Virtual Summit Day 2

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00:02

Okay, we will go ahead and get started this morning. I want to welcome you today to the National Center for Mobility Management, mobility management connections. That's a mouthful Virtual Learning Summit. Today we have a great lineup of events, speakers and presentations today. I also want to let you all know that I do have Mobility Manager in the ATI president, which is the Association of travel training instructors with me today and she will be facilitating emceeing the first part of the summit this morning. Her name is Raven, Alexander. Raven, I believe that you should be hopping on here soon. Here she is, we'll let her connect here. Raven has been with city of Wichita transit for eight years, she holds the position of the mobility relations and grants manager. And so I won't spoil everything because she will actually be presenting for us a little bit later on this week. So you'll have the opportunity to see her she is our keynote for tomorrow morning. So I thank her for helping this morning because she has been super, super busy. This morning. I will hand things over for her today to go ahead and get started.

01:23

All right. Well, good morning, everyone. So just want to go in and introduce our first guest speaker today we have Mr. Milo booth and he is the Director of Office of Tribal Government Affairs in the Office of the Secretary at the Department of Transportation. As a director Mr. Booth leads the new tribal government affairs office and serves as an advisor on Tribal Affairs for the Secretary in all DLT leadership's as DLT implements the tribal transportation self governance program, and works collaboratively with tribes to strengthen our government to government relations. Additionally, he assist DLT program to assess coordinate and advice regarding impacts of current and proposed policies and actions on tribes helps ensure real and meaningful engagement takes place with tribes and assists DLT programs with tribal consultation. Additionally, he supports tribal liaisons and programs in all DLT modes and strengthening their relationship with tribes and works with tribes to improve their capabilities to effectively work with DLT so Mr. Booth has over 25 years of experience working on tribal state and federal agencies on infrastructure land management, energy resource development and emergency management. He is an Alaska Native and a sim she and and and a SAM she and enrolled in the and please correct me if I get this wrong? Met look cops Metlakatla Andean community in the Raven clan. So everyone please welcome Mr. Milo Bucha

03:11

Thank you Raven. Okay, in fact that Tony's new system, board Oh no, I need to get my booty Where are you shiana had too much I have to do. I'd like to add an atomic Maryland Dylan saga has our shoe wept psexec Washington, DC. Good morning, everybody. Thank you for inviting me here today to speak with you all. It's good to see all of you. I'll be at virtually. Milo booth, Director of the Office of Tribal Government Affairs. I am from malerkotla Alaska. Good job on that. By the way Raven, shout out I am from the Raven clan. So it's always nice to see people with the name Raven. I am a current employee out here and in Washington DC and serving in this capacity. And if I can share my screen, I'll go ahead and get us started in terms of the showing the presentation that I have here. On test. How's that? Is that? Getting? I see it? I'll take that as a yes. We can't know it yet. Or you can't see it. Okay. Okay, that is not good, then. Let's try that again. Are you guys able to see my screen

04:28

I can't hear anybody. Go back to the Zoom

04:35

is still showing just you? Okay.

04:38

Let me see if this little work here. Okay. I think that is that better? Yeah. Sharing now. Okay, excellent. Let's see if we can start. And can you see me there Kevin? Okay. Yeah, yeah, you can see the presentation. Okay. So again, I am from Mountain cattle, Alaska and I use this picture in a lot of my presentations for us to to, primarily for one reason is I am born and raised cattle, Alaska. I'm a forester by trade. And I got my introduction to transportation, working directly with the federal government when I worked for my tribe back in 1998. This picture is taken just a few years ago from a road that was built at the time by the largest multi agency project in the country, which involves department transportation, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the mountain Catlin and community, Alaska, do t Alaska marine highway, so on and so forth. And so this is what transportation looks like in Indian country, right? Not every tribe is, is an island out in an archipelago and Alaska. But the rural aspect, as our secretary says lot is, Indian country does sit in a transportation desert. And if you look at this, you can see, well, you can't see the road, but you can see the village from the road. And this provided really vital access to the tribe. And they now have more reliable access to the next town over that has ferry service that has has Alaska Airlines that has options to get out of the state of Alaska. But that said, I'll back up here a little bit. We do handle everything on behalf of the Secretary in regards to the tribal portfolio with all 574 federally recognized tribes, and tribal organizations that primarily handle transportation portfolios, be at Inter tribal Transportation Association, National Congress of American Indians, so on and so forth. There's a number of organizations out there that that we engage with. And additionally, we work internally with all the modal agencies to ensure that our tribal programs are functioning properly, be it at the consultation level, program development, policy, writing, technical assistance, and kind of everything in between. But prior to know right now, a lot of people talking about the bipartisan infrastructure law as they should. It's the largest infrastructure package in our lifetime. And it did a lot of changes here at the department. Obviously, the monetary aspects are probably what get most of the headlines. When you look at the raised grant the safe streets for all reconnecting communities, the mega the rural picker grant, any grant right has had a positive impact from the big ol. But when you look at federally recognized tribes, and how they saw the bipartisan infrastructure law as it was getting drafted, tribes were very vocal about a couple things. Prior to the big oil. I was housed in the Office of Government Affairs. And tribes were very vocal about that they didn't like that they wanted their own office, if you will. And so they lobbied really hard and worked with legislators to get it into law, that there is that there will be an Office of Tribal Government Affairs in the flesh. And I'm actually sitting in that right now. I'm located at seven West here at DOD headquarters in Washington, DC, we opened our doors this past October. I know the PIO was past, you know, two, three years ago. But the the the opening of our office had more to do with COVID delays in terms of getting equipment here to build site office. But nevertheless, it also did another thing to to our program is that it elevated our political leadership from the rank of Deputy Assistant Secretary to Assistant Secretary. And those are two things that tribes have been very vocal about over the last decade plus. In my time here in Washington, DC I've, I've spent a number of years over at FEMA as their National Tribal Affairs Advisor, I spent a couple years at the BIA as the Senior Advisor to the director. And over the course of those years, I would engage with tribes very similar to what I do now. But this would always come up. And the fact that tribes fought for this over any kind of monetary opportunity really speaks volumes to how they wanted to see representation put forth in terms of leadership and an actual creating a space for the Native American Programs. When I talk about tribes, I am talking about federally recognized tribes, of which as I said, there's 574, we're bound by the federal definition of that. I would note to that the Office of Federal acknowledgment otherwise known as ofa, for those of you who may not be familiar with that, is run out of the Department of Interior. And then the BIA the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Indian services posts twice a year to the Federal Register, a list of all the federally recognized tribes. I always bring that up to say one thing, if you do pull that list of just to look at it out of curiosity, please don't count out the names of each tribes. I know it doesn't add up to 574. There are reasons for that some tribes have existing federal contracts under various names that they didn't choose that may have been given to them by the federal government, and since then they've done over a name change, so on so forth, so you get the idea there can be, I think it ranges between 574 and 580, if you're actually to count them all out in the Federal Register, but this is where we get our direction. It's not to say that as a department, we won't engage state recognized tribes, but our Inter governmental affairs team would interact with them in regards to the federal programs that I'm talking about. I'll talk about how and why we engage and work with with tribes. Looking across the federal government from that perspective, I think it'll give you kind of an idea of why we do what we do here at the Department of Transportation, and again, across the government as well. Again, I'm from Alaska. And if you ever look at race, ethnicity boxes, you know, American Indian slash Alaska Native is always one of the boxes there. But if you look at like the number of laws that have been written, Supreme Court decisions, I know, there's been some in the news, the last couple years, treaties are always a big thing that get brought up from time to time, executive orders, I'll talk about some of those as well. But this all stems from tribal sovereignty. So the federally recognized tribes are essentially looked at as, as a sovereign entities and sovereign nations no different than, like the leader of Canada, or Brazil, or, you know, grab a country, any country. And so when we talk about 574, we talk about engaging leadership structures that are sovereign, and that have the right to self determination under certain legal authorities. And so we want to make sure that we understand that not every single tribe, you know, there is no one size fits all, you probably hear that a lot. Looking at some of the tribes. For instance, I'll look at the Navajo Nation, where my boss, the Assistant Secretary Orlando tellers from they're very similar to how the US government is set up that a president vice president, they have their own department, transportation, their own Supreme Court, so on and so forth. Where I'm from the mountain Callinan. community, we are very small, we have a little over 2000 tribal members, we're led by a council of 12, tribal leader who was the elected mayor. And so we don't have a well fleshed out tribal government in terms of how large it is. Now, we do handle all the same, same challenges and programs that someone like Navajo would, but on a much smaller scale. And, and, you know, I know, those are probably two tribes on the extreme ends of size, Navajo Nation, I think is bigger than the state of West Virginia. In terms of geographical size, they have about 400,000, enrolled members. Again, I've mentioned my tribe has little over 2000 members, and we got about 150,000 acres. So really big differences in terms of who we're talking about. Looking at the jurisdictions, tribes do have the authority to make and create their own laws. They're not bound, obviously, by by what their neighboring jurisdictions which aren't tribal would fall under. And we do want to make sure that we're aware of that, because how that plays out in terms of the tribal government itself will really affect how we interact with the tribes. Or maybe we don't look at a number of policies, I put this up just to kind of talk about that self determination arrow looking at 1961 to present. So when you hear people talk about, well, what does this really have to do with you? Or how does this affect you, I mean, I can literally look at like, going back to the age of assimilation for my grandparents, right. So these are people that are actually new, and some of them are still with us today. So this, when we talk about this, it's not in some historical, massive concept. It's literally in the lifetime of people who are still working and leading these tribes today. So but that being said, if you look at a map of where the tribes are a lot of them as you can see, our west of the Mississippi. Being from Alaska, I take a little bit of offense to how small Alaska is represented on this map. But that's conversation for another time. Of the 574. Trump, there are 229 of them in the state of Alaska. And so that's almost half of them, with most of the all the other ones. Again, being down on the west coast here in the lower 48 sort of gives you an idea of what we're talking about in terms of, of where the tribal Indian country is at. So when we talk about it, this is where we're looking. You can see Oklahoma, Arizona, southern Louisiana, and then you get really small, small, smaller land based tribes out in the in the Nevada and into California and Alaska.

