



H.E.L.P. Initiative: County Interview Results



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Overview

Purpose: H.E.L.P. Initiative leaders wanted to understand the assets and gaps in community services in Hall County. Parlay Consulting Firm was invited to assist the Initiative in gathering this information.

Methods: Parlay conducted 30-minute, semi-structured interviews with Hall County residents knowledgeable about the community services available. Snowball sampling was used starting with a group of interviewees provided to Parlay by H.E.L.P. Initiative leaders. Ten (10) interviews were conducted in September and October 2024. \$25 gift card incentives were offered for interview completion.

Limitations: Significant efforts were made by the H.E.L.P. Initiative team and Parlay to contact potential interviewees with knowledge about various service areas. However, the sample skews heavily toward providers versus those with lived experience. Most participants were also based in Grand Island so results may not be representative of Hall County.

H.E.L.P. Initiative

H.E.L.P. Focus Areas

- Quality early childhood education and care
- Food insecurity or hunger
- Housing insecurity or homeless services
- Immigrant and refugee services
- Domestic violence and sexual assault
- Mental and behavioral health (including substance treatment)
- Healthcare access
- Transportation

Consistent Themes

- More **transportation** options, and affordable options
- Affordable, **quality housing** and landlord accountability
- Immigrant **legal services** and translators
- **Culturally appropriate** services – food access, language access, housing options
- Quality **childcare** options and availability

Hall County: Likes and Strengths

Hall County Likes

- Both rural and city areas
- Beautiful, open spaces
- Smaller community
- Slower pace than Omaha or Lincoln
- Community service providers genuinely care about people

Strengths of Hall County

- Several food pantries
- Goodwill programs
- Safer than larger cities
- Collaboration among agency leaders

Known Initiatives

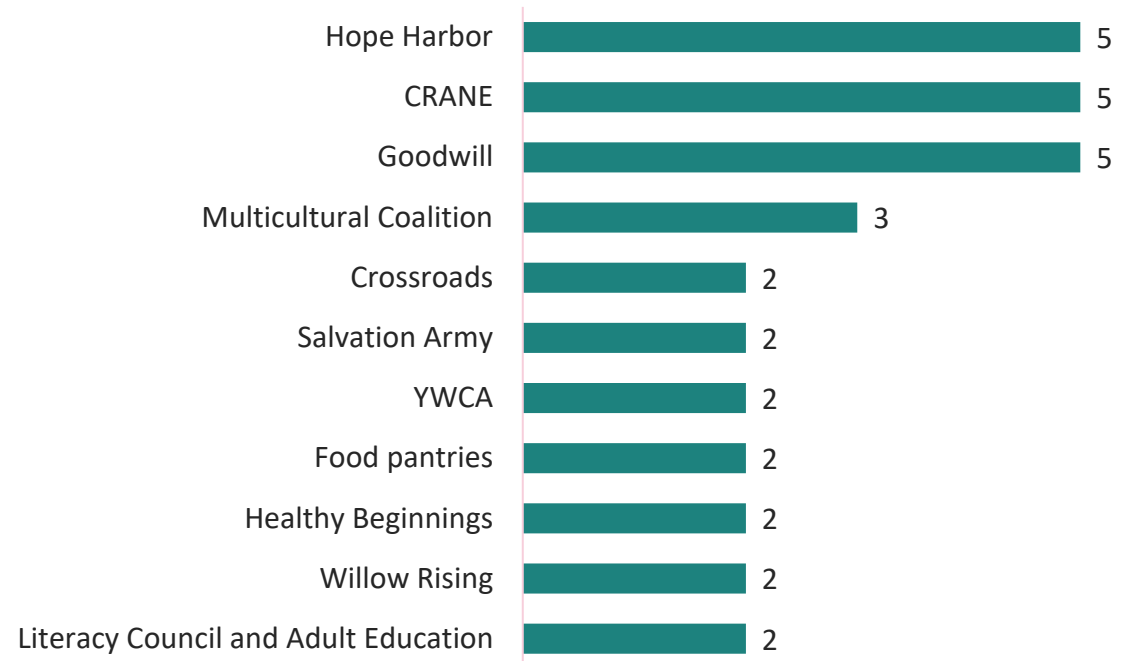
- Community Health Improvement Plan
- Improving prenatal care
- Housing Coalition Initiative
- Childcare Initiative
- HOPE Initiative
- SIM Mapping

Hall County: Programs & Services

Most services recognized by interviewees are in the Grand Island area of Hall County. This represents the most frequently named agencies.

Hope Harbor is a great resource and a community leader. **CRANE** is the primary transportation source. **Goodwill** is a primary service provider and highly impactful.

