



Conectando Cosechas con la Salud Connecting Harvest to Health (H2H) 2022 Annual Report

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Thank you to all Conectando Cosechas con las Salud/Connecting Harvest to Health (H2H) partners for their continued support and commitment.



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Executive Summary

This summary provides an overview of the key findings from data and feedback collected during the program's full duration. In 2018, Presbyterian Healthcare Services partnered with Encuentro, Meals on Wheels, and Three Sisters Kitchen on a four-year project to improve senior nutrition, reduce language access disparities, increase local food access, increase consumption of nutritious foods, enhance workforce development, support entrepreneurship, and strengthen the support structures for agricultural producers.

Conectando Cosechas con las Salud/Connecting Harvest to Health (H2H) project fully met or partially met most of the goals set for the grant period. Thirteen metrics considered high level were kept on a dashboard to help partners enter data they were responsible for collecting and monitoring (**Figure 1**). Other key metrics were collected and monitored by the community health evaluator (metrics collected through Home Health Aides pre-and post-surveys, farmer surveys, care recipient surveys, and six-month follow-up surveys). The evaluator created reports and shared findings at H2H quarterly lead team meetings.

Conectando Cosechas con las Salud/Connecting Harvest to Health (H2H) project met or exceeded half of the goals set for Years 1-4 despite the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic during the project. The number of growers supplying local produce, number of seniors per year assessed for nutrition needs by Meals on Wheels, number of seniors connected with meals, and pounds of local produce purchased all met or exceeded grant total goals. Some goals were not met during the project either due to the circumstances created by COVID or other factors.

Lastly, the pre-and post-surveys for the HHAs did not include questions specifically tied to evaluation metrics, so in some cases, a proxy question was used for analysis (resources for food vs. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits). The following report is structured to include the evaluation questions, the associated outcome, the indicator, the goal, and the year three outcome.

Over four years, H2H has successfully:

- Provided **578,602** meals
- Purchased **49,363** pounds of local food for senior meals
- Purchased **3,892** pounds of local food for H2H classes
- Connected **2,754** seniors with nutritious meals through Meals on Wheels
- Assessed **65** seniors for nutrition needs
- Purchased food from **22** local farmers and producers
- Held **15** professional development workshops
- Successfully transitioned to online trainings

