

## Letter of Intent – Friends Foundation for the Aging

More than 54 years ago, Rise was created as one of four Community Service Action Agencies in Mercer County whose mission was to fight the war on poverty. We believe the Friends Foundation for the Aging commitment to promoting health and wellness of our senior community aligns with the Rise mission to assist our clients with basic needs while educating them during their journey toward wellness.

Issue: The National Institute of Health presents that maintaining a nutrient-dense diet is critically important for older adults because of the impact of food intake on health. Yet, this can be challenging to achieve because many seniors experience mobility constraints, which make it difficult to shop for food, lift heavy jars, and open containers, and fixed incomes prevalent in aging populations make it difficult to access high quality foods (i.e., those foods tend to be more expensive). Reference: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK51847/>

Theory of Change: We know hunger exists in every community but it is especially prevalent in aging, low-income, and minority neighborhoods. Nutrition programs with educational as well as feeding components can reduce food insecurity, improve health, and decrease poverty-related challenges.

The Families Understanding Nutrition (FUN) at Rise program is a year-long program which will address dietary needs and challenges individuals who reside in Eastern Mercer County, live at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Line, and the majority will be of Hispanic origin. Each month, 50 participants aged 65 or older will receive a supplemental food box (e.g., 'Blue Plate') containing nutritious food, as well as educational support including workshops or Zoom interactive videos about new fruits and vegetables and how to shop and prepare healthy meals on a budget. Mercer County College Culinary Institute will be assisting with the videos and providing SNAP and other nutritional programming in Spanish and English. The newly created recipe book will include nutritious menu options featuring food items distributed at the pantry.

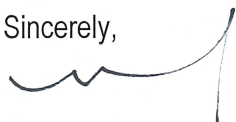
Measurement: We will track progress and measure outcomes using pre- and post-surveys, feedback about food boxes, number of food boxes, and client interactions during workshops. Rise believes that by providing bilingual nutritional education, healthy food, and community support, our senior community can thrive. We will continue to encourage other civic and religious organizations to join with us in our mission to increase food security in our neighborhood.

Budget: Our funding request of \$20,000 will cover costs of healthy food for the monthly boxes purchased from local farmers at the Tri-County Co-Op, the creation and distribution of the recipe book, partial salary for the food pantry coordinator, refrigeration costs for additional produce, workshop/video costs, and doorstep delivery.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions on this Letter of Intent or our agency's important work to assist low-income seniors who are facing food insecurity and other critical needs in East Windsor, Hightstown, and its surrounding areas. I can be reached at 609-443-4464 or email at [lkoppel@njrise.org](mailto:lkoppel@njrise.org).

Thank you for the opportunity to apply and we look forward to a partnership with Friends Foundation for the Aging.

Sincerely,



Leslie Koppel  
Executive Director