

## **APPENDIX B**

# **CONVENING DATA**

# **SUMMARY REPORT**

## **Texas Panhandle Convening on Senior Food Insecurity**

**November 15, 2017**

*Organized By:*

**Amarillo Area Foundation**

**Harrington Cancer and Health Foundation**

**High Plains Christian Ministries Foundation**

**Mary E. Bivins Foundation**

*Facilitated By:* **Linda Pitner**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In November 2017, the Amarillo Area Foundation, the Harrington Cancer and Health Foundation, the High Plains Christian Ministries Foundation and the Mary E. Bivins Foundation organized a convening to address the issue of senior food insecurity in the top 26 counties of the Texas Panhandle. Held at the Park Central Senior Living Community, the convening was a forum for discussing the issue of food insecurity among seniors in both Potter/Randall counties and the other 24 more rural counties of the region.

The discussion was facilitated by Linda Pitner, the Senior Services Coordinator for the City of Amarillo. The 16 participants represented 13 organizations including local government, service providers, funders and other community organizations. Participants received materials prior to the event that included an overview of the three primary questions that would be discussed.

The purpose of the convening was to mobilize insights and support for assessing and addressing the needs of food insecure seniors in the Panhandle as well as engaging other potential partners and organizations with resources or expertise in strengthening systems similar to this.

Following the meeting, participants had the opportunity to complete a survey that allowed them to provide their feedback on the proceedings as well as supply incremental information on suggested next steps. Results from the survey are attached in Appendix B.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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***Question 1: What is the state of Senior Hunger in Potter/Randall counties? Across the larger Panhandle Region?***

Several participants shared their perspective that the number of seniors who need food assistance is significant and growing. Catholic Charities indicated that they served 710 clients (all senior or disabled) at their food pantry last month and that they are experiencing consistent growth in their audience. The Food Bank revealed that in 2015, 15% of clients were seniors while that figure is upwards of 25% today.

The group discussed three key statistics and the potential impact of those numbers; 1) there are more than 63,000 55+ individuals in Amarillo alone and this number is growing 2) the percentage of seniors who are not able to make ends meet is also increasing 3) sources of funding are decreasing for some programs. The AAA indicated that at one time its FoodNet program (congregate sites in Potter/Randall) fed as many as 550 seniors. Today that number is at about 270, primarily due to funding cuts.

Participants also highlighted that there are programs and services available to assist seniors in securing food but that these offerings are under utilized. Possible reasons for this include pride, awareness, ease of access, and a lack of accurate information. Catholic Charities offered the following perspective, “What I see is that those who have been in the system know and

understand it, but those who are new to senior assistance do not know what is available. Maybe they planned for retirement but then there was a medical emergency or new people (grandchildren) to care for and their anticipated planning no longer meets their current needs.”

Heal the City indicated that they serve a large number of seniors (40% of their client base are estimated to be seniors) and they have a social worker on site during clinic hours to help connect their clients connect with available services.

There were varied perspectives regarding the status of waiting lists for services in Amarillo. The AAA believes that it could easily add 100 eligible individuals to the current congregate feeding sites. Meals on Wheels, however, has only one person on its waiting list and no one is denied from receiving their services. Meals on Wheels also shared that referrals come from all areas of town.

The AAA shared data about the differences between our rural counties and Amarillo. It is their belief that Potter and Randall counties are underserved. Today, AAA programs feed an average of 2,000 individuals. Only 265 of those are from Potter/Randall counties – even though ½ of the region’s population is located in Potter/Randall. This means that ½ of the region’s population is receiving only 15% of the meal assistance offered through the AAA. Similarly, the FoodBank indicated that 70% of the food it sends out goes to the 24 counties outside of Potter/Randall.

Another concern that came to the forefront was the lack of services in smaller/less affluent communities such as Friona and Bovina. The belief is that some of these communities do not even have a food pantry. More research in this area would be helpful.

