# Central Oregon Council on Aging

2015 Community Assessment Sponsored by Meyer Memorial Trust

Reaching Priority Seniors in Central Oregon

Littledeer-Evans Consulting

# **Target Audience**

Central Oregon Council on Aging (COCOA) management, staff, Board of Directors, Advisory Council and Community Partners

## Presented By

Littledeer-Evans Consulting

## Purpose

This document reports the findings of the Community
Assessment Workgroup, convened by COCOA and facilitated
by Littledeer-Evans Consulting. The purpose of the
community assessment is to understand food security and
related needs as expressed directly by seniors of color in
Central Oregon.

To accomplish this, COCOA and Littledeer-Evans Consulting convened and facilitated a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic workgroup comprised of representatives of key community organizations to develop survey questions designed to engage seniors of color in the Central Oregon region. The workgroup met eight times over the course of seven months, creating questions that would be understood and comfortable for the target population, identifying members of priority populations to reach out to and personally interviewing 62 seniors of color in the Central Oregon region.

The work group then reviewed and analyzed the interview responses, both qualitatively and quantitatively, to formulate recommended strategies for COCOA to better reach and serve seniors of color in Central Oregon.

Community Assessment Workgroup Members

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# Acknowledgments

Littledeer-Evans Consulting would like to thank Bernadette Handley, Nutritionist at COCOA, Laurie Hoyle, Fund Development and Grant Manager at COCOA, Denise Piza, Latino Outreach Assistant at Let's Talk Diversity Coalition, Brad Porterfield, Executive Director at Latino Community Association, Carlos Salcedo, Community Strategies Educator at St. Charles Health System, and Emma Smith, Warm Springs Tribal member and Let's Talk Diversity Coalition member, for their countless hours of work on this project and their expert contributions to this work.

The workgroup members would also like to thank the many Native American and Latino/Hispanic seniors who shared their experiences and stories with us. These stories put a face and name to the data, to the recommendations in this report, as well as to the vulnerable populations that are often silent or absent from decision making processes. The workgroup members thank you for your courage and contributions.

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## **Executive Summary**

In spring 2014, Central Oregon Council on Aging (COCOA) began reviewing demographic data of the organization's client base. COCOA determined that seniors of color in Central Oregon are underrepresented in COCOA's service delivery when compared with white, non-Hispanic client participation. As a result of this finding, COCOA began meeting with Latinoserving organizations to promote meal services within this population. In so doing, staff began to understand the number and complexity of cultural, familial, linguistic, and sociopolitical issues surrounding the participation of Latino/a seniors in meal programs, as well as the potential disconnects between meal service as traditionally offered and actual needs and preferences as experienced by priority communities.

Staff also realized that community assessment - the need to engage communities of color and hear from them as to their needs, challenges and preferences - was paramount to success. In response, COCOA determined that a facilitated planning process, to include a thorough, direct, and systematic community needs assessment, supported by key community organizations serving communities of color, was required.

Beginning in April of 2015 a workgroup was convened, with representation from COCOA, Let's Talk Diversity Coalition, Latino Community Association, and St. Charles Health System. The work group also consisted of Latino and Native American representation. Littledeer-Evans Consulting provided facilitation and consulting for the project.

Over the course of seven months the workgroup reviewed demographic data, developed survey questions and a culturally responsive engagement process for the priority populations and set out to interview at least 50 seniors of color in the Central Oregon region. The workgroup members conducted one-on-one interviews in the following areas of Central Oregon:

- Bend
- Culver
- **❖** La Pine
- Madras
- Prineville
- Redmond
- Sisters
- Warm Springs

Survey Monkey was used as the tool to input and analyze the interview data, input by the workgroup members. It is important for readers of this report to understand that storytelling, via first person interviews is a sound community engagement method and was chosen by COCOA and Littledeer-Evans Consulting to effectively engage underrepresented populations, particularly Native American and Latino/Hispanic seniors, using conversations conducted in a welcoming and culturally appropriate manner. It is also important to understand that the project was not designed to be a statistical survey or poll, but rather a qualitative project aimed at gaining community wisdom to inform the workgroup's recommendations.

Though the workgroup reflects local and community agency people who serve and/or represent the target populations (including seniors), COCOA will need to determine next steps, including how it might implement the recommendations contained in this report to improve service delivery to seniors of color. This project represents an exceptional level of community engagement and empowerment, particularly with seniors of color and seniors with limited English language proficiency. The resulting outcomes and recommendations are based on these conversations and stories and they represent an opportunity for COCOA to understand the experiences behind state and local data around disparities for seniors of color within the agency's clientele. It is also the first step in addressing such disparities and working towards more equitable and inclusive access to service delivery for our most vulnerable populations.

In the initial findings, the workgroup found that Native American and Latino/Hispanic seniors are indeed underserved and only access services on a limited basis. There were some areas where the preference for service delivery was similar across the two demographics, such as with food assistance preferences and transportation being the biggest need for these seniors. However, there were also clear differences between the two demographics, especially around knowledge of senior-specific services, accessing food/meal services for seniors, preferred method of delivery of services and current needs not being met.

Based on the findings, the workgroup and Littledeer-Evans Consulting make the following recommendations for the Central Oregon Council on Aging as essential next steps to begin to engage and serve the Native American and Latino/Hispanic communities in an equitable and inclusive manner. The areas of focus include:

- Develop outreach strategies to engage communities of color
- Provide culturally inclusive meal/food services
- Provide services in language of preference

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#### Create and hire positions reflective of target population

Overall, the assessment seems to have answered COCOA's many questions about priority seniors and their needs. It has demonstrated some specific needs of Native American and Latino/Hispanic seniors. The assessment process also shaped COCOA's understanding of the experiences of these seniors in Central Oregon and has already begun to shape and inform the lens of equity, diversity and inclusion through which the organization views its service delivery.

Littledeer-Evans Consulting hopes that the stories, experiences and recommendations within this report aid COCOA in its journey to create environments and services that are safe, inclusive and equitable for all seniors in Central Oregon.

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### Definition of terms

**Diversity** is all the ways in which we are different, similar and unique.

**Equity** is the fair access to livelihood, environmental benefits, education, and resources; full participation in the political and cultural life of the community; and self-determination in meeting fundamental needs. Where all persons have access to the resources and power they need to attain their full potential. The quality of being impartial or reasonable; fairness; justice.

**Inclusion** is ensuring that everyone, no matter their race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, source of income, age, religious affiliation or nationality, feels that they can contribute to their fullest.

**Cultural Competence** is the ability to interact effectively across culture. The ability to flex with cultural differences.

Communities of color include Latino, Native American, African-American, and Asian-Pacific Islander communities. Note that Native American tribes hold unique U.S. Constitutional powers compared to other communities due to their legal status as sovereign nations. Several tribal governments pre-date the US government, which acknowledges their inherent governing authority.

Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs is a federally recognized confederation of Native American tribes who currently live on and govern the Warm Springs Indian Reservation in Central Oregon. The confederation consists of three tribes; Warm Springs, Wasco and Paiute Native American Tribes. The borders of the reservation stretch from the snowcapped summit of the Cascade Mountains to the palisaded cliffs of the Deschutes River.

**Ethnicity** is the fact or state of belonging to a cultural group that has common national or social traditions.

**Oral Culture** is the reliance on the oral transmission of stories, histories, lessons and other knowledge to maintain a historical record and sustain indigenous cultures and identities. According to scholars Renée Hulan and Renate Eigenbrod, oral traditions are "the means by which knowledge is reproduced, preserved and conveyed from generation to generation. Oral traditions form the foundation of Aboriginal societies, connecting speaker and listener in communal experience and uniting past and present in memory."

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Oral cultures record and document their histories in multifaceted and sophisticated ways, including rituals such as dancing and drumming. Although most oral societies, indigenous or otherwise, now use the written word as a tool for documentation, expression and communication, many still adhere to and depend on oral traditions and greatly value the oral transmission of knowledge as an intrinsic aspect of their cultures and societies.<sup>ii</sup>

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### A Case for Action

U.S. Census Bureau data show COCOA's tri-county service area to have higher proportions of seniors, lower median household incomes, and higher poverty rates than Oregon's state averages. In Crook County, 22.4% of residents are 65+ (vs. 14.9% statewide) and median household income is \$40,263 (20% below the \$50,036 state average). While 19.2% of Jefferson County's population -- almost 1 in 5 individuals - lives in poverty, as compared to 15.5% statewide. With the aging of baby boomers into the senior population, and the significant loss in retirement income resulting from the recent recession, the number of Central Oregon seniors in need continues to grow.

