

Food, Hunger, Water, Agriculture Policy Workgroup
General Action Team
9.17.20 ♦ 12-1:00 pm
Meeting Notes

Facilitator: Lilly Irvin-Vitela, New Mexico First / Rep. Melanie Stansbury

Notes: Sharon Berman, New Mexico First

In Attendance:

- Jane Braithwaite, Office of Rep. Stansbury
- Ellen Buelow, Interfaith Hunger Coalition
- Molly Callaghan, Office of Rep. Haaland
- Bryan Crawford-Garrett, Thornburg Foundation
- Tim Davis, NM Center on Law and Poverty
- Gerry Fairbrother
- Bruce Hinrich, NMSU Extension
- Sherry Hooper, The Food Depot
- Ophelia Hudson, NM DOH
- Allison Griffin, Cullari Communications Global
- Isabelle Jenniches, Healthy Soil Group
- Karen Plawecki, NMSU Extension
- Derek Lin, NM Voices for Children
- Judy Messal, Interfaith Hunger Coalition
- Christina Morris, NM DOH
- Jonas Moya, NM Cattle Growers Association
- Carlos Navarro, Interfaith Hunger Coalition
- Tsiporah Nephesh, NM Thrives
- Kurt Rager, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry
- Valerie Rangel, NM Foundation
- Erika Robers, NM First
- Sophia Rose, NM Out-of-School Time Network
- Pam Roy, Farm to Table
- Victoria Quevedo, La Semilla Food Center
- Rep. Melanie Stansbury
- Mag Strittmatter, Roadrunner Food Bank
- Xavier Vallejo, NM First
- Daniel Valverde, NM Appleseed
- Shay Zamora, North Central NM Economic Development District

Welcome, Introduction and Overview

Facilitators gave an overview of the Food, Hunger, Water Ag Policy Workgroup. She originally convened the group to help connect the policy work in hunger and providing food and meals to people who need them. It was our sense that the people were not connected in the policy and advocacy space. If we are going to fix the system, we need to figure out how to bring the communities together, talking in one space. Local producers can get their food to market to feed New Mexicans. They teed up ideas for the 2020 regular session. Then the pandemic hit and the group convened again in March, and many more joined. This workgroup has been helping formulate policy ideas, connect the dots. Lately the group has been discussing how to take the whole body of work and prepare ideas for the upcoming session in January 2021. The timeline is such that if we were to introduce legislation, we need to have it drafted, vetted and cleaned up before the holidays. We'd prefile in December so legislation could be heard in January. We've been discussing lessons learned from the pandemic and have grouped them into categories. We are calling it the NM Farm Bill. It will be looking at whether there is a role for state government, what its role should be, and what can state government do to foster it. Some areas cannot be covered by state government. Not all state legislation can solve all problems. But we can develop a bill for state government that can help the state foster that which the state can do.

NM First has helped compile policy points, which Rep. Stansbury dropped into an open [Google Doc](#) we can work on together. We are writing a document together in real time, people from all over the state.



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People. Ideas. Progress.

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

The bill is organized into 4 categories:

1. Food production, ag system, infrastructure, economic & workforce issues
2. Emergency food and hunger programs
3. Constellation of wraparound services dealing with income insecurity, poverty and other social challenges hungry people face
4. Resources – funding.

A facilitator acknowledged that the bill may not be perfect and said she was completely open to a giant omnibus. However, if other bills were to remain separate that was perfectly fine as well.

A facilitator said that the file gets opened, and either send outline with concept and ideas to legislative council and ask them to help draft, or we can send a complete draft for them to typeset. She added that there was still some research needed before sending the outline to legislative council.

1. Title 1
2. Title 2 – had a good discussion last week about using buying power of state and state procurement. There was a small conversation last week about food rescue programs. Today’s meeting will focus on this area.
3. Title 3 is about income support pieces, how state provides better services to low-income people in a manner that is respectful and timely. Tim had said he had follow-up with colleagues at ctr of law & poverty. There were questions raised about whether this bill could address tax exemption issues. Rep. Stansbury wasn’t positive about whether the bill was the place to do it. And whether it might be best to make a policy statement about what we think should happen about food ta.
4. Final piece – as we’ve been having conversation as with legislative finance council, it’s becoming clear that the state is going to have to cut many programs this year. So rather than talking about huge expanses in funding we are talking about a discrete fund for food and ag programs, articulating what money could be used for, including food bank needs, and storage and infrastructure needs. Ultimately there are a number of programs – including Double Up Food Bucks program, where we want to make sure the funding is preserved and potentially augmented. Might want to post other THINGS into the bill. We want to be sure these programs continued to be funded and expanded.

