

AN ACT

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 (“Department”) to improve nutrition, health, and well-being programming, to screen clients for housing-related needs, make referrals to other District agencies, provide clients with relevant information, to offer training to home health aides, to regularly check on seniors’ physical, mental, and emotional well-being, to regularly distribute routine mailers that include information about existing programs, services, and upcoming events provided by the Department, to identify and develop a group of District seniors to provide suggestions and recommendations to the Department on how to improve the quality of life for seniors in the District of Columbia, and to require the Department to make necessary referrals in cases of abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation and referrals to assisted living or nursing home facilities; and to amend the Office on Aging Reporting Requirements Act of 2015 to require the Mayor to submit annual reports to the Council on programs and operations in the Department.

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

Sec. 2. Title III of District of Columbia Act on the Aging, effective October 29, 1975 (D.C. Law 1-24, D.C. Official Code § 7-503.01 *et seq.*), is amended by adding new sections 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, and 318 to read as follows:

“Sec. 311. Nutritional services.

“The Department shall:

“(1) Routinely evaluate the quality of food choices available in community dining sites and home delivered meals;

“(2) Conduct quarterly taste tests of food made by vendors and provide comments and feedback to vendors with the intention of enhancing meal programs that contemplate dietary restrictions and ensuring that meals are of nutritional value; and

“(2) Actively solicit direct feedback from seniors through direct outreach of current and potential new participants regarding food options, including feedback on cultural preferences, quantities, and dietary restrictions.

“Sec. 312. Housing resources and program referrals.

“(a)(1) In gathering and evaluating data, the Department shall screen clients for housing or housing-related programmatic needs, such as referral to the Shallow Subsidy program administered by the District of Columbia Housing Authority pursuant to section 26e of the District of Columbia Housing Authority Act of 1999, effective October 30, 2018 (D.C. Law 22-168; D.C. Official Code § 6-230).

“(2) Upon discovery of a client’s housing or housing-related needs, the Department shall refer clients to the appropriate government or private agency administering the Shallow Subsidy program, and to a health practitioner, social service entity, or nutritional provider, if needed.

“(3) When a referral is necessary, the Department shall inform and educate clients of available District-funded programs and basic eligibility criteria prior to making the referral.

“(b) The Department shall include data of all referrals made pursuant to this section in its annual report to the Committee with oversight of the Department.

“Sec. 313. Home health aides.

“In ensuring and improving overall senior well-being, the Department shall collaborate with the agency that oversees home health aide training by offering:

“(1) Home health aides regular training on cultural competency for the District’s senior population;

“(2) Training to home health aides on common dietary preparations and meals;
and

“(3) Training to home health aides to learn to listen and best accommodate individual participants’ needs and requests, in collaboration with advice from a health practitioner or nutritionist.

“Sec. 314. Senior wellness check programs.

“(a)(1) The Department shall establish programs to regularly check on participating seniors’ physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The programs may include a Call and Talk Program, Socialization Call Program, Call-Check Program, or an Assistive Technology Program.

“(2) Participants of programs established pursuant to paragraph (1) of this subsection shall register voluntarily.

“(b) The Department shall, at a minimum:

“(1) Establish programs in accordance with this section within one year after the applicability date of this act;

“(2) Promote programs to all seniors throughout the District; and

“(3) Pursuant to the reporting required by section 1042 of the Office on Aging Reporting Requirements Act of 2015, effective October 22, 2015 (D.C. Law 21-36; District of Columbia Official Code § 7-521) (“Reporting Requirements Act”), submit a written report to the Council Committee that has oversight of the Department to evaluate the programs’ operations, successes, and failures during the prior fiscal year (“Council Committee report”). The Council

Committee report shall be incorporated into the annual report required by the Reporting Requirements Act.

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

“Sec. 315. Routine mailer distribution.

“(a)(1) At least once a year but no more than quarterly, the Department shall distribute to seniors over the age of 60 mailers that describe available programs and services, upcoming events and activities, important service providers’ contact information, and information on Adult Protective Services for the purpose of increasing outreach, helping to assess successes and failures of the Department’s programs, and providing support to all seniors over the age of 60 throughout the District.

