

Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services (BEAS) Restaurant Voucher Program (RVP) Standards

A Restaurant Voucher Program (RVP) is a meal service option under the congregate and home delivered meals program that is intended as an adjunct to traditional congregate dining sites and home delivered meals service. A contracted nutrition agency (agency) may develop a system for issuing vouchers redeemable for meals at a restaurant, café or other food service establishment that offers onsite dining and/or grab-n-go (also referred to as take-out) meals. Prior to implementation, the agency must submit the following to BEAS for approval:

- BEAS 3045 RVP *Request for Restaurant Voucher Program (RVP) Approval Form*; and
- A copy of BEAS 3046 FSE *Request for Food Service Establishment (FSE) Approval Form* for each FSE participating in the RVP.

BEAS must approve of the above documentation before RVP can begin

The following sections detail standards that must be met when implementing a RVP (as described above).

Requirements for Agencies

- A) Each agency must designate a qualified staff member(s), who will oversee the planning and implementation of new dining sites as well as provide ongoing monitoring of the RVP to ensure it meets the standards set forth in this guidance [Qualified person(s) include the agency director and their designee(s)].
- B) Each agency must adhere to the nutrition and program requirements of the OAA and comply with all applicable provisions included in Administrative Rule He-E 502*, and *New Hampshire DHHS Nutrition Services Contract*. To include, but not limited to:
- 1) Participants are not charged for the meal;
 - 2) Participants are provided the opportunity to make a donation that is voluntary and confidential;
 - 3) Promotion of socialization. Examples: offering scheduled transportation to and from a senior center to a designated RVP foodservice site; promotion of early bird dining times that encourage participants to invite friends and family; flyers or website postings providing information on agency and local events, senior center activities, volunteer opportunities; etc.;
 - 4) Meals adhere to the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) and Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI); meals have been reviewed and approved by a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) or individual of comparable expertise (ICE); and participant preferences are considered and incorporated into meals/menu planning;
 - 5) Meals are served to eligible participants only; and
 - 6) Participants have not been means-tested (eligibility is not based upon financial circumstances).
- C) Each agency must support RVP participant's awareness of available educational materials and events on nutrition and wellness that are generally available to traditional dining site participants and recipients of home delivered meals. Information may be provided at the RVP dining site, at a local agency site(s), or by other mode(s) of communication customarily used to inform participants. Examples: website home page or website posting visible at point of RVP registration, mailing flyers, menus/newsletter, or other forms of communication, as feasible.

* *Administrative Rule He-E 500*. [he-e-502-older-americans-act-administrative-rule.pdf \(nh.gov\)](https://www.nh.gov/Portals/0/He-E-502-older-americans-act-administrative-rule.pdf)

