

**Food, Hunger, Water, Agriculture Policy
Action Team
6.4.20 General Action Team ♦ 12:00 – 1:30 pm
Meeting Notes**

Facilitator: Lilly Irvin-Vitela, New Mexico First

Notes: Sharon Berman, New Mexico First

Federal Delegation- Molly Callaghan, Office of Congresswoman Haaland

State Departments- Jason New, NMDA; Christina Morris, NM Department of Health

Legislators- Rep. Phelps Anderson, Rep. Joanne Ferrary; Rep. Melanie Stansbury

Local Government- Grant County Commissioner Alicia Edwards, Emerson Toledo, City of Gallup

Food Providers- Sherry Hooper, The Food Depot; Katy Anderson and Andrea Nash, Roadrunner Food Bank; Alice Perez, The Community Pantry- Gallup NM; Michael Venticinque, NM Farmers' Marketing Association

Faith-based Organizations-Carlos Navarro and Ellen Buelow, Interfaith Hunger Coalition

Philanthropy- Bryan Crawford-Garrett, Thornburg Foundation

Agriculture Stakeholders-Pam Roy, Farm to Table and the New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council; Tracey Enright, Santa Fe Food Policy Council; Steve Warshawer, Wallace Center at Winrock International; Zoey Fink, National Young Farmers Coalition

Advocacy Organizations- Andrew Baker, Health Action NM; Sharon Finarelli, NM Alliance of Health Councils; Tim Davis, NM Center on Law and Poverty; Melanie Sanchez Eastwood, Jonas Moya and Wendy Wintermute, NM First; Tsiporah Nephesh, NM Thrives; Emily Wildau, NM Voices for Children;

Academia- Bruce Hinrichs and Stephanie Rogus, NMSU; Diana Gonzales-Pacheco and Joyce Naseyowma, UNM

Volunteers- Jane Braithwaite and Barbara Leppala, Office of Rep. Melanie Stansbury

Other- Allison Griffin, Cullari Group; Gabe Mounce, Air Force Research Lab-New Mexico

Updates re. the Special Session

Rep. Stansbury: The special session has been called. It will start on Thursday, June 18. The House Appropriations and Finance Committee will convene the day before, and will be considering budget framework and recalibrating the FY21 budget. The recalibration will involve reductions to the active budget enacted in February, using reserve funds. but it seems the budget cuts may not be as significant as feared. Agencies will be looking into reductions. They've been looking at how to meet emergency food needs. It's a complex set of challenges. Rep. Stansbury will be working



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

to put over water needs proposal. Anyone who is interested in that is welcome to participate. She will send out information.

Rep. Ferrary thanked Rep Stansbury and NM First for sending out hard copies of the letter as well as the policy funding priorities in poster-sized format. She said it could be good to have extra copies of the documents on hand to disseminate during the session. Rep. Stansbury concurred and added that as a lot of discretion will fall to the agencies themselves, the DFA and agency cabinet secretaries as well could use it.

Rep. Stansbury – will be ramping up for the regular session, which is only 6 months away.

Rep. Anderson said that spending reductions will be largely or entirely administered by the agencies. So the Executive and agencies will be critical for any budgetary reductions in FY21. The special session will be very quick and he believed everyone will say “everything was cooked before we got there.” He added that the January regular session will see us up against budget cuts as well as new and expanded programs. It will be here lickety-split.

Rep. Ferrary noted that finance committee will be holding open planning meeting via Zoom. She predicted that other open meetings will also be held in this way. The information

Molly said she was listening in and has been doing so regularly. “I love these calls and think they are so helpful.” My email is molly.callaghan@mail.house.gov in case anyone wants to get in touch with Congresswoman Haaland’s office

Bruce, Extension Service, said they have been diligently working on mental health issues. They’ve always done a lot of food, nutrition, cooking activities. They did a several week series on mental health with groups of professionals. The financial piece of unemployment ties in with health too. They’ve been expanding into those areas as need demands given the current situation.

