

**NEW YORK STATE OFFICE FOR THE AGING**  
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Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor      Greg Olsen, Acting Director  
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**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE  
MEMORANDUM**

**Number 12-TAM-03**

**Supersedes N/A**

**Expiration Date N/A**

**DATE:** August 13, 2012

**TO:** All Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NNORC) Programs

**SUBJECT: NNORC Program Guidance and Requirements**

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**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Technical Assistance Memorandum is to summarize the key components of the New York State Office for the Aging's (NYSOFA's) NNORC program and provide additional guidance regarding program requirements.

**BACKGROUND**

NNORC programs operate differently from more traditional, service-driven programs. One of the key features of a NNORC program is the essential role that the community plays in the structure and operation of a successful program. This TAM describes the major elements of a NNORC program and NYSOFA's requirements which have been established in accordance with §209 of the NYS Elder Law.

The term Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) is commonly used for a community that was not originally built for seniors, but is now home to a significant number of older residents. The New York State Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NNORC) Program was established to help residents of participating neighborhoods by extending their independence, improving their quality of life, and avoiding unnecessary hospital and nursing home stays. The New York State Elder Law (Article II, Title I §209) contains the specific legislative requirements of the NNORC program administered by the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA).

The following are the key program components and the related requirements of the NYSOFA NNORC program:

- Eligible Community - An eligible community is a residential dwelling or group of residential dwellings in a geographically defined neighborhood of a municipality which is made up of low-rise buildings, six stories or less in height and/or single and multi-family homes, which was not originally developed for older adults, does not restrict admission strictly to older adults, where at least forty percent of the units have an occupant who is sixty or older and no more than two thousand residents that are sixty and older.
- Mission or Goal - By harnessing the skills and expertise of diverse organizations and building community support and ownership from older residents , NNORC programs create age friendly communities that view older adults as valued partners and are better able to meet their needs.
- Partnerships – NNORC programs must include collaborative partnerships between community organizations, businesses, philanthropies, government agencies and residents. The core partners are usually one or more social service providers, one or more health providers, housing management (if applicable), as well as the NNORC residents. These core partners share in the mission of the NNORC program, play an important role in its day-to-day operations and share responsibility for achieving its goals and objectives.
- Resident Ownership – NNORC programs are resident driven and must actively work to build community participation and collaboration throughout their infrastructure. Community residents must be empowered to play meaningful roles in the planning, implementation, evaluation and governance of the NNORC program. Resident representation and involvement must be encouraged at all levels, including active participation in the NNORC advisory group, resident advisory group and/or program committees and especially volunteer opportunities.
- Knowledge of the Community – NNORC programs must have a thorough understanding of the NNORC community (e.g., population, housing, local businesses, leadership, other resources, etc.). **For all NNORC programs, a needs assessment is mandatory to help determine the needs and interests of its older residents and shall be used as a basis for establishing the nature and extent of services.** This process is to be repeated frequently (at least every five years) to ensure that the NNORC program is flexible to the needs and interests of the community and services offered change over time as residents' needs and preferences change.

The goal of the needs assessment is to identify the assets of the community as well as the challenges to successful aging in place. This process must be comprehensive and inclusive, engaging the residents and all other NNORC partners as well as other organizations and individuals that are not current partners of the NNORC. The needs assessment process requires adequate planning, organizing, information gathering, identification of goals and objectives, data collection and analysis by the NNORC.

NNORC Advisory Group – All NNORC programs are required to establish a NNORC advisory group, which must bring together core partners, other partners as well as local stakeholders to help evaluate community needs and resources, develop innovative programs to fill gaps in services, improve overall service delivery and help leverage resources. **The NNORC Advisory Group is to meet at least quarterly.**

- NNORC Services - All NORCs must provide what NYSOFA defines as “core services,” which are case management, case assistance, healthcare management and/or healthcare assistance. Please refer to the “Standard Definitions for NORC Services and Service Units” for additional information.

**All NNORC programs receiving \$100,000 or more in state funds annually are to have a minimum of one full time equivalent (FTE) providing case management and one-half an FTE providing healthcare management and/or healthcare assistance.** Programs should also provide a wide range of other services that match the varied needs and interests of all older adults in the community, whether they are well and active or frail and isolated. Programs are expected to reach out to older adults in isolation to connect them with existing services.

- **NYSOFA NNORC funding cannot be used to support services that are already available in the NNORC community.** NNORC programs must provide services that satisfy the unmet needs of its older residents. State funds may be used to establish previously inaccessible services on-site at the NNORC, or to help seniors apply for or gain access to other available programs and services, but must avoid duplicating services. The NNORC program is not expected to be the provider of all needed services, but to utilize and maximize existing services of the community and work together with other providers to coordinate services more effectively for older residents.
- Services to non-residents – NNORC funded services can only be used to assist older residents that live in the NNORC except for one-time health and wellness activities that can be provided to individuals who live in neighborhoods outside of, but contiguous to the boundaries of the NNORC. These services must be intended to support or improve residents’ health and welfare and would not include the provision of ongoing services. For example, an annual health fair may be opened up to nearby residents of the NNORC, but not a series of monthly health lectures, as these are not considered a one-time service.
- Matching Funds - All NNORC programs are required to provide matching funds, in the form of either cash or in-kind, equivalent to fifteen percent of the amount of state funds received in the second year after the program is approved, twenty-five percent in the third year, forty percent in the fourth year and fifty percent in the fifth and all subsequent years. Twenty-five percent of the total matching funds must

come from the community served or neighborhoods contiguous to the community served.

Programs may request a waiver for the twenty-five percent portion of the matching funds required from the community served only if the NNORC qualifies as a low income or hardship community. **NYSOFA will not approve ongoing waivers for the total match requirement.** Programs that are unable to meet the fifty percent matching funds requirement will have three years to develop a successful plan for meeting the total match requirement. Any program still unable to meet the match requirement at that time will have the option of reducing their state award accordingly. Please refer to the NNORC program matching funds policy for additional information.

- Contributions/Fees –Consistent with other programs administered by NYSOFA (e.g., Older Americans Act), older residents may be asked to help support the NNORC program by providing a voluntary contribution or fee for service or a nominal membership fee (e.g., requested annually). Contributions or fees are to be reasonable and should not discourage any resident from obtaining services or participating in activities. Older residents must be involved in determining fees or suggested contributions. No person can be denied service because of an inability or unwillingness to make a contribution or pay a fee. Methods of handling contributions must protect the privacy of all participants.
- Program accessibility and visibility - Programs receiving NNORC funding must have a visible office and meeting space within the NNORC boundaries or within very close proximity that is designated for the NNORC program. The program should be recognized by clients and other residents as a unique program providing distinct services in the community. If the NNORC site also houses other aging programs, such as a senior center, there must be safeguards in place to ensure that the NNORC program and state funds are used to provide unique services that other programs are not providing.

If you have any questions concerning the NNORC program or the use of state funds, please contact Donna DiCarlo at (518) 474-0441 or at [donna.dicarlo@ofa.state.ny.us](mailto:donna.dicarlo@ofa.state.ny.us).

**PROGRAMS AFFECTED:**

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Title III-B | <input type="checkbox"/> Title III-C-1 | <input type="checkbox"/> Title III-C-2 |                                 |                                 |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> EISEP       | <input type="checkbox"/> NSIP          | <input type="checkbox"/> Title V       | <input type="checkbox"/> HIICAP | <input type="checkbox"/> LTCOP  |
- Other: NNORC

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