

BUILDING EXCELLENCE:

National Council On Aging/National Institute of Senior Centers -*The National Senior Center Self-Assessment Process*

*"This manual is dedicated to all the senior centers that were first,
To all the senior centers that are now,
To all the senior centers that will be
...And especially to all the creative people who make them work."*

National Council on Aging
NISC National Accreditation
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Washington, D.C. 20036
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NCOA/NISC SELF-ASSESSMENT and ACCREDITATION MANUAL

Preface

The National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) celebrates senior centers, a tested and customer-focused service model for older people. Senior centers have grown from the first, established in New York in 1943, to an estimated 11,000 senior centers, serving 10 million older adults.

Senior centers, located in most of America, are rural and urban, public and private, and single or multiple sites. They serve a diverse and growing population of older adults with many new facilities developing annually. Each senior center is a unique operation with a direction and focus determined by its community, older people, and their families.

Senior centers are an accessible focal point and a gateway to an important system of home and community-based services. Senior centers serve people from those thinking ahead to retirement to those who are struggling with the vicissitudes of advanced years. They strengthen and support the integration of older people into community life by offering intergenerational activities, volunteer services, life-long learning and leadership opportunities. They invigorate the older person by encouraging healthy behaviors, and thereby, discouraging disability and disease. Senior centers also support the family and community by providing information and referral to a myriad of social service resources including caregiving and long-term support and services.

Although each is unique, NISC accredited senior centers operate effectively from a common philosophy and with adherence to established standards of excellence. This manual is an important tool, developed to help review and strengthen key operations and programs. Senior centers have benefited in many ways from the national accreditation process. Some report that it has leveraged needed funds for capital and programmatic improvements; some say that it propelled older adults into leadership roles and ownership. Others remark that the process gave visibility to the senior center in the community and provided a crucial road map for improvements.

The National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) is to be congratulated on its initiatives with accreditation and senior center standards. Nationally accredited senior centers are demonstrating the vitality of this remarkable senior center model and creating a better future for all of us.

NCOA/NISC SELF-ASSESSMENT and ACCREDITATION MANUAL

WELCOME LETTER

Dear Colleague:

Congratulations! You, the senior center and community are embarking on an exciting path. The senior center self -assessment is the first step in becoming nationally accredited. This letter gives you an overview of the self-assessment and accreditation process and some helpful tips for successful completion.

You can find information and people to contact for help on the [NCOA website](#). You can also go to [NCOA Crossroads](#), our online community for senior center professionals to post questions and get answers from the experts. There are people who can help you – you just need to ask.

This Manual consists of:

1. General Information
2. Criteria for the Nine Standards
3. Accreditation Forms

The General Information section will provide background information and hints for carrying out the self-assessment process. The Standard section will spell out the criteria by which the senior center will evaluate itself. These criteria are the measuring sticks that the self-assessment committee will use in gauging whether the senior center meets the standard.

The Intent to Self-Assess form is completed when you begin the Self-Assessment Process. Other Accreditation Forms are completed when the senior center is ready to submit information to NCOA's NISC Program Manager.

Please know that there are many people who want to help make this a worthwhile experience for you and your community's senior center. The forthcoming pages will help you start down the road to examine your senior center and prepare to submit the information necessary for the accreditation process.

Good luck. You will be glad that you decided to take this journey.

Sincerely,

NCOA's NISC Delegate Council

NCOA/NISC SELF-ASSESSMENT and ACCREDITATION MANUAL

Steps to Complete Self-Assessment and Accreditation

1. The senior center who are members of NISC will be able to download a copy of *"Building Excellence", The National Institute of Senior Center's Self-Assessment and Accreditation Manual* from the NCOA website. Non-members will need to purchase it from NCOA.
2. The senior center files the *Intent to Self-Assess* form found in this Manual on page 11. Upon receipt of this form, you will be invoiced for the \$500 "Intent to Self-Assess" deposit that will be deducted from the total accreditation fee, found on page 12.
3. The senior center forms a committee and completes the self-assessment process.
4. The senior center evaluates its level of compliance to the national standards and completes any tasks to bring it into compliance.
5. The senior center prepares four (4) copies of the Document Review Notebook. (See pages 7-10.)
6. The senior center contacts NCOA's NISC Program Manager prior to sending one (1) copy of the Document Review Notebook.
7. The senior center sends one (1) copy of the Document Review Notebook to the NISC Program Manager at NCOA headquarters.
8. The NISC Program Manager contacts the senior center letting them know that the Document Review Notebook has arrived and the approximate time it will be reviewed by the office.
9. The NISC Program Manager reviews the materials and lets the senior center know if additional materials are needed.
10. The NISC Program Manager recruits on-site and off-site peer reviewers.
11. When the peer reviewers have been secured, one (1) Document Review Notebook is sent to each peer reviewer.
12. The On-Site Peer Reviewer arranges the schedule for the visit with the senior center and the Off-Site Reviewer.
13. The Peer Review site visit takes place.
14. In consultation with the Off-Site Peer Reviewer, the On-Site Peer Reviewer writes the report and makes the recommendation relative to the accreditation status of the senior centers.
15. The Accreditation Board meets on a regular basis, reviews the reports and makes their recommendations. The senior center then receives official notification of its accreditation status.

NCOA/NISC SELF-ASSESSMENT and ACCREDITATION MANUAL

Self-Assessment Process

1. Submit *Intent to Self-Assess* form.
2. Become familiar with the parts of the Manual and the Self-Assessment Process.
3. The Senior Center Self-Assessment Manual contains the nine (9) Standards.
4. These Standards are used to evaluate the performance of a senior center and how prepared a center is to be accredited. These criteria will help you recognize the things the senior center is doing well and the areas that may need improvement.
5. Each standard lists items that are necessary to be accomplished in order to receive accreditation and information that needs to be collected and submitted as the *Document Review Notebook*.
6. A committee carries out the senior center self-assessment process.

Self-Assessment Committee

By selecting members of the self-assessment committee from a wide variety of community people it is an opportunity to educate the public and raise awareness about the value of the senior center to the community, while at the same time tapping into the knowledge and skills of a broad range of people.

The committee should:

1. Represent the diversity of the community
2. Include community leaders
3. Include paid and unpaid staff and board of directors or advisory board members
4. Include people familiar with the Center as well as people who are not familiar with the center

The committee could include the following people or groups:

Elected officials, Town officials, Marketing professionals, Higher education personnel, Members of fire or police department, Non profits or for profits who serve the 50+ population, Housing authority and other housing options for those 50+, Religious organizations, Funding organizations, Medical professionals, Leaders in the business community, Staff, paid and unpaid, Board and Advisory Council members, Center participants/members/clients

If the committee is made up of 20-to 30-people the work can be spread among many people.

Contacting individuals selected for the self-assessment committee and clarifying expectations ensures you of people willing to commit to the process. One way to complete the process is to divide the committee into smaller sub-committees with each handling one of the standards. However, it is helpful to have one (1) large orientation meeting, so everyone starts with the same set of information. At the end of the review process, the large committee can again meet to hear reports of committees.

Accreditation Submission

Submission of information for accreditation

When the self-assessment committee has completed their review of the standards, it is time to decide if the center meets the standard criteria at a level acceptable to apply for accreditation.

During the self-assessment process noted information should have been gathered to make the process of putting together a *Document Review Notebook* easy at this point.

A total of four (4) *Document Review Notebooks* will need to be compiled. The materials should be put together in this manner:

Required Documentation for all Senior Centers

Each senior center submitting for accreditation must prepare four three-ring binders called *Document Review Notebooks*. Please read the following directions and process notes and then use the Document Checklist, found on pages 8 to 10, to organize your documents.

- The numbered sections for Senior Center Description and Accreditation Process and the section for each Standard, and items included in each Standard, should be tabbed/indexed in the order given on pages 8-10. Please do not rearrange the order.
- Please do not use plastic sleeves. Marketing material, such as brochures and newsletters, should be three hole punched. Please do not use staples. Please refrain from adding material not requested.
- Send **one** *Document Review Notebook* to the NISC Program Manager. It will be reviewed to determine if it is complete. Additional items may be requested to complete the notebook.
- Once the notebook is determined to be complete, Peer Reviewers will be assigned for the accreditation visit. The senior center will be notified as to whom the Peer Reviewers are and will then forward a copy of the *Document Review Notebook* to the On-site and Off-site reviewers. The senior center will need to retain one (1) copy of the notebook for their reference. Please use the following list and information to insure that all required materials have been formatted, prepared and mailed as required.

DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

Please submit one copy of the Document Review Notebook to:

NISC Program Manager

NCOA

1901 L Street, NW, 4th fl.

Washington, D.C. 20036

DOCUMENTATION REVIEW NOTEBOOK Each item must be tabbed and indexed.

Senior Center Description and Process

1. Description of Parent Organization (multi-site only). See page 14.
2. *Senior Center Profile* - Provide one (1) completed form per senior center applicant. Please use the appropriate form provided in the application materials.
3. Senior Center Description - Provide a comprehensive written description of the senior center in terms of the following elements. Limit to two (2) pages.
 - Community Context (urban, rural, suburban)
 - Participant demographics
 - Size of membership, average daily attendance
 - Primary funding sources
 - Community partnerships
 - Administrative structure (private, non-profit, operated by municipality)
 - Number of years in operation
4. Description of Senior Center's Self-Assessment Process -provide a comprehensive description of the following: Limit to two (2) pages.
 - How the process was organized
 - List of individuals who participated in the process with their affiliations
 - Scope and frequency that various workgroup(s) met to accomplish their tasks
 - Interesting experiences related to the process

Please note, **BOTH** the Standard and the Items under each Standard must be tabbed/indexed.

STANDARD

PURPOSE and PLANNING

ITEMS

- Senior center's mission statement
- Senior center's planning document with goals, objectives and action plan.
- Report on accomplishments and/or status of the planning document
- The senior center's most recent annual report.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- List of collaborative community partners.
- Sample of a cooperative agreement between senior center and collaborative community partner.
- Explanation of how the Information and Referral process is made available to seniors and the community.
- Copy of marketing plan.
- Copy of marketing materials (No older than two [2] years).
- Copy of news releases and news articles.
- Research guidelines.

GOVERNANCE

- Documents or by-laws showing that nine (9) of the guidelines are met for the senior enter governing board or charitable arm or advisory board/council as listed under **Governing Structure C#1** *(These may either be placed in the book or ready for Peer Reviewer to peruse.)*
- Code of ethics
- Conflict of interest statement
- List of standing boards and/or committees – include the members' names and their affiliation or profession
- List of activities or services that require certificates or inspections to be posted

ADMINISTRATION and HUMAN RESOURCES

- Current resume for main administrator of senior center
- Job descriptions for paid staff
- Organizational chart(s) showing structure and lines of authority
- Personnel policies for paid staff (If document is lengthy, include a copy of the table of contents and have a copy ready for the On-site Reviewer)
- Job descriptions for unpaid staff
- Volunteer Handbook for unpaid staff that includes policies

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT and IMPLEMENTATION

- Description of programs and services that show senior center meets the standard criteria as outlined in Program Implementation #1, 5 and 6
- List of hours when program or services are available and where they are available

EVALUATION

- Senior center's evaluation plan
- Two (2) evaluations that show measuring different areas as identified in **B, Areas of Evaluation #1**. Include compilation of results and two (2) recommendations drawn from the results.
- Examples of two (2) types of evaluations from **C, Information Collection Methods #3**, with explanation as to why that type was chosen
- Two (2) examples of outcome based evaluations, explanation as to why they were done and how the information was used.

FISCAL and ASSET RESPONSIBILITY

- Senior center budget
- Sample of monthly financial statement
- Copy of current audit or financial review
- Written procedures for internal financial control
- Statement of insurance coverage
- Incident report
- Disaster recovery or business continuity plan

RECORDS and REPORTS

- Monthly or quarterly statistical report on programs and services
- Year-end statistical reports for two (2) separate years
- General participant record form
- Participant forms used for specific services or activities
- Confidentiality policy
- Policy and Procedures Manual (Table of Contents can be submitted)

FACILITY and OPERATIONS

- Picture of senior center that includes outside signage
- List of transportation options
- Drawing that shows layout of senior center
- Copy of safety procedures
- Preventive maintenance schedule
- Written procedure for rental to other groups or agreement for senior center to rent its space

NCOA/NISC
National Senior Center Accreditation Program
Intent to Self-Assess Form

When the senior center is ready to begin the self-assessment process, it should submit the *Intent to Self-Assess Form*. This form is used as a planning tool by the National Accreditation Office.

After you submit the Intent to Self Assess Form you will be invoiced a five hundred dollar (\$500) non-refundable "Intent to Self-Assess deposit. The application deposit will be credited towards the total accreditation fee you will be assessed. The time limit for completing the accreditation process is three years unless prior permission is granted. If after three years from the date of submitting you application, you do not complete the accreditation process the \$500 deposit will be forfeited.

Parent Organization (if applicable): _____

Name of Senior Center: _____

Address (City, State, Zip): _____

Contact Person/Title: _____

Authorized Representative (if different from above):

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

We will begin (or began) NCOA/NISC self-assessment process on: _____ (DATE)

We anticipate completing the self-assessment process on: _____ (DATE)

We plan to apply for National Accreditation: Yes No

If "Yes," on approximately what date: _____ (DATE)

Estimated Annual Budget of Senior Center _____

Signature of Authorized Representative

Date

Please submit one (1) original of this form to:
NCOA/ NISC Program Manager
1901 L Street, NW, 4th fl.
Washington, D.C. 20036

ACCREDITATION BASE FEE GUIDELINES

The Table below outlines the base fee costs for accreditation paid to NCOA by the senior center.

- When the NISC Program Manager receives your *Intent to Self-Assess Form*, the Senior Center will be invoiced for a \$500 "Intent to Self-Assess" deposit that will be deducted from the Accreditation Base Fee.
- Upon the Accreditation Office receiving your *Document Review Notebook*, you will receive an invoice for the remainder of the Accreditation Base Fee.
- The fee does not include the National Accreditation Manual or peer review expenses. The cost of the Peer Reviewer visit (transportation, hotel and meals) will be billed after the on-site visit.

Costs related to Individual Senior Center Accreditation Base Fee:

Senior Center Annual Operations Budget	Accreditation Base Fee NCOA/NISC Centers	Accreditation Base Fee Non-Member Centers
\$0 - \$100,000	\$1,300	\$1,900
\$100,001 - \$250,000	\$1,500	\$2,100
\$250,001 - \$500,000	\$1,700	\$2,300
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	\$1,900	\$2,500
\$1,000,001 - \$1,500,000	\$2,100	\$2,700
\$1,500,001 - \$2,000,000	\$2,300	\$2,900
\$2,000,001 - \$2,500,000	\$2,500	\$3,100
\$2,500,001 - \$3,000,000	\$2,700	\$3,300
Over \$3,000,000 *	\$2,900	\$3,500

Costs related to Parent Organization & Multiple Senior Centers Accreditation Base Fee:

Parent Organization Annual Operations Budget + 1 Senior Center	Accreditation Base Fee NISC Member Centers	Accreditation Base Fee NISC Member Additional Centers	Accreditation Base Fee Non-Member Centers	Accreditation Base Additional Centers Non-Members FEE
Over \$3,000,000	\$2,900 includes 1 center	\$750 per each additional center	\$3,500	\$950 per each additional center
Over \$4,000,000	\$3,100 includes 1 center	\$750 per each additional center	\$3,700	\$950 per each additional center
Over \$5,000,000	\$3,300 includes 1 center	\$750 per each additional center	\$3,900	\$950 per each additional center
Over \$6,000,000	\$3,500 includes 1 center	\$750 per each additional center	\$4,000	\$950 per each additional center
Over \$7,000,000	\$3,700 includes 1 center	\$750 per each additional center	\$4,200	\$950 per each additional center
Over \$8,000,000	\$3,900 includes 1 center	\$750 per each additional center	\$4,400	\$950 per each additional center
\$ Over \$9,000,000	\$4,100 includes 1 center	\$750 per each additional center	\$4,600	\$950 per each additional center

National Senior Center Accreditation Program

Multiple Site Accreditation Application Form-1

Applicant senior center(s) complete and file the *Intent to Self-Assess Form* with the NISC Program Manager. This form must be on file before national accreditation will be undertaken. This process serves to officially notify NCOA, NISC, and the National Accreditation Board that a senior center has entered (or is in the midst of) the self-assessment process and offers an approximate date the senior center anticipates applying for national accreditation. The submission of this form is not a formal agreement on the part of the applying senior center(s) to enter into national accreditation. It serves only to guide NISC to accurately anticipate future personnel needs and plan schedules six (6) to nine (9) months in advance.

Parent Organization: _____

Address (City, State, Zip): _____

Contact Person/Title: _____

Authorized Representative (if different from above): _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

Names of Senior Centers:

Signature of Authorized Representative

Date

Multiple Site Accreditation Application – 2

Parent Organization

- I. Parent Organization Description - Please provide a comprehensive written description of the parent organization in terms of the following elements. Limit to three (3) pages.
 - Official name of the parent organization
 - Full name, direct telephone number, fax, and e-mail of the CEO/Executive Director
 - Brief historical description of the parent organization
 - Parent organization's mission statement
 - Primary funding source
 - Parent organization's annual budget
 - Size and demographics of staff
 - Administrative structure (private, non-profit, operated by a municipality)
 - Community partnerships
 - Services and programs offered by the parent organization

- II. Multiple Site Directory - Please provide a comprehensive list of all senior center sites to be accredited (now or later). Include the following information for each site.
 - Senior center name and complete mailing address
 - Contact person's name and title
 - Telephone and fax numbers and e-mail address for contact person
 - Approximate date each senior center site will undertake national accreditation

About the National Council on Aging (NCOA)

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) is a nonprofit service and advocacy organization headquartered in Washington, DC. Our mission is to improve the lives of older Americans.

