SERVICE GUIDELINES
TITLE III-B INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

December 2022

DEFINITION

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE**:** A service for consumers that may provide individuals with current information on opportunities and services available to individuals within their communities, assesses problems and capacities of the individuals, link individuals to opportunities and services available to them, establish adequate follow-up procedures based on consumer's needs. The service may be initiated by the consumer, caregiver or service provider.

ELIGIBILITY

Units of I&A are counted for those persons 60 and older, or caregivers of those 60 and older. Caregivers also include professionals calling on behalf of a consumer who is 60 and older.

UNIT OF SERVICE

Any individual consumer contact made for information, referral, or assistance constitutes one unit of service. These units include all referral and follow-up contacts on behalf of that consumer.

- Example: If an older adult contacts the service provider requesting information on a pharmaceutical assistance program, this contact constitutes one unit of service. When the service provider follows up with this same person to see if the application has been made to this program, this will constitute another unit.

The service units for information and assistance refer to individual, one-on-one contacts between an information and assistance provider and an older adult or caregiver. An activity that involves a contact with several current or potential consumers/caregivers (what is considered group services) should not be counted as a unit of information and assistance. Group services are defined as public education, public information or similar designation.

Internet web site hits are to be counted only if information is requested by older individuals, or caregivers, and supplied by the provider. For example, an older adult requests by e-mail on a provider's website, information on pharmaceutical assistance programs. If the provider provides this information by e-mail, traditional mail, or telephone, this is one contact (one unit of service).

If the older individual or caregiver simply reviews information on the provider's web site and does not request specific information, then this situation cannot be counted as a contact (unit of service).

SERVICE ACTIVITIES

- Provision of specific information about appropriate community resources which meet the immediate expressed need, including information relating to assistive technology;
- Provision of assistance to older persons (or their caregivers) to identify their needs and to place them in contact with appropriate community resources or service providers;
- Assessment of the problems and capacities of the individual;
- Follow-up activities conducted with older persons and/or agency(ies) to determine whether services have been received and the identified needs have been met following the formal referral; and
- Expansion of Information & Assistance services on a 24-hour (if needed) emergency basis during times of disaster (e.g., flooding, hot weather, tornadoes, severe weather, man-made emergencies, etc.) to assure older persons are safe and have access to services to meet their needs.

SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

- Must provide service for at least 7 hours a day, 5 days a week with the exception of holidays.

- Have computer capability, internet access, e-mail, fax and staff with competent computer skills to operate mentioned equipment. Computer capability is defined as the ability to navigate the Internet for information, communicate effectively using e-mail, basic working knowledge of Microsoft Word and Excel in order to accurately record consumer contacts, making referrals and completing reporting requirements.

- AgingIS will serve to document units of service and unduplicated consumers. The Grantee is expected to fulfill the projected number of units and unduplicated consumers.

Entering AgingIS Data:

Adding a New Consumer

- Enter in Basic Data.
- **Basic->Client Registration->Type in New Client Information**
- **You do not need a person's full name to search.**
- Aging IS will give you a list of possible people.
  - Look at the list to make sure the person isn't already in the system.
- Enter the person's information.
  - **DO NOT put in client's Social Security number!**
- Fill in everything that is underlined.
- There are some sections that are not underlined, but still need to be filled in:
  - Spouse (if applicable)
  - Phone Number
  - Personal Income (annual)
  - Language, enter only if English is a Second Language to the individual.
- **Veteran** section
  - Fill out Spouse/Widow of Veteran box.
- Medicare number box can be filled out if you want to. It is not required.
- **Other** section please fill in:
  - Marital Status
  - Perceived Health Status
  - Disability Status
- Client Notes Tab - Do not enter any information here
- **Method box -** Select *what* kind of contact it was.
- **Log Unit check box -** Make sure that Log Unit box is checked.
  Once it is checked, you should be able to select Information & Assistance or Unfunded Option Counseling in the box next to the Log Unit box. Make your selection based on what type of service you provided.
  If you enter data here, it will not count as a contact/connection.

