

# “The Guide” to Council on Aging Eligible Costs and Best Practices FY 2011 FORMULA

(Issued June 2010)

**Retain a copy of this  
document for your files**

*It serves as a guide for determining the eligibility of Formula Grant expenditures. It notes many (but not all) allowable costs, along with requirements and/or suggestions regarding programs and services. The contents are subject to change based on best practices and input from COAs.*

## A. TYPICAL STAFF/INSTRUCTOR/CONTRACT/STIPEND WORKER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

A1. \_\_\_ Title.

A2. \_\_\_ Supervision received or exercised.

- a. title of person to whom this person reports; when or how often
- b. the type & frequency of written and/or verbal reports

A3. \_\_\_ General statement of duties.

A4. \_\_\_ Specific responsibilities or characteristics of job.

- a. at least six (6) directly observable tasks or functions
- b. frequency (e.g. daily, flexible) and length/timing of service(s)
- c. target population
- d. where performed

A5. \_\_\_ Minimum qualifications.

- a. the minimum knowledge, skills and/or abilities for the **position** (*not* the same as the incumbent's background)
- b. equivalent knowledge, skills, abilities and/or desirable characteristics
- c. confidentiality – required for all employees, volunteers, stipend workers
- d. other criteria, e.g., licensure/membership, certification, car access, computer familiarity...
- e. **CORI check** (employment/volunteering after 20 March 1997; applies to virtually all positions, including clinicians, instructors and volunteers -- including tax preparers)  
For further information contact the Criminal History Systems Board (617-660-4600).

A6. \_\_\_ OPTIONAL Orientation; in-service training or support through conferences or workshops.

A7. \_\_\_ Salary rate/range; stipends.

- a. Indicate rate per hour, week, class or other measure. For session/s, note rate per hour.
- b. Fringe benefits should be identified (see Attachment B, notes).
- c. **Rate of pay/reimbursement to be set by municipality**; however, it should not exceed “community standard” i.e., what the municipality would (be willing to) pay in the absence of state grant funding. Minimum wage is \$8.00/hour as of January 2008.
- d. Attachment B should identify anticipated participant contributions.
- e. Note the average/minimum number of hours of service provided by stipend workers. Payments of stipends may carry tax obligations (if for more than out-of-pocket costs).
- f. Must have written job descriptions for stipend workers.

A8. \_\_\_ OPTIONAL : Objectives

- a. number of elders/clients served ("unduplicated count")  
number of units of service to be provided ("duplicated count") e.g., *hours of service, contacts, intakes/referrals, riders carried (one way trip count), meals served or delivered, in-home visits, copies distributed, repairs completed, volunteers recognized, applications completed, blood pressures read, flu shots administered, etc.*
- b. outcome/s (performance criteria) should be measurable, realistic, "doable."  
For personnel and direct services, outcomes are based on services received or provided, knowledge/information gained, needs met, etc. This is **not** the same as implementing a program. It's whether the program meets the need(s) you've defined: how do **you** measure success? There is increased emphasis on "evidence/client based outcomes."

A9. \_\_\_ OPTIONAL Work plans note time frame/s (typically monthly or quarterly) for meeting objectives.  
Work plans are not a/the daily schedule of activities.

A10. \_\_\_ OPTIONAL Should be retained in file. Contracts/agreements should include a (draft) copy of the contract, along with the application and job description(s).

- a. Contracts should note whether (and which) fringe benefits are included. Examples include vacation, sick/personal leave, health insurance, worker/s and unemployment compensation, etc.
- b. Identify start/end dates, and how work is invoiced and paid.
- c. Where appropriate, require a work plan (see A9). Note any products (e.g., reports, surveys, studies, etc.) **and** where records are kept.
- d. Avoid actual (as well as appearance of) conflict of interest.
- e. termination for cause, notice provided
- f. subcontracting
- g. political activity; "force majeure" -- causes beyond the COA's control/anticipation, etc.; amendment of contract and other considerations.
- h. Elder Affairs suggests that municipal legal counsel review any contracts
- i. (if applicable). Ensure (confidential) collection/deposit/offsetting of revenue, including accounting and use of offset revenue (MGL Ch.44, sec. 53E ½)
- j. See also G9, General Remarks, "Standard Job Description".

