

**Food, Hunger, Water, Agriculture Policy**  
**Communication Action Team**  
**May 4, 2020 ♦ 3:30 – 4:30 pm**  
**Meeting Notes**

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

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

In Attendance:

- Alissa Barnes, Progress Now
- Carlos Navarro, Interfaith Hunger Coalition
- Tsiporah Nephesh, New Mexico Thrives
- Sherry Hooper, The Food Depot
- Melanie Sanchez Eastwood, New Mexico First
- Sonya Warwick, Roadrunner Food Bank
- Steve Burstein, volunteer with Representative Stansbury

### Updates

Lilly: There are currently three urgent opportunities for action:

1. Rep. Stansbury is working to create a document with guiding principles for funding decisions. She had invited feedback by today. Lilly's feedback included the following recommendations:
  - a. Process. Prioritize transparency and with respect to timing; spend federal money first; focus on basic needs in both relief and recovery phases. Laser focused cuts, not to cut anything related to basic needs; support community and economic development. With respect to capital outlay, prioritize that which has to do with basic needs.
    - Tsiporah said she had sent a letter that included broadband. She noted that in a relief package there should also be provisions for technical assistance for grant writers.
    - Lilly will send her recs to others on the call and they can opt to add to it.
2. We will be sending letter about what is important to us, that people can sign onto or opt to borrow content for their own letters to members and ultimately to the Speaker, Majority and Minority leaders.
3. The third piece is around concrete policy asks by mid-May, with specific ideas and budget amounts to go into a one-pager. Lilly welcomed input from those on the call regarding state-level asks. There are also some federal level pieces that the Center for Law and Poverty and NM Voices for Children are working on, related to SNAP.
4. The final area will be around good governance. Is there anything that comes to mind for folks as a broad category that we're missing? I can give you a couple of specifics that have bubbled up. We'll be getting this out to folks to weigh in on and vet.
  - a. Retain universal feeding program. Currently there is an age 1-18 program. Hold onto this through the recovery phase.
  - b. Having a NM version of the care box. Currently the federal practice is requiring GAP certification. Most small and mid-sized farmers in NM are not GAP certified, nor do they have the time and skills to complete that paperwork. There is an ask around making it more friendly for farmers.
  - c. Requesting that relief come in the forms of grants, not loans.
  - d. Finding local food systems solutions.
  - e. Increasing eligibility and supplement that bridges federal SNAP eligibility and real needs and increase minimum SNAP reimbursement rate.
  - f. Prioritize a \$10-15 million ask for the food banks.
  - g. Ensure no food tax will be levied.



**NEW MEXICO FIRST**  
*People. Ideas. Progress.*

Please contact Sharon Berman at [sharon@nmfirst.org](mailto:sharon@nmfirst.org) if we missed or misunderstood anything in these notes.

- h. Alissa mentioned making sure NM Voices for Children is included in the policy discussion. They have done a good job compiling areas affecting families. Lilly replied that NM Voices for Children are involved in the Policy and Advocacy Action Team, as well as the Center for Law and Poverty and NM Appleaseed.
- i. Tsiporah said she hadn't heard anything about GRT on nonprofits. She had spoken to Richard at the NM Tax and Research Institute, and he hadn't heard anything on that issue. She also spoke with Sen. Ortiz y Pino. He hadn't mentioned it but had mentioned sweeping funds from a number of places.
- j. Lilly commented that Rep. Stansbury had heard NM may have something in the ballpark of a 40% shortfall.
- k. Alissa mentioned that legalizing marijuana had come up in a few conversations and potentially would surface as a long term solution. Lilly noted that New Mexico First may not take a policy position on it. Tsiporah noted that regarding medical marijuana, we don't have to decide whether to support it, but we should be at the table on the discussion about where the tax benefits go.
- l. Sonya noted that last year there were a lot of cuts to programs such as SNAP. She said she'd heard that clients in food lines were not getting their food benefits and wondered if that would be addressed in the special session. Her concern was making sure the unemployment office has what it needs to respond to the need. Lilly noted that in a report that NM First published last fall on cliff effects, that there were cliff effects and churn, and some of the churn was administrative and understaffing. One of the policy recommendations was more staff, lower caseloads, quicker turnaround in processing.
- m. Sherry noted that she had heard there may be a few returning taxes. At Think NM there is agreement that there will be returning taxes. The Food Depot will fight it. She wondered whether aligning with THINK NM would be something to consider. She added that last year talking to legislators, they brought up the fact that there weren't enough staff at the state office to process SNAP requests in a timely manner. She learned that ISD was only half staffed. Sherry and Mag had spoken to the Governor's Office regarding funds for food. They expect to have that worked out within a week. They will also be updating Mariana Padilla.
- n. Sonya seconded Sherry's point about making sure ISD had sufficient funding to process SNAP applications, especially in the times we anticipate will have high volume and be able to handle recertification.
- o. Lilly noted that lessons learned from putting out a one pager for the 2020 session, that asks need to be simplified. Thinking about what is most essential.