**Question 2: What role does your organization play in addressing the issue of senior food insecurity in the Panhandle?**

Some participants, such as ACTS Community Center, Catholic Family Charities, and Meals on Wheels, are direct providers – supplying food directly to seniors. Others, such as the AAA and the Food Bank, provide food or funding to front line organizations.

Initially, this conversation started with individuals speaking to the number of clients or meals served. It then evolved to enable a discussion of how different types of assistance best suit the unique needs of diverse segments of the senior population.

Types of programs discussed included home delivery (AAA and Meals on Wheels), congregate sites (AAA, the Food Bank through its Mariposa site and Food with Friends through ACTS Community), food pantries (ACTS Community and Catholic Charities) and a senior box program (Food Bank).

Detailed information regarding these programs is as follows:

**Home Delivered: Meals on Wheels**

- Target Client
  - Homebound

- At least 60
- Not driving
- Trouble fixing meals
- Program Provides
  - A critical safety check
  - Five hot meals/week
  - A modest price
- Client Overview
  - Approximately 200 – a few more clients on list, and a few less meals delivered each day due to client activities/preferences, etc.
  - 18% of clients can not afford to pay

#### Congregate: Food Bank – Mariposa Congregate Meal

- Program Provides:
  - A hot meal to seniors (55 plus) five days a week

#### Senior Box Program: Food Bank

- Target Client
  - 55 plus at 130% of poverty line
- Program Overview
  - A pilot program
  - Case load is a limit of 2,000
  - Success for this program will require relationship building
- Client Overview
  - Already have 600 signed up

#### Congregate and Home Delivered: Area Agency on Aging

- Target Client
  - Home delivered program has strict requirements bound by the Older Americans Act (OAA)
- Program Overview
  - Congregate and home delivered in Potter/Randall and the other 24 counties
  - All of these meals are free, though donations are encouraged. Donations/client are much higher in the outlying areas than they are in Potter/Randall
    - 2016 donations for all of FoodNet was about \$4,000
    - 2016 donations from the rural areas were approximately \$144,000
- Client Overview
  - 78% of FoodNet clients are at 100% or more of poverty line

Participants also spoke to what their programs provide, beyond just food. ACTS Community shared that they believe the food is a connector that allows staff an opportunity to understand what a senior's real needs may be. It also, creates community "There is power in the idea of not just the hot meal, but also in the community they share". Similarly Meals on Wheels indicated that the meals they provide allow clients to stay in their homes (what most of them desire) as long as they can.

***Question 3: If there were no operational or funding barriers, what - if anything - do you think our community could/should do to better meet the needs of our hungry seniors?***

As the conversation surrounding question two came to a close – participants began to speak about challenges, concerns and opportunities – which was an ideal time to transition to question three. Snack Pak 4 Kids shared that they survey participants and that though the question has not yet been directly asked, staff are confident that many of their students share their weekend food with parents and/or grandparents as well as siblings. Snack Pak offered to include a question that will allow quantitative data regarding the number of students sharing their food with hungry seniors in their home on the student survey that will be issued in May 2018 (to 200,000 students from 43 school districts). This data could potentially shed light on pockets with significant need.

ACTS Community indicated that they would like to develop a program for seniors that participate in their congregate meal program based on the Snack Pak 4 Kids program, thereby enabling these individuals to have something to eat on the weekend. Access is also a challenge for this population, with 70 – 80% of clients having to walk to the site due to a lack of transportation. Another wish list item for ACTS would be to offer more services to this population. The perspective for this organization is that it should be about more than just a hot meal, it should be about quality of life. Suggestions for service extensions include a senior night, a cancer survivor group and opportunities for the seniors being served to give back to the community.

AAA spoke about the issue of food waste – especially in home delivered programs. There is a thought that if the client does not like the meal, it does not get eaten. Some communities are piloting vouchers to grocery stores, restaurants, etc. This would not fit every seniors needs – but it may work well for others.

Another area that participants felt should be addressed is awareness – awareness of the need and of the opportunity for community members to get involved through volunteering and contributions. There is a belief that progress on this issue will require the development of a meaningful story that can engage the community – not a story about dollars needed but about people being served.