Despite cut-backs in federal funding for meal programs, COCOA is meeting this need reasonably well, except within communities of color. The majority of COCOA's clients self-identify as white, even though the data (which typically under-report race and ethnicity) point to relatively large Latino and Native American populations within their service area:

- Jefferson County: 19.9% Hispanic, 19.1% Native American
- Deschutes County: 7.7% Hispanic, 1.1% Native American
- Crook County: 7.4% Hispanic, 1.4% Native American

Under-representation of seniors of color in COCOA's meal programs parallels such seniors' under-representation in other federal government nutrition programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)<sup>iii</sup>. Racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity among the aging population in Central Oregon continues to grow. COCOA's current client base does not reflect the face of the Central Oregon region. On a national level, according to the 2010 U.S. Census, there are more than 40 million adults aged 65 and older in the U.S., a population that will more than double over the next four decades. By 2050, Latino, Black, Asian and Pacific Islander, and American Indian and Alaska Native people will comprise more than 40 percent of this elder population<sup>iv</sup>. (These national thresholds will reach Oregon soon after.)

Seniors of color face significant disparities in health and health care access, financial security, housing, work opportunities, community support, and more. More broadly, programs aimed at older people rarely explicitly serve seniors of color and many seniors of color face outright discrimination and neglect from our aging and health care systems. "In addition, the research literature on these issues is near non-existent, few programmatic interventions exist that

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explicitly serve seniors of color and the policies meant to support aging, health and wellness often ignore, underfund, or discriminate against seniors of color across diverse populations"v.

COCOA must develop strategies now to build trust and engage communities of color within the region in a meaningful way to gain insight into the changes that must be made to better serve the diverse needs of these seniors.

# Assessment Approach

The workgroup used one-on-one interviews as the community engagement process for the project. We know that people who experience the greatest disparities often have the least amount of power to influence changes in the policies, systems, and environments that impact them the most. Personal experience via first person narrative is a best practice and culturally appropriate community engagement strategy for communities of color. Personal experiences and stories is a way to bridge community members and the organization's decision makers in the hopes of encouraging dialogue and fostering action.

The workgroup set a goal of interviewing at least 50 seniors in the Central Oregon region, with a focus on the two main populations of color: Latino/Hispanic and Native American populations. Workgroup members reflected these demographics, as well as community agencies that successfully engage and serve these priority populations. "Senior" was defined as someone who is age 60 or older. The workgroup agreed that if an individual wanted to be interviewed who was under the target age, they would not be denied. In the end, twelve individuals under the age of 60 were interviewed.

Interview questions were developed by the workgroup, based upon the questions and information that COCOA desired to learn and that could help inform the agency's service delivery. Four main areas were the focus of the questions:

- Awareness of services offered by COCOA
- Inclusiveness of COCOA's meal services
- Need for senior specific services within these populations
- Preference for how/when/where services are delivered

The workgroup members identified seniors of color through their own agency networks, sponsored events and/or their own personal networks as members of the communities of color in Central Oregon themselves. All interviews were completed by workgroup members or individuals who work/volunteer for the community agencies represented on the workgroup. Sixty-two seniors of color were interviewed during the project. Of those, twelve were under the age of 60. While the insight and experience of these individuals is valuable and will inform COCOA's work in other ways, these respondents' answers were excluded from the data analysis in this report.

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Interviews were conducted at several different locations, including the homes of respondents, the Mexican Consulate visit to Central Oregon, Let's Talk Diversity Coalition office, Latino Community Association offices, Warm Springs back-to-school event and senior centers.

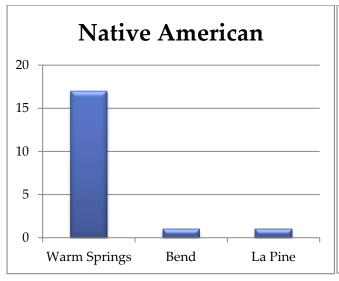
# Overall Assessment Findings

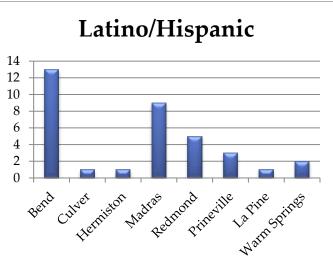
The data from the interviews have been filtered by race/ethnicity identification. Respondents were asked how they identified culturally/ethnically and were able to respond with more than one choice. Therefore, seniors who identified as bi-cultural, answers falling into both Latino and Native American identity are duplicated in the data when filtered by cultural identity. There were four respondents whose answers are duplicated in both the Latino and Native American response summaries. Thus, even though there were a total of 50 seniors of color over the age of sixty interviewed, when split into two categories of responses (Latino (35) and Native American (19)) the total responses will add up to 54 instead of 50.

We cannot choose to count the answers and experiences of these duplicated respondents in one group or the other, nor do we wish to pull them out separately because of such a small number. Because we are looking for trends or noteworthy themes in the experiences of Latino seniors and of Native American seniors, we allowed this duplication to remain. Also, because this is a qualitative assessment, the duplication does not pose an issue in informing the recommendations of this work.

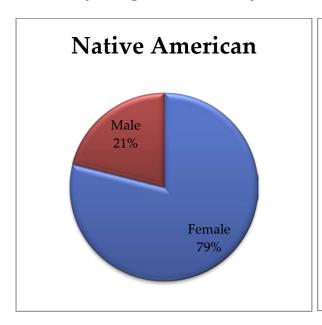
#### Demographic Information

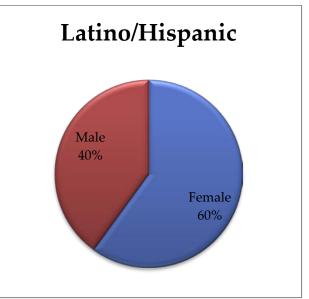
#### What is your home location?



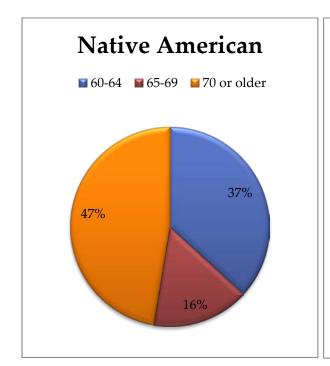


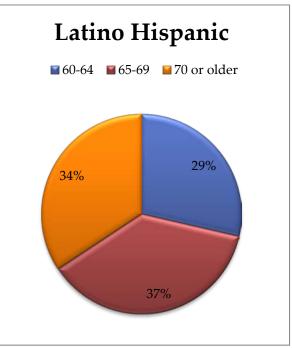
### What is your gender identity?



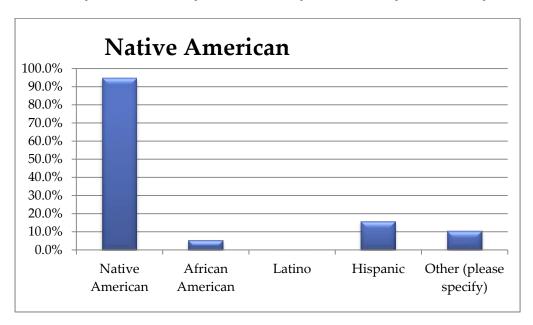


#### What is your age group?

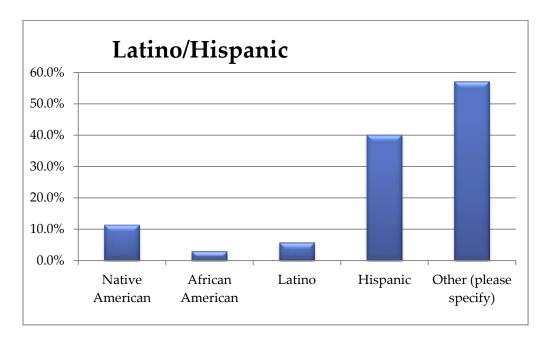








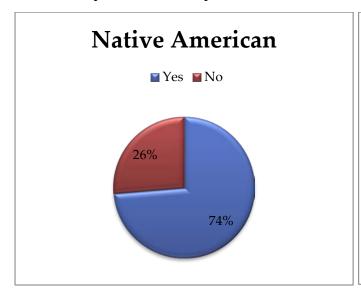
For the Native American respondents, there were two responses in the "Other" category which were Indian and Mexican.