NCOA is a national voice for older adults—especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged—and the community organizations that serve them. We bring together nonprofit organizations, businesses, and government to develop creative solutions that improve the lives of all older adults.

We work with thousands of organizations across the country to help seniors find jobs and benefits, improve their health, live independently, and remain active in their communities.

We accomplish our work through collaborative leadership, innovation, and advocacy. We create and lead strategic alliances, coalitions, and multi-sector partnerships. We organize, mobilize, and support nationwide "communities" of organizations and leaders. And we foster and diffuse innovations and strive to make markets work better for older adults.

As advocates, we work to improve public policies by being a national voice for older adults in greatest need and those who serve them, combining community service and advocacy, and empowering and engaging older adults.

For all older Americans, we seek:

- Improved health and reduced disability.
- Increased participation in meaningful and rewarding work.
- Increased community service that enriches participants and is productive for society.
- Increased access to public and private benefits and resources.
- Enhanced capacity to live in communities with dignity, choice, and financial security.

At NCOA, our work is guided by **four core values**: social and economic justice, respect and caring for all, innovation, and excellence and integrity.

National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC)

NCOA's National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) was established in March 1970. NISC is a network of professionals dedicated to enhancing the lives of older adults through professional development, advocacy and promotion of national standards. They believe that Senior Centers create opportunities for successful aging in our communities.

Through the efforts of their volunteer leadership, the NISC Delegate Council, members receive these "robust" member benefits:

- **Newsletters** –Members receive our popular *Senior Center Voice* each month — plus *Aging in Stride*, which offers news written just for older clients.
- **Online Community** - Share, learn, and problem-solve with other senior center professionals through our online community Crossroads. Senior centers have their own group on the site.
- **Webinars** - Tune in every month to get new ideas from the experts on what's hot in aging services.
- **Advocacy** - Join a grassroots movement to urge more funding and support for our nation's senior centers — and policies to improve the lives of older Americans.
- **Annual Conference** – Members get valuable discounts to Aging in America - the only national conference featuring a special educational track just for senior center professionals.
- **National Accreditation** – Members receive a discount for NISC National Senior Center Accreditation.
- **Research** – Members gain access to cutting-edge research on senior centers. Use the findings to promote your center, gain funding, and market your services.
- **Best Practices & Programming Ideas** - Discover best practices to improve your programs and services — including the *New Models for Senior Centers Final Report*. Every year, members' get a free kit to help celebrate Senior Center Month in September.
- **Partnership Opportunities** - Take part in NCOA/NISC partnership opportunities such as the CVS/pharmacy-sponsored Pack Your Bag medication management program and other community health education programs.
- **Fundraising** – Cellular Recycler fundraising available.
- **Discounts** - Receive money-saving deals on Licensing fees from the Motion Picture Licensing Corporation, allows your center to show movies legally.
- **Leadership Opportunities** - Advance your career by becoming active in the NISC Delegate Council.
- **Awards** Gain recognition for your work through NISC awards.

SENIOR CENTERS

HISTORY OF SENIOR CENTERS: A LONG AND PROUD HERITAGE

The legacy of senior centers and their roles across the nation represent more than 65 years of rich tradition. The industry started in 1943 with one senior center, the Williams Hodson community Centers, established by the New York City Department of Welfare. The senior center's primary function was to provide a place where older, isolated members of the community could come together for socialization. Within a few years, similar sites in San Francisco, Philadelphia, Menlo Park and Bridgeport followed Hodson. By 1961 there were an estimated 218 senior centers operating across the country.

Senior centers were initially small, private clubs established by local nonprofit groups or units of government such as recreation and social service departments. They experienced dramatic growth in the 1970s when the Older Americans Act (OAA) identified senior centers as "essential links in the service network for older adults." In 1972, amendments to OAA provided funding for acquisition, alteration, or renovation of senior center facilities, development and delivery of services and construction and operation of senior centers. The OAA defined a senior center as "a community facility for the organization and provision of a broad spectrum of services..." including health, social, educational and recreational services and to serve as a focal point for the delivery of services to older adults in the community.

Definition of a Senior Center

No longer do senior centers provide only socialization opportunities. A senior center is a community focal point where older adults come together for services and activities that reflect their experience and interests, enhance their dignity, support their independence and encourage their involvement in and with the senior center and the community.

As part of a comprehensive community strategy to meet the needs of older adults, senior centers offer services and activities within the senior center, outside the center and link participants with resources offered by other agencies. Senior center programs consist of a variety of individual and group services and activities that include but are not limited:

- Health and wellness
- Arts and humanities programming
- Intergenerational activities
- Employment assistance
- Information and referral services
- Social and community action opportunities
- Transportation services
- Volunteer opportunities
- Educational opportunities
- Financial and benefits assistance

- Meal programs

Senior centers also serve as a resource for the entire community for information on aging, support for family caregivers, training professional, lay leaders and students and for developing innovative approaches to addressing aging issues.

The Senior Center Philosophy

The philosophy of the senior center movement is based on these premises:

- Aging is a normal developmental process;
- Human beings need peers with whom they can interact
- Peers are a source of encouragement and support
- Older adults have the right to a voice in determining matters that impact them

In accordance with these premises, senior centers adhere to the following beliefs.

- Older adults, like all people, are individuals with ambitions, capabilities and creative capacities.
- They are capable of continued growth and development.
- They have certain basic needs, including the need for opportunities for relationships and for experiencing a sense of achievement.
- They need access to sources of information and help for personal and family problems and the opportunities to learn from individuals coping with similar experiences.
- They have a right to involvement and representation in a senior center's decision-making process.

Senior center staffs are obligated to create an atmosphere that acknowledges the value of human life, affirms the dignity and self-worth of the older adult participant and maintains a climate of respect, trust and support. Within this atmosphere, the staff creates opportunities for older adults to apply their wisdom, experience and insight and to learn new skills.

As an integral part of the aging network, a senior center serves community needs, assists other agencies in serving older adults and provides opportunities for older adults to develop their potential as individuals within the context of the entire community.

Today, there are an estimated 15,000 senior centers in the United States. The evolution and growth of the industry have mirrored society in many ways. As the nation's older population has increased, senior centers have grown, adapted and changed to function as viable participants in the community-based system of services for older persons. They provide social opportunities as well as education, nutrition, recreation, health programs and support services. Senior centers are unique because they focus on older adults as total persons, recognizing their diverse interests, needs, experience and skills.

THE NATIONAL SENIOR CENTER SELF ASSESSMENT PROCESS

HISTORY

Among NISC's many accomplishments were its development and publication of national standards for the industry in 1978. It was initially a reference tool for communities interested in developing senior centers and a guide for existing centers. The initial Senior Center Self-Assessment served as a guide for program development, assessment of program quality and identification of areas that needed improvement. Since 1978, NISC has completed revisions of the national standards in 1990, 1996, 1999 and 2010. The national standards function as a guide for developing and implementing programs and service as the core of NISC's long-held dream of accreditation. This is the fifth edition of NISC's Senior Center Self-Assessment and National Accreditation Manual. This manual would not have been possible without the advice, opinions and input from experts and professionals who served on advisory committees during the initial development and subsequent revisions.

With emphasis on evidence-based programs in community-based services, NISC's Senior Center Self-Assessment and Accreditation helps those in the field meet this need. Centers who participate in the accreditation process show that they are able to meet new challenges of an aging population, measure their compliance to national standards and demonstrate excellence in accomplishing their mission.

The NISC Program Manager and NCOA staff work diligently to ensure that senior centers pursuing accreditation receive necessary information and materials. Please call the **NISC Office at 1-800-373-4906** if you have any question or concerns when reviewing the manual or during the self-assessment process. The NISC Program Manager can also be contacted by email at nisc.coordinator@ncoa.org. All accreditation documentation must be sent to:

NCOA
NISC Program Manager
1901 L Street, NW, 4th fl.
Washington, D.C. 20036

WHO'S WHO

Accreditation Coaches, are senior center professionals who have been extensively trained in the accreditation process and have personally participated in the process. They are available to assist your senior center during the self-assessment and accreditation process. These professionals will be able to answer questions via phone calls or emails.

Peer Reviewers are senior center professionals who are trained to review the information provided to them by the senior center. Then, through an on-site visit, write a report that indicates the accomplishments of a senior center and the items that need improvement. The Peer Reviewer recommends to the Accreditation Board whether the senior center should receive accreditation, provisional accreditation or not accredited.

NISC Accreditation Board consists of senior center professionals who are trained and certified to review the recommendations from the Peer Reviewers. With this information they vote on the recommendation of the Peer Reviewer. The Accreditation Board generally meets once a month.

BENEFITS OF SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND ACCREDITATION

The Senior Center Self-Assessment is the first step in the two-tiered accreditation process. When best practices are used to carry out the process, several accomplishments can be realized:

- It establishes a community-wide process that increases awareness of the senior center's contribution in the lives of older adults and their families.
- It creates a forum in which the community and a center's participants can ask questions, raise concerns and advocate for their needs.
- It serves as a catalyst for opening a dialogue between community leaders and service providers to better understand senior centers' significant role in the aging population and the local community.
- Working together with community leaders in a structured evaluation often leads to a clearer understanding of why additional resources are needed to expand facility, programming and staffing.
- It documents the senior center as an accountable, reliable and fundable program with capacity to provide services that lead to substantive outcomes.
- It leads to a sense of pride and empowerment for senior center staff, participants, volunteers and members of the community.

PURPOSE OF THE SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The self-assessment is the first step in the accreditation process. The purpose of the self-assessment is to evaluate how well the senior center meets the standard criteria as indicated within each of the nine (9) standards. The senior center measures itself against the information contained in the standards section of the manual. The standard criteria are used to examine the senior center's total operation in relation to the expectation set out in each standard. The senior center will recognize what it is doing well. It will identify ways in which the program and services can be expanded or strengthened. Many times a senior center is able to strengthen its collaborative role with other community agencies. The standards provide an excellent review of management and operating procedures and policies. The

ability of the senior center to evaluate its programs and services is examined. It scrutinizes procedures regarding financial and facility management. The programs and the needs of the community are examined to see if the senior center is meeting those needs. A schedule is developed for any work that needs to be done to meet the criteria as set forth in the standards. Finally, the decision is made to submit the information to the accreditation office.

WHO DOES THE SELF-ASSESSMENT?

A committee representative of the community should be appointed to conduct the self-assessment. The committee should be composed of senior center participants, staff, volunteers, individuals from the governing structure, community, corporate and government leaders, other organizations who serve the older population, institutions of higher education and other interested individuals. The perspectives and ideas offered by a diverse committee are essential for a complete assessment and for recognizing what the senior center is doing well and what needs to be done to strengthen its operations and programs. A committee may have 20 to 30 members that break down into smaller work groups.

Senior center participants and those not participating but eligible are important to be included. Their view of how the senior center meets the needs and interests of older people in the community is a critical measure of its responsiveness. It is important to look at what might be missing in the program and service offerings.

HOW IS IT DONE?

After the committee is chosen, it needs to receive orientation. Information contained in the previous pages can be used for an orientation. Each standard is divided into four (4) parts. The *Principle* is a statement about what the standard accomplishes. The *Rationale* gives a discussion as to why and sometimes how the standard should be met. The *Standard Criteria* spells out in more detail what is expected in each standard. The *Workbook* section uses questions to help the committee examine how well the senior center satisfies the criteria.

The committee decides its schedule of work, who and how it will accomplish its review. The leader of the process can be the director of the senior center, another staff person, someone from the governing body, or an interested community leader. In many instances the staff is involved in gathering the information needed to evaluate each standard.

After the standards are read and understood, the Workbook section can provide guidance in evaluating whether the senior center meets the criteria in that standard. Notice needs to be given to the proper staff in instances where the senior center does not meet the criteria. The appropriate staff person and, if needed, committee members can plan what needs to be done to meet the criteria. A report for each standard indicating good practices and areas for improvement would be helpful to the senior center.

SUBMITTING FOR ACCREDITATION

When the committees are analyzing and reviewing the standards by using the Workbook section, two (2) types of statements are found. One statement says, "Required for accreditation..." These criteria must be met in order for a senior center to be accredited. A senior center should not submit for

accreditation until these requirements are met. The other statement says, "Place in the Document Review Notebook...." and then an item is listed. These items need to be collected and submitted as explained earlier in this manual. If the item is not available, information needs to be given as to why it is not available. The Peer Reviewer will consider this information in the review of the senior center. When the senior center feels it has met the requirements, it should contact the National Accreditation Office and then submit the Document Review Notebook. Instructions for assembling this were explained earlier in this introduction.

ON-SITE PEER REVIEW

The visit by the Peer Reviewer can be an extremely rewarding, although sometimes seemingly stressful, experience. The Peer Reviewer may be able to advocate for something badly needed by the senior center. It is a new pair of eyes, very experienced in the professional world of senior centers. The Peer Reviewer will use the Document Review Notebook to become familiar with your center. (S)he may request additional information to be sent or be available at their visit. The Peer Reviewers have experience with the Senior Center Self-Assessment Process in their own professional context and have been certified in conducting comprehensive on-site peer review visits. The on-site visit enables the peer reviewer to put the printed materials received before the visit into a physical, community and relational context. The visit provides an opportunity for the reviewer to observe first-hand the programs and persons referred to in the documentation. The Peer Reviewer will want to meet with people involved in the Self-Assessment process as well as staff, board and committee members and key volunteers or participants. The visit will probably take a day and a half. The senior center pays the Peer Reviewer's travel, housing and meal expenses as part of the accreditation costs.

At the end of the review visit the Peer Reviewer holds an exit interview. This provides an opportunity for the peer Reviewer to discuss his/her findings with the appropriate individuals from the senior center and to share the strengths of the senior center as well as the areas that may need improvement. The Peer Reviewer informs the senior center what the recommendation will be to the Accreditation Board. However, the Accreditation Board has the final decision as to whether a senior center receives full accreditation, provisional accreditation or does not receive accreditation.

MEMBER OF A SPECIAL GROUP

An important and valuable by-product of the accreditation process is the recognition of best practice models in the field. It provides an opportunity to identify programs, exemplary policies and unique components of senior center operations worthy of broader dissemination. By working together we will demonstrate that senior centers are the gateway to a broad array of services and opportunities for senior adults of all ages, needs and abilities.

Senior center professionals and governing bodies will find the Self –Assessment Process to be the most important step they will take in analyzing the structure of their organization. Achieving national accreditation will bring much-deserved recognition to a senior center and assure the community that they are competently prepared to provide services and opportunities to their older residents and their families.

PURPOSE AND PLANNING

PRINCIPLE

A senior center shall have a written mission statement, goals and objectives, and action plans consistent with the senior center philosophy. Strategic planning is the method by which these are developed. Goals and objectives are based on the mission and the needs and interests of older adults in the community or service area. The action plans describe how the work of the center's paid and unpaid staff will achieve its goals and objectives. These statements are to guide the character and direction of the senior center's operation and program.

RATIONALE

Through strategic and tactical planning a senior center sets the stage for what it will do. A senior center's operation is based on its mission statement; goals, objectives and action plan are also known as plan of work. These documents give direction to the board members, staff, volunteers, and participants. An annual report announces to the community the accomplishments and the people involved in those accomplishments.

An organization's mission statement provides its reason to be, the social justification for its existence and its purpose. It is the "who, what, where and why" of an organization. It is usually short, frequently inspiring, and is used to establish the scope and character of an organization's services and activities. The stakeholders of an organization should review

the mission statement at least every five (5) years.

Strategic planning identifies where an organization wants to be at some point in the future. The "strategic" part of this planning process is the development of future plans by looking at current conditions in the organization and external environment. Strategic planning is critical to the long-term success of an organization because it determines the overall direction and goals of the organization.

The strategic plan and the mission statement are the basis for development of goals and objectives, which serve as the guidelines for the senior center's work. Goals are broad statements and objectives are how those goals will be achieved. The same goals may stand for several years, but how they are achieved may change. The goals should reflect the needs and interests of older adults and acknowledge the availability of resources in the community, as well as, the skills and talents of the participants.

Objectives are the method to meet the goals. Objectives express, in specific and measurable terms, what the senior center wishes to accomplish within a specified time period. Regular reporting on the progress of attaining these objectives helps keep everyone on target.

An action plan explains how the individuals within a center work together to accomplish the objectives. Action plans list the specific activities that must be carried out to accomplish the objectives. They answer the questions: What? Who? When? The action

plan is the vehicle to carry out the goals and objectives and ultimately the mission. The goals, objectives and action plan make up the planning document.

The development process for the mission statement, goals, objectives and action plans should involve participants, paid and unpaid staff, advisory committees, community leaders and other stakeholders. Formal and informal involvement of a broad segment of stakeholders helps assure that the senior center's plans are realistic and have the support of those needed for accomplishment. Involving a broad segment of people affirms the central theme of the senior center philosophy – to be a focal point in the community. By

involving the community in planning, the senior center becomes part of community-wide planning and policy making. The final responsibility for the development and review of these statements rests with the senior center's staff and boards.