The facilitators need your help to get this bill in shape.

HOMEWORK: SEND PERTINENT RESOURCES TO REP. STANSBURY BY TOMORROW EVENING. She will work on the bill draft over the weekend and could use anything people can send it to her by end of day Friday, 9.18.20.

Title 2 Conversation

A participant noted that with federally funded programs – you need to remove state requirements that are preventing communities from being involved in the programs. It’s making it hard for them to for example bring in school lunch programs. The paperwork, which is state-imposed, is too much for them. There is very little communication between those programs. For example: when Food Depot applied to be a sponsor for one program, they had repeat the process all over again when they had done it for another program that used the same database. It is very inefficient as it stands now.



- A facilitator asked a Participant to put a note in the Google Doc to the effect of what she said so Facilitator can update the bill draft. “We can direct state agencies to streamline and remove barriers.” The legislature creates rules and framework and the executive branch executes it.

A participant emphasized that cold storage units and regional food hubs could have a multiple access function, and could be accessed for emergency food.

A participant noted that Springer Prison in Colfax County has a commercial kitchen. Facilitator replied that there might be as many as 3 points to consider:

- Where assets are
- If there are state and public assets, the information is being shared and is available
- More distributive cold storage for state and NGOs
- Valerie thought there might be a fourth point to add, regarding social capital – who is providing labor and how that is being covered. Are the prisoners doing the labor or are others coming into the facility? Who is providing food assistance at the food pantries and food distribution centers.
- Valerie added that transportation could also be a point to add.

Distribution needs of nonprofit organizations that are getting the food out, doing the work – that could be part of the appropriations part of the bill. She added that some things belong in legislation. Management and labor practices are sometimes unruly and hard

A participant noted that food banks and school meals get a lot of food that is not the healthiest. Food grown under management of Health Soil food group would be a healthier choice. We don’t have preambles in our state bills. It’s really important that we put our vision into this document – what kind of foods to emphasize, what kinds of connections do we want to make between the growers and the eaters? It could be beneficial on multiple issues.

- Facilitator replied that the current activity was focused on the mechanics of writing the bill. “We are on the same page as you about the vision.” She liked the idea of embedding the vision into the text. “My focus the last few meetings was how to get programs connected. The final bill will reflect that bigger vision and value.”

A participant commented regarding anti donation clause. We have facilities that are sitting idle all over the state. She added that they had published a report on corrections in the past and need to update it. The upshot is that many of the facilities are run by out of state corporations. It could be a separate bill – Pam said she would be willing to work on it beyond the next session. “There is so much that we could focus on in that realm.”

A participant noted that the Gallup Community Food Bank has a garden that supplies the food bank. They lost the workers who worked at the garden for their TANF benefits. Master gardeners and NMSU weren’t able to help. There needs to be some way to keep that fueled with workers.

A facilitator noted that early on in the pandemic there wasn’t official direction on how the emergency food system should be working. If there were more guidance about who those key folks are that should be communicated with in any natural or economic disaster, it would save time and would help folks understand how to most appropriately get help – one example, National Guard being sent out when there were better, local options.



- A facilitator noted that the ESF-6 in the early days had been chaotic. She thought the ESF-6 was examining lessons learned. She cautioned against putting into statute a rigid structure. Lilly – listing who are likely to be part of the solution. Also having a data system folks could access, rather than a spreadsheet. She added that she would love to learn from the ESF-6 analysis. A participant said, it's almost like a secession plan. They were taken from all over state government and plopped into their position. The participant spent a week educating them all about the food banks. At least leave something that gives contact information and general description of the major players.
- A participant noted that there was also the ESF-11, headed up by the Department of Ag. "A lot of us and other folks spent a lot of our time discussion impact on ag and shortages." He added that it seemed like there was overlap and it wasn't coordinated. ESF-11 spent time dealing with seed shortages, food needs, trucking issues, etc. He didn't know how ESF-11 was tied to ESF-6. A facilitator wondered if there had been an internal analysis had been done. **Bruce said he would check with them.**

A participant said it would be very helpful for the bill to provide maps or data showing where socially vulnerable communities lie, such as the elderly, those with chronic diseases, pregnant women, those without transportation, those with the most children. How does the state use that information to prioritize and focus the needs?

