

**Food, Hunger, Water, Agriculture Policy
Communication Action Team
6.1.20 ♦ 3:30 – 4:30 pm
Meeting Notes**

Facilitator: Lilly Irvin-Vitela, New Mexico First

Notes: Sharon Berman, New Mexico First

In Attendance:

- Wendy Wintermute, New Mexico First
- Steve Burstein, Office of Rep. Melanie Stansbury
- Tsiporah Nephesh, New Mexico Thrives
- Melanie Sanchez Eastwood, New Mexico First

Updates and communication on food/hunger/shelter fronts

- Tsiporah said there were activities coming up around the special session such as Impact & Coffee the next morning. She added that Terry Bruenner, James Jimenez from NM Voices, and staff from the Taos Directory would be in attendance. She said there would be a nonprofit advocacy meeting Friday at noon re. prepping for special session. Tsiporah said she would include that information in her newsletter.
- Steve asked about updates about Gallup.
 - Lilly replied that food distribution was challenging in Gallup. She added that there were reports of over 9000 food boxes disseminated in the Navajo Nation, of which only 40 boxes had come to the NM side. She added that cold storage is difficult in communities where people don't have electricity.
 - Lilly added that water distribution was taking place via Indian Affairs and others. She commented that with chapter houses closed since March, it exacerbated what was already difficult in terms of distribution as that was where water for drinking and bathing had been coming in. She noted that one colleague had mentioned that the roads were in such bad shape that distribution was taking much longer.
 - Gallup as a whole was concerned about infection rate, Lilly noted. The state was concerned about the spread of COVID in McKinley and San Juan Counties, and public health folks were very busy screening and testing. Lilly commented that Mariana Padilla had shared on an earlier call that they have been working hard through the E06 contingent to try to match open hotel and motel rooms to keep folks safe.
- Lilly said she found it tremendous how many local folks were working together to respond to relief efforts and leverage significant resources to do so. She continued by emphasizing that need was significant. She added that were ongoing efforts between government and philanthropy to assess what federal and state resources could be used for and where philanthropy could step in. Lilly gave an example of New Mexico Foundation working with others to assess the needs of seniors and to figure out who had the capacity to meet their needs.



NEW MEXICO FIRST
People. Ideas. Progress.

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

Update on Special Session

- Lilly reminded the group that there had been an opportunity for a [sign-on letter](#) inviting legislators to do the best they could to engage in practices toward a healthy democracy. She added that over 30 folks had signed on, and the communication went out to legislators in early May. Lilly added that the larger group had more recently put together a document outlining [policy funding priorities](#) related to alleviating hunger and water insecurity. NM First printed the one-pager on poster sized paper with the [original letter](#), as well as the letter from the NM Food and Ag Policy Council and sent the packet to legislators, the Executive Branch, and agency leadership. Lilly noted that staff had used PPE and safe practices. She added that Rep. Stansbury had been frank in predicting that some of the policy priorities wouldn't be addressed in the special session. A wide variety of stakeholders signed on to the policy funding priorities documents from good governance, food & water emergency relief, with varied geographic representation and several different systems.
- Tsiporah said she was still unclear how much will go toward relief efforts. She said she was concerned that when the state thinks about economic relief, it would focus on business relief, leaving nonprofits and agriculture out of the picture. Tsiporah wondered how to get to decision makers/legislators to ensure that not only food relief, but building food systems were part of relief and recovery. Lilly replied that in addressing the healthy food systems, a broad range was included. She added that one of the requests in the food bucket was to see if dollars coming into NM could go toward creating a local version of the USDA food box program. Lilly noted that the USDA program required GAP certification, which was prohibitive for many NM producers. She said that PED had done a beautiful job of creating an intermediate step, and that there was a group of folks working on how to get folks GAP certified. She acknowledged there was a need to think across systems to reduce future vulnerability.
- Regarding \$12.5 million request for food banks, Lilly said that was still in question. There have been conversations with CYFD and the Governor's Office regarding how federal relief dollars could be used, as the current setup didn't work well for nonprofits. She added that as yet, the issue hadn't been resolved.
- Steve asked how the NMSU study was coming along and if the results would be ready to inform the legislators. Lilly replied that NM First had helped with distribution of the survey. **She said she'd follow up with Stephanie Rogus at NMSU to find out more.** Steve said the survey was similar to his idea for a top-down model. Lilly noted that even if the data was available for the special session that there might not be time for deliberation.
- Tsiporah said she had heard the session could last 3-4 days. She added that the Senate wanted to meet for 12 hours and the House wanted 3-4 days.

Lessons learned

Lilly recalled that at the last meeting the group had addressed lessons learned. One example was that there had been beautiful communication and coordination between range of stakeholders. Lilly wondered if folks on the call could share important lessons learned. Some ideas included:

- The scale of public/private partnerships



- Government/NGOs have been able to ease application processes to access resources, speed up cycle of response to requests through RFP process, or grant application that formerly took 8 hours and even now have been significantly reduced. What's the most critical info to make informed decision about good investment of resources.
 - Whether or not this system would be sustained was of concern of Tsiporah.
- Ability to solve concrete implementation issues – instead of saying “We don't do that,” people were saying “How do we do that?”
- NM Farmers' Marketing Association (“NMFMA”) demonstrated an ability to work through relationships and networks, to work with small and large producers in cooperative models in collaboration with each other, to assess needs, and to address the seed supply chain issue very quickly so farmers could plant.
- The NM Acequia Association, NMFMA, NMDA, NMSU came together rapidly to problem-solve together. NM knows how to work through relationships to get things done.
 - Maybe in non-pandemic times there will be more understanding of common ground.

Communication collaboration possibilities

Lilly wondered if there were additional shared communication possibilities for additional policy issues folks would like consensus around, framework around an op-ed, or other media work to do in terms of broadcast, print, or television in preparation for the session.

- Tsiporah liked the idea of an op-ed about cross-sector work, with the message “If we can do it in a crisis, why can't we do it all the time.” Tsiporah and Steve agreed to give input to a draft Lilly would create the following week.
- Keep sharing info about the special session
- NMSU Survey - Make a point during general meeting if Stephanie can be on call at general action team
- Continue to think about lessons learned