A11. \_\_\_ Other Considerations:

- a. Would the fees/rates of pay (and benefits, if applicable) likely be supportable by the community in absence of state grant funding?
- b. Is the work doable by one person?
- c. Have volunteers been tried? Is that approach feasible? Is collaboration with other agencies/organizations practicable?
- d. Do payments jeopardize housing or (low) income benefits?

## B. PROGRAM ITEMS

### B1. Outreach Recommendations

- \_\_\_ Use of standard outreach--or intake/assessment--form(s) and record keeping practices with respect to client services and activities.
- \_\_\_ **Client finding** to be emphasized.
- \_\_\_ Note case/care management (*if applicable*) and be mindful about performing social services for which a license might be required.
- \_\_\_ Meetings with ASAP counterparts at least quarterly, with monthly preferred.
- \_\_\_ Develop regular contacts with local newspapers, cable TV, public safety/municipal agencies, churches, civic organizations, housing authority, trailer parks, VNA....
- \_\_\_ Formulates/implements a plan to regularly monitor frail, homebound and at-risk (mental/physical health) elders and provide appropriate services and/or referrals.
- \_\_\_ Participates in local/public civil defense efforts to ensure senior safety and wellbeing.
- \_\_\_ Maintains professional contacts and participates in appropriate learning opportunities.
- \_\_\_ Optional. Obtain SHINE certification as backup to SHINE volunteers.

### B2. Supportive (formerly "Social") Day Care

- \_\_\_ Program must be in accord with the general program standards from Elder Affairs.
- \_\_\_ **Service Incentive**: submit an income/expense statement for the previous fiscal year.
- \_\_\_ Note, as applicable, current daily census, total clients and projected growth.
- \_\_\_ Maintain emergency facts about client medical issues, e.g., hypertension, congestive heart failure, TB, diabetes or any condition that may require emergency services, as well as contacts, insurance, primary care physician/s. (Files should be kept in a secure location with extra copy for medical personnel). Also suggested: first aid kit, blankets.
- \_\_\_ Staff/volunteers to receive annual TB testing.

### B3. Support Groups

- \_\_\_ Identify outreach, objectives (measurable outcomes), format, administrative duties.

### B4. Minor Home Repair/Rehabilitation; (Intergenerational) Chore Services

- \_\_\_ Specify types of improvements.
- \_\_\_ Identify eligibility requirements and screening procedure. No open reviews.
- \_\_\_ State the **maximum** benefit (grant dollars) per household.
- \_\_\_ Prepare/use a liability waiver (to be signed by participants)
- \_\_\_ Note the practice of reimbursement provided **to elders** (*not the provider/contractor/vendor*) **after** the work has been completed.
- \_\_\_ Formula funds may **not** be used for materials.

### B5. Nutrition

- \_\_\_ Consumables only for meals meeting 1/3 RDA values. Grantee shall **note** how these dietary guidelines are being or will be met.
- \_\_\_ Strengthen cooperative relationships between nutrition, fitness/exercise, health screening and related support/wellness programs.
- \_\_\_ Tie-in to "newcomer" or other outreach efforts, e.g., monthly welcoming breakfasts.
- \_\_\_ Consider 90+ (or older!) annual group birthday celebrations as a way of outreaching to seniors, families, media. (Conduct simultaneous intake.)

**B6. Fitness/Exercise**

Fitness/exercise equipment, training and instruction to further health promotion, coordinated movement and/or therapeutic activities including **aerobic dance** is permitted. Note appropriate before and after health measures, and how structured and trained supervision will be provided. Software (such as Wii) is permitted.

