

Christie Administration Helps Senior Nutrition Programs Restock Emergency Supplies

Thursday, October 24, 2013 Tags: [Hurricane Sandy](#)



Social Services Block Grant Reimburses Agencies For Sandy-Related Food Disbursement

Trenton, NJ - The Christie Administration today announced the distribution of \$117,692 to reimburse county Area Agencies on Aging that diminished or depleted their shelf-stable food inventory during Superstorm Sandy. The funds were made available through a federal Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) administered through the New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS).

DHS Deputy Commissioner Lowell Arye visited the Sayreville Senior Center to speak to the staff and seniors about how important the emergency food service program was during Sandy. The Center allowed the Middlesex Senior Meal Program to operate out of its second kitchen from October 29, 2012 through November 9, 2012 because most of the county's congregate meal sites were being used as shelters or were closed due to power outages. During that time, 3,048 meals were delivered to seniors who were home-bound and 4,542 meals were served to walk-ins.

"Access to food, particularly during and immediately following an emergency, is essential for residents who may have a limited supply of non-perishables at home," said Deputy Commissioner Arye. "Seniors, especially, can have a harder time due to a disability, lack of dependable transportation or an inability of caregivers to help them during a disaster. Sayreville Senior Center opened its doors to provide food and shelter, grief counseling, charging stations and camaraderie to local residents during a very difficult time."

Statewide, county Area Agencies on Aging - funded through the DHS' Division of Aging Services - delivered up to four days' worth of shelf-stable meals to seniors before Superstorm Sandy made landfall. In total, 28,750 emergency meals were provided to 12,617 seniors at a cost of \$192,692.

A \$75,000 National Disaster Relief Grant from the U.S. Administration for Community Living was awarded earlier in the year, but it covered only part of the costs. The SSBG grant reimburses the agencies fully and ensures that they can restock their supplies and be prepared in the event of another emergency.

In New Jersey, the Senior Nutrition Program serves about 5.2 million meals annually. In 2012, there were nearly 34,000 older adults accessing congregate meals and about 30,000 receiving home delivered meals. Each meal meets the nutritional standard and complies with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The program supports seniors by helping to keep them living independently in the community.

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