

Kennett Area Community Service (KACS)
Letter of Intent to the Friends Foundation for the Aging
August 2022
Kennett Square Food Cupboard Programs for Low-Income Seniors

Organization Description

Kennett Area Community Service (KACS) provides essential, life-sustaining services to thousands of individuals each year. Our services focus on the critical needs in our community: food security, housing stability, and crisis services. In addition, our Getting Ahead program focuses on the long-term economic health and sustainability of individuals who are motivated to break the cycle of poverty.

Program Summary

The Kennett Food Cupboard provides food and essential to food insecure households. Target beneficiaries are those living below 350% of the federal poverty level and residing in the Kennett Consolidated, Unionville-Chadds Ford, or Avon Grove school districts. About 85% of those we serve live below the poverty line. Approximately 10% are age 62+. The Food Cupboard's target area includes residents of the Kennett Consolidated, Unionville-Chadds Ford and Avon Grove School Districts.

Kennett Square is a community with generally high income, although with a great deal of inequity. The median household income is \$78,796, compared to a household income of \$63,463 in Pennsylvania as a whole. The cost of living is even higher, with the median home or condo valued at \$279,669, compared to \$192,600 in the state as a whole. While many residents earn enough to live comfortably at this cost of living, many earn dramatically less, especially those on a fixed income.

The population we serve at KACS is predominantly Hispanic (83%), with smaller numbers of White (9%) and Black (6%) individuals (2% are Biracial or Other). Most Food Cupboard clients (about 85%) have household incomes below the federal poverty level. For many of the Latinx residents we serve, public benefits such as SNAP are not available, so the safety net food and services they receive at KACS are truly life-sustaining. Most of our staff are bilingual in Spanish and English, and our food offerings are tailored to the tastes and traditions of Latinx families. Our partnerships with Philabundance, the Chester County Food Bank, and local farms allow us to provide fresh produce, dairy, and healthy proteins for our participants.

Two special programs enable us to ensure that low-income seniors who cannot travel to our Food Cupboard are able to access sufficient food. Our partnership with Luther House, a low-income HUD senior living facility in Avondale, served 28 seniors in 2021. Our KACS on Wheels program delivered food to 126 homebound seniors in 2021. Both programs are showing increased demand now; already in 2022, we have served 23 unduplicated individuals at Luther House and 113 through KACS on Wheels. Rising inflation and skyrocketing food prices are extremely difficult for low-income seniors on fixed incomes; our programs ensure that they need never go hungry.

KACS' current annual budget for the Food Cupboard is approximately \$1.2 million, of which about 75% is comprised of in-kind food donations. We receive no government funding for this program, so rely on community support to balance the budget. We are requesting \$15,000 from the Friends Foundation for the Aging for the coming year, which will help us cover the cost of healthy, fresh food for the seniors we serve in their homes and at Luther House. The cost of food has risen steeply in the past year, and your support would be a great help in ensuring that seniors in southern Chester County have ready access to the regular, nourishing food they need to stay well.