



Local

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# Feed Seniors Now food drive kicks off monthlong event

 By Renee Beasley Jones Messenger-Inquirer

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In 2017, 8.4% of Kentucky's senior citizens reported being food insecure, according to a Feeding America report.

By comparison, the U.S. rate among people 60 and older was 7.7%.

In the report, Louisiana ranked highest for food insecurity among the elderly. More than 12% of that state's senior citizens struggle with hunger.

To combat regional hunger among residents 60 and older, Green River Area Development District, Comfort Keepers, Independence Bank, Kentucky Legend and Canteen at Your Service have partnered for the eighth annual Feed Seniors Now food drive. They kicked off the month-long event Thursday afternoon at Kroger's Wesleyan Park Plaza store.

Since the local food drive started, it has collected nearly 40 tons of food and provided meals to more than 3,000 regional residents.

"We'll be collecting food through Oct. 11," said Jennifer Williams, GRADD associate director for aging and social services.

Donors should look for food collection boxes in a number of regional locations. The drive collects nonperishable items, such as canned protein, peanut butter, pasta, soups, vegetables and breakfast cereal. Kentucky Legend donates a ham and hot-dogs for each recipient.

Throughout the month-long drive, food is collected and taken to Owensboro Christian Church, where it is stored until it is sorted and packaged for delivery. On Oct. 22, volunteers will deliver a week's worth of groceries to every recipient.

"We get to visit with the seniors," said Susanne Story, Independence Bank community enrichment officer. "It is the most heartwarming day ever."

Nearly one-third of GRADD's aging services clients report choosing between buying food and paying for medical care or utilities, Williams said.

To qualify for a food basket through the Feed Seniors Now food drive, recipients' income level must be at or below 150% of the federal poverty level or they must receive public assistance. To refer a senior or to request a box of food, call Williams at 800-928-9094.

"We want to encourage the community to be part of this (food drive)," Story said. "Go to a collection box and make a difference."

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### Collection Box Locations

Collection boxes for the 2019 Feed Seniors Now food drive are at these locations:

- **Daviess County** -- Independence Bank locations, Kroger stores, IGA stores, Meijer, Owensboro Convention Center, Comfort Keepers, Green River Area Development District and Senior Community Center of Owensboro-Daviess County
- **Hancock County** -- Independence Bank locations, IGA, Senior Center and Hancock County Public Library locations
- **McLean County** -- Independence Bank, Livermore; Senior Services, Calhoun
- **Ohio County** -- Senior Community Center, IGA

Monetary donations can be sent to The Independence Foundation, P.O. Box 988, Owensboro, KY 42302. Write on the envelope: Feed Seniors Now. On the check's memo line, donors should indicate which county they wish to support.

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