14:41

How do we engage with them? Looking at just on a departmental level, not exactly a federal level across the federal government. We do have an internal travel policy and consultation plan. Our secretary just signed this in August of 2023. This has been around for a while but it hadn't been updated in over 20 years. ers. And so we went out for a couple rounds of tribal consultation, we took a lot of comments. And when I say consultation, we're talking about engaging the federally recognized tribes, we tell them, here's something that we're going to do, please give us your comments. And here's the comment window, we'll set up dates for when we can meet in person will be at usually at a conference just so we know there'll be a lot of tribes there. And then we'll also do the same thing virtually. So we'll let them know. Here's how to get us your comments. If you want to talk to us directly. Here's the virtual options, or here's the in person pieces. I did put the website in there, if you want to look at that when you get a chance. I know I shared this earlier. So you should have a copy of this. Looking again, stepping away from the department looking holistically at the government. You may or may not have heard of the White House Council on the American affairs. This is something that was stood up under the Obama It was actually started in the Obama administration. The Biden administration reconvened this, Secretary Buttigieg does sit on that on the council as a principal, as do all the sectors across the government. We primarily have our involvement through the energy infrastructure and Economic Development Committee, Assistant Secretary Taylor and I sit in on the day to day operations of this, and we're on a number of subcommittees as well. And it ranges in broad diversity of what some of those subcommittees can be. I bring up the native language revitalization effort is something that we are involved in. We take a lot of our safety campaigns we asked tribes to, to translate them into their languages, and then we would store these translations on do t.gov for future language learners to use. Compare that to on the economic development energy infrastructure committee, we do want to get out grants, grants, grants, apply, apply, apply, we need to get that money. Yeah, right. The way are the opportunities here at D. O T were written into existence via Congress is through the Notice of Funding Opportunity, competitive grant formula, tribes see the opportunities, they apply for it same as the state and local jurisdiction, and they get those applications in and then again, and then again, and then again, and we are looking, or we are trying to prevent, I would say grant fatigue, we don't want any of our tribal partners to miss out on opportunities, because either a they didn't know about it, and it's our fault, or B, they just don't have the capacity to keep applying, we want to make sure that we address both of those, either through the technical assistance piece, working across the aisle in the government with our friends who may have more hands on technical assistance, such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or maybe Department of Agriculture, or any of the other federal entities out there that really assist tribes. But we want to make sure that we do a number of projects through the White House Council on Native American Affairs, we have what's called deliverables. This culminates at a tribal nation Summit, that the President himself hosts and he brings in all his cabinet and we meet the tribes over the course of a couple of days. The deliverables can range anything from new policies to meeting engagements to symposiums and whatnot to our tribes can have sort of their own siloed opportunities to come in and engage us and really work with us on things that are related to infrastructure. Some of those examples here, you can get the idea of what I mentioned earlier, looking at campaigns, symposiums job fairs, we just hosted a Virtual Job Fair for the department just last month, and we had a number of tribal college and university students log in and really engaged us through that. So we're really happy about that. But we want to keep that momentum going. Because one thing we're learning is when we talk about the federal government to Native Americans on an individual level, the the idea of coming to work for us really kind of is already pre cast, if you will of Oh, you mean the BIA the Bureau of Indian Affairs Oh, you mean the Indian Health Service, all right chest to entities that are really entrenched in in Americans lives either because they have clinics that the tribe has contacted via via the self governance program or the Bureau of Indian Affairs who has an office on a lot of reservations where they have a big superintendent who kind of handles the management that almost the federal government interface for the tribes. And so we're competing with that when we talk about come do a summer intern at D O T comm apply for a new job here after you get out of college. And we want to make sure that they know about these opportunities and so as broad and diverse as we can get. We are working in that in that direction will work and across all of our modal agencies. And we're getting a lot of good engagement doing so. I know I mentioned the self governance aspect and sort of a 30,000 foot view is tribal self governance is the authority of that tribe federally recognized tribes have to administer federal programs on behalf of the government. So they've had it for a number of years over at the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Service respectively. It was brought to the Department of Transportation under the fast snack of 2015. And then it was put into Final Rule via Negotiated Rulemaking committee that culminated posting in the Federal Register in June of 2020. June 1, to be specific, and so it went live, if you will, October 1 2020. And we have three tribes in the program right now who are active in the self governance program. To give you an idea, if you look at the Indian Health Service, I think they have almost 300 tribes who are in their self governance and the BIA has somewhere between two and 300 as well. So there's a number of tribes who are using self governance as a tool, if you will, to administer federal programs. And it's growing here at the department. So we're the newest kid on the block, if you will, with self governance. We work with tribes kind of educate them on what our program is how it differs from BIA and IHS, how they can get in. a picture's worth 1000 words, I think this one is a combination of 1001 or, or quite frankly, more than that. This is the Cherokee Indian Nation, June 7, the 2022. So kind of poetic that it was almost two years to the day that we got our first drive into the program. That's Deputy Secretary Polly Trottenberg on the left sitting down on the table with principal chief Hoskin from Cherokee Indian Nation signing their their federal compacts and funding agreements. That's Assistant Secretary teller in the tan blazer sitting there, and that's our senior advisor. Eldridge Onko. I myself was not there, I was out sick. And then also you'll notice our secretary Pete Buttigieg is not in there either. He came down on COVID On that same day, so he couldn't make the trip. But this was significant because we do have our leadership here at the highest levels of transportation, who get down into the, into the nitty gritty with our tribal partners, when they're signing these the I have the authority to sign on behalf of Secretary. But our secretary and our deputy and our Assistant Secretary, they all want to be there, they want to be the ones put pen to paper. And we've been doing so since then, we've had two more tribes. As I mentioned, we've had the okay when gay, Pablo out of New Mexico signed with they came out here and did a signing ceremony with our secretary just about I think three months ago now. And then, three weeks ago, we had Citizen Potawatomi, Indian Nation sign, Assistant Secretary teller went down and did that signing ceremony. So we have a lot of involvement. We're negotiating with a number of tribes right now to join the program. And as we move forward, this will just grow and grow and grow. Again, sort of a high level step back on again, just to rehash what we do. We handle everything and anything on behalf of the Tribal portfolio in regards to what the Secretary of Transportation is involved in via technical assistance, funding opportunities, consultations, both policy based project based and really across the government through the White House Council on Native American Affairs. I know I'm really moving through that fairly quickly, I do want to get to any questions that you have. Lastly, sort of a snapshot of the leadership in this office, the political leadership is Orlando teller, as Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs. And then our senior advisors, elder John CO, as well. So we have a lot going on, we're really excited. We've been a growing program, we're soon to be seven people, which, you know, as far as federal entities go, that's pretty small, but from a new tribal program. I think it's quite impactful. And I want to thank you guys for your time for inviting me here to speak again today. I look forward to the rest of this event. And again, thank you