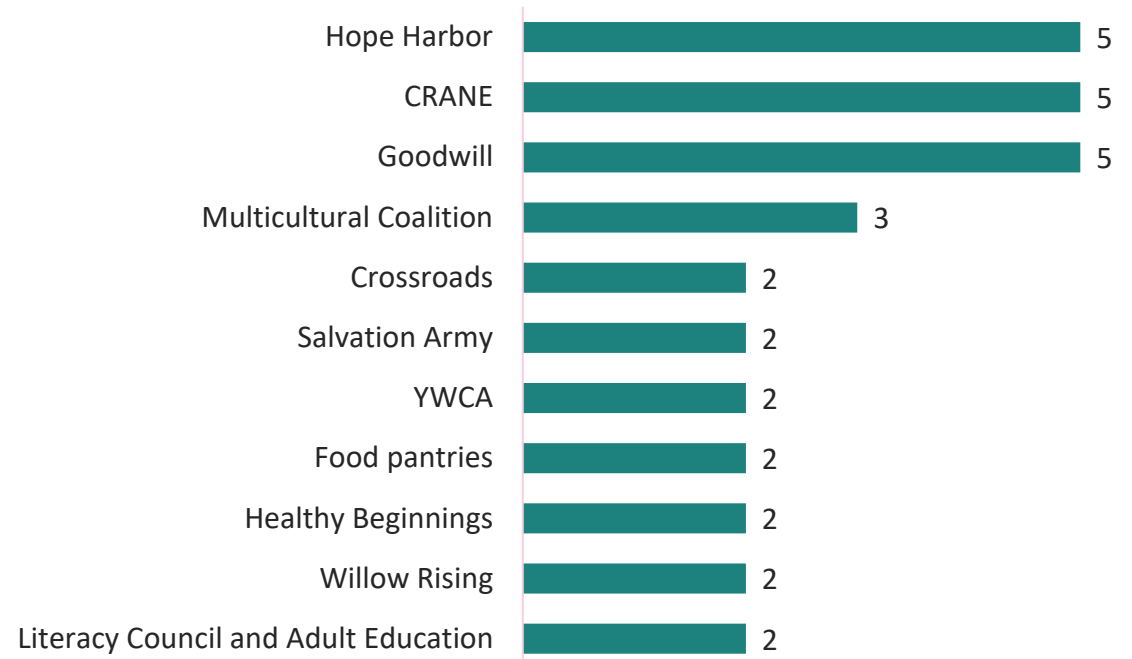
Most Recognized Agencies



Hall County: Programs & Services

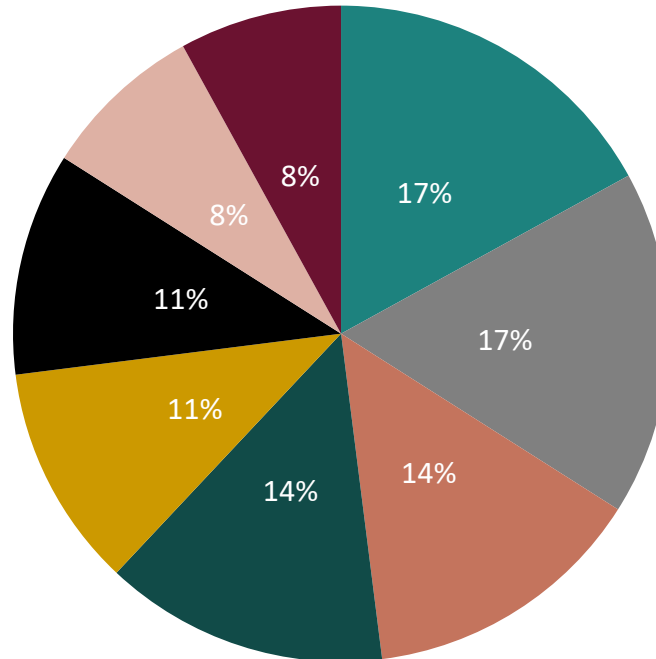
- Interviewees stated that the need for each of these services is high in the Grand Island/Hall County area.
- Most services are described as being at capacity.
- Additional providers are needed for CRANE, Goodwill, and YWCA.
- There are many food pantries, but access is dependent on someone's location relative to the pantry.

Most Recognized Agencies



Hall County: Service Barriers

- Transportation
- Language Access
- Knowledge of Resources
- Housing
- Racial Inequality
- Childcare Availability
- High Demand and Low Supply
- Stigma (across many areas)



Each barrier is compounded by an **accessibility challenge**. Locating and navigating services is difficult. Availability of help in languages other than English or Spanish is hard. Costs of services is high, and availability is low.

The most frequently identified barriers are **transportation**, **language access**, **knowledge of resources**, and **housing**.

