

Food, Hunger, Water, Agriculture Policy
General Action Team
8.13.20 ± 12:00pm-1:30pm
Meeting Notes

Facilitator: Lilly Irvin-Vitela, New Mexico First

Note Taker: Sharon Berman, New Mexico First

In Attendance:

- Katy Anderson, Roadrunner Food Bank
- Rep. Gail Armstrong
- Ellen Buelow, Interfaith Hunger Coalition
- Antonio Corrales, State Auditor's Office
- Joy Dinero, Interfaith Hunger Coalition
- Alicia Edwards, Grant County Commissioner
- Tyler Eshelman, NMCEWL
- Gerry Fairbrother, The Food Depot
- Rep. Joanne Ferrary
- Josey Foo, Indian Country Grassroots Support
- Dan Gerry, WAVE Foundation
- Sherry Hooper, The Food Depot & NMAFB
- Brenda McKenna, Congresswoman Deb Haaland's office
- Emily Arasim from NM Acequia Association
- Judy Mesal, Interfaith Hunger Coalition
- Barbara Leppala, w/ Rep. Melanie Stansbury
- Roy Montibon, The Montibon Company
- Jonas Moya, NM Association of Cattle Growers
- Andrea Nash, RRFB
- Rose Nava, NM Appleseed
- Carlos Navarro, Interfaith Hunger Coalition
- Tsiporah Nephesh, NM Thrives & Covenant Pathways
- James Povijua, CCP
- Victoria Quevedo, La Semilla Food Center
- Adelante, The Storehouse
- Kurt Rager, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry
- Valerie Rangel, The New Mexico Foundation
- Rep. Melanie Stansbury
- Erika Robers, New Mexico First
- Jeremy Toulouse, ESF6
- Kyle, Dine Introspective
- Reena Szczepanski, Office of Speaker of the House
- Brian Egolf
- Daniel Valverde, NM Appleseed
- Emily Wildau, New Mexico Voices for Children
- Janene Yazzie, Sixth World Solutions

Lilly shared the draft [pandemic policy priorities document](#).

How do we maintain commitment to local food systems and resilient ag to healthily position ourselves during challenging times. Considering elements that would go into omnibus bill/s.

PRIORITY #1 - Address Root Causes of Food Insecurity

Key:

Green = Move Forward

Yellow = Keep Developing (not yet ready for legislative action)

- Create a constitutional amendment to the NM Constitution making safe and sufficient food and water security a human right. (20 in favor)
 - Amending the condition is a multi-year process that requires a ballot measure and a lot of planning and resources. Would suggest a different mechanism (x3 agreement)
 - I like the concept.. but not sure about an amendment (x 3 agreement)
 - Access to water should be prioritized over food.
 - Not sure of the goal of the Constitution Amendment but obviously think that food/water is a right
- Reject re-institution of a Food Tax in New Mexico. (22 in favor)
 - More than one-year no food tax



