



OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER ANITA BONDS
CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION
THE JOHN A. WILSON BUILDING
1350 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20004

September 19, 2022

Nyasha Smith, Secretary
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Secretary Smith,

Today, along with Councilmembers Gray and Pinto, I am introducing the **“Senior Nutrition and Well-Being Equity Act of 2022.”** Please find enclosed a signed copy of the legislation.

This bill amends the current District of Columbia Act on the Aging by requiring the Department of Aging and Community Living to improve the implementation of nutrition and overall senior well-being programming, distribute routine mailers, establish an advisory task group that provides suggestions and recommendations to the Department on ways to address nutrition and improve the quality of life for seniors in the District.

Residents and advocates have raised a number of concerns regarding the needs of the approximately 120,000 elderly population in the District, pertaining to hunger and outreach that impact the overall well-being of seniors, which have been further exacerbated by the pandemic and physical isolations. In October 2021, a No Senior Hungry Omnibus bill was introduced that required several District agencies to implement various aspects of the legislation. However, because of its complexity and challenges in obtaining a fiscal impact, this new legislation aims to address the needs of the senior community relating to hunger and overall well-being by tasking the Department to make improvements through collaborative and data-driven methods.

Should you have any questions about this legislation, please contact Aimellia Siemson, Chief of Staff, at asiemson@dccouncil.gov or 202-724-5483.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "ANB".

Anita Bonds



Councilmember Vincent Gray



Councilmember Anita Bonds



Councilmember Brooke Pinto

A BILL

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To amend the District of Columbia Act on the Aging to require the Department of Aging and Community Living to compile and submit to Council a comprehensive report that identifies outreach needs; improve implementation of nutrition and well-being programming; to regularly check on seniors’ physical, mental, and emotional well-being; to require the Department to distribute routine mailers on a quarterly basis that include information about existing programs, services, and upcoming events provided by the Department; and to require Department to identify and develop a group of District seniors who will provide suggestions and recommendations to the Department on how to improve quality of life for seniors in the District of Columbia.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the “Senior Nutrition and Well-Being Equity Amendment Act of 2022”.

Sec. 2. The District of Columbia Act on the Aging, effective October 29, 1975 (D.C. Law 1-24, D.C. Official Code § 7-502.01 *et seq.*), is amended as follows:

(a) Section 201 (D.C. Official Code § 7-502.01) is amended as follows:

(1) Paragraph (1) is amended by striking the phrase “means” and inserting the phrase “or “Senior” means” in its place.

(b) New sections 310, 311, 312, 313, and 314 are added to read as follows:

25 “Sec. 310. Data Collection and Reporting on Senior Outreach and Service Needs.

26 “(a) By 180 days after the effective date of this act, the Department shall establish and
27 implement a senior nutrition and well-being data collection and reporting plan for the purpose of
28 improving services, that, at a minimum:

29 “(1) Requires the Department to submit, within the currently required Annual
30 Report, data that identifies the outreach needs of the senior population in the District;

31 “(2) Requires the Department to report on best practices for communicating with
32 the District’s senior population, including those who are difficult to reach, such as seniors who
33 are not currently participating in available programming provided by the Department;

34 “(3) Requires the Department to submit, on or before September 30th of each
35 year, to the Committee that has oversight of the Department a written evaluation of the increase,
36 decrease, or stagnation, in senior participation in all programs and services provided by the
37 Department;

38 “(4) Requires the Department to promote senior programs and well-being services
39 in addition to outreach conducted around specific programs and supports;

40 “(5) Provide annual trainings for all senior-facing District employees and
41 community-based organizations affiliated with the Department on programs and services that are
42 available to District seniors;

43 “(6) Requires outreach to physicians and clinicians serving seniors for the purpose
44 of enrolling patients to existing nutrition programs and services offered through the
45 Department’s referral system; and

46 “(7) Requires the Department to update its websites and application portals for
47 senior programs and services using best practices for senior-facing technology, taking into

48 account access to and familiarity with technology among the population being served.

49 “(b) In preparing the plan required by subsection (a) of this section, the Department shall:

50 “(1) Coordinate with all District agencies providing services relevant to senior
51 nutrition, transportation, and other senior programs and services for the purpose of awareness
52 and distribute information to the public;

53 “(2) Provide opportunity for input from the public, including community-based
54 organizations serving seniors, healthcare providers, and seniors participating in nutrition
55 programs, by:

56 “(A) Holding at least 4 community meetings open to the public; and

57 “(B) Making a draft plan available for written comments.

58 “(c) The Department shall update the plan required by subsection (a) of this section every
59 fiscal year. The Department shall publish the plan required by subsection (a) of this section and
60 all updates on its website.

61 “(d) For the purpose of this section, the term:

62 “(1) “Outreach” means the process executed by the Department to encourage and
63 increase participation among the senior population by educating and informing them of the
64 Department’s and the District’s available programs and services;

65 “(2) “Outreach Needs” means an accurate depiction of the demand among the
66 senior population for communication with regards to programs and services provided by the
67 Department;

68 “Sec. 311. Nutrition Services.

69 “(a) In administering nutrition services, the Department shall screen clients for food
70 insecurity and malnutrition and provide appropriate referrals based on such screening, also

71 taking into account a client’s meal preparation ability, in-person and online grocery shopping
72 ability, and access to grocery stores and transportation.

