



Confident Choices for Senior Living Application Instruction Packet

Thank you for considering Confident Choices. Aging Services of Minnesota's Confident Choices for Senior Living program is designed to:

- improve quality in Housing-with-Services settings, including those with assisted living programs
- increase public trust and consumer confidence, and
- inform consumer decision-making.

We believe that Confident Choices can help consumers identify the housing providers that best meets their needs. In addition, Confident Choices will help you celebrate and market what you do. Over time, this review process and the information gathered may also positively affect public perception and advocacy efforts.

This instruction packet is intended to explain the process of Confident Choices and to provide details for each section so that you may more easily and effectively complete your application.

Process

Applications, along with a **non-refundable fee**, are accepted at Aging Services at any time. Applications received each quarter (January through March, April through June, July through September, and October through December) will be reviewed for completeness and held until the start of the next quarter. On or about April 1st, July 1st, October 1st and January 1st, the completed applications will be sent to the District Coordinator. Please note that if a large number of applications are received in a single quarter, Aging Services reserves the right to hold some for review until the following quarter.

These District Coordinators are trained volunteers who have been selected to assist with this process. The coordinators are experienced in Housing-With-Services and/or Assisted Living settings within their respective Districts. Once the coordinator has received the applications for the previous quarter, they will review each application.

Coordinators will make every attempt to review your application in the first two weeks of the quarter. They will complete a feedback form regarding your application and return that feedback form to Aging Services staff. Aging Services staff will then notify you whether your application has been accepted or not. If your application is not accepted, you will be told the reasons and the next steps should you choose to re-apply.

If your application is accepted, the District Coordinator will be in touch with you to schedule a site visit. There will be at least two people to complete the site visit. These volunteers are also professionals in the field of senior housing who have been trained in Confident Choices, screened for conflicts of interest and have signed statements of confidentiality. If you have any objection to a reviewer assigned to your site review, please notify the District Coordinator and another person will be assigned. The timing of the visit will be mutually determined by you and the Coordinator. Depending on the electives you select in your application, the Coordinator may ask you to have some documentation available for the visit. We anticipate the visit to take 1-2 hours, depending on the size of your building.

The people completing the site visit will complete a form based on their observations and will return that form to Aging Services staff. Aging Services staff will then notify you whether your site has passed the visit and will be awarded the Confident Choices designation. If you do not pass the site visit, you will be told the reasons and the next steps should you choose to re-apply.

If you are awarded the Confident Choices designation, Aging Services of Minnesota will send out a packet including marketing materials, the Confident Choices seal itself, and ideas on how to use the seal and promote your accomplishments.

Instructions for Completing the Application

Important: In order to be considered for Confident Choices, you must be registered as a Housing-with-Services provider. If the Housing-with-Services Contract Act applies to your building but you have not yet completed this registration with the Minnesota Department of Health, go to <http://www.health.state.mn.us/> and register with MDH before submitting the application. At this time, skilled nursing facilities or any other type of operation that is not eligible for Housing-with-Services registration is not being considered in the Confident Choices program.

Demographic Section

Please provide us with the basic information noted on the application. If you have multiple buildings on your campus or within your operation, the application should follow the Housing-with-Services registration. If you have chosen to register several of your buildings under one Housing-with-Services registration, then you only need to complete one Confident Choices application. However, if you have chosen to register each building separately, then a Confident Choices application must be completed for each building. Please call Mary Youle at 651-645-4545 if you have questions about this requirement.

Important Tips for Completing Your Application

- Be clear when describing how you meet the core and elective requirements. You can attach additional paper if your answers need more space, but please do not send in supporting documents unless the application form specifically requests them. Supporting documents can be reviewed on-site if necessary.
- Some of your programs or systems may fit more than one application requirement. Please note that you cannot use the same example to meet two different requirements.
- We encourage you to fill out the application with your management team to be sure that your application reflects all the good programs you offer.
- Although applicants are required to address only five elective requirements, we encourage you to address additional electives as “insurance” of a successful application.

CORE REQUIREMENTS

The application has two parts, core requirements and elective requirements. In order for your application to be considered, you must meet each of the core requirements and at least five of the elective requirements.