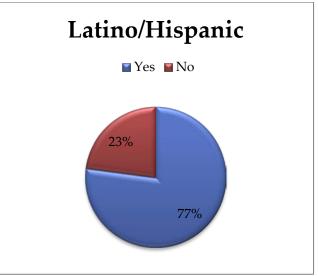


For the Latino/Hispanic respondents, there were twenty responses in the "Other" category which were Mexican (16), Mexican-American (3), and white (1). These data point to a disconnect in how we ask diverse individuals to identify in terms or race/ethnicity. Most respondents preferred to be identified with their country of origin, rather than the race/ethnicity categories of Latino and Hispanic.

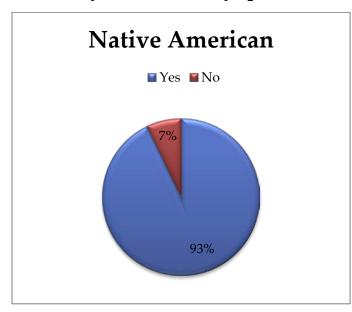
#### Interview Questions

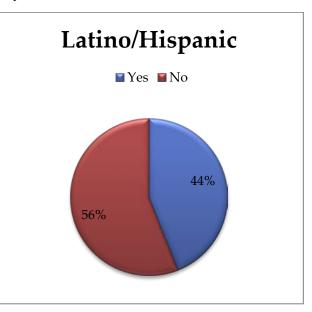
#### 1. Do you think of yourself as a senior?





#### 2. Do you know of any special services just for seniors?

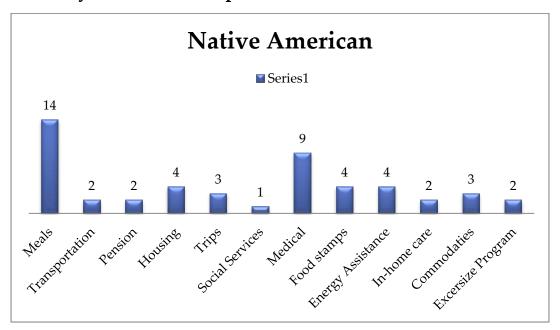


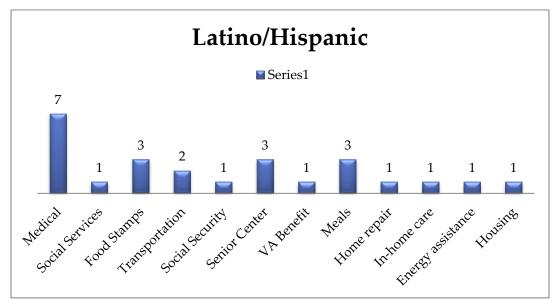


Question 2 provides the first distinctive difference between the two demographic groups. Native American seniors report a high rate of knowledge regarding senior specific services at 93% answering "yes", while 56% of Latino seniors report not knowing of any services specifically for seniors. This can be connected with some of the barriers that keep Latino seniors isolated from the mainstream community; including legal status, language barriers,

access to media and agency outreach, socioeconomic status and the oral culture versus the written culture of service delivery. The Native American respondents' answers correlate to the Warm Springs reservation, a community that exists exclusively for Native Americans and where services and outreach are delivered in the culturally appropriate ways that work within and for that population.

#### 3. If you do know of special services for seniors, what are those services?

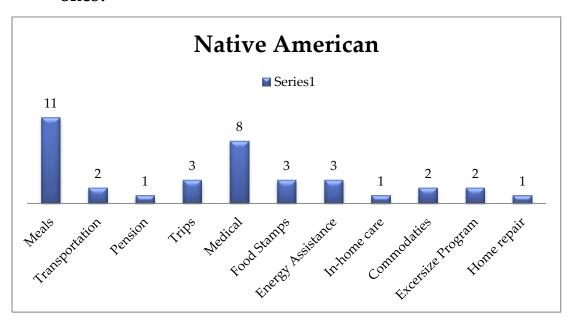


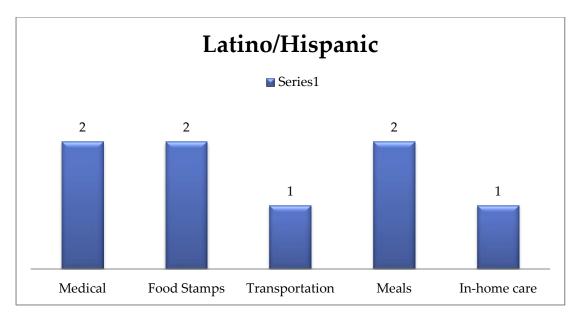


In the responses to question 3, you can see the difference in knowledge of services available to seniors among each group. Meals are a service that seems to be well known by Native

American seniors, however, in the Latino Community only 3 out of the 13 who answered this question indicated that they knew of any sort of meal service for seniors. Knowledge about specific medical services for seniors was another service area that both groups seem to know about more than others. Answers from Native American respondents that fell into the category of "medical" were specific to the Native American community in Warm Springs, such as Indian Health Services, eyeglass programs and in-home medical services. Whereas among the Latino/Hispanic respondents the medical services referred to were more specific to Oregon Health Plan and emergency medical services.

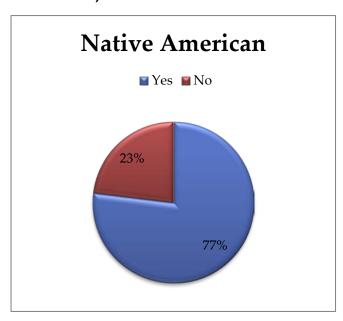
# 4. Do you and/or your spouse/family use those services and if so, which ones?





Question 4 drills down even deeper than the previous questions and looks at the level of service utilization out of the senior services that are known to these seniors. We again see a large difference in the Native American senior population utilizing the services that they know about, with highest usage for meal services and medical, and the Latino/Hispanic senior population with minimal service utilization.

# 5. Were/are those services helpful? Could they have been more helpful, and if so, how?



Thirteen Native American respondents answered this question. Some of the comments on how the services were helpful or could be improved included the following:

"Not really except for the salmon hand out."

"Yes. Wood delivery needs improvement, it's not well run."

"I don't care for some of the foods."

"Yes, they are nice and they help me."

"Senior meals are most helpful because they are healthy and a nutritionist over sees it - low salt, skim milk, sugar alternatives. I also like diabetic checks everywhere I go."

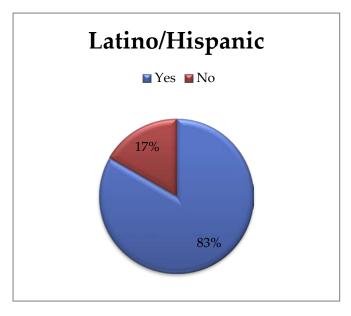
"The trips and lunches are great." "Yes, they always check up on me so I feel they are all helpful."

"Yes. Wood delivery required multiple calls and wood was delivered wet. Delivering it in a timely fashion when it was dry would be helpful."

"A light snack/salad is offered after aerobics so I am able to have lunch m-f. Some of the available programs are not open to all seniors. Folks who run the programs or the Senior Center are selective in determining who gets van rides or who gets assistance with heating."

"Food stamps would have been better if rate had not been reduced once my mother moved in."

"Very Helpful. Helpful at I.H.S. for Senior Dental-Optical-Physical Day-Diabetes-etc."



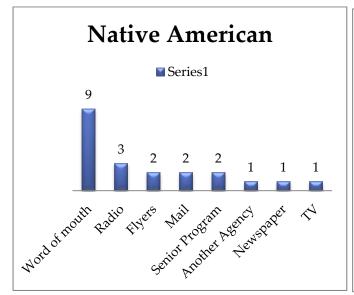
There were only six Latino respondents who used a senior specific service and answered about the service being helpful or not. Here are some of their comments on how the services were/are helpful or not:

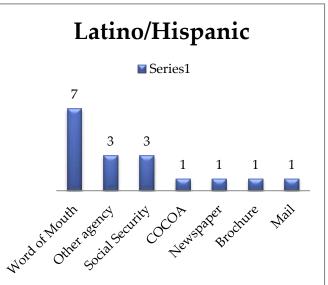
"No I haven't considered using them; I mean they may be a helpful option in the future."

"Yes, they are nice and they help me."

"Yes in case of illness (emergency)."

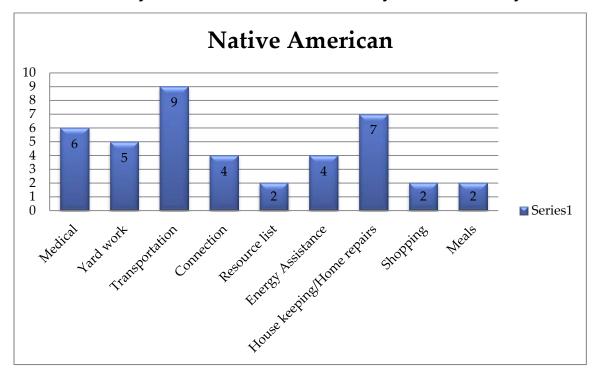
#### 6. How did you (and your family) learn about those services?

