

## NCOA/NISC SELF-ASSESSMENT and ACCREDITATION MANUAL

### 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.