

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-04

Supersedes N/A

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DATE: August 13, 2012

TO: All Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities - Supportive
Service Programs (NORC-SSP)

SUBJECT: NORC-SSP 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) NORC-SSPs and provide additional guidance regarding program requirements.

BACKGROUND

NORC-SSPs operate differently from more traditional, service-driven programs. One of the key features of a NORC-SSP 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 NORC-SSP 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 Naturally Occurring Retirement Community – Supportive Services Program (NORC-SSP) was established to help residents of a participating apartment building or housing complex 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 NORC-SSP 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 NORC-SSP:

- Eligible Community - An eligible community is an apartment building or housing complex that was built with government assistance, was not originally built for older adults, does not restrict admissions to older adults, where at least fifty percent of the units have an occupant who is sixty or older or twenty-five hundred residents that are sixty or older and the majority of these older adults are low or moderate income as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Mission or Goal - By harnessing the skills and expertise of diverse organizations and building community support and ownership from NORC residents, NORC-SSPs create age friendly communities that view older adults as valued partners and are better able to meet their needs.
- Partnerships – NORC-SSPs 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, as well as the NORC residents. These core partners share in the mission of the NORC, play an important role in its day-to-day operations and share responsibility for achieving its goals and objectives.
- Resident Ownership – NORC-SSPs are resident driven. NORCS 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 NORC. Resident representation and involvement must be encouraged at all levels, including active participation in the NORC advisory group, resident advisory group and/or program committees and especially volunteer opportunities.
- Knowledge of the Community – NORC programs must have a thorough understanding of the NORC community (e.g., population, housing, local businesses, leadership, other resources, etc.). **For all NORC-SSPs, 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 NORC-SSP 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 NORC-SSP partners as well as other organizations and individuals that are not current partners of the NORC. The needs assessment process requires adequate planning, organizing, information gathering, identification of goals and objectives, data collection and analysis by the NORC-SSP.

- NORC Advisory Group – All NORC programs are required to establish a NORC 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 NORC Advisory Group is to meet at least quarterly.**
- NORC Services- All NORC-SSPs 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 NORC 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 NORC-SSP funding cannot be used to support services that are already available in the NORC community.** NORC-SSPs 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 NORC, or to help seniors apply for or gain access to other available programs and services, but must avoid duplicating services. The NORC-SSP 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 - NORC-SSP funded services can only be used to assist older residents that live in the NORC 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 NORC. 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 NORC, but not a series of monthly health lectures, as these are not considered a one-time service.
- Matching Funds - All NORC-SSPs are required to provide matching funds, in the form of either cash or in-kind, equivalent to the amount of state funds received. Twenty-five percent of the matching funds must come from the housing development, its owners or managers, and residents.

Programs may request a waiver for the twenty-five percent portion of the matching funds required from housing and/or residents only if the NORC 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 total matching funds requirement (one hundred percent of state funds awarded) 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 NORC-SSP 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 NORC–SSP 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. NORC-SSP funding is targeted for low and moderate income communities and 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 NORC-SSP funding must have a visible office and meeting space on site or within very close proximity that is designated for the NORC-SSP. The program should be recognized by clients and others in the community as a unique program providing distinct services in the community. If the NORC site also houses other aging programs, such as a senior center, there must be safeguards in place to ensure that the NORC-SSP and state funds are used to provide unique services that other programs are not providing.

If you have any questions concerning NORC-SSP or the use of state funds, please contact Donna DiCarlo at (518) 474-0441 or at 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 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Title III-D | <input type="checkbox"/> Title III-E | <input type="checkbox"/> CSE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EISEP | <input type="checkbox"/> NSIP | <input type="checkbox"/> Title V |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> HIICAP | <input type="checkbox"/> LTCOP |

Other:
NORC-SSP

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