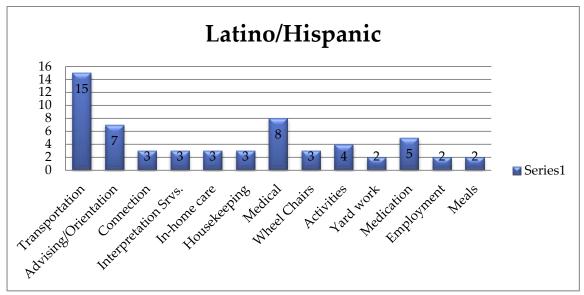




When trying to learn how seniors of color find out about the services they know about and/or use, the two demographics share in word of mouth being the most often utilized method of information sharing. This makes sense when we consider that both Native American and Latino/Hispanic cultures are both oral cultures. The Latino respondents reported fewer means from which to learn about services than the Native American respondents. Also responses from Native American respondents noted specific venues for communication unique to the Warm Springs community, such as the local newspaper, *Spilyay Tymoo*, and the local radio station, KWSO.

### 7. What do you think/believe seniors in your community need help with?



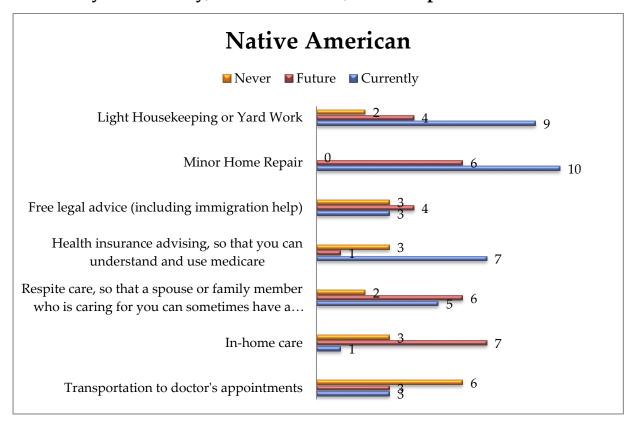


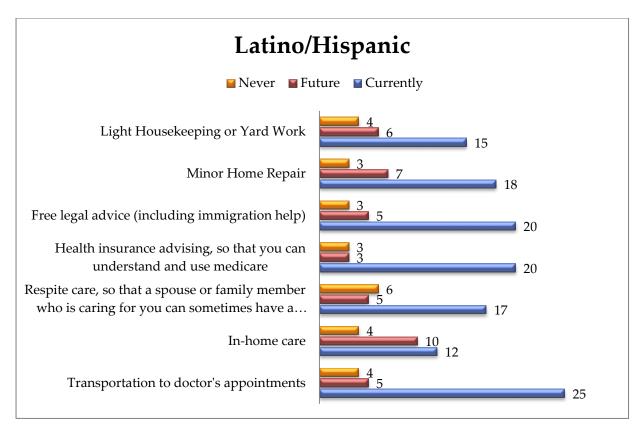
For question 7, within both the Native American and Latino/Hispanic respondents, transportation was the number one need identified for seniors of color. The need for transportation was more prevalent within the Latino/Hispanic population. Medical was an identified need within both populations, second highest within the Latino/Hispanic population and third highest within the Native American community.

Latino/Hispanic respondents also identified needing advice and information regarding medical coverage, available services and understanding health services.

Native American respondents identified housekeeping, home repairs and yardwork as an area of need among their population. This matches up with the access and utilization of Oregon Project Independence (OPI) services, which can provide for such needs but have not yet been accessed by the Warm Springs community.

#### 8. Do you currently, or in the future, need help in the areas of:





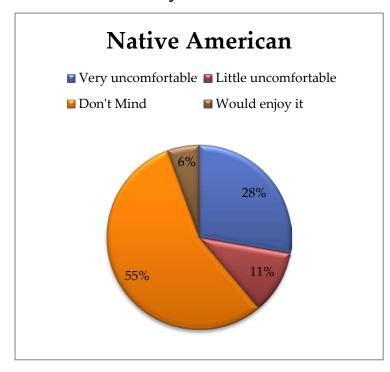
When asked about current and future needs in several areas of service, the responses from both demographic groups matched with responses from earlier questions. We see the highest current need with Native American respondents in minor home repair, yard work and housekeeping. The third highest area of need for these respondents was health insurance advising to better understand Medicare. For future need, Native American respondents indicated in-home and respite care might be needed.

Our Latino/Hispanic respondents showed higher immediate need in different areas with transportation being the highest current need. Legal advice and health insurance advising came in next highest among Latino/Hispanic seniors. Minor home repair and respite were not far behind as current needs.

These responses and differences between the two demographics continue to demonstrate the differences in access to and knowledge about services for seniors. These responses clearly demonstrate that Latino/Hispanic seniors have the need for assistance in these key areas and thus their underrepresentation among those served is related to other factors than need. The Native American responses also show that underutilization of OPI services by these seniors is not for a lack of need.

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# 9. Some services for seniors involve an agency person visiting your home. How would you feel about a home visitor coming into your home?



Sixty-one percent of Native American respondents didn't mind or would enjoy someone visiting their home regarding services. However, nearly forty percent felt some level of discomfort. Comments included the following:

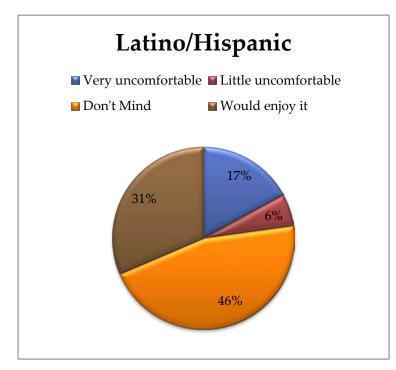
"As long as it is scheduled in advance."

"As long as contacted beforehand."

"Depends on the person."

"I'm very private."

"I'm very private, but most I know like it, they like connecting, oral people."



Seventy-seven percent of
Latino/Hispanic respondents would not
mind or would enjoy the visit. And
twenty-three percent had some
discomfort with a home visitor.
Comments included:

"Maybe. It's never happened."

"I prefer someone that speaks Spanish and a female."

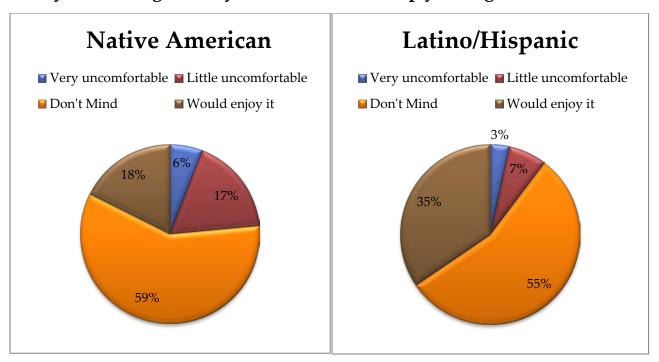
"Believes mom would enjoy talking to someone."

The responses from the Latino/Hispanic

demographic is interesting because we know from previous questions that most have not

accessed such services nor do they know they exist. From the responses of this population it seems the engagement is not only needed but welcomed.

# 10. How would you feel about the home visitor talking with you about how you're doing and any other additional help you might need?



The Native American response to a home visitor asking about how the senior is doing and helping with other needs was well received, with 77% responding that they wouldn't mind or would enjoy it. And likewise within the Latino/Hispanic population, the openness to the home visitor asking about how the senior is doing would be well received, with 90% of Latino/Hispanic seniors indicating that they would not mind or would enjoy such a visit and dialogue.

Some of the comments from the Native American seniors included:

"I'm comfortable with information and asking." "As long as s/he is credible."

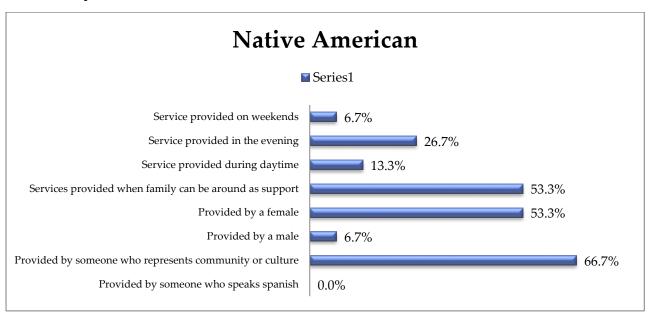
"I feel comfortable with the people who currently visit me. Maria has been coming to my home for 5 years and I feel comfortable with her."