Christina – planning buy fresh, buy local, community health focus, youth, education. The experiences of witnessing and going through turbulent times. How to educate folks, not only in medial but also other spectrum. See about health and food – local food is an inherent determinant part of health, economic part of health, not a political force. As a public health professional, she added that it’s important to recognize what’s happening in our nation today, not just with COVID, is a call to all of us to recognize the social determinants have widened the gap for access – not just health, but access, wages. We look with a PH lens not only with clinical component, but also community voices – pain. Advocating with community to ensure that their priorities are continued to be raised to the top. Communities continue to address getting fresh food delivered to communities. It’s been a wonderful to witness – not just donations of money but also food. SOMEONE donated \$100,000. It’s a global awareness raised about the Navajo Nation. What NM is doing in response to COVID – that the approaches our Governor is taking to suppress the infection have come to the attention nationally. Food as part of long term health – not just an economic driver.

Sharon F. Bernalillo Co will be leading health council to health council efforts. Food insecurity will probably be one of the needs address. Health councils connecting community to food resources. It will probably be part of long-term planning. They are selecting 6 health councils to participate in an RQWJ project (name was named) to identified community needs as well as CHI will help. Anticipates food will be a piece of that. Looking at existing policies and



impact they might have. Then seeing what communities can do to advocate on their own behalf. Grant funding also includes addressing disparities in health councils and community planning. Stakeholders most affected will be at the table when discussions are happening. Stakeholder engagement is foundational first activity in this grant.

Denise: The NMFMA and Co-Op extension and La Montanita just finished their online food safety training for farmers, particularly in connection with PED's Farm to School. Their spring trainings got canceled and they had to create an online training. Producers are submitting their assignments and food safety plans, which are due at the end of June. They finished their first round of funding to farmers and collaborative food distributors. The 2nd round will open up in mid-June. Look for emails, and if not, make sure you are on the email list. Send an email to Denis INCLUDE EMAIL. Collaborative grant projects. The application is minimal to make it easier to apply. Additional funding may be available for Native American groups. She wanted to reply to Christina and Sharon. That work sounds really interesting and she wanted to make sure to connect with Sharon outside of the call. They have done participatory research before, has ideas about how to make sure community health workers could be involved and SNAP participants and other health clinics as stakeholders. She addressed the Buy Fresh, Buy Local program that Christina mentioned. Local Food connects NM campaign – which tries to create visibility around the same types of efforts ad the Buy Fresh, buy Local. There is a lot of information, including graphics and content that they can use. She wondered if there was an online forum and offered to help provide content or whatever might be useful for them. She added that there were a lot of outreach tools available. There is an important and growing outreach tool called Good Food NM which is a text messaging tool. It reaches a lot o SNAP customers. It started with targeting underserved communities in particular. They are also incorporating consumers who are part of farmers markets across the state. She offered to speak offline. Christina replied that Bonnie Hopkins was planning to reach out to Denise and others about the conference they had originally planned for earlier this year. Christina will pass on the information to Bonnie. Denise Miller 505-699-2064, dmiller@farmersmarketsnm.org

Michael: all seed requests were met. There is a small stash for upcoming fall season. The seed shortage won't go away immediately due to the backyard grower rush. He heard from several farmers who were grateful for the seeds. They've been able to offer a seed scholarship. They are looking to do some assistance for the fall growing season.

Katy: Some relationships between First choice Community Healthcare and Roadrunner Food Bank. Re healthy shelf-stable product kits, 1200 were distributed to First Choice Health. Did screening for food insecurity, being able to provide small bag of food to folks who identified as food insecure. 65,000 individuals were screened over a 5-month period and was able to get the data into their EMR system.

