

**Food, Hunger, Water, Agriculture Policy**  
**General Action Team**  
**7.30.20-12:00 – 1:30 pm**  
**Meeting Notes**

**Facilitator:** Lilly Irvin-Vitela, New Mexico First

**Notes:** Sharon Berman, New Mexico First

**In Attendance:**

Adelante

Katy Anderson, Roadrunner Food Bank

Andrew Baker, Health Action NM

Tim Davis, NM Center on Law and Poverty

Bruce Hinrichs, NMSU

Rep. Joanne Ferrary

Dan Gerry, WAVE Foundation

Jane Braithwaite for Rep. Stansbury

Barbara Leppala for Rep. Stansbury

Brenda McKenna for congresswoman Deb Haaland

Judy Mesal

Christina Morris, NMDOH

Jonas Moya, NM Cattle Growers Association

Rose Nava, NM Appleseed

Carlos Navarro, Interfaith Hunger Coalition

Tsiporah Nephesh, New Mexico Thrives

Jason New, NMDA

Valerie Rangel, The New Mexico Foundation

Anna Rondon, NM Social Justice Equity Institute

Pam Roy, Farm to Table, Food & Ag Policy Council

Emerson Toledo, City of Gallup, Indigenous Peoples Commission

Xavi Vallejo, NM First

Emily Wildau, New Mexico Voices for Children

**Homework:**

- Executive branch is administering CARES ACT funding. Quite a bit of those funds still sitting there. If you have ideas about greater flexibility, let us know. If folks have thoughts on CARES act flexibility please send those this way as well to [info@nmfirst.org](mailto:info@nmfirst.org).

**Updates:**

- Which of these lend themselves to farm & ag bill/to distinct legislation. He suggested they be sorted out into actionable time frame.
- Congresswoman Haaland attended the funeral for beloved Congressman Lewis today. He was eulogized by Presidents Obama and Presidents Bush & Clinton were there as well. "I think Congressman Lewis would love what this group is doing."
- The Council of State Governments discussed social determinants of health such as housing and food. "We need to recognize that's really important for everyone's health."

**Agenda:**

- We will break into breakout sessions for 30 minutes. Think together about food security and getting folks fed. Root causes.
- Think Production, Supply Chain, Future of Ag Solutions.
  - Group 1: Production, Supply Chain
  - Group 2: Emergency Food Relief/Anti-Poverty Measures
  - Group 3: Infrastructure needs underlying and parallel with emergency food & water distribution
  - Group 4: Equity issues in access to resources

**Group 1:**

- Andrew Baker
- Tsiporah Nephesh
- Tim Davis
- Carlos Navarro
- Sharon Berman
- Lilly Irvin-Vitela
- Pam Roy
- Food desert issue. We're seeing some local restaurants to grocery delivery. If we can utilize this, deliveries via existing pathways, that could be a solution. Lessons from those and figure out how to get more grocers doing more delivery of food.
- Investment in regenerative agriculture. A lot of fertilizers and other projects are needed. It adds value to the soil. More money stays in the state, improves the quality of the soil, food grown is more nutritious, and the water is able to retain more water.
- Transportation. Creating hubs
- La Montanita co-op has been developing hub and transportation network. We should check in with them.
- Food Hubs – definition – what does that mean in the state? In a meeting earlier today, we were discussion about that. Agricultura network – group of farmers – about aggregation & distribution. There's one in San Juan County, Shiprock is starting one. La Semilla has similar qualities in Dona Ana.
- How are they helping if it's not physical?
- Spokes on a wheel. NMFMA provides the coordination. Coordinates product to grocery, school, or senior center. Food hub might play a role in that. One example: getting produce to San Juan county from Corrales. They were able to link Food Hub Initiative to cold storage, hold it over a holiday and was able to distribute to 5 spots after: Cold Bot (pull along).

