

# Food For Our Elders: Expanding the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program

JULY 2023

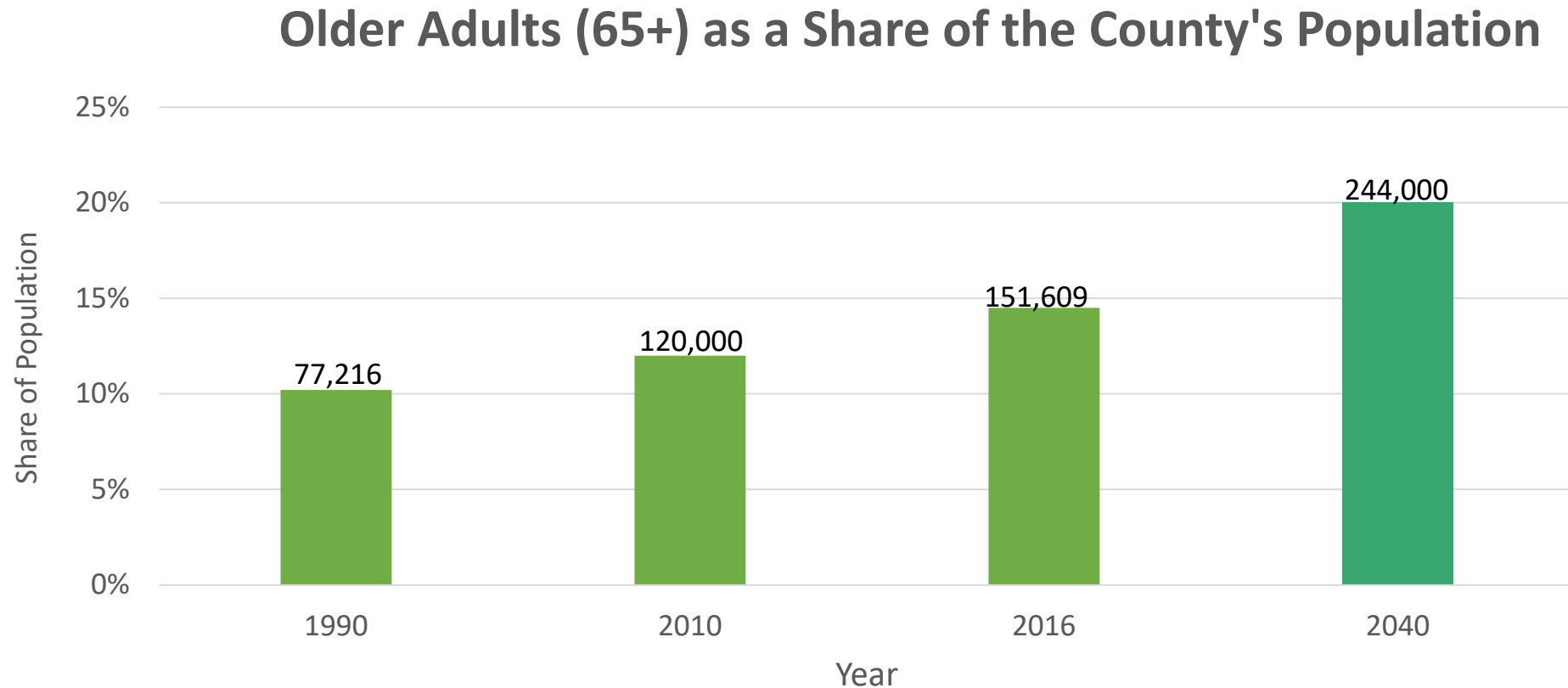
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# Montgomery County's Senior (65+) Population is Steadily Growing

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## Seniors are Especially Vulnerable to Food Insecurity

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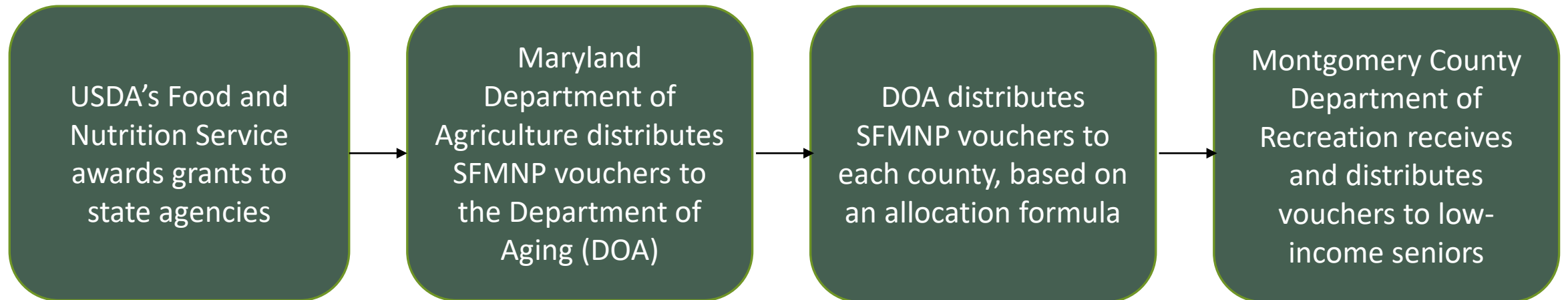
**The 2017 Montgomery County Food Security Plan identified seniors as being especially vulnerable to food insecurity:**

