

Disclaimer: For visioning purposes only, document may not reflect current state of project

AGE FRIENDLY ARIZONA IMPROVES ACCESS TO RURAL HEALTHCARE WITH POTLUCK NEW PROGRAM CONNECTS PEOPLE, DOCTORS AND TRANSPORTATION

(Flagstaff, AZ - October 20, 2022) Today, Age Friendly Arizona launched People-Oriented Transportation Linkages for Underserved Communities POTLUCK - a comprehensive suite of programs and services designed to improve the access and quality of healthcare for rural Arizonans. Older adults in rural communities have to overcome long distances, limited infrastructure and strained resources to receive care. POTLUCK changes this by using telehealth, mobile services and pop-up centers along with improved collaboration between health care and transportation providers.

Delivering healthcare in rural areas has always been a challenge, especially for older adults who may have mobility issues and lack expertise using technology. Human services transportation providers exist to help meet the need, but are limited by the number of vehicles, the number of volunteer drivers and the time to cover long distances. Potential solutions like telehealth and home monitoring are impacted by poor access and high costs of rural Internet service and poor digital literacy skills.

Age Friendly Arizona addresses the problem with a multi-faceted approach based on a highly replicable cost containment model that augments in-person medical visits with in-home and in-community telehealth services. POTLUCK contains costs for healthcare and transportation providers by reducing canceled and missed appointments and unneeded rides through improved communications and coordination. POTLUCK has a built-in baseline and metrics to show impact and evaluate program success.

“Providing healthcare for rural Arizonans is what we are all about and transportation is an essential component. People have to travel long distances to reach doctors. We’ve improved access to healthcare with expanded telehealth services and logistics tools to maximize our limited transit resources. This increases our capacity in a cost-efficient way,” said Julie Jones, CEO of Arizona Rural Healthcare.

“POTLUCK made an immediate impact by creating ways to collaborate and connect people to care that didn’t exist before. We’ve been able to reduce unnecessary trips by 30% while increasing in-person and virtual visits by 30%.”

With POTLUCK older adults work with their healthcare providers to create tailor-made solutions to meet their specific needs and situation. These include using home monitoring devices and telehealth solutions to reduce the number of in-person visits required. Older adults without Internet access can visit local telehealth centers equipped with high resolution cameras and mobile health centers. Better collaboration between health and transportation providers improves communication and reduces the number of trips with telemedicine visits.

“Now that I am getting on in years, I have more health issues and doctor’s visits and I need help with rides. Sometimes I have to go all the way down to Phoenix which is really uncomfortable, especially if I have to go to the bathroom,” said Bobby Baker, Show Low resident. “The new telehealth center in town saved me from having to ride down to Phoenix a couple times already. Less long trips also make it easier for the volunteers to provide rides to everyone who needs one.”

For more information, please visit - www.mag.gov/potluck.

POTLUCK FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

1. What are we building and why?

POTLUCK stands for People Oriented Transportation Linkages for Underserved Communities. POTLUCK is a program to improve the quality of life of rural seniors by expanding and improving access to healthcare. The POTLUCK program improves access to healthcare by improving collaboration between patients and healthcare and transportation providers. POTLUCK uses expanded in-home and regional telehealth and monitoring services combined with digital tools to improve human services transportation logistics.

2. How does POTLUCK work?

POTLUCK works as a program with multiple services to change the rural healthcare delivery paradigm and bring healthcare to the people instead of the people to the healthcare.

One service is telehealth. POTLUCK researched the rural senior community in Arizona and the universe of healthcare services the community accesses. POTLUCK then identified telehealth solutions to provide healthcare services either in-home or at regional telehealth centers. Using telehealth reduces the number of rides needed and removes a barrier to healthcare by making it easier for seniors to access.

A second service is mobile health vehicles which travel to rural areas and provide common offerings like screenings, dialysis and lab work.

POTLUCK is envisioned as a living program that will continue to innovate and find new ways to improve access to healthcare. As technologies like autonomous vehicles come on line, POTLUCK will work to provide testing opportunities to help perfect replicable solutions that can be used in other rural areas.

3. Who owns and maintains the solutions?

POTLUCK is owned and operated by Age Friendly Arizona with a partnership that includes regional transportation providers, healthcare organizations, non-profit organizations and local governments.

4. What is the impact?

The primary impact is the increase in the health and happiness of rural seniors through reduced travel times, reduced stress booking rides and increased access to healthcare services. Secondary impacts will include the increase in efficiency and capacity of human services transit providers and the reduction in canceled and missed appointments for healthcare providers.

