and answers from ACL's call with SUA Directors on April 22, 2020.

(Issued 4/29/2020)

### PRESENTATION SUMMARIES:

#### **Dr. Hope Thompson, Economist, Office of Policy and Program Analysis, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**

Dr. Thompson serves on a team that monitors problems related to food banks, food assistance programs and serving the food needs of the nation's most vulnerable populations. The team is currently monitoring problems such as, reports of canceled orders to food banks and food programs due to USDA or FEMA large purchases, PPE issues and lack of availability for volunteers. FEMA hosts a weekly interagency coordination call to discuss current efforts to combat these issues.

FEMA Public Assistance Program serves to meet the immediate needs of people who lack access to food because of COVID-19 and protects the public from the spread of the virus. The policy has the ability to cover various costs related to ensuring those in need have access to food (i.e. food banks, home delivery, etc.). Each state must communicate the specific needs of their population, and applicants seeking reimbursement for such costs must be the actual state, tribal, or territorial government. All private non-profits must have formal agreements with their local, state, tribal or territorial government making them legally responsible for providing specific life safety services to receive funding. For specific questions related to this program, please contact your local FEMA regional office.

#### **Dr. Alexis Travis, Senior Deputy Director, Michigan Aging and Adult Services Agency**

AARP Michigan (MI) connected MI State Unit on Aging (SUA) to the Food Bank Council (Council) of Michigan in order to assist older adults (age 60+) throughout the state who cannot access food due to the stay-at-home order. MI SUA purchased 10,000 quarantine boxes (Q-boxes) from the Council, and the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) distributed the Q-boxes throughout the state.

Initially, MI SUA purchased Q-boxes through the Aging Adult Services Agency using administrative funds. However, now MI SUA is working with the public and other funding sources to raise additional dollars. For example, SUA raised \$40,000 from the public through a virtual food-drive and plans to use these funds to make additional Q-boxes available. Each Q-box costs approximately \$28 and contains 33 food items, such as chicken, green beans, peanut butter, rice and

tomatoes. Altogether, the Q-boxes provide approximately 22 well-balanced meals designed to feed recipients for ten days. The boxes also contain breakfast, lunch, and dinner recipes for seniors who are food insecure.

MI SUA is also using state level funds to issue mini grants for virtual delivery for support groups, friendly reassurance, and other evidence-based programs that support seniors. Currently, the SUA has about 3,000 volunteers delivering meals, Q-boxes and providing friendly reassurance. MI SUA developed a portal where individuals can volunteer to assist with these services.

**Kelly Cronin, Deputy Administrator, Center for Innovation and Partnership, Administration for Community Living (ACL)**

Currently, there are many opportunities for aging and disability networks to partner with health systems to support care transitions and COVID-19 emergency response. Recently, ACL organized a webinar with the Aging and Disability Business Institute and N4A on April 16, 2020, to provide an overview of the Medicare flexibilities currently available but primarily focusing on the telehealth expansions and flexibilities, as well as the Hospital without Walls Initiative. Over 560 participants attended the webinar. The participants included over 150 triple AAAs, over 40 CILs and around 90 other CBOs.

To access the webinar. Please click here:

<https://www.aginganddisabilitybusinessinstitute.org/resources/hospital-without-walls-new-opportunities-for-cbos/>

## FISCAL

### **Question:**

What are our options for match related to family caregiver COVID-19 supplemental funding?

### **Answer:**

There is no service match requirement for Title III-E CARES Act funds. However, if taken, State Plan and Area Plan administration match is required at the normal 25% match rate.

### **Question:**

Which supplemental COVID-19 funds should states spend first?

### **Answer:**

Because FFCRA & CARES Act funding is specifically appropriated for COVID-19 response, ACL encourages the use of funding in the following order:

1. Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) funding;
2. CARES Act funding;
3. "Regular" OAA Title III and Title VII grant funds, starting with the oldest funds available first;
  - a. FFY 2018
  - b. FFY 2019
  - c. FFY 2020

All SUAs have been provided a no-cost-extension for the FFY 2019 Title III, Title VII, and NSIP grants. The project period end dates have been extended to September 30, 2021 with final reporting due December 30, 2021. A new Notice of Award (NOA) will be provided to SUAs that have not fully expended their grants in the July 2020 timeframe with the updated project period end date. SUAs that receive the no-cost-extensions will be required to submit semi-annual reports until a final report is submitted.

All SUAs that have FFY2018 Title III, Title VII, and NSIP grants will be provided a liquidation extension for an additional year to December 30, 2021. Please note funds must have been obligated by September 30, 2018 to be available for expenditure and liquidation. A new NOA will not be provided with this updated liquidation period, however late requests for liquidation will be approved. Final liquidations and SF425 report are due December 30, 2021.

## OAA TITLE VII

### Question:

Can the state Ombudsman Program use CARES funding or is it all intended to go out to the AAAs?

### Answer:

- Yes, the state Ombudsman determines the use of the fiscal resources appropriated or otherwise available for the operation of the Office, including the CARES Act funds. ACL encourages SUA Directors to work with their state Ombudsman to determine the needs at the state Office, such as, bulk purchasing of equipment, statewide training needs, etc. and the allocation of these funds to the local Ombudsman entities, such as AAA's. See previous [State Long Term Care Ombudsman FAQ](#) for additional information.

### Question:

Since the COVID-19 relief funds are being used for a number of different services. Is there going to be any relaxing of the Certification of Long Term Care Ombudsman Program Expenditures for next year?

### Answer:

The Older Americans Act Reauthorization of 2020 updated the minimum expenditure requirements for the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program to the total amount of funds expended under the Older Americans Act in fiscal year 2019. FFY 2020 minimum expenditure requirements for the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program must meet or exceed the FFY 2019 expenditure levels. ACL is available for additional technical assistance in this area if needed.

# STRATEGIC PLANNING

## **Question:**

Does ACL have guidance or guidelines that it can provide to SUA Directors about how they can provide good information to their governors' offices about reopening in a phased in approach?

## **Answer:**

ACL is working on guidance about reopening based on the administration's phased approach. We will make it available as soon as it is finalized.