Conectando Cosechas con la Salud/Connecting Harvest to Health YEAR 4

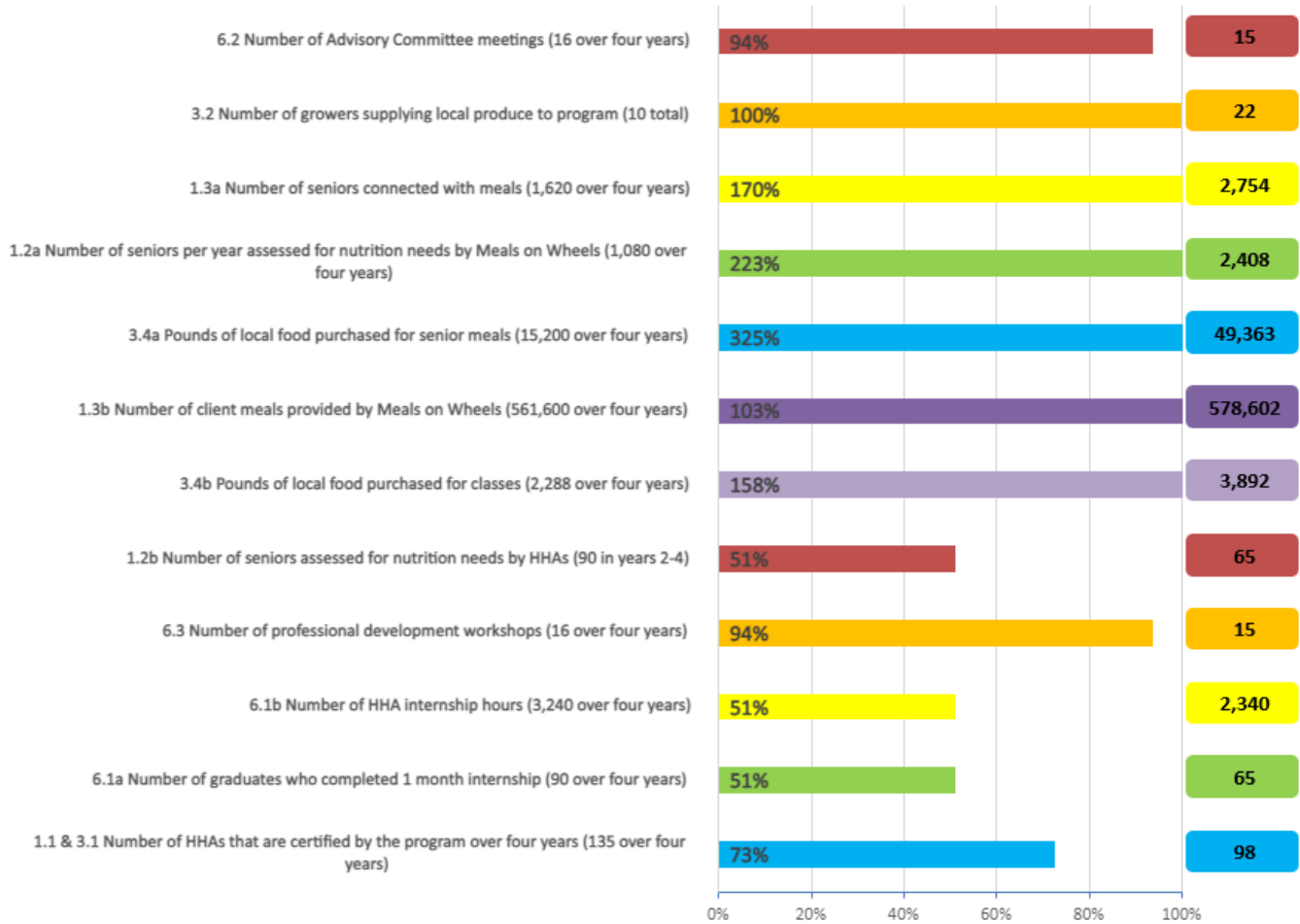


Figure 1. H2H High-Level Data

Introduction

Fifteen-point-five percent (15.5%) of the total population in New Mexico is food insecure¹. Three primary models address senior food insecurity: congregate meals, home-delivered meals, and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program². Presbyterian Healthcare Services, Encuentro, Meals on Wheels, and Three Sisters Kitchen have created a comprehensive approach by connecting elderly residents with local nutritious meals. The program has also helped Home Health Aides (HHAs) who will receive nutrition/cooking training that will supplement their medical assessment needs for elderly patients. Connecting Harvest to Health/Conectando Cosechas con la Salud aims to improve senior nutrition, reduce language access disparities, increase local food access, increase consumption of nutritious foods, enhance workforce development, support entrepreneurship, and strengthen the support structures for agricultural producers.

The purpose of this evaluation is to determine the effectiveness of the Connecting Harvest to Health/Conectando Cosechas con la Salud program in improving food security and nutritious eating, increasing the purchase and use of local food, and increasing the number of trained Home Health Aides (HHAs). This evaluation will investigate components of the program that are performing optimally and should be expanded and replicated in future initiatives and develop reporting mechanisms for output metrics needed for USDA reporting.

Several methods were used to track outcomes, progress indicators, and program processes. This report presents data from August 1, 2018-August 31, 2022.

Background

The prevailing barrier was the COVID-19 pandemic from mid-2019 to 2022. This has forced all in-person activities to pivot to a virtual platform which includes H2H cohorts, quarterly professional development workshops, advisory committee meetings, lead team meetings, cooking classes, etc. The Encuentro and Three Sisters Kitchen staff successfully designed and implemented the quarterly online professional development workshops, as well as the H2H course curriculum and HHA internship orientations and support program using the Zoom platform. Additionally, H2H instructors created asynchronous video content and a course website to better facilitate online learning.

Encuentro and Three Sisters Kitchen continue to utilize virtual tools and resources to support HHA learning. Some HHAs continue to wait for in-person opportunities, as they report feeling overwhelmed by digital communications; find that online learning is not a good match; or do not have access to technology and internet services. They were able to use tools such as break-out rooms to engage participants in active sharing and co-learning from one another. Guest speakers were able to join via Zoom to provide content area expertise. Implementing the internship during the COVID-19 pandemic was challenging due to the fear and additional state regulations regarding COVID-19. Protocols were developed for both the HHAs and clients to prevent COVID-19 infection utilizing recommendations

¹ New Mexico Department of Health, Indicator-Based System for Public Health Website. <http://ibis.health.state.nm.us>

² Frongillo, E., Warren, A., An Evaluation Report: Senior Food Assistance, Related Programming, and Seniors' Experiences Across the Feeding America Network. <https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/research/senior-hunger-research/senior-hunger-evaluation.pdf>

from the National Domestic Workers Alliance and the CDC. Personal protective equipment was distributed to all HHA interns. Virtual interpretation was challenging at the onset of COVID-19, but this was solved through the Zoom Simultaneous Interpretation feature for both the advisory committee meetings and the H2H course. It has been challenging to recruit Home Health Aides and maintain interest and participation through virtual formats. As COVID-19 regulations in the state have shifted, H2H partners have slowly begun to re-integrate hands-on activities such as visiting the Downtown Growers' Market and local farms.