Organizations should recognize the value of producing an Annual Report each year. Annual reports can be used to demonstrate how you have accomplished your goals and contributed to the good of the community. This message can be delivered to your stakeholders, current and future donors, and can be used to cultivate new partnerships, and to recognize important people. It is another method of communicating with the public.

PURPOSE and PLANNING STANDARDS CRITERIA

A. Mission Statement

1. A senior center shall have a written statement that expresses its basic mission. The mission statement is:
 - a. Consistent with senior center philosophy;
 - b. Developed by participation from governing structure, paid and unpaid staff, participants and community representatives;
 - c. Description of the who, what, where and why of the organization;
 - d. Written in concise, clear and understandable language;
 - e. Physically visible in the center and on publications;
 - f. Reviewed regularly, every 3 to 5 years; and
 - g. Used as the test for new projects and activities.

B. Strategic Planning

1. A senior center should complete a strategic plan every 3-to-5 years. The process of developing a strategic plan should include:
 - a. An environmental scan - A wide look at what's going on outside the organization and its effects on the organization;
 - b. SWOT analysis - A review of what's going on inside the organization by looking at strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats;
 - c. The review and establishment of a statement for mission, vision and values;
 - d. Development of goals broad enough to be viable over the next three (3) to five (5) years; and

- e. Involvement of a committee made up of board, paid and unpaid staff, community members and other stake holders led by a facilitator skilled in leading groups through a strategic plan.

C. Goal and Objectives

1. A senior center shall have written statements of goals.
 - a. Goals carry out the mission;
 - b. Goals are developed through strategic planning process;
 - c. Goals identify major accomplishments that a center seeks to achieve; and
 - d. Goals are broad enough to be viable for 3-to-5 years.
2. A senior center shall have objectives that are developed as the way to accomplish goals. Objectives should have these characteristics:
 - a. Developed by the individuals responsible for carrying them out;
 - b. Measurable;
 - c. Reviewed annually by governing structure, advisory committees, paid and unpaid staff;
 - d. May change each year or be static for several years;
 - e. Available to the public, as needed; and
 - f. The basis for reports prepared and distributed to governing and advisory boards at least quarterly that describe the progress in meeting the objectives.

D. Action Plan

1. A senior center shall have an action plan that details the activities to be carried out to achieve the objectives.
2. An action plan shall:
 - a. Be developed by those involved in carrying it out, including paid and unpaid staff;
 - b. Consist of the steps that paid and unpaid staff perform to achieve an objective;
 - c. Be adjusted by staff to meet new circumstances or opportunities; and
 - d. Be available to those involved in carrying it out.

E. Annual Report

1. A senior center should produce an annual report each year as a way of communicating to the community its accomplishments.
2. At a minimum an annual report should contain:
 - a. List of Board of Directors or governing body;
 - b. List of additional decision making boards or committees;
 - c. Financial statement;

- d. List of staff; and
- e. Mission statement.
3. An annual report can:
 - a. Communicate activities completed by the organization;
 - b. Focus on accomplishments of the organization during the past year;
 - c. Show supporters that resources are being used in meaningful ways;
 - d. Educate community leaders and influential decision makers about the work on important issues regarding the senior populations;
 - e. Recognize special people including donors and volunteers;
 - f. Serve as a historical record of the organization's progress;
 - g. Show outcomes by including stories and changes in the lives of the constituents;
 - h. Record major decisions of the governing board.

ITEMS FOR ON-SITE REVIEW NOTEBOOK

- Senior center's mission statement
- Senior center's planning document with goals, objectives and action plan.
- Quarterly/semi-annual/annual reports on accomplishments of the planning document, which should provide an update on the accomplishments of your goals and objectives.
- The senior center's most recent annual report.

STANDARDS REQUIRED FOR ACCREDITATION

- A senior center must have a mission statement consistent with NCOA/NISC senior center's definition and philosophy.
- A senior center uses a planning document that consists of goals, objectives and action plans.
- Produces an annual report for the senior center

These are a few of the web sites that were reviewed at the time of this update. However, be aware that web sites can change. Using Google or another search engine may find additional sites

http://www.managementhelp.org/plan_dec/str_plan/str_plan.htm Alliance for Nonprofit Management

www.wmich.edu/nonprofit/Guide/guide7.htm Nonprofit Leadership and Administration Faculty
Western Michigan University

www.nonprofitexpert.com/strategic_planning.htm NonProfit Expert.com

<http://www.idealists.org/if/idealists/en/FAQ/QuestionViewer/default?section=03&item=22> Idealist.org

SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKBOOK

PURPOSE and PLANNING

Instructions: These questions are designed to help you measure the senior center against the standard criteria and to review and strengthen senior center operations and programs. Please fill in the blanks with appropriate answers or information. The On-Site Peer Reviewer will review these worksheets.

A. Mission Statement

1) What is the mission statement of the senior center?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: The Mission Statement.

Requirement for Accreditation: A senior center must have a mission statement consistent with NCOA/NISC senior center's definition and philosophy.

2) When was the mission statement last reviewed?

3) Who was involved in the reviewing of the mission statement?

4) Examine the statements under **A. Mission Statement, #1** heading in the Standards Criteria section. If there are criteria that are not being met, what can the center do to meet these criteria?

B. Strategic Planning

5) Which of the components under **B. Strategic Planning, #1** did the senior center include in their strategic planning process?

6) How has strategic planning helped the center meet the needs of its constituents?

7) When was the last strategic plan developed and who was involved?

C. Goal and Objectives

8) A "Goal" is a broad statement and "Objectives" are the statements on how those goals will be achieved.

Place in the Document Review Notebook: Senior center's planning document with goals, objectives and action plan.

Requirement for Accreditation: A senior center must have a planning document with goals, objectives and action plans.

9) How were the goals and objectives developed?

10) Who was involved?

11) How do the goal statements fit with the mission?

12) What are the major accomplishments toward which the senior center wishes to work?

13) What measurements are indicated in the objectives?

14) How often are the accomplishments of objectives reported and to whom?

15) What steps might be taken to strengthen the planning document?

D. Action Plan

16) How does the action plan indicate what steps are needed to accomplish the objective?

17) Does it include the what, who, when and resources needed?

18) In what ways have action plans been adjusted due to changing circumstances or opportunities?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: Quarterly/semi annual/annual reports of accomplishments of the planning document, which should provide an update on the accomplishments of your goals and objectives

E. Annual Report

Place in the Document Review Notebook: The most recent annual report.

Required for Accreditation: Produces an annual report for the senior center.

19) Look over the annual report. Indicate which of these elements are parts of your annual report.

- Report of accomplishments of the center
- Report of activities of the year
- Outcomes are shown by stories and changes in the lives of the constituents
- Information about the work of the organization – mission statement
- Recognition for volunteers, donors and other supporters
- List of members in governing boards and decision-making committees
- Financial statement
- Description and list of programs or departments
- List of staff
- Major decisions of the governing body

If the senior center's annual report is part of a larger organization's report, does information about the senior center stand out from other services? If not, what steps can the senior center take to individualize the annual report? What other ways can the annual report be improved?

20) How is the annual report used to educate your constituents and the public about your organization?

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

PRINCIPLE

A senior center shall serve as a focal point in the community by participating in cooperative community planning, establishing cooperative service delivery systems and providing information and referral services. Providing information and connecting older adults to resources in the community is an important service of a senior center. Educating the community, public officials, other professionals and students about the richness and diversity of the senior population as well as its needs is one of the purposes of senior centers.

RATIONALE

A senior center is a vital social institution closely related to and involved with its community. It works with other organizations to establish collaborative and cooperative guidelines for the delivery of service to older adults in the community.

Through community linkages, a senior center coordinates service delivery with other agencies, mobilizes resources and develops ways to expand services and activities. Senior centers work with many organizations, on both a formal and informal basis.

Cooperative planning among community service agencies provides a framework to deliver effective programs and stretches limited resources. For many senior centers, the area agency on aging is a principal partner in the service planning process for

the community. Designated as regional planning bodies, area agencies can be units of county, city, or town government, or a private nonprofit organization. They are responsible for assessing the needs of older adults in the area; setting priorities for service; funding services through contractual and other arrangements; planning and coordinating existing services; acting as advocates for older adults and offering technical assistance and training to service providers.

A senior center improves the community's delivery of services to older adults by providing information about and referrals to aging services. Through community outreach efforts a senior center may improve access to these services by providing information where seniors live, gather socially or worship. These outreach efforts are the community links to resources and an avenue to educate older adults. Outreach services may enable the senior center to identify and link low income or socially isolated people to services. By conducting presentations where older adults gather, the reach of the senior center is extended outside its walls and provides an opportunity to educate and identify people in need of service or a referral.

A senior center uses marketing techniques to inform the community and participants about the scope of their services and activities. It should create a marketing plan focused on promoting current and potential products, programs, activities and services

to the public. Successful marketing will create an identity that will gain community support, attract resources and help increase participation in the senior center. Marketing materials should be directed at current and future participants.

A senior center should use a variety of marketing techniques to educate the community on aging issues, publicize its mission, promote its activities and programs, and enhance the image of older adults. Frequently cooperative relationships with educational institutions or businesses can result in low cost ways to market a center.

A senior center knows first-hand the challenges that seniors face. Therefore,

senior centers can advocate for seniors' needs, as well as educate seniors on how to advocate for themselves. They can bring large numbers of people together on an issue. Senior centers should not support one party or public official, but provide a forum for people to be informed on the issues and to meet those who want to represent the public.

A senior center can be a valuable resource to its community by providing field training opportunities for students and by conducting or participating in research to increase understanding about older adults or improve gerontological practice.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS STANDARD CRITERIA

A. Community Collaborations

1. A senior center shall function as a focal point for service delivery to older adults by making services more accessible. This is accomplished in many ways.
 - a. Partner with agencies or organizations that could or do offer services to older adults.
 - b. Develop appropriate arrangements for mutual referrals and cooperative service provisions that contain clear statements of each agency's responsibility and appropriate follow up mechanism.
 - c. Encourage providers, where appropriate, to deliver their services at the senior center in order to make services more accessible to the community's older population
 - d. Arrange for the senior center to use the facilities of other organizations to deliver services.
 - e. Partner with other agencies to deliver services in the community. These organizations may include:
 - Other senior centers,
 - Area agencies on aging,
 - United Way,
 - Social service providers,
 - Recreation and parks departments,
 - Religious organizations,
 - Hospitals,
 - For profit service delivery entities,

- Local businesses,
- Schools,
- Colleges and universities,
- Libraries and
- Others who wish to serve the older population

B. Information and Referral

1. A senior center shall improve older adult's access to information about community service through numerous ways.
 - a. A center can provide paid or unpaid staff to provide one-on-one information and referral
 - b. A center can make information bulletins and pamphlets available in locations that are accessible to the public.
 - c. Staff from service organizations can make presentations at a senior center to provide information to the participants.
2. Through outreach methods a senior center will be able to provide services to adults who may not be able to attend the senior center facility. These methods can include:
 - a. Offering home visits to assess need and provide information and referral to individuals about services.
 - b. Take information to where seniors live, gather or worship.
 - c. Locate and identify underserved or socially isolated seniors who could benefit from the information and referral services.
 - d. Provide follow up visits to assure that the older adult has received services that were referred.

- e. Offer appointments or walk-in service for older adults to receive information and referral on community resources and services at the senior center.
3. A senior center shall reach out to the community to develop and to maintain relationships with other community and planning services by:
- a. Becoming part of community planning and providing representation on agency boards, committees and task forces;
 - b. Involving other agencies in senior center planning and development;
 - c. Exchanging information with other agencies on issues affecting older adults; and/or
 - d. Presenting informational lectures to relevant groups i.e. hospitals, service clubs, retirement clubs.

- better than many messages repeated regularly;
- h. Use many methods to deliver the message;
- i. Include the use of technology whenever possible;
- j. Assign responsibility for tasks; and
- k. Measure and evaluate on a regular basis.

2. Marketing materials should do the following:
- a. Publicize the senior center's mission;
 - b. Educate the community on its programs and services;
 - c. Enhance the image of older adults;
 - d. Promote a positive understanding of aging in the community;
 - e. Be representative of the community residents; and
 - f. Provide the private sector an opportunity to support programs and services.

C. Marketing

1. In creating a marketing plan a senior center shall do the following:
- a. Assess current marketing techniques;
 - b. Identify target audiences;
 - c. Develop communication that has a consistent message;
 - d. Establish a time line;
 - e. Communicate visually as well as verbally – use words and pictures;
 - f. Use different media;
 - g. Use message repetition – a tag line repeated over and over is

3. A senior center should use a variety of ways to educate the community and advocate for senior needs. These may include:
- a. Sponsorship of community events;
 - b. Development and distribution of fact sheets;
 - c. Newspapers articles
 - d. Radio and television shows or spots
 - e. Maintenance of an interactive website
 - f. Sponsoring events that educate the public, i.e., expos, health

fairs, travel fairs, job and
volunteer expos

consistent with its planning and
program priorities. The privacy of
participants and staff shall be
respected.

D. Training and Research

1. A senior center shall provide, to the extent practical, field training or internships to increase the number of qualified people in the aging field and other disciplines that interact with the older population.
2. A senior center shall, when feasible, participate in research that is
3. In order for a senior center to take part in educational or scientific based research, research guidelines need to be developed and followed when approving projects at the senior center.

ITEMS FOR ON-SITE REVIEW NOTEBOOK

- List of collaborative community partners.
- Sample of a cooperative agreement between senior center and collaborative community partner.
- Explanation of how the Information and Referral services are made available to seniors and the community.
- Copy of marketing plan.
- Copy of marketing materials (Not older than two [2] years).
- Copy of news releases and news articles.
- Research guidelines.

STANDARDS REQUIRED FOR ACCREDITATION

- Collaborate with at least five (5) community partners to offer services at the senior center.
- Information and referral services are provided to seniors and the community.
- Use at least three (3) marketing techniques.

SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKBOOK
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Instructions: These questions are designed to help you measure the senior center against the standard criteria and to review and strengthen senior center operations and programs. Please fill in the blanks with appropriate answers or information. The On-Site Peer Reviewer will review these worksheets.

A. Community Collaborations

1) Describe how the senior center works with other agencies on community planning to arrive at common goals.

Place in the Document Review Notebook: A list of collaborative community partners.

Requirement for Accreditation: The senior center works with at least five (5) community partners.

2) With what organizations have cooperative agreements been established?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: A sample of a cooperative agreement between senior center and collaborative community partner.

3) List the community agency boards or committees on which the senior center has representation.

4) What methods does the senior center use to exchange information or stay abreast of aging issues in their community?

5) In what ways could the senior center strengthen its efforts in community planning and collaboration with other organizations?

B. Information and Referral

6) Describe how information and referral is made available to participants and the community.

Place in the Document Review Notebook: An explanation of how the “Information and Referral” process is made available to seniors and community.

Requirement for Accreditation: “Information and Referral” services are made available to seniors and the community.

7) How do the outreach efforts of senior center provide “information and referral” to individuals in the community?

C. Marketing

8) How was the marketing plan developed?

9) How is the marketing plan evaluated?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: A copy of the marketing plan.

10) What are the methods that the senior center uses to inform the community and participants of its programs, activities and services?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: Copies of marketing materials (not older than two [2] years.)

Requirement for Accreditation: A senior center uses at least three (3) marketing techniques.

11) How is the relationship with print or other public media maintained?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: Newspaper articles or broadcast PSA’s.

12) How is the marketing plan evaluated?

13) How does the senior center provide training opportunities to students?

14) In what ways has the senior center participated with higher education in program-related research?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: The Research Guidelines.

NCOA/NISC SELF-ASSESSMENT and ACCREDITATION MANUAL

GOVERNANCE

PRINCIPLE

The method of operation of a senior center should be to create effective relationships among the participants, staff, governing structure and the community. These guiding principles and system of regulations should be structured so as to strengthen the governance system, provide transparency and ethical standards that are respected in the community. The human and financial support of an organization and the success of its mission are dependent upon its ethical conduct.

RATIONALE

The role of governance is to provide the framework within which a senior center operates. Clear definition of structure relationships and lines of communication are essential to effective operation and community support. Good governance is a necessity for all types of senior centers regardless of where or with whom the authority of the organization rests.

Common types of senior center organization structure:

- A senior center may be an independent, private, nonprofit agency that is incorporated and has a governing board of directors. This board has the ability to hire and fire designated staff, oversees financial matters and helps set the broad direction of the center. There also may be advisory boards with other duties.

- A senior center may be a sub-unit of a private, nonprofit organization and under the authority of the parent organization's governing board. The senior center should have advisory boards/councils and/or fundraising boards. Advisory boards/councils that raise and disperse funds shall have established rules and guidelines.
- A senior center may be a sub-unit of a public agency or department and is governed by a board of supervisors, commissioners, town council or city or county officials. The senior centers should have advisory boards and/or fund-raising boards. Advisory boards/councils that raise and disperse money shall have established rules and guidelines.
- A senior center may be a stand-alone unit or be part of a for profit organization. In this situation, rules that govern businesses would be followed. However, to ensure that the organization is meeting the needs of the community, it should have an advisory board/council.