Volunteer recruitment is another issue for some providers. Meals on Wheels shared that acquiring volunteers is one of their biggest challenges. Retention is less of an issue, given the relationship their volunteers form with clients, but recruitment is a struggle.

**Question 4: *What would be a good next step to being doing more to collectively address this concern?***

Below are a number of the thoughts that were discussed in regards to next steps. Other items you would like to see included can be easily added, so please share them.

- Include additional service providers from the community in future conversations. Organizations and geographic areas mentioned include the Washington Street Family Service Center, Eastridge, and representatives from the more rural 24 counties.
- Include those that we propose to serve at the table next time and allow them to help shape the conversation.
- Increase knowledge of the habits of target audiences, especially as it relates to how they gather information.
- Address the differences and disconnects between senior food insecurity in Potter/Randall and those in the surrounding 24 counties so that any story created resonates with everyone across the Panhandle.
- Identify mechanisms to share resource opportunities with this audience.
- Talk to each other more.
- Ask ourselves and others the question, “What happens if we don’t solve this problem?”
- Recognize that we have two distinct audiences - poverty based food insecurity and physical limitation based food insecurity. At times, they overlap. At times, they don’t. Solutions for these two groups will look different.
- Launch a pilot program to begin gathering data that will help create a future narrative.
- Recognize and plan for the fact that the need is going to grow.
- Begin to consider who will own this effort and lead the program.
- Identify some early wins we can achieve to advance the work of this group so people see that their time and commitment are worth the investment. Don't meet to just meet.

## CONCLUSIONS

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Conclusions from the meeting are listed below. As with other sections of this report, we welcome your perspectives on any items that may be missing from this list or you may have understood to be different from what is recorded here.

1. Senior food insecurity has many faces and causes and no one solution will meet the needs of all target audiences. Various models should be considered as well as hybrid options.
2. Each person at the table is very familiar the work they do but there is limited knowledge on the problem of senior hunger across the entire city. Most participants lack an understanding of how their program fits into the bigger picture.
3. Sustainability needs to be a key consideration moving forward
4. There are service gaps – in the rural areas they are most likely in towns that do not have enough population or infrastructure to support feeding services. In Potter and Randall – these gap areas are not yet fully defined though there is some consensus on pockets of need – including the South Lawn and Eastridge areas.
5. Geography plays a role in the number and type of services provided. Solutions for those in Potter/Randall may vary from those in more rural communities.
6. Recruiting volunteers, client transportation and adequate sustainable funding are concerns among providers.
7. There are available services that are not being fully utilized. Increased awareness is needed.
8. Progress in addressing senior food insecurity will require a compelling message, clear communications and a strategy that engages a cross section of clients and providers.
9. There are several opportunities for short term initiatives including:
  - a. Data mining via SnackPak 4 Kids surveys
  - b. Feeding those at congregate sites with waiting lists
  - c. Providing additional meals to those being served five days a week (by adding meals for weekends)
  - d. Increasing education and awareness of available services to target audiences
  - e. A pilot program at a new or existing location.



## APPENDIX A: LIST OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

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### ACTS Community Center

Chad Connor, Executive Director

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### Amarillo Area Foundation

Clay Stribling, President/CEO

Jessica Tudyk, Grants Officer

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### Amarillo Meals on Wheels

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Ann Clary, Board Member

Casey Webb, Board Member

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### Area Agency on Aging

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### Catholic Charities of the Texas Panhandle

Jeff Gulde, Executive Director

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### City of Amarillo

Linda Pitner, Senior Services Coordinator

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### Harrington Health and Cancer Foundation

Gainor Davis, Executive Director

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### Heal the City

Steve Rogers, Board President

Chelsea Stevens, Clinical Director

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### High Plains Christian Ministry Foundation

Steve Dalrymple, CEO and General Counsel

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### High Plains Food Bank

Zack Wilson, Executive Director

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### Mary E. Bivins Foundation

