



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Division of Aging and Adult Services

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DAAS Administrative Letter No. 12-04

TO: Area Agency Aging Directors
County Managers

FROM: Dennis W. Streets 

SUBJECT: Area Agency on Aging Responsibilities in County Funding Plan Development for the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG)

DATE: March 26, 2012

With the twentieth year anniversary of the establishment of the Home and Community Care Block Grant (operational since 1992), it is a good time to reiterate and reemphasize some of the State policies that were developed with the assistance of the NC Association of County Commissioners (NCACC). These include the importance of citizen input and the role of Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) in support of the County Funding Plan development. With the retirement of key personnel among AAAs and within county governments and other changes that have affected knowledge of and experience with the HCCBG, we hope this brief review will be instructive. We are also working with NCACC on an article about the HCCBG that will be appearing in an upcoming issue of *CountyLines*.

Established in 1992 under NCGS 143B-181.1(a)(11), the HCCBG was devised to provide a "common funding stream" for a comprehensive and coordinated system of home and community-based services and opportunities for older adults. Administered through the State Division of Aging and Adult Services and the Area Agencies on Aging, the HCCBG combines federal and state funds with a local match to give county commissioners greater discretion in budgeting and managing aging funds to meet priority local needs.

While we constantly work to assure the continued relevancy of the HCCBG for our changing population and evolving service system, essentially the same HCCBG recommendations exist today for county government, county lead agencies, and the AAAs. This letter serves as a reminder of some of these expectations and does not introduce any new or no additional ones.

Recently, DAAS issued Administrative Letter No. 12-01 (see <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/aging/admltrs/2012/DAAS-12-01.pdf>), which provided information about our annual county data packet and HCCBG budget instructions. The County Budget instructions (as stated in Administrative Letter No. 94-02), outline the important role that AAAs must assume under the federal Older Americans Act. The Older Americans Act requires that Area Agencies on Aging function as public advocates in the development and enhancement of community-based aging services. In carrying out their mandated responsibilities, AAAs are required to serve on the local HCCBG Advisory Committee when they are not designated by the county as the lead agency. AAAs are also expected to contribute to the development of the county funding plan as follows:

1. As necessary, train the HCCBG Advisory Committees on:
 - flow of funds and budgetary requirements;
 - responsibilities of the Division of Aging and Adult Services, Area Agency on Aging, board of commissioners, lead agency, and advisory committee; and
 - service standard requirements (AAAs help answer questions pertaining to the description of services, eligibility, targeting of services, and participation rates).
2. Interpret demographic information in the County Data Package and explain variations in regional and county funding from the previous year. AAAs should encourage open discussion within the county planning committee regarding the data and how to best meet the needs of seniors.
3. Help the county and the local lead agency assure that the HCCBG advisory committee represents a broad range of aging interests in order to effectively build local consensus on the county funding plan. A viable committee should not be viewed as being predisposed to supporting particular providers or favoring specific interests. From the beginning of the HCCBG, DAAS has strongly encouraged that older adults comprise a substantial part of Advisory Committee membership (at least one-third).
4. Based upon monitoring and provider performance data available through the DAAS Aging Resource Management Information System, offer analysis on provider performance, expenditure and service levels, and effectiveness of client targeting.
5. Make recommendations concerning an effective services mix and provider selection.
6. Through its compliance review, approve the county funding plan submitted by the board of commissioners. This includes assuring consistency between the allocation and funding plan, assuring the minimum percentage of access services and in-home services are being met, and that required budget forms such as the 730, 731, 732, 732a, 733, and 734 (as provided on DAAS website) are completed and correct. The compliance review also includes a review of appropriate signatures to address Older Americans Act Standard Assurances.

In summary, AAAs are expected to attend the county planning meetings, and should provide relevant information to assist in the decision-making process related to client “waiting list” data, local indicators of service needs, current budget utilization by funding sources, availability of other sources of funding, costs of service, demographic profiles of clients, success in consumer contributions, client satisfaction with services, and evaluations of the current set of providers delivering services. They should also assist the county lead agency in assuring input from older

consumers and their families, along with provider interests, in achieving consensus on the funding plan. This participation and information-sharing by the AAA staff enhances local planning for older adults by ensuring that those who are decision makers in this process are well equipped to make the best decisions with limited resources by utilizing pertinent and accurate information.

I hope that this review of the HCCBG on its 20th anniversary has been useful. We appreciate the continued support of the NC Association of County Commissioners and each of our 100 counties in the successful implementation of this important program for older adults. The most recent data from our State demographer show that already 43 of our counties have more persons age 60 and older than 17 and younger. By 2025, this demographic is expected to be true of 85 of our counties (see <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/aging/demographic/PopGrowthCompare.pdf>). Clearly, we must continue to effectively plan for our aging population.

Please feel free to contact the AAA serving your county if you have any questions about the HCCBG or other programs or services for older adults and their families.

cc: Rebecca Troutman