Statewide Navigator Analysis

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Arizona Rural Health Conference
June 14, 2022
**Scope and Methodology**

**Question:** What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current navigator, eligibility and enrollment systems?

- Conduct a literature review to identify best practices, models, and landscape of initiatives around the country
- Conduct key informant interviews to understand barriers, opportunities and considerations for streamlining AZ public benefits
- Coded data using Barriers/Facilitators as the main categories
Background

Benefits Data Trust: 2021
$60 Billion in public benefits go unclaimed annually in U.S.

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities 2021:
1 in 8 Arizonans participated in SNAP
SNAP enrollment rose during summer 2020 and 2021 COVID peaks but not winter outbreaks
Key Trends in Benefits Enrollment

**Pre-Pandemic**
Decreasing Poverty
Stable Medicaid enrollment
Decreasing SNAP enrollment

**Pandemic**
Rising Medicaid enrollment
Variable SNAP enrollment
Initial pandemic job losses

Rural Arizonans have higher rates of poverty and more rely on SNAP and Medicaid benefits
How Would a Consolidated Platform Improve Services?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connects More People to Benefits</th>
<th>Reduces workload on Case Managers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simplifies Outreach</td>
<td>Potential to improve health, educational, and employment outcomes for applicants</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Populations Interviewed

Key Informant interviews
28 Completed

AHCCCS

State/Partner Organizations

Elderly
Statewide Independent Living Council

Tribal
Banner Health
Native Health of Phoenix

Women/Children
WIC/MICVEI

Immigrant & Refugees
CPLC
International Rescue Committee

People w/Disabilities
AZ Commission for the Deaf

Faith-Based & Non-Profits
Cherish Families
Cornerstone Mission
Wildfire AZ

Local Agencies
North Country Regional Center for Border Health

Navigators

Academic
UAzona

Regional Navigator Representation

13 of 15 AZ Counties
Apache, Cochise, Coconino, Gila, Graham, Greenlee, La Paz, Maricopa, Mohave, Navajo, Pima, Santa Cruz, Yuma

*Pinal, Yavapai not represented
Statewide Partners Interviewed

- AZ Department of Health Services
- AZ Department of Economic Security
- Arizona Housing Coalition
- Banner Health, BH AHCCCS Tribal Liaison
- Connections Health Solutions
- Contexture
- International Rescue Committee
- Maternal Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program
- Native Health of Phoenix
- North Country HealthCare FQHC
- Pima County Re-entry Program
- Regional Center for Border Health
- UArizona Prevention Research Center
- Wildfire AZ

Navigators/Assistors Interviewed

- AZ Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing
- AZ Statewide Independent Living Council
- UArizona Center for Rural Health
- Cherish Families
- Chicanos Por La Causa
- Coconino Health Department
- Colorado City FQHC
- Cornerstone Mission
- Golden Valley Health Center
- Solari Crisis and Human Services 2-1-1 Program
## Theme Frequencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enabling Factors</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outreach - 96</td>
<td>Accessibility- 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology - 67</td>
<td>Requirements - 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication - 54</td>
<td>Communication - 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Factors - 46</td>
<td>Technology - 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility - 41</td>
<td>Human Factors - 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements - 15</td>
<td>Outreach - 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy - 5</td>
<td>Policy - 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Special Populations (tribal, elderly, disability) | 46 |
| Attitudes (feeling/emotional statements) | 23 |
| Equity (race, age, discrimination, literacy statements) | 18 |

621 Total Coded Themes:
“It's a dichotomy that those that often need the most to connect to help ... experience the most barriers in trying to find it.”

- Interviewee who works for a home visiting program across Arizona
"12 years after its launch there are still people who don't know that the marketplaces/social services are available to them"

- Navigator serving in Santa Cruz, Graham, Greenlee & Cochise counties
"You can't code compassion. You have to hire good people. And they burn out and lose patience when they are overworked. So design a system that helps them to do their job better. A data driven approach is important, but you can't lose sight of the human aspect."

- Interviewee who works with probation populations
Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication-Enabling</td>
<td>22/28</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication-Barrier</td>
<td>12/28</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
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</table>

"No matter how intuitive you think you're building a system to be...if you are **not asking the people** who you are going to be applying the questions to, **you're not going to get the right response**"

- Interviewee who works with a poverty non-profit based in Maricopa County
"A dashboard/website where both client and Navigator can see all of the benefits a person might be eligible for would be helpful... empowering"

- Navigator who works in immigrant and border health
Equity

"How do you provide access equitably, when access still isn't equitable across the board? Redirecting people to local sources is good but some people will have far fewer local resources"

- Interviewee who works in Maternal and Infant Care
Attitudes

- services
- information
- trust
- process
- system
- health
- government
- project
- sensitivity
- regards
- agencies
- communities
- dignity
- access
- without
- enrollment
- help
- communication
- share
- benefits
- community
- deaf
- help
- system
- trust
- process
Population Needs

- Elderly Tribal Disabled
- Disabled
- Human factors
- Rural Probation
- Immigrants Refugees
- Education Awareness
- Translations Trust
- Homeless
- Ease of Documentation Requirements
Recommendations

- Allow local Navigators/Assistors partners greater access to self-submitted applications
- Create more accessible communication channels (e.g., text reminders for important deadlines, mobile apps, document capture)
- Develop a pre-screener element to increase awareness of available programs
- Involve key stakeholders and users in development and execution
Recommendations

- Include more Self-Service Options
- Keep flexible options, different groups have different needs
- The human element is an integral part of the system
Q: Is there anything else you'd like to share?

11/28 interviewees were overwhelmingly positive
9/28 interviews were slightly positive
7 interviews were neutral
1 interview was negative
"Excited about exploring the concept; glad to be part of the discussion and be able to access."

"I think a one-stop shop is a great idea particularly if it can house both state and federal benefits agencies under one website."

"Great opportunity to enhance collaboration across a spectrum of social services.”
"Sounds like a really useful platform. Benefits coordination is a huge challenge impacting access to services"

"It is a great idea. It sounds like it has the potential to be easier and more efficient for people...consider building in programs aimed at supporting self-sufficiency and peer support elements too."

“Try to give hope to people who are struggling. There is still a lot of stigma surrounding benefits...it would be beneficial to show success stories to change the narrative – this person was on benefits for months and now has a stable job, housing, and enough to eat.”
Acknowledgements

University of Arizona
Michelle Moore MS, MPH
Mona Arora, PhD, MsPH
Jennifer Peters
Brianna Rooney, MPH
Laura Schweers, MSW
Joyce Hospodar, MBA/MPA
Jill Bullock
Agnes Attakai, MPA
Bryna Koch, DrPH
Patrick Wightman, PhD, MPP
Dan Derksen, MD
Loren Halilli, GRA / Martin Caudillo, GRA

Arizona Department of Health Services
Siman Qaasim, MBA
Alicia Kenney, BSW
Carla Berg, MHS