Sherry: they continue to serve 9 counties in northern NM. Providing food through partner agencies, drive-through distributions. One yesterday in Espanola, always a big hit. Slight decrease in people seeking health through the drive-through distributions. May see a dip before second wave hits in the car. Getting ramped up for food for children out of school. Having to completely revamp the program as no longer can do hot meals. They are going to cold meals. Had a great meeting with Our Kids Kitchen UWSFC – with Michael and Pam, discussed getting local grown produce into Kids kitchen. Gearing up for the session to support the work of the legislators in the group. Congratulations to the legislators in this meeting for winning their primaries. Thanks for the work you do at the legislature for this group.

- Sherry added that they have expressed concern about ability to maintain increase in services throughout the pandemic period. Planning in case it returns. Support from private foundations, businesses and individuals



that they won't be able to maintain that funding. They've had people say they'll give their funding now due to the great need, which leads them to wonder if more funding might not be coming. Proposal to legislature and Governor's office for \$12.5 million for food banks to continue providing services throughout pandemic. Met with Secretary Blalock and others. They spoke to some of their NM legislators in their service area. Purchase for nonperishable food items is in the approved budget – they have said that they will do everything to keep it in the funded, they don't anticipate the \$12.5 being funded in the session. Where are we going to find the money to continue doing what we are at this level. For the Food Depot in April they more than doubled their monthly distribution of food. The food banks have spent millions of dollars between them as donations did not help them keep up with demand.

Rep. Stansbury said in the chat: Just want to clarify that we're working with LFC and DFA staff to look at all available monetary sources to meet emergency food needs. Our finance staff is asking us to exhaust all possible avenues to use federal relief money before appropriating new state dollars. It's complicated to navigate. We're working on it!

Lilly Irvin-Vitela said in the chat:

- Food Assistance for Kids and families
- New Markets for States- Meats
- Relief for America's Small Farmers
- Farmers and Families Food Box

Pam thanked NM First for sending out the policy working group and the materials in the mailing that went out last week. She has focused a lot on federal side of things. Participated with Sen. Udall on a call about food and ag issues. She focused on the nutrition programs. They have asked Senators Heinrich, Udall and congressional leadership – the covid packages that have been released. There are bills brewing that, asked leadership to support. She listed a few things – new markets for meat processing, relief for America's small farmers act, farmers feeding families. The latter – farmers and families food box program. None of the NM applications were accepted. Trying to understand what we are and are not getting, and inequities. We want to make sure that NM benefits, and there are inequities. Considering platform about what learning now and how federal programs can hamper mobilizing for child and adult care feeding programs. National farm to school network and others who have put together platforms. She'll send out information for people to sign on. She added that NM Grown fruits & veg – senior pilot program – finalizing program. Thanking Michael V, NFMFA incredible work to get produce into 3 county senior. Almost all of the \$50,000 in the program was spent on local produce. Still looking to expand program and get the program off the ground in more communities.

Rep. Stansbury: The issue is not that the state and the legislature are unwilling to meet emergency food needs. We're in the midst of a complicated accounting problem how much of federal relief money can be used. We are all highly engaged – we're trying to figure out the complicated accounting mechanics.

Sherry: Food banks have major role in disaster response and relief. Currently working with ESF-6 group to work out a good MOA to allow us to be available to the state to help during a disaster. Could help the food banks access FEMA funds. Trying to identify federal funding.



Emily Wildau [via chat]: I apologize, I'm going to have to hop off for another meeting but I wanted to give a short update for Voices. We are focused on the special session and starting to think ahead to the regular session as well. Primarily, we are prepping anti food tax social media materials and updating data and numbers regarding the negative impact of re-enacting a food tax. Also focusing on other progressive tax policy to help low-income families have the resources they need to alleviate food insecurity. Great work everyone!