Whenever funds are being received and dispersed, governance guidelines need to be in place. The American Competitiveness and Corporate Accountability Act of 2002, commonly known as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act ("Sarbanes-Oxley"), signed into law on July 30, 2002, applies to public companies, but is frequently followed by non-profit and

government organizations. There are two (2) criminal provisions that apply to non-profit organizations. These are: (1) Provisions prohibiting retaliation against whistleblowers; and (2) Prohibiting the destruction, alteration or concealment of certain documents or the impediment of investigations.

Legal responsibility rests with the senior center's governing board structure. It establishes policy that is available in written or electronic form to any interested party. These formal documents, the basis for the center's continuity, should allow enough flexibility to respond to changing circumstances. They should be reviewed on a regular basis. The members of the board also serve as advocates for the senior centers.

A senior center that is part of a larger agency or operated by a governmental agency may either be separately incorporated or covered by the parent organization. A senior center that is a public agency is generally established through state or local legislation or administrative action that enables a division of government to operate the senior center. The center's organizational charts describe the relationships, lines of authority and communication among all principal components.

In order to identify and devise ways to meet the needs of the community, senior centers should have one or more advisory boards/councils. They may be organized for a variety of purposes, such as fundraising, facility design, program promotion or membership development. Membership of these committees should reflect the participants of the center and the population of the community. Participants should have the opportunity to utilize their leadership skills and/or to learn new skills. Committee members who are not of the senior age add vitality and new ideas and perspectives to the group.

Senior center participants should be represented in the senior center's governing structure. This is a fundamental aspect of the senior center philosophy and assures it is responsive to those it serves. Participants should have formal and informal mechanisms to communicate with other participants, staff and the governing body.

Ethical governance and management starts with ethics guidelines and conflict of interest statements. Ethical guidelines can cover many things, but it is the code that the organization lives by. Conflict of interest statements ensure that no one profits from their involvement with the senior centers.

GOVERNANCE STANDARDS CRITERIA

The standards that are set forth here may be met in different ways depending on the structure of the senior center. It is the role of the self-assessment committee to seek out where and how they are being met and to ensure that they are met to the degree necessary to run an ethical, transparent and responsible organization.

A. Documents of effective governance

1. A charitable organization, 501(c)(3), generally has a governing board of directors. The board sets the organization's broad policies and oversees its operation including financial policies.
2. In senior centers that are not 501(c)(3), there may be a charitable arm that raises funds. It is not a governing body but, because it has fiduciary responsibilities, it should meet the requirements of governing boards.
3. The board of directors or a public entity bears the primary responsibility for ensuring that the organization lives up to its legal and ethical obligations to its donors, participants and the community. The assurance that this is happening is in the utilization of the following:
 - a. Bylaws, which are reviewed regularly;
 - b. Code of ethics that is enforced;
 - c. Conflict of interest statements signed by governing boards;
 - d. "Whistle blower" policy;
 - e. Membership in committees, advisory groups or boards that are representative of the community;
 - f. Committee members with the expertise necessary to accomplish their work; and

g. Procedures for ethical financial oversight.

4. Governing documents should be made available to the public. They are the foundation for operation of the senior center and should be reviewed at least every three (3) years. The governing documents should comply with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations.

B. Organizational structure

1. Senior centers shall have written statements and organizational charts that explain the senior center's structure, lines of communication and authority.
2. The organization structure should indicate the relationship of the senior center components or departments.
3. When a senior center is part of a larger organization, network of senior centers, or local government the senior center's relationship to these entities shall be clearly defined.
4. All documents concerning organizational structure should be kept in a location accessible to all paid and unpaid staff. When requested they should be available to participants, community members and other stakeholders.

5. Within an organization's structure the following duties need to be accomplished:
 - a. Employ a chief administrative person who manages the daily affairs of the center;
 - b. Recruit, interview, train, evaluate and dismiss paid and unpaid staff;
 - c. Develop an annual budget;
 - d. Adopt an annual budget, receive financial reports and arrange for annual independent audits or financial reviews;
 - e. Raise and disperse funds;
 - f. Review regularly the senior center's mission, goals and objectives;
 - g. Receive reports on the accomplishments of senior center activities;
 - h. Evaluate senior center activities and services;
 - i. Review personnel policies and evaluate benefits and compensation package; and,
 - j. Record the results of meetings.
6. Senior centers shall create numerous ways for participants and their families to provide input to the administration and boards of the center. Open door policies, suggestion boxes, question boards and participant councils are only a few of the ways that individuals can have their voices heard.
7. Participants may help in the following ways:
 - a. Assist senior center administrator in identifying participant and community needs; and/or

- b. Represent the center on specific issues and problems to the community or public officials.

C. Governing Structure

1. Governing boards and advisory boards/councils with fiduciary responsibility should have written documents or bylaws that define and establish procedures for the following:
 - a. Qualifications for membership in the organization;
 - b. Designation, election, tenure of officers;
 - c. Specification of officers' and members' duties;
 - d. Announcement and schedule of ongoing and special meetings;
 - e. Designation and role of committees;
 - f. Quorums and what constitutes presence at a meeting;
 - g. Recording of minutes;
 - h. Amending written documents;
 - i. Development and enforcement of a "Code of Ethics";
 - j. Development and enforcement of "Conflict of Interest" statements and full disclosure for decision making bodies;
 - k. "Whistle blower" policy;
 - l. Investment policy; and/or
 - m. Dissolution of the organization and its assets.

Must have at least nine (9) of these established for a governing board or advisory board/council to be accredited.

D. Compliance with Regulation

1. A senior center's governing board or entity ensures that it complies with all local, state, or federal regulations regarding the various types of offered services. These include, but are not limited to: Transportation; medical; wellness programs; food service; spa services; pools; fitness centers and care providers.
2. The following should take place:
 - a. Proper licenses have been applied for, received and are properly posted.
 - b. People hired to carry out duties requiring special training have received the proper training as required by regulatory organization.
 - c. Required certificates are obtained and properly displayed.
 - d. Inspections and reviews are conducted as indicated or needed.
3. The senior center should have a code of ethics under which their work is carried out.
4. Additionally, the following are some issues that should be considered:
 - a. What actions should be taken, with or without the consent or knowledge of the participant or family, when a participant's health or behavior changes significantly?
 - b. When should the emergency contact or family be notified of a participant's behavior change?
 - c. Under what circumstances can services be denied to someone and for how long?
 - d. What information is necessary to provide service to an individual?
 - e. What is the policy of the center on advertising or the sale of products at the senior center?
 - f. What is the policy regarding political activity at the senior center?
5. The senior centers should develop a conflict of interest statement for staff and boards.

ITEMS FOR ON-SITE REVIEW NOTEBOOK

- Documents or by-laws showing that nine (9) of the guidelines are met for the senior center governing board or charitable arm or advisory board/council under **C. Governing Structure, # 1**. *These may either be placed in the book or ready for Peer Reviewer to peruse.*
- Code of ethics
- Conflict of interest statement
- List of standing boards and/or committees – include the members' names and their affiliation or profession
- List of activities or services that require certificates or inspections to be posted.

STANDARDS REQUIRED FOR ACCREDITATION

- Documents that define and establish nine of the items under **C. Governing Structure, # 1**
- Code of Ethics.
- Conflict of interest statement.
- Required certificates are properly displayed.

These are a few of the websites that were reviewed at the time of this update. However, be aware that web sites can change. Using Google or another search engine may find additional sites.

<http://www.independentsector.org/PDFs/sarbanesoxley.pdf> Sarbanes-Oxley Act and Implications for Nonprofit Organizations

<http://www.nonprofitpanel.org> Panel on the Nonprofit Sector releases Principles for Good Governance and Ethical Practice

http://www.independentsector.org/members/code_main.html Independent Sector

<http://www.idealists.org/if/idealists/en/FAQ/QuestionViewer/default?section=16&item=59> Samples of Conflict of Interest Statements

SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKBOOK

GOVERNANCE

Instructions: These questions are designed to help you measure the senior center against the standard criteria and to review and strengthen senior center operations and programs. Please fill in the blanks with appropriate answers or information. The On-Site Peer Reviewer will review these worksheets.

A. Documents of effective governance

1) Using this chart, decide how well the governing boards or advisory boards/councils of the senior center meet the responsibility of incorporating these into their way of work:

	Very well	Could do better	Plans for improvement
Bylaws	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Code of Ethics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Conflict of Interest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Whistle Blower Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Membership representative of community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Members with expertise to do their task	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Financial oversight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

B. Organizational structure

2) Using this task chart, examine how your senior center operates and check where these responsibilities lie. If the responsibility is not being met, it may be a red flag that needs to be looked at. More than one (1) entity/person may be responsible for a task. If this is true, ensure that the conditions are spelled out when each has that authority.

RESPONSIBILITY	GOVERNING BOARD NON-PROFIT	MUNICIPAL or OTHER PUBLIC ENTITY	CHARITABLE ARM OF SENIOR ARM	ADVISORY COUNCIL/ BOARDS	STAFF
Hires chief administrator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Oversees and evaluates chief administrator					
Raises funds	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Disperses funds	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Receives regular financial reports	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Arranges for financial audit or review	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Reviews senior center mission and goals	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Receives reports on accomplishment of goals and objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Holds regular meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Records the substance of the meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>				

C. Governing Structure

3) In order for a decision-making or fundraising organization to be successful, guidelines or rules need to be in place. Use this chart to check that your boards, committees or public entity have these guidelines in place and follow them.

Guideline	Governing Board Non-Profit	Municipal or Other Public Entity	Charitable Arm of Senior Center	Advisory Boards or Councils
Qualification for membership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Election or appointment of members				
Tenure of members' terms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specification of officers' duties	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Election and tenure of officers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting schedule and notification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Committees and their roles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quorums	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Constitutes presence at a meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recording of minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Amending written documents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Securing and dispersal of funds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Code of Ethics"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Conflict of interest" statement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Whistle Blower" Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Investment Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dissolution of the organization and its assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

GOVERNANCE

Place in the Document Review Notebook: Documents or bylaws showing that nine (9) of the guidelines are met for the senior center governing board or charitable arm or advisory board/council under Governing Structure, C # 1. *These may either be placed in the book or ready for Peer Reviewer to peruse.*

Requirement for Accreditation: Documents are available that define and establish nine (9) of these guidelines for an entity in the senior center.

4) How and when was the senior center's "Code of Ethics" developed?

5) How is it disseminated and interpreted to boards, committees, paid and unpaid staff?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: Senior center's "Code of Ethics."

Required for Accreditation: The senior center has a "Code of Ethics."

6) How and when was the "Conflict of Interest" Policy developed?

7) How is it used to ensure there is no "Conflict of Interest" on decision-making Boards and Committees?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: The "Conflict of Interest" statement.

Required for Accreditation: The senior center has a "Conflict of Interest" statement that is signed by boards and staff.

8) How does the senior center ensure that anyone reporting illegal or unethical behavior is not subject to punishment or harassment? Has the center considered a "Whistle Blower" policy?

9) What opportunities do participants have to be part of the decision-making bodies of the center?

10) What opportunities do participants have to advocate for senior issues with public officials?

11) What are the standing committees or boards?

- Place in the Document Review Notebook: The list of standing boards and/or committees, including the members' names and affiliation or profession.**

D. Compliance with regulations

12) What senior center activities have regulations and inspections overseen by another body?

13) Who has the responsibility to see that these regulations are followed?

- Place in the Document Review Notebook: List of activities or services that require certificates or inspection records to be posted.**
- Required for Accreditation: Certificates and inspections are properly displayed.**

NCOA/NISC SELF ASSESSMENT and ACCREDITATION MANUAL

ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES

PRINCIPLE

A senior center shall have clear administrative and human resource policies and procedures that contribute to the effective management of its operation. It shall be staffed by qualified personnel, paid and unpaid, capable of implementing its programs and services for its participants.

RATIONALE

Effective management requires clearly defined areas of administrative responsibility, lines of supervision and communication. The chief administrator is accountable to the senior center's governing structure and is usually given complete control over day-to-day senior center management. The administrator, in most cases, carries primary responsibility for dealing with agency interactions, funders, and community resources and collaborations. He/she also plays a leadership role with the center's governing structure, paid and unpaid staff, participants and advisory groups. An effective administrator recruits and retains competent staff members to accomplish senior center goals and objectives.

Senior center staff, paid and unpaid, should have the opportunity and be encouraged to learn new skills and take on responsibilities that promote personal growth. Staff should be encouraged to increase their knowledge through ongoing education, in-service training, and membership and participation in professional organizations. Training and professional growth should be a budgeted item in a senior center's budget.

Periodic review and updating of the human resource policies and practices manual ensures policies are up-to-date and in sync with actual practices. New policies and practices arise out of staff needs, changes in laws and expectations of the community. Sound policies and practices provide objectivity and fairness. They give staff an understanding of the organization's environment and clarify work expectations. Consistent, fair human resource management enhances staff morale and promotes cooperative effort. Personnel policies should reflect the needs of the employees and also the goals of the organization.

A senior center's staffing pattern may look different when it is part of a larger organization, e.g. government or multi-service non-profit. The makeup of the parent organization and the services it provides may affect staffing patterns and policies in place. Government organizations may have policies governed by unions or other procedures common to government groups. Compensation packages will also vary based on resources available, community practices and expectations. However, fairness and equality to all individuals are essential.

Unpaid staff and stipended individuals from federal or other programs are an essential part of senior centers' operations. They are an invaluable source of knowledge, experience and skills. Their role should not be seen as subordinate to paid staff rather on the same level. They can play a role in building the

capacity of a senior center, particularly in the age of dwindling government support.

Good volunteer management practices for unpaid staff mirror good management practices for paid staff. Therefore, written personnel policies, equipment and appropriate space to accomplish assignments, compensation in the form of recognition and communication with a supervisor are all essential components. The volunteer's knowledge and experience should be respected and utilized in the same way as a paid employee.

Much is being written about the "Boomers" and what they can contribute to an organization's capacity to meet its mission. They will also redefine the role of the unpaid staff person in an organization. A senior center needs to recognize that adaptations will need to be made in how to engage unpaid staff. Good management practices will be very important. However, the rewards in increased human resources will be evident not only from the Boomer generation, but others who will gain from the new perspective of working side by side with paid staff.

ADMINISTRATION & HUMAN RESOURCE STANDARDS CRITERIA

A. Administrative Responsibilities

1. The governing organization or sponsoring organization of a senior center shall designate a chief administrator and delegate responsibility for the overall management of the senior center's operation and program.
2. Through a combination of education and experience, the chief administrator shall possess the ability to perform the necessary duties.
3. A senior center's chief administrator's roles and responsibilities shall be clearly defined.
4. The chief administrator has the ultimate responsibility, but may delegate or share many of the following duties:
 - a. Development of the center's overall work plan;
 - b. Assessment of community needs;
 - c. Planning and implementation of programs and services to meet community needs;
 - d. Evaluation of programs and operations;
 - e. Resource development;
 - f. Day-to-day operations;
 - g. Development and nurturing of community relations;
 - h. Human Resource management;
 - i. Staff development;
 - j. Reporting to boards; community, funders and others regarding program accomplishments and needs; and/or
 - k. Financial and risk management.
5. For a senior center that is part of a larger agency, the senior center's

administrator shall have a defined relationship with the larger agency regarding:

- a. Governing structure;
- b. Administrative staff;
- c. Relevant committees; and
- d. Shared space or co-located organizations.

6. In a multi-site operation, there shall be a staff person on-site with clearly defined responsibilities and the ability to carry out day-to-day operations. There shall be a clearly defined relationship between this on-site person and other administrators and governing structure.

B. Personnel

1. A sufficient number of competent and qualified personnel, paid and unpaid, are needed to implement the activities and services to meet the senior center's goals and objectives.
2. Supervisors shall ensure that individuals have the skills, knowledge and information needed to complete tasks and provide the autonomy to accomplish them.
3. A senior center shall have a staffing pattern that clearly defines the positions and the relationships necessary to implement the center's goals and objectives.
4. A senior center shall use resources in the community to increase its capacity to accomplish goals.

5. The ethnic and racial makeup of senior center staff should reflect the ethnic and racial makeup of the older adults in the community
6. At all times, staff shall show respect and encourage personal growth of senior participants by:
 - a. Respecting individual needs, interests, rights and value;
 - b. Developing relationships that respect the individuality of each person;
 - c. Encouraging responsibility for making one's own decisions;
 - d. Providing the resources to aid people to develop coping skills and solve personal problems; and
 - e. Supporting the individual's involvement in senior center decision making.
7. Each staff person shall have a written job description, which minimally would include:
 - a. Position title and classification (if applicable);
 - b. Qualifications;
 - c. Essential duties and responsibilities;
 - d. Lines of communication for supervision and reporting; and
 - e. Salary range and benefits.

