

**Food, Hunger, Water, Agriculture Policy
Policy and Advocacy Action Team
8.6.20 ♦ 12 – 1 pm
Meeting Notes**

Facilitator: Lilly Irvin-Vitela, New Mexico First

Notes: Sharon Berman, New Mexico First

In Attendance:

- Carlos Navarro, Interfaith Hunger Coalition
- Jeff McConaughy, New Mexico Out-of-School Time
- Ellen Buelow
- Sharon Finarelli, Alliance of Health Councils
- Brent Van Dyke, National Association of Conservation Districts
- Emily Wildau, New Mexico Voices for Children
- Felipe Guevara, NM Center on Law and Poverty
- Kurt Rager, Lutheran Advocacy NM
- Sherry Hooper, The Food Depot
- Tsiporah Nephesh, NM Thrives and
- Xavier Vallejo, New Mexico First
- Jonas Moya, Cattle Growers Association
- Derek Lin, NM Voices for Children
- Pam Roy, Farm to Table NM and Food and Ag Policy Council
- Judy Messal, Interfaith Hunger Coalition
- Erika Robers, New Mexico First
- Jenny Ramo, New Mexico Appleseed

Preemptive Questions

- What do we want to protect as budgets tighten?
- What do we want to innovate about – that could go in a NM-style farm bill?
- Reimagine existing systems to better serve New Mexico’s needs around food, hunger and agriculture?

Anything you heard at last two policy calls that gave you pause, or something you’d like to get behind?

- Impressed by what was going on at the Navajo Nation regarding food and water.
- NM Out of School Time Network increased access and higher quality at schools around the state.
- One member stated he was part of an agriculture coalition in southern NM.
- Impressed that people were committed to coming up with new and innovative ideas.
- Excited by the creativity in the group.
- Amazed that this kind of talent could be pulled together during the pandemic. Considered the Policy and Advocacy Action Team to be one of the silver linings of the pandemic. “This is new territory for me around policy work and agriculture.”
- Learned from everyone and said the group served as a positive example for meaningful change.
- Inspired to hear how many people are working on these issues, from so many different areas.



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People. Ideas. Progress.

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

- Excited to continue to be part of the group. Looked forward to the box programs, adding nutritional items and recipes, and different ways to prepare food – especially beef.
- Appreciated the opportunity to network with everyone. Stated the food box and milk box programs were vital. Interested in the policy work together.
- Consistently inspired by folks willing together to work together for short and long-term solutions. Collaborations and resource-sharing that wouldn't have otherwise happened.

Updates

Addressing Root Causes of Food Insecurity, Strengthening Food & Water Recover

- Food Research and Action Center frac.org. They are organizing a day of action around requests to the federal government. SNAP is an effective way for low and no-income families to have the food they need. National SNAP Day of Action. Also Feeding America is a good place to go.
- Immediate food relief as well as upstream, such as SNAP, TANF and working families tax credit.
- New Mexico Voices for Children is working on document that will be done by the end of the month. One of the items will be related to affect of lowered income on food insecurity.
- NM Center on Law and Poverty working on the DWS budget and believe that by further supporting the DWS, particularly wage theft division, it helps people have the income they need and avoid hunger. They are pushing for five new full-time wage claim investigators and a full-time attorney. The DWS is not taking cases to court that are above \$10,000. Given the current backlog at DWS they need more investigators and an attorney who can take larger cases to court. They'll bring these ideas to the session.
 - There is a study that described the ways in which verifications for eligibility was keeping people from applying within timelines for programs they were eligible for. It's good to have policies but there was a great need for people to help enforce the policies. Felipe agreed that they were related. He said there was not enough capacity, where DWS staff was overwhelmed.
- During COVID – an updated list of food distribution sites and plans throughout the state. Helping out of school programs to use the CACFP.
- The benefits were running out and the good bank network was afraid there would be more people coming to the food banks. “we're gearing up now to meet a greater need.” She said she couldn't imagine what kind of increase we'd see at food banks and pantries.
- Not sure if anything would change at governor's press conference today. There would be additional people filing for unemployment and we would see people's needs continuing to rise. CFAP update – food assistance program. 2 of those phases have come through the system. For the 3rd phase, the bids are due on Friday. This will meld into one box of roughly 30 pounds. Less volume over 2 years of time. It will look and feel different.
 - NM wasn't able to compete in going after USDA grants
 - The Food Depot had been meeting with SFPS to talk about the school feeding programs. “As you can imagine everything is totally up in the air still.” Food Depot is bound by requirement to hand out one meal per address.
- The Food and Ag Policy Council has advocated for the Heroes Act, a broader approach to farm to food box. The doors were opened for much more local options for farmers to participate in the program. The Child Hunger Prevention Act, includes request for school meals. There is an Advocacy Meeting next Friday, August 14.



- NM Food & Ag Policy Council upcoming Advocacy Committee meeting to focus on state and federal policy priorities, Friday, August 14th, 11:15am - 1:00pm. If interested email pam@farmtotablenm.org, 505-660-8403, www.nmfapc.com.
- Interested in transport of live cattle, especially regarding log times and hours. Meat inspection program.
- National Association of Conservation Districts priorities from the ag sector was to make sure that they had the ability to process food from NM is processing. They will be focusing on that – GAP certification, meat inspection, healthy watersheds, etc. Working with everybody regarding transportation to refrigerated facilities in remote spots in the state.
- There is a need to mobilize quickly to make sure everyone completed the census.
- Representative Ferrary was recruiting members to the legislative hunger caucus. She will send out an email in the next few weeks. Importance of activating advocacy constituency groups to speak with legislators in the fall. Rep. Stansbury had been encouraging people too.

