



JEWISH RELIEF AGENCY

225 East City Avenue, Suite 210
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004
P 610-660-0190 • F 610-660-0191
jewishrelief.org

Friends Foundation for the Aging
P.O. Box 1081
Langhorne, PA 19047

March 2, 2022

Dear Susan,

Prior to the pandemic, one in five Philadelphia residents was unable to afford sufficient food for their household (Philadelphia Hunger Report, 2018). Now, pandemic-related unemployment combined with inflation has placed additional pressure on households struggling to meet their basic needs for food. SNAP enrollment is still way up—two million more than in 2020 an indicator of ongoing need for assistance. If current events mirror the extended recovery that followed the Great Recession of the late 2000s, the increased need will continue for many years in a post-COVID world (Feeding America, March 2021).

In these challenging times, JRA's mission to ease the burdens of poverty for low-income households across Greater Philadelphia through monthly food delivery is more important than ever before. Officially designated as a 501(c)(3) in 2009, Jewish Relief Agency's (JRA) mission is to serve over 6,400 diverse, low-income individuals across Greater Philadelphia by relieving hunger, improving lives, and strengthening our community.

Our Monthly Food Distribution Program is the primary vehicle by which JRA advances our mission and aims to make a difference in the lives and health of community members. Nearly 75% of JRA's clients are over the age of 65. The pandemic has hit older adults hard. For nearly two years, they have been experiencing the negative economic and physical and mental health impacts of COVID-19. In response, JRA is providing more food and services to the 3,400 older adults we serve, many of whom are on a fixed income.

Through the Monthly Food Distribution Program, hundreds of volunteers assist with packing and delivering nutritious kosher food into boxes. JRA volunteers then deliver our 15 lbs. food assistance boxes to approximately 3,200 households each month, helping these families close the gap between hunger and food security. Each of the households on JRA's Monthly Distribution List receives a box of food weighing 14-15 pounds, including proteins, carbohydrates, and staple pantry items that are whole grain and low in sodium and sugar. JRA provides fresh fruits and vegetables in each food assistance box from October to May, when it is cool enough to safely store produce in our warehouse without refrigeration. During the pandemic JRA also began including toilet paper, hand soap, hand sanitizer, and face masks in each box.

Just like Friends Foundation for the Aging, JRA values diversity. Almost all of the JRA recipients have a household income at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level and represent a diverse range of backgrounds, religions, ethnicities, and abilities. Our clients identify as White (70%), Black (10%), Latinx (2%), and Asian (1%) with 17% not providing this information. A large portion of the individuals who identify as white are from the Former Soviet Union and specifically the Ukraine.



JEWISH RELIEF AGENCY

225 East City Avenue, Suite 210
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004
P 610-660-0190 • F 610-660-0191
jewishrelief.org

JRA's clients struggle to obtain enough food for their households for a variety of reasons. The population we serve includes the unemployed, individuals with disabilities, holocaust survivors, persons suffering from temporary illness or injury, recent immigrants, and persons experiencing housing instability. Our delivery model eliminates potential barriers to acquiring food—clients do not need to know English, organize transportation, or leave their homes to get help from JRA. Our model has been a critical asset during the pandemic, ensuring underserved households receive assistance safely.

Just like the Friends Foundation for the Aging, JRA aims to serve older adults with the dignity and respect this valued population deserves. JRA knows we are accomplishing this goal through the Monthly Food Distribution Program because we track the number of households served each month and pounds of food delivered, collect demographic information on the recipients we provide food assistance to upon initial inquiry, and survey bi-annually utilizing a satisfaction and impact survey. We also collect both formal and informal feedback from recipients and volunteers on an ongoing basis. In addition to food, JRA works to meet the fullest possible range of needs of our older adult clients, including making referrals to partner agencies, helping them obtain COVID-19 vaccines, and operating a crisis fund for emergency situations. Further, we increase intergenerational interaction through our volunteer-based delivery model. Many of our volunteer drivers deliver to the same households each month, allowing them to develop relationships with the older adults they deliver to. This helps relieve isolation and volunteers can notify JRA staff if a client needs additional help.

To ensure our program is sustainable, we have increased our fundraising goals and diversified our funding streams. These include government, corporate, foundation grants, sponsorships, individual donors, and our annual fundraiser. The total Monthly Food Distribution Program budget is \$1,649,196. With a \$30,000 grant from the Friends Foundation for the Aging JRA will make our community a healthier place for older adults by reducing food insecurity, providing basic health essentials, and fostering connection.

Meaningful partnerships that advance JRA's mission are valued, stewarded, and deeply important to our impact in the community. We look forward to building a long-term collaborative relationship with the Friends Foundation for the Aging and we truly appreciate your consideration of this letter of inquiry.

Sincerely,

Jodi Roth-Saks
Executive Director

