



## Final Report: Enhancing Health and Well-being Among Underserved Seniors

**Organization:** Rise

**Grant Title:** Enhancing Health and Well-being Among Underserved Seniors

**Date:** 3/3/2025

### Completion of Contracted Work

Rise successfully implemented health services for underserved seniors, integrating screenings, education, and navigation into ELL classes and pantry services. Partnering with Henry J. Austin Health Center, Zufall Health, Ivira's Pharmacy, NJ Charity Care, and Crossroads4Hope, we provided critical healthcare access, including cancer support, diabetes screenings, and enrollment in Get Covered NJ.

Increased immigration concerns led to declining ELL attendance, limiting engagement in health services. Fortunately, we reached many seniors before participation dropped, maximizing impact.

Through outreach at the pantry and ELL classrooms, more than 10 individuals engaged in Get Covered NJ enrollment, with some Rise staff also securing coverage. The Trenton Health Team provided A1c tests and early detection cancer screenings, offering financial incentives for participants. Vision services were expanded by securing 15 free eye exams for seniors at Hickory Corner Library while planning continues for Optical Academy's mobile exams.

Rise partnered with the West Windsor Department of Health to provide free flu and COVID-19 vaccinations for uninsured and underinsured individuals. While Zufall Health held a vaccination clinic on November 8, some clients faced scheduling challenges. We are working on an additional clinic with improved scheduling support to address this. Pantry-based outreach efforts also included information sessions on the PACE Medicaid program for seniors, with bilingual backing to ensure accessibility.

As part of the Mercer-wide Community Health Needs Assessment, Rise recruited Spanish-speaking focus group participants and attended breakout sessions to help establish new goals for the next three years. Additionally, we conducted over 50 surveys on senior health needs. The Office on Aging did not provide a Spanish translation, preventing many from participating. We will advocate for improved accessibility in future countywide health assessments.

A lack of community health clinics in Hightstown-East Windsor was identified as a key barrier, requiring many residents to travel for affordable healthcare. This and language access issues highlight the need for additional local services and interpreter support.

### **Looking Ahead: 2025 Priorities**

Rise is focusing on pantry upgrades to improve choice and accessibility. Plans include transitioning to a client-choice model, enhancing infrastructure for seniors and individuals with disabilities, and continuing partnerships with healthcare providers to integrate health assessors and navigators. Advocacy efforts will continue to push for expanding community clinics and improved language-accessible health services.

### **Conclusion**

This grant expanded critical health access despite evolving challenges. Rise remains committed to food security, healthcare navigation, and community empowerment to meet the growing needs of our community.