

Food & Hunger Advocacy Response Covid 19
4.16.20 ♦ 12-1 pm
Meeting Notes

Facilitator: Lilly Irvin-Vitela, New Mexico First

Notes: Sharon Berman, New Mexico First

In Attendance:

- Alissa Barnes, Progress Now
- Ellen Buelow
- Jonas Moya, New Mexico First
- Jenny Ramo, NM Appleseed
- Representative Melanie Stansbury, NM State Legislature
- Mag Strittmatter, Roadrunner Food Bank
- Daniel Valverde, NM Appleseed
- Sonya Warwick, Roadrunner Food Bank
- Emily Wildau, NM Voices for Children

I. Welcome

- a. Lilly: On the agenda today, we'll talk about our collective work, going into special and regular sessions. Is there national policy work? Local work that is policy work in light of COVID-19? Let's stay in contact with one another. We agreed we'd meet every other week and as needed.

II. Overview from Representative Stansbury

- a. Rep. Stansbury: I have a few things to run through:
 - i. Coordinating our food and hunger policy efforts with emergency response efforts
 - ii. Prepping for special session
 - iii. Created a landing page on New Mexico First's website
 - iv. Weekly meetings with funders. Over the last three weeks we've formed a tight group of philanthropy and donor organizations. Things have jelled this week. Who's doing emergency funding, and what kind of funding. That will go on the landing page. As part of funder work, we're doing a huge press pitch today on a new Native American relief fund stood up with New Mexico Foundation and Santa Fe Community Foundation. Our goal is to raise three million dollars. This will be a national and in-state effort. In the coming days we'll be asking you to help with that. If you have friends and contacts with cash, please put them in touch with us.
 - v. EOC and state policy
 1. We spent a lot of time trying to understand the EOC system. If you receive an emergency request, the state is asking folks to go through their county emergency response team or tribal emergency officer. We tested it last week and it does work, although maybe not as swiftly as we might like. If you have any trouble please contact Lilly or myself and we can help triage and matchmake to get you the help you need.
 2. State policy – we're all still a little in the lurch, wondering what's going to happen in the special session. I communicated with David Abbey of the LFC. He told me our state budget outlook is this: because so much of our revenues depending on



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Please contact Sharon Berman at sharon@nmfirst.org if we missed or misunderstood anything in these notes.

- oil & gas and we've had a price crunch, companies are throttling production. There will be a reduction over the next several years. It looks like for FY 21, our budget can be shored up through reserve funding. But in FY22 the state will be in really, really bad shape. Leadership and the finance committees say that many of the things you advocated for, as well as pay raises may be affected. I had conversations with various advocates over the last week. They told me that during the recession of 2008-9 work group was set up, led by Voices for Children. Now we're in mid-April, looking at a special June session. We can add value through our workgroup by gaining clarity on:
- a. Which programs absolutely must be preserved
 - b. Of new programs we advocated for, develop a unified policy proposal to present to LFC and the finance committees, so that they know what the food and hunger communities see as priorities.
- b. Lilly – we've had a couple of reviews of our draft website and will make that live as soon as we get that feedback. The EOC information will be front and center on the landing page as well as the resource page. We'll get that link out to folks, if not by end of day, by tomorrow.
 - c. Rep Stansbury – we finally found the states liaison for food & hunger – it's Jeremy Toulouse. When we hear from food banks, we'd like to hear about supply and how communication has been going.
 - d. Jenny – a quick question about funding. Where is all the money going from the funding stream?
 - i. Rep. Stansbury – right now it's very ad hoc. UWCNM, NM Foundation, Santa Fe Community Foundation, fielding requests from all over the place. It's on an as-requested basis. Most foundations are doing weekly reviews with their boards. They are doing grantmaking weekly.
 - ii. Jenny – I want to make sure that the funding – we do need funding. I know the food banks are desperate for money. I want to be cautious that we're not eating up donors for Roadrunner's critical needs. In the past, funds were diluted. The people doing the work and after COVID is done are included.
 - iii. Lilly – what you're saying is very much in line with what we're hearing other people on the ground. Both in emergency food sector and also in the community response around basic needs. It's not opportunistic and not putting people serving marginalized folks in a situation where they are out of resources.
 - iv. Jenny – the other side of that is using existing people doing that work to fund. We used to do a ton of Navajo work. Who's already out there doing the work, and donating directly to them.
 - v. Rep. Stansbury the reason why we set up this fund is to do national fundraising to bring funds to New Mexico. To bring more dollars to the relief effort, not to create a new effort.

III. Updates by Organization about Policy Needs

- Lilly: What are you seeing, and are there administrative needs that are policy related, or legislative policy related? Is there anything that was a win in the last session that you propose we all get behind and advocate as we all go into the special session?



