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The Nutrition Program for the Elderly

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The Nutrition Program for the Elderly (NPE) is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). NPE is part of a large nutrition and social services program that assists elderly Americans by providing them with nutritious meals. NPE is authorized under Titles III and VI of the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended.

Title III is administered by State agencies on aging through area agencies on aging. Title VI is administered by Indian tribal organizations. Both Titles III and VI provide the same benefits and operate basically in the same fashion. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides cash and/or commodity assistance to State agencies on aging on a per-meal basis.

Who Is Eligible?

Under Title III, people age 60 or older and their spouses, regardless of age, are eligible for the program. Under Title VI, Indian tribal organizations may select an age below 60 for defining "older Indian" for their tribes. However, the awarding of the grant is based on the number of tribal members over age 60. Age is the only factor used in determining individual eligibility. Elderly persons do not have to meet any set income limits to receive meals under NPE.

What Does the Program Provide?

Neighborhood centers for the elderly serve well-balanced, hot or cold meals at least once a day, 5 or more days a week. Each meal served must contain about one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowances in order to be eligible for USDA cash or commodity assistance. Home-delivered meals are provided to elderly people who are homebound. When possible, transportation is offered to and from the sites for those who need it.

What Foods Are Offered?

The foods that USDA provides to NPE include basic items from the four major food groups: meat, dairy, fruit/vegetable, and bread/cereal. States may choose to receive all or part of the assistance from USDA in the form of cash rather than commodities. States that choose to accept at least 20 percent of their entitlement in commodities are eligible for extra (bonus) foods when they are available. Menus are planned at the local level. Often local sites employ nutritionists to assist in the menu planning.

What Do the Meals Cost?

While each provider of nutrition services suggests appropriate contributions based on local economic conditions, each recipient decides the amount of money he or she can contribute toward the cost of the meal. The meals are free to eligible persons if they cannot make any contributions. Additionally, the provider of nutrition services may apply to accept food stamps in exchange for meals served to recipients

Whom To Contact Regarding NPE

Eligible persons should contact their area agency on aging or Indian tribal organization officials to inquire about meal service locations and how to sign up to receive meals. Inquiries concerning USDA assistance to NPE should be addressed to the appropriate Food and Nutrition Service regional office. All other inquiries concerning NPE should be sent to the DHHS Regional Offices, State agencies on aging, area agencies on aging, or Indian tribal organizations.

You may obtain information on NPE from the Department of Health and Human Services' regional offices at the following addresses:

Department of Health and Human Services
John F. Kennedy Federal Building
Boston, Massachusetts 02203
Telephone: (617) 565-1158

Department of Health and Human Services
26 Federal Plaza, Room 4149
New York, New York 10278
Telephone: (212) 264-2976

Department of Health and Human Services
3535 Market Street
P.O. Box 13716
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19101
Telephone: (215) 596-6891 or 6900

Department of Health and Human Services
101 Marietta Towers, Suite 903
Atlanta, Georgia 30323
Telephone: (404) 331-5900

Department of Health and Human Services
105 W. Adams Street, 21st Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60603
Telephone: (312) 353-3141

Department of Health and Human Services
1200 Main Tower Building
Dallas, Texas 75202
Telephone: (214) 767-2971

Department of Health and Human Services
601 East 12th Street, Room 384
Kansas City, Missouri 64106
Telephone: (816) 426-2955

Department of Health and Human Services
1961 Stout Street, Room 1185
Federal Office Building
Denver, Colorado 80294
Telephone: (303) 844-2951

Department of Health and Human Services
50 United Nations Plaza, Room 443
San Francisco, California 94102
Telephone: (415) 556-6003

Department of Health and Human Services
Blanchard Plaza, Room 600, RX-33
2201 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98121
Telephone: (206) 442-5341

Cooperating Departments

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service
and
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging

The Nutrition Program for the Elderly of the U.S. Department of Agriculture
is available to all eligible people regardless of race, color, national origin,
sex, or handicap.