"If not the State and Federal people just getting snoopy about Rez life and benefits. Especially the Food Stamp program, they get real PERSONAL."

Comments from Latino/Hispanic seniors included:

Again, it is clear that the underutilization of services by seniors of color is not for lack of want or need. Thus, COCOA must look at the barriers to access for these seniors in order to address the disparity.

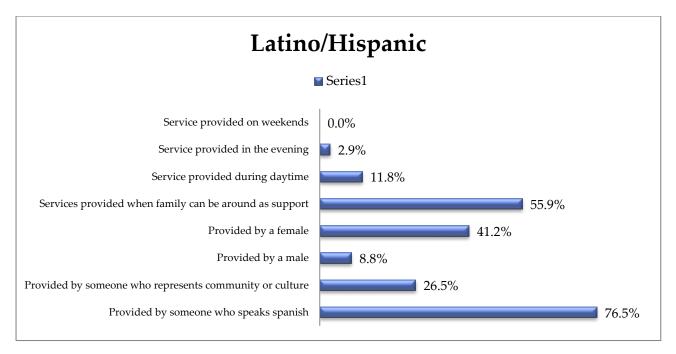
# 11. What would make services, inside your home and out, most comfortable for you?



When asked what would make services most comfortable for Native American seniors, in or outside of the home, nearly 67% responded that having the service provided by someone who represents their community or culture was preferable. This is a very important statement by this population and has implications for culturally responsive service delivery. With most of the Native American seniors interviewed being a member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs community, understanding this close connection and the close-knit community is crucial to understanding how best to deliver services to seniors there.

Over half of Native American seniors also preferred to have family around for support when services are delivered and over half preferred a female over a male service provider.

Time of day didn't seem to be heavily weighted for making service delivery more comfortable, but for those who did respond to this preference, they indicated that evening was most preferable.



Latino/Hispanic seniors made it clear that the most important aspect of service delivery for their comfort is to have the services provided by someone who speaks Spanish. Almost seventy-seven percent indicated this preference. Over half of Latino/Hispanic seniors also preferred that services be provided when their families could be there for support. Latino/Hispanic seniors also overwhelmingly preferred a female service provider over a male and about one quarter preferred services provided by someone who represents their community or culture. Time of day was not indicated as weighing on comfort of service delivery; although of those who responded to this question, most indicated daytime was preferable.

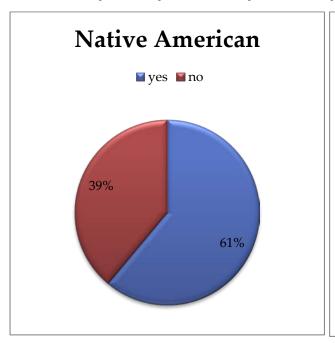
One Latino/Hispanic senior comment highlights the importance of language access:

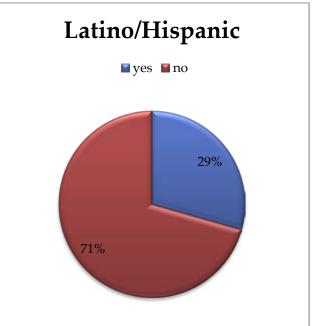
"Someone who speak Spanish, not interpreters over the phone. I don't like the over the phone interpreter. I had an experience with an interpreter who spoke Spanish and English worse than I do. I could not understand what they were saying. It was useless having them there. I asked my daughter to help instead."

Language access for the Latino/Hispanic senior population is a key finding. Spanish speaking clients providing their own interpreters or not being able to access services because of a language barrier is inequitable treatment and creates an unearned disadvantage for this population. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the courts have applied Title VI of the Civil Rights Act to protect national origin minorities who do not speak

English well.<sup>vi</sup> It will be imperative that the Central Oregon Council on Aging sufficiently address language access in their service delivery for Latino/Hispanic seniors.

#### 12. Are you or your family currently getting any help with food or meals?



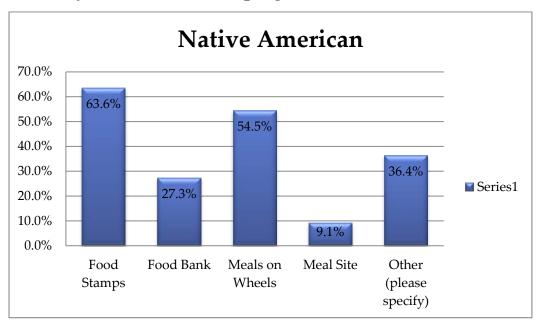


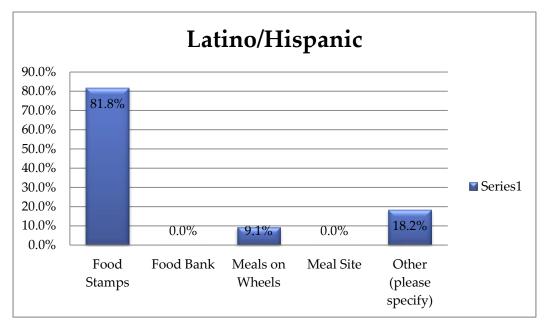
When specifically asking about current food/meal services being accessed by both populations, there is a very clear difference between the two. Sixty-one percent of Native American seniors report receiving assistance with food, leaving almost forty percent not receiving food services. The reasons for this vary. However with the Latino/Hispanic population 71% reported not receiving any assistance with food. Again we see a difference among both populations related to knowledge of services, which affects access and utilization of services.

Another factor to consider for both populations is the family component. Both populations have a cultural value of family, where meals are a time for family and caring for elders within the family is a shared value. Most of the meal services offered in the region focus on individual need and ignore the family setting in which these seniors live.

In our eariler data we learned that Native American seniors are aware of such senior-specific services in their community at a much higher rate than their Latino/Hispanic counterparts. And here we see this play out in the underutilization of services for the Latino/Hispanic seniors.

13.If yes, which services/programs?





Of those seniors who answered yes to question 12, they were asked which food services they were receiving. Among Native American seniors, there was a wide spread of service utilization. Most utilize more than one food service. The "other" category identified "Commodities" as an additional food service that was currently being used. Food stamps and Meals on Wheels seemed to be utilized the most among Native American seniors.

Of the 29% of Latino/Hispanic seniors that utilize a food service, the majority of these access only food stamps. The "other" category identified food boxes from church. This question demonstrates the underutilization of senior food services by the Latino/Hispanic seniors in Central Oregon. It also reinforces the idea that services that do not include the cultural value of family will be underutilized by these populations, even when they have knowledge of the services. Food stamps and food boxes are both meal/food assistance that can be utilized to support family meals.

#### 14. What do you like about that service, and what could be better about it?

This question was an opened-ended question soliciting aspects of the food services that seniors of color are receiving and what they liked or experiences that didn't work for them.

Native American seniors shared the following:

"I like the cheese that commodity offers every other month. I liked the butter too but they stopped sending that. I like that they offer fresh fruits and vegetables when available at the food bank. I like that the meals are delivered out here so I don't have to drive."

"We had an Indian woman who used to provide our meals, she knew how to prepare our foods. Then a white man came, he began preparing our foods and sometimes we could not eat them."

"It would be great if organic foods were offered and special bargain foods. Food boxes would be better as food stamps do not last in Warm Springs. Foods /gas are overpriced in Warm Springs Market /gas station.

"Better form of communication instead of just word of mouth."

"Offering fresh fruits and vegetables."

#### Latino/Hispanic seniors shared the following comments:

"They are very helpful for us that we can no longer work full time."

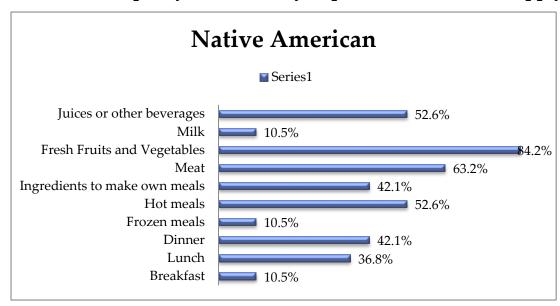
"The friendliness of people." "I receive very little. It's not enough."

