

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program

Serving Southern Georgia

2026 Program Overview

Presented by Kimberly Hobbs
Executive Director
Southern Georgia Regional Commission



Who We Are

Regional Services • Community Focused



Serving Southern Georgia

A regional partner providing expertise, services, and resources to strengthen communities and improve quality of life across Southern Georgia.

18 counties • 45 municipalities • 60+ professional staff

WHAT WE DO

- Community & Economic Development
- GIS & Mapping
- Finance & Administration
- Planning & Transportation
- Business Lending
- Area Agency on Aging

A thriving Southern Georgia where every community has the opportunity to prosper.

Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program

Fresh food access for older adults.

Local farmer support.

A seasonal nutrition benefit with community-wide impact.



\$30

Seasonal benefit per
eligible recipient



June–September

Georgia's peak
growing season



AAA-led

Distributed locally through
Area Agencies on Aging

USDA funded

**Georgia Dept. of Public Health
administered**

Local AAA delivery

A federally funded program that helps low-income older adults purchase locally grown, unprocessed fruits, vegetables, and edible herbs from authorized farmers and markets.



Who can participate?

Benefits are offered once per season, on a first-come, first-served basis.



GEORGIA RESIDENT

Must live in Georgia when
benefits are issued.



AGE REQUIREMENT

Age 60+; or age 55–59 if
residing in senior housing.



INCOME ELIGIBILITY

At or below 185% of the
federal poverty guidelines.

Two goals. Lasting local impact.

The program improves nutrition access while keeping food dollars in Southern Georgia.



1. Increase access to nutritious foods

For some older adults, farmers markets are their only access to fresh produce. Access to nutritious food supports chronic disease prevention and management.

2. Support local farmers

Purchasing from local farmers generates revenue for their businesses and keeps food dollars within Southern Georgia, while also forging relationships that can continue beyond market season.

We bring the market to the seniors

Fresh produce, closer to where older adults live, gather, and receive services.



Where they live

Senior housing and residential communities

Where they gather

Community buildings, parks, and local events

Where they receive services

Senior centers, food pantries, and community partners

Accessibility starts with meeting people where they are.

One program. Multiple ways to participate.

Flexible delivery models remove mobility and transportation barriers.



Choose your own produce



Pre-packed produce bags



Drive-up distribution



Homebound delivery

Removing Obstacles. Creating Opportunities. Bringing Fresh Food Within Reach.

Reaching those who need it most

Our target is older adults most in need of services including those who are economically disadvantaged, socially isolated, underserved, and at nutritional risk.



Food & nutrition risk

Food insecurity
Chronic health concerns
At nutritional risk

Rural access barriers

Rural communities
Limited transportation
Homebound seniors

Social isolation

Living alone
socially isolated
Grandparents raising grandchildren

Greatest need

Low-income seniors
Minority populations
Older adults with disabilities

Meet people where they already are

Outreach happens where older adults already live, work, shop, eat, socialize, and receive services.





Service locations



Food pantries



Health fairs



Health departments



Healthcare offices



Public libraries



Faith-based organizations



Community gathering points



Community centers



Grocery stores



Community action agencies



Veterans organizations



Social service agencies



Local fairs & celebrations

Our partners make the reach possible

Shared relationships strengthen outreach, delivery and local impact.



Community

Local governments, volunteers, faith-based and civic groups

Senior network

Senior centers, housing, Meals on Wheels and service organizations

Farmers

Growers who supply produce and build community connections

Funding partners

Agencies & donors supporting program resources and delivery

Shared relationships → greater reach

2026 impact across Southern Georgia

A deliberate approach to removing barriers has expanded participation.