23:44

all right. Thank you for that my low. Does anyone have any questions for us?

24:04

And you can place those in the chat.

24:24

All right, nothing wrong. No questions. Thank you.

24:27

Well, thank you. All right. Well, we can go on to our next speaker. And that is going to be Kevin to FOIA. And Kevin, if you want to, are you able to go ahead and share your screen while I start on your bio. And we got you still on mute.

24:48

Oh, I'm sorry. Let me get this out here. Okay. All right.

24:54

So everyone Kevin Sequoia is the manager for Cherokee transit in North care. Elena join the National Arts half review board in the fall of 2022. Claire key transit is operated by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, which is part of is which is part of Kevin's lineage My apologies, along with Cherokee Nation, Comanche and Santa Clara Pueblo tribes, born in Espanola, New Mexico, Kevin Rose words in all languages of his ancestors. He received his education in Native American boarding schools in New Mexico and in Oklahoma, where he learned how to depend upon and respect people from other tribes whose cultures he felt were similar, but not the same. All right, Kevin, you can take it away.

25:45

Good morning, everybody. My name is Kevin's flora. That's pretty good. Roundup about me, I guess. So I work at Cherokee transit in Cherokee, North Carolina. We're part of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. We're separate from Cherokee Nation. So we're in the western most part of North Carolina in the Great Smoky Mountains about 30 miles from Tennessee. anybody's familiar with the area? Is everybody able to see my screen? I guess my what I'm sharing

26:22

it's sharing the right one, I guess. Okay. So hopefully you're looking at a picture of our office or transit office. So recently, it was renamed after our former her former manager Miss Cathy Little John. She, he she was she did was kind of reestablish public transit here and Cherokee. She piggybacked with one of the counties nearby of Swain County, and was able to procure, I think, three, three bands, and it started out more like a service for our senior citizens, and then it just grew from there. So let's go in here. Okay, so So our mission statement, our mission statement is to provide me it's situated here, provide safe, dependable transit, transportation reasonable cost the residents and visitors at the Qualla boundary. The Qualla boundary is the main area of our tribal lands. We also have some worry we cover about five counties Cherokee County, Graham County, Jackson County and Swain County in western North Carolina. But the Qualla boundary is the main the main land that we have. The land that we have in Cherokee in Graham County is probably about an hour away from the main boundary. So we do have in a satellite office in what is called Robbinsville Snowbird area, and what we do is we just we will provide, while we consider two different types of transportation. So we have what we call public transportation. And while we call mobility and most of our public transportation services covered the main boundary, what we do is we provide we provide a fixed deviated service here in town and in our communities. So we work Monday through Friday 645 to 1130 1145. We usually around are wrapping up and headed out for the night. When we first started, we were just doing days. We were doing about five days a week, and then it grew to we got our casino established, we had a lot of ridership from the different hotels, so we actually went seven days a week at one time. But as the casino grew and began having hotels on their property, the ridership declined around town. So what we did was we kind of had to scale back. So we have three routes that cover our three big communities which have left town by town and because of communities. We run into each community about nine to 10 times a day, and we each and Alana each routes probably about 11 to 15 miles so we'll go out and then make a loop and come back to town and people come from the communities to town to do whatever they need to do shop handle business. We have we give our senior citizens ride to a local senior center for communal lunch. They give them right back home. People come out for medical appointments that are local Indian hospital. And then we have two routes in town that cover two loops on each side of town, and then crossover so that somebody can transfer from one side of town to the other. And we try to keep those hidden each side will probably about every 30 minutes. And that's probably our biggest ridership. I think people go into work in the same point shopping or just doing personal business. We also have what we call our mobility department, which essentially is non emergency medical transportation. So in our mobility department, we, we use grant funding to transport passengers to medical appointments if they don't qualify for Medicaid. We also do Medicaid transportation with three different counties. We do work with Swing County, Jackson County and Graham County. And we take people here locally, and we also transport within the state as far as about six hours away, which is like Winston Salem, Durham, that's probably the farthest we go. But while we do is just the we're not really we're a managed care state. But we don't have managed care. We don't provide managed care transportation. What we do is since we are in a tribe and some Native Americans are exempt from being on managed care, so the majority of our ridership is Native American, we do have a few that are non Native American, but their trips are usually local and nature's choose to pay the fair to get to where they need to go. mobility services are a little different than our public services. They run Monday through Friday from 745 until 430. Usually, usually we're going to local local towns just just not too far, like Silva, which is about 10 miles away, Bryson's 10 miles. Asheville is about an hour away, we have a lot of appointments there. And then we also provide transportation to the dialysis center locally. And it's Monday, Wednesday and Friday. And we have two shifts, or two bands that cover a morning shift. So it runs pretty constant, when rain, snow, whatever, we just keep that going. So a little bit more about us. I felt like I'm once we began offering transportation in 1997 primarily for medical appointments for seniors. And then we initiated public routes and established our town routes. And cat that's a picture of Kevin litter John, our former former manager. She's demonstrating our wave down service. So we have stops around town we also have you can call in and schedule, same day appointments. Most of the we're literally unique compared to the transit systems around us. We don't we do same day scheduling on the fly scheduling. So if you're calling for a ride or big Cove, and you call before the vans actually coming back to town that you can, you're easily able to get get on and just make it to where you need to go. I'm not sure this is a map of our this is off our website. And it shows our town stop switch. We're currently updating our website. So some of these names will change. Because some of the some of the locales have kind of changed some stops we don't use anymore. So if you can see the red dots is what we call a river trail. And we cycled through them. Them stops about every 30 minutes. And then orange is our mountain trail. So this is pretty much our township. We've got the food line, which is our grocery shopping. And then we have a few fast food places. And then up here where we're located. The transit office we have a lot of tribal buildings in that area. And then we also have our cultural attractions so and then this is a map. This is a map of our zones which we charged by zone fares. So if you start a one zone and you cross over to another, then you're paying another dollar depending on how far you go you could possibly pay up to about $6 But usually it's anywhere from one to three that someone is writing and that is pretty much about the gist of our system I felt like if you have any questions about what we do or what we what services we provide I'd gladly try to answer the bakey.