**Main Ideas:**

1. Buy local
2. Central data depository – in a searchable database that folks could use in real time
3. Continue work that groups have been supporting around Farm to institution (Senior Centers and Schools)
4. More local processing capacity, of produce, meat and dairy,

- Buying made him think of intersection of WHAT? School meal program, state institutions. Incentive state institutions to buy local, maybe a percentage. Would strengthen supply chains.
- SNAP double up food bucks benefits local producers and helps people get fed
- Figuring out ways to make it possible, incentive people to switch business models – there is an investment in regenerative agriculture

### Value Chain/Future of Ag

- Transportation – hubs
  - Where are they, what makes them unique, what resources they need
  - Example: Agri-Cultura Network (South Valley of ABQ) – farmers can bring product to facility, to be processed, repackaged, connected with customers
  - San Juan will be provided facility – right now there is a Cold-Bot truck.
  - Shiprock just purchased their Cool-bot. Effort 3-4 years in making. Money will go back to farmers, and communities will have a greater connection. Beginning sometime next month.
  - There is a potential group that could be aggregated statewide.
  - May need to map out and document future possibilities (example Oate Center near Alcalde, county-owned)
  - SW food hub exists.
  - How can Gallup/McKinley start a food hub?
- Buying local
  - Lessons learned from a pilot project with senior centers and other past projects
  - Institutional procurement
  - Looking at something more comprehensive: legislative – where agencies are tied together. Unifying this effort – not only with schools but also to incentivize. This adds strength. “We have the right constellation.” Have built capacity and need to build more. We may see an initiative building out more comprehensive procurement. This may pair well with La Semilla’s Healthy Food Finance Initiative.
  - don't miss percentage goal across institutions
- Labor/Compensation Living wage – building capacity and pathways across the industry.
  - Staff in kitchens are among the most poorly paid in our sector. (NYT article – Pam may have)
  - Farms/farmers/cost of labor
  - Institutional labor
  - Lift up labor force for those who are working for children, seniors, etc.
- Having integrated data systems
- Continuing to invest in farm-to-institution model
- Local processing – meat, dairy, etc.
- Local benefits
- Warehousing – e.g., Cold Storage.
  - We’re in a time of abundance now, but what about in December/January?
  - We need solutions at individual level (electricity, transportation) as well as institutional level.

- Local food – available for emergency relief
  - But we can't use it to fix ag markets in NM.
  - NM Food Box Program – as dedicated to quality and safety as federal program but customized to NM so it is a win-win
- Other emerging solutions??
  - Block chain model – a ledger where all can see what is available. Similar to Food Bucks, where producers and transporters are connected to distribute food
- Education
  - How to train/prepare folks and connect people to their relationships to food

### Group 2:

- Flexibilities in State programs for emergency meal programs
- Production: farmers donating food to local food distributors
- New Study (Jason N) findings:
  - Feasibility of introducing state inspecting
  - Majority of meat exported for V-A processing
  - Expanding the possibility of HSD food & nutrition –
  - Build upon programs implemented before and emergency – potential for new HSD division
- Improve speed and accuracy of food transportation.
- Meat production. Livestock going to Texas or Colorado to get raised & processed. Improvements needed in the areas of
  - Labor
  - Affordable grain
  - Type of cattle – not end of line
  - More inspectors
  - Ways to export beef internationally

### Policy Solutions:

- Strategic planning and first steps to make it more profitable for local producers to get in the game
- ESF-6 – State's current State entities working on these issues
- Flexibilities – state and federal programs including SNAP
- Integration and coordination between state departments.

**Group 3:**

Valerie Rangel  
Christina Morris  
Katy Anderson  
Brenda McKenna  
Xavier Vallejo