Judy Day, President/CEO

Susan Severn, Grants and Scholarship Officer

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### Snack Pak 4 Kids

Dyron Howell, Founder & Board Member

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### United Way of Amarillo/Canyon

Belinda Crelia-Palacios, Senior Director of

Community Impact

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## APPENDIX B: RESULTS OF PARTICIPANT SURVEY (6 RESPONSES. 60% RETURN RATE)

### 1. Overall, how would you rate the convening?

Response	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Excellent		
Very good	5	83.33%
Good		
Fair	1	16.67%
Poor		

### 2. What did you like about the event?

- *It brought together several agencies and funders with a stake in food scarcity issues.*
- *I enjoyed being able to discuss the problem with multiple people who bring different perspectives.*
- *Visiting with colleagues and meeting Steve Dalrymple. Linda Pitner did an excellent job moderating and kept us on time.*
- *Bringing many of the people together at the same table with the support of our local foundations.*
- *Opportunities to meet new people in the field and an honest discussion on the need for more services.*

### 3. What did you dislike about the event?

- *At the moment, nothing comes to mind.*
- *Nothing.*
- *I'm just not confident that anything will get done or come of it.*
- *Fix what you can fix and focus on those issues. We don't set policy for Medicare or other programs.*
- *Nothing in particular but would like to see action take place soon.*

### 4. Was the event length too long, too short or about right?

Response	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Much too long		
Too long		
About right	6	100%
Too short		
Much too short		

**5. On a scale of 1 - 10, how would you rate the appropriateness of the individuals who participated in the convening? (With 1 indicating that the mix of participants was not appropriate and ten indicating that all the right people were in the room for this preliminary discussion)**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
# of Responses					1	4	1			
% of Responses					16.67%	66.67%	16.67%			

**6. Are there any other specific organizations or individuals that you believe we should have included in this initial discussion? If so, please list.**

- *If we plan to address the issue across the 26 counties of the Texas Panhandle, we need a few key players outside of Amarillo. Few is critical as we don't want to bury the discussion with too many voices.*
- *I agree about bringing the client to the table!*
- *PCS, Wesley Community Center, Bivins Village, ASCA,*
- *Wesley Community Center, Hilltop Sr. Center, key churches involved with senior hunger.*
- *Perhaps some community members who receive current services.*

**7. On a scale of 1 - 10, how useful were the three questions that were discussed? (With 1 indicating that the questions did not successfully address the issue and 10 indicating that the questions were successful in addressing the issue)**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
# of Responses							2	2	2	
% of Responses							33.33%	33.33%	33.33%	

**8. What other questions or issues do you think this meeting should have included for discussion?**

- *I'd be curious to see the notes from the discussion. I can't think of any issue not already brought up. Addressing transportation and lack of knowledge by those in need are certainly worth mention.*
- *Problem solving ideas*
- *There are seniors in facilities that are not being fed because government funding has been frozen for a long time, yet food is being delivered to those facilities - just not enough. This is where the greatest need seems to be. Since food is already being delivered and we know there is a huge waiting list, why not feed those seniors before expanding the program to other parts of town? Funding shouldn't be the issue in these cases.*
- *What goals do the 4 foundation have for this issue since they called the meeting?*
- *perhaps an expected result of what we hope to accomplish or a timeline for action*

**9. Please provide any additional comments you have regarding the convening or the issue of senior food insecurity in the Panhandle.**

While I stated above we need more participants, I'm not sure we are ready for that yet. We probably need one more meeting to set focus, which will help determine who should be included in the future.