35:52

Okay, well I thought we were gonna end with Anjali was gonna pick up but does anyone have any questions?

36:11

Let's see not seeing any more questions for me, did you see any in the chat,

36:17

I just saw one pop up. And it's for Kevin, do you coordinate with other transits outside your area. As far

36:27

as trips go, we do coordinate with Graham County, which is located in the Robbinsville area. Sometimes if they have overflow with their any empty, what we'll do is we'll pick up the overflow. And we do pick up since our tribal lands are kind of checkered in that area. So we do pick up a lot of the tribal members that they can't easily get to. And as as an agency, I'm on the transit advisory board for Jackson County, which is about 10 miles over. So I haven't really we have pretty good really, really good relationships with like, Graham County, Jackson County and Macon County. But recently they had they have a new director, so I haven't had much time interaction with them. But we do we do our best to coordinate trips.

37:27

All right, another question. How can communities engage representatives of tribes and coordination work? And what are proven strategies to improve diverse representation of community planning?

37:42

I think just starting at the transit system, reaching out to the local transit system reaching out to us to speak with us and just make connection. And then going up the ladder you kind of you may have to engage with tribal council and just come in present yourself. I think that's one of the one of the best strategies is just to, to let people know who you are and what you're trying to accomplish. Our tribal council is really good. They are really supportive of what we do. And anytime we bring anything a resolution for something that we need, they're usually in full support. So

38:31

have you had any challenges doing the wave down service on a fixed route?

38:38

So it here in the mountains we do, some of the roads that we have are just two lane mountainous roads curvy. So if we have somebody that's on the road walking, and they try to wave us down, sometimes it's not easily a play, it's not a place we can easily start. That's one of the major challenges. So what we'll do is we'll try to make it to the closest pull off or drive driveway and try to stop. But it's not very often that we see that we'll see more waved down service in town where there's a lot of sidewalks. And we'll have people sit at stops. So we'll always check the stop and whether or not we received a call for a ride or not. We'll just call in and check make sure that they they're not waiting for somebody. Even if they're waiting at a stop, they may be going into one of the communities and they may have not called and then they'll just talk to the driver and the driver can get their trip scheduled scheduled to dispatch. But in during the during the cold months. Anytime that the temperature is extremely low or windshields extremely low. What we'll do is we'll offer pretty fair service for people that are kind of outside it's not walking to their destination we'll just pull over and ask them if they need rides. So just to get him out of the cold it seems to work while there.

40:06

So from Judy, she says that we have been looking at developing community hubs, places where the community can access transit services and other support services, healthcare etc. Have you implemented any of these hubs in your community?

40:23

No, we have community centers and in the different communities, but as far as transportation hubs and services, there's not really here up in on the main boundary. There are, there is the satellite office in the Snowbird area, which is smaller, smaller area, tribal land, they have their own center there. And they they offer the same services that are on the main boundary. And we also have a satellite service there with three drivers. So there we can have people call their scheduled appointments, even just to ride to town or to ride to up to the main hospital here in Cherokee or even regionally to some of the specialists offices. That's, that's really a really good idea, though. I think that would work well in it, maybe even I just set up a transit station within the communities, that would be really cool.

41:27

There's another question. Let me see if I'm reading this right. Have you all looked at connecting with any Uber or Lyft? Or any alternative modes of transportation? For the tribal communities? Have you been approached?

41:42

No, we haven't been approached, we see Uber but as far as we know, there's there might be two or three and charity that we've seen. Our drivers are pretty paid pretty good attention, this, the new businesses coming up like taxis and stuff like that, so that they can offer an alternative if somebody's not able to ride with us. But we had actually had one of our employees that did Uber and on a side, but it's there's not really a great demand for it.

42:12

There's actually a follow up to that, or they send it directly to me, is there. You mentioned the taxi voucher. So I think that's what they're talking about here. As far as alternatives, would there be a voucher program in some places they have with Uber or Lyft, getting people to health care, or food pantries, or for longer distances for services, maybe specialist services.

42:38

I don't know if it would involve Uber, but any anything, there is some alternative transit transit services in some of the towns that do medical transportation. We had a client that had to go to Windsor had to go to Winston Salem three times a week. And we were able to provide the trip for the first three weeks. In its ongoing. There was a transportation transportation service in Franklin, North Carolina. I'm not sure if it's still in business. But they handled that trip for about a good year and a half. And then that client came back to us when we were able to provide that service. So yeah, I think there are a few in but that was a Medicaid trip. So I'm not sure if there's like any kind of funding set aside, outwardly. But within our tribe, we have a couple of funding, places funding sources that we can look for. We have a family safety program, family support, which sometimes if there's a family that's in need of transportation, though, sometimes they'll give gas vouchers or they'll even pay for a trip with the transit system to get them where they need to go.

43:56

is looking for other questions. It's a great questions, everyone.

44:04

So what is the best way to approach and work with tribal communities to coordinate?

44:13

In my opinion, I think just reaching out and just reaching out to the programs and talking with the staff and talking with administration. And then that can lead I think that leads upwardly to like tribal leadership each so we have we have 14 I'm sorry, 12 council members, for different communities. So we have six communities represented. And then we have vice chief and chief principal chief. So he the when you reach out to when you reach out to the programs, a lot of them have connections with their community council members. So and I think once you've established that connection, and you have support for what you're trying to what you're trying to do. They can they can forward that their support as well and just kind of get everybody on board.

45:15

All right. And then what are some steps to connect systems?

45:21

In my experience to is just kind of reaching out and making a connection with the different programs. I know we had we had a pretty good relationship with Macon County before the director transferred, but just talking to we have we used to have a local, regional meeting regional, regional A, and just kind of talking about issues that we're facing, and then coordinating what would work best.

45:57

All right. Does anyone have any additional questions for Kevin?

46:09

All right, well, thank you so much, Kevin. Oh, nope. We do have another one. No, nevermind, that was a comment that's gonna be shared with Judy. So thank you so much for your presentation. That was very insightful and very helpful for those communities to begin to be work with tribes.

46:29

Thank you for having me.

46:34

Thank you very much, Kevin. We will pause just a little bit. Our next group of speakers are trying to log in here a couple of little technical difficulties. And that's okay. So just bear with us. And thank you very much Raven for assisting today. I think I know the minute you'll have to jump off for another meeting. So I appreciate that.

47:03

No worries. My pleasure. Thank you. And you guys enjoy.

47:09

While we are waiting, if you have any other questions in general, please let us know in the chat. And then also drop just a few highlights that you've enjoyed from the summit, any other presentations and speakers. And we know that we also have a survey for you all to fill out. But if there's anything else that you all would like to hear learn more about as we continue to develop these types of beanies, please let us know. Good morning, Dre. I think you're gonna meet.

47:40

Mary, go. Good morning, everybody. All

47:43

right. So our next speaker, for speakers that are coming up, they we seen Dre about a month ago, he graced us with his awesome mapping skills on the food access universal mobility, mapping to better food access actually was the topic of that webinar. And I just posted on the Instagram site for you all to view it more in depth. Today, Dre Taylor, and Jessica Kerr, who's with harvesters Food Bank, she's the Director of Programs and food and she should be hers is still connecting, we'll be presenting on connecting food access and transportation Dre is going to do just a slight overview. For those who may not have seen the in depth webinar. Like I said, you could reference that one about mapping and kind of easy tools that you can use for your organization. So whether you're a Mobility Manager, or transportation planner with agency, a school as a pantry, a church, any type of organization, just easy tools that you can use, because we know that everyone may not have access to GIS. And it doesn't have to be super, super detailed data involved mapping. And then Jessica will present on a really, really neat program that they have which are pop up pantries at bus stops. So Dre, I'll let you go ahead and start and take it away.