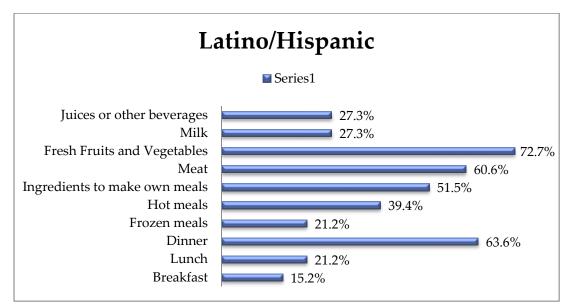
"I like that service, but would appreciate to receive more help with food."

"More phone numbers - more accessible: not automated services. Person to person."

With most of the seniors of color who are accessing a food program using food stamps, there seems to be a theme that this often is not enough and/or does not last.

# 15. If you currently need or were to need help with food/meals in the future, what help do you or would you prefer? (mark all that apply)





When asked what help with food/meals they would prefer, either now or in the future, Native American and Latino/Hispanic seniors had some similarities. Among both demographics, fresh fruits and vegetables were the highest need, 84.2% of Native American seniors indicated this as a need/preference and 72.7% of Latino/Hispanic indicated the same. Meat was the next most identified item that Native American and Latino/Hispanic seniors indicated they would

prefer or need help with, 63.2% and 60.6% respectively. When asked which meal of the day would be more preferable for receiving help with, dinner was highest among both populations; however Latino/Hispanic seniors preferred dinner by a much larger margin at 63.6% and Native American seniors at 42.1%. Lunch was a close second option for Native American seniors at 36.8%.

Areas that differed somewhat between the two were in type of meal assistance; frozen meals, hot meals, or ingredients to make your own. Native American seniors preferred hot meals at 52.6% and ingredients for their own meal at 42.1%. Latino/Hispanic seniors on the other hand preferred ingredients to make their own meals with 51.5% and hot meals were preferred 39.4% of the time.

In the area of drinks/beverages, of those that indicated this is/will be a need, Native American seniors clearly preferred juices or other beverages (52.6%) over milk. Latino/Hispanic respondents were even across both beverage options, at 27.3% for milk or juices/other beverages.