C. Staff Supervision and Training

1. A senior center shall ensure that hiring practices, staff compensation, classification and benefits are consistent with requirement of government laws and regulations.
2. A senior center shall have a formal system of staff supervision for paid and unpaid staff to:
 - a. Provide feedback on the accomplishments of the individual;

D. Human Resources Management

1. Policies governing paid personnel shall be established by the governing structure, reviewed periodically, maintained as an official document and made available to each individual.
2. Personnel policies should outline how all personnel issues are handled. What is written in the policy and what is carried out should never differ.
3. A personnel policy should include the following topics:
 - a. Terms of hiring and training periods;
 - b. Compensation and benefits;
 - c. Various types of leaves from work;
 - d. Savings programs;
 - e. Performance appraisal;
 - f. Job posting and promotions;
 - g. Communication channels,

- grievance and disciplinary actions;
 - h. Staff development, training and reimbursement of such;
 - i. Family leave;
 - j. Protection from discrimination based on: sex, age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and religious preference;
 - k. Policy on prescription drugs, illegal substances and drug testing;
 - l. Confidentiality statement;
 - m. Technology use and abuse.
4. Issues often emerge that may necessitate the development of new policies or guidelines. For this reason, someone knowledgeable in the field of Human Resource Management should review the policies at least every two (2) to three (3) years.
 5. An employee record should be maintained for each paid employee containing at the minimum:
 - a. Application for employment;
 - b. Resume (if applicable);
 - c. Job description;
 - d. Letter of employment;
 - e. Record of compensation, promotion and salary adjustments;
 - f. Annual performance evaluations;
 - g. Commendations;
 - h. Disciplinary actions; and
 - i. Correspondence.

E. Unpaid staff (volunteers, interns or stipended individuals)

1. A senior center shall engage individuals of all ages to assist with the delivery of programs and services in unpaid or stipended positions.

2. There should be a Volunteer Administrator who handles management of these individuals, which is frequently referred to as Volunteer Management.
3. These unpaid or stipended staff should be treated in the same professional manner as paid staff. Refer to the above sections to clarify what these are. (See C 2, 3, and 4)
4. A Volunteer Manual should be provided to all unpaid staff. At the minimum it should contain the following:
 - a. Organization's mission statement;
 - b. Orientation information about senior center;
 - c. Opportunities for sharing skills;
 - d. Communication channels, grievance and disciplinary actions;
 - e. Protection from discrimination based on sex, age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation disability and religious preference;
 - f. Process of evaluation for appropriate placement and job satisfaction;
 - g. Confidentiality statement; and/or
 - h. Recognition of contributions.
5. This will be especially important for the volunteers that help build the capacity of the organization by carrying out functions that in other instances might be completed by paid staff.
6. The following techniques will be important in working with Boomers and highly skilled unpaid staff who can work independently:
 - a. *Job sculpting* – designing a job that will allow the person to use skills and knowledge already gained.
 - b. *Flexible scheduling* – understanding the person's availability and

- designing a schedule to fit their need.
- c. *Self directed teams* –Teams that work without a designated leader.
7. An unpaid staff person will feel connected to an organization when he/she understands the mission of the organization and how their role fits into meeting that mission.
 8. When an unpaid staff person is provided the tools necessary to accomplish their task (telephone, computer, appropriate information etc.), they are more likely to continue to assist the organization.
 9. Compensation for unpaid staff may come in the form of recognition, tokens of appreciation, notes of thanks and other expressions of gratitude.
 10. A stipended position may receive reimbursement for expenses and payment for the job that would be below market rate.
 11. People who have a positive experience helping a senior center are the best people to recruit additional people. They are also the ones who will support the center financially and in other ways.

ITEMS FOR ON-SITE REVIEW NOTEBOOK

- Current resume for main administrator of senior center
- Job descriptions for paid staff
- Organizational chart(s) showing structure and lines of authority
- Personnel policies for paid staff (If document is lengthy, include a copy of the table of contents and have copy ready for the on site review.)
- Job descriptions for unpaid staff
- Volunteer Handbook for unpaid staff that includes policies

STANDARDS REQUIRED FOR ACCREDITATION

- The chief administrator must have the experience and education to accomplish duties as outlined in job description
- Personnel policies have been distributed or are available electronically to employees and are followed as written
- There is a Volunteer Handbook written for unpaid staff that includes policies

These are a few of the web sites that were reviewed at the time of this update. However, be aware that web sites can change. Using Google or another search engine may find additional sites.

<http://nonprofitrisk.org/tools/volunteer/volunteer.shtml> NonProfit Risk Management Center – Volunteer Risk Management

<http://www.energizeinc.com/> Energize Inc. by Susan J Ellis

<http://managementhelp.org/policies/policies/polslist.htm> Free Management Library – Sample List of Personnel Policies

<http://www.encore.org/about/employers> Encore Careers – Employer Advice

<http://www.allianceonline.org/boomers.page> Alliance for Nonprofit Management – Resources on Baby Boomer Volunteers

SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKBOOK

ADMINISTRATION and HUMAN RESOURCES

Instructions: These questions are designed to help you measure the senior center against the standards and to review and strengthen senior center operations and program. Please fill in the blanks with appropriate answers or information. The On-Site Peer Reviewer will receive these worksheets.

A. Administrative Responsibilities

1) Discuss the role of the chief administrator and what training and experience make this person a good fit for the position.

Place in the Document Review Notebook: The current resume of the chief administrator.

Place in the Document Review Notebook: The job description for all paid staff.

Requirement for Accreditation: The chief administrator has the experience and education to accomplish duties as outlined in job description.

2) If the senior center is part of a larger organization, discuss the chain of command and the relationship of the staff to each other.

Place in the Document Review Notebook: The organizational chart showing structure and lines of authority.

3) The major responsibilities of a senior center's chief executive are included in this table. Indicate who is responsible for the task and briefly discuss how the process works.

Task	Who	Process
Development of work plan		
Assessment of community needs		
Planning and implementation of programs and services to meet community needs		
Evaluation of Program and Operations		
Resource Development		
Day-to-day Operations		

Development and nurturing of community relations		
Task	Who	Process
Human Resource Management		
Staff Development		
Reporting to boards, community, funders and others regarding program accomplishments and needs.		
Financial and risk management		
Volunteer Management		
Emergency preparedness		
Specify other duties		

B. Personnel

4) Explain recruitment of staff and how the staff represents the diversity of the older population of the community.

5) Discuss interaction of staff and participants. What is done to involve participants in decisions of the center?

6) A review of job descriptions should be undertaken to ensure that the job description is an accurate reflection of what the staff person is doing. List what changes need to be made if any to job descriptions.

7) Explain how performance evaluations are conducted with paid staff.

C. Human Resources Management

8) When is the Personnel Manual given to staff? What assurance is there that the individual read and understood manual information?

9) How and when is it reviewed?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: A copy of personnel policies for paid staff. If document is lengthy, include a copy of the table of content and have a copy ready for the on-site review.

Requirement for Accreditation: Personnel policies have been distributed or are available electronically to all staff.

10) Review the Personnel Manual for the following items. If it is not in the Personnel Manual, how is a staff person given the information?

Policy	YES	NO
Terms of hiring and training periods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Compensation and benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Types of leave(s) from work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Savings programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Performance appraisals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job posting and promotions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication channels, grievance and disciplinary actions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff development, training and reimbursement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family leave	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protection from discrimination based on: sex, age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and religious preference	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy on prescription drugs, illegal substances and drug testing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confidentiality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technology use and abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11) Who is responsible for maintaining employee records?

12) Where are they kept and what information is in each one?

D. Unpaid staff (volunteers, interns or stipended individuals)

13) Discuss roles of the various types of unpaid staff

14) How might the senior center expand utilization of unpaid staff to increase capacity to meet their goals?

Place in Document Review Notebook: Job descriptions for unpaid staff.

15) There should be a Volunteer Handbook for unpaid staff. Review the senior center's volunteer manual for inclusion of these items.

Policy	YES	NO
Volunteer application	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mission statement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Orientation information on senior center	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities for sharing skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communication channels, grievance and disciplinary actions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Protection from discrimination based on: sex, age, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and religious preference	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Process of evaluation for appropriate placement and job satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confidentiality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognition of contributions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Place in Document Review Notebook: The Volunteer Handbook for unpaid staff that includes policies.

Requirement for Accreditation: The center has a written Volunteer Handbook for unpaid staff that includes policies.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT and IMPLEMENTATION

PRINCIPLE

A senior center's program shall provide a broad range of group and individual activities and services that respond to the needs and interests of older adults, their families and caregivers in the community or service area.

RATIONALE

A senior center seeks to fulfill its mission and achieve its goals and objectives through its program. A senior center's program encompasses all activities and services offered by the senior center and also those it makes accessible and available to participants through linkages with other agencies. The participants of a senior center should be in the forefront of the program development. Programs at a senior center are implemented by and with, **not for**, its participants.

Effective program planning and development begin with specific identification of the needs of the population in the geographic area to be served. Planning should take into account suggestions and information gathered from participants, prospective participants, paid and unpaid staff, other service providers, community agency leaders and the latest best practice models and gerontology research. Planning should also take into account the changing characteristics and needs of participants, availability and demand for services and the human and fiscal resource of the senior center and the community.

Strategic planning produces fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide an organization. This process was discussed in the Purpose Standard. In the process of program planning and development the following should be considered:

- The fit of the plan into the center's mission statement;
- The populations and geographic area identified;
- An examination of the needs and interests of the population;
- A resolution that the services and activities will address the needs of the community;
- A determination of resources needed and their availability; and
- Program evaluation to help determine courses of action. (Program Evaluation is outlined in the Evaluation Standard.)

As senior centers prepare for program implementation, they face the challenge of providing a wide spectrum of services and activities that respond to the characteristics of their diverse groups of participants. The phenomenon of aging well has resulted in many senior centers serving two (2) or even three (3) generations at the same time. The characteristics and needs we may have once attributed to a certain age are no longer holding true. Ninety-year olds are using computers alongside the fifty-five year olds. Exercise classes and fitness centers have participants of all ages. The activity may be slightly different, but the goal is the same. Providing the services and activities for a diverse group of people is one of the greatest

challenges for senior centers in the twenty-first century.

Older adults not only want to remain physically healthy and active into later years, but they additionally are concerned about their mental health and cognitive ability. It is easy to recognize activities that stimulate our thinking processes; however these are not the only activities that stimulate good brain health. Research shows that the brain can increase in capacity, as well as maintain cognitive skills through a variety of physical and social activities. The studies of noted neuropsychologist Dr. Paul Nussbaum, of the University of Pittsburgh, have shown that physical activity, socialization, spirituality and good nutrition are equally important.

Age diversity is only one challenge that senior centers face. A center may serve people with varying income levels. There may be individuals who have recently immigrated to this country, or who have been here many years but still practice traditions from their homeland. There will be participants with varying abilities due to chronic illness or a life-threatening event. Transportation and access to service may be a major challenge for participants who want to attend a senior center.

A senior center should offer information and support in a way that empowers participants to understand how to solve their own problems and make their own choices about services and activities. All programs should operate with a positive view and expectation of the older adult.

Many older adults are isolated because of geographic conditions, socio-economic barriers

or health-related hardships. Finding these isolated or hard-to-reach members of the community, identifying their needs and linking them with available services may take extra efforts but should be part of the mission of the senior center. Many times grants or special funds are available to reach these individuals if a senior center takes the time for research. Private funders and government granters are realizing that providing services to the isolated older adult can often save costs in the future.

Most importantly, the participants, program planning committees, paid and unpaid staff should be representative of the community. Senior Centers should make special effort to ensure that no group is overtly or covertly excluded from program participation. A review of formal and informal procedures should be carried out regularly to ensure that no barriers have been established.

Frequently ethical and procedural questions may be raised when planning and implementing activities or services. If the following questions are considered and a procedure is in place it may eliminate confusion and embarrassment. Some of these questions are:

- Is there a need to set criteria for a person to participate?
- Is special consent needed from the participant?
- Are there risks associated with participating that individuals should be informed about?
- Is there a need for more information on a participant than already is recorded?
- Is confidentiality of information being maintained?
- Do instructors or service providers have necessary credentials and insurance?

PROGRAM PLANNING and IMPLEMENTATION STANDARD CRITERIA

A. Program Planning and Development

1. The planning and development of a senior center's program shall involve a combination of participants, paid and unpaid staff, community members and governing structure.
2. As often as possible, program planning and development should be in the hands of the adult participants of the senior center.
3. Program planning is a continuous process that includes:
 - a. Identifying the needs and interests of older adults in the senior center's service area, focusing on all adults not just participants;
 - b. Developing annual program plans that reflect the senior center's mission, goals and objectives;
 - c. If necessary, identifying who is to be served by defining the service area (population and geographic);
 - d. Identifying community resources that support and strengthen activities and services;
 - e. Analyzing the best way to provide programs;
 - f. Developing guidelines for ethical issues related to the delivery of activities and services;
 - g. Identifying resources needed to complement, modify or increase senior center programs;
 - h. Developing a program delivery plan that will ensure that it is accessible to those in need of its services or activities; and
 - i. Setting up monitoring and evaluation procedures for use as a basis for program modification and future planning.

B. Program Implementation

1. In order to serve the diverse group of older people, a senior center should examine various methods and locations for delivering its programs and services. Ideas to be considered are:
 - a. Program delivery at various times (early morning, evening and weekends).
 - b. Program delivery at places other than the senior center (housing units, malls, book stores, other gathering places, in homes).
 - c. Collaboration with other organizations to provide program or services at the senior center.
 - d. Acceptance of referrals from other agencies to provide services or programs to participants.
2. A senior center's programs shall respond to participants' interrelated yet diverse needs and interests.
3. Program and services should take a holistic approach and consider the whole person.
4. Programs should take a proactive approach to meeting participant's needs.
5. Activities shall promote personal growth by providing opportunities for:
 - a. Socialization through activities that promote working in a group setting;
 - b. Mental stimulation through intellectual activities;
 - c. Increased cognitive functioning by learning new skills;
 - d. The opportunity for choices;
 - e. Provision of information so participant can make their own decisions.

- f. Skill development for employment or personal growth;
- g. Development of self-efficacy that leads to independence;
- h. Leadership development;
- i. Development of creative capacities and engagement in creative and artistic endeavors;
- j. Exploration of various racial and ethnic cultures and geographic regions of the world;
- k. Participation in delivering and promoting activities that improve one's community;
- l. Participation in physical activity appropriate to the broad spectrum of individual capabilities and interests; and
- m. Intergenerational activities that promote understanding across generational cohorts.

- a. Small and large group activities
- b. High and low activity levels
- c. Spectator and participatory activities
- d. Intergenerational activities

C. Program Availability

1. A senior center shall have programs and services available at least 30 hours per week, either at a main site or in an off-site location.
 2. This could include activities made available during morning, afternoon or evening hours.
 3. The senior center should seek input from participants as well as age-eligible individuals regarding time and location of program delivery.
 4. Facilities can be made available outside normal business hours by using unpaid staff to oversee building.
 5. Senior center program hours can be expanded and a new audience served by sponsoring activities at a site where seniors live or gather (mall, local coffee shop, senior living facility or care facility).
6. A senior center's program shall respond to individual differences such as lifestyle, ethnicity, values, experiences, needs, interests, abilities, skills, age and health status by providing opportunities for a variety of types and levels of involvement, including:

ITEMS FOR ON-SITE REVIEW NOTEBOOK

- Description of programs and services that show senior center meets the standard criteria as outlined in **B Program implementation #1, 5 and 6.**
- List of hours when programs or services are available and where they are available.

STANDARDS REQUIRED FOR ACCREDITATION

- Program delivery shall be of a diverse nature in order to meet at least one (1) of the following:
 - Meeting at various times of the day and week, including evening or weekends;
 - Delivery of programs or services at locations other than the senior center facility; and/or
 - Collaborating with other agency/organization to deliver their programs/services at the senior center facility.

- Program/service activities shall promote personal growth by providing opportunities to develop in twelve (12) of these areas:
(Programs must have taken place in the past year.)
 - Socialization
 - Mental stimulation
 - Improve cognitive function
 - Opportunity to make choices
 - Presentation of information necessary to make decisions regarding lifestyle
 - Skill development
 - Self-efficacy
 - Practice and learn leadership skills
 - Creative aptitude
 - Exploration of different cultures
 - Exploration of different geographic regions of the world
 - Community pride and ability to create change in the community
 - Physical ability through organized movement classes
 - Intergenerational activities

- It is required that a senior center makes programs/services available for a minimum of 30 hours per week.

SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKBOOK

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT and IMPLEMENTATION

Instructions: These questions are designed to help you measure the senior center against the standards and to review and strengthen senior center operations and programs. Please fill in the blanks with appropriate answers or information. The On-Site Peer Reviewer will review these worksheets.

A. Program Planning and Development

- 1) How do you make program planning a continuous process?

- 2) What efforts are made to ensure that participants are involved in program planning and development?

- 3) What efforts are made to ensure that program activities and services are available to anyone who wants to participate and is able?

- 4) Tell us how you carry out the aspects of planning and development by involving various groups (e.g. participants, paid and unpaid staff and community agencies).

- 5) Explain how program resources are identified, explored and utilized for program delivery.

- 6) What is used as the basis for program modification and future planning?

B. Program Implementation

- 7) How does the senior center examine and make use of various methods and locations to deliver its programs?

8) Explain how the senior center's programs take a positive, proactive approach to the issues of those over 50.

9) How do the senior center's programs take a holistic approach?

10) Using the following chart, indicate which senior center activity provides the indicated growth opportunity:

ACTIVITY	SOCIALIZATION	MENTAL STIMULATION	COGNITIVE FUNCTION	CHOICES	DECISION MAKING	SKILL DEVELOPMENT	SELF-EFFICACY
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							

ACTIVITY	LEADERSHIP	CREATIVE APTITUDE	CULTURAL EXPLORATION	REGIONAL EXPLORATION	COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	PHYSICAL ACTIVE	INTERGENERATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							
<input type="checkbox"/>							

Place in the Document Review Notebook: The description of programs and services that would show how the above criteria are met.