- a. Mag: **We need to keep the budget allocation for the half a million dollars for shelf-stable products for members of the food bank association in NM.** After the first of July, when the new budget goes into effect, those dollars will be as critically needed as ever. We need to make sure all 33 counties are being taken care of.
- i. When polling the other 4 food banks, we're looking to see how many of their partner agencies have closed. Food Depot have had a handful of partner agencies closed. Same for Eastern in Clovis. **All 23 partner agencies with the community pantry in Gallup have closed.** That means they are on their own. We haven't gotten definitive info from Farmington Echo. We're concerned about issues going on in McKinley County and the Navajo Nation. There's already a bad situation with the food and water needs in that part of our state. We've had 20% of our agencies close that are Catholic Diocese related. We've had to add 5 mobile food distribution units in Albuquerque and know there will be more. We're also looking at the health and wellbeing of our food bank association.
 - ii. Lilly – Half a million dollars is a drop in the bucket when you said last week that you'd spent twice your annual budget in one month due to the COVID-19 crisis. Could you put a price tag to your need? Rep. Stansbury, is it reasonable to ask what the budget will be?
 1. Rep Stansbury: **Like the budget often is, it's a black box right now.** I don't have a clue what their plan is. Given that we do have a surplus for FY20, and healthy reserves for emergency response, I think we should ask for what we need. We can scale back if we're told it's too much.
 2. Mag: we haven't gotten to the tunnel yet. So much of what's going to happen is going to happen on the recovery side. If it's anything like 2008-2012, it's going to be a process. **I would advocate up to \$5 million for a one-time request for food,** because it's going to take every penny of that to backstock, anticipating the slow economic recovery as people get back to work, getting back to a servable level.
 3. **Rep. Stansbury: I think we should put that in the stimulus package.**
 4. Lilly: when you think of additional needs – more mobile delivery, partnering more with tribal and pueblo communities, the need to be getting out – thinking about association as a whole, I'm wondering if \$5 million is too low.
 5. Mag: We have a call tomorrow with association members. All of the pueblos and reservations are going to have difficulties. In Grant and San Juan county, they're losing jobs. What can we do as a collective to put our heads around what that number would look like. Knowing there will not be just the "old normal" numbers, but trying to anticipate what that new number will be, and how long it will be in effect. **I'll be happy to have that conversation tomorrow.**
 6. Rep. Stansbury: I would suggest to not only think about what kind of numbers you would need for feeding folks. I anticipate, based on media statements, the governor and democratic leaders, that we will be doing a state stimulus to jumpstart the economy. Be creative about what we're doing in the mix. Paying volunteers, in the ilk of recovery and stimulus.
 7. Lilly – To existing calls Mag mentioned on a previous call – **thinking about compensation for existing folks that are in high demand.**



- b. Emily: We have put out a blog talking about the needs for SNAP moving forward. We're working on a full report about the federal relief so far, and gaps.
- c. Jenny: we are working on big interesting things:
 - i. Transition of feeding programs at school into the summer. We're working with different agencies – CYFD and PED. If the school shutdown continues, we need to keep up the same level of feeding that's happening now. Schools are running out of gas – and normally not all of them serve during the summer. We're trying to get that figured out now so that come June 1st, we're not caught by surprise. We need to get Patty and Mariana in the Governor's office to get the projection for the worst case scenario. We really need a plan to keep this level of intensity up, probably throughout the summer.
 - ii. The other thing is the pandemic EBT piece. If we can get more families and do some sort of statewide marketing for families to sign up for EBT now, we'll have more families getting pandemic EBT. **We could use support getting information out there.** I was on a national call and some food banks and places doing school feeding had a sticker with a QR code. The pandemic EBT will be around \$200 per kid/\$5-7 per day per kid. **The more people we get to apply for free and reduced price meals now, the more pandemic EBT funds we'll get.** We're looking at nationally approved plans and other plans.
 - 1. Lilly – as you are developing materials and pushing forward an ask, you're wondering if there's a way we folks on this call and the broader statewide network can amplify it – the
 - 2. Jenny: Is it unreasonable to ask, Mag if the food banks could give anything out?
 - iii. Mag: I think that is possible. I know we've already been doing that. Now that we're packing boxes, we put literature in those boxes.
 - 1. Lilly – **Mag's to-do list: you're going to be checking in what that budgetary ask may be but also ways to connect folks with food and resources.**
 - iv. Lilly – Are there programs in place for kiddos who aren't eligible for school feeding programs? Do you have thoughts, or have you heard about other strategies other states are deploying?
 - 1. **Jenny - Ages 1-18 are covered. It's not just for school-aged children. When I see the pandemic EBT plans, I'll see how the kids' parents are eligible for pandemic EBT.**
 - 2. Lilly – on Jicarilla, their biggest concern is the 200 head start children who are no longer getting food. It's clearly misinformation. Is there a resource I can point people to?
 - 3. Jenny – they can call us.
 - 4. **Lilly – I'll set up a call with you and Lt Garcia at Jicarilla.**
- d. Alissa: I think at this point, we're still waiting from a communication standpoint. I take all my direction from Sonya in terms of communicating out what the Roadrunner Food bank needs. If there's an opportunity to advocate for things, we'll be uplifting needs of the association and other feeding programs in whatever way is appropriate. We're waiting to hear about when the special session will be and what that will look like before making concrete plans. We're dealing with fallout of Supreme Court Decision on Tuesday, and have people still participate in democracy in this especially critical time.