3,235

older adults served in 2026

*(up from fewer than 600 annually
under the original model)*

#1 in Georgia

Most seniors served among Georgia regions
each year since 2020

28 markets • 18 counties reached

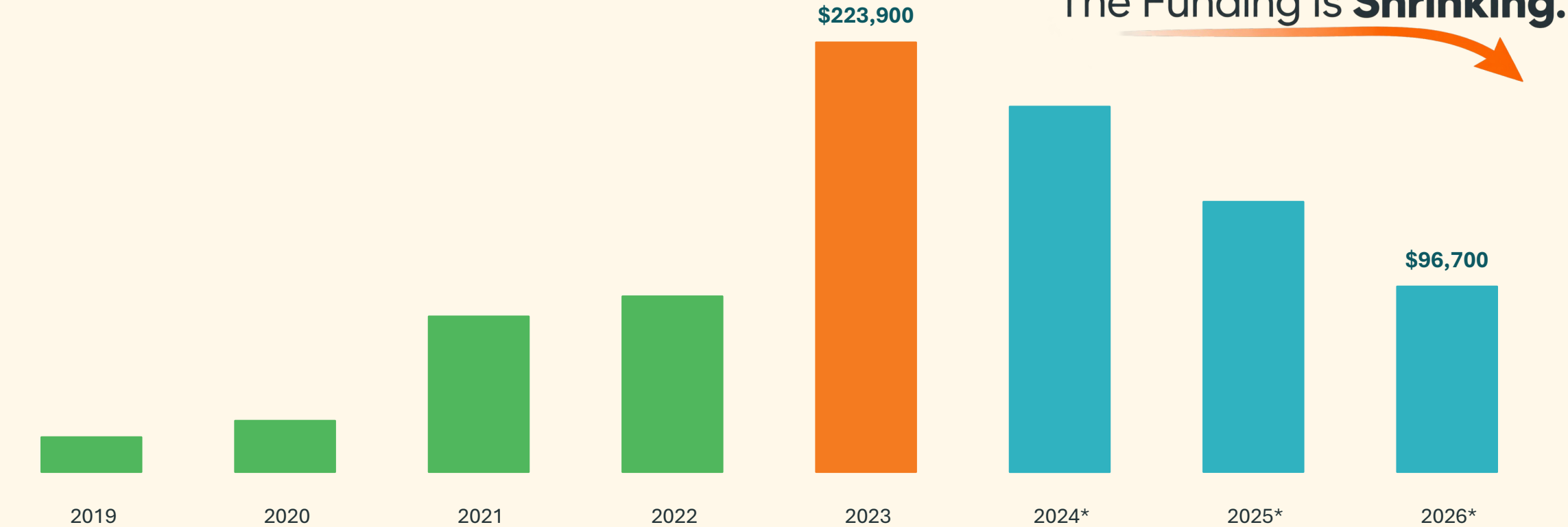
Each market creates a practical opportunity to identify
older adults who are **not yet connected** to AAA services.



Strong demand. Fewer resources.

Funding trends do not reflect the growing need for senior nutrition assistance.

The Need Is **Growing**.
The Funding Is **Shrinking**.



* Recent year decreases are due to federal reductions in the overall Senior Farmers Market Program budget.

What changed — and why it worked

Simply offering a program does not guarantee participation.

Where We Started



Served **fewer than 600** older adults annually, primarily congregate meal clients



Held markets at **senior centers**



Only offered **traditional market setups**



Conducted markets **independently**



Event-based strategy

What We Changed



Expanded community outreach across all 18 counties, reaching eligible older adults in communities throughout our service area



Markets held where older adults live and gather, outside of the senior centers



Offered various market setups



Established community-based collaborations



Integrated the program into our ongoing senior hunger initiative



The takeaway:
**We cannot serve people
we never reach.**

Keep learning. Keep removing barriers.

The goal is meaningful access for more older adults.



Expand access

Continue identifying and reaching eligible seniors across Southern Georgia.

Strengthen impact

Use markets as a practical connection point to other AAA services.

Support independence

Help older adults access nutritious food to live healthier lives.

Questions?

Let's connect

Shawn Taylor
Director of Aging Services
staylor@sgrc.us

Leischa Matthews
Aging Program Manager
lmattews@sgrc.us