- Reject taxation of non-profit organizations who provide essential nimble capacity in responding to basic needs in New Mexico's COVID-19 relief and recovery efforts. (22 in favor)
 - Yes, and it needs to be broader.
 - Applies to all nonprofits, and long term.
 - Suggest we consider a competitive grant program to support non-profits providing emergency relief for food and water.
 - “Competitive” should take into account that not every non-profit can compete on the same playing field
 - Because of the anti-donation clause, we have to do competitive programs with state dollars
 - Understood but how we define the parameters matters
 - Can a competitive mechanism be structured by tiers or "pools" where smaller nonprofits aren't pushed to compete with those with bigger budgets and greater capacity but still do meaningful work in rural and local communities? (x 3 agreement)
 - Can do by how eligible entities are defined for the grant program
- Require New Mexico to accept any waivers allowed in federal programs that are aimed at supporting people of low-income and reducing barriers to participation. (22 in favor)
 - Add broader concept – no additional barriers –
 - Agencies taking hard look at administering rules – language directing agencies to aggressively pursue waivers and flexibilities in rules
- NM Legislature asks Congress for continued flexibility and implementation of programs that impact social and structural determinants of health such as food, housing, health, childcare, and workforce development as relief and recovery efforts continue across NM and the country. (17 in favor)
 - With state dollars
 - Re: the legislature asking Congress—is this a letter to the delegation? We can do that without legislative action.
- Implement a Working Families Tax Credit to keep more money in family budgets and invest more in local economies. (21 in favor)
 - The WFTC has already been implemented so it should be increase and/or expand.
 - Would that be an "increase" to the WFTC? Increase staffing for State Departments responsible for administering Public Benefits to lower caseloads, prevent churn, and assure the timely processing and administration of social safety net benefits and continuity of access to income supports to stabilize and strengthen recovery and relief efforts. Institutionalize lessons learned from COVID-19 operations about reducing barriers to re-verification.
- Increase staffing for State Departments responsible for administering Public Benefits to lower caseloads, prevent churn, and assure the timely processing and administration of social safety net benefits and continuity of access to income supports to stabilize and strengthen recovery and relief efforts. Institutionalize lessons learned from COVID-19 operations about reducing barriers to re-verification. (22 in favor)
 - I agree with concept
 - Have heard that there will be budget cuts to state departments which usually means a hiring freeze.
 - The LFC is working on the budget framework now and hearing from agencies and we will be in a tight budget situation.
 - Advocate for agencies using maximum flexibility to fill staffing needs
 - I'd also like to see a strategy for other orgs to be able to help with this issue (x2)
- Help families avoid the cliff effect AKA the poverty trap by creating longer transition periods or gradual stair steps to self-sufficiency rather than immediate termination of benefits when income thresholds are reached for up to 6 months to allow families to gain income stability. (20 in favor)
 - Does the extension of services require community service or drug testing?

- Increase training, professional development, reflective supervision, and quality monitoring for public benefits case workers and supervisors in: public benefits eligibility, parameters, and requirements across front-line staff in social safety net programs; Motivational Interviewing 40 hour training; implicit bias training and coaching; causes and responses to secondary and vicarious trauma; trauma-informed approaches; and conflict resolution. (21 in favor)
 - I think it's highly important and should be increased to 8 months-1 year, re: creating transition period
 - Professional development around these issues is also important for non-profits etc. working in the same field
 - This is a great idea. May be an idea ripe for a philanthropic + NGO partnership
 - Yes, and I think this is something that can be pushed in collaboration with Governor's racial equity advisory committee
 - Yes, and yes!
 - Maybe one of our funders can take this up!
 - Yes!!
- Increase staffing for DWS to investigate and respond to wage theft claims and to enforce the minimum wage laws. (21 in favor)
 - Historical & policy context of NM should be included.
- Study and develop recommendations about the relationship between food insecurity and housing insecurity and consider rent control in gentrifying communities across New Mexico. (10 in favor)
 - Are there other people working on this – do we ask them to consider this policy idea? Addressing food insecurity at the nexus of housing insecurity.
 - I'm not sure that they're working on the relationship piece...
 - Opportunity for collaboration.
 - they are working on housing insecurity... rent control... etc.
 - I would reframe as the nexus between food and housing insecurity, and get more concrete on what that means (x2)
 - Think this should be reframed for how you described it rather than as written (x2)
- Invest in data and information sharing systems, technology, broadband, and connectivity to avoid programming or networking glitches that undermine clear and actionable communications with New Mexicans about income supports. (24 in favor)
 - HUGE YES!
 - Connectivity is being worked on.
 - Let's figure out how to use sophisticated data and tech systems to address food system distribution and infrastructure needs
 - Agreed, but quality of IT development makes a huge difference, not just throwing money at the problem. Who is doing the actual work, who gets the contracts?
- From a federal perspective, SNAP is extremely important. **Protect and increase the SNAP allotment**, not just during the emergency. Keep maximum SNAP benefits; this is absolutely huge, from an on-the-ground perspective. All the federal nutrition programs are critical for NM esp. with the budgetary challenges we're facing. We need to maximize all the federal resources we have. (24 in favor)
 - Question: State has added to SNAP benefits for seniors. What is happening? Does it need to be reinstated? Should it be added to this point?
 - HUGE yes
 - Strongly Support This
 - SNAP benefits for seniors should be increased (x2)
 - We need to increase SNAP benefits -the need is huge in NM
 - the public really needs to understand why SNAP is so much better for families, our economy etc. in order to support this