The ongoing pandemic has also impacted the local/national food system and the seniors H2H partners serve. Many Senior clients that participate in the Meals on Wheels (MOW) meal delivery program have moved to weekly frozen meals permanently, although a focus on purchasing local produce has helped maintain frozen meal production. As COVID-19 restrictions change, more Senior clients have felt more comfortable returning to hot meals/daily delivery.

Program Enhancements

Home Health Aides participating in the Fall 2020 Harvest to Health cohort requested learning opportunities in home gardening, and a desire to be able to grow their own healthy food at home. Since February 2021, with the help of a generous donation by a community partner, we have installed 35 3' x 5' raised beds and covered gardens at the homes of program graduates. We have worked with community partners at Bernalillo County Extension to offer 13 online Spanish-language home gardening classes. The Garden program infrastructure was primarily designed and led by two program graduates, who served as paid intern coordinators for the program in 2021. One of these interns went on to teach Spanish-language container gardening classes for New Mexico State University – Ideas for Cooking and Nutrition (ICAN).

H2H partners have also integrated Cooking Matters (CM), a nutrition program that provides professional-level curricula and instructional materials, hands-on training, resources, and program customization. This was integrated into Harvest to Health in September 2021. The first training occurred in person with 4 H2H graduates, in November 2021, and was offered both in English and Spanish. The purpose of this integration is to provide opportunities for professional development and increasing skillset while benefitting the community through hands-on cooking classes and nutrition education, healthy eating, and access to resources. The program's first H2H CM Educator Training graduated 4 educators, who will offer community cooking classes in 2022. In 2022, H2H partners plan to host bi-annual trainings for Cooking Matters interns and graduate with at least 2 CM educators per session.

H2H course instructors have also supported 5 H2H graduates in developing senior nutrition and gardening curriculum, and graduates are now teaching these workshops through the City of Albuquerque Senior Affairs and New Mexico State University.

A social work intern through New Mexico Highlands University was brought on to support HHA interns as they navigate the joys and challenges of working with low-income seniors and the need for resource navigation.

Evaluation

H2H evaluation outcomes were rated based on whether they were met or not met using the following ranking system. Some goals took into consideration the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as the program had to make changes to follow public health orders. Some changes impacted the result of the program such as HHA participation, HHA certification, and curriculum topics that could not be fully adapted to a virtual setting.

Fully Met	99%-100% of the goal was met
Partially Met	76%-98% of the goal was met
Not Met	0%-75% of goal was met
Not Applicable	Not applicable

QUESTION 1:

To what extent was food security and nutritious eating among seniors improved?

Not Met	Outcome 1.1: Within four years, train 135 HHAs on senior eating assessment, general, and geriatric nutrition.
	Goal: One hundred and thirty-five (135) HHAs trained over four years (Y1: 15; Y2: 40; Y3: 40; Y4: 40).
	Outcome: Ninety-eight (98) HHAs were certified during the project. This does not meet our total grant goal of 135 HHAs trained over 4 years.
	Outcome 1.2: Meals on Wheels will assess food security and well-being for 1,080 senior clients and, in years 2-4, HHAs will assess a total of 90 seniors for food security as part of the internship (including food benefits eligibility and enrollment navigation).

Fully Met

Goal:

- a) One thousand and eighty (1,080) senior clients over four years by Meals on Wheels (years 1-4).
- b) Ninety (90) senior clients by HHAs (years 2-4).

Outcome:

- a) Meals on Wheels assessed 2,408 seniors for food insecurity and wellbeing during years 1-4, exceeding the grant goal by 123%.
- b) HHAs assessed 65 senior clients for food insecurity and wellbeing in years 2-4. This did not meet the goal of 90 seniors assessed in years 2-4.

Outcome 1.3:

Connect 1,620 seniors in Bernalillo County over four years with 561,600 free nutritious meals through Meals on Wheels programming over the project period.

