Congregate Nutrition Programs in 2021 & Beyond: Exemplary Innovations in Iowa & Texas

December, 2021
Alexandra Bauman, RD, LDN
Nutrition & Wellness Division Director
Iowa Department on Aging

Danielle Crail, RD, LDN
Healthy Aging Director
Elderbridge Area Agency on Aging

Gina Carter
Director
Office of Area Agencies on Aging
Texas HHSC Access & Eligibility Services

Linda Netterville, RD, LDN
Independent Consultant

Nandita Chaudhuri, Ph.D.
Research Scientist
Public Policy Research Institute
Texas A&M University
ACL INNU Grant Program

- ACL funded “Innovations in Nutrition” grants to support the testing and documentation of innovative and promising practices within the aging services network since 2017

- TCMI, funded in 2019, is a partnership between Texas HHSC, Texas A&M University, SNAP-Ed, 16 Selected Nutrition Providers & their Area Agencies on Aging

- The Iowa Café, funded in 2020, is a partnership between Iowa Dept. of Aging and Elderbridge Area Agency on Aging

---INNU GOALS---

- Enhance Quality
- Increase Participation
- Best Practices
- Results-Oriented Strategies
- Cost-Effectiveness
- Enhance Quality of Life
Iowa Congregate Nutrition Consumer Participation

60% Decline in Participation in 9 Years

Source: Iowa Department on Aging, Aging & Disability Database
Barriers Addressed:

- Nutrition
- Menu
- Intake Form
- Funding
- Environment
- Marketing
The Iowa Café Key Innovations

**Goal:** Modernize Iowa’s congregate meal program infrastructure, delivery mechanisms, and outreach to increase the number of consumers and meals served.

**Outcomes:** Improved infrastructure and delivery mechanisms; strategic outreach to reach targeted senior population.
Iowa Service Area

- 99 counties in Iowa with a total population of 2,697,968
- Elderbridge Agency on Aging serves 29 counties with a total of 428,307
- 15.9% of the population
- Mostly rural
INNOVATIVE MENUS

THE IOWA CAFE

PLYMOUTH LOUNGE | PLYMOUTH, IA

All meals served with orange juice, cranberry juice, pineapple juice, 8 oz. milk, or unsweetened iced tea.

SANDWICHES
Served with choice of side salad, French fries, cottage cheese or coleslaw
- Grilled Chicken - Lettuce, tomato, and mayo
- Tenderloin (breaded or unbreaded) - Lettuce, tomato, and mayo
1/4 lb Hamburger - Lettuce and tomato

SALADS
Served with Texas toast
Large salad served with your choice of grilled chicken, crispy chicken or taco flavored ground beef.

WINGS
Served with celery, carrots, and ranch, choice of one side, and Texas toast
6 wings - traditional or boneless

SPECIALS
Tuesday - Taco
Wednesday - Tenderloin Basket (served with tomato, lettuce, mayo) and 1 side of choice
Thursday - Chef's Choice
Critical Marketing Strategies

**EAT. LEARN. SOCIALIZE.**

**Crazy Bob's BBQ**

240 N 8th E
Hartley, IA 51346
712.928.2666

The Iowa Café is the new face of the Elderbridge nutrition program serving those 60 years of age or older! Dine with your family and friends at a participating local restaurant.

To participate in the Iowa Café, individuals must be 60 years of age or older, or a spouse of an eligible individual regardless of age. Meals are provided on a voluntary contribution basis for up to 15 meals per month, and individuals will be given the opportunity to contribute towards the cost of the meal.

call 1.800.243.0678 for more information

**sign up today for the iowa café!**

who
Everyone age 60 and older & spouses of those age 60 and older

what
Iowa Café members receive a card that will be loaded with 15 meals per month to be used at any time. Participants will be given the opportunity to voluntarily contribute/donate towards the cost of the meals each month.

when
May 2021

how
Ask your server for more information!
Call LifeLong Links to register at 1-800-243-0678

**Aspen Leaf Café & Coffee House**

210 N Main St.
Pocahontas, IA 50574
712.335.1777

The Iowa Café is the new face of the Elderbridge nutrition program serving those 60 years of age or older! Dine with your family and friends at a participating local restaurant.

To participate in the Iowa Café, individuals must be 60 years of age or older, or a spouse of an eligible individual regardless of age. Meals are provided on a voluntary contribution basis for up to 15 meals per month, and individuals will be given the opportunity to contribute towards the cost of the meal.

call 1.800.243.0678 for more information
Revamped Intake & Registration

Nutrition Registration

Sign up today to enjoy wholesome meals with friends!

