

Equity for All Arizonans

WICKENBURG COMMUNITY TOWN HALL

October 26, 2023 – Wickenburg, AZ

DEFINING EQUITY AND ITS IMPACT

Equity means basic fairness. Everyone should have the same chance of getting what they need to live.

Seniors are not always treated equitably. For example, some seniors who worked forty to fifty years have retired without the means to afford the necessities of life, such as food, medicine, utilities, and health care. Some rely solely on social security, which was not meant to provide fully for retirement.

OPTIMIZING EVERYONE'S POTENTIAL AND IMPROVING COMMUNITIES THROUGH EQUITABLE APPROACHES

People who scramble just to get food on the table don't have time to optimize their circumstances by pursuing education and training for better employment. People who are the most in need, including those who are the sickest, have the hardest time making their way in life. Government programs that might help them are difficult to navigate, with sometimes conflicting procedures and requirements, and it can be difficult for people to navigate the system and get the help they need.

To optimize their potential, some seniors rely on help from family members and friends. Some seniors who need help could benefit from volunteer assistance, to navigate complex systems and online resources that can be confusing or difficult to access. Seniors can also look out for one another, offering help in case of emergency or to assist others in need.

Foundation for Senior Living is an example of an agency that assists seniors in need. For example, one FSL service coordinator was able to help a client suffering from cancer to reduce their monthly drug costs from \$1,000 to \$0.00.

Seniors living in a rural area like Wickenburg do not always have access to the kind and quality of health care they need, particularly specialists. Although the Wickenburg hospital is pretty good, it does not have all the departments and resources that are needed to provide all the medical care that is needed in the community, and often must transport patients to Phoenix or other Valley cities. Seniors also have unmet needs for transportation, and the public transportation systems available are not adequate to meet those needs. These are areas that could be improved.

NEXT STEPS AND ACTIONS

There should be better coordination and sharing of information by the various governmental entities that serve seniors. In some cases, the private sector is providing services, such as navigator services assisting with insurance coverage, but people don't know about these programs. The various agencies and individuals who provide services should coordinate and collaborate more effectively. They should get together to hire a coordinator or ombudsman to provide better coordination and sharing of information.

The Senior Center provides transportation services within Wickenburg but does not transport people to other locations. They do not have the funding and other resources needed to expand their service. A shuttle service between Wickenburg and Phoenix or other Valley locations would be very helpful, even if this service ran only once a month. Transportation is inadequate due to the lack of funding.

Arizona has the financial resources to provide transportation for seniors but lacks the political will to commit the necessary funding.

INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENTS TO ACTION

Recognizing that the power to change the future begins with each individual, participants committed to take personal actions based on their experience and discussions during the Wickenburg Community Town Hall. Below are individual actions that were shared.

I WILL...

- Try to help more people.
- Help my friends and other seniors to get the help they need.
- Be there as a friend or helper to get them needed services. We should all be helpers to each other.
- Do the right thing by helping others and finding help for others!
- Help others by talking to people and praying for them.
- Find community services to coordinate with to provide assistance.
- Strive to be more actively involved in my community.
- Continuing to help my fellow friends at Foundation for Senior Living (FSL), after a friend was complaining about dizziness and nausea, I felt it was my duty to help her. Helping out friends in need is where we can start.
- Continue to volunteer.
- Help people in my community.
- Vote for the things that matter.
- Do the right thing.
- Keep helping seniors get help as a service coordinator. Someday I will be a senior and would love to have help when I need it.
- Help people who need help and food.
- Help our elders, whether assisting with grocery shopping, helping walk their dogs, or cleaning.
- Help our elders through Meals on Wheels for those in need.