

Senior Issues Workshop #2: Food Access Meeting Notes
April 25, 2019

As part of the Ten at the Top Senior Issues Committee's stated goal of being intentional about addressing senior needs, this workshop will look at the issue of food access for seniors. According to SC's Council on Aging, 20% of South Carolinians over the age of 60 are food insecure, so the barriers that seniors face in accessing nutritious food need to be identified and removed.

The panel, moderated by Catriona Carlisle, Executive Director of Meals on Wheels Greenville, included the following members:

Amy Bell, Manager, Emergency Food Pantry Manager for Harvest Hope Greenville

Bates McKinney, Congregate Dining Site Manager, Spartanburg Recreation

Laurie Ashley, Executive Director, Meals on Wheels Anderson

Kathy Hendricks-Dublin, CEO, Piedmont Agency on Aging

Yvonne Harper, Director, Fifty Upstate

- Discussion of difference between hunger and food insecurity: food insecurity is more persistent, whereas hunger may be more temporary. Improper nutrition may play into both. An [article shared by Vee Daniel](#) was discussed as a source of statistics on senior hunger/food insecurity.
- Amy Bell and Kathy Dublin spoke about boxed meal programs that provide enough food for several meals—they cost less than hot meal programs, can be delivered less frequently, can reach people who are beyond the geographical delivery area for hot meals, and are often preferred by seniors who like the flexibility they afford.
- Partnerships were a topic for discussion. Both public/private and inter-agency partnerships among nonprofits enable agencies to reach more people, consolidate services, and share resources. Harvest Hope, for example, has partner agencies that distribute the food received by HH without HH's human resources being depleted by expanded delivery. And Spartanburg Recreation's Fifty Plus program as well as Fifty Upstate benefit from the culture of partnership in Spartanburg County, with multiple entities working together to serve seniors. Piedmont Agency on Aging partners with the hospital to certify its meals; works with Lander University and PCC to provide interns; and has opened an intergenerational childcare center that meets multiple needs and absorbs 1/3 of their overhead costs.
- Asked what the biggest need was for each organization, in addition to funding and volunteers, Kathy Dublin mentioned the need for innovative ideas—to find new ways to do more with the money available, rather than feeling pressured to find more money to fund programs.
- A great deal of interest was expressed in forming an action committee of some kind to promote cooperation among the groups represented (and others) regarding the sharing of resources. Some of the ideas that came up regarding the sharing of resources included having food trucks with excess produce in Dollar General parking lots, possibly using trucks that are not otherwise being used on the weekends, and working with home care organizations that offer transportation to drive seniors to the farmers market or grocery store.