

Step 6

The resident council president or representative signs the application, indicating that the EQUAL plan reflects the residents' priorities. If there is no resident council, 3 residents must sign the application.

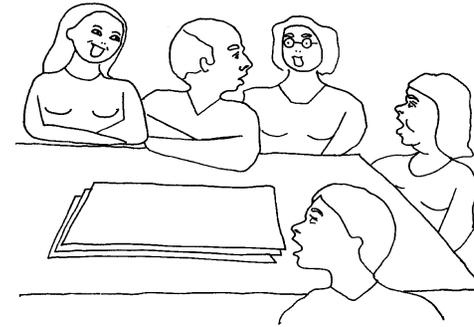
Keep In Mind

- Plan Ahead. The timeframe for the EQUAL Application process is a short one. Your resident council should start identifying needs and priorities ahead of time.
- Funds are divided into two categories: 1) direct improvements to residents' quality of life, called Local Assistance Projects, and 2) improvements to a facility's physical environment, called Capital Improvement Projects.
- These categories are equally divided 50/50. For example, if a home was receiving a total of \$1,000 in EQUAL, \$500 would have to be devoted to Local Assistance Projects and \$500 would have to be devoted to Capital Improvement Projects.
- Funds are appropriated in the state budget annually, and funding amounts vary from year to year. Some homes are disqualified from participating due to DOH enforcement action or incomplete applications.
- CIAD is available to answer your questions or provide you with support in any of the steps listed above.

Coalition of Institutionalized Aged and Disabled (CIAD)

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EQUAL: **New York State Grant Program** **For Adult Care Facilities (ACF's)**



What is EQUAL?

Enhancing the Quality of Adult Living Program

The EQUAL Program provides adult care facilities (ACF's) that house residents on SSI, SSP, Safety Net and/or Medicaid with payments to improve the quality of residents' life and care and enhance the homes' services and environment. It is a state funded program administered by the New York State Department of Health (DOH). EQUAL Program payments are based on the number of residents on SSI, SSP, Safety Net and/or Medicaid who live in the home.

How You Can Be Involved in the EQUAL Program

Your facility must ensure that its application is based on residents' priorities and must obtain approval from the resident council for its plan to spend EQUAL funds. In addition, the resident council president or chair signs the application, indicating that the EQUAL plan reflects the residents' priorities. If there is no resident council, at least 3 residents must sign the application.

How Your Facility Applies For EQUAL

1. To apply, ACF's first submit basic information about the home to be eligible.
2. The Department of Health then tells each home how much EQUAL money it will get, and the home must share that information with the resident council.
3. The home submits a spending plan that details how the resident council and administration have decided to use the EQUAL funds.

What Do EQUAL Funds Pay For?

Funds are divided into two categories -- funds that support 1) direct improvements to residents' quality of life, called Local Assistance Projects, and 2) improvements to a facility's physical environment, called Capital Improvement Projects.

Local Assistance Project Funds Can Be Used for :

- Clothing allowances
- Cultural, recreational and other leisure events
- Improvements in Food Quality

Capital Improvement Project Funds Can Be Used for:

- Enhancing the physical environment of the facility to promote a higher quality of life for residents.

EQUAL Funds Cannot Be Used for the Following:

- Daily operating expenses such as staffing or utilities.
- The operator's obligation to keep the facility safe, comfortable, and in a good state of repair and sanitation.

Steps For Residents' Participation in EQUAL

Step 1

Become informed:

- Meet as a council and read this booklet together.
- Invite or call CIAD and/or the Ombudsman Program.

Step 2

Develop a process to identify the priorities of the residents.

- To identify residents' priorities, hold one or several special and well-publicized council meetings or conduct a survey.
- At the council meeting, ask residents to suggest the items they would like to see funded that will improve their quality of life, divided into two categories: 1) improvements directed to residents, and 2) improvements to the facility's physical environment.

Step 3

Establish the priorities you identify in a democratic way. For example:

- Take a vote.
- Use the results of a survey that the council conducted.
- Be specific about the priorities you choose, e.g., "\$100 clothing allowance", **not** "clothing allowance".

Step 4

Document residents' priorities and top preferences by writing them down in the minutes.

Step 5

Meet with your administrator to present him/her with residents' top priorities and its incorporation into the EQUAL application.