

PROGRAM INSTRUCTION

SUA-15-PI-08

April 1, 2015

TO: Area Agencies on Aging Directors

FROM: Cynthia Brammeier, Administrator, State Unit on Aging

BY: Claire Covert-ByBee, Program Specialist, State Unit on Aging

SUBJECT: Voluntary Contribution Requests

CONTENT: Voluntary contribution requests are a frequent topic in Nebraska and across the nation. The model of successful and sustainable senior centers is evolving. At the 2015 Aging in America Conference, the topic was repeated in multiple sessions tailored for senior centers and those of us involved in the services or funding. The emphasis was that there is (monetary) value in the work of Senior Centers. Prevalent phrases such as “get into the outcomes business, and out of the service business” – “set a price for your services based on value, not what it cost you” - “focus on your brand” - “evolve or evaporate” and “stop using the word free” – were repeated extensively - all of these are a change from the status quo.

The Older American’s Act requires offering each person the opportunity to contribute to the program they are participating in. This folds into the funding mix.

The Administration for Community Living (ACL)/Administration on Aging’s (AoA) Older Americans Act (OAA) Sec. 315(b)(4)(A) requires the following:
*The area agency on aging shall ensure that each service provider will—
(A) provide each recipient with an opportunity to voluntarily contribute to the cost of the service.*

In addition, the Nebraska Community Aging Services Act (CASA) 15 NAC 1.001.07L.1 requires that each Area Agency on Aging must assure their “program is administered in accordance with the Act (OAA), these rules and regulations (CASA), and the Area Plan.” They must also assure that they “operate fully in conformance with all applicable Federal, State, and local fire, health, safety and sanitation and other standards prescribed in law or regulations.” 15 NAC 1.001.07L.5. This includes providing recipients of OAA and CASA funds, “a free and voluntary opportunity to contribute to the cost of services.” 15 NAC 1.001.07O.

Services provided through the Nebraska Care Management Act indicate the following, “The Care Management Unit shall inform the individual of the fee for services prior to the delivery of services. Monthly statements of the services rendered and prior balance receivable, charges at full fee, sliding fee scale adjustments, payments received and ending balance receivable shall be sent to each client.” 15 NAC 2.007.04. The regulations indicate *each* client and not a subset of clients based upon income.

Based on these regulations, Voluntary Contribution Request forms should be mailed, or presented in person, to all clients receiving any services where a voluntary contribution box does not exist. Even those clients whose income is 0-149% of the poverty level. This includes Care Management, Title III-B, Title III-C2, and Title III-E clients. The attached Voluntary Contribution Request letter was created in cooperation with the Care Management Supervisors team to meet this need.

(Agency Letterhead)

(Date)

Dear (Client Name),

As a valued client of the (program names/type), we are committed to providing you with quality services. To ensure that (program name/type) services are funded, we offer all clients the opportunity to make voluntary contributions towards the cost of services. As always, services will be provided to clients aged 60+ regardless of ability or willingness to contribute. To ensure that contributions are confidential, all (program name/type) clients will be given an envelope to make a contribution if they so wish.

You have received the following services:

- (hours) (program name/type) (cost)

This is not a bill. Neither your Care Manager nor the **(agency)** will know whether or not you contribute. Contributions made to offset the cost of services are not tax deductible. If you are in a position to contribute, please know that your help will ensure that **(agency)** continues to provide services to all who need help. Checks may be made payable to **(agency)**. Thank you.

Sincerely,