Additional comments from Native American seniors included the following:

```
"Red/wild meat" "I like to cook. I usually only eat venison, elk and salmon."
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"I would accept all 3 meals if I could." "Diabetic diet, request no bacon, no sausage."

"In season fruits/veggies and fresh bread, not stale! How about some diet packets of making juice for pre-diabetics/diabetics. Vitamins, some home products some seniors can't afford; allergy products, lotions, household garbage bags/cleaning products, etc."

Additional comments from Latino/Hispanic seniors included the following:

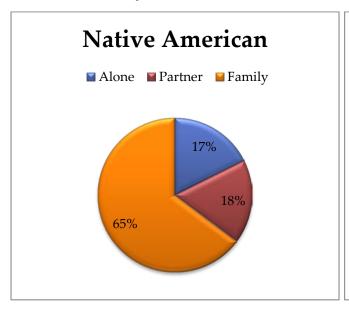
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"Comment re 'Ingredients to cook': As long as I am able to cook."
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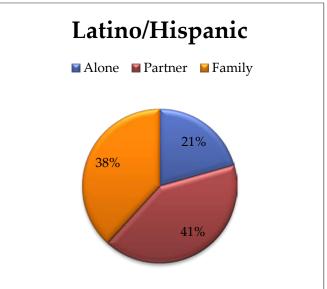
"Chorizo (kind of sausage)." "Tortillas."

The preferences identified in this question along with the comments by Native American and Latino/Hispanic seniors begin to show the cultural preferences and specific needs for meal assistance these seniors of color desire. We now know these seniors have the need for and desire these services, and this question information helps begin to inform how COCOA might focus specific meal services to better engage these populations. In the Native American population, diabetic needs were mentioned a few times. With Native American communities

having a 2.2 times greater likelihood of having diabetes compared with non-Hispanic whites, this is a compelling consideration for senior services to this population.<sup>vii</sup>

16. Who do you live with?

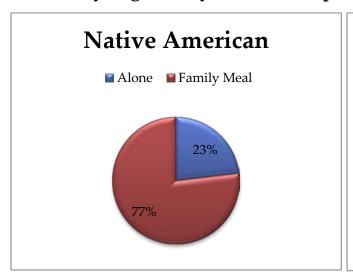


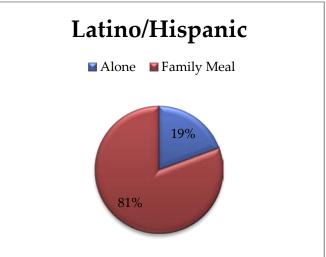


When asked who they live with, the majority of both Native American seniors and Latino/Hispanic seniors reported living with either a partner or with other family members. Just 17% of Native American seniors we spoke with and 21% of Latino/Hispanic seniors we spoke with reported living alone.

These data are important when planning for how best to offer meal services to seniors of color. Seniors of color tend to live with family and be taken care of by family members. This means that meal services must take into consideration that seniors of color will often not be living alone and thus single/individual meal style or congregate dining might need to include options for this.

#### 17. Do you generally eat alone, or part of a family meal?





In question 17, we see a very similar response across Native American seniors and Latino/Hispanic seniors, where both predominantly eat their meals as a family. Additional comments from Native American seniors included:

"Eat both on own and with family." "Sometimes with family."

"Family meal at night. Independent during the day time."

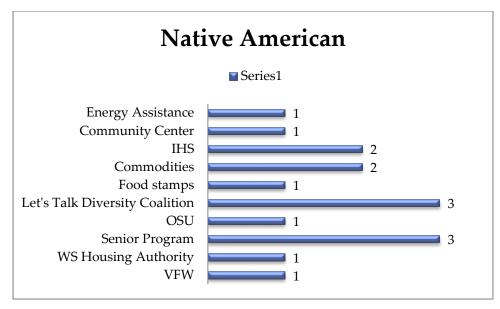
"Dinner usually together but independent for lunch."

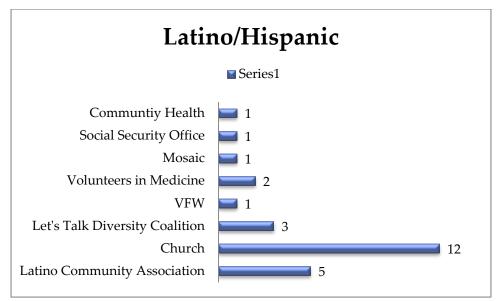
Additional comments from Latino/Hispanic seniors included:

"In my Baptist church." "I eat with my son."

These results again point to the need for COCOA to assess their meal delivery services to ensure that they are not excluding seniors of color who live and eat with family but still need assistance and help with meal/food services.

## 18. What organizations or groups do you enjoy working with the most?





Question 18 asked seniors if there were certain organization that they enjoyed working with. This question was asked because if there are organizations that are engaging well with seniors of color in Central Oregon – getting it right – then there may be an opportunity to learn from those organizations.

With the Native American respondents, there was no real theme emerging, however many of the programs/services identified are programs and/or departments of the Confederated Tribes

### COCOA Community Assessment 2015

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of Warm Springs (CTWS). This tells us that many of the services that the CTWS provides to its people are hitting the mark. The Let's Talk Diversity Coalition was one organization that operates outside of the CTWS and seems to be having an impact and engagement with Native American seniors.

With the Latino/Hispanic respondents there was a clear connection to churches that serve this community. This comes as no surprise considering that only 18% of Latino adults in the U.S. report being unaffiliated with a religious organization. This will be a key area for connection when looking to engage and serve the Latino/Hispanic community. The Latino Community Associaton was another organization identified by several Latino/Hispanic seniors that is working well with them. These organizations will be ones to look at for what works in engaging the Latino/Hispanic senior populaton and for future partnerships.

### Recommendations

Based on the community assessment and analysis, the following are key recommendations of the workgroup for Central Oregon Council on Aging to engage and serve the Native American and Latino/Hispanic seniors in Central Oregon in a more culturally responsive, equitable, and inclusive manner:

## 1. Develop outreach strategies to engage communities of color

It is clear from the assessment that Latino/Hispanic seniors are not being reached by COCOA's current outreach efforts and that this population is mostly unaware of the organization's services despite that they qualify for and need the services. This may be due to several factors including language of organizational marketing and literature, written outreach versus oral, no bilingual or Latino staff, and limited presence within the Latino/Hispanic communities within Central Oregon.

The organization must add these additional means of outreach to engage the Latino/Hispanic community and begin to build the awareness that COCOA's services exist. All aspects of COCOA's advertising, media and literature should be offered in Spanish with appropriate literacy levels and focus on family values. But this is not enough. As the assessment also demonstrates, the Latino/Hispanic community is oral and much information travels by word of mouth and the sharing of experiences. COCOA must have a presence in the Latino/Hispanic community and connect with these seniors where they naturally gather. One clear area for connection from the assessment would be Latino/Hispanic churches. Other areas include cultural events, community socials and events put on by other community organizations that serve this population. The organization must go to where the population is already gathering, where they feel safe and in doing so the organization demonstrates its interest and desire to serve Latino/Hispanic seniors and their families.

COCOA should also strive to have staff that reflect the diverse communities. Having bilingual staff and staff that are members of the target community provides a level of welcoming engagement once contact is initiated by either side. When this is not present within an organization, causing a barrier to accessing services, this spreads quickly by word of mouth, making the next opportunity for engagement that much harder.

To engage Native American seniors, COCOA must develop strategies to collaborate and work with the Senior Program within the CTWS. Native American seniors living in and around Warm Springs seem to know about the services offered. However, there are some barriers that this population identified in accessing services for their specific needs that COCOA can help bridge the gap for. COCOA must start the conversation with the CTWS about what strategies are needed and possible ways to better serve and meet the needs of the Native American seniors in Central Oregon.

By collaborating and working in conjunction with the CTWS to serve Native American seniors, COCOA can also begin to expand their engagement to Native Americans who don't reside in Warm Springs but who may need services. Because most Native American enrolled tribal members living in Central Oregon access and utilize Indian Health Services (IHS) in Warm Springs, there is an engagement opportunity with these seniors through oral culture and word of mouth. And similar to the engagement strategy for Latino/Hispanic seniors, COCOA must have a presence among the Native American communities.

### 2. Provide culturally inclusive meal/food services

Based upon the preferences and needs identified by Native American and Latino/Hispanic seniors, there are ways COCOA can adapt their current meal/food services to be more culturally inclusive. The first part of this is providing the foods and meal options that these populations have identified as needing help with, such as fresh fruits, vegetables and meat and/or ingredients to make family meals in their own home. Native American seniors also identified wild meat (salmon, venison, and elk) as traditional foods in their community and Latino/Hispanic seniors noted traditional foods such as chorizo and tortillas would be preferred.

Access to these food items may be limited or is a high need for these populations because of socio-economic and rural-access barriers. As of 2010, twenty-eight percent of Native American populations live in poverty by Federal poverty thresholds, which is nearly double that of the U.S. Both Native American and Latino/Hispanic seniors face deep economic struggles, the causes of which have roots in past discriminatory practices including the taking of land without compensation, exclusion from social institutions, forced migration and prohibiting the accumulation of wealth.

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If COCOA can find ways to make these staples part of its meal/food service delivery, coupled with targeted outreach to communities of color, the organization stands to increase access to its services for these communities of color. COCOA must also find ways for Native American and Latino/Hispanic seniors to engage in meal services with their families. With 77% of Native American seniors and 81% of Latino/Hispanic seniors eating as part of a family meal, single-serving, home-delivered meals and/or congregate dining just for individual seniors seems to exclude this demographic. In addition, 53.3% of Native American seniors and 55.9% of Latino/Hispanic seniors indicated they would prefer services to be delivered to them when their family could be there for support. COCOA needs to look at ways to offer their services in a family inclusive manner, including congregate dining for families or meal delivery service that is inclusive of family style meals.

### 3. Provide services in language of preference

COCOA needs to deliver services to seniors in the language of the senior's preference. In this assessment, 76.5% of Latino/Hispanic seniors stated that services would be more comfortable for them if the service was provided by someone who spoke Spanish. In order to provide services in the language of preference for this population, the organization must employ staff at all points of access and contact within the organization who are bi-lingual in Spanish and English.

Outreach services, written or oral, need to also be in the preferred language of the Latino/Hispanic senior population, and thus bi-lingual ability is needed for engagement and presence within this community. Seniors who speak Spanish need to be able to access service delivery at all levels, not only with single points such as intake, assessment or case management. The use of certified interpreters is one option when an agency has no Spanish speaking staff within the organization. However, services delivered in the seniors' native language, in first person, is always best practice.

## 4. Create and hire positions reflective of target population

In order to engage the communities of color in Central Oregon, the organization must reflect those communities by having a workforce that represents the major demographic groups in the region. COCOA will need to create and dedicate positions to this work. In the assessment, 66.7% of Native American seniors indicated that having services delivered by someone who

represented their community or their culture would be most comfortable for them and 76.5% of Latino/Hispanic seniors indicated services in Spanish would be most comfortable for them.

Native American and Latino/Hispanic liaison positions can focus on community outreach to the Latino/Hispanic and Native American communities. Liaison positions are usually themselves members of the diverse communities and have experience and background in equity, diversity, and inclusion work. The liaison is aware of the pulse of the community, including the different types of diversity, challenges faced by each area and the populations that they work with, as well as the atmosphere of the community.

