



# Conectando Cosechas con la Salud Connecting Harvest to Health (H2H) 2021 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 in year three. 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 year three. 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.

Eleven outcome goals were fully met, eight outcome goals were partially met, four outcome goals were not met, and one outcome goal was not applicable in year three. The three goals partially met and one goal that was not met were due to adjustments made to the program during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program continued the H2H trainings and certification on a virtual platform in response to COVID-19. Collection methods were also transitioned to be completed online by Home Health Aids (HHA), seniors, and farmers, with the option to mail in responses.

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.

In year three, H2H has successfully:

- Provided **143,084** meals
- Purchased **12,103** pounds of local food for senior meals
- Purchased **1,159** pounds of local food for H2H classes
- Connected **696** seniors with nutritious meals through Meals on Wheels
- Assessed **638** seniors for nutrition needs
- Purchased food from **22** local farmers and producers
- Held **4** professional development workshops
- Successfully transitioned to online trainings

### Conectando Cosechas con la Salud/Connecting Harvest to Health YEAR 3

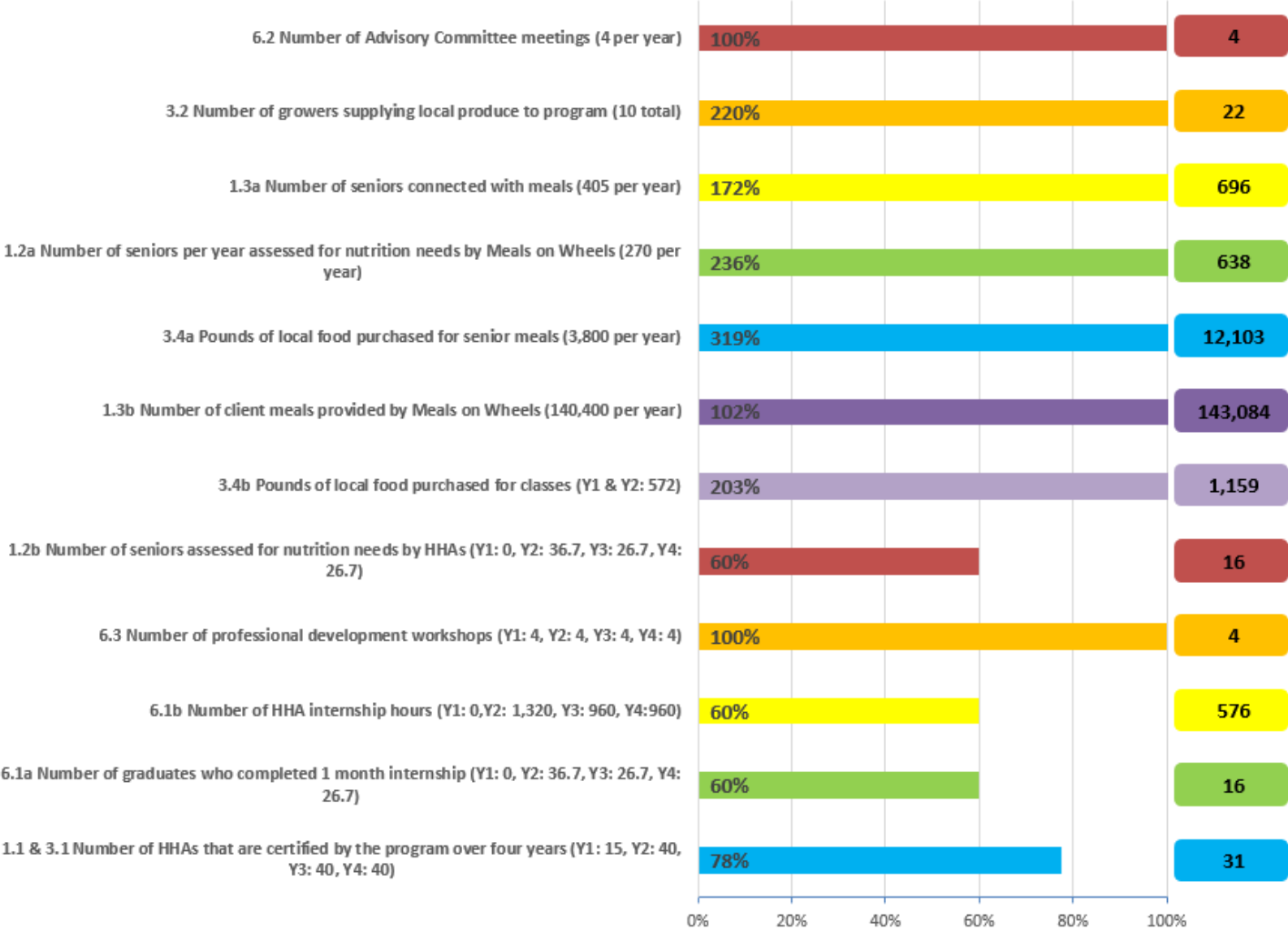


Figure 1. H2H High-Level Data

## Introduction

Fifteen-point five percent (15.5%) of the total population in New Mexico is food insecure<sup>1</sup>. Three primary models address senior food insecurity: congregate meals, home-delivered meals, and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program<sup>2</sup>. 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 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 September 1, 2020-August 31, 2021.