IV. Brief Check-in:

- Lilly: there are some dots to connect about local food system. Some administrative policy issues raised among ag advocacy folks to make sure that, to the extent that local producers are able to contribute to the food supply chain, there are policies to make that possible. The public health orders requiring no more than 5 people in commercial kitchen at a given time are challenging. People who are sharing spaces are trying to figure out how to do that. In the meantime there are commercial kitchens that are dark. It would be great to do matchmaking. We need resources for food banks, for emergency response and ongoing recovery. Also looking at those needs around feeding programs and making sure they are sustained. I know the \$650,000 around removing co-pays for folks who receive reduced price lunches was huge. Rep. Stansbury, are other policy issues cropping up related to food, ag or water needs?
 - a. Rep. Stansbury: I saw some of the email traffic regarding public health orders and commercial kitchen with the Governor's office. My interpretation is that they are providing a lot of leeway to interpret essential services. **If you hear about a pantry or commercial kitchen that is doing emergency feeding, we should circle back with the Governor's office.**
 - i. I also wanted to piggyback on what Alissa brought up around the upcoming primary. As we keep our eyes on long term, a lot of the primaries on both sides of the aisle could have significant implications for state government around food and hunger programs. We need to increase turnout through absentee ballot voting. As an elected official and as somebody running, we're going to do a push for absentee ballot voting because we're going to have a low turnout otherwise.
 - ii. Alissa: Progress Now has a whole page on our website that includes emergency feeding organizations and advocacy organizations. We know all of the intricacies. **If it's easier for groups to reshare, we'll be developing talking points.**
 - iii. Lilly – we've been reminding folks each week to apply for their absentee ballot. If you are cool with us linking and/or using your graphics in our newsletter, let us know. NM First has been working in partnership with other community organizations regarding redistricting and the census. All of those will have implications on food and hunger. We know it may not be the central-most thing to folks on this call but we're happy to share information.
 - iv. Rep Stansbury: yes! These are critical:
 1. Raise money and support emergency food and hunger relief
 2. Fill out your census
 3. Order your absentee ballot
 - a. Getting people to turn out to absentee ballot early will be critical to almost every competitive in this state. It doesn't matter who you advocate for – just turning out voters will be critical to all the work we do, in every race.
 4. Sonya – **Lilly, we would be interested in those assets as well so let us know when you're ready.**
 - v. Rep Stansbury – we talked last week about the federal relief package. These things always come back around. Their plan was to attach it to the transportation bill. If it doesn't move



this summer, it will move in the lame duck. I would think about all the things that happened this session. We increased significant funding for disability, Medicaid, early childhood childcare services. They are all part of the package providing support for families.

1. Emily – Voices is working on some of that stuff too.
- vi. Sonya – in terms of revenue raising, is anyone on the line concerned about the reintroduction of the food tax?
 1. Emily: that’s definitely a conversation that’s starting up for us as we near the special session.

V. Next Steps

- a. Lilly – we’re trying to be focused and thoughtful and if you are aware of others who should be in the conversation, the next call is on April 30th. We’ll be getting the landing page out to folks.
- b. Next time we’ll share updates.
 - i. Mag, if you’re able to share numbers we can start working on a policy summary. Probably more focused and not as comprehensive as the 2020 session one.
 - ii. Emily, as Voices is evolving your policy positions, if we can start getting those into a one-pager that we share that has additional background information,
 - iii. I’ll ask Jenny for the same.
 - iv. Alissa, if you have a pro-democracy message, we can include that in our ask.
 - v. To Rep. Stansbury’s point, **if there are people to be reaching out from disability, to early care and education, it would be helpful to have those folks as part of the conversation.**
 1. Rep Stansbury – if you could let us know if there are other conversations happening that touch on these issues, so we can be informed or be part of it, if it’s appropriate, please let us know.

Lilly – look for notes soon. If you have information to share, we all have each other’s contact information. Don’t be shy about sharing things that are timely.

[Meeting Recording](#)



Please contact Sharon Berman at sharon@nmfirst.org if we missed or misunderstood anything in these notes.