

Local

Feed Seniors Now receives \$5,000 grant

✍ By Renee Beasley Jones Messenger-Inquirer

🕒 02.27.18

For the first time, Feed Seniors Now — an annual food drive that provides nutrition to low-income senior citizens in several counties — has received a \$5,000 grant.

Since the program started in 2011, Feed Seniors Now has gathered more than 20 tons of food and provided meals for 1,500 senior citizens.

The Volunteer Generation Fund, which is administered by the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service, gave the grant to the Senior Connections AmeriCorps program at Green River Area Development District. The funds will be used for Feed Seniors Now.

Last year, the food drive provided supplemental and emergency food, including a ham from Specialty Food Group, to more than 450 regional senior citizens.

This year, Feed Seniors Now kicks off March 16. Monetary and food donations will be accepted for three weeks, and seniors will receive their food donations April 25.

"The food is delivered in the county it was collected in," said Dave Clark, AmeriCorps Program Director.

Many businesses and agencies work together on Feed Seniors Now, Clark said.

Comfort Keepers, Independence Bank, GRADD, AmeriCorps, Kroger, IGA, Canteen at Your Service, Specialty Food Group and regional senior citizen centers provide assistance.

Amanda Payne of Independence Bank said up to 20 employees volunteer to sort, shop and fill orders. They also donate to the food drive.

"It's a very welcomed and anticipated event," Payne said. "Employees get excited about it. You don't see a lot of food drives for senior citizens."

The \$5,000 grant will be spent on additional food and other items the campaign needs.

"Our collection boxes are cardboard, and over seven years, some have gotten worn out and shabby," Clark said.

A portion of the grant money will replace those boxes, some signs and delivery bags.

Feed Seniors Now provides food to low-income senior citizens who qualify for federal assistance, such as food stamps or housing subsidies. They must live at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

During the three-week food drive, boxes will be set up in Kroger and IGA stores, where people can shop and donate nonperishable items. Also, donors can write a check to Feed Seniors Now and send it to Independence Bank, 2425 Frederica St., Owensboro, KY 42301.

The money will go into the Feed Seniors Now bank account and will be used at the end of the campaign for more food purchases.

For those who plan to donate nonperishable food, popular items are peanut butter, crackers, canned meats, canned soups and cereal.

Residents who want to receive a Feed Seniors Now donation should call Janet Clancy at 270-926-4433. People who want to volunteer and help with the annual food drive should contact Clark at the same number.

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