- D)** Each agency must have an agreement with a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) or individual of comparable expertise (ICE) to assist during the development and implementation of RVP menus/ meals at dining sites.
- E)** The RDN's/ICE's responsibilities will include but are not limited to:
- 1)** Assuring compliance to expectations put forth in the OAA with regards to the following:
 - a)** Ensure meal(s) comply with the DGA; provide for 33 1/3% of DRI; and that participant preferences are considered and incorporated into meal planning.
 - b)** Reviewing and approving all menu item substitutions. Allowance of meal item substitutions is intended to support optimal intake and nutrition status and recognize the potential variance in availability of menu items. Attention should be paid to offering substitutions of similar nutrient content whenever possible.
 - c)** Provide nutrition education (RDN or ICE) as well as nutrition counseling (RDN only) as appropriate/available.
- F)** Each agency must monitor each participating FSE at least once per calendar year to ensure compliance with applicable federal, state and local regulations on the safe and sanitary handling of food, equipment and supplies used in the storage, preparation, service, and delivery of meals as described in He-P 2300, Sanitary Production and Distribution of Food. This may be accomplished by verifying current licensing/certificates/permits are up to date. Agencies must provide monitoring documentation to BEAS upon request. During the first six months following implementation of a new dining site location, it is recommended that the agency conduct on site monitoring at least bi-monthly. Standard is no less than 2 on site visits/monitoring during the first 6 months.
- G)** Each agency must create program policies and procedures regarding the following (Agency may reference existing policies/procedures; supplement current policies to incorporate RVP services; and/or create policies that are RVP specific):
- 1)** RVP registration; provision of vouchers and voucher redemption;
 - 2)** Voluntary contributions/donations and confidentiality-to include specification that all advertisement for meal donations will have the word "suggested" accompanying the term "donation". Example: "suggested donation of \$3.00." Any term that states or implies an obligation to make a donation must not be included in a request for a donation. Examples of unacceptable words for donations include "requested," "customary," "expected," and "asked.";
 - 3)** Gratuity/tipping for FSEs with tipped wait staff. The gratuity/tipping policy must include:
 - a)** The agreement between the agency and FSE; and
 - b)** How the agency or FSE will inform participants of the policy.
 - 4)** Confidentiality;
 - 5)** RVP Menu, meal options, food substitutions, and ordering food items not on the RVP menu;
 - 6)** Gift certificates, if applicable;
 - 7)** Grab-n-go meals, also known as carry-out/take-out meals.
- H)** Each agency must assess training needs and provide training to FSE staff, based upon assessed needs, on the following topics:
- 1)** Meal/nutrition standards including:
 - c)** meal pattern requirements and/or nutrient analysis,
 - d)** approved menu items and
 - e)** component/menu item portion sizes
 - 2)** Agency policies and procedures regarding the following but not limited to:
 - a)** voluntary contributions and confidentiality;

- b) carry-out/take-out, grab-n-go meals; and
 - c) individual participant's meal leftovers.
- 3) RVP policies and procedures regarding:
- a) registering for the voucher program;
 - b) voucher redemption; and
 - c) program-related outreach materials. Examples: agency menu and activities schedule; and nutrition education handouts/flyers.
- I) Each agency must have a policy that outlines appropriate use of vouchers and addresses how misuse of vouchers by both participants and the FSE will be addressed.
- J) Each agency must have a process to provide eligible participants with access to other older adult services offered by the agency and the community (See c) above).

Participant Registration; Voucher Issuance and Redemption

- A) Each agency will at a minimum, make written registration materials available to eligible program participants at the agency site(s). Additional locations may include:
- 1) Agency's webpage which provides for secure registration and donation process;
 - 2) Dining locations where vouchers are accepted with the stipulation that materials are to be informational only and include an agency point of contact. Agencies must register participants for RVP. FSE staff cannot register participants for RVP.
- B) Each agency will provide registration materials to BEAS as part of their submission of the BEAS 3045 RVP *Request for Restaurant Voucher Program (RVP) Approval Form* to include:
- 1) **Registration form** for eligible participants to complete [hardcopy and electronic (i.e. website/Facebook), as applicable]
 - 2) **Voucher order form**
 - 3) **Voucher program guidelines**
 - 4) **Sample voucher*** Voucher creation/maintenance and associated expenses are the responsibility of the agency.
 - a) All participants receiving restaurant vouchers must also receive a **schedule of meals and activities** available at congregate site(s) and/or senior center(s) in the agency service area.
- *Refer to Appendix: for RVP standard voucher content requirements and Sample Voucher; and other considerations for voucher creation and content.*
- C) Each agency will ensure adequate program resources. BEAS recommends the number of vouchers issued to an eligible participant not exceed 22 vouchers per month (approximately one meal per day, five days per week), however actual maximum may be determined by the agency with final approval from BEAS.
- D) Each agency will determine duration period in which vouchers will be valid. BEAS recommends not to exceed 30 days from date of issuance. Consideration should be given to program reporting and tracking of voucher issuance vs. redemption when determining duration period. Participants must be informed of the voucher valid thru dates at registration and voucher issuance.
- E) Each agency must have a procedure for participants to confidentially and voluntarily contribute toward their meals and receive their vouchers. Examples include: US Mail, pick up at the agency office, secure online registration and donations.
- F) Each agency must develop a system that ensures that vouchers cannot be easily duplicated by participants or the FSE. Examples include: use of a watermark, numbering and/or color coding, participant signature requirement and verification*. Agencies are also responsible for accurate reporting of the number of

vouchers provided to participants and the number of vouchers redeemed, in addition to all other required federal and state reporting for the nutrition program. BEAS distributes form 3502, Contract Service Authorization-New Authorization form, which includes service codes for RVP reporting.