- *I think starting with a pilot program would be a great start*
- *It doesn't appear that there is a duplication of services among senior meal providers in Amarillo, which is a good thing. Funders should be happy about that.*
- *We need to sit down with seniors and listen to their needs and ideas before we get to far down the road and forget about what they need.*
- *N/A*

**10. What, if any, next steps do you think this group should take to further address the issue of senior food insecurity in our region?**

- *Meet again to review previous discussion, set focus, and the next steps should make themselves apparent.*
- *Most of the non-profits in the room already work very well together and are collaborating among ourselves to meet the needs we see and know exist with our target population. The primary needs seem to be in facilities owned by some of the funders where food is being delivered but only to those that qualify to receive government funding. We should stop depending on government funding and feed people, especially when food is already being delivered and the capacity to produce the food is available. There was a clear divide in the room with those that are the "doers" and those that just want to study the issue to death and nothing gets done.*
- *I think we should begin some small pilot projects with collaboration across the groups in the room to begin gathering data and impact on a small scale before we roll out bigger ideas.*
- *The resource directory is a good idea that is currently being worked on.*

## APPENDIX C: RESOURCES

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Below are websites and articles that may be of interest to those engaged in the issue of senior food insecurity. The list is, by no means, exhaustive. We welcome any resource suggestions that you might have. Please email recommendations for additional resources to be shared to [susan@bivinsfoundation.org](mailto:susan@bivinsfoundation.org).

### Websites and Organizations

1. The National Foundation to End Senior Hunger: <https://www.nfesh.org>
2. The National Council on Aging: <https://www.ncoa.org>
3. Feeding America: <http://www.feedingamerica.org>
4. Feeding America, Map the Gap: <http://map.feedingamerica.org>
5. Feeding America, Senior Hunger Research: <http://www.feedingamerica.org/research/senior-hunger-research>
6. Meals on Wheels, National: <http://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org>
7. Meals on Wheels, Texas: <http://www.mealsonwheelstexas.org>
8. National Association of Area Agencies on Aging: <https://www.n4a.org>
9. Texas Hunger Initiative: <https://www.baylor.edu/texashunger>
10. Grantmakers in Aging: <https://www.giaging.org>
11. Grantmakers in Aging, Rural Aging: <https://www.giaging.org/issues/rural-aging>
12. Grantmakers in Aging, Hunger: <https://www.giaging.org/issues/senior-hunger>
13. AARP Foundation, End Senior Hunger: <https://endseniorhunger.aarp.org>
14. National Association of Aging and Nutrition: <http://www.nanasp.org>
15. National Association of Aging and Nutrition, Senior Hunger and Nutrition: <https://www.ncoa.org/healthy-aging/hunger-and-nutrition>

### Documents

1. Spotlight on Senior Health: Adverse health outcomes of food insecure older Americans, published by Feeding American and the National Foundation to End Senior Hunger: <https://www.hungernwnc.org/about-hunger/Spotlight%20on%20Senior%20Health.pdf>
2. America's Health Rankings, Senior Report Executive Summary published by United Health Foundation: <http://cdnfiles.americashealthrankings.org/SiteFiles/PressReleases/ExecSummary-Seniors-2016-Edition.pdf>
3. 2016 NCOA survey of community-based organizations on older adults and malnutrition, published by the National Council on Aging: <https://stage.ncoa.org/wp-content/uploads/Understanding-the-Need-for-Community-Based-Services-NCOA-Overview.pdf>
4. March 2017: Opportunities to Improve Nutrition for Older Adults and Reduce Risk of Poor Health Outcomes, published by the Administration for Community Living, Center for Policy and Evaluation: <http://nutritionandaging.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Malnutrition-Issue-Brief-final-3-2017.pdf>
5. The State of Senior Hunger in America 2015: An Annual Report, Prepared for Feeding America and the National Foundation to End Senior Hunger: <http://www.feedingamerica.org/research/senior-hunger-research/state-of-senior-hunger-2015.pdf>
6. Combating Food Insecurity: Tools for Helping Older Adults Access SNAP: A Toolkit from the AARP Foundation and the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC): [http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/senior\\_snap\\_toolkit\\_aarp\\_frac-1.pdf](http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/senior_snap_toolkit_aarp_frac-1.pdf)
7. Implementing Food Security Screening and Referral for Older Patients in Primary Care – A Resource Guide and Toolkit, prepared by AARP Foundation and IMPAQ International: [https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/aarp\\_foundation/2016-pdfs/FoodSecurityScreening.pdf](https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/aarp_foundation/2016-pdfs/FoodSecurityScreening.pdf)