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Secretary of Agriculture, Second Lady Announce Partnership with DoorDash to Deliver Meals to Seniors in Need

Delmont, PA – At the Westmoreland Food Bank today, Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding and Second Lady Gisele Fetterman joined Pennsylvania’s anti-hunger organizations and food banks to announce a new partnership with DoorDash to have healthy, nutritious meals delivered to homebound seniors in need.

The initiative, unveiled during Hunger Action Month, is designed to remove barriers and increase enrollment in the underutilized [Pennsylvania Senior Food Box Program](#), which provides life-sustaining meal deliveries and nutrition services to eligible older Pennsylvanians.

“It’s high time that Pennsylvania’s food assistance programs offer services tailored to the unique needs of their recipients and actively work to remove barriers to access,” said Redding. “This partnership with DoorDash to deliver Senior Food Boxes is a commonsense solution that will make saying ‘yes’ to the box easy. Accepting assistance can be hard enough for some, wondering how to get the food home should never be an added worry.”

More than 300,000 Pennsylvania seniors are eligible for the Pennsylvania Senior Food Box Program, but only about 35,000 are enrolled to receive it this year. Seniors often face barriers to access for food assistance programs because of issues such as transportation, mobility, or technology.

Hunger-Free Pennsylvania, Feeding Pennsylvania and their network of food banks are partnering with DoorDash where its coverage overlaps with agencies administering the food box program. Dashers then will deliver boxes to seniors in need. As with any DoorDash delivery, Dashers are compensated.

“Our seniors deserve fresh, nutritious food. Transportation should never be a barrier to life-sustaining nourishment,” Pennsylvania Second Lady Gisele Fetterman said.

In Pennsylvania, eligible participants for the Pennsylvania Senior Food Box Program include low-income individuals who are at least 60 years old and whose household income is at or below 130 percent of the U.S. poverty level. Seniors can fill out the [self-certification form](#) found on Agriculture’s website at agriculture.pa.gov/seniorfoodbox or call 800-468-2433 to be directed to the regional food bank distributing the senior food box in their county of residence.

“DoorDash is proud to partner with Hunger-Free Pennsylvania, Feeding Pennsylvania, and others to power the delivery of food boxes to seniors through Project DASH and to celebrate this work alongside Secretary Redding and Second Lady Fetterman. This partnership is another example of DoorDash helping to meet an ongoing need for underserved communities,” said Brittany Graunke, DoorDash Drive’s Director of Government and Nonprofit. “Leveraging our last-mile logistics platform, we are committed to promoting convenience and dignity while reducing barriers to accessing meals, groceries, and pantry items.”

This partnership with DoorDash is part of the company’s work through Project DASH, an initiative that connects food banks and food pantries with clients through last mile delivery. To date, Project DASH has made more than 900,000 deliveries of an estimated more than 15 million meals in more than 900 cities in the U.S. and Canada.

The program is already up and running in several communities across the commonwealth. More than 365 meals have been delivered as part of the launch. In southwestern Pennsylvania, Westmoreland Food Bank, Fayette County Community Action Food Bank and Food Helpers are among the first to utilize the service, with deliveries set for seniors who signed up for the service.

“Hunger and food insecurity are serious problems in America and throughout Westmoreland County, especially among seniors,” Westmoreland Food Bank CEO Jennifer Miller said. “We’ve seen more people coming through our doors in recent years. This partnership with DoorDash helps us fill a void by getting food delivered to those who can’t make it here for help.”

Currently, 10 counties are being served by DoorDash as part of the innovative partnership. They include Bucks, Dauphin, Erie, Fayette, Luzerne, Montgomery, Philadelphia, Washington, Westmoreland and York. The program remains open to other counties as it continues to grow.

Hunger-Free Pennsylvania is the state’s partner in administering the federally-funded Senior Food Box Program, formally known as the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), which leverages government buying power to provide nutritious food packages to low-income residents. Recently, Hunger-Free Pennsylvania and the Department of Agriculture worked together to rebrand CSFP to the Pennsylvania Senior Food Box Program and removed the requirement where seniors had to provide documented proof of income when applying to receive the box.

“No senior in need should ever go hungry,” Hunger-Free Pennsylvania Executive Director Sheila Christopher said. “Through this innovative partnership, we can remove barriers and increase enrollment while simultaneously reducing the stigma of hunger. Thousands of seniors are eligible for assistance but not getting it. We want them to know the resources are available so they can take advantage of this service to get the meals they need to stay healthy and strong.”

Hunger-Free Pennsylvania also recently launched a pilot with PACE and PACENET, Pennsylvania’s prescription assistance programs for older adults. Because eligibility requirements for prescription assistance and the Pennsylvania Senior Food Box Program mirror each other so closely, the organizations are able to capture people seeking low-cost prescription medication and bring them

into the charitable food program. Since its launch this summer, the effort has already drawn more than 2,800 applications for food boxes provided by nine different regional food banks.

“You can’t fight hunger alone,” said Tom Snedden, the Department of Aging’s PACE Director. “All of these successes are proof of what we can accomplish together when organizations work together to identify and serve those who need help the most.”

Note: Photo and video from the event are available at PAcast.com.

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