**Refer to Appendix: RVP Voucher Content Standards, Sample RVP Voucher*

- G)** Each agency will ensure vouchers do not have a stated dollar value and will reimburse the FSE at the per-meal rate agreed upon for each voucher redeemed.
- 1)** When an eligible participant redeems a voucher, the FSE is responsible for verifying that the individual has registered for the RVP as an eligible participant. Only one voucher can be redeemed per eligible participant per visit. The FSE is also responsible for documenting the meal items that were provided to the participant [Examples: via receipt (if meal has item options), check-off system if meal components/items are fixed] and attaching to the participant's voucher, as applicable. FSEs must submit this information along with an invoice to the agency according to the billing schedule agreed upon by both parties.

Requirements for Restaurants/FSEs

The FSE must:

- A)** Be licensed by an appropriate regulatory authority;
- B)** Comply with all licensing and/or certification requirements required by state or local laws or rules;
- C)** Provide copies of any licenses or certifications to agency upon request; and
- D)** Provide meal(s) that meet agency standards (1/3 DRI and compliance with Dietary Guidelines for Americans) as approved by the agency RDN/ICE.

Requirements for Written Agreements with Participating Restaurants/FSEs

- A)** Before entering into an agreement with a prospective FSE, the agency will conduct an on-site visit to determine that agency requirements can be met and appropriate food safety and sanitation practices are in place.
- B)** The agency and the FSE must have a written agreement that addresses the following in addition to the requirements of the New Hampshire, DHHS Nutrition Services Contracts with Nutrition Services Providers and the BEAS RVP Requirements for Written Agreements with Food Service Establishments (FSE):
 - 1)** Procedures for tracking voucher usage and reporting to the agency.
 - a)** When an eligible participant redeems a voucher, the FSE is responsible for verifying that the individual has registered for the RVP as an eligible participant. Only one voucher can be redeemed per eligible participant per visit.
 - i)** The FSE is also responsible for documenting the meal items that are offered to the participant (Examples of this include: creating or identifying meals that are part of the RVP menu; or if substitutions are allowed changes may be reflected on a receipt; or other means to accurately capture actual meal items offered and attaching to the participant's voucher). FSEs must submit this information along with an invoice to the agency according to the billing schedule agreed upon by both parties.
 - b)** Procedures for evaluating service delivery, program quality, and participant satisfaction.
- C)** Note that this list is not all-inclusive. An agency may add additional items to agreements as necessary.
- D)** A copy of the written agreement will be provided to BEAS for review and approval *prior to implementation*.

Appendix

RVP Voucher Content Standards

- Items in **bold** must be included on RVP Voucher

SAMPLE RVP VOUCHER

Agency Name and Contact Information

Restaurant(s)/FSE(s) Name, address, phone [location(s) where voucher is valid]

Identify Meal service type, Circle One: Dine In/On Premises Grab-n-Go/Take-Out

Suggested Meal Donation: \$3.00 [actual amount to be determined by agency]

Valid/Good thru dates: Start date - End date

Name: (of Participant)

Date Redeemed: (day meal was provided/served)

- Other considerations for voucher creation & content include:
 - Means to verify person presenting voucher is the designated eligible participant
Examples:
 - Signature for comparison to master signature list
 - System of verification agreed upon by agency and FSE
 - Means to ensure voucher presented for redemption is legitimate
Examples:
 - Use of watermark paper
 - Identifying or Sequential numbering
 - System of verification agreed upon by agency and FSE