49:08

Perfect. All right, everybody. So let me get ready to share my screen. Let's see. sure that's the right one. Perfect. So today I'm going to be going over a broad overview of what food access and transportation looks like and the Douglas County region. So let's get started here. So Lawrence Douglas County we have what's called a food systems plan. And this is something that a lot of communities actually do not have. This is produced by our Food Policy Council and what this does is it details how we are going to view food and sustainability within our community. It is a long range plan and it touches on everything pertaining to how do we get the food from the farm to the stores. How do we get out Um, food from how do people get food from the store to their house? And that includes? Are they walking? Are they biking? Are they driving? Are they taking the bus. And so this does touch a lot on transportation, which is a really nice aspect because most plans, whether they're food access related or healthcare related, whatever, they do not really mention the transportation component, and transportation is one of those key determinants of health. We also have a Lawrence pedestrian plan. And so what this pedestrian plan does it details where sidewalks are going to be the width of builds sidewalks, or shared use paths. As we know, most sidewalks in most regions are going to be like that standard, two and a half, three feet, in which case of two individuals and wheelchairs were riding in opposing directions, they want to would have to get into the grass in order to actually make it past. And so this is helping prioritize, where are the people trying to get to. And based off of that, like, these high priority locations are places where we need to really focus on filling those sidewalk gaps. And so we are working with other communities to help in a house with the MPO. And so we're helping the other communities within our county to identify priority routes and get those places paved so that individuals who may not have access or choose not to use an automobile, they can still get to those priority destinations, which oftentimes include grocery stores and food pantries. In my work, I work with like a lot of social service agencies. And we have a coalition of Human Services. And one of the things that we have our list of like community meals, we have list of food pantries, we have lists of lots of things. But most of the content that is on those websites are in list form. And it's not super easy to access or to view. And so if you look on the left side of the page, you'll see like Jubilee Cafe, and it has the address their hours or phone number in the description. And same with Lincoln dining room. And so when you're a human community member looking at that, it doesn't really, it's not welcoming, it's not bright, it's not colorful, your eyes don't travel around it naturally. But most individuals are accustomed to looking at a calendar and identifying based off the calendar locations and stuff like that. And so what I did is I simply just took the stuff from the list, plugged it into an Outlook calendar and exported it. And from there, it's easy to see that, you know, on Sundays, and Sunday, Tuesday, Thursdays, and Fridays and Saturdays that you can get food from link dining on Tuesdays and Fridays, you can get free food from Jubilee cafe. And so when it comes to like mapping food, part of this is not just like actual maps that we we think are part of this, it's actually making our information visual. So we are making it so that people can understand it and access it a lot easier. When it comes to us mapping food mapping food does not always have to be something that we do from scratch. The USDA has a food desert map, they give it a slightly different name. But in essence, that's what that is. And based off of this, it divides your community into the census block groups that are pre established by the federal government. And you can click on any of those census tracts. And it will break down the demographics and the situations going there on the ground based off of the most recent data set that they may have incorporated at the time. And so when I made this slide 2019 was the most recent data that was available. And this will tell you how many housing units are without a vehicle how many total housing units are in this census tract. It can break it down by age race, who's receiving SNAP benefits and more. And so if you're really trying to do like some, some research and trying to understand what's what's it look like on your community, and you don't have time to do lengthy, robust surveys, this is a really great tool that has all that data generally compiled in one location that will really help you paint the picture. I know that harvesters is pretty nationwide and they have a food locator on their website. I know harvesters is here on the call as well and so I'm not going to spend too much time on this. But when it comes to mapping food sometimes you don't have to recreate the wheel. Sometimes you can add a link or embed something onto your website. So that People can access and learn where some of these locations already exist. When it comes to mapping food and transportation, we do a lot of transportation planning, we have a fixed route system called Launch transit. And one of their initiatives is to make every route a strong route. And what this means is part of this is making sure that there is access to high priority destinations via the fixed route system, such as your grocery stores, healthcare facilities, government offices, and certain social service agencies in town that are high needs. This has been really instrumental and getting people access to things that they normally may not have access to. Because like I said, like, not everybody has a car and not every sidewalk can lead you to every place. And sometimes, like in the situation of Lawrence, our DMV is on the very north outskirts of town. And so getting to the DMV to renew your license or to do whatever you need to do there would be inaccessible to most people. And so we actually have a bus route that does take people to that northern edge of town so that they can get their stuff handled. Another aspect of mapping food is to understand where your grocery stores are at. And your food pantries are at where your farmers markets are at. And paying special attention to where your ethnic grocery stores are, right. So we have a African Caribbean grocery store, we have an Indian cafe and grocery store. So these are things that are very high importance to us. Because when we think of food we just think of, we need to make sure that an individual has stuff in their stomach. But food goes beyond just making sure a person is full. Many people and many cultures view food as historical tying you to your ancestors, to your culture, to your religion to your people. And so making sure that individuals in your community have access to not just, you know, Walmart, Dylan's and HyVee, but making sure that they have access to grocery stores that provide things that reminded them of home and that tied them back to their culture is especially important. If you do have the technical ability, I am housed in the MPA when I have some GIS experience, there are you could use ArcGIS Pro to actually map where certain populations of your community are clustered, I worked with just food, our Mobile Food Pantry, or our local food pantry, who also has a Mobile Food Pantry unit to map where their clients are living. So they sent me all their client data. They scrubbed like personal information from it, of course. But based off of their addresses, I was able to make a map that shows where are all of their people that they're serving, where are those people living? Where are those people clustered? This information will help detail or to help influence your fixed route systems potentially, it'll help influence where your outreach events are located. Prior to doing this type of mapping with the NPO, the Mobile Food Pantry would go over to the northwest side of town to Rock Chalk Park and do their Mobile Food Pantry and giveaways there. But for some unknown reason, you know,

58:43

show out was very low, they didn't get enough people going there and didn't understand completely why. But after mapping this, they're able to make more informed decisions on where they are going to locate that Mobile Food Pantry. And so these yellow spots are high density areas where more individuals are housed. And so you have a situation where lots of just food clients are condensed in this region, this region up here. And based off of that they can move their Mobile Food Pantry to those locations. The Lawrence bus system can also make sure that, hey, you know, individuals who are using this type of service are more than likely going to be underserved in many ways and lacking transportation is one of those. And so what we can do here is we can make sure that we have multiple bus routes that cross through this area that go to different parts of town to make sure that they have access to grocery stores, health care, government offices, in our in our city, most of the health care facilities are going to be off Sixth Street and off of Iowa. So, optometrist, dentists and then your healthcare facilities are going to be in like that T zone. And so we have to make sure that we have bus routes in those regions. And then if your agency does not have the finances or the technical knowledge how to use advanced software like ArcGIS Pro, and you don't have access to a local university or your public works, or planning department would don't want to work with you on developing a map system like that. Something that's really easy to use, that's very easy and very plug and play is Google mind map. So you have to be very specific with how you like look it up the first time. So you have to say Google Maps. So how I have it here on the presentation, you have to type that in, and it should be their first link. But what this is, is a pretty simple, almost a drag and drop type of software where it's integrated into Google, you can create categories. For this map that's here on the screen, I opened up the Google my map and I looked up grocery stores. And based off of that, it grouped up all the grocery stores in the city of Lawrence. And I clicked accept and added that to a layer. And then I changed the icon. You can change icons as a group or individually. I did the same with medical facilities. And then you can add different points of interest, you can create a legend, you can embed this onto your website, they have a line drawing tool where you can click and drag and outline the transit route in your community if you have one. And if you'd like a more robust example, Burlington Vermont has a an interactive mind map that has information on their food pantries it has if you click on any of the food pantries or distribution sites, it will detail the hours of operation. This is a really fun and easy tool to learn how to use. And I think that any agency that is participating in you know, food access, or health care access, or connecting people to social services should use this site, and then they should get this embedded onto their website. Anjali, I think that's all I have for you for now. Let me stop sharing. Did you have time for questions? Are we doing those at the end? We

1:02:26

will pause for questions at the end. And we'll move right on to Jessica. Jessica. You can share yours

1:02:34

in morning, thank you I will share right now.