Several interviewees noted **racial inequality** in the community, explaining that immigrants or refugees may not feel welcome in the community, or have difficulty with finding housing, either being denied outright or offered unsafe conditions.

Hall County: Service Barriers

Mental Health

- 7/10 interviewees noted the need for and difficulty of accessing mental health services.
- Notable challenges are:
 - Costs
 - Availability of providers and provider turnover
 - Facilities
 - Culturally aware treatment options
 - Stigma

“Somebody who is having a mental health episode, we don’t have enough mental health beds for anybody to get care, so we stick them in a jail cell for a night.”

“If you don’t speak English or if you come from a different culture, if you are a bilingual person, you can’t really relate to your white counselor because your experience may be way different than their experience.”

Hall County: Community Challenges

Housing

Noted Agencies: Hope Harbor, Crossroads

- Affordability, quality
- Background discrimination

Food Pantries

Noted Agencies: St. Mary's, Hope Harbor, Salvation Army, Crossroads

- Nutrition options
- High demand
- Cultural appropriateness

Childcare

Noted Agencies: YWCA

- Long wait lists
- Limited providers
- High costs

Immigration/Refugees

Noted Agencies: Multicultural Coalition

- Few legal services
- Translators
- Stigma and unwelcomeness

Hall County: Potential Solutions

- More homeless shelters, especially for DVSA victims
- Drop-in day center for people recovering and needing support
- Community awareness of challenges and resources
- Service applications or notices in more languages, such as French and Arabic
- Invest in and elevate community groups
- Peer support for DVSA victims
- Educate people about self-advocacy within systems

“The hotline is fine if you’re in an emergency situation, like suicidal or what not. But that line isn’t set up for just like a...just to have a chat and be able to bring yourself back down and ground yourself.”

“Because only so many people know how much help there is, and I’m sure that there is more help out there that I’m not aware of.”

“There are a lot of people that have stuff in their background and can’t get into places. So, like if they worked with them a little better.”

Hall County: Thinking About Mapping

Participants named the following agencies as providing needed services in Hall County:

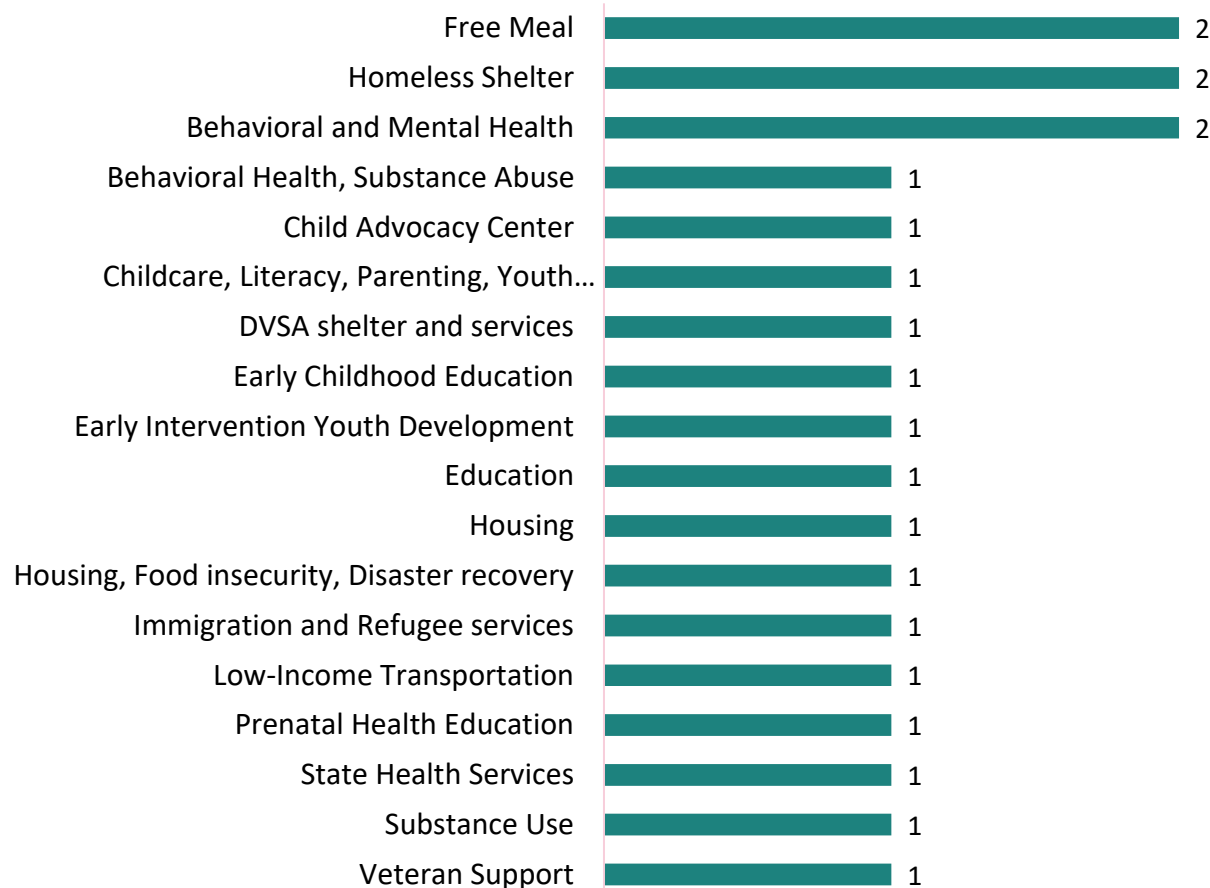
Alfrey & Pruitt
CRANE
Crossroads
Early Development Network
First Light
Food pantries
Goodwill
Habitat for Humanity
Head Start
Healthy Beginnings