73 “(b) Beginning 180 days after the effective date of this act, and by every January 1
74 thereafter, the Department shall provide within the currently required Annual Report a progress
75 report to the Mayor and Council on its implementation of the Senior Food Security Plan during
76 the preceding fiscal year, including, at a minimum:

77 “(1) All actions taken under the Senior Food Security Plan during the preceding
78 fiscal year by the Department and other affected agencies;

79 “(2) Data on senior participation in nutrition programs, including the number of
80 seniors participating in nutrition programs compared to the number of seniors 60+ years of age in
81 the District;

82 “(3) Qualitative data on participant satisfaction with and awareness of nutrition
83 programs, including food quality, referral and enrollment systems, and perceived access to
84 resources; and

85 “(4) Senior food insecurity data, as reported by US Census Bureau, and the
86 District’s progress on addressing senior food insecurity, broken down by Ward, quadrant, and
87 neighborhood

88 “(c) All agencies providing senior nutrition services shall provide any data or information
89 relevant to the annual progress report required by subsection (c) of this section to the Department
90 upon request.

91 “Sec. 312. Housing Resources and Program Referrals.”

92 “(a) In gathering and evaluating data, the Department, shall screen clients for housing or
93 housing related programmatic needs.”

94 “(b) Upon discovery of client’s housing or housing related needs, the Department
95 shall refer clients to the appropriate government or private agency administering the program,
96 health practitioner, social service, entities, and nutritional provider.

97 “Sec. 313. Home Health Aides.”

98 “(a) In ensuring and improving overall senior well-being, the Department shall:

99 “(1) Offer home health aides regular training on cultural competency of the
100 District’s senior population;

101 “(2) Offer training to home health aides on common dietary preparations and
102 meals;

103 “(3) Offer training to home health aides to listen and best accommodate individual
104 participants’ needs and requests, in collaboration with advice from health
105 practitioner or nutritionist.

106 “Sec. 314. Senior Wellness Check Program(s).”

107 “(a) The Department shall establish program(s) to regularly check on participating
108 senior’s physical, mental, and emotional well-being. This may include the Call and Talk
109 Program, Socialization Call Program, Call-Check Program, and/or an Assistive Technology
110 Program. Participants of program(s) must voluntarily self-register or register through a bona fide
111 family member.

112 “(b) At minimum, the Department shall:

113 “(1) Establish program(s) in accordance with this subsection within 1 year after
114 the effective date of this subsection.

115 “(2) Promote program(s) to all seniors throughout the District of Columbia.

116 “(3) On or before September 30th of each year, the Department shall submit a
117 written report to the Committee that has oversight of the Department to evaluate the program’s
118 operations, successes, and failures during the prior fiscal year.

119 “(c) For purposes of this Subchapter, the term “Voluntary” means a person 60 years of
120 age or more, or a caretaker, or a designated guardian has registered with the Department to
121 participate in this Call-Check program.”

122 “Sec. 315. Routine Mailer Distribution.”

123 “(a) On a quarterly basis, the Department shall distribute to seniors over the age of 60 in
124 the District of Columbia, mailers that describe available programs and services, upcoming events
125 and activities, and information on Adult Protective Services for the purpose of increasing
126 outreach to seniors, to all seniors over the age of 60 throughout the District of Columbia.

127 “(b) At a minimum the Department shall develop an in-depth resource guide of all
128 programs and services, in accordance with this subsection, within 6 months of the effective date.

129 “(c) For the purpose of this Subchapter, the term:

130 “(1) “Mailer” means a comprehensive document, in the form of a pamphlet,
131 booklet, catalog, flyer, or notice, that describes, in detail, all current services and programs
132 provided related to senior well-being by the Department, including relevant contact information,
133 reference site, and registration or application instructions, if applicable.

134 “(2) “Senior well-being” includes any program or service provided by the
135 Department that focuses on the well-being and quality of life of seniors in the District of
136 Columbia.

137 “Sec. 316. Establishment of Community-Lead Task Group.”

138 “(a) There is established a Community-Lead Group for the purpose of providing
139 suggestions to the Department on how to improve the overall well-being and quality of life of
140 seniors 60 years of age or older in the District of Columbia, with a specific focus on senior
141 engagement and outreach.

142 “(b) The Group shall be composed of:

143 “(1) Thirteen seniors over the age of 60, appointed by the Council and representing
144 each Ward, including three from the Commission of Aging, six members age 75 or older, from
145 connected and disconnected individuals with service delivery programs, for a renewable term not
146 to exceed two consecutive years, and shall receive a stipend of no more than \$200.00 per
147 meeting or \$1,200.00 per year, for their participation in the Group.

148 “(c) The Group shall, at minimum:

149 “(1) Provide suggestions and recommendations to the Department on how to
150 improve senior well-being and quality of life across the District of Columbia by way of outreach
151 and engagement strategies;

152 “(2) Describe to the Department the overall status of senior well-being and quality
153 of life throughout the District of Columbia and identify any pressing issues or concerns among
154 the senior community;

155 “(3) Meet at least quarterly to discuss ways in which outreach to seniors can be
156 improved and provide opportunity for public comment and input.

157 “Sec. 317. Collaborative Efforts with Grantees and Community Members.”

158 “(a) The Department shall collaborate with grantees and community members to serve all
159 senior population regardless of their capabilities and limitations.

160 Sec. 3. Fiscal impact statement.

161 The Council adopts the fiscal impact statement in the committee report as the fiscal
162 impact statement required by section 4a of the General Legislative Procedures Act of 1975,
163 approved October 16, 2006 (120 Stat. 2038; D.C. Official Code § 1-301.47a).

164 Sec. 4. Effective date.

165 This act shall take effect following approval by the Mayor (or in the event of veto by the
166 Mayor, action by the Council to override the veto), a 30-day period of congressional review as
167 provided in section 602(c)(1) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December
168 24, 1973 (87 Stat. 813; D.C. Official Code § 1-206.02(c)(1)), and publication in the District of
169 Columbia Register.

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