* Required

First Name *

Your answer

Last Name *

Your answer

SeniorDineQR

Matts Place

Meal

Enter Last 6 digits

Transactions Today: 9

THE IOWA CAFE

800-243-0678

6010 9600 1079 8817
OLDER AMERICANS ACT
Purpose of Nutrition Programs
Reduce hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition.
Promote socialization of older individuals.
Promote health and well-being with access to nutrition & health promotion/disease prevention services to delay onset of chronic diseases.

What is food insecurity?
Some people are unable to get enough nutritious food for an active, healthy life.

Did you know?
The Older Americans Act is not simply a “feeding program” or a “meal program.” It’s more than that! The OAA specifies these purposes of the nutrition program: (1) provide nutrition services to prevent or delay the onset of nutrition-related problems among older persons; (2) enhance the nutrition status of older adults; and (3) promote the socialization of older persons. Providing nutritious meals contributes to health and well-being and helps older persons remain independent in their homes.

Registration Form
A registration form must be filled out by all participants during the initial visit and on a yearly basis. All questions are required by the OAA, and they are required for the participant to receive a meal at a local restaurant. The form can be done online, in person, by calling the AAA, or through tablet technology at the restaurant. See the graphic below for details. If a participant registers at the restaurant, the first initial meal can be provided at no charge. If you do not have this information, you may want to contact the AAA for reimbursement. All other meals cannot be provided at a discount or free meals.

BENEFITS OF THE IOWA CAFE PARTNERSHIPS
- Increase participant choice
- Serve dinner, breakfast, & weekend meals
- Connect participants to other AAA services
- Expand outreach & improve visibility
- Serve minority groups with ethnically diverse meals
- Economic boost for local restaurants
- Can be a part of disaster & emergency planning

IOWA CAFE M E N U

B E V E R A G E S (P I C K 1):
Coffee
Milk
Orange Juice

S I D E S (P I C K 1):
French Fries
Baked Potato
Garlic Knots
METHODS:
1 egg, 1/2 cup of milk, 1/4 cup bread crumbs

B E N E F I T S:
- Increased variety of choices
- Improved nutrition
- Socialization opportunities

OTHER RESOURCES:
- Iowa Department on Aging
- Administration for Community Living
- Meals on Wheels America
- National Association of State Units on Aging

How to Register for Iowa Cafe:
Call sunshine@iowacafe.org
Monday-Friday, 8 am - 5 pm
Contact your local area agency on aging
www.iowacafe.org

USDA: Food and Nutrition Service
Office of Food Security and Support
www.fns.usda.gov
January–November, 2021
Success Measures

• 13 Sites opened in 9 Counties
• 2,006 unique new participants registered
• 17,031 meals served
A gentleman who was a regular at a participating Iowa Café restaurant lost his job. When he stopped coming in, the restaurant manager inquired about his whereabouts. She was told he had lost his job and was living on a can of soup a day. She contacted him and informed him about our program and he now gets a hot meal every day.---Iowa Café participating restaurant owner

“I don’t know what we did to deserve this. We are so happy we get to enjoy these delicious meals.” - Iowa Café Participant from Garner, Iowa

“This man was so emotional when he came in to apply. His case worker told him to come in. He was thanking me over and over. So sweet. I’m so glad we’re doing this.” -- Iowa Café participating restaurant owner
What’s Next?
TEXAS CONGREGATE MEAL INITIATIVE:
DEVELOPING CUSTOMER FOCUSED SUSTAINABLE & LOW-COST CONGREGATE PROGRAM MODELS AT 16 SITES

Texas HHSC, Public Policy Research Institute & Mays Business School, Texas A&M University
WHY MODERNIZE & RETHINK CONGREGATE MEAL PROGRAMS IN TEXAS?

The graph shows the trend of meals served and population over 60 in Texas and the United States from 2005 to 2017.

- Meals Served (Texas)
- Population Over 60 (Texas)
- Meals Served (US)
- Population Over 60 (US)

The data indicates that the population over 60 in Texas has increased by 24.9% from 2005 to 2017, while the number of meals served has decreased by 2.9 million meals.
Key Goal

Improve the well-being of older Texans by modernizing local congregate nutrition programs

Key Objectives

Conduct a comprehensive gap analysis
Increase business acumen and program development
Implement and evaluate a learning collaborative

Desired Outcomes

Increased business acumen and program development skills
Increase participation in OAA C1 Congregate Nutrition Programs
Increased satisfaction and participation; Improved well-being and social integration
TCMI PROJECT PHASES & WHERE WE ARE

PHASE 1
RESEARCH & GAP ANALYSIS
- Surveys of individuals 60+ and senior serving orgs
- 29 Focus Groups with 28 AAAs and Nutrition Providers
- Survey of Community Health Providers