- \_\_\_ You must provide an opportunity for participants to make a (confidential) donation to defray program costs.
- \_\_\_ Participant waivers (strongly suggested, not required)
- \_\_\_ The need for hydration and reminders regarding awareness of limitations and proper breathing techniques should be mentioned at **each** session. Please acknowledge or refer to the "**Cautions When Exercising**" guide available at/from Elder Affairs.
- \_\_\_ Note administrative duties including attendance; fee/donation collection & deposit. *Optional* -- questionnaire/survey re: program likes, suggested changes
- \_\_\_ An agreement or contract (see section A10) is strongly suggested.
- \_\_\_ Note professional affiliation requirements. (These are rare for T'ai Chi & Yoga).

**B7. Health Screening; Case Management; "Wellness"**

- \_\_\_ Keep a **copy of your vendor/provider contract(s)** on file. Be certain to note services to be provided (e.g., blood pressure, glucose testing, podiatric screening, urinalysis).
- \_\_\_ Note **follow-up** for those considered at-risk.
- \_\_\_ Describe referral relationship with ASAP (if/as applicable); use written releases or waivers for those referred.
- \_\_\_ Note cost(s) per hour, and per unit of service (if applicable).

**B8. Health and Community Education; Lectures; Videotapes**

- \_\_\_ Create a (brief) summary of individual program/learning outcomes.
- \_\_\_ Programs should focus primarily on health/well-being of seniors. Funds may **NOT** be used for Intensive (clinical) mental health assessment/counseling. **NO** massages or podiatric treatment (however, **screening** is permitted).
- \_\_\_ Honoraria are **not** intended to be a payment for services: budget accordingly.
- \_\_\_ Will cable TV or other media be used to promote, record and/or rebroadcast programs. Is captioning possible? Are there accommodations for persons w/ disabilities?
- \_\_\_ **NO** intensive (clinical) mental health assessment/counseling.

**B9. Conference/Education:** For (paid) directors/coordinators, maximum of \$900 per year; meals costs may not exceed \$30/day with Formula funds. Other paid staff may qualify for this allowance; approval must be secured in advance from Elder Affairs.

Other paid staff and volunteers, including board members, may attend conference/ training events. For such individuals, the total maximum charge to Formula funds will be \$500 per conference; related mileage costs need not be charged against the \$500 maximum allowance. Overnight expenses must be borne by participants. Elder Affairs will consider modifying the maximum for boards of 11 members or more.

**Unallowable Costs**

General language (ESL) and computer educational/training programs are not allowed, except for direct service training needs of staff and/or "dedicated" volunteers.

### C. TRANSPORTATION/TRAVEL/VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

- C1. General considerations.
- a. Vehicles must be lift equipped. Equivalent service **may** be allowed--exceptions based on local circumstances, letter from local ADA committee.
  - b. Disabled and able-bodied elders must have same advance notice period (and cost) to access service.
  - c. Note how elders are informed of alternative services if COA vehicles are not lift equipped.
- C2. Has an EOT van application been submitted? Call Joanne Champa at (617) 973-7062. Note that there is typically more money available for private not-for-profit organizations.
- C3. Rate of mileage reimbursement shall be determined locally. Indicate this rate in your proposal. The current rate allowed by the IRS is 50 cents/mile (for calendar 2010).
- C4. Are volunteer drivers **excluded** by the municipality's insurance policy? Grantee should check directly with insurance agent. COA should investigate registering volunteers with RSVP.
- C5. Is a CDL (Commercial Driver's License) required?
- C6. Is CPR or other emergency training available? Provided? Required?
- C7. How are rider donations are received? Is the procedure confidential? Is there public promotion (sign, driver announcement) that emphasizes that receipts help secure additional transportation services? Has an appropriate municipal account been established?

Remarks: Cost sharing (via Regional Transportation Authorities--RTAs) should be investigated and/or demonstrated. Grantee must provide an opportunity for confidential contributions. Note/ indicate the type/s of outreach used to promote the transportation service. Monies may be used for CPR training (if not available gratis through local public safety or similar offices).