Goal:

- a) Sixteen hundred and twenty (1,620) seniors in four years.
- b) Five hundred and sixty-one thousand and six hundred (561,600) meals in four years.

Outcomes:

- a) 2,754 seniors were connected to meals, exceeding the goal of 1,620 seniors over four years, by 70%.
- b) Meals on Wheels provided 578,602 meals to seniors during years 1-4, which met 103% of the original goal, of 561,600 seniors assessed over 4 years.

Fully Met

Outcome 1.4:

In years 2-4, 95% of HHA graduates preparing meals for clients report incorporating preparation of nutritious, diet-appropriate meals in client care six months following program completion (on-site cooking, supporting client cooking).

Goal:

Ninety-five percent (95%) of graduates who report preparing meals for clients (years 2-4)

Outcome:

Eighty-six percent (86%) of HHAs reported on their six-month follow-up survey that they incorporated nutritious, diet-appropriate meals in client care from years 2-4.

Fully Met

QUESTION 2:

To what extent was food security and nutrition among HHAs improved?

Outcome 2.1:

Through the training program, 100% of program HHAs are aware of their eligibility for SNAP and, among those who are not already enrolled in SNAP and are interested in enrolling, 100% of eligible low-income HHAs enroll during training.

Fully Met

Goal:

One hundred percent (100%) over four years for both

Outcome:

Pre and post-training assessments were administered to HHAs to assess their change in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors on several topics. Eighty-three percent (83%) of HHAs said they had an increase in knowledge about nutrition services and resources that are available while 17% said they had no change in knowledge of nutrition resources currently available, which indicates the success of increasing knowledge on the topic.

Outcome 2.2:

Ninety percent (90%) of HHA graduates report increased personal healthy eating behaviors (produce shopping, healthy cooking, nutritious meal consumption, etc.) at six months post-graduation.

Goal:

Ninety percent (90%) of graduates (years 2-4)

Outcome:

One hundred percent (100%) of HHA graduates reported an increase in personal healthy eating behaviors six months post-graduation.

Outcome 2.3:

Achieve a 20% reduction in HHAs reporting food insecurity between the start and completion of training, per standard food insecurity screening questions.

Goal:

Average of 20% reduction between training start and completion over four years

Outcome:

HHAs were assessed on their food need using the food insecurity questions, resulting in a 10% increase in food need amongst HHAs during participation in the program. The goal is an average of 20% reduction between training start and completion over four years.

Fully Met

QUESTION 3:

How successful were H2H partners in increasing the purchase and use of local food in senior meal preparation?

Outcome 3.1:

Within four years, train 135 HHAs on healthy cooking using local produce to prepare healthy meals for their households and to meet client needs.

Goal:

One hundred and thirty-five (135) HHAs trained over four years

Outcome:

Ninety-eight (98) HHAs were certified during years 1-4. This does not meet our goal of 135 HHAs certified over four years.

Not Met

Fully Met

Outcome 3.2:

Ten or more (10+) growers supply local produce for meal preparation, cooking classes, and Meals on Wheels during the project period.

Goal:

Ten growers over four years

Outcome:

Over four years, Meals on Wheels worked with 22 growers who supplied local produce for meal preparation for Meals on Wheels clients. This goal was exceeded.

Fully Met

Outcome 3.3:

At the time of training program completion, 100% of HHAs know how to use supportive food programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), farmers' market match dollar programs, subsidized CSA, and Meals on Wheels.

Goal:

One hundred percent (100%) of HHA graduates

Outcome:

Pre- and post-training assessments were administered to HHAs to assess their change in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors on several topics. Eighty-three percent (83%) of HHAs said they had an increase in knowledge about nutrition services and resources that are available while 17% said they had no change in knowledge of nutrition resources currently available, which indicates success of increasing knowledge on the topic.

Fully Met

Outcome 3.4:

A total of 4,372 lbs. of local food per year purchased: 3,800 lbs. per year by Meals on Wheels to incorporate into delivered meals and 572 lbs. by Three Sisters Kitchen for HHA training.

Goal:

a) Thirty-eight hundred pounds (3,800 lbs.) per year by Meals on Wheels

b) Five hundred and seventy-two pounds (572 lbs.) by Three Sisters Kitchen

Outcome:

a) Meals on Wheels purchased 49,363 pounds of local food, which exceeds the program goal of 15,200 lbs. of local produce over four years.

b) During years 1-4, Three Sisters Kitchen purchased 3,892 pounds of produce, which is 170% of 2,288 pounds over 4 years goal. The total pounds of local produce purchased between the two organizations equaled 41,833 lbs.