- **Agent Type**
  - Select your initials.

- **Purpose box**
  - Use drop-down arrow and select an option.

- **I&A Type box**
  - Use drop-down arrow and select an option.
  - There is the potential to add to this list, but it will not be down on an individual organization basis.

- **Caller Type**
  - Use drop-down arrow and select an option.
  - This is for who made the contact/connection.

- **Remarks**
  - This box is for explaining what you did for/with the client.

- **Click SAVE**
  - One of two things will happen:
    - 1 - It will save; or
    - 2 – The Schedule Service box will pop up.

Schedule Service Pop Up Box (For a new client)

- **Create New Eligibility**

  When you create a new eligibility, you will be using one of the following:
  - A- Age (60+)
  - D- Disabled 18-59
  - G- CG Under 60 (this means the caregivers age is under 60)
  - G-CG 60 & over (this means caregivers age is under 60)
  - CG GRG Over 55

Service Start Date- Date you first saw/talked to them.

- During normal weekday business hours, the Grantee is expected to have a "live" voice answer the telephone 85% of the time with someone present to answer an inquiry 85% of the time. It is expected that calls received will be returned within 24 business hours. An answering machine will record after-hour calls for which the Grantee will respond in a timely manner, usually the next business day.

- Must be able to assess consumers to determine if there are other services that may be needed beyond what the consumer has specifically inquired about.

- Are required to have on staff: one SHIP counselor and one person trained in Options Counseling. It is highly recommended that one person is certified through the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS), preferably

CIRS-A/D (Certified Information and Referral Specialist-Aging/Disability). This can be one single individual who holds all of the afore mentioned skills.

- Are required to attend Agency training and update sessions, as well as other program trainings and updates.

- Are required to have a reciprocal MOU/MOA with other AgeSmart Grantees, who are not themselves I&A Grantees, to provide I&A services. Regular presence of the I&A Grantee will ensure consistency of services provided to beneficiaries in the seven-county service area.

- The Grantee will receive monitoring visits and phone calls. AgeSmart Community Resources will inform the Grantee of monitoring efforts through written reports.

- Grantee Organizations are encouraged to join the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems, Inc., and/or partake in Illinois AIRS programs and trainings.

- Grantees are required to enter contacts into State Health Insurance Program (SHIP-STARS) on a monthly basis.

- Grantee shall have a revocable Release of Information Form (ROI) for consumers to sign. This form is necessary so that I&A staff can make calls on behalf of consumers.

- ASSESSMENT
  During an interview with a consumer, the I&A Grantee shall be able to ask appropriate questions to determine if other services may be needed. This information may be offered to the consumer at that time to avoid the consumer having to call back at a later date.
    - Example: if a consumer calls to find out about home care, they may also find information on home-delivered meals to be helpful.

- PROVISION OF INFORMATION
  Information must be provided in a clear, professional manner to the consumer. This requires that staff possess excellent verbal and written skills, since referrals are made verbally or in printed form. The information shall be provided to the consumer in the manner that they request.

- DESIGNATIONS
  I&A Grantees shall be designated as Coordinated Points of Entry, SHIP, SHAP/MIPPA and Caregiver Resource Centers. These designations require that Grantees establish working relationships with Congregate Meal Sites, other Agency Grantees and members of the Aging Network in the service area.

- I&A Grantees will provide consumers with the Information & Assistance Consumer Survey. The Consumer Survey will be in electronic form. The link to the survey is https://goo.gl/forms/tBKMoXBWPExLN25I2. AgeSmart Community Resources will be monitoring the online Consumer Surveys on a monthly basis.

- Grantees will use the AgeSmart logo on facilities, webpages, newsletters and brochures. All logo and branding standards are available to Grantees. Along with branding, the following statement must be used by Grantees:

  Funding for Grantee is received from the United States Administration for Community Living, the Illinois Department on Aging and AgeSmart Community Resources. Grantee does not discriminate in admission to programs or activities or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal Statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, you have the right to file a complaint with AgeSmart Community Resources by calling 618-222-2561.

