

Background and Purpose

A. Goal:

The goal of the project is to improve the well-being of older Texans by modernizing local congregate programs through the creation of the Texas Congregate Meal Initiative (TCMI).

B. Objectives:

- Conducting a comprehensive gap analysis to identify the facilitators and barriers of congregate meal programs in Texas
- Increasing business acumen and program development skills of selected congregate nutrition providers
- Implementing and evaluating a learning collaborative model of innovative low-cost sustainable congregate meal pilots

C. Overview of Project:

Sixteen diverse congregate meal program pilots across rural and urban Texas implemented low-cost, replicable, innovative pilots through a Learning Collaborative (LC) model. With a comprehensive technical assistance curriculum, TCMI helped test community-centered, organic, low-cost innovations that targeted congregate meal participation, expanded benefits to seniors in Texas, and impacted their social determinant of health outcomes.

D. Project Results:

Project outcomes were tracked with the help of a program manager survey, a client survey and TCMI Learning Collaborative evaluation surveys that integrated multiple programmatic and client outcome indicators to track over the course of the project.

- Of the participating LC sites:
 - 96.4% of clients **would recommend their congregate program** to other older adults in their community.
 - 94.5% found the **marketing strategies** and **resource management** from TCMI subject matter experts, the **innovations thinking and related tips from fellow TCMI sites**, and the **congregate program barriers and facilitators** from the research conducted by TCMI project staff helpful.
 - 92.7% found the **program tips from the fellow TCMI pilot sites** and the **program development and business skills** from the TCMI subject matter experts helpful.
 - 79.9% of clients reported positive satisfaction with meal quality. Of these, 37.4% of clients said the meal quality was “Excellent” and 42.5% of clients said the meal quality was “Good”.
- **Social Determinants of Health:**
 - 80% of clients reported the program increases their social connection opportunities.
 - 75% of clients reported the program made them feel better generally.
 - 74% of clients reported the program helps them access healthy meals.
 - 51% of clients reported the program made them feel less sad and anxious.