

Responses to requests for clarification
Erie County Elderly Nutrition Services Program (ECENS)
RFP #1310VF

The following are responses to the questions that the County has received to date on the ECENS RFP. The County will be accepting further requests for clarification up until Wednesday May 29th at 4:00 p.m. Updates to this document will be made weekly until that point, with the final version of this document being available on Friday May 31st.

Service related requests

1. If Proposer is willing to extend its proposed service area in the event that there are no successful proposals for a particular location, can the willingness be based on the provision of a cold meal which can be reheated in lieu of the hot meal if distance impacts the ability to deliver a hot meal to the extended service area within the County's required time frame?

Willingness to extend proposed service area must be based on the requirements set forth in the RFP. Page 10, 3a requires the provision of a hot (mid-day) meal.

2. For the home delivered meals program, the RFP refers to an "optional cold meal for those clients with an identified need." Approximately how many such optional cold meals are expected to be needed during 2014? Should the proposal set forth separate pricing for a single hot meal and an optional cold meal?

All proposals should include a separate price for the hot meal (mid-day) and the cold meal (supper). The hot mid-day meal is considered the primary meal. If a client is scheduled to receive meals on a given day, at minimum, that delivery must include the hot mid-day meal. There will be no deliveries of cold suppers only.

Currently all ECENS home delivered meals clients receive both a hot mid-day meal and a cold supper. However, there are a small but significant number of clients that have informal supports (family, friend, neighbors) who are able to prepare evening meals for the client. The County is interested in exploring the extent to which separate pricing can yield savings that can be re-invested in the ECENS program, to help meet the demand for ECENS service. The County currently estimates that approximately 15% of clients would be appropriate for a one meal delivery. Proposers should estimate their number of cold meals at no fewer than 85% of the number of hot meals they project to serve. It is important to note that these numbers represent a County-wide estimate. Proposers are encouraged to take into consideration any and all information relevant to the particular part of the County for which they are applying to provide service when establishing their cold meal projections.

3. Is the County requesting a proposal for Congregate Dining meals to be delivered to sites in the Town of Amherst and to the Salvation Army Main Street, Buffalo site?

The County is requesting proposals for congregate dining meals to be prepared and delivered to sites within areas no smaller than a city or town or to smaller subdivided areas that comply with the exceptions set forth in the RFP.

4. Is the County requesting proposals for Home Delivered Meals service in the Town of Amherst, the Town of Tonawanda (including the Village of Kenmore) and/or the Village of Alden?

The County is requesting proposals for home delivered meals service within areas no smaller than a city or town or to smaller subdivided areas that comply with the exceptions set forth in the RFP.

5. Can new agencies (not already on the Erie County Stay Fit Dining Sites list) apply for the Elderly Nutrition Program?

Yes, new agencies can apply.

6. In Section 3 of the ECENS application, can you please elaborate on what information needs to be included under “Section 3 C: Plan for Meal Delivery?”

This section applies to proposals for the ECENS home delivered meals service, and calls for a thorough description of how the proposer will execute the tasks associated with the timely delivery of meals to the homes of ECENS clients. This description should address all of the identified areas of section III-C as outlined in the RFP, and include how the Proposer will ensure compliance with the requirements outlined in Appendix B. Include procedures for transport, maintaining temperatures, and emergency backup. This section should also indicate whether the Proposer will be able to provide frozen weekend meals.

7. Should the reference at page 10 to “...two meals seven days per week” have been to “two meals five days per week”?

The language in the second paragraph under section III-C 3(a) on page 10 provides guidance on how Erie County case managers determine the number of meals a client will need to be provided weekly. In a very small number of cases, the County has found that certain clients do need meals for 7 days per week. Currently the County meets those needs through the delivery of meals Monday through Friday, with an option to have up to four frozen weekend meals delivered on the last delivery day of the week.

8. Is 89-TAM-7 the current menu planning guideline for purposes of the nutritional requirements of this RFP?

Yes 89-TAM-7 is the current menu planning guideline for the purposes of nutritional requirements for the RFP; however, please note that the 1980 RDA dietary guidelines referred to in stated TAM have been revised--- some key nutrient levels have increased, while some have decreased; all efforts should be made to accommodate the revised levels as realistically as possible.