**No "contributions" to provider agencies. Written agreements--specifying minimum activity/service units--must be developed, signed and retained locally.**

**Unallowable:** Ambulance funds, "cultural" (or recreational) bus trips.

### D. NEWSLETTER/BROCHURE. Also SURVEYS, MANUALS, and other PRINTING.

- D1. Is a (COA) **copy machine** used for this purpose? (This may not be cost-effective.)
- Review proposals from private firms that print newsletters in exchange for advertising; COAs may also generate their own income from ads (perhaps through "Friends of COA...") Prisons and (vocational) schools may print for a nominal charge, or the commercial market.
- D2. How is **newsletter** funded?
- A nominal/full subscription fee should be considered.  
Consider an annual mailing to all seniors, including non-subscribers.  
Consider an annual survey of readership interest/s.

- D3. How is **newsletter** distributed?
- bulk mail; bar coding; carrier route presort
  - private nonprofit sponsorship (e.g., "Friends of COA...")
  - multiple copies delivered to locales frequented by seniors (e.g., library, grocery stores, post office, town/city hall, housing authority, drug and book stores, beauticians/barber shops, doctor's offices, favored restaurants, ...)
  - ongoing public awareness: municipal department heads, finance committee, "Friends of," elder network, local media
- D4. Acknowledgment of Elder Affairs support for brochures produced/distributed with Formula funding is required.
- D5. **Note whether** Elder Affairs is and/or will continue to be recognized as a newsletter sponsor in each issue of the newsletter.
- D6. FYI. Some COA **surveys** *may* require approval of the state's Elder Rights Review Committee (depending on the nature of the research and personal data collected). Elder Affairs should be contacted **prior** to conducting any survey that might require approval of that committee. (This office has sample surveys used by other COAs.)

#### **E. EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES/FURNISHINGS**

- E1. \_\_\_ Provide specifications and unit cost(s). Be aware of local public health code/s with respect to dishwashers and/or other food service related items.
- E2. \_\_\_ How are the item/s related to the stated objectives? Is purchase cost-effective?
- The use of copy machines for newsletter reproduction is discouraged.
  - Is purchase necessary based on frequency of use?
  - Is joint purchasing possible or appropriate? Is a bid list available? Is it current?
  - Have donations been sought through your newsletter or other means?  
(Be careful about asking current/potential suppliers or vendors, though.)
- E3. \_\_\_ Is the use totally by COA? Who else will share? Formula grant funds may only be used to support the **percent of actual use by seniors**.
- E4. \_\_\_ Elder Affairs requests that three estimates be obtained for equipment (may be on-line) or as determined by your municipality.
- E5. \_\_\_ Computer system and software meet Elder Affairs specifications -- generally 1 GB minimum; dual core is common; a "netbook" is cheaper than a "PC" or "laptop" ; check municipal purchasing. At least 80GB hard drive.
- discuss compatibility with other municipal equipment, networking
  - a public bid list is not necessarily the lowest price, but may be a municipal requirement
  - systems must provide for backup (CD "burner" is often used, but there are other means)
  - Equipment may not be used for a "computer lab"**; group training not covered or generally recommended.
  - "Are You OK?" (RUOK) systems require joint participation with police/sheriff's offices.
  - Computer use for staff and/or dedicated volunteers (for work on behalf of the COA).

E6. \_\_\_\_\_ Stacking chairs should be designed for sturdiness and ease of seating and rising. Desirable characteristics: stable (without protruding legs); washable; #250 capacity; spot welds can be problematic; avoid plastic end caps; prefer "squarish"/rectangular backs over round backs (so people can drape their purses, coats). A slight "Adirondack" style is more comfortable, but elders need to be able to arise easily. Mix arm/non-arm? Cardboard filler/stiffening creates repair issues. Suggest elders "pre-test" chairs prior to purchase.

"Cafeteria" or round tables with wheels may be more expensive but easier to maneuver.

*NOTE:* Elder Affairs strongly suggests consulting "Consumer Reports" for photography, audiovisual equipment, etc.

Please know that equipment or furnishings may possibly be available for free (you move it) at <http://www.thebostonchannel.com/commonwealth5/>. Use is restricted to private nonprofits (such as "Friends of COA").