Code of Ethics

In order to meet this requirement, your Code of Ethics (or appropriate alternative) must be current. The Aging Services of Minnesota Code of Ethics designation is only good for two years, so check to see if your Code is current by consulting your paperwork, reviewing the Aging Services web site, or contact Alecia Crumpler at 651-645-4545. If your Code has lapsed, complete the paperwork to renew your Code before completing the Confident Choices application.

If you are not an Aging Services of Minnesota member or have not completed the Code of Ethics process, and have an alternative process, feel free to describe that process. In order for an alternative process to be considered, it must contain evidence of:

- Integrity and fairness, honesty and confidentiality;
- Open communication;
- Encouraging choice through disclosure of vital information;
- Well-trained, competent staff and prudent management of resources;
- Innovative and supportive housing options;
- Maximizing independence, autonomy and dignity;
- Partnership and collaboration with the community; and
- Good citizenship and mutually beneficial activities.

On-Site Housing Manager

Each organization uses different job titles; for the purposes of this application, the On-Site Housing Manager is defined as the person responsible for the day-to-day operations of the housing or assisted living site being considered in the application. In order to meet this requirement, you must show that your on-site housing manager has at least one year of experience in the field of older adult housing services. If your manager is brand new to the position of housing manager,

wait until he or she has had at least one year of experience and before submitting the application. The successful application will also show a commitment to ongoing training and development in the field of older adult services, such as participation in the Aging Services Certificate Programs, Aging Services of Minnesota Institute, regular conferences, degree programs, etc. Alternatives to Aging Services programs and offerings will be acceptable.

Resident (or Family/Responsible Party) Satisfaction Survey

In order to meet this requirement, you must be currently (within the last year) administering a resident satisfaction survey. At this time we will not be evaluating your response rate, satisfaction score, or follow through on items noted. Through the application or site visit process, you may be asked to show the survey and results. During the on-site visit, reviewers will be looking for “best practices” that can be shared with others, such as a successful change you made as a result of feedback from your satisfaction survey.

Resident Handbook

In order to meet this requirement, you must have a current resident handbook that you distribute to your residents. At this time we will not be evaluating your handbook. Through the application or site visit process, you may be asked to show the handbook and if you'd be willing to share it or some of its contents with other providers as a best practice.

Dementia/Memory Care Standards

You only need to complete this section if you market your building as providing dementia or memory care services. In order to meet this requirement, you must be currently following recognized Dementia/Memory Care standards. The easiest way to comply is to be using the Aging Services of Minnesota Dementia Care Standards, although other alternatives will be considered.

Important: If your application does not address all of these sections (five if you have dementia/memory care, four if you do not), it will not be considered. You will be notified if this is the case and given an opportunity to complete all sections.

ELECTIVE REQUIREMENTS

You are required to meet at least five of the fourteen options for elective requirements, and we encourage you to select more than five electives, if possible, to provide extra “insurance” of having a successful application. The electives have been chosen so that all providers - small or large, HWS with AL program or Housing-with-Services with no assisted living program, rural or metro, stand-alone or multi-facility - all have the opportunity to participate. Select the electives you want to address and then **complete those corresponding sections**. **YOU DO NOT NEED TO COMPLETE ALL SECTIONS IN THE ELECTIVE PART OF THE APPLICATION.** Through the application or site visit process, you may be asked to show your systems/programs and results and if you'd be willing to share with other providers in the name of spreading best practices.

Staff Satisfaction Surveys

In order to meet this requirement, you must be currently (within the last year) administering a staff satisfaction survey. If you have contract services in your building, such as home care or food service, you are not required to make sure that those employers administer a satisfaction survey. However, if your staff survey has resulted in an improvement that you'd like to share with others, please tell the on-site reviewer. At this time we will not be evaluating your response rate, satisfaction score, or follow through on items noted.

Staff Education and Training Programs

In order to meet this requirement, you need to demonstrate that you offer or make available ongoing education and training opportunities for your staff. You are not required to provide all of the education and training programs yourself, only that the opportunities are available to your staff. You must also have offerings that are beyond the mandatory in-services such as OSHA, Fire Safety, Vulnerable Adult, etc.

Participation in My InnerView Quality Profile

Assisted Living only: In order to meet this requirement, you must be currently participating in the My InnerView Quality Profile and show evidence of using the information or process to improve your care and services. Examples may include monitoring the information and improving one of the clinical standards (falls, weight change, etc.) or one of the employee standards (turnover or absenteeism). Note that if you choose this elective and one of the other performance improvement plans below, each of these electives must address a different clinical issue or service.