**Discussion:**

- Policies for basic human rights to water. UN definition to clean source of water, no further 30 minutes from residence. Electricity important as for health.
- For our region, we need to have better conversations with other states. Policies are always very different. We're not taking into context intersects with other states and the federal government.
- We talked about things a bit last time. Good cold storage is a must. From an infrastructural road perspective, working with food bank of Utah to identify. Look into building specific roads and cold storage. Arizona & Utah seeing the same issues as well.
- People who don't have electricity don't have refrigeration.
- It's not just having infrastructural needs and collaborative processes. Non-profits will tend to get a lot of dollars, but the money going back into communities is disproportionate. We need to build infrastructure to help build collaborations. This kind of thievery happening.
- There is an importance of community voices being present at the table. One of the biggest challenges is the number of voices. All unique voices should be heard. There should be more community building around this work.
- I would also add looking into the social capital of the populations who receive services.
- That is an ongoing challenge. Base of volunteers.
- Social determinants of health. In public health. Local leaders are all making their own decisions and for us to make sure this pandemic doesn't continue; we need to work together. For us to be prepared for the fall and winter.
- Communication statewide system. How are we disseminating information?
- Meetings with coalition advocacy groups. Some communication is coming from the governor and we didn't even know that. We need communication to be community based. Each community is going to community.
- Is there some kind of grouping of 5-10 personas for different communities.
- In our area, we have been very intentional about communicating. We have been strengthening communication and our vision. There has been some major steps in how the education department can break down the barriers. There are farmers on the Navajo nation that want to stay under the radar because being monitored

**Summary:**

- Infrastructural Needs for emerging Food & Water distribution
  - Water
  - Communication
  - Infrastructure

- Distribution
- Inequality of water – Valerie suggested what the UN has, a human rights declaration for water – clean, located in a certain proximity of where people live
- Inequality in infrastructure: cold storage. Lack of electricity.
- Food hubs – need partnerships, listen to community. Need to empower farmers yet respect them when they don't want to participate in certain task due to more duties.
- There's a challenge in maintaining social capital. Example was Roadrunner Food bank. How do we keep social capital strong when working with volunteers and interns. Can we get people paid.
- Communication:
  - Need global united voice especially in light of what we're going through with COVID.
  - People are using cardboard for messaging and AM radio.
  - Everyone should have access to broadband. It shouldn't be driven by corporations.

#### Group 4:

Dan  
Jonas

- We want to work more closely with the Governor.
- Water for agriculture, especially for smaller farms and areas. (Navajo Nation, Dig Deep providing tanks, pumps and water but so much more is needed to provide water to farms)
- Getting crops from the farms to the places where the food is needed. NMSU is mapping cold storage areas that aren't in use now (schools/restaurants/etc. that are closed). Then proper transport needed from cold storage to people
- Removing obstacles to buying local agricultural products. Get it to NM people.
- Circuit riders
- Technology in greenhouses – hoop houses and sturdier greenhouses
- Working more with Cooperative Extension services, bring them in
- CARES Act, \$700 million that will be going to Navajo Nation, and understanding how that will be used
- We need more funding for food banks. Need to explain the need. We weren't able to get the \$12.5 million to food banks. Issues are so high profile that we'll need to see changes in state funding for this
- Resources out there – we can do a better job getting food and water to people! Work with Governor.
- There problem with sheep and NM Wool Growers  
<https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/most-states-are-using-new-flexibility-in-snap-to-respond-to-covid-19> This is a recent report from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities on waivers available for SNAP now that make application and renewal simpler and more efficient. There is a table that shows what waivers states have received (including NM).

Closing Summary:

Take advantage of Interim Committees – make sure there is time to socialize with policy makers, use time well, see where political will lies among stakeholders. This will help us move quicker to a drafting phase. If we can begin to bucket policy ideas into the following buckets that would be super helpful.

- Legislative policy ideas
- Budget Ideas
  - (e.g., need to first ask if requirements of cares act apply to an item. If not, then we move toward seeking funding through state budgetary process)
- Executive (rule or program) ideas
- It might be useful for the entire group to prepare a comprehensive legislative focus with \$ or without \$ that needs better collaboration.

Lilly invited the group to let NM First staff know ([sharon@nmfirst.org](mailto:sharon@nmfirst.org), [xavi@nmfirst.org](mailto:xavi@nmfirst.org)) If they had any ideas that they didn't get to share, or thought were important and it didn't come up today. Or, if any idea they heard were of grave concern, she invited them to let NM First know that too.