- 16% of seniors live below 200% of the federal poverty line
- 14% of seniors don't have access to a vehicle
- 25% of seniors live alone and in isolation

# Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program

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**The Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) provides low-income seniors (60+) with vouchers which can be used to purchase fresh fruits, vegetables, honey and herbs at participating farmers markets.**



# SNAP Data Indicates Significant Need for Food Benefits among Seniors

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During the 2022 farmers market season, Montgomery County had an average of **13,910** seniors (62+) on SNAP

*Note that SNAP eligibility is more restricted than SFMNP eligibility:*

SNAP Eligibility Requirements (60+ in MD)	SFMNP Eligibility Requirements
165% of FPL (Gross Income)	185% of FPL (Gross Income)
US Citizenship (some exceptions)	60 years or older

**However, the County only received enough SFMNP vouchers to serve **817** low-income seniors that year**

*On average, Montgomery County receives 828 voucher booklets per year from the state.*

# Not Enough SFMNP Vouchers to Go Around

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**SFMNP vouchers are in high demand in Montgomery County**

Voucher booklets are distributed via a **random lottery** administered at the County's senior centers

**In 2022, 1162 low-income seniors applied for just 817 SFMNP voucher booklets**

**“We are swamped. We can’t keep up with demand.”**

**“There are so many seniors who want the vouchers, who can’t get them.”**



# Limited Supply Creates Access Challenges

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The SFMNP program is advertised exclusively in person at the County's senior centers

Outreach is restricted because program administrators and site directors **don't have the capacity to manage increased demand**

**This restricts participation to a small percentage of the County's low-income senior population**

## Recommendation #1: Expand Funding to Provide Vouchers to More Seniors



Advocate for increased state funding for additional SFMNP vouchers



Supplement with county dollars to fund additional SFMNP vouchers



## Recommendation #2: Improve Program Outreach and Accessibility

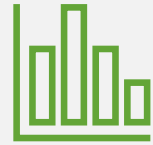


Expand outreach and advertising beyond the senior centers – libraries, grocery stores, senior housing complexes, etc.

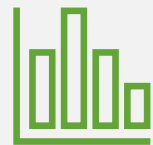


Provide online and phone options for registration, to increase accessibility

## Recommendation #3: Strengthen Data Collection and Management



Require annual data collection on application and participation rates, demographics, and redemption rates at the County level



Dedicate additional human resources to data collection and management, as needed.

## Recommendation #4: Increase Staffing Resources to Manage SFMNP Administration



Increase staffing resources within Department of Recreation to support the administration of SFMNP.

## Recommendation #5: Support Markets in Accepting SFMNP Vouchers



Award grants to help markets cover the staffing and administrative costs of participating in SFMNP