- For priority #1, wondering why the role that systemic racism plays in food insecurity — specifically anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism — is not on this list (x2)

PRIORITY #2 - Strengthen Food and Water Relief and Recovery

- Provide emergency funding to the Tribal Infrastructure Fund in IAD and the Water Trust Fund to leverage federal funding for Tribal, Rural and Frontier Water Needs in New Mexico. (23 in favor)
 - Reframe slightly – provide increased funding for water needs in Tribal communities – increase percentage of dollars set aside for the TIF – for water AND OTHER infrastructure needs – infrastructure set-aside or increase the funding. This would be an amendment. Advocating for increased federal funding.
 - Drop "emergency" and make it long term (x5)
 - Just increase the funding (x3)
- Invest \$12.5M in HSD for Emergency Relief and Recovery Efforts with Food Banks for purchased food, health and safety supplies, transportation, and to enhance capacity to respond to additional community needs. (20 in favor)
 - Correct to purchase
 - The actual number may need to be changed. Dollars made available through state budget for emergency food needs.
 - Q: is this retroactive? A: No. This is an emergency measure going forward.
 - Currently \$1.2 million going to 5 food banks to acquire produce. Close attention paid to nutritional quality of distributed food. There was an opportunity to add \$500,000 for shelf-stable food. Important because other nonprofits receiving food from food banks don't always have capacity to handle fresh foods. Donated food is decreasing. Having to increase purchase of food to meet growing demand especially during pandemic.
 - Does health and safety include hygiene items?
 - Re: Tribal Infrastructure and Water Funding from feds—we should add this to a single letter we write to the federal delegation about food and water needs (x2)
- Protect \$1.2M already allocated to Food Banks to acquire, source, and distribute Fresh Produce from possible cuts. Protect \$500K and allocated in February 2020 for Shelf Stable Food for food banks. (20 in favor)
 - Is this for the same purpose as above bullet? The state has been generous to support produce food program for food banks. Mainly only having to pay freight costs. At most, .09 cents/lb. for produce when purchasing from sister food banks. This is helpful for the shelf-stable purchases.
 - Consider consolidating like bullets? Protect existing funding and expand it for x and y purposes.
 - We can outline the differences between the two issues - i.e. explain what the investment would do on top of existing funds
- Reduce higher-education student hunger by providing state funding for partnerships between higher education and one of the 5 regional food banks to procure and distribute food on a weekly basis to food insecure students who are disproportionately people of color, LBGTQIA+, and veterans. (22 in favor)
 - This would be another one that could be grouped together
 - How do you know when students are food-insecure? A: Some universities and colleges are gathering this data
 - UNM has a food bank now. Anyone can come get food
 - CNM is doing a lot of work around student food insecurity too.
 - WNMU also has a pantry
 - Lots of great movement in NM amongst higher ed sponsoring food pantries!
- Continue school-based universal feeding programs and extend School Breakfast and Lunches to year-round and expand to public and private early learning settings. (18 in favor)