1:02:48

Everyone's seen the presentation. Yes, we can see it. Okay. Perfect. Thank you. Thank you. I will just jump right in. Thank you so much for allowing a few minutes to share. Thank you Dr for sharing the information too. I will be brief on my slides. And there's some nice tie ins with I'm sure what you have already been talking about during your sessions. I'm sorry, I couldn't join you a little bit earlier. So I'm Jessica Kerr. I'm the Director of Programs with harvesters where the food bank in the Kansas City Metro region. And we're going to talk a little bit today about some things that we're doing around food plus transportation. As a brief bit of background harvesters is a member of Feeding America, the national network of food banks across the country, they're over just around 200 food banks that cover every county plus Puerto Rico. And so wherever you may be or wherever your practice might take you there are food banks and food pantries in every area across the country. Our mission at harvesters is that we mobilize the power of our community to create equitable access to nutritious food and address the root causes and impact of hunger. This is recently updated mission statement which we're really proud to really call out and be really intentional around this idea around mobilizing community assets and creating this equitable access, which I think ties in really great to the transportation themes around how do we do food, right, we hear and I'm sure you all here to have the biggest barrier for folks for healthy living and food security is transportation. We constantly hear that from neighbors. And so again, how do we how do we do that type of our food and nutrition programs to leverage some of these other outcomes. As a food bank, we acquire and store and distribute millions of pounds of food and personal care items through a network of about 800 partners across 26 counties in Kansas and Missouri. And then our four initiatives here feeding children, seniors, families and healthy eating lots of work that we do. Here's a quick map of our service area. 10 counties in Missouri 16 counties in Kansas these service areas are designated by Feeding America. Our main facility is in Kansas City. So lots of our work is here kind of Kc Metro we have a branch office in Topeka, Kansas, moving to Lawrence, Kansas soon but You can see there the reach in the scope of our programming. And again, just this map kind of calls out the level of food insecurity in our region. But also like the, again, kind of overlaying this with what we know about transportation within urban settings like KC metro or downtown Topeka, or Lawrence. And then all of our counties to there's a lot of rural areas to which have different types of transportation gaps and barriers or needs, right, or again, different assets that might be happening in those in those areas. So lots of different ways. We're trying to interact with making sure people have access to healthy food. So real briefly, I want to share a little bit about this idea around food plus. And at harvesters, this is a newer term that we've been using food plus the whole idea really is, you know, as a food bank, we are centered around this emergency food assistance, that charitable sector of food and nutrition programming, where we know people need help today, right. And so we're going to do that we have been doing that for 40 years in, in this area with our network of partners, but also knowing that we need to work on these root cause and social drivers of health aspects. And so knowing it takes more than food to solve hunger, right? Again, like sometimes my food insecurity might not be about food at all it might be about I didn't have the right type of health care or health coverage, or maybe it's transportation is a very right or maybe it's a safe housing situation, all of these different types of things that play into this. And so really looking at again, how do we use this idea of food? Plus, if we're a food bank, why is the food bank talking about health wise, if we've been talking about transportation, well, we can use our, our network and our leverage on those food and nutrition programs to then work on some of these other types of things. At the very least, we have a big network that we can be conveners and sharing information, sharing resources like this as well. This I imagine you all are familiar with these types of concepts. This, you know, this idea of like the root causes of food insecurity, social drivers of health is the conversation these days. And so, again, really calling out specifically and being very intentional about like we know, it's not just about food and food access, what are these barriers in these root causes that are deeper, more upstream, then that are potentially perpetuating somebody's food insecurity, lack of transportation of courses, they're clear and simple, but also like looking just in general other lack of resources, housing instability, calling out things like discriminatory policies, and toxic stress and trauma, all these things, right, that lead to could lead to different types of things. Also, knowing though that it's like where, again, where do we as harvesters in our network? Where do we interrupt some of these cycles, and help with some of these places?

1:07:42

This again, kind of just one more graphic to show the the last similar concept of all these things happen in in conjunction with each other, right? These are these are complex food securities complex. And so it's it's not? Well, I'll worry about transportation today and food tomorrow, right? We have to deal with all of these things all at once. And so there's things that are driving people's food insecurity that may or may not have to do with food. At the same time, people are making really difficult trade offs, brave decisions every day. And again, I think we probably see this call out to like people making trade offs or coping strategies around maybe how they're going to figure out transportation or not maybe how they're going to figure out food or not, right, maybe I'm going to skip a meal. So I know, I can whatever, get this bus pass those types of things, right. Like there's lots of things that are happening. Any one of these things out of order that are out of balance, of course, is going to impact your physical and mental health. And so that's why again, like how do we use these things together, that we're working with a lot of the same folks to really row in the same direction and work on some of these things more upstream. One piece that we've done within food plus is food plus transportation. So most of our momentum within our food plus realm has really been healthcare over the last several years. So doing things like prescriptive pantries, and diabetes management, while you're working through food security, types of things, working now with some workforce development programs, but then also transportation. And so again, knowing that transportation is usually one of the bigger barriers for food security for folks. One example, this is not the total solution, but it's a solution. This is you know, one of those things about like, it's been a really popular model these best stop pop up pantries. And so we are there's a couple that we do currently where kind of the idea of like, you know, people need food today. Right? So how do we help today we're still working on these upstream long term, we need policy solutions we need, you know, all the different things that you all already know and talk about within your mobility conversations and walkable neighborhoods and the bus routes that need to be intuitive and right and helpful, right, all of those types of things. But at the same time, we know people need food today. So while we're doing all of those upstream things, we're also like this, this idea this bus stop. So this is a 31st interest in Kansas City if you're familiar with this city. This is when we started this was the second busiest bus stop in the city in this house. is a nice, kind of like little closet area. So we have some space to set up some tables. I think I have some more pictures here. Yeah, so a few more photos. So this is primarily for folks who do this once a month at this, again, pop up pantry, we bring out tables and some food and different items that we have primarily meant for folks who are riding the bus or walking this location, specifically was chosen because we have a density of partners. All right, they're the partners that were listed on the previous screen. So there's Operation Breakthrough that does daycare. And in early childhood, there's literacy KC that does literacy classes and some workforce training for adults. There's another, you know, helping social service agency on the corner and another one down the street. So there's this and then again, the bus app. And so the idea here was you know, if I'm, you can tell this is folks are not necessarily like, loading up on groceries for their entire family. This is, if I'm walking or riding the bus, what do I need? You can see, we've tried to be pretty curated on these are beverages, brown bag lunches, what do I need to day to get through a meal, as I'm on my way to maybe pick up my kids from daycare, or I'm going to my class or Gosh, I'm going to this class and I have not had lunch yet. Those types of things that I am going to do better when I'm in this class now and maybe stay in it and be able to get that certificate or whatever, and move myself forward. Because I know this, this groceries, um, have been handled there too. So we try to be pretty curated on those as people are walking through or driving through, it's really become a great place to these pop up, pantries have been really great. For other resources to write, if I'm riding the bus, I might not have time to get to everywhere I need to, or I might not be able to even know that, you know, we've had like the health department out of some of these offering hygiene kits or information about immunizations, or wild child visits or bike helmets, or like all those types of things that I might not be able to do on my own or get to those places, we've had the library out doing books. And in Kansas City, there's the new fountain card, it's a like a city ID card that's supposed to help again, removing a barrier, inviting all those assets right there to working to also with Casey, he has been a really great partner and working through some of those edits, you know, we're self contained, we're not taking, there's every once awhile, you'll get a look from a bus driver. But it's like, overall, again, like these are folks who are hammering it, we take grocery bags, we're not loading down everything. There's not trash leftover, there's not trash left on the bus, right. So it's really about enabling access, we do another one, this is in on the Kansas side, Kansas City, Kansas, downtown 17, Minnesota, again, kind of a central location a busy Bestop. That's sort of the hub for a lot of different things downtown. There's some other helping organizations right there, we take out the crates, you can see pretty curated, this is not for all time, you're gonna get loads and loads and loads of groceries, but but it's out there typically ready to eat pop top water, those types of things. Were out doing snap Outreach at the same time typically. And then finally, I would share this too, we are similar to the work that Dre was highlighting, we have also been working on some of these ideas around mapping and bus routes and food resources. Like I said, we have about 800 partners in our area. And so some of it is really looking at where are there gaps, and we need to add pantries and locations or we need to add these pop up ideas. Or is it how do we also like, enable access to existing resources, maybe we don't need another pantry, we need to make sure people know how to get to what is already out there. And like working with these partners for mapping. We know where all of our pantries and distributions are obviously they know where the bus routes are. And so overlaying those maps and helping our partners also think through mobility about like, Hey, did you know you're on this bus line? Or you're one block off? Did you think about maybe think about what your hours are? Do your hours line up with when the buses are running or not? Or other types of things around accessibility of your ride on the bus line? But is it also walkable? Or is the sidewalk clear for folks who need those types of accessibility ideas to so so working on some of those to that we would similar to how Jay was saying like how to have it, you know, kind of cross posted on all of our websites and sharing that out for folks who are looking for assets in their area. We have a lot more on our webpage if you're interested in more about food plus and then again, some of the other things that you can specifically see some videos and brand partners and hearing directly from neighbors who are using these programs. And then of course, my contact information as well. So that is what I had to share. Thank you.