PHASE 2
COACH & PREPARE
- 16 Meal Provider Proposals $2,500 each
- 6-Month Targeted Learning
- Learning Collaborative Workshop & TA

PHASE 3
IMPLEMENT & EVALUATE PILOTS
- 16 Pilots $7,500 each
- 7-Month Implementation
- Evaluation to develop Texas specific evidence base

PHASE 4
SHARE RESULTS
- 3 National Conferences
- 2 Academic Journal Submissions
- 1 State Summit to showcase best practices

28 AAAs
254 counties
Nearly 200 Providers
16 Pilot Sites

28 AAAs

254 counties

Nearly 200 Providers

16 Pilot Sites
KEY FINDINGS
RESEARCH & GAP ANALYSIS

WHY DECLINE IN PARTICIPATION?

- Lack of Awareness; Marketing
- Transportation
- Changing Senior Demographics & Roles
- Stigma & Pride; Unappealing & Unwelcome Settings
- Meals & Activity Limitations

WHAT WORKS IN INCREASING PARTICIPATION?

- Regional Adaptations
- Strategic Marketing
- Revitalization of Activities & Settings
- Updating & Creative Rethinking of Meals
TCMI LEARNING COLLABORATIVE:  
THE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR INNOVATION

Selection of 16 Pilot Nutrition Providers

Virtual 3-Day Workshop October 2020

Targeted & Tailored Technical Assistance Curriculum

Providers Develop & Refine Innovative Low-Cost Business Plans

TCMI Pilot Innovations
FOUR TYPES OF TCMI INNOVATIVE PILOTS

- Technology Based Programming
- Creative Dining Models
- Rebranding & Marketing
- Health & Wellness
Breakfast Café Experience

Set up a distinctive process and area for breakfast and discussions

Engage early bird seniors with light breakfast and discussions

Provide enhanced social connection experience

Partnerships

- Host local elected officials and other community partners as conversation leaders at the café once a month
- Lead conversations on current events, history, etc.

Marketing

- Flyers distribution
- Social media use
- One Call Software
Connection Focused Programming

Programming geared towards fostering social connection

Development of key community partnerships for delivery

Dining Model Enhancements

- Component-based grab-n-go meal concept
- Menu development and efficient production schedule

Marketing/Rebranding

- Rebrand: Connection Café
- Targeted outreach to both previous & new clients
- Utilize social media and digital billboards
Café-based Meal Service

- Update décor
- Update seating arrangements

All Day Energy Under One Roof

Expanded Meal Options

- Cappuccino machine
- Salad bar
- Frozen drink machine
- Partnerships with donut shops

Removing Senior Center Stigma

- Target younger senior population
- Target with creative advertising
Offer a New Program Focused on Arts & Crafts

- Target a different set of older adults
- Promote creative aging
- Provide social engagement
- Provide opportunities to connect with the community and bridge generational divides

Offer a New Menu

- Different from regular Meals on Wheels offering
- Different packaging and display of food offering
- Get quick and constant feedback re menu for continuous improvement

Marketing

- Dedicated Facebook and Instagram accounts
- Showcase seniors work at a craft fair, exhibition, etc.
- Work with local media to promote the program
- Network with local arts and crafts groups
Expanded Activities

- Create menu options with help from local restaurants and chefs
- Provide technology training on Zoom and social media as programming components
- Partner with local educators to develop curriculum that can later be implemented by recruited volunteers

Monthly Café based Meal Service

- Enhanced ambience
- Local restaurant & chef partners

Marketing

- Work with local media and restaurants to market the program
OUTCOME MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Increased Client/Program Outcomes
- Participation
- Satisfaction
- Awareness and Knowledge
  - Nutrition
  - Health and wellness
- Technology
- Program Offerings
- Engagement in the Program
- Social Isolation/Connection
- Program Visibility & Reach
FACTORS PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY & SCALING

- Low Cost Innovations
- In-Kind Community Partnerships
- Volunteers & Client Ambassadors
- Repeatable Sponsorships
- Equipment & Resources
- Overall Institutionalization
Thank You!

Iowa
Alexandra Bauman, RD LDN
Contact: alexandra.bauman@iowa.gov

Danielle Crail
Contact: dcrail@elderbridge.org

Texas
Nandita Chaudhuri, Ph.D.
Contact: nchaudhuri@ppri.tamu.edu

Gina Carter
Contact: gina.carter@hhs.texas.gov

Linda Netterville
Contact: linda.netterville@comcast.net

Any Questions?
Panel Questions & Answers