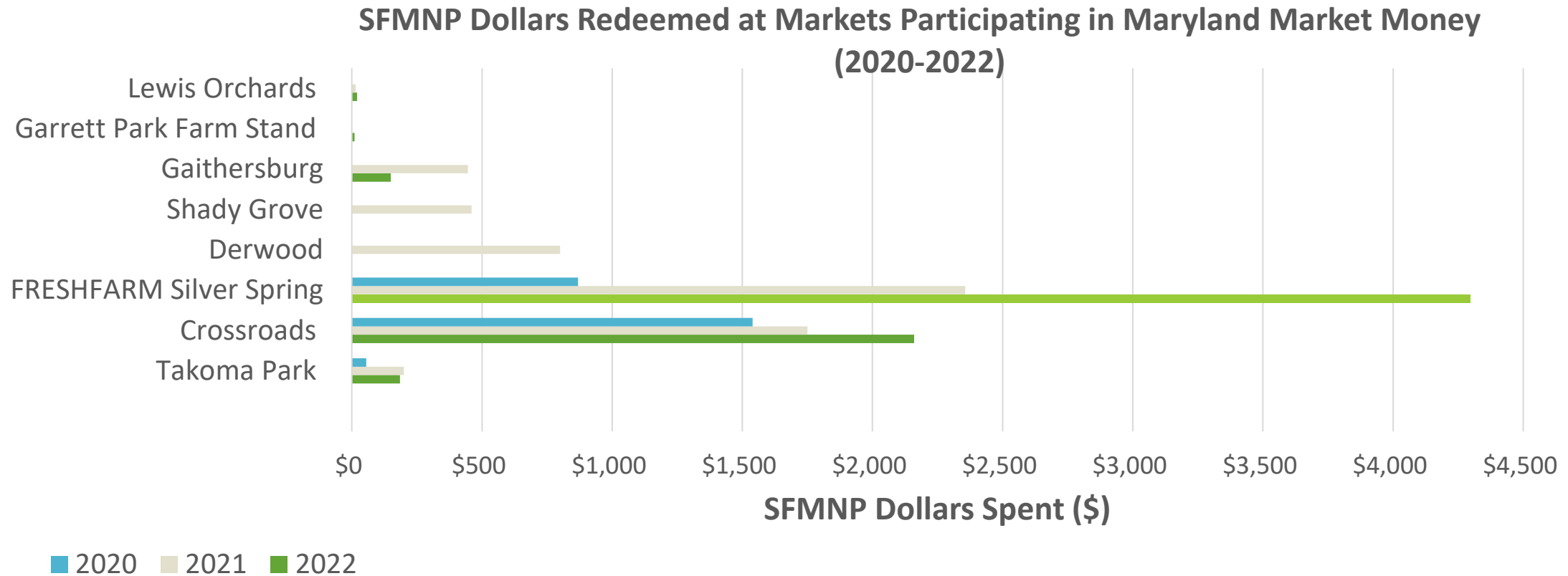


Thank you!

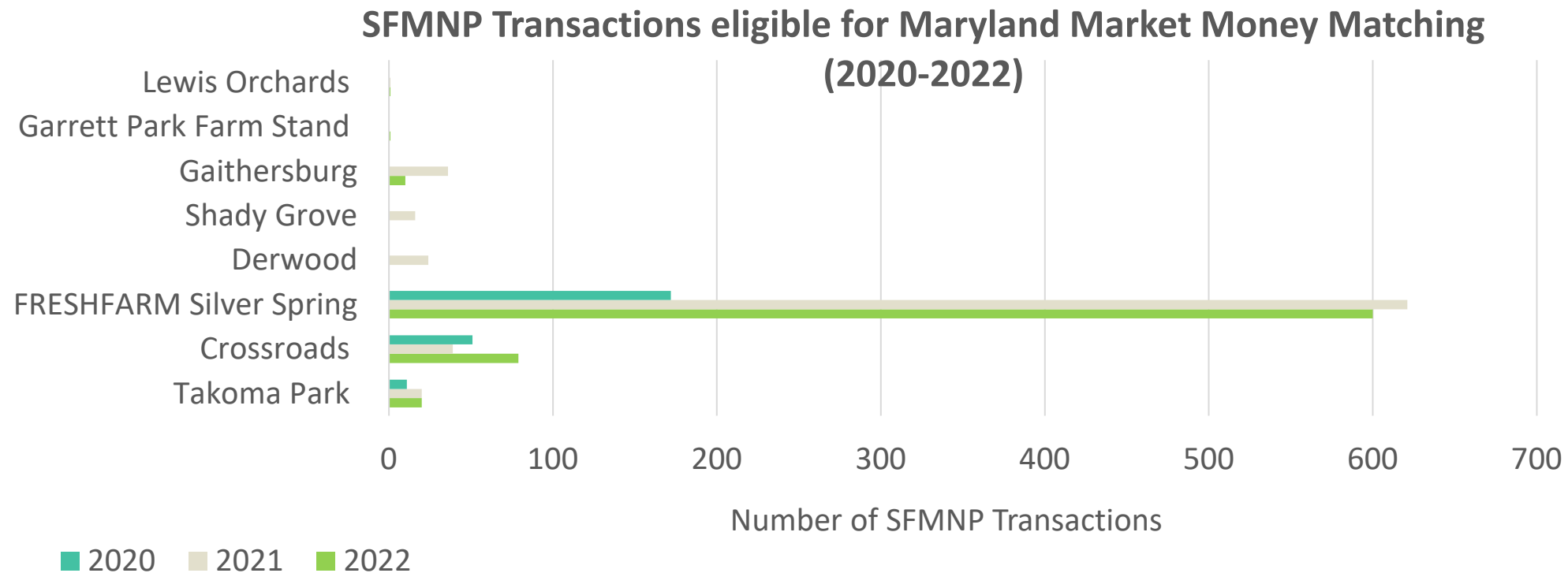
# Appendix

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# Estimating SFMNP Redemption by Market



# Estimating SFMNP Redemption by Market (Transactions)



*Note: This chart represents transactions at markets which accept **both** SFMNP and Maryland Market Money, a state-wide nutrition incentive matching program. Full data on SFMNP redemption by market will be available in the full report.*