Tim: Working to try to PEBT program – taking place of school meal program for children who've had their schools closed (all children in NM). He wondered where people could go to apply, so information could go to the communities. Phone number, central hotline. If anyone has information, let him know. Lilly replied that she would look at what was said in a previous call, but it looked like it was happening in a school-by-school basis.

tim@nmpovertylaw.org

Bruce said Extension has published a new circular publication on working with farmers and ranchers on buying beef. Another one is about cover crops recently released. *I Can* program which is part of SNAP program, Seeds to Supper program. Around 1500 people worked with and 5000 people who received seeds. Preserves program will help people with their produce. Don't forget us when you have any kind of need

Jonas invited everyone to reach out to him. He said NM First convenes monthly calls to discuss land and water, economic viability, K-12 agriculture education, value chain. Would love you to join us and participate.

Jason: Some of the staff on our team are involved in ESF 6 and 11. Some of the food order and needs are stabilizing. Corona safety practice workgroups specifically food processing groceries farmers marketing, discussions led by secs Kinney and Witte, what can be done on covid front to measure and control spread. We are waiting at the starting gate to see what lines out after the session. We have a new website that will be a hub point [Elevate NM Agriculture](#). They are working hard on buy local, economic recovery and have a lot of really neat things to share as they develop. Under umbrella program of NMSU. Town hall meeting with NMSU president this afternoon. NMDA marketing development update. On the meat front, it's in the hands of the livestock board is looking at the possibility/feasibility/viability of a state meat inspection program. Four meat packers in the state are only federally certified. You have to be state or federally certified to produce meat for public consumption. Maybe it will surface in regular session.

Zoey Fink asked via chat: Does anyone know if the Mountainair processing plant has come back online with re-certification from the USDA?

Jason: I've heard that it's in the works, as well as the one in Las Vegas. There is one in Raton is supposed to open on June 11. In Roswell, there will be expansion of processing and storage. Something in Lordsburg is starting as well. Jason New, jnew@nmda.nmsu.edu; 575.339.5048

Pam: Have you checked in with the NM School Nutrition Association (they are the School Food Authorities/Service Directors) about the EBT access? Pauline Raia is the SNA contact. Pauline.raia@q.com.



Bryan: The Native American Relief Fund which a number of folks on this call were instrumental in getting established has just passed \$1 million in contributions. They have put out an initial round of funding to all 23 Tribes, Nations and Pueblos around the state and just opened a second round of funding. Two others were NM ag funders, talking about post-emergency response for local food and ag systems. That's a conversation going on right now within philanthropy and organizations linked to food and ag in the state. On top of everything else, the water situation for the growing season is not looking good. We are in a draught. As this group continues to do its work, bringing in the importance of growing conditions and challenges producers are facing. The Acequia Association gathering testimonials from producers about their experiences thus far.

Lilly: NM Foundation also has [Vecino Fund](#), smaller grants can be powerfully good and make a big difference in local efforts. The application is short and sweet, the turnaround is a week. Con Alma released funding that will be available for 9 months.

Carlos said that he and Rep. Ferrary just had a private chat. They talked about reaching out to newly elected folks about updating them about the work of this group. The reason to do it now is so the issue comes up during the campaigns. A news item: Islamic circle of North America donated 9,000 pounds of food to Northern Dine COVID Relief, the Arizona chapter.

- Christina – Northern Dine COVID Relief is focusing on the northern region of Navajo Country, including NM/AZ
- Carlos named Rep. Keel sp. Rep Allison, who helped make that happen.

Lilly noted that the NM First Health Town Hall that was planned for April was postponed. It will still be happening and they are aiming for August. Looking for ways to do it safely. The planning and research committees are suggesting holding it remotely. We've been working with a group of amazing people around the state who care about having conversation in nonpartisan, respectful, values-based ways. We'll be putting new registration lines up. Food security will be one of the tracks, and the others will be about health workforce, continuum of care, mental/behavioral health and toxic stress and resilience. Keep an eye out for that. NM First is reaching out to communities all over NM to hold community conversations. We see a lot of assets, a lot of resilience, and a lot of smart ideas to address health needs. We hope you consider participating. If you want to know more about those community conversations and one near you, let us know, and we'll be reaching out as well.