### **Unallowable:**

Grant funds may **not** be used for DVDs/VCRs (except for educational purposes), BINGO equipment, arts and crafts supplies, Personal Emergency Response Systems (e.g., "LifeLine"), pool tables, hearing aids or fire/smoke/CO detectors.

House numbers require equal non-elder participation with non-Elder Affairs funds.

## **F. RENOVATIONS/SITE IMPROVEMENTS**

All site improvements shall comply fully with the rules and regulations of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (the **CODE**). Contact local building inspectors, the Board itself or the Secretary of State's office has copies, or you can go to this web site, which includes illustrations of some features, as well:

[http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eopsterminal&L=4&LO=Home&L1=Consumer+Protection+%26+Business+Licensing&L2=License+Type+by+Business+Area&L3=Architectural+Access+Board&sid=Eeops&b=terminalcontent&f=dps\\_aab\\_regs&csid=Eeops](http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eopsterminal&L=4&LO=Home&L1=Consumer+Protection+%26+Business+Licensing&L2=License+Type+by+Business+Area&L3=Architectural+Access+Board&sid=Eeops&b=terminalcontent&f=dps_aab_regs&csid=Eeops)

The **CODE** for carpets (section 29.3) or other surfaces is cited below. Other comments follow this section:

29.1 Ground and floor surfaces including floors, *walks*, *ramps*, and *curb cuts* shall be stable, firm, slip resistant, and maintained with materials that ensure continued slip resistance.

### **29.2 LEVEL CHANGES**

Ground and floor surfaces shall be of a common *level* throughout, except for the following permitted changes in *level*. (see code)

### **29.3 CARPET**

When carpet or carpet tile is used on a ground or floor surface, it shall comply with the following:

- 29.3.1 Material: Carpet material shall be high density, non-absorbent, and the maximum pile thickness shall be ½ inch (½" = 13mm).
- 29.3.2 Installation: Carpet shall be adhered directly to the floor or shall be stretched tautly and securely fastened to floor surfaces at all edges.
- 29.3.3 Exposed edges: Edges of carpet exposed to traffic shall have trim along the entire length of the exposed edge. Edges perpendicular to the path of travel shall have edging strips no higher than 3/8 of an inch (10mm) above the floor and shall have a beveled edge with a slope no greater than one-in-two (1:2) (50%).
- 29.3.4.1 If padding is installed, it shall not exceed ¼ of an inch (¼" = 6mm) in thickness and shall be secured tautly to the floor.

F1. \_\_\_ **Improvements must be necessary for the health, safety and/or well-being of participants, or for energy conservation.**

F2. \_\_\_ Plans, drawings and specifications are to be available on-site (locally). The final, accepted cost estimate must be submitted to Elder Affairs.

The following reflect some basic considerations for accessibility:

ramps not to exceed one in twelve (1" rise to 12" run)

handrails (both sides)

three foot wide doors

grab bars in lavatories

five foot long level platform on **each** side of doors

All fixtures must be operable with a CLOSED FIST.

F3. \_\_\_ Minimum five-year use and occupancy from the date of completion of work.

F4. \_\_\_ Time frame for completion of access. Facility currently in use? If not, when?

→ Note **percent of occupancy** by the senior center/office site. If the proportion is less than one hundred percent, other non-Elder Affairs resources must contribute proportionally to cost of improvement/s.

Local procurement procedures must be observed.

Monies should be expended within the grant period; funds unexpended as of the close of business on June 30<sup>th</sup> may be carried forward, but will reduce the following year's award, if any, by that unexpended amount. (This provision awaits final approval of the comptroller.)

#### Other notes:

Cosmetic improvements (e.g., paint) are not allowed. Blinds may be considered only for energy conservation and to promote confidentiality in support groups.

Parking improvements will be considered only for "handicapped" pickup/ drop-off area.