Hope Harbor
Literacy Council and Adult Education
Mid-Plains Behavioral Health
Multicultural Coalition
Region 3
Salvation Army
St. Francis Alcohol and Drug Treatment
Staff Sergeant Fox
Willow Rising
YWCA

Participants named these food pantries, although more are available:

Crossroads Mission Avenue
Hope Harbor
Salvation Army
St. Mary's

Hall County: Thinking About Mapping



Looking at the services provided by the agencies named by interviewees, we can see that a wide array of services are known (*Hall County strength*), but people could only name one or two agencies who provide that service (*Hall County challenge*).

This suggests, but does not confirm, that there may be **more services available but not commonly known.**

Hall County H.E.L.P. Initiative Interview Questions

1. First, please share your name and how long you have lived in Hall County.
 - a. *[If needed...]* For reference, where in Hall County do you currently live? What city or town?
2. Next, I'd like to know what is your favorite thing about living Hall County? *[If needed...]* Tell me more about why that improves your experience living in Hall County. *[If applicable...]* Do you think everyone in the community has access to that benefit? Why or why not?
3. Now, what is one thing you wish you could change about Hall County?
 - a. What makes that a top priority? How would that improve things for you or others?
 - b. What might you suggest would make a positive change related to this concern?
4. *[If applicable...]* Briefly, please tell me a little more about your work, your organization, and its role in the community.
5. Next, please describe one public/community service or program that you think has been MOST impactful for people in your community. What makes it so impactful?
 - a. How would the community be different if that service(s) was not available?

As we've mentioned, we are gathering more information about the needs in Hall County in a variety of service areas that the H.E.L.P Initiative hopes to strengthen and so we'd like to know more about your understanding of the needs in your community.

6. Thinking about your community, what are some areas of critical need? *(If needed, these needs may relate to housing, food insecurity, childcare, immigration and refugee services, healthcare, mental health services, safety and violence, and/or transportation – add to the chat if able and helpful to the interviewee.)*
 - a. Can you think of some examples of work being done to address any of those needs?
 - Who is involved? What individuals or organizations?
 - What is happening? How is it helping to address the need?
 - What else is needed to address the need?
 - b. Which of these needs are not being well addressed?
 - Why do you think that is?
 - Can you think of any past efforts to address these needs? Why do you think they weren't successful?
 - What makes it difficult to support/address these needs?

Hall County H.E.L.P. Initiative Interview Questions

7. What are some barriers that prevent community members from accessing services? These may be barriers to specific services or barriers to all services.

Instruction to interviewer: If specific areas related to any of the following are not mentioned in response to question 6, ask specifically about them here. Skip those service areas that were well covered.

8. The H.E.L.P Initiative seeks to strengthen services in eight service areas. *[If applicable...]* We've already talked about a couple of those areas *[name services if relevant]*. Now I want to ask about a few specific areas we haven't discussed. It's okay if your knowledge for some of these areas is more limited.

What services are currently being offered in Grand Island or Hall County to address needs related to....

- Quality early childhood education and care
- Food insecurity or hunger
- Housing insecurity or homeless services
- Immigrant and refugee services
- Domestic violence and sexual assault
- Mental and behavioral health (including substance treatment)
- Healthcare access
- Transportation

9. Are there any service areas we haven't already discussed that you think are important for the H.E.L.P. Initiative to think about?

10. What is one innovative idea you have for the H.E.L.P. initiative to potentially change the lives of community members?

11. Who else in the community should we interview to better understand community needs and services? We welcome your suggestion of one or two specific individuals.

a. If we reach out to the individual(s) can we let them know you suggested them for an interview?

Thank you

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