“(2) Each mailer shall contain information that is useful for the purpose of empowering seniors with the information they need to help themselves, including information about new services and programs, when available.

“(b) At a minimum, the Department shall develop an in-depth resource guide of all programs and services within 180 days after the effective date of the Senior Nutrition, Health, and Well-Being Equity Amendment Act of 2022, passed on second reading on December 6, 2022 (Enrolled version of Bill 24-996).

“(c) For the purpose of this section, the term “mailer” means a document in the form of a pamphlet, booklet, catalog, flyer, or notice that describes in detail all current services and programs related to senior well-being by the Department and local service providers, including relevant contact information, hours of operation, and registration or application instructions.

“Sec. 316. Establishment of Community-Led Task Group.

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

“(b) The Group shall be composed of:

“(1) Thirteen seniors over the age of 60, appointed by the Council, with at least one participant from each ward, including:

“(A) One from the Commission of Aging;

“(B) One from a Senior Village;

“(C) One from the DAFL Ambassadors program; and

“(D) One from each lead agency; and

“(2) The remaining 9 members shall be members of the public who are age 75 or older, including individuals who are connected with and individuals who are disconnected from service delivery programs.

“(3) The members shall serve for a one year term. The members may serve for no more than 2 consecutive terms.

“(4) Each member shall receive reimbursement of all expenses related to their

participation in the Group, not to exceed \$1,000 annually.

“(c) The Group shall, at a minimum:

“(1) Provide suggestions and recommendations to the Department on how to connect individuals who are not already getting services to the Department and identify potential participants to address health needs, combat isolation and hunger, and improve senior well-being and quality of life across the District by way of outreach and engagement strategies;

“(2) Communicate to the Department and submit a report to the Council Committee that has oversight of the Department regarding the overall status of senior well-being and quality of life throughout the District and identify any pressing issues or concerns among the senior community. This report shall be submitted to the Council within the currently required annual report submitted by the Department pursuant to section 1042 of the Office on Aging Reporting Requirements Act of 2015, effective October 22, 2015 (D.C. Law 21-36; District of Columbia Official Code § 7-521); and

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

“Sec. 317. Adult protective services.

“(a) Reports pertaining to alleged abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation of a senior shall be immediately referred to the Department’s case-management system for proper resolution, referral, or investigation.

“(b) If a referral is made, the Department shall keep a proper record of the case being referred and its disposition.

“Sec. 318. Assisted living and nursing facilities.

“The Department shall:

“(1) Screen clients for eligibility and the need for assisted living or nursing home facilities services and make referrals when appropriate;

“(2) Collect data on the number of cases referred to each type of facility and the age of the individuals referred;

“(3) Quarterly, collect data on the occupancy and vacancy rates of all assisted living and nursing home facilities in the District; and

“(4) Include the data collected pursuant to paragraphs (2) and (3) of this section in its annual performance oversight report to the Council Committee with oversight of the Department.”.

Sec. 3. The lead-in language of section 1042 of the Office on Aging Reporting Requirements Act of 2015, effective October 22, 2015 (D.C. Law 21-36; D.C. Official Code § 7-521), is amended by striking the phrase “The Mayor shall submit biannual reports to the Council, no later than 30 days after the end of the 2nd and 4th quarters of each fiscal year,” and inserting the phrase “The Mayor shall submit annual reports to the Council, no later than 30 days after the end of each fiscal year,” in its place.

Sec. 4. Applicability.

(a) This act shall apply upon the date of inclusion of its fiscal effect in an approved budget and financial plan.

(b) The Chief Financial Officer shall certify the date of the inclusion of the fiscal effect in an approved budget and financial plan, and provide notice to the Budget Director of the Council of the certification.

(c)(1) The Budget Director shall cause the notice of the certification to be published in the District of Columbia Register.

(2) The date of publication of the notice of the certification shall not affect the applicability of this act.

Sec. 5. Fiscal impact statement.

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

Sec. 6. Effective date.

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

Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia

Mayor
District of Columbia