## Background

The prevailing barrier in 2021 was the COVID-19 pandemic. This has forced all in-person activities to pivot to a virtual platform which include 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

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

<sup>2</sup> 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 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 meal/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 bed, 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. 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, 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 programs 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 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 senior 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.

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

### QUESTION 1:

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

**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).

**Year 3 Outcome:**

Thirty-one (31) HHAs were certified during year 3. Partners did not fully meet their goal of training 40 HHAs in year 3. They were unable to meet this goal due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Partially Met**

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**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).

**Year 3 Outcome:**

- a) Meals on Wheels has assessed 638 seniors for food insecurity and well-being during year 3. Partners are on track to meet the total goal by assessing 270 seniors per year.
- b) HHAs have assessed 16 senior clients for food insecurity and well-being during year 3. Partners are at 50% of meeting their goal by the end of the project period.

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**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.

**Year 3 Outcomes:**

In year 3, 696 seniors were connected to meals, exceeding 172% of the goal for 405 seniors per year. Meals on Wheels provided 143,084 meals to seniors during year 3.

**Fully Met**

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**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)

**Year 3 Outcome:**

Sixty-four percent (64%) of HHAs reported on their six-month follow-up survey that they incorporated nutritious, diet-appropriate meals in client care.

**Not 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.

**Goal:**

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

**Partially Met**

**Year 3 Outcome:**

Due to the sensitivity of the questions, a proxy question was put in place for this evaluation question. Pre and post-training assessments were administered to HHAs to assess their change in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors on several topics. Eighty-six percent (86%) of HHAs reported an increase in knowledge about resources that are available while 14% said they had no change in knowledge, implying they were already aware.

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**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)

**Fully Met**

**Year 3 Outcome:**

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

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**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

**Fully Met**

**Year 3 Outcome:**

HHAs were assessed on their food need using the food insecurity questions, resulting in a 4% decrease 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.

**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

**Year 3 Outcome:**

Thirty-one (31) HHAs were certified during year 3. This does not meet their goal of 40 certified HHAs for year 3. H2H partners were unable to meet this goal due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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**Partially Met**

**Fully Met**

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**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

**Year 3 Outcome:**

During year 2, Meals on Wheels worked with 10 growers who supplied local produce for meal preparation for Meals on Wheels clients.

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**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

**Year 3 Outcome:**

A proxy question was put in place for this evaluation question. Pre and post-training assessments were administered to HHAs to assess their change in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors on several topics.

Eighty-six percent (86%) of HHAs reported an increase in knowledge about resources that are available while 14% said they had no change in knowledge, implying they were already aware.

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**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

**Year 3 Outcome:**

During year 3, Three Sisters Kitchen purchased 1,159 lbs. of produce. Meals on Wheels purchased 12,103 lbs. of local food. Total pounds of local food purchased between the two organizations equaled 13,262 lbs., which exceeded the goal for total pounds of local food for year 3.

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**Fully Met**

**Outcome 3.5:**

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

**Goal:**

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

**Fully Met**

**Year 3 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?**

**Partially 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

**Year 3 Outcome:**

Due to the sensitivity of the questions, a proxy question was put in place for this evaluation question. Pre-and post-training assessments were administered to HHAs to assess their change in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors on several topics. Eighty-six percent (86%) of HHAs reported an increase in knowledge about resources that are available while 14% said they had no change in knowledge, implying they were already aware.

**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

**Year 3 Outcome:**

Sixty-four percent (64%) 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.

**Goal:**

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

**Partially Met**

**Year 3 Outcome:**

Sixty-four percent (64%) of HHA graduates reported sourcing local produce, meat, eggs, or dairy for personal use.

**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

**Year 3 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)

**Year 3 Outcome:**

Six percent (6%) of HHA training graduates reported having the nutrition program included in the EnCasa Care Connections profile, 25% reported not having the nutrition program included on their profile, and 66% reported not having a profile created.

**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)

**Year 3 Outcome:**

Twelve (12%) of HHA graduates reported that they have additional opportunities because of the training.

**Not 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)

**Not Met**

**Year 3 Outcome:**

Due to the sensitivity of the question, a proxy question was used for the evaluation. Twelve percent (12%) of graduates reported having more 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

**Year 3 Outcome:**

- a) Three cohorts of graduates participated in one-month internships in year 3. Sixteen (16) total graduates completed the one-month paid internship program. For year 3, H2H partners completed 60% of the goal.
- b) Five hundred and seventy-six (576) internship hours valued at over \$10,300 were completed in year 3. For year 3, H2H partners completed 60% of the goal.

**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

**Year 3 Outcome:**

Presbyterian Community Health held one Advisory Committee meeting per quarter, totaling four meetings for year 3.

**Fully Met**

**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)

**Fully Met**

**Year 3 Outcome:**

Encuentro held one professional development workshop per quarter, totaling four workshops for year 3.

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**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

**Year 3 Outcome:**

Four HHAs completed the Cooking Matters train-the-trainer initiative.

**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

**Year 3 Outcome:**

Four reports to be compiled and analyzed were received from each of the partners in year 3.

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**Fully Met**