## G. ADMINISTRATION, TRAINING , VOLUNTEER SUPPORT and CONTRACTS

- G1. \_\_\_ If funds are being used as a cash match, you must identify the program and/or purpose/s for which match will be used; include a summary or copy of the relevant program proposal or summary.
- G2. \_\_\_ Site rental agreement/s should be included. Note whether use is full or part-time. Indicate estimated cost per square foot.
- G3. \_\_\_ In-service training of staff and board members is encouraged. Conference attendance must conform to the guidelines provided in the Formula Grant announcement (and/or section B9.)
- G4. \_\_\_ Volunteer recognition is strongly encouraged.
- a. Costs may not exceed \$15 per volunteer per year for recognition. (In-service training & education costs are not counted against this figure). No alcohol related expenses.
  - b. Grantee **must identify** (a) training/educational component(s) offered in concert with volunteer recognition; additional funds may be used for this purpose (see G5a. above).
  - c. Please note the minimum hours of service that qualifies an individual for "recognition."
- G5. \_\_\_ The formula grant may be used for volunteer liability insurance; however, check with the municipality's insurance provider directly to see whether such coverage is *excluded*. Consider registering volunteers with RSVP for this cost.
- G6. \_\_\_ Include a copy of invoices (e.g., for professional association membership for the COA).
- G7. \_\_\_ Provide an opportunity for participants to contribute (voluntarily/confidentially) at least twenty percent (20%) of the cost of conducting the applicable program/activity. This remark applies in particular to fitness, health screening, nutrition, medical/shopping transportation and certain educational programs. Use the notes section of Attachment to confirm your adherence to this policy; otherwise, this requirement may appear as a grant condition.
- G8. \_\_\_ Follow municipal procurement procedures. A brief itemization of proposed costs is requested.
- G9. \_\_\_ Personnel / service contracts should be retained locally, including a copy of the contract/s; measurable program objectives (outcomes); the job description and minimum qualifications (as applicable); rate of pay/hour or per class—with class length defined; and anticipated program income—if any—see item G8. Municipal practices prevail with respect to service costs large enough to be bid. See also General Remarks (following this section).

### UNALLOWABLE:

Program advertising. (Personnel advertising OK; on-line may be considerably cheaper!). No payment for SHINE counselors (except out-of-pocket expenses).

## GENERAL REMARKS

All **Formula** paid positions—full/part time, including vendors/contractors--must be identified on the budget sheet. Note TOTAL hours/week and benefits. If the COA is paying a portion of the funding, please note the total number of hours.

Some vendors (or consultants) may be considered municipal employees, depending on their supervision and responsibilities! Check with your local personnel board--or legal counsel--to be certain that you are not unnecessarily incurring potential municipal liabilities. Be mindful of the need for CORI checks.

An ideal job description is one that a qualified candidate, upon reviewing it for the first time, would likely know "what to do next" in absence of other written instructions. Job descriptions are **strongly suggested** for volunteers (including board members) and stipend workers. Elder Affairs has some sample job descriptions available. Seek input from current volunteers when creating these documents.

Rates of pay (and benefits, if applicable) should be compatible with community standards: would the rate of pay be equal to that paid by the community if Formula Grant funds were not being used?

An individual may hold more than one position, but be certain the municipality is aware of this circumstance. More than one job description should be submitted if major job functions are unrelated. Combined funding (sources identified, along with hours worked) should be indicated in the NOTES section of Attachment "B".

No payment for SHINE counselors (except out-of-pocket expenses).

COAs are encouraged to obtain three (written) quotes (or bids—depending on item/size of expense) for any contract, e.g., fitness, sign language interpreters, construction/renovation/site improvements, maintenance, health screening, site rental, food service or others. This is not always feasible in rural areas. Funds may **not** be used for computer service contracts. Purchase of service contracts should be reviewed for copiers (is it worth the expense versus individual service calls?)

Contracts (and budgets) should identify any offset revenues from participants. Confidential contribution procedure must be ensured (i.e., no glass jars, but there has been success with "piggy banks!"

Are there funding alternatives, e.g. local cultural councils? Have they been explored?

You **need a license** to show DVDs/videotapes (even those donated) publicly.