

ACTIVITIES LEGALLY REQUIRED OF SENIOR CENTERS

Introduction

This document describes activities that Federal, New York State and New York City laws require of senior centers. Please treat this as a guide to inform discussion on:

- The most important functions of senior centers,
- The efforts necessary to fulfill those functions, and
- How the legally required activities fit within this framework.

Specific Requirements

- **Meals**
 - Centers must provide at least one meal, five days a week (Federal).
 - Each meal must include 1/3 of the federally dictated Dietary Reference Intakes (Federal).
 - Meals also must meet specific nutrition requirements (New York State) and recently published Food Standards (New York City).
 - *The laws do not specify on which days meals must be served, or at what time of day.*
- **Nutrition Education**
 - Centers must provide six nutrition presentations per year (New York State).
- **Elder Abuse**
 - Centers must hold two educational sessions per year regarding elder abuse prevention and awareness (New York City).

Other Generalized Requirements

Centers also must offer the following:

- **Health, social, supportive and recreational services** (Federal);
- **Activities geared toward disease prevention and health promotion** (Federal);
- **Information concerning benefits available to seniors** (Federal);
- **Opportunity for clients to contribute to the cost of senior center services** (Federal); and

Centers also must attempt “**to provide services to low-income minority individuals at least in proportion to the number of low-income minority older persons in the population serviced by the provider**” (Federal).

The legal guidelines allow providers flexibility to implement these generalized requirements based on the specific needs of the seniors they serve.