- The Grantee shall conduct pre-employment criminal background checks for all employees of AgeSmart-funded programs. The Grantee shall also conduct criminal background checks on volunteers participating in AgeSmart-funded programs with access to confidential client information including, but not limited to, addresses, social security numbers, financial information, etc.

IDOA REQUIREMENTS

- In areas in which a significant number of older persons do not speak English as their principal language, the service provider must arrange for or have the capacity to provide information and assistance services in the language spoken by the older person. The service provider should develop a language assistance plan if needed. (For PSA08, IDOA Senior Help Line or SHIP provides language assistance as necessary.)

- A provider of I&A must:

  a. Maintain current information with respect to the services and opportunities available to older persons;

  b. Develop current lists of older persons in need of services and opportunities; and

  c. Employ a specially-trained staff member to inform older persons of the services and opportunities which are available and to assist older persons in taking advantage of the services and opportunities.

- The I&A service provider may disclose information by name about an older person only with the informed consent of the older person or his or her authorized representative. Such informed consent must be documented in the older person’s case file whether it is written or verbal consent. The case file documentation must include who (older person or authorized representative) provided the written or verbal consent.

- The I&A service provider shall provide a setting for the I&A worker to attend to each caller's questions without interruption and in a confidential manner.

- The staff of the I&A service provider shall be competent, ethical, qualified, and sufficient in number to implement the policies of state programs and service objectives.

- The I&A service provider must maintain accurate, up-to-date information on resources available. AgeSmart Community Resources requires service providers to use the resource databases such as Aging IS and Benefits Check Up (BCU).

- A data-collection system shall be developed to meet consumer and service needs and as a resource for meeting community needs.

- The I&A service provider shall seek to maximize the accessibility of other needed services.

- Facilities shall be provided in sufficient quality and quantity to insure operation of I&A service.

- The I&A service provider shall have a plan in place that addresses its operations in the event of disaster conditions.

- The I&A service provider shall provide consumer advocacy to secure needed benefits.

- The I&A service provider shall provide community and/or group presentations about available resources and services.

Individuals must have reasonably convenient access to the service with particular emphasis on linking services available to isolated older individuals and older individuals with dementia (and caregivers of individuals with such disease or disorder).

TARGET POPULATION

Information and Assistance shall be focused on individuals aged 60 plus and their caregivers, with emphasis on those with greatest social and economic needs and/or those at risk for nursing home placement.

REIMBURSEMENT

The Grantee will be paid one-twelfth of the grant amount each month. **Reporting must be correct and submitted on time. Should reporting be late, reimbursement may be withheld.**

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Fiscal Guidelines for all Title-III Programs

Program Income

Program Income is defined as contributions made by recipients of service and interest on such contributions.

A. Program income includes, but is not limited to:

1. Contributions of recipients of service and interest on such contributions.

2. Income from service fees obtained through the use of a sliding fee scale or suggested fee schedule.

3. Proceeds from the sale of personal or real property with an acquisition cost of less than $5,000.

4. Usage or rental fees.

5. Sale of assets purchased with grant funds with an acquisition cost of less than $5,000.

6. Royalties on patents and copyrights.

B. The following specific revenues shall **not** be included as program income:

1. Interest income on State funds whether earned on advances or the "float." This does not include interest on contributions made by recipients of service under a project which is considered program income.

2. Rebates, discounts, and recoveries.

3. Income earned by individuals or a group of project participants, when such income accrues directly to the participants.

4. Revenues raised by a grantee or contractor which is a government under its governing powers, such as taxes, special assessments, etc.

5. Tuition and related fees received by an institution of higher education for a regularly offered course taught by an employee performing under a grant or contract.

6. Proceeds from the sale of personal or real property with an acquisition cost of more than $5,000.

7. Sale of assets purchased with grant funds where the acquisition cost was more than $5,000.

8. Contributions made by representatives of service recipients, relatives, non-related individuals or entities, on behalf of service recipients are not program income, but are considered to be local cash.