Requirement for Accreditation: The programs and services of the senior center promote personal growth by having a program example in twelve (12) of these categories. (Programs must have taken place in the past year.)

5. Use the chart to analyze program activities that would respond to individual differences.

ACTIVITY	SMALL GROUP	LARGE GROUP	HIGH ACTIVITY	LOW ACTIVITY	SPECTATOR	PARTICIPATORY
<input type="checkbox"/>						
<input type="checkbox"/>						
<input type="checkbox"/>						
<input type="checkbox"/>						
<input type="checkbox"/>						
<input type="checkbox"/>						

C. Program Availability

6. How does the senior center try to diversify its program delivery in order to meet the needs of a variety of eligible participants?

Requirement for Accreditation: Program delivery systems need to be diversified to meet the needs of adults in at least one (1) of these three (3) ways:

- Times of day and days of week;
- Locations in community; or
- Collaboration with partners.

7. Describe the participants that the senior center serves. If this description does not include all groups within the community, what can the senior center do to include this group?

8. List the hours that the senior center provides access to program or services.

Place in the Document Review Notebook: List of hours when programs or services are available and where they are available.

Requirement for Accreditation: A senior center's programs and services must be available a minimum of 30 hours a week.

NCOA/NISC SELF-ASSESSMENT and ACCREDITATION MANUAL

EVALUATION

PRINCIPLE

A senior center shall have appropriate and adequate arrangements to evaluate its programs, services and their delivery. Evaluation is the catalyst for change and growth.

RATIONALE

Evaluation is carefully collecting information in order to make necessary decisions about a program or service. It is an essential component of the planning cycle and should be sufficiently funded in order to accomplish its purposes. The type of evaluation chosen depends upon what one wants to learn about the program/service. An evaluation plan should be developed and reviewed annually. The results of evaluation are extremely useful to a senior center in strengthening its relationship with the community and funding sources.

When evaluation is an ongoing process, built into all phases of the center's operation, it becomes part of the planning process. An evaluation committee can assist with the process. There may be senior center participants, community volunteers or faculty from local colleges who could be part of this committee. An evaluation consultant could be hired. Computer technology can make gathering, compiling and analyzing information much easier and should be used whenever possible. Ultimate responsibility for evaluation rests with the senior center's administrator and governing structure. This ensures evaluations are completed on a regular basis, appropriate

individuals are involved, reports are prepared and distributed to the suitable groups, and results are used in planning.

The results of evaluations should be readily available to the senior center's participants, paid and unpaid staff, sponsors, funding sources, boards and committees. The evaluator, staff or an evaluation committee should prepare comprehensive reports that include the evaluation instrument, a summary of findings, compilation of all answers, and recommendations from the information gathered. Evaluation of program use can help decide whether to implement, continue, expand or end a particular service or activity.

Evaluation can improve delivery mechanisms so that they become more efficient and less costly. Over time, programs and their delivery can become a collection of activities. Evaluations can identify activity strength or weakness that will lead to improvement in its delivery and impact.

Program evaluation can serve a variety of purposes. An evaluation can gauge satisfaction with program content or implementation. Measurements would be in terms of whether expectations were met, participants were satisfied, would repeat the experience or tell friends about it. The center may want to explore whether the delivery is appropriate for the audience. They might want to know whether the scheduled time of the activity, quality of instruction, content of information or physical space meets the needs of the participant.

A needs assessment examines the nature of a problem and solutions. It can help determine the need for an activity or service. It can also study the services or activities that address this need and whether they are available and being utilized.

Program evaluation can also look at quantitative measurement. This type of evaluation measures the number of participants, number of unduplicated people or number of service units. It can measure the amount of service in different ways.

A program's impact on participants is a growing concern of funders. They want to know "Are people better off because of your efforts?" and often make funding contingent upon evidence showing how participants are benefiting from senior center programs and services. Today, when public and government funds are decreasing and community needs increasing, funding organizations and individuals want to know that their dollars are being put to good

use. Outcome evaluations are used to gather this type of information.

Outcome evaluations are used to document short- or long-term results. Implementing outcome based evaluations should be part of a center's evaluation plans. There are many reasons why there is more emphasis on outcome based evaluation:

- Public and government funds are decreasing.
- Community needs are increasing.
- More emphasis is being placed on whether a program is making a difference.
- Funders (organizations and individuals) want to know the impact of their dollars.

The first step in outcome based evaluation is to identify the outcomes you want to examine. Then for each outcome, specify what observable measures or indicators will suggest that you have achieved it.

EVALUATION STANDARDS CRITERIA

A. Evaluation Process

1. The senior center's administrator and governing structure have ultimate responsibility for carrying out evaluations.
2. Some of the responsibility can be delegated to a committee made up of paid and unpaid staff, which may include participants, interested community members, or staff from institutions of higher learning.
3. Program evaluation enables the senior center to:
 - a. Demonstrate program successes;
 - b. Discover program weaknesses;
 - c. Assess programs for efficiency, effectiveness and customer satisfaction;
 - d. Produce valid data to facilitate decisions related to their expansion, retention or elimination;
 - e. Examine and describe effective programs for duplication elsewhere;
 - f. Discover unmet needs or duplication of services;
 - g. Document accomplishments and successes;
 - h. Substantiate financial needs to justify budget and grant requests; and
 - i. Show willingness to let people voice their assessment of the organization.
4. The center has a plan to evaluate each element of the center's programs and services on a regular basis. These plans are reviewed yearly to ensure that all aspects of program and service are covered.
5. Periodically an individual trained in the evaluation process should review the evaluation plan to see that it is on target.
6. Evaluation summaries should be produced and made available to those completing the evaluation, staff, governing body, funding organizations and the public.
7. Negative evaluations can show ineffective efforts that might be resolved with additional funding. These then can be used for funding requests. Negative results can be the basis for implementing change.
8. Results of the evaluations shall be used in planning and improving operations.
9. Adequate resources for evaluation (including paid and unpaid staff) shall be included as part of a senior center's operating budget.

B. Areas of evaluation

1. The following areas could be included in a senior center's evaluation plan.
 - a. Extent to which the senior center's activities are meeting their mission;
 - b. Extent to which an activity or service is achieving its stated objectives;
 - c. Participant's satisfaction with program and services;
 - d. Evaluation of participation rate over time;
 - e. Examination of whether there is a need for the program and whether the program is meeting that need;
 - f. Analysis of cost/benefit for programs and cost per participant;
 - g. Examination of how decisions are made and who is involved;
 - h. Evaluation whether the customer is receiving the service that they expect and deserve;

- i. Assessment of whether the facility, equipment, parking and furnishings are adequate and appropriate;
- j. Effectiveness of internal and external marketing strategies;
- k. Adequacy and efficiency of communication within the senior center, with other organizations and with the community; and
- l. Assessment of the visibility and image of the senior center in the community.

- e. Focus groups can explore a topic in-depth through group discussion. This can be useful in evaluating a new service or activity.
- f. Case study reviews can help fully understand or depict a client's experience in a program. These usually are time consuming to collect, organize and describe data. However, it can be a powerful way to portray a program and its outcomes to outsiders.

C. Information collection methods

1. The type of evaluation a center undertakes depends on what information they need to collect and how it is going to be used.
2. The center should investigate the use of computer technology to gather the information or to evaluate the results.
3. There are numerous ways to collect the information one needs for an evaluation. Some can be informal and simple; others may be more scientific and require more skill to implement and analyze. The following are methods of gaining evaluation information:
 - a. Satisfaction questionnaires can measure how well a program/service meets the expectation of a participant.
 - b. Surveys and checklists are a way to get information quickly from people in a non-threatening way.
 - c. Interviews help evaluate more fully a person's impressions or experiences about a subject.
 - d. Observation helps gather accurate information about how a program actually operates. Observers would need to be well-trained and have a criteria checklist.

D. Outcome-based evaluations

1. The more skilled a senior center is in developing outcome-based evaluations the better the staff will be able to advocate for the need of their programs and services.
2. Self-reporting is a simple method of outcome based evaluation. Asking clients how they have benefited from a service or activity is a first level outcome-based evaluation.
3. Another way to measure outcomes is through a pre- and post-test to gauge how much a person has changed. These are effective in a learning situation or when physical changes can be measured.
4. A more complex type of outcome based evaluation is the logic model. This model helps determine if your center is really doing the right program activities to bring about the outcomes you want to attain.
5. There are four parts to an outcome-based evaluation using the logic model. The four parts are:
 - a. *Inputs* are the various resources needed to run the program/service, e.g. money facilities, program staff, etc.

- b. *Process* is how the program is carried out, e.g., clients are served, counseled, provided learning opportunities, educated.
 - c. *Outputs* are the units of service, e.g., the number of people fed, the miles driven to deliver food, pounds lost, blood pressure reduced.
 - d. *Outcomes* are the impacts on the participants or how their life has improved, e.g., lower blood pressure, extended social circle, better able to do daily activities.
- 6. When performing outcome-based evaluations, there needs to be observable measures or indicators that suggest you are achieving your goal. This can be the most challenging step as you think about what actions would demonstrate the success of your program, e.g., one can say they have extended their social circle and then show it by reporting that they call people they met at the center on weekends.

ITEMS FOR ON-SITE REVIEW NOTEBOOK

- Senior center's evaluation plan.
- Two (2) evaluations that show measuring different areas as identified in **B, Areas of Evaluation, #1**, and include compilation of results and two (2) recommendations drawn from the results.
- An example of two (2) methods of evaluations from **C, Information Collection Methods, # 3**, with explanation as to why that type was chosen.
- Two (2) examples of outcome-based evaluation, an explanation as to why it was done and how the information was used.

REQUIREMENT FOR ACCREDITATION

- The senior center has developed and implemented an evaluation plan
- Evaluations are completed and the results are used in planning
- Outcome-based evaluation is used in at least two program/service areas to document their impact.

These are a few of the web sites that were reviewed at the time of this update. However, be aware that web sites can change. Using Google or another search engine may find additional sites.

<http://managementhelp.org/> This website provides resources on many aspects of managing an organization.

<http://managementhelp.org/evaluatn/evaluatn.htm> Evaluations Efforts in Organizations

<http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf> W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Logic Model Development Guide

<http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/outcomes.htm> Basic guide to Outcomes-based Evaluation for Nonprofit Organizations with very Limited Resources

<https://www.ncoa.org/content.cfm?sectionID=44&detail=2548> Publication *Senior Center Evaluation Toolkit* has been developed by Florida Department of Elder Affairs. This access is through NCOA/NISC website. It can also be found on the state of Florida's web site.

SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKBOOK

EVALUATION

Instructions: These questions are designed to help you measure the senior center against the standards and to review and strengthen senior center operations and program. Please fill in the blanks with appropriate answers and information. The On-Site Peer Reviewer will review these worksheets.

A. Evaluation process

1) Explain how the evaluation function is carried out at your senior center. Who is responsible and how it is part of the ongoing planning of the center.

Place in the Document Review Notebook: The senior center's evaluation plan.

Requirement for Accreditation: An evaluation plan has been developed and implemented.

2) Distribution and use of evaluations can help tell a senior center's story. Indicate which of these ways were used and an example of when they were used.

Use	Yes	No	Example
Program planning and development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Proposal for funding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Report to funder	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Report to community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Annual Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Specify other purposes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

3) Who sees the results is also important. Use this chart to indicate when each group sees the results of evaluations.

Who sees results	When	Comments
Participants		
Paid Staff		
Unpaid Staff/Volunteers		
Governing Structure		
Funders		
Others, Specify		

B. Areas of Evaluation

4) The following chart shows areas or reasons for evaluation. Indicate which ones are being used and for what program or activity and who is responsible. (The evaluations need to have been completed in the past two [2] years.)

Area or Reason	Program or Service	Who is Responsible	When completed or to be completed	Comments
Activities meeting mission				
Activities achieving objectives				
Program satisfaction				
Participation over time				
Needs assessment				
Analysis of cost/benefit				
Examination of how decisions are				

made				
Evaluate service delivery				
Assessment of facility				
Effectiveness of marketing strategies				
Adequacy of communication				
Measurement of visibility and image				

- Place in the Document Review Notebook: Two (2) evaluations that show measuring different areas with compilation of results and two (2) recommendations drawn from the results.**

C. Information collection methods

5) There are numerous ways to gather evaluation information. The following chart suggests some methods. If you have used these methods, indicate for what program/service, who was responsible, how the information was used and how often the evaluation is completed. If you have used other methods, please add them.

Collection Method	Program/Service	Person Responsible	Results Used	Frequency
Satisfaction questionnaires				
Surveys				
Interviews				
Observation				
Focus Groups				
Case studies				

- Place in the Document Review Notebook: examples of two (2) methods of evaluations with explanation as to why that method was chosen**

6) How have the results of evaluations been used in planning?

Requirement for Accreditation: Evaluations are completed and the results are used in planning.

7) Discuss how the senior center has used technology to gather or analyze evaluations.

8) If this has not happened, what steps could be taken to begin to use technology?

9) How is the evaluation process funded? Is there money in the budget set aside specifically for evaluation? Is the process burdensome for staff or participants?

10) The following are three (3) ways to complete an outcome-based evaluation. Explain how the senior center has used each one and for what type of program.

- a. Self reporting - How has the person improved since participating in the program/service?
- b. Pre- and post-tests or measurements – How were the tests administered and how were the results analyzed?
- c. Logic model or other model that looks at what goes into a program as well as the result.

Place in the Document Review Notebook: Two (2) examples of outcome-based evaluation.

Requirement for Accreditation: Outcome-based evaluation is used in at least two (2) program/service areas to document their impact.

11) How could the evaluation process be improved?

NCOA/NISC SELF ASSESSMENT and ACCREDITATION MANUAL

FISCAL and ASSET RESPONSIBILITY

PRINCIPLE

A senior center shall practice sound fiscal planning, management of assets and maintenance of information. The community expects transparency in actions and responsibility to all constituents.

RATIONALE

A senior center's financial operation should be based on efficient fiscal planning, sound resource management and a transparent system of fiscal management. This need has increased due in part to what happened in the corporate world prompting the passage of The Sarbanes-Oxley Act (The American Competitiveness and Corporate Accountability Act of 2002), which is referred to in the Governance Section. There is pressure on nonprofits and government groups who depend upon public and community funding to adhere to pertinent sections of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, and to use it as a standard for their financial practices. One aspect of Sarbanes-Oxley that is most relevant to senior centers has to do with the establishment of an audit committee whose membership includes at least one person who is considered a financial expert.

The senior center's operating budget is the basis of a center's fiscal planning for a specified time period, usually twelve (12) months. Fiscal responsibility starts with a well thought out, realistic budget. The senior center staff and governing body should be involved in the budget planning process. The budget is

developed by taking into consideration cost to deliver ongoing programs and services and any expanded services. The senior center must also estimate the revenue streams for the fiscal period, seeking to diversify funding as much as possible. The governing body of the senior center should approve the budget. The senior center may also develop a capital budget for construction or renovation projects which may be funded outside the operating budget.

Communities expect senior centers to utilize funds properly and efficiently. Accepted standards for budgeting, accounting, and financial reporting should be the norm. The senior center's accounting system should enable staff, governing body, participants, funders and other interested parties to obtain clear and complete information regarding its financial affairs. Financial reports should be prepared monthly and presented to administration and governing board. A senior center's financial operation should conform to all applicable legal and administrative requirements. Appropriate staff should be trained in fiscal management and be familiar with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

An internal control system that provides checks and balances to ensure fiscal propriety is a necessity. Since establishing and maintaining a responsible fiscal system can be a complicated task, it is advisable to seek an accountant's assistance in implementing procedures. Procedures should be maintained in written format accessible to all staff and governing body.

A senior center needs to have basic insurance coverage to protect its physical operation and the individuals involved in it. When purchasing insurance, an experienced and trustworthy agent or broker who understands the senior center's business is essential. Liability insurance protects the organization from claims alleging negligent conduct, which is failing to do what an ordinarily prudent person would do. We cannot prevent people from bringing suits, but a center can act prudently. Examining risks involved with activities and making provisions to avoid these risks is a way to show good judgment.

A senior center also needs a disaster recovery or business continuity plan in the face of a crisis. A disaster recovery plan is the process by which you resume services after a disruptive event. Business continuity planning suggests a more comprehensive approach to keeping an organization in existence after small or large disruptions. The plan needs to be written by the people involved in the day-to-day work of the senior center. In recent years we have seen disasters bring many organizations to a standstill. Since many times the services offered by the senior center are for the most frail in the community, it is imperative to continue some operations.