9. Will the County or will the successful proposer be doing the nutritional analysis per item E on page 28 of the RFP?

The County will be doing the nutritional analysis.

10. Please clarify that, if a casserole or stew item includes a three-ounce protein requirement and does not include the vegetable requirement, the minimum weight served can be six ounces, rather than eight ounces as stated at page 29 of the RFP.

If a casserole or stew item includes a 3oz. protein requirement and does not include the vegetable requirement, the minimum weight served must be 6 oz. Casseroles and stews that contain the 3 oz. protein requirement plus the ½ cup vegetable requirement, must be a minimum of 8 oz.

11. Please clarify that the requirement at page 29 of the RFP for an entrée salad twice per month is not applicable to the Home Delivered Meals Program.

Entrée salads offered twice/month is not applicable to the home delivered meal program.

12. Please clarify the requirement at page 29 of the RFP that Ida Reds are not the only type of apple that can be offered.

Ida Reds are not the only type of apple that can be offered; however, the size indicating a 120 count is required.

13. Please clarify what is meant at page 30 item J that “the same serving type” may not be provided more than one type per week.” For example, does that mean that whole grain bread cannot be served more than once per week? If so, can this be clarified to simply state that there should be a variety of serving types in the course of a week?

No, whole grain bread can be served more than once per week. Item J refers to serving type. Here is an example of what is permissible:

Monday-1 slice of whole wheat bread

Tuesday- 1 soft dinner roll

Wednesday- ½ cup of cooked brown rice

Thursday- 1 cornbread square

Friday- 1 slice of rye bread

Saturday- 1 breakaway roll (Frozen Weekend Meal)

Sunday- 1 whole wheat roll (Frozen Weekend Meal)

14. Please clarify that the statement at page 31 item K that the “Nutrition program staff will designate milk choice” is not applicable to the Home Delivered Meals Program.

Nutrition program staff will designate milk choice is not applicable to home delivered meals program.

15. Please clarify whether the proposer has to provide for test meal temperature testing as required by NYSOFA guidelines.

The proposer must provide for meal temperature testing as required by NYSOFA and per current policy: “Home delivered meals temperatures shall be taken before portioning (of individual meals) and when the last meal is delivered. This must be done no less than monthly on all routes over one hour in length and quarterly on all routes under one hour.” Test meals are considered a cost of doing business and should be factored into overall business costs.

16. Please provide copies of the materials which are identified in footnotes 5, 13 and 17.

These items can be found on the Erie County Department of Senior Services Website at: <http://www2.erie.gov/seniorservices/index.php?q=program-info-department-partners>

17. Are the facilities that may be involved owned by the county?

No.

18. Is there a county facility associated with the provisioning?

No.

19. This question speaks to the definition of the term "plating"? The RFP states that the period between "plating the cold meal must be no more than 2 hours to the time it is delivered. Does the 2 hour time period begin from the time the cold meal is placed into the cooler and the time it is delivered to the meal recipient? What if the cold meal is packaged and sealed and then put into a refrigerator prior to being put into a cooler? Could the two hour timeframe begin at the time it is removed from the refrigerator until the time it is delivered? Please clarify.

The two hour time frame for the cold meal begins at the time it is removed from the refrigerator until the time it is delivered to the recipient.

20. The RFP states that no route should have more than 12 meal recipients on it. We have 17 routes that have up to a maximum of 17 meal recipients on it. These are situated within a fairly concise and defined area due to the fact that we only serve one Town within the County of Erie. This has not posed a problem especially when some of the routes contain senior apartment complexes. Is this acceptable? Holding to the 12 meal recipient maximum per route would place a considerable burden on the program due to the need

for significantly more volunteer drivers and servers each day. Is there flexibility on this matter in light of the fact that all of the routes are completed within one hour?

Routes that contain more than 12 meals may be submitted for approval by the County provided that the proposer can demonstrate that there is adherence to the temperature and 2-hour maximum time limits.

21. A request for clarification was submitted regarding the threshold for providing nutrition assessments, education and counseling.

Proposers should base plans to provide nutrition assessments, education, and counseling on the number of meals that they propose to provide under the funding available as described in the RFP.