1:14:32

Hey, thank you very much, Trey. Thank you very much, Jessica. I am just scrolling through the chat. And I did drop the link down there for harvesters in the transportation tab of your site so that they can look a little more in depth. They're interested. And let me just scroll all the way back up and also look under any questions sent directly at This can be for you are Dre. Oh, there's another one just popped up. Have you seen since COVID? More and more people utilizing the food bank and using public transit? Or? Or? Let's see, I think they're saying expressing that there is a lack of mobility or transportation to get to the establishments. So are they saying they're, they're having, you know, a challenge getting to food more and more since COVID.

1:15:33

I guess I would say from our side, we have seen an increase in throughout COVID. And even to now like the need is higher than ever. And it's real tricky. Now, when a lot of those federal programs remember all the aid that was happening, we were getting a lot of food from like the USDA, and we're getting all like, remember, people were getting stimulus money and like SNAP benefits, we're getting the maximum levels, and there were lots of protections around evictions and childcare and schooling. Like there's all sorts of aid that was out there. So a lot of that has expired. And so, so yes, we have seen a higher number. And we're also seeing a little bit of a different, maybe a different demographic, we hear stories, like I used to be the one to give and now I'm I'm in line. And so helping people understand like there is this, this network that's here to support, I guess I would say to again, I mentioned that transportation continues to be the biggest barrier. And so for when neighbors respond when we do surveys or focus groups with neighbors, they talk about well, what's what's stopping me from my food security is transportation. And so at harvesters and I think across other food banks and across the feeding American network really thinking a lot about like, how do we do this about and they're really like the game is changing, right? I think of like all the different things about what you can do for online groceries and lots of places now that you can use your SNAP benefits used to be called food stamps, that you can use your SNAP benefits for online groceries. And so it's similar to how I was saying like, how do we enable these this access? Is it we need to get food to people, we have some mobile distribution models, where we're going right into communities? How do we get food to people? Or how do we get people to food? Right? Like all these different types of things. It's around mobility? How do we do things like the HelloFresh model where it's, you know, home delivered types of things? That's not our model right now. But could it be right like there's things that are out there deck technology exists in a different way, some of these partners and again, like the the models that are out there could be I think translated into the nonprofit sector and what we could do within pantry work.

1:17:25

You injuries, everything you have seen in Lawrence.

1:17:29

Yeah, so here in Lawrence, our main food pantries called just food and they over the time of COVID, they saw approximately like a 30 to 40% increase in people using their services. As Jessica mentioned, there was a lot of federal benefits going on at the time. And that was really beneficial to them, they were able to purchase enough food, they were able to get enough food donations to meet the need. But as we've gotten further from the pandemic, the those extra funds have dried up, and the amount of donations that the food pantry is receiving has gone down, but the amount of people still using their services has not gone down. And so they're still seeing an uptick of people utilizing their services every year, which has created a some somewhat of a strain on the current system. And so trying to address that has been a whole community wide effort. So the transportation component has helped out some the Lawrence transit in 2022, I believe, did a pilot of distributing grocery food carts that are relatively small enough to fit on a on a bus and has changed up their their policy for the bus system itself to not only allow groceries but to kind of promote it. And so all the electric buses that they've procured have seats that fold. So you have room next to you to put your grocery cart next to you. And then they are working on RFPs to procure seats for their older diesel buses to get those retrofitted to have folding seats as well.

1:19:18

Great. I have a couple other questions that popped up. How did you engage other agencies? What made it compelling to them to offer services? Another one that is kind of similar that one is how did you begin your partnerships and engage with your local transit partners to start the Papa so the first one is how did you engage other agencies?

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I went well I can start I would say for harvesters, we I mean we're a large nonprofit in Kansas City and in this metro area and across our region and so, we we are known and so it same way like when I say like what is our role in this Why'd the food bank and transportation but like we do have a responsibility there if like we can, as conveners at the very least And as a trusted source, we have a big network. There's nothing that harvesters does directly. It's always in partnership with something. And so the bus stops have been really compelling. Because I think it's a lot of the we're, we can see where we're probably talking with a lot or trying to reach a lot of the same folks. Right. And it's, we know, for reasons, good and bad, and there's barriers. And there's all sorts of reasons why this might be a tricky population to to capture sometimes, right. And so I think in terms of like value add for offering other services, these, a lot of organizations were looking at ways to do outreach in a different setting, the food is a drawn, it's a nice again, like everybody needs that. And that's something that everybody can kind of, well know what that feels like, right and that that have that resource. But then at the same time of like, again, like maybe I'm not thinking, oh, I need to figure this out at the Medicaid office. But they're here, I'm just going to talk to them right here too, right. And so in the way that they, those other services also wanted to be talking to the same folks are like, Oh, I have these, again, these hygiene kits, or we've been trying to tell people about we have this new ID card system, like all those types of things of it just is one more kind of touch point. And the idea really talking with them about removing how to remove a barrier. And when we all go together, there's a lot there of like in terms of risk management, it kind of alleviates some of that, because we're all there together. But it's also like, we all want to be reaching the same folks and talking with the same folks. So that was good, most of it in terms of that than otherwise in terms of engaging with the local transit. And then beginning those partnerships. I read an article about kch they had done an event and maybe there was a food truck. And like the library, there was something there at one of their kind of main hubs and I thought, well, they're going to have a food truck, then maybe we can think about that they're really snap outreach, right, we can connect to a resource like snap, but then maybe we could do something like a pop up. And then as we were talking and again, other partners in the table just kind of sort of grow into a thing of its own. And like this could be a thing. And it could be a really cool thing. And internally different processes to be much more curated of like, again, this is not just we're sending out millions of pounds of food, like this is a very curated for this demographic and what might be needed there. So working through that, and kind of you know, how that is program lifecycle view, you kind of grow in there together on those things. But yeah, it really is all of it really is relationships and the, you know, the pace of relationships and the pace of trust and building that showing that we can do a good distribution and not tear up the little closet area. And we're not leaving trash everywhere. And we're not leaving trash on the bus, right? Like all those types of things. So. So yeah, it was all about relationships, really. And we have grown from there. To to the point that we're really and even KCTS asking, like, where do we where do we go next kind of thing?