5. What data is required and where does it come from?

POTLUCK will leverage data on the rural senior population, transit resources and activity and healthcare providers, locations and activities.

6. How will POTLUCK be adopted?

Age Friendly Arizona will launch POTLUCK with a package of marketing and training tools to drive adoption by patients, transit and healthcare providers. The campaign will include regional events, promotional materials and video content. Outreach to rural seniors will include demonstrations of telehealth options, training on how to use digital tools and contact information for transit providers.

7. What training will be required?

8. What systems need to be interoperable for POTLUCK to work?

9. What customer approvals are needed for transportation and healthcare providers to use?

Customers can opt in and out by allowing the transit provider to communicate with their healthcare providers to confirm appointments.

10. How will POTLUCK be measured and evaluated?

POTLUCK will use a robust evaluation framework to measure impact on overall patient health and satisfaction, transportation performance and the number of canceled and missed appointments.

Starting with a benchmark of current data, Age Friendly Arizona will measure the impact of POTLUCK on a list of metrics.

1. Headline

AGE FRIENDLY ARIZONA IMPROVES RURAL TRANSPORTATION

POTLUCK DIGITAL ASSISTANT CONNECTS PEOPLE, DOCTORS AND DRIVERS

(Flagstaff, AZ - October 20, 2022) Age Friendly Arizona and partners launched a new digital assistant called POTLUCK that connects people using human services transportation with health care and transportation providers to confirm appointments and reduce unneeded trips, no-shows and cancellations. POTLUCK fills a gap in the communications link by ensuring everyone involved in the process of getting rural seniors to healthcare appointments has the most up-to-date information. [\(AS- this is an important step, I think we also need to offer support for a range of technology solutions like telemedicine and autonomous vehicles\)](#)

2. Problem

Delivering healthcare in rural areas has always been a challenge. One part of the problem is coordinating between health care and transportation partners. Limited transportation resources, like vehicles and drivers, means that seniors who depend on rides are not always able to book them when needed. This problem is complicated by a high number of appointment cancellations by health care organizations, which has a ripple effect through the transportation services. The lack of coordinated communications means patients and providers may not find out an appointment has been canceled until they get to the facility - which both wastes patient and

driver time and prevents others from accessing transit. (AS- This is one problem, the other is limited numbers of volunteers and long geographic distances- need to address these as well)

3. Approach

Age Friendly Arizona uses a new digital coordination assistant to solve the communications problem. The digital assistant connects all the parties together through a reliable communications system. Healthcare providers can confirm and update appointment information to the assistant through an interface with their scheduling software. Providers can also see that patients are using transportation services so they understand the impact of schedule changes. By notifying transportation providers, they are brought into the communications loop, which allows for better scheduling, reduces unneeded trips and helps them provide better support for rural seniors. (AS- this can be one solution among others as noted above)

4. Leaders

“Providing healthcare for rural Arizonans is what we are all about and transportation is an essential component. Appointment cancellations happen and when they do it reduces our already limited resources,” said Julie Jones, CEO of Arizona Rural Healthcare. “POTLUCK has made an immediate impact by creating a way to collaborate that didn’t exist before. We’ve been able to reduce unnecessary trips by 30%.”

5. Customer Experience

Seniors can access the digital assistant on a smart phone with the application or through text, with Alexa enabled devices and online. Because not all seniors use technology, transportation providers can now provide support, with customer approval, by using the assistant to see appointment schedules so they can confirm appointments and see cancellation to prevent unnecessary trips. (AS- would like to include this and range of tech solutions like support for telemed in the home, at the nonprofit office, and autonomous vehicles)

6. Customer

“I don’t have a neighbor for a mile in any direction and I love it. Now that I am getting on, I need a little more help with driving to appointments. The ride company is a lifeline, especially for trips down to see my doctor in Phoenix,” said Bobby Baker, Show Low resident. “Last year, I got a ride. 3 hours down and we found out the appointment got canceled and had to come back. I felt real bad that we wasted all that time. Now my driver reconfirms the appointment before picking me up.” (AS- I believe this is happening now when clients are working with a nonprofit agency)

7. Call to Action

For more information, please visit - www.mag.gov/potluck.

FAQ

1. What are we building and why?
2. How does it work?
3. Who owns and maintains the solution?
4. What is the impact?
5. What data is required and where does it come from?
6. How will it be adopted?
7. What training will be required?
8. What systems need to be interoperable for POTLUCK to work?
9. What customer approvals are needed for transportation and healthcare providers to use?
10. How will the system be secured?