- Is this permanent? Or for emergency only? There is not a universal feeding program available. Without the pandemic it would be \$30 million/year. Right now, with summer waiver program during the pandemic through Labor Day. Then it will be “back to school lunch program” after Labor Day. These are all national program and has to do with area eligibility and school districts meeting CEP (community eligibility provision) criteria. This is multifaceted, covered by different programs. The only way to do it universally would be through the CEP program.
- All school district sponsors eligible to do free meals should be doing it at 100%.
- Should we change the term "universal feeding" to something else? (x2)
- Protect funding for Summer Meal programs for people of low-income statewide across the lifespan. (19 in favor)
 - Goes along with previous on, includes year-round.
 - Federal funding.
 - Transportation issues need to be addressed with food access to summer meals
- Protect and expand Senior Meal and Nutrition Programs through ALTSD. (18 in favor)
 - It's a challenge in rural communities to get people to the sites
 - Need to address the shortage of home delivered meal capacity for seniors (x2)
- Protect and expand the SNAP Double Up Food Bucks program. (20 in favor)
 - More food with the same amount of federal dollars. Dome coordination happens through NM Farmers Marketing Association. Protect and expand category.
 - 1 opposed.
- Reform rules and regulations that prohibit coordination and sharing of infrastructure such as dry and cold storage, kitchens, distribution facilities, and transportation across community programs that prioritize different parts of our community. (21 in favor)
 - Removing policy barriers.
 - What areas are being prioritized? What are the criteria?
- Create a NM version of the farm to food box program that delivers safe, high quality, local food to people of low-income who are food insecure by building on the health, safety, and quality tiers developed by PED and ALTS in their farm to school and farm to senior center programs. (16 in favor)
 - Invest in local food production for emergency relief, building on NM safety standards rather than USDA federal rules that are challenging in NM
 - This should be expanded to ensure participation and collaboration with tribal communities, re: reforming rules and regulations
 - Super complicated, but yes, I'm supportive.
- Need to look at barriers in the anti-donation clause that could be changed to strengthen food systems initiatives and infrastructure and deployment of resources to NGOs that are already in position to respond to basic needs. (16 in favor)
 - Maybe group together – revisit, refine so state, county, city governments work with NGOs to target resources most effectively
 - Anti-donation clause is OLD and may have been developed to respond to railroad transportation issues in the past century
 - Ask Sen. Ortiz 7 Pino to point us at anti-donation clause
 -
- Create a plan and allocate resources to respond to food deserts across New Mexico with expansion of mobile food pantries, education about growing your own food, and soil health to strengthen food sovereignty. (21 in favor)
 - USDA keeps accurate tabs, as well as others in state
 - Is this related to Extension Services? A: that's mainly in the next section. But yes, Extension research facilities and data help us understand this issue

- Water analysis is needed
 - Water quality and quantity analysis
- Institutionalize lessons learned about adjusting to inter-generational feeding programs; allowing schools to continue to modify how they get food to students; adequately paying for those costs; creating direct-to-family options including P-EBT. (19 in favor)
 - Community schools would help fulfill full family, so they could get food, even dinners to the families and adequately paying for those costs, so we could leverage federal funding.
- Implement gleaning similar to other states and adopt the Gleaning Taskforce's recommendations that address producer needs around respect of private property, liability, and economic needs as well as the emergency food sectors needs to source quality food at a low-cost by providing grants or tax credits the producers who partner with local non-profit food banks, pantries, food closets, etc. to allow gleaning for use in the emergency food supply. (12 in favor)
 - Reduce wasting food, at restaurants and in the fields.
 - Task force is still working – recommendations not yet solidified. Support partnerships between emergency food sector and producers that are genuine win-win for both. Maybe when that work is more mature this is something we can support.
- Implement a successful law from other states to allow schools to re-package and freeze (when appropriate) food that is unused during school meals for student use at home. (16 in favor)
 - Rep. Ferrary is seeking information – will give it to Sherry
 - As long as food safety plays a key role.
 - Address food that is dumped by students.
 - School food waste would be food that is prepared but not served to students for breakfast and lunch. The food could be packaged, frozen and sent home with low-income children, potentially.
 - Yes, with a lot more detail.
- Healthy food financing – La Semilla and Poverty Center (15 in favor)
 - Been working on for 2 years. Large support throughout rural Dona ana co. Statewide program to attract federal funds – maybe \$2-3 million/year minimum. 2 different pots of food – thru treasure and USDA. “also, CDFI’s are eligible for larger pots of money through the treasury.” So businesses have info that they need to expand their business. There is equitable language in the bill. Historically not included would sit on steering committee. Black, indigenous, people of color, women, LGTBQ, farmers.

Not completed: Priority #3.

Next steps

- We will put together the notes from this meeting. At the August 20 Policy/Advocacy Action Team meeting, 12-1 pm, we’ll cover Priority Section 3. Please join if you are able. If you can’t join but can send your feedback, please send it to Erika Robers at erika@nmfirst.org.
- If anything is missing or misunderstood in these notes, please let Sharon Berman know via email at sharon@nmfirst.org.