FISCAL and ASSET MANAGEMENT STANDARDS CRITERIA

A. Fiscal Planning

1. Budget development should:
 - a. Be based on programs and services that would fulfill the center's mission and goals;
 - b. Have input from staff and governing board;
 - c. Include costs of ongoing programs and services;
 - d. Include cost of planned expansion of program and services;
 - e. Include anticipated income; and
 - d. Be approved by the governing board.
2. The senior center should be working toward diversification of income funding. Funding sources could be:
 - a. Federal, state, or local government grants for delivery of service or capital needs;
 - b. Grants from funding foundations to support physical plant or program delivery;
 - c. Fees for service with accompanying plan to accommodate those unable to pay;
 - d. Membership dues as allowed by funding sources;
 - e. Shared cost or sliding scale payment;
 - f. Donations for service;
 - g. Annual appeal or solicitation for specific or general needs;
 - h. Fundraising events;
 - i. Planned giving;
 - j. Financial support from the local business community; or
 - k. In kind-support or pro bono professional support from businesses.
3. Considerations when seeking funding sources:

- a. Compatibility with the senior center's philosophy and mission;
 - b. Adherence to any requirements of sponsoring organization, major funders, or local laws;
 - c. Accountability for the funds received;
 - d. Fund raising activities carried out by individuals or groups associated with the senior center should adhere to the same principles as the senior center.
4. If a senior center is not a non-profit, it may need to set up a non-profit arm to solicit and accept donations.

B. Fiscal Responsibility and Reporting

1. A senior center's financial operation shall be based on sound planning.
2. A senior center should review The Sarbanes-Oxley Act to see what effect it has on their financial management.
3. The senior center should have an audit committee that includes a person who is considered a financial expert.
4. An audit or a full financial review by a qualified accountant should be performed each year.
5. Staff responsible for financial management should have proper education or experience.
6. The accounting system should produce information so staff can:
 - a. Analyze cost to deliver specific programs or services;
 - b. Compare income and expenses over time;
 - c. Use results for future planning; and
 - d. Make responsible decisions on decreasing or increasing services.

7. Financial reports should be prepared on a regular basis, which include:
 - a. Income for period covered;
 - b. Expenses for period covered;
 - c. Comparison to budget;
 - d. Comparison to previous year or period;
 - e. Balance sheet; and
 - f. Commentary explaining any unusual activity.
8. Reports should be distributed to staff, governing body and other organizations that have a need to know.
9. Participants/members should receive budget information in a way that helps them understand income and expense as it relates to their experience.
10. Reports should be provided to funding agencies as requested.
11. In-kind and unpaid staff contributions shall be recorded and documented in conformance with income source regulations.
12. Advisory committees or other groups who incur income and expenses in carrying out their activity shall employ the senior center's fiscal reporting practices such as:
 - a. Accurate and complete records shall be maintained.
 - b. Records shall be available for review by administrative staff.
 - c. An audit committee should review records annually.
13. Internal control system should have written procedures for the following:
 - a. Recording cash receipts;
 - b. Depositing cash;
 - c. Separation of cash handling from recordkeeping;
 - d. Petty cash requests and distribution;
 - e. Control of and use of credit cards;
 - f. Use of technological methods to handle management of funds;

- g. Bidding and purchasing approval system;
- h. Separation of ordering and receiving functions; and
- i. Check approval and signature requirements.

C. Risk Protection

1. A senior center should have insurance coverage that ensures its ability to continue operation.
2. Insurance coverage should include the following as meets the senior center's needs:
 - a. Liability insurance protecting organization from claims alleging negligent conduct.
 - b. Director's and officers' liability policy.
 - c. Business auto policy or non-owned auto liability.
 - d. Workers' compensation, which is required by state law.
 - e. Umbrella or excess liability insurance that can cover catastrophic liability.
 - f. Property insurance ensuring recovery of property owned.
 - g. Crime or employee dishonesty that may also be extended to cover unpaid staff.
3. Insurance coverage could be considered adequate if:
 - a. It meets legal requirements;
 - b. Is adequate to preserve the senior center's assets; and
 - c. Covers the senior center, its paid and unpaid staff, participants and governing structure.

D. Disaster Recovery

1. A senior center needs to have established plans to resume operation after a disruptive event.
2. These are some of the events that can cause disruption to operation:
 - a. Weather related damage to physical plant;
 - b. Power outages;
 - c. Technological breakdowns; and/or
 - d. Sudden loss of a significant staff person.
3. A recovery plan needs to be designed by the staff involved in the day-to-day service delivery.
4. A senior center needs to determine its critical services and functions.
5. Questions to be considered when establishing a plan to resume operation include, but are not limited to:
 - a. What services and programs do you offer?
 - b. What would interruption of services do to clients?
 - c. What are your personnel and equipment requirements?
 - d. Which functions are critical to the community?
 - e. Which functions can be delivered temporarily by another organization?
 - f. Which functions can your organization deliver from another location?
 - g. How do specific services impact the organization as a whole (e.g., fee for service activities that cover administrative overhead)?
6. Ways to avoid disruptions can also be part of the plan (e.g., need for computer back-up to avoid technological disruptions.)
7. Plans should be reviewed yearly for their viability.

ITEMS FOR ON-SITE REVIEW NOTEBOOK

- Senior center budget
- Sample of monthly financial statement
- Copy of current audit or financial review
- Written procedures for internal financial control
- Statement of insurance coverage
- Incident report
- Disaster recovery or business continuity plan

STANDARDS REQUIRED FOR ACCREDITATION

- Preparation and publishing of an annual budget document
- Budget reports are given on a regular basis to the appropriate governing board
- The center's budget, accounting and financial reporting practices conform to appropriate and accepted accounting standard
- Insurance coverage that protects assets, paid and unpaid staff, participants, and governing structure
- Provisions have been made to continue critical functions after a disruption

These are a few of the web sites that were reviewed at the time of this update. However, be aware that web sites can change. Using Google or another search engine may find additional sites.

<http://www.disasterrecoveryforum.com> The *Disaster Recovery Community Planning Forum* is intended to provide a range of information and background to assist those with responsibility for business continuity and disaster recovery planning. It covers all aspects, from management and planning, to data recovery and emergency response issues.

http://www.managementhelp.org/finance/np_fnce/np_fnce.htm Basic Guide to Non Profit management

<http://www.nonprofitrisk.org/enews/enews060607.htm> Article "What Basic Insurance should a Nonprofit Consider?"

SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKBOOK

FISCAL and ASSET RESPONSIBILITY

Instructions: These questions are designed to help you measure the senior center against the standards and to review and strengthen senior center operations and programs. Please fill in the blanks with appropriate answers or information. The On-Site Peer Reviewer will review these worksheets.

A. Fiscal Planning

1) Describe the senior center's budget development process.

Place in the Document Review Notebook: Senior center budget.

Requirement for Accreditation: Preparation and publishing of an annual budget document.

2) List all the sources of income for the senior center.

3) If there is a need to diversify funding, what steps has the senior center taken to do this?

4) If the senior center has a "friends," "foundation," or other non-profit that raises money for the senior center, describe the relationship between it and the senior center.

5) What are the considerations before the senior center launches a new fund raising event or establishes a relationship that will result in revenue.

B. Fiscal Responsibility and Reporting

6) How has the Sarbanes-Oxley Act affected the way the senior center does its business?

7) What information is given and how are the regularly produced financial reports used? Who receives these reports?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: Sample of monthly financial statement.

Requirement for Accreditation: Budget reports are given on a regular basis to the appropriate governing board.

8) How is the annual audit performed? Who is involved?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: A copy of current audit or financial review.

Requirement for Accreditation: The center's budget, accounting and financial reporting practices conform to appropriate and accepted accounting standards.

9) What information is not given that would be helpful for analysis or understanding of the senior center's financial position?

10) How is budget information or financial needs interpreted to participants/members?

11) What is the financial oversight for any group within the center who incur income and expense?

12) Using the table indicate who is responsible for these tasks regarding financial system. Indicate yes or no if there is a written procedure

Place in the Document Review Notebook: Written procedures for internal financial control.

PROCEDURE	RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S) OR POSITION(S)	WRITTEN PROCEDURE	COMMENT
Recording cash receipts		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Deposit cash into financial institution		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Petty cash requests		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	

		No	
Use of credit cards		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Purchase approval		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Bidding process		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Ordering supplies		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Receiving supplies		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Check request approvals		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Signature on checks		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

C. Risk Protection

- Place in the Document Review Notebook:** A statement of insurance coverage.
- Requirement for Accreditation:** Insurance coverage that protects assets, paid and unpaid staff, participants, and governing structure

13) Using the table indicate whether the center has the insurance and what the level of insurance is. Add any additional insurance the senior center has.

TYPE OF INSURANCE	YES or NO	LEVEL OF PROTECTION
Liability	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Directors and Officers	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Auto policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Worker's compensation	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Umbrella or excess liability	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Property insurance	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Employee dishonesty	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

14) How does the senior center handle accidents, or any other incident in which the senior center may incur liability?

- Place in the Document Review Notebook:** The senior center's incident report form.

D. Disaster Recovery

15) What types of service disruption has the senior center established recovery plans for?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: a disaster recovery or business continuity plan.

Requirement for Accreditation: Provisions have been made to continue critical functions after a disruption.

16) How would you rank the services/programs of the senior center from the most critical to the least critical to be established when a disruption occurs.

17) What has the senior center done to avoid service disruptions where possible?

RECORDS and REPORTS

PRINCIPLE

A senior center shall keep complete records that provide a picture of its daily, weekly and yearly operations. It shall regularly prepare and circulate reports about its operation to inform its governing structure, participants, staff, funders and community about aspects of its operation, program and services. A senior center shall maintain information on participants.

RATIONALE

Records and reports are essential to effective senior center management. Systematic record keeping is necessary for planning, evaluating and maintaining accountability. They provide a senior center with current and historical information about its program and operation. These documents can help guide a senior center's choices about its future growth and development.

The chief administrator is ultimately responsible for maintaining and/or ensuring that records are kept and reports are written. It should be emphasized to all staff and participants the importance of gathering data and maintaining complete and accurate information.

Program records reflect the scope of a senior center's activities and services. They will tell how many individuals participate in an activity and how often the activity is offered. Reports prepared from such records are one way that a senior center remains accountable to the public, governing bodies and funders. Statistical program reports tell the quantitative

impact that a senior center has on its community. This is one way to measure whether goals are being met and how successful the senior center is.

Participant information forms are a means of identifying who uses senior center services. These records may provide information needed for the safety of the individual, e.g., emergency contacts and medical information. They may also provide information for funders as to the population being served. The senior center needs to be mindful to collect only the information that is necessary and collect it in a confidential and sensitive manner. All participant information is considered confidential, based on the laws of the community or state. A senior center shall have a confidentiality policy that all paid and unpaid staff are expected to follow.

The form should be professional in appearance and easy to fill out. A senior center may use general individual participant forms, which gather information that is needed for all participants. They may also use forms that request information relating to an individual's use of specific services and may contain sensitive information. Files containing this information should have restricted access.

Statistical program records, which are kept over many years, can show trends, as well as growth and changing impact. Comparing activity and service participation over several years provides a senior center with information that can be useful in making decisions about program expansion, reduction or elimination. In this age of technology, maintaining statistical information has become much easier. The

challenge now is to decide what analysis to perform and to ensure that the correct conclusions are being drawn.

Administrative policy and procedures should be gathered in one place to form an official Policy and Procedures Manual. This manual provides

a location for the information on how the work of the various departments is carried out. Each staff person should contribute to the development and updating of such a document. It is a dynamic document that changes as the center implements its program or services in new ways.

RECORDS and REPORTS STANDARDS CRITERIA

A. Program Records and Reports

1. A senior center shall establish and maintain a system of recording activities and participants in these activities or services.
2. There should be a records collection and management policy for services and activities in order to:
 - a. Document scope of current operations;
 - b. Meet funding reporting requirements; and
 - c. Promote community support.
3. Guide future planning.
4. A senior center shall establish and maintain a statistical system of recording number of activities and number of participants in each activity.
5. A senior center shall establish a system for recording the number of individuals utilizing its activities each day.
6. There may also be a record for each participant that would show in which activities they participated.
7. A management activity report may also include a description of the activity or service.
8. A statistical management report may contain the following:
 - a. Unduplicated number of individuals participating;
 - b. Number of people served by each activity in a certain time period. This is achieved by counting individuals participating each time activity is offered.
 - c. Number of units of each program or service; e.g., times an activity is offered during a certain time period – Tai chi offered three (3) times a week.

9. Program reports should be prepared at regular intervals, at least quarterly. These reports shall contain:
 - a. The number of activities provided during the time period.
 - b. The number of unduplicated participants in an activity.
 - c. The total number of participants for a specific activity.
 - d. The unduplicated number of persons using the senior center daily.
10. Written program/service reports should be provided at least quarterly to any of these groups: Participants, governing bodies, community, funders and other interested parties who may provide a benefit to the senior center by receiving the information.
11. Reports should be maintained over time. These reports give a history of the development of the senior center.
12. Each year reports should be compared to previous years. They should be analyzed for:
 - a. Trends over the years;
 - b. Emerging activities; and
 - c. Activities diminishing in popularity.

B. Participant Records

1. A senior center shall establish and maintain appropriate participant records.
2. Standardized forms should be used so that the same information is asked of everyone. This information may include:
 - a. Name;
 - b. Address;

- c. Phone numbers, including cellular phone;
 - d. E-mail address;
 - e. Emergency contact phone numbers and relationship of person;
 - f. Birth date; and
 - g. Interests, skills and professional affiliations.
3. All forms should be easily understood and simple to complete.
 4. Permission for photo release may also be included on the participant information form.
 5. A general statement can be included to indicate expected behavior and participation of individuals attending a senior center. By having the participant sign the form, acknowledgement of having read the statement is secured.
 6. When serving non-English speaking participants, effort should be made to have forms translated or provide assistance in completing information forms.
 7. If specific service programs have unique forms that are not easy to understand or complete, it is suggested that assistance be provided in completing them.
 8. When an individual utilizes special services, information gathered from that contact should remain separate from general information form.
 9. A participant record may be maintained that lists the activities in which the individual participates. This provides a way for a person to build his/her resume of acquired skills and experiences.
 10. The use of technology makes recording information much easier.
 11. A senior center needs to ensure that access to physical files and computer files is limited to those who have a purpose for access.

12. All information should only be used for its intended purpose, not sold or divulged in any way.
13. A senior center shall have a confidentiality policy that all paid and unpaid staff are expected to follow.

C. Policy and Procedures Manual

1. In order to ensure smooth transitions and management of administrative functions, a Policy and Procedures Manual shall be developed that provides the structure for the administrative functions of a senior center.
2. A Policy and Procedures Manual may contain the following sections and sub-sections. This is not an inclusive list.
 - a. Administrative policies
 - 1) Emergency preparedness guidelines
 - 2) Technology usage
 - 3) Membership criteria
 - 4) Disruptive participant procedures
 - 5) Record retention and disposal
 - 6) Crisis communication
 - 7) Client records
 - 8) Incident report form
 - b. Fiscal
 - 1) Petty cash
 - 2) Spending authority guidelines
 - 3) Budget development
 - 4) Cash receipts and disbursements
 - 5) Credit cards
 - 6) Refund/credit
 - c. Human Resources
 - 1) Reference checks
 - 2) Record retention
 - 3) Application forms
 - 4) Confidentiality policy
 - 5) Photograph release form

- c. Facility
 - 1) Maintenance request forms
 - 2) Safety issues
 - 3) Security
 - 4) Inclement weather closing
- d. Program
 - 1) Access and denial of services
 - 2) Trips
 - 3) Lunch reservations
 - 4) Advisory council activities
- e. Social Service
 - 1) Application form for service
 - 2) Contact information for collaborating organizations
 - 3) Services available

ITEMS FOR ON-SITE REVIEW NOTEBOOK

- Monthly or quarterly statistical report on all programs and services
- Year-end statistical reports for two separate years
- General participant record form
- Participant forms used for specific services or activities
- Confidentiality policy
- Policy and Procedures Manual (Table of Contents can be submitted.)

STANDARDS REQUIRED FOR ACCREDITATION

- A statistical report must be completed for a specific time period for all activities and services.
- The senior center has a general participant information form completed by all participants
- A senior center shall have a confidentiality policy that all paid and unpaid staff are expected to follow.
- The senior center shall have a Policy and Procedures Manual that contains information on administrative functions.

SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKBOOK

RECORDS and REPORTS

Instructions: These questions are designed to help you measure the senior center against the standards and to review and strengthen senior center operations and programs. Please fill in the blanks with appropriate answers or information. The On-site Peer Reviewer will review these worksheets.

A. Program Records and Reports

1) Explain how statistical information is gathered for the following information:

- a. The total participants in a particular activity or service.

- b. The number of times activity or service is offered in a given time.

- c. The number of individuals utilizing services of the senior center each day.

- d. The unduplicated number of people participating in senior center activity or service.

Place in the Document Review Notebook: Monthly or quarterly statistical report on all programs and services.

Requirement for Accreditation: A statistical report is completed for a specific time period for all activities and services

2) How is the year-end statistical report used and to whom is it distributed?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: The year-end statistical report for two (2) separate years.

3) Explain how comparison of statistical reports over several years is used.

4) If the senior center gathers additional data, explain what it is and how it is used.

B. Participant Records

5) Discuss what information is required on the general participant form. How is the information used?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: The general participant record form.

Requirement for Accreditation: A senior center shall have a general participant form used by all participants.

6) Discuss what additional participant forms are used. How are these forms used?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: Participant forms used for specific services or activities.

7) How does the senior center ensure that information on individuals is kept confidential and used only for the purpose for which it is gathered?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: The confidentiality policy.

Requirement for Accreditation: A senior center shall have a confidentiality policy that all paid and unpaid staff are expected to follow.