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Right. Let's see. Are you all looking to develop more busstop pop ups, harvesters crosses over the state lines? Are there any other type of similar events that you're looking to partner with organizations? To start? Yeah,

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we are always looking for more partnerships, and especially like it with this one where it's been a proven model. And it's been proven that your neighbors are responding really well. And it's been something that has been really effective for them. And so where we can see that impact? Absolutely, I think we have a few places in mind where we might be able to go again, just in terms of where the density might be where there's could be a gap where Otherwise there might not be another place within walking distance or something on the bus route. i We're definitely open, I don't have anything in mind specifically like, but we're definitely open for sure. So and I can share happy to share my contact information, people have ideas for what that could look like. And I would think to like even beyond just the bus stops, that has been a nice kind of gathering point for folks. You can tell those go real fast, you could tell when the bus is coming up, because some people are like, shooting through that line, and then some right legged or it's like, oh, the bus stopped and there's 20 More people kind of a thing. And then everybody's on their way. So it kind of comes and goes and we can be flexible on those models. I think in general to like just that the food bank is even thinking and talking about transportation, if there's other things that we haven't again, it's not our world, right? We know food, and we're happy to bring that to the table. But transportation is not my expertise in the way it is for you all and so even that about like, is there something else that like beyond the bus stops? Is there something we should be thinking about or doing or engaging with transportation organizations or those those areas to again, we're easy to do the whole idea around connecting to resources.

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Another question? Let's see if I'm looking at this right, that they may be left out a word has there have you all tackled the issue with food access and college students? There are a lot of regional universities in the area in the Midwest and that has been health concern.

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Harvesters does work with and I think again across the across the country more and more food banks do we do work with I think we're probably doing 10 or 12 local colleges and universities that have some sort of food pantry or a pop up distribution, or again, some sort of thing that they are working on food access for sure. It's very much of a kind of a hidden hunger of like, we hear these stories about like, oh, remember College, like, we all just ate ramen, and we were all hungry. It's like, no, that's not, that's not the college experience. That's food insecurity, right? Like, and we can do better, right. So there are some colleges that do have pantries and built in, in an in a way to where it's really thoughtful by just an integrated thing. Like this is part of the service at this college. And there's, you know, classes that are built in with like, doing the marketing are the volunteer hours, and the outreach and, and all of those types of things. So yes, we are doing some of those with colleges and universities, and then kind of a new layer to like, some of the like, School of Nursing, same thing about how do we get those nurses deployed out to our partners for some of that in the community and learning but also like making sure that they have the resources they need. Another

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question for you all, as have, have there been any unintended positive and or negative benefits associated, associated with the coordination. So I think any maybe interesting side effects during the popups at a bus stop or, or having or you know, like, enlarge, having to reroute to make sure it goes by a pantry, a garden, or things or any feedback that

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you could share. I mean, there's always like, you know, you learn and you grow. So I don't know that there's been any negative benefits or negative aspects of it. Maybe some things again, like as you as you kind of learn and stay flexible with that model, we have changed either like an internal process for what type of food we send out how we build those orders, or some of those types of things. beyond that. So I think it is sort of said, sometimes when we talk about it, people are like, What are you doing at a bus stop. But then when we talk about it, it's also like, Oh, this is really intuitive. And like, it makes sense. And people get really excited about like, oh, we could probably think about this a little bit more this idea of food banking, and food pantries, it doesn't have to be where it has like traditionally been within food banking. Right now we do food pantries at bus stops, and in clinics and at schools, right? Like, there's that kind of that feels like freedom to really think about, like where are people and that's where we're going to make sure that there are resources.

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I had any real negative externalities, pertaining to our food access work, really, we did just recently have a complete route redesign. And whenever you ever have like, robust change, there are going to be pain points, and people are going to be frustrated with change, because changes, change is bad. But we've had a significant change. And we hope that it's going to increase people's accessibility to all these high priority destinations and Creek, including food access locations. So on the negatives, we haven't really had any in the positives. I know that there are a couple nonprofit organizations in the community who are super excited about the test pilot of the grocery cart distribution. And so I have a couple of agencies that are looking into figuring out whether they have the budget to actually procure more of those and keep it coming and so that more individuals have access to those kinds of grocery carts so they can get their food onto the bus a little bit easier. So just by testing out one time, little pilots here and there has made it so that other agencies are gets their wheels turning a little bit and some of these agencies are more equipped and have better capacity to actually perform some of these rules long term.

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I have one last question. And then we will have to wrap up today because we do have a another webinar that is separate from the virtual summit that was already planned, which is one a community partnerships and food access. And I will drop that registration in the link here. If you've not registered, please go ahead and we want to we get the feedback. Last couple days, we want to make sure that everyone has a good break to go grab a snack and things so they can come back and join us for that. The last question is we go back up here. How about job exploration job seeking kinds of services from Department of Labor colleagues or information about mental health services or engaging your public health colleagues in the food access and transportation portion?

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i Yes, I all of the above. And I added a link to our website to that shows all of our food tests work. And again, just back to like the overall network of partners that are also doing these types of things. And so where we know it's not our expertise and where it's like again, where can we enable some access and connection points? Where do we step back because we're not the experts here. We are working on some work within economic mobility, this idea of workforce development jobs, skilled training, in some of those types of placements same thing if we can put a pantry in a place where they're doing job training, and we have some really robust models of that where you know, removing that barrier removing if I can have that crisis solved like it I'm gonna get food so I can stay in this class and I can get this certificate, I can get this, you know, people are on a career path and doing and they're doing that hard work. We're there. We're just there for one small part of that support. But yeah, absolutely, again, with the same idea of if I'm limited on transportation, or any of these other types of things, removing a barrier, it's all here, right here where I can do this one, class one, get this pantry, get all these other types of resources right there.

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Um, I am participating in a lot of also healthcare access initiatives in the community. And if I got talking about those, it'd be a whole nother webinar, so probably shouldn't get too deep into that. But, you know, I do not just work with this one agency, I work with our smaller agencies, like our senior centers, and our Centers for Independent Living. And those usually have a small transportation component to, to their operations, like our senior center that performs like 7000 trips every year. And that's for residents within the entire Douglas County area. And so they are also going to have health care facilities, they're also taking people to the food pantry, they're also taking people to the grocery store. And so there are a there's a robust network of agencies that are working day in and day out to make sure that we have access to food, food and health care, recreation, whatever it is that you know, maintains your standard of living.

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Okay, we do not have any more questions for the day. I want to thank Jessica. Thanks, Ray for presenting today. And thank all of our presenters that we're all on for the virtual learning summit today, we had a great lineup, and learn lots and lots of information. And I'm sure like Trey said for each of the topics, they're all probably separate webinars for about a half day by themselves. But we provide you the information. If there are any questions please email us also take time and provide us a feedback in the survey that we dropped in the chat as well. I dropped a note in the chat, take time to stretch, grab a beverage and a snack and then join us in about 25 minutes or so for the community partnership and food access webinar that we have going on this afternoon. Have a great day everyone