

Now Is the Time to Join an Older Adult Center



An older New Yorker uses her Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) coupons to buy fresh vegetables in East Harlem. SFMNP coupons are worth \$25 and can be exchanged for fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets and stands across the city.

When the global pandemic forced those of us in aging services to pivot the way we serve older adults, one of the major challenges we faced was the closure of older adult centers. For decades, these local centers have played a critical role in increasing the quality of life for New Yorkers. As the global pandemic wore on, centers did incredible work making sure older residents received the services they needed, such as meals and online programs and courses. But that could never replace the real-life interactions

these centers traditionally provided. Which is why it is great that they are now back open so they can fully continue their work, building a community for older adults.

Going to visit older adult centers across the city continues to uplift and gives me even more energy to continue working to ensure they are able to serve those who come through their doors. With over 300 older adult centers located across the city, there are ample opportunities to join one and take part in fun social activities. Just recently I have seen live entertainment, fashion shows, fitness classes, along with so many other activities that brings people together, allowing for the social interaction they need, which has proven to support the body and mind.

Just as importantly, the primary services that were offered before the pandemic are also once again taking place. They include making sure individuals are on the right insurance plans and

have classes to manage chronic diseases.. They also assist individuals apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Insurance Program (SNAP) to reduce the costs of food. And let's not forget, you can even celebrate your birthday, or go on recreational trips to museums, parks and other places to visit with friends.

There are also special initiatives that the Department for the Aging works with these organizations on so we can be as effective as possible. In fact, right now older adult centers – and Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities – are helping distribute Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program coupon books. These books are worth \$25, up \$5 from last year, and we received nearly 40,000 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for qualified older adults. The coupons can be used at participating farmers markets or farm stands – which there are plenty of in every borough – allowing residents to exchange them

for fresh fruits and vegetables.

The network of community-based organizations that operate older adult centers have always been critical to helping the Department for the Aging succeed in its mission because they know the communities they work in best.

This is all on top of the services we can provide older adults with, such as employment, volunteer opportunities and a host of other programs that are available at older adult centers and within Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities, allowing New Yorkers to live a full and independent life. So if you are at least 60 years old, find the closest older adult center near you on our website today and start participating in all the activities and services available!



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