A. Policy and Procedures Manual

8) How was the Policy and Procedure Manual developed? How is it distributed and kept up to date?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: The Policy and Procedures Manual (or the table of contents).

- Requirement for Accreditation:** Senior center shall have a Policy and Procedures Manual that contains information on administrative functions.

FACILITY AND OPERATIONS

PRINCIPLE

A senior center shall establish facilities that promote effective program operation and provide for the health, safety and comfort of participants, staff and community.

RATIONALE

A senior center's appearance has a significant impact on its ability to function as a community focal point for older adults. An appealing and easily identified facility will attract participants and the resources needed to deliver needed services and programs. A visible, accessible location is a major key to a senior center's success.

The building design needs to be coordinated with the activity and service needs of the community. Key to this is knowledge of the needs, interests and values of older adults in the community. Therefore, a broad cross-section of actual and potential participants should be consulted in all phases of facility development or modification. It is highly feasible that the population at a senior center will include participants from two (2) generations. It will be necessary to have environments that are comfortable for both generations. When designing a building, the ability to modify and expand in the future should be of prime importance.

Technical assistance is an invaluable part of modifying or constructing a facility. The senior center can benefit from input from architects, interior designers, gerontologists, occupational and physical therapists,

nutritionists, audiologists, psychologists and other experts who have experience in the field of aging and meet the needs of a diverse population. The focus should be on ways to devise spaces that are versatile and can be used for multiple purposes and to meet the needs of a diverse population.

Senior center design, equipment and furnishings should create a space that is accommodating and welcoming without looking institutional. Universal design should be part of the planning so that accommodations are present yet not obvious to the casual observer. Furnishings and equipment should be easily maintained and comfortable, as well as, provide accommodations to people with limited mobility. They should compensate for changes in levels of physical mobility and sensory losses while encouraging independence and minimizing dependence.

Signage is especially important. Well-placed, legible signage gives people the ability to make independent decisions and feel they have control over their environment. Not only should signage identify places in buildings, but also inform participants about daily scheduled events, upcoming events and other pertinent information. Professional signage reflects a well-thought out plan and respect for the individuals.

Designing a "green building" and reducing senior center's carbon footprint are concepts that need to be considered. The green building theory is the practice of increasing the efficiency with which a

building uses resources and also reducing the building's impact on the environment. Reducing one's carbon footprint is more difficult to visualize yet can be part of a facility's overall plan.

Proper management and maintenance of a building will result in a safe and secure

environment for staff and participants as well as a building that will age well. There should be written procedures for safety measurements. The staff should be trained in the proper procedure or process to handle emergencies. Procedures and agreements for use of facility should be in writing.

FACILITY and OPERATIONS STANDARDS CRITERIA

A. Location, Visibility and Accessibility

1. Selection of a site for a senior center shall be based on information from a variety of entities and individuals. The following factors should be considered:
 - a. Demographic information and projections
 - b. Proximity to other services and facilities
 - c. Convenience to transportation links and safe conditions for participants walking to site
 - d. Adequate parking
 - e. Avoidance of structural barriers and difficult terrain
 - f. Safety and security of participants
 - g. Ability to expand footprint of building
2. A senior center facility shall be visible and easily recognized as a community focal point for program and services.
3. The facility's external appearance should be attractive, well-maintained and appropriate to its use.
4. If the senior center is part of a larger complex, its location should be easily found.
5. Identification signs shall be attractive, visible and clearly indicate the purpose of the facility.

B. Building Design

1. Input on building design and space usage should be gathered from participants and future participants.
2. Consideration needs to be given to the age range of participants and the environments in which they are comfortable.
3. When designing or redesigning the facility, spaces within the building should be both single-use and multiple-use.
4. Moveable walls should allow the size of spaces to be changed.
5. Issues to consider when building or remodeling:

- a. Heating, cooling ventilating systems that are sector or room controlled;
 - b. Illumination levels that are adequate yet have multiple levels of adjustment;
 - c. Using natural light whenever possible;
 - d. Use of acoustical surfaces to retard the transmission of sound between spaces;
 - e. Amplification systems are available for large meeting spaces;
 - f. Planning ahead for technology needs in all areas; and/or
 - g. Planning for space that is regulated by government body, e.g., healthcare space, smoking areas.
4. Access to and movement within the facility should focus on a barrier-free environment and wherever possible, automatic doors should be the priority.
 5. Professionals familiar with the needs of an older population, from these occupations can provide valuable input in designing or redesigning a building:
 - a. Architects
 - b. Interior designers and decorators
 - c. Gerontologists
 - d. Occupational and physical therapists
 - e. Audiologists
 - f. Recreation specialists
 - g. Exercise physiologists
 - h. Information system analysts
 - i. Energy analysts
 6. Consider use of "green building" ideas and exploring ways to make the building energy efficient.
 7. Signage should be presented in a professional manner and have multiple usages, including:
 - a. Identification of spaces;
 - b. identification of exits;
 - c. Announcement of current activities;
 - d. Information on future activities; and
 - e. General and specific information about the senior center.
 8. Toilet facilities should be sufficient and easily accessible.

9. Adequate storage space should be considered.
10. Office space for paid and unpaid staff should be sufficient, encourage the interaction of the staff and participants and provide for good work flow.
11. The environment should provide for groups of all sizes to come together, including space for small group confidential meetings.
12. The future ability to expand or redesign the building should be considered.
13. Universal design solutions should be an integral part of the design of the building.

C. Interior Design and Furnishings

1. Furnishings should be selected for comfort, safety and ease of maintenance.
2. Furnishings and their placement should compensate for visual, mobility, and physical limitations.
3. Areas between furnishings and their arrangement shall promote socialization as well as observation of activities.
4. The choice of furnishings and their arrangement shall promote socialization as well as observation of activities.
5. Floor coverings should be appropriate for the activity.
6. The interior decorations should be:
 - a. Pleasing to the eye;
 - b. Representative of a variety of tastes;
 - c. Well-organized;
 - d. Replaced when worn or outdated;
 - e. Provide honor and acknowledgement to a wide age-range of participants.

D. Management and Maintenance

1. The safety of staff and participants shall take precedence in the management of the building.
2. All applicable federal, state and local building safety regulations should be followed.
3. Regular and on-going review of the building for risks or hazards that could create an

unsafe environment should be completed looking at these items:

- a. Loading and unloading areas;
 - b. Exterior lighting after sunset;
 - c. Street or parking lot crossing;
 - d. Paved exterior walkways; and
 - e. Areas where spills occur.
4. Procedures should be in-place for the safe egress of participants from the building.
 5. These procedures should be posted in each room or spaces and practiced on a regular basis.
 6. All staff should be familiar with safety procedures and equipment, including training in first aid and CPR.
 7. All safety equipment should be properly maintained.
 8. Maintenance and cleaning staff should be sufficient to maintain a clean, sanitary and safe facility.
 9. A regular schedule for maintenance and cleaning shall be maintained.
 10. The senior center should aspire to the highest levels of recycle, reduce and reuse.
 11. Explore the use of "green building" theories and reducing the carbon footprint of the senior center.
 12. The interior and exterior of the building shall be maintained to present a pleasing appearance.
 13. A sufficient budget for maintenance, replacement of furnishings and upkeep of the building shall be planned.
 14. Cleanliness will be maintained by regular disposal of trash and use of pest control methods.
 15. Written procedures and agreements should be in place if the senior center rents its space from another organization or if the senior center rents its own space to other groups. Items that should be considered:
 - a. Time of use;
 - b. Maintenance and responsibility;
 - c. Equipment use;
 - d. Security and safety;
 - e. Liability and insurance; and
 - f. Cost and reimbursement of expenses.

ITEMS FOR ON-SITE REVIEW NOTEBOOK

- Picture of senior center that includes outside signage.
- List of transportation options.
- Drawing that shows layout of senior center.
- Copy of safety procedures.
- Preventive maintenance schedule.
- Written procedure for rental to other groups or agreement for senior center to rent its space.

STANDARDS REQUIRED FOR ACCREDITATION

- Barrier-free access to the facility.
- Safety and maintenance procedures are in place.

These are a few of the web sites that were reviewed at the time of this update. However, be aware that web sites can change. Using Google or another search engine may find additional sites.

www.epa.gov/greenbuilding/pubs/whybuild.htm	EPA on Why Build Green
www.epa.gov/greenbuilding/pubs/about.htm	EPA Definition of Green Building
http://www.universaldesign.org/	Universal Design Alliance
http://www.carbonfootprint.com/	Carbon Footprint

SELF ASSESSMENT WORKBOOK

FACILITY and OPERATIONS

Instructions: These questions are to help the Self-Assessment Committee analyze how well the senior center is meeting the criteria. The answers should be written after the question. Refer to the Rationale and the Standard Criteria for clarification.

A. Location, Visibility and Accessibility

1) Discuss the location of the senior center based on the criteria given in A-1.

Place in the Document Review Notebook: Picture of senior center that includes outside signage.

Place in the Document Review Notebook: List of transportation options.

2) What are there, if any, improvements or changes that need to be made in the location, visibility or accessibility of the senior center?

B. Building Design

3) Discuss in what ways the senior center facility meets the needs of the seniors in the community. How is it determined that the facility meets the needs of the seniors?

Place in the Document Review Notebook: Drawing that shows layout of the senior center.

Requirement for Accreditation: Senior center provides barrier-free access to the facility.

4) Discuss ways that the senior center identifies unmet needs. Determine if the facility can meet these needs and, if not, what changes need to be made?

5) Analyze to what extent the facility meets these criteria:

	Needs to Improve	Partially Meets	Meets	Exceeds	Comments
Control of HVAC System	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Levels of illumination					
Natural light is abundant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Acoustical barriers prevent travel of sound	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Amplification systems are available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Technology is available in all spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Regulated spaces meet codes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Adequate, accessible toilet facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Storage Space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Office space for paid and unpaid staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Versatility of space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Universal design features improve accessibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Space for small groups, large groups, and confidential meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Provides barrier-free environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

6) How does signage encourage use of the facility and participation in activities and services?

7) What has been done to enhance the building as a "green building" and make it more energy efficient?

8) What professionals have been involved in evaluating the building design and use? How has their input helped improve the environment of the building?

C. Interior Design and Furnishings

9) Discuss the pros and cons of the furniture and other furnishings for the age group being served.

10) Evaluate the type and placement of furnishings considering:

a. Compensation for mobility limitations;

b. Ease of use;

c. Placement encourages socialization and observation; and

d. Convenience of maintenance.

11) Discuss how the interior decorations add to the comfort and attractiveness of the space. What criteria are used to determine what becomes part of the interior decorations?

D. Management and Maintenance

12) Using items D-1 through D-7, discuss how safety of the participants and staff takes precedence in the management of the facility.

Place in the Document Review Notebook: Copy of safety procedures.

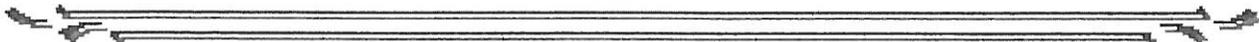
13) Review the maintenance and cleaning schedule for appropriateness considering the participant use of the building, size of building, age of building and availability of financial and human resources. Suggest any changes that may be needed.

Place in the Document Review Notebook: Preventive maintenance schedule.

Requirement for Accreditation: Senior center has safety and maintenance procedures in place.

14) Discuss the use of procedures and agreements for renting space to another party or, if the senior center is in rented space, its rental or use agreement.

Place in the Document Review Notebook: Written procedure for rental to other groups or agreement if senior center rents the space it uses.



NCOA/NISC

National Senior Center Accreditation Program

Senior Center Profile Form

In an effort to establish reliable national baseline information on senior centers, and as part of the accreditation process, all centers who apply for accreditation are required to complete the Senior Center Profile. Questions asked include:

What services are typically offered by senior centers in America? What is the average number of paid staff members in these same centers? How many volunteer hours are donated in a 12-month period to carry out the mission of senior centers? How do urban and rural centers compare demographically? What are some of the major outcomes being measured by centers in my region?

Answers to the stated questions will provide valuable information for center directors, board members, volunteers, funders, and planners.

NCOA/NISC

National Senior Center Accreditation Program

Senior Center Profile

Senior Center Name: Amesbury Council on Aging

Address: 68 Elm Street

City, State, Zip: Amesbury, MA 01913

I. Type of Organization

- A. Nonprofit (501C3) C. Governmental
B. For-Profit D. Other (specify)

II. Board Development

- A. What type: Advisory Governing
B. Number of Board Members: _____
C. Number of Standing Committees: _____
D. Do you report to your board? Yes No
E. Does your board hire/fire the director? Yes No

III. Hours/Days of Operation

- A. _____ Hours per week
B. _____ Days per week
C. Is senior center open on weekends? Yes No
D. If "Yes," Saturday Sunday
 Every Saturday Every Sunday
 Alternate Saturdays Alternate Sundays
 One Saturday Monthly One Sunday Monthly

Senior Center Profile - 2

E. Is your senior center open evenings? Yes No

How many/which evenings per week? _____

F. Comments on your experience with extended hours

IV. Senior Center Location

Client Population (Census)

V.

A. Total persons served _____
(Unduplicated annually)

B. % Female _____

C. % Male _____

D. Average Daily Attendance _____

A. Urban (central city)

B. Urban (suburban)

C. Rural

VI. Year Senior Center Opened _____

VII. Client Population (Nationality)

A. _____ % Caucasian

D. _____ % Hispanic

B. _____ % African-American

E. _____ % Native American

C. _____ % Asian

F. _____ % Unknown

VIII. Client Population (Age)

A. _____ % 59 years & younger

D. _____ % 75 - 84 years

B. _____ % 60 - 64 years

E. _____ % 85 years & older

C. _____ % 65 - 74 years

IX. Client Household Income

A. _____ % \$0 - \$9,999

D. _____ % \$20,000 to \$29,999

B. _____ % \$10,000 to \$14,999

E. _____ % \$30,000 and above

C. _____ % \$15,000 to 19,999 F. _____ % Income Unknown

Senior Center Profile - 3

X. Senior Center Budget

A. _____ % Federal Funds E. _____ % Other

B. _____ % State Funds F. _____ % Other

C. _____ % Municipal Funds G. _____ % Other

D. _____ % Special Levy Funds H. _____ % Other

Total senior center operating budget including services and administrative costs: \$ _____

XI. Funding Sources

A. Title III-B M. In-Kind Matching Funds or Contributions

B. Title III-C-1 N. Fundraising

C. Title III-C-2 O. Other _____

D. United Way P. Other _____

E. Senior Services Levy Q. Other _____

F. County Support R. Other _____

G. Municipal Support

H. Foundations

I. Fees for Service

J. PASSPORT

K. Membership Fees

L. Social Services Block Grant (TITLE XX)

Senior Center Profile - 4

XII. Senior Center Facility

- A. Stand-alone facility dedicated to senior center focus
- B. Senior center program shares facility with other operations
- C. Square footage dedicated to senior center operations.
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 5,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 25,001 to 30,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5,000 to 10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 30,001 to 35,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10,001 to 15,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 35,001 to 40,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15,001 to 20,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 40,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20,001 to 25,000 | |

XIII. Senior Center Staff (Check all that apply)

A. Senior Center Director (Educational and salary answers are optional)

- | | |
|---|---|
| (1) <input type="checkbox"/> 0-5 yrs experience | (9) <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate |
| (2) <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 yrs experience | (10) <input type="checkbox"/> Salary -- \$15,000 - \$25,000 |
| (3) <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 yrs experience | (11) <input type="checkbox"/> Salary -- \$26,000 - \$35,000 |
| (4) <input type="checkbox"/> 16-20 yrs experience | (12) <input type="checkbox"/> Salary -- \$36,000 - \$45,000 |
| (5) <input type="checkbox"/> ____ yrs experience | (13) <input type="checkbox"/> Salary -- \$46,000 - \$55,000 |
| (6) <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Degree | (14) <input type="checkbox"/> Salary over \$55,000 |
| (7) <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's Degree | (15) <input type="checkbox"/> Salary: \$ ____
(Optional) |
| (8) <input type="checkbox"/> Master's Degree | |

B. Total number of full-time paid staff (including Director) ____

- L. Housing
- M. Educational opportunities
- N. Employment assistance

Senior Center Profile - 7

- O. Recreational activities
- P. Adult day services
- Q. Intergenerational programming
- R. Advocacy
- S. Information, referral, counseling
- T. Adult Protective Services
- U. Financial assistance
- V. Personal care
- W. Home care
- X. Chore service
- Y. Substance Abuse Intervention Program
- Z. Other: (Please specify) _____

XV. Community Partnerships

(e.g., other organizations providing services, speakers, goods, etc. to your senior center)

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 20. _____ |

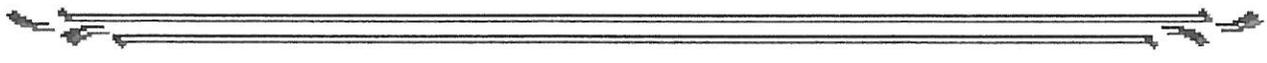
XVI. Your Top Two Outcome Measurements

(Examples: 65% of the seniors who attend our senior center report less depression since coming to the senior center; 80% of the seniors who participate in our nutrition education program show an increased knowledge of good nutrition.)

- 1. _____
- 2. _____

Signature/Title of Person Completing Senior Center Profile

Date



Additional Comments: _____