Outcome 3.5:

Ninety percent (90%) of local growers report a positive impact on the local agricultural system from the program.

Fully Met

Goal:

Ninety percent (90%) of local growers providing produce to Meals on Wheels

Outcome:

The farmers' survey was conducted by Presbyterian Healthcare Services with farmers who are part of the Agri-Cultura Network (a farm cooperative) and other local farms. One hundred (100%) of the local growers reported a positive impact on the local agricultural system from the program.

QUESTION 4:

To what extent were H2H partners successful in increasing the purchase and use of local food by HHAs?

Fully Met

Outcome 4.1:

Through the training program, 100% of program HHAs are aware of their eligibility for SNAP and local benefits/incentives to buy produce for themselves and their families, eligible low-income HHAs use existing food programs including SNAP.

Goal:

One hundred percent (100%) of HHA graduates

Outcome:

Pre and post-training assessments were administered to HHAs to assess their change in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors on several topics. Eighty-three percent (83%) of HHAs said they had an increase in knowledge about nutrition services and resources that are available while 17% said they had no change in knowledge of nutrition resources currently available, which indicates the success of increasing knowledge on the topic.

Outcome 4.2:

In years 2-4, among HHA graduates who report preparing client meals, 75% of HHA program graduates report sourcing local produce for client meals and/or aiding clients in buying/accessing local produce & food within the six months following program graduation.

Goal:

Seventy-five percent (75%) of graduates (among those who report preparing client meals) in years 2-4

Outcome:

Sixty-two-point two percent (62.2%) of HHA graduates reported sourcing local produce for client meals and/or aiding clients in buying/accessing local produce.

Partially Met

Outcome 4.3:

In years 2-4, 80% of HHAs report buying local produce, meat, eggs, or dairy for personal use within the six months following program graduation.

Partially Met

Goal:

Seventy-five percent (75%) of graduates (among those who report preparing client meals) in years 2-4

Outcome:

Sixty-two-point-two percent (62.2%) of HHA graduates reported sourcing local produce for client meals and/or aiding clients in buying/accessing local produce

QUESTION 5:

How successful were H2H partners at growing income opportunities for HHAs by providing specialized food and nutrition education?

Fully Met

Outcome 5.1:

One hundred (100%) of HHA care recipients who participate in the HHA internship are aware of the HHA training program and the benefits of hiring graduates.

Goal:

One hundred percent (100%) of employers who participate in HHA internship

Outcome:

One hundred percent (100%) of local HHA care recipients who participated in the HHA internship are aware of the HHA training program and the benefits of hiring graduates.

Outcome 5.2:

One hundred percent (100%) of HHA training graduates using EnCasa Care Connections have the nutrition program included in their profile.

Goal:

One hundred percent (100%) of HHA graduates who respond to the six-month follow-up survey (years 2-4)

Outcome:

Fifty-three-point-four percent (53.4%) of HHA training graduates reported having a nutrition program included in the EnCasa Care Connections profile. The EnCasa Care Connection system was being updated to allow HHAs to alter their profiles independently to include the nutrition program certification. This may have impacted the ability of HHAs to update their profiles before the time of the survey.

Not Met

Outcome 5.3:

Twenty-five percent (25%) of HHA graduates report that they have additional opportunities because of the training.

Goal:

Twenty-five percent (25%) of HHA graduates (years 2-4)

Outcome:

Fifty-six-point-seven percent (56.7%) of HHA graduates reported that they have additional opportunities because of the training.

Fully Met

Fully Met

Outcome 5.4:

Fifty percent (50%) of HHAs self-report earning \$10+ per hour six months following program completion (a rate above typical entry wages and near median wages).

Goal:

Fifty percent (50%) of HHA graduates (years 2-4)

Outcome:

Fifty-six-point-seven percent (56.7%) of HHA graduates reported that they have additional opportunities because of the training.

QUESTION 6:

How successful were H2H partners at cultivating a home health workforce that is highly trained in understanding senior food and nutrition needs and evidence-based strategies for senior care?

Outcome 6.1:

Place ten graduates per cohort (90 total) in one-month paid and mentored home health internships to practice nutrition and food security assessment, dietary needs, cooking and food preparation, social meal accompaniment, and general home health aide skills for a total of 3,240 internship hours over four years.