22. The application requires submitting profiles of key personnel along with credentials. Is the information included in Section 1 of the application (organizational capacity and experience) enough information, or do proposers also need to submit the resumes of the key personnel?

The RFP does not specifically ask for resumes. The extent to which a proposer will provide profiles of key personnel and organizational capacity will vary based on the content of their proposal. Proposals involving nutrition education, assessment, and counseling should be sure to include the appropriate credentials for staff completing those tasks where applicable.

BUDGET related requests

23. Please confirm that the \$1,437,314 of Title III C-1 funding includes \$775,000 of anticipated revenue from the County's collection of voluntary participant contributions as stated in footnote 26 of the RFP.

The \$1,437,314 of Title III C-1 funding indicated on page 15 does include \$775,000 of anticipated revenue from the County's collection of voluntary participant contributions (see footnote 26). The funding amounts indicated on pages 14 and 15 are the grant funds the County currently estimates will be available for the provision of services specifically outlined and requested in the RFP. The amounts do not include grant funds the County currently estimates will be spent for other ECENS activity that are not included in this RFP.

24. Please clarify what is meant at page 41 that "The meal projection should be based on only one of these age groups."

Table 3 provides information from the 2010 Census. It indicates the number of older adults that reside in Erie County census subdivisions by age group. Proposers should be aware that the age groupings overlap. Therefore, the 60+ category includes all individuals who are 60 or older, including the 75+ and the 85+. It will lead to artificially high meal projections if a proposer were to combine these numbers. For some areas of the county, the concentration of 85+ may be higher than in others, and using the

number of 85+ for meal projections may produce more accurate service projections. It is at the proposers' discretion as to which age group they use.

25. Please clarify how many Congregate Dining Meals or the amount of the average voluntary contribution. At footnote 26 of the RFP, the total amount is projected at \$775,000 and at page 41 the average contribution is \$3.00 per meal which would indicate that 258,334 Congregate Dining meals were served. At page 24 of the RFP, it is stated that 341,461 Congregate Meals were served.

The \$775,000 in revenue that is projected to be available from voluntary contributions in 2014, presented in footnote 26, is a conservative estimate based on the most recent retrospective data the County has available from the 2012 service year. At that time the suggested contribution was set at \$2.75. The actual revenue generated from voluntary contributions in 2014 may be higher or lower than the amount estimated in footnote 26, and is dependent on a number of factors including the suggested voluntary contribution at the time, participants ability to pay, the number of 'seconds' and unused meals, and the satisfaction with the food that is served.

The e-budget is prospective in nature—a part of a proposal for the 2014 service year. The \$3.00 average contribution reflects the goal that the ECENS program has set for voluntary contributions in 2014. It reflects the expectation that the suggested contribution will continue to be the 2013 rate, \$3.50, and that the actual contributions collected will be approximately 86% of the suggested rate.

Proposers should keep in mind that all performance data supplied in this RFP, including number of meals served and revenue generated from the collection of voluntary contributions, are based on the 2012 service year, and are intended to be informational only. They are indicative of what may be expected from program performance in the 2014 service year, but should not be interpreted as guaranteed.

26. Please explain how the costs that are requested to be entered on the “Sub-Contracts Sheet,” “Equipment-Space Costs,” “Maintenance and Operations” and “Other and Travel Sheets” described at pages 42 and 43 of the RFP will be considered by the County in reviewing the RFP or in paying for the services which are the subject of this RFP. The RFP seems to indicate that the County expects the food preparation and delivery component of the RFP to be based on a per meal unit payment.

For the congregate meals program, proposers are only being asked to provide food preparation and delivery for up to 45 dining sites. All costs associated with the program therefore, can be provided under “Food Preparation and Delivery,” on a per unit basis.

For the home delivered meal program, proposals are requested for food preparation, daily meal delivery to client homes, and other client services such as nutrition education and nutrition counseling. For home-delivered meal proposals, the e-budget provides separate schedules to capture the costs of the program that are above and beyond meal preparation and delivery, but necessary for operating the program. This can include, but is not limited to, costs such as volunteer recruitment, dietitian

services, and administrative services in direct support of the program. These schedules should not include costs of food prep and delivery that are identified under "Food Preparation Expenses." The costs identified in these schedules are used to populate the section of the e-budget associated with "Other Client Services." All such costs are ultimately incorporated into the "Total Hot Meal Cost" as this is viewed as the 'base product' that all home delivered meal clients will receive.