Liaison positions can be cost shared with other organizations that already work with the communities of color and this partnership helps the organization to build trust and additional partnerships. Liaisons can also create a presence within the diverse communities for the organization, without many of the cross cultural miscommunications that can sometimes stifle outreach. Ultimately, Liaisons can be critical in carrying out the strategies of the organization to engage with diverse communities in the mode that works best for that community or population.

### Conclusion

The Central Oregon Council on Aging has taken a huge first step in the process to ensure their services are accessible, equitable and inclusive of all seniors – including seniors of color. This community assessment represents a level of commitment by the organization to continue on this journey. The stories and experiences of Native American and Latino/Hispanic seniors contained within this report are gems – gifts from these communities. It now rests upon the organization to reciprocate, which is the first and most important step in building a trusting relationship. And there is much to build from the contents of this report that can begin to eliminate the disparities and inequitable access that these seniors experience.

It is our hope that COCOA takes these next, crucial steps on its journey to equity and inclusion in serving the senior population and that the input from this engagement process informs the work of the organization for many days to come.

# Appendix 1: Introduction for COCOA needs assessment

Pre-interview Introduction: The Central Oregon Council on Aging, or COCOA, is a non-profit organization that supports individuals in Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson counties who are 60 years of age or older. Right now, we're trying to better understand the needs of all seniors, particularly Latino/Hispanic and Native American seniors, and to see if COCOA should change or add services to meet those needs. To do this, we're asking people who are 60 years or older and who identify as Latino/Hispanic or Native American to spend time answering some questions and sharing their stories with us. We hope to talk with as many as 50 individuals. We will bring all of those conversations together in a report that will include recommendations for change, and we'll share that report with the leaders of COCOA and the community.

The interview could take up to 30 minutes. For your time we do have a free gift for everyone who participates. You are also free to end the interview at any time you wish. Would you be willing to talk with me today?

**Post-interview conclusion**: I would like to share with you a bit more about Central Oregon Council on Aging (COCOA) and the services we/they provide. As I mentioned before, we/they serve individuals 60 years of age and older in Central Oregon. Services include Meals on Wheels for homebound individuals and congregate dining – or shared meals – at senior centers and community centers.

COCOA also provides those who are income-qualified with financial assistance for minor home improvements or repairs, like installing safety bars in showers or tubs or having heating repaired. COCOA can also help with in-home care, with respite for caregivers who sometimes need a break, and with light housekeeping and yard work.

Thank you for helping us make COCOA a stronger support for all seniors in Central Oregon. We greatly value your time and experience. (give free gift!)\*

<sup>\*</sup>free gift was an insulated shopping bag

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# Appendix 2: Introducción para el cuestionario de COCOA

Antes de la entrevista: el Concilio de Oregón Central Sobre el Envejecimiento, o COCOA por sus siglas en inglés, es una organización sin fines de lucro que apoya a los individuos en los condados de Crook, Deschutes, y Jefferson que tienen 60 o más años de edad. Actualmente, nos interesa entender mejor cuales son las necesidades de todas las personas mayores, pero particularmente los Latinos y los Nativos Americanos, y evaluar si nuestra organización (COCOA) debe de cambiar o añadir algun servicio para servirles mejor.

Para lograr esto, estamos invitando a las personas que tienen 60 o más años de edad, y quienes se identifican como Latino o Nativo Americano, a contestar algunas preguntas y compartir con nosotros sus historias. Guardaremos todas las respuestas en confianza. Tenemos la meta de entrevistar a un mínimo de 50 personas. Vamos a recopilar todas las respuestas en un reporte que incluirá sugerencias para hacer cambios. Luego compartiremos el reporte con los líderes de COCOA y con la comunidad.

La entrevista puede tomar hasta 30 minutos. Para compensarle por su tiempo y atención tenemos un regalo para todas las personas que participan. Usted tiene el derecho de detener la entrevista en cualquier momento.

Esta dispuesto/a platicar conmigo y participar en este proyecto?

Después de la entrevista: Me gustaria informarle un poco sobre el Concilio de Oregón Central Sobre el Envejecimiento (COCOA) y los servicios que ellos proveen. Como le había mencionado, ellos apoyan a las personas que tienen 60 o más años de edad y que viven aqui en Oregón Central. Sus servicios incluyen "Meals on Wheels" para los individuos que les cuesta salir de su casa y comidas comunitarias – o comidas compartidas – en los centros para la gente mayor.

COCOA también se le ofrece a las personas que califican segun sus ingresos ayuda como reparaciones pequeñas de su casa, por ejemplo la instalación de barras de seguridad en el baño o reparaciones de la calefacción. COCOA además le puede ayudar con el cuido de usted en su casa, o que alguien le cuide a usted por un rato para que se descansen los miembros de su familia que normalmente cuida de usted, y con trabajos livianos en su casa o cuido de su jardín.

Muchísimas gracias por su ayuda y cooperación! Valoramos mucho su tiempo y sus sugerencias. (Dale su regalo!)

# **Appendix 3: Community Engagement Questions**

Central Oregon Council on Aging – Reaching Priority Seniors in Central Oregon

Community Engagement Questions

Date:	Interviewer:	
Location of interview:	Start Time: End Time:	
Subject's Home location:	Gender Identity:	

1. What is your age group? Or the age of the person you are responding for?

Under 60 60 – 64

65 - 69

70 – 74

75 or older

- 2. What is your ethnicity or how do you identify culturally?
- 3. Do you think of yourself as a "senior"? If not, at what age do you think you'll be a "senior"?
- 4. Do you know of any special services just for seniors?
  - a. If yes, what are those services?
  - b. Do you (you and your spouse, or you and your family) use those services and, if so which ones?
  - c. Were/are those services helpful? Could they have been/be more helpful and, if so, how?
  - d. How did you (and your family) learn about those services?
- 5. What do you think/believe seniors in your community need help with?

- 6. Do you currently or in the future, need help in the areas of:
  - a. transportation to doctor appointments
  - b. in-home care
  - c. respite care, so that a spouse or family member who is caring for you can sometimes take a break
  - d. health insurance advising so that, for example, you can understand and use Medicare
  - e. free legal advice, including immigration help
  - f. minor home repair
  - g. light housekeeping or yard work
  - h. other:
- 7. Some services for seniors involve an agency person visiting your home. How would you feel about a home visitor coming into your home?

## Scale: Very uncomfortable Little uncomfortable Don't mind Would enjoy it

- a. How would you feel about the home visitor talking with you about how you're doing and any additional help you might need?
- 8. What would make services, in your home or out, most comfortable for you?

Prompts if needed-

- a. prefer someone who speaks Spanish and/or represents your culture/community?
- b. prefer a man or a woman, or would that make a difference?
- c. family member with you when you talk or share information?

- 9. Are you or your family currently getting any help with food or meals?
  - a. If so, which services/program? (Food stamps/food bank/Meals on Wheels/meal site)
  - b. What do you like about that service and what could be better about it?
- 10. If you currently need or you were to need help with food/meals in the future, what help do you or would you prefer?

Prompts if needed-

- a. Which meal do you prefer breakfast? lunch? dinner?
- b. Would you like frozen meals which could be eaten at any time, hot meals, cold meals, or ingredients to make your own meals?
- c. What kinds of food and meals would you most like? With meat? With fresh fruits and vegetables? With milk, fruit juice or other beverage?
- 11. Do you live alone? If no, who do you live with? Do you usually eat alone or as part of a family meal?
- 12. What organizations or groups do you enjoy working with the most?
- 13. What else would you like to tell us about services you might use or need at this point in your life?
- 14. Do you know of any other seniors we should talk to?

# Appendix 4: Cuestionario Comunitario

### Concilio de Oregón Central Sobre el Envejecimiento (COCOA) – Comunicándonos con las Personas de la Tercera Edad en Oregón Central Cuestionario Comunitario

Fecha:	Entrevistador/a:	
Lugar:	Se empezó a las:	Se terminó a las:

gar:		Se empezo a las:	Se termino a las:
15.	5. ¿En cuál de los siguientes grupos de edad se encuentra usted? ¿O, en cuál grupo de edad se encuentra la persona sobre quien usted está respondiendo?		
	[Menos de 60 anos] [	60 – 64] [ 65 – 69]	70 – 74] [ 75 o mayor]
16.	¿Cuál es su etnicidad, o de qu	ié forma se identifica cultu	ralmente?
1.	¿Se considera una persona "r "mayor"?	nayor"? ¿Si no es así, a que	é edad usted cree que será una persona
1.	1. ¿Está enterado de algunos servicios ofrecidos solo a personas mayores?		
	e. ¿ <u>Si es afirmativo</u> , cuál	es son esos servicios?	
	f. ¿Usted, u otro miemb cuáles?	ro de su familia, <u>utiliza</u> cua	lquiera de aquellos servicios? ¿Si es as
	g. ¿Son esos servicios út	iles? ¿Podrían ser más útile	es - y, si es así, de qué forma?
	h. ¿Por cuál medio se en	teró usted acerca de estos	s servicios?
17.	¿En su opinión, cuáles son las comunidad?	necesidades mas importa	ntes de las personas mayores en su
18.	Usted necesita ayuda, o piens áreas:	sa que necesitará ayuda en	el futuro, en alguna de las siguientes

i. Transporte para asistir a sus citas medicas

- j. Cuidado en su hogar
- k. ¿Que alguien le cuide a usted por un rato para que se descansen los miembros de su familia que normalmente cuida de usted?
- I. Asesoramiento en seguro de salud para que pueda comprender y utilizar el Medicare
- m. Reparaciones menores en su casa
- n. Limpieza de su casa o cuido de su jardín
- Consejería legal gratis, incluyendo asistencia en asuntos de inmigración o ayuda en lograr la ciudadanía.
- p. Otra necesidad:
- 19. Algunos de los servicios a personas mayores involucra que un representante de la agencia lo visite en su casa. ¿Cómo se siente usted de que alguien lo visite en su casa?

### Escala: No me molesta Muy incómodo Un poco incómodo Me gustaría

- b. ¿Cómo se sentiría si esta persona hablara con usted acerca de cómo se siente, o si le preguntara si necesita alguna asistencia?
- 20. ¿Qué se podría hacer para que usted se sintiera más cómodo/a, ya sea en su casa o por fuera, recibiendo estos servicios?

En el caso de que no se le ocurre ninguna respuesta, puedes preguntarle:

- d. ¿Preferiría a alguien que hable Español o alguien que represente a su cultura o comunidad?
- e. ¿Preferiría a alguien de su mismo genero/sexo, o le daría lo mismo?
- f. ¿Que estuviese presente un familiar suyo cuando hable o comparta información con este visitante?
- 21. ¿Está usted o algún familiar recibiendo ayuda con alimentos o comidas?
  - a. ¿Si ese fuese el caso, qué tipo de ayuda recibe? (Cupones de comida, banco de alimentos; Comida que le llevan a su Casa; un comedor fuera de su casa)

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- b. ¿Qué le gusta de esos servicios y como podrían ser mejores?
- 22. ¿Si en la actualidad usted necesita, o podría necesitar ayuda con comida, qué clase de asistencia preferiría?

En el caso de que no se le ocurre ninguna respuesta, puedes preguntarle:

- d. ¿Qué comida preferiría? desayuno, almuerzo, cena?
- e. ¿Le gustaría recibir comidas congeladas; que pueden comerse en cualquier momento; comida caliente; o ingredientes para hacerse usted sus propias comidas?
- f. ¿Qué clase de comidas le gustaría más? ¿Con carne? ¿Con frutas frescas y vegetales? ¿Con leche, jugo de frutas u otras bebidas?
- 23. ¿Vive usted solo? ¿<u>Si no</u>, con quien vive? ¿Come regularmente solo o con la familia u otras amistades?
- 24. ¿Cuáles son las organizaciones o grupos con las cuales usted está en contacto y que le agradan más?
- 25. ¿Qué más le gustaría decirnos acerca de los servicios que usted podría usar o necesitar en esta etapa de su vida?
- 26. ¿Conoce algunas personas mayores que le gustaría recomendarnos para que habláramos con ellos?

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