Goal:

- a) Ten graduates per cohort
- b) Three thousand two hundred and forty (3,240) internship hours over four years

Outcome:

a) Fifty-five (55) HHAs graduates completed the one-month internship in years 1-4. This does not meet our goal of 90HHAs over 4 years. Various barriers such as COVID-19, family and personal obligations, and illness and death made it difficult for some HHA's to complete the internship.

b) 1,980 HHA internship hours were completed in years 1-4. Although the goal wasn't met, we consider this successful because HHA interns were able to complete some internship hours, despite the continued barriers of COVID-19.

Partially Met

Outcome 6.2:

HHAs, community members, seniors, and partners take part in 16 quarterly Advisory Committee Meetings about program progress, training needs, unmet senior needs, quality improvements, and strengthening referral and sector connections.

Goal:

Sixteen meetings over four years

Fully Met

Outcome:

In total, Presbyterian Community Health held fifteen (15) Advisory Committee meetings over four years. This does not meet the goal of 16 meetings over four years. The last advisory meeting was set to be held after the completion of the grant. It was agreed upon by the lead meeting to make the 15th advisory meeting the final advisory meeting and celebration.

Outcome 6.3:

HHAs participate in 16 quarterly food and nutrition continuing professional development workshops during the project period.

Goal:

Sixteen workshops over four years (four per year)

Outcome:

Encuentro held fourteen (14) professional development workshops over four years, which is just shy of the project goal of sixteen (16) professional development workshops.

Fully Met

Outcome 6.4:

Via train-the-trainer initiative, HHA graduates advise, teach, and help grow the program in years 3 and 4.

Goal:

1) In year 3, 4 H2H graduates will participate in peer teaching opportunities 2) In year 4, 3 H2H graduate for community teaching opportunities

Outcome:

In Year 3, partners assessed interest in peer teaching opportunities among HHA graduates of the H2H program. From those assessments (surveys and conversations), Encuentro developed and delivered leadership development and facilitation training for HHAs in Year 4. In Year 4, 6 HHAs facilitated Cooking Matters Classes at Las Estancias Clinic. Five (5) more graduates were trained in the Cooking Matters curriculum and will begin teaching community nutrition classes this fall.

Fully Met

QUESTION 7:

What are the qualitative perspectives of the benefits of the program for funded partners?

Outcome 7.1:

Within four years, gather more comprehensive qualitative perspectives on the benefits of the program.

Goal:

Sixteen reports from each funded partner over four years

Outcome:

Four reports to be compiled and analyzed were received from each of the partners in years 1-4.

Fully Met

Opportunities

Ninety-eight (98) Home Health Aides were trained in years 1-4. Additionally, 55 Home Health Aides participated in a one-month paid internship through the H2H Program. Encuentro hosted quarterly professional development workshops and leadership trainings; 14 professional development workshops were completed in years 1-4. Three Sisters Kitchen and Encuentro partnered with experts to develop Spanish-language Nutrition and home cooking videos. These videos covered: Introduction to the Healthy Eating Plate, reading nutrition labels, portion size, diabetes, the Diabetes My Plate, Heart Healthy Diet, caring for clients with dementia, tube feeding, Narcan training, and an introduction to a local farm. Our partners launched a home gardening program for Harvest to Health graduates in response to the interest and needs expressed by participants. Seventeen (17) program graduates received covered raised beds at their homes and participated in Spanish-language gardening classes. A new internship supported the gardening program in coordination, community building, and development of responsive learning opportunities and created a learning and leadership opportunity for an H2Hgraduate. Three Sisters Kitchen also initiated a new collaboration with the University of New Mexico's Occupational Therapy M.S. program. Two (2) graduate students, under close supervision by their professor, developed content to support training in assisting clients facing challenges with chewing, swallowing, and mobility. While utilizing a web-based curriculum is very accessible and can facilitate meaningful engagement with content, an exclusively online environment remained challenging. Despite challenges, program participants (students, facilitators, and presenters) report a strengthening in their technological skillset. Program educators upgraded their processes for managing logistics, including delivery of educational materials, surveying, and organizing virtual small out-of-class working groups. Via the Train-the-Trainer model, 6 HHAs facilitated Spanish-language Cooking Matters curriculum at Presbyterian sites and 5 participants developed and taught Spanish-language workshops at Senior Centers. Lastly, Three Sisters Kitchen created a second paid internship opportunity for an H2H graduate to manage coordination between the Harvest to Health and ReFresh fresh food access program. The intern improved communication with H2H participants in the program supported participation in the cooking classes and recommended program enhancements informed by her experience as a Home Health Aide.