Lilly: if there are messages you want amplified for the website – such as news releases and calls to action, please pass them on by emailing pdf files to Melanie at [melanie@nmfirst.org](mailto:melanie@nmfirst.org). The only requirement is that it be food/hunger/water/ag related and nonpartisan. If it's something that requires action quickly, share it with Lilly at [lilly@nmfirst.org](mailto:lilly@nmfirst.org). Related to good government, NM First and other members of the Ethics Coalition are working on a letter to the editor.

### Communication and Funding

- Lilly noted that in terms of local philanthropy in the food/hunger/water/food systems as well as what local philanthropy is doing to leverage national philanthropy, there are productive conversations every week on emergency and long term need. There is an effort to reduce paperwork burdens. Restrictions have been loosened so that needs can be addressed. There's an awareness that there is a disparity about the effects of the pandemic in rural, tribal, frontier and immigrant communities. Lilly added that by the end of the day Friday she



intends to have a list with outstanding needs, coordinating with emergency relief, philanthropy and Governor's Office. If there is more information to add to the ask, let her know.

- Matchmaking has led to funds for those in needs, Lilly said. In terms of national funding, it is hard to keep pace with how quickly the turnaround on some applications has been. How can we coordinate better together? Grant Plant, Grant Collective, NMMAG, NM First. With respect to food, hunger, water and ag, NM First is trying to maintain up-to-date knowledge.
- Alissa: Maybe we can ask the federal delegation – here's a specific pocket of activity – can you send this info to Lilly (or whomever). Lilly said that NM First turns around that information as soon as it can. Please send that information that is especially time-sensitive. **Alissa said she would send that information to Melanie at New Mexico First.**
- Sherry had a conversation with Terry Brunner at the Grant Plant, which received funding to be a resource for all. Terry had encouraged food banks to apply for FEMA funds. However, right now there are restrictions that prevent it. The EOC is looking at a way for food banks to work with EOC to access FEMA funds. Lilly remarked that this kind of request shouldn't be thought of as double dipping, but more as an extension of need during a national disaster. She encouraged messaging the federal delegation around that. Sherry noted that the anti-donation clause should be reviewed and fixed, as it wasn't serving the purpose and was making public/partnerships difficult.
- Lilly noted that this might be a good point to bring up in the general session as it might be regarded as a structural issue. The Ethics Commission, which will then be a year old, and more nuanced conversations about ethics, governance and procurement can take place now that there will be an infrastructure to support it.
- Regarding helping those who could use assistance in applying for funding, Lilly thought there might be a way to help people address funding opportunities. She noted that people had offered pro bono assistance with grant writing or to review budgets and evaluations. Lilly added that Olivia Roanhorse at Roanhorse Consulting had put together a list of experienced grant writers interested in helping out. People were willing to roll up their sleeves and help. Olivia can be contacted at [olivia@roanhorseconsulting.com](mailto:olivia@roanhorseconsulting.com).
- Sonya stated that the anti-donation clause prevents nonprofits for qualifying for capital outlay. She thought there would be value in looking at nonprofits as sources, not only for emergency need but also long term need. "So maybe we need to build some ammunition around that because the pushback, I think, is going to be, 'Well, you guys should have all the money that you need. Already, you rely on those philanthropic dollars.' if they're concerned about the ethics piece of it, or the trust piece of it, I think for the most part, many nonprofits in our community have demonstrated that already." Sherry noted that there had to be a better way than the present situation.
- Carlos said that, regarding communication and policy, we're on the same page as a lot of the nonprofits out there. He wondered how to connect efforts of faith communities such as Catholic Charities with major nonprofit efforts. "Perhaps we need to ask them what they want." **Lilly wondered if Carlos would be interested in reaching out with her to Catholic Charities, to the Lutheran advocacy group and other interfaith and faith specific groups working on food, hunger, water and human rights issues.** She reckoned it would be good timing to approach them after the one-pager is complete, and to then later add in any slight tweaks with information/needs that might come up in those discussions. **Carlos said he would bring it up at a meeting next Thursday at the Interfaith Hunger Coalition.**

Lilly said that she would soon send out the letters to the speakers, majority and minority leaders as well as draft of the one pager.

---