9. Organized fund-raising activities carried out by Title III grantee agencies.

Allowable Uses of Program Income

A. Additional Costs Alternative

Under this alternative, the income is used for costs which are in addition to the allowable costs of the project or program, but which, nevertheless, further the objectives of the Federal statute under which the grant was made.

Examples of purposes for which the income may be used are:

1. Expanding the program.

2. Continuing the program after grant ends.

3. Supporting other programs that further the broad objectives of the statute.

4. Obtaining equipment or other assets needed for the program or for other activities that further the statute's objectives.

Award recipients under an Area Plan must receive prior approval by the Area Agency on Aging for costs borne with program income under this alternative.

B. Additional Requirements

1. All program income earned under Title III must stay with the service provider who earns it.

2. All program income earned under Title III, Part B, Part C-1, Part C-2 and Part E must be used only for services allowable under the part from which it was earned except as provided in (6) below.

3. All program income must be expended prior to requesting federal funds from the Department on Aging and must be expended within the fiscal year in which it was earned.

4. All program income received in the form of “cash” must be expended as it is earned to minimize cash draw down.

5. Program income earned as a result of services provided with Title III, Part B or Part E assistance may be used for any service which that contractor is authorized to provide with Title III-B or Title III-E funds.

6. Program income earned as a result of services provided with Title III C-1 or III C-2 must be used:

a. To increase the number of meals served by the project involved;

b. To facilitate access to such meals; or

c. To provide other supportive services directly related to nutrition services.

7. Prior approval requests to expend program income in excess of the amount approved on the Notification of Grant Award must be submitted on the Program Income Addendum to the Department by no later than prior to September 30 of the current fiscal year (refer to section 900 of this manual for detailed reporting requirements).

C. Special Requirements for Providers Receiving Section 5311 Funds from the U.S. Department of Transportation

All transportation providers receiving support from Section 5311 and Title III-B and/or Title III-E must report rider donations as program income. Program income collected should be reported under Section 5311 and Title III-B and/or Title III-E only to the extent and in direct proportion to each funding source's financial participation. Thus, the same rider donations shall not be reported in the same amount as program income under both funding sources.

Accountability for Program Income

A. Program income must be deposited into an appropriate bank account or converted to money orders on a regular basis.

B. Cash participant contributions should be counted by two (2) persons, placed in a safe, secure place until deposited, deposited intact, and deposit receipts compared with count sheets. Such standards require the accurate recording of amounts collected at the project and site levels and subsequent use of these funds.

C. Grantees must account for program income on an on-going basis, and must report such income to the Area Agency on Aging through the established financial reporting system.

D. Accounting records and reports submitted by a recipient to the Area Agency on Aging should provide a clear audit trail on all program income and its uses. Account records and reports should accurately reflect the receipt of such funds **separately** from the receipt of Federal funds, grantee funds, and the use of such resources.

E. Although interest income earned on General Revenue and/or local funds by non-profit organizations is not considered program income, project grantees should maintain adequate accounting records on any interest income earned. The Department on Aging must approve the Area Agency on Aging's proposed use of

General Revenue Funding interest income as an activity which will further the purpose of the project and the Act.

F. Rebates, discounts, and recoveries on leases should be treated as applicable credits and credited to the Federal grant accounts.

Voluntary Contributions

Each service provider must:

1. Provide each older person with an opportunity to voluntarily contribute to the cost of the service;

2. Protect the privacy of each older person with respect to his or her contribution;

3. Establish appropriate procedures to safeguard and account for all contributions; and

4. Use all contributions to expand the services of the provider under this part and supplement (not supplant) funds received under the Older Americans Act.

The service providers that receive funds under this part **shall not means test** for any service for which contributions are accepted or **shall not deny any older person service because the older person will not or cannot contribute** to the cost of service. Contributions made by older persons are considered program income.