Performance Improvement Plans - Clinical

In order to meet this requirement, you must show evidence of regularly monitoring your resident clinical outcomes such as skin condition, falls, hospitalizations, etc. and implementing process improvements to enhance those outcomes. Some of these projects may take a while to show improvement; the successful application will show current efforts on these projects within the last 12 months. Note that if you also select participation in My InnerView quality profile as one of your electives, then each of these electives must address different clinical issues, services or programs.

Performance Improvement Plans – Non Clinical

In order to meet this requirement, you must show evidence of regularly monitoring some aspect of your care and services to your residents such as use of transportation systems, attendance in activities, length of stay, etc. and implementing process improvements to enhance those outcomes. Some of these projects may take a while to show improvement; the successful application will show current efforts on these projects within the last 12 months.

Corporate Compliance Program

In order to meet this requirement, you must describe a corporate compliance program as outlined in federal guidelines (for more information, refer to <http://oig.hhs.gov/fraud/complianceguidance.html>). Typically these programs have frequent communication with employees, residents, families and vendors about your commitment to ethical and fair business practices, including a commitment to not commit fraud and abuse in the areas of contracting and billing for services. Employees, residents, families, and vendors are invited to raise issues of concern, often through a designated phone number and staff member who follows through on issues raised.

Social Accountability Programs

In order to meet this requirement, you must show that you are currently demonstrating good faith efforts to be a “good neighbor” to the whole community. Typically these efforts take your staff or residents outside of the building to benefit the broader community. Examples include: Adopt-A-Highway; participation in programs such as Feed My Starving Children or Operation Christmas Child; regular participation in local Rotary, Lions, Chamber of Commerce or other civic organizations, intergenerational or school partnerships; or financial programs that benefit specific residents who may run short of funds. If possible, provide examples that involve residents as well as staff.

Resident Education and Training Programs

For this elective, you are not required to provide all of the education and training programs yourself, only to make sure that you are making opportunities available to your residents. In addition to the programs you provide for your residents, examples may include: posting calendars of local community center offerings, or scheduling transportation to bring residents to external offerings.

Resident/Family Meetings, Councils or Conferences

In order to meet this requirement, you must describe how you are offering regular resident/family meetings, councils or care conferences to address resident input and concerns about the management of the building and/or specific programs such as dining, home care, or activities.

Referrals to Other Programs or Services

It is not expected that each provider offer every service that your residents might want or need. The quality providers will have a system in place for referring residents to other providers or agencies who may offer services that the provider does not. In order to meet this requirement, you must describe which services you routinely refer out and how those options are made available to the residents (e.g., who on staff makes referrals and/or how you distribute information about other available services.)

Opportunities for Resident Socialization and Recreation

In order to meet this requirement, you must describe the kinds of activities or opportunities for socialization that you make available to your residents. At this phase, we will not be evaluating the quality of the opportunities, but we will be looking for an appropriate number and type of activities given your residents and operation.

Fitness/“Wellness” Programs

In order to meet this requirement, you must describe active steps you are taking to encourage resident wellness. It is not enough to have a walking path around your building or even an exercise room. There must be some evidence of staff, residents, or volunteers taking an active role to promote good lifestyle choices in all areas of wellness. Wellness activities include nutrition (e.g., healthy meal options, nutritional education, etc.), physical wellness, mental and spiritual wellness. While no one can make the residents participate in exercise or healthy eating options, the high quality provider “will actively promote” such programs.

Communication System or Newsletters

In order to meet this requirement, you must describe how you regularly communicate with your residents. The most common form of communication is a resident newsletter, but well-used bulletin boards, closed-circuit TV systems, and well-attended resident meetings may all be examples of good communication systems.

Resident-Centered Technology

If you choose to respond to this elective, you should describe some of the technology systems you are using directly with your residents or to benefit their care and services. Some examples may be: resident computers with Internet hook-up, high-tech call systems, resident monitoring systems such as Quiet Care, or physical/cognitive fitness programs for residents.

Important: If your application does not address at least five of these electives, it will not be considered. You will be notified if this is the case and given an opportunity to complete at least five sections.

If you have any questions regarding this application or the Confident Choices process, contact Mary Youle at Aging Services of Minnesota, 651-645-4545 or myoule@agingservicesmn.org.

Thank you for considering Confident Choices!