

Cornell Cooperative Extension | Putnam County

Location: Putnam County

Free, Farm-Fresh Meals for Seniors

Feedback:
"The food is delicious – compliments to the chefs. This program is really helping me! Nutritious, delicious, and spending \$10.00 less per week on groceries – which I appreciate so much"

Executive Summary:

According to the United Way of Westchester and Putnam, the number of senior households facing economic struggles to meet household basics is growing, with 4,000+ households living paycheck to paycheck (2020). To address this issue, CCE Putnam began working with the Office for Senior Resources to place two distribution freezers in two senior centers, stocked with free, farm fresh meals prepared from produce grown by local farmers. In 2022-2023, the Bountiful Meals program provided 7,546 meals to seniors, improving their access to nutrient-dense meals while economically supporting six local farmers.

Issue:

According to the United Way of Westchester and Putnam, the number of senior households facing economic struggles to meet household basics is growing, with 4,000+ households at poverty level and ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) (2020). Of Putnam County's total elderly population, 1 in 8 of those face food insecurity (Feeding America 2019). Food insecurity in older adults is associated with increased health costs and health problems including heart attacks, congestive heart failure, diabetes, asthma, and depression.

Extension Response:

By offering free ready-to-eat frozen meals to Putnam's senior population, CCE Putnam meets the need of nutritious meals for senior citizens and improve health-related impacts of food insecurity. The meals are also driven by case managers directly to home-bound seniors. The program pays local farmers to provide farm fresh produce that goes directly into meals, cooked by local non-profit Second Chance Foods. This program economically supports local farmers and directly improves seniors' food security.

Impacts:

- 7546 free meals for Putnam County seniors
- 40 seniors reporting improved food security
- 6 farm partners paid fair-market price for produce
- 4460 lbs of produce purchased directly from local farms

Partners

- Office for Senior Resources
- Second Chance Foods
- Long Haul Farm
- Harvest Moon Farm and Orchard
- Patterson Community Church
- SPACE on Ryder Farm
- Peterson's Patterson Greenhouses and Nursery

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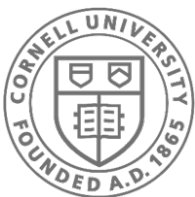
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Bountiful Meals freezer in Putnam Valley Senior Center



CCE IMPACT