- A facilitator thought it might fit under the umbrella of preparedness - necessary for the state to have preparedness for future emergencies. May not want to be too prescriptive but could provide a roadmap.
- Participant emphasized that she'd like to see a map.

A participant noted that under local procurement bills' flexibility and understanding that all dollars that flow through state depts are not impacted by bills that are absolute about buying local. "We are able to use our leverage across the region to acquire the multitudes of produce that are needed by hungry people."

A facilitator said that Secretary Witte noted that the challenge was making sure NM producers made a living while we needed to feed people. The idea is to use buying power of state to enhance procurement of local products. Require that they adhere to buying local. She added, "I think we can resolve that with exemption clauses and things like that."

- Other facilitator wondered if other participants wanted to chime in. A participant said she would be happy to help by doing research if needed.

A participant noted that regarding making sure the NM Nutritional Association is included, as they are statewide and it would be helpful for them to participate in this section. A lot of research indicating "recess before the bell" which means recess before lunch, is much more beneficial. She was confident as work was being done currently that there would be an interagency initiative.

A facilitator noted that NM Appleseed and others would be working on school food. She asked those on the call to add ideas in the document.

A facilitator said she would like to add food procurement. A participant said there would soon be language available that could be included regarding food for seniors, schools, and early child education. **Rep. Stansbury would share it with the group as soon as it was available.**



A facilitator noted that there were some ideas added from the NMF town hall:

- Sharing data & information – system that connects to be able to get food where it needs to go.
- Finding some way to incentivize farmers to participate in gleaning.
 - A facilitator wondered if that would be a tax mechanism like gross receipts. **Lilly to follow up with Richard.**
 - A facilitator remembered that this exists already for sourcing and moving food. A participant thought Rick Schnieders was the person to connect with. **Lilly will follow up with Rick.**
- Restaurants, hospitals, catering, grocery stores – interconnected system
- Good Samaritan Law – people donating in good faith aren't held liable
 - A participant said we have that for NM> There is a national law and state law. The state law doesn't go into issues about protecting farmers if someone is injured while gleaning on someone else's land
 - **Lilly or Sherry to send info on gleaning.**
- Finding ways to incentivize composting rather than sending it to landfills
- Increase grants to food banks, pantries, soup kitchen and shelters to hire people to transport and distribute rescued food.
- A participant asked if water could be addressed in the bill. A facilitator said that having ag/food next to each other in one bill not a problem but would be accused of log rolling if water were added. She has been having discussion with group of legislators, Indian affairs and others about increasing funding to tribal SOMETHING FUND. Separate bill. Place she could see tie-in would be in appropriations section.

Group: if you have resources, please when possible put the links in the document, adding a note that synthesizes the document, clarifies policy points as best as you can.

- If you don't have links to the docs you would like to share, send them via email to Rep. Stansbury at melaniestansbury@yahoo.com.

Next Steps:

- Rep. Stansbury will take what the group has been working on and try to put it into more nuanced bill outline and will repost it to the document. Then she will ask people to start working on it, commenting etc. on their own time.
 - **Group: please add any resources you think should be included, remembering to synthesize them!**
- In a week or two Rep. Stansbury plans to open a file and begin drafting the bill
- Rep. Stansbury will be meeting with Sec. Keyes. Anyone with ideas or thoughts you'd like her to share with them, she is happy to do so. Please email her at: melaniestansbury@yahoo.com
- Would like the bill to be a centerpiece bill. We are such a board coalition and have so much SOMETHING from all over the state.
- Lilly noted that she will be contacting people to follow up on links and resources to help Rep. Stansbury.

