



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

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Director, Division of Aging and Adult Services

DAAS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER NO. 20-10

TO: Area Agency on Aging Directors, Local Providers

FROM: Hank Bowers, Assistant Director

DATE: June 9, 2020

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Pandemic Response, Part IV:

- The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) Administrative and Fiscal Overview
- Programmatic Implications
- New ARMS Codes to Capture Disaster Efforts for Programs

I. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Fiscal Overview

Background

Per federal disaster declarations related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Administration on Community Living (ACL) has awarded funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act for:

- Ombudsman Program under Title VII of the OAA;

Funds must be expended on allowable Older American Act activities as defined within the Act, as well as in accordance with state and local policies. Funds must be accounted for, tracked, and reported separately from recurring Older American Act funding.

Project Period

The project period for CARES Act funds is April 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021. There is no prior approval required to charge expenditures for COVID related activities to the CARES Act funds for pre-award costs incurred from January 20, 2020 forward to the effective date of the project period. (Reference: ACL FAQs based on call with ACL and SUA Directors on April 15, 2020; Issued by ACL on April 21, 2020). Disaster relief funding, including the CARES Act, does not correspond to state fiscal years. Unspent fund balances for each region will be used as the new state fiscal year allocation award throughout the duration of the project.

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF AGING AND ADULT SERVICES

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All CARES Act funds must be obligated by September 30, 2021, with final liquidation due by December 30, 2021. Further reporting details remain under development and will be addressed in later guidance

Distribution of Funds and Local Planning

CARES Act funding is being provided to each of North Carolina's (16) Area Agencies on Aging via the intrastate funding formula (10A NCAC 05C. 0404) for the purpose of responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

CARES Act funds are issued under a separate grant award number; therefore, funds must be accounted for separately from the regular issuance of Title VII Older Americans Act funding.

States, and by extension, Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), should be recording the number of clients to whom service is provided, the name or category of services provided, the number of units of service provided, and the expenditures related to providing such services. Funds are to be used in response to the COVID-19 emergency by providing OAA services related to the pandemic. Expenditures must be allowable and reasonable. (Fiscal FAQ—COVID-19 Emergency; Issued by ACL on April 8, 2020).

II. Program Implications

Ombudsman Program

Funds expended from the CARES Act are to respond to the Coronavirus Emergency by providing Older Americans Act services related to the response.

Ombudsman programs will seek to expand their virtual presence to residents and their families and continue to promote the health, safety/welfare and rights of residents in the context of COVID-19. Funds must be expended on allowable Older Americans Act activities as defined by the Older Americans Act, State and local policy. Below are examples of COVID-19 specific use of funds for consideration; these do not replace existing fiscal requirements.

- o Purchase of equipment and associated technologies that will allow for remote work and enhance Ombudsman presence in facilities while they cannot physically visit during the COVID crisis.
- o This may include reimbursement of expenses related to remote work; such as
 - purchase of laptops,
 - smart phones,
 - electronic tablets,
 - iPads and
 - similar products including:
- o Software to facilitate video conferencing and virtual meetings;
 - purchase of hardware and software to develop equipment lending libraries to facilitate resident complaint handling and development of virtual resident and family councils.
- o Costs associated with community outreach including, advertising, postage, printing of brochures and similar educational materials.
- o Paying for staff extended hours, or hiring of additional staff, including associated personnel costs. *Note* This funding is time limited.*

- o Training costs related to COVID-19 including additional costs associated with advertising, recruiting, certifying or providing continuing education (*both remote and in-person*) to current and prospective representatives of the Office.
- o Funds for travel once visits to facilities resume.
- o Acquiring personal protection equipment and supplies for program use, as appropriate, once in-person visits resume. (Source: ACL LTC Ombudsman Program-Fiscal and Programmatic FAQs April 17, 2020)

No Area Plan Administration is allowed with the CARES Act Ombudsman Title VII grant funding. (Source: ACL Fiscal FAQ – COVID-19 Emergency April 8, 2020)

III. New ARMS Codes to Capture Disaster Efforts Funded by the CARES Act

Non-Unit Codes (Ombudsman Title VII)

Code 990 – Virtual - COVID

Non-unit costs such as equipment and associated technologies that will allow for remote work and enhance Ombudsman presence in facilities while they cannot physically visit during the COVID crisis, and equipment such as iPads, tablets, and software to facilitate conferencing and virtual meetings.

Code 991 – Non-Unit Emergency Response Cost - COVID

Non-unit costs such as PPEs that will be used once in-person visits to facilities resume.

Code 992 – Outreach - COVID

Non-unit costs associated with community outreach including, advertising, postage, printing of brochures and similar educational materials.

Code 993 – Training - COVID

Training costs related to COVID-19 including additional costs associated with advertising, recruiting, certifying or providing continuing education (*both remote and in-person*) to current and prospective representatives of the Office.

Code 994 – Staff Cost - COVID

Cost for staff extended hours, or hiring of additional staff, including associated personnel costs. *Note * This funding is time limited.*

Code 995 – Travel - COVID

Funds for travel once personal visits to facilities resume

Questions regarding this administrative letter should be directed to Victor Orija, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman at victor.orija@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-855-3426

HB/KL/VO/pg