27. Please confirm that the guidelines set forth under "Other and Travel Costs" are not applicable to costs which are included in meal costs.

The costs identified under "Other Expenses" and "Travel Expenses" should not include costs that are associated with food preparation and delivery. These are expenses that are generated by "Other Client Services" that are above and beyond meal preparation and delivery, but necessary for operating the program.

28. It appears that the way that the budget portion of the application is structured, all of the costs that pertain to administrative expenses and other client services expenses are reflected in the cost per unit of service for the "hot" meal only and not into the "cold" meal. While this may just be a result of not being able to populate the information into two places at the same time due to the formulas built into the application, it does, however, artificially increase the CPU for the hot meal and results in a greater disparity between the CPU for the hot and cold meals. Hopefully, that factor will be taken into consideration when reviewing the CPUs for the hot and cold meals. However, if we as applicants are not completing the application correctly, please advise if there is another way to account for this.

The budget document is designed to allocate all of the expenses for "other client services" to the hot meal. The hot meal is considered the 'base product' that all clients will receive. While most clients will also receive the cold meal, it is possible that for certain clients this will not be the case. It is understood that the cost of the hot meal will be higher for this reason and others. This will be taken into consideration when reviewing CPUs.

29. In the RFP, there is reference to payment rates for the second and third years of what I believe, pertains to the three years covered by the RFP application. It goes on to say that while the meal costs etc would be reviewed from one year to the next, it further states that the price per unit of service will not exceed 2.25% of the agreed upon cost per unit of service during the first year. Our concern is that while 2.25% is probably in line with typical annual inflationary adjustments, it does not appear to take into consideration that the federal minimum wage will be going up by \$.75/hr on 1/1/15 and an additional \$.50/hr on 1/1/16. We have some kitchen helpers who are at minimum wage and their wages will have to be increased accordingly. In addition, this will mean that other kitchen staff near minimum wage will also have to receive a significant increase. This may also dramatically increase the food costs which are already escalating. Is the County firm on the 2.25% increase from one year to the next? We would hope that the 2.25%

increase could be revisited in light of the aforementioned increases in the federal minimum wage standards.

The 2.25% figure is intended to capture all cost increases including employee compensation that may increase over time. Proposers are encouraged to plan accordingly.

30. A request was submitted to revise the E-Budget to include a legal disclaimer as desired by a proposer.

An updated E-Budget is now available on the county website. This updated E-budget includes "comments boxes" on each page. Proposers are encouraged to include all applicable and relevant information in these comments boxes.

31. A proposer requested cosmetic and formula corrections to the E-Budget.

These changes have been incorporated into the new E-budget available as of this posting on the County website.

Legal related requests

32. Please clarify that the "defense and defend" covenant under "Indemnification and Insurance" at page 20 has a similar exception as the "indemnify and hold harmless" covenant in that same section; i.e., that the successful proposer is not required to defend the County with respect to claims resulting from the negligence of the County.

The successful proposer is not required to defend the County with respect to claims resulting from the negligence of the County.

33. Please confirm that the successful proposer is not required to competitively bid subcontractor services or supplies the costs of which are included in meal costs, or equipment that is not purchased with County funds.

The successful proposer is not required to competitively bid subcontractor services or supplies; however proposers are encouraged to do so in an effort to lessen costs charged to the County.

34. Is the signature page for the application, "Schedule A, Proposer Certification?"

Yes.

35. A request was submitted to revise the E-Budget to include a legal disclaimer as desired by a proposer.

An updated E-Budget is now available on the county website. This updated E-budget includes “comments boxes” on each page. Proposers are encouraged to include all applicable and relevant information in these comments boxes.

36. Will the same contract form be used for the successful proposer regardless of whether the proposer is a for-profit business corporation or a not-for-profit corporation?

The County anticipates using a similar contract form for each successful proposer.