



New Mexico Health Equity Partnership, an initiative at the Santa Fe Community Foundation Collective Policy Impacts

The New Mexico Health Equity Partnership's (HEP) network consists of four core partners and over 90 members in 15 counties. The network is supported by three staff, four technical assistance providers, and a steering committee comprised of eight diverse members. Collectively, we believe that all people should have the opportunity to live a healthy life and have say in decisions that impact their communities and lives. HEP moves towards this vision and continues to build on its current foundation of health equity leadership, mobilization, and momentum with three strategies: 1) Community-Driven Research; 2) Place-Based Infrastructure; and 3) Critical Connections.



Photo: Health Equity Partnership Network

Funding/Training for Community-Driven Research: Partners engage in community-led research (i.e. Health Impact Assessments, mapping projects, etc.) that result in recommendations about proposed policies, plans, and programs designed to inform decision making and improve the health and wellbeing of New Mexico's children and communities. Community-driven research brings a health lens to various types of policies (transportation, housing, food, environment, employment, etc.) where health isn't typically considered. Community members identify an issue of importance to them, collect data and stories, and make policy recommendations based on the findings. Through the process, diverse partners build alliances around a common goal, strengthen leadership and build power, and elevate community members voices within city, state, federal, and tribal decision-making. This ultimately has **profound policy impacts**.

Investing in Place-Based Infrastructure: Doña Ana Communities United, McKinley Collaborative for Health Equity, and San Juan Collaborative for Health Equity work to improve children's well-being through strategies unique and culturally relevant to their respective communities. In addition to coordinating community-driven research, they are actively engaged in coalition building and community efforts to educate and inform the public and decision makers about policies of importance to their communities.

Creating Critical Connections: It is via gatherings that HEP fosters relationship building, promotes cross-community learning and exchange of organizing tools, and strengthens the statewide network of organizers and leaders working to impact policy and improve the wellbeing of current and future generations.

This document highlights a list of HEP's collective impacts to policies, plans, and programs. These systems changes have taken place because of: 1) funding, coaching, and training provided by the HEP team; 2) implementation of community-driven research and mapping projects led by HEP partners; and 3) coordination of community efforts led by place-based coordinators. Policy impacts are organized by topic.

Equitable Development, Built Environment, and Transportation

- Trail enhancement plans and designation – In April 2015, the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center in partnership with the Step into Cuba Alliance completed the *The Studying Trail Enhancement Plans* Health Impact Assessment and released it to the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. **Input from the STEP-HIA was incorporated into the National Environmental Policy Act and several recommended trail design features were adopted.** Further, the **Village of Cuba was named a Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDT) Gateway Community.** The program serves to highlight and recognize communities who are taking steps to ensure the ongoing protection of their natural, cultural, and recreational resources, including the CDT.
- Comprehensive plan: In 2015, Doña Ana Communities United completed a Health Impact Assessment focused on parks and multi-use trails. In 2015 and 2016, **DACU was instrumental in utilizing the HIA to inform Doña Ana County's proposed new comprehensive plan and unified development code.** The team and community residents submitted comments and provided testimony at over a dozen public meetings based on the findings of their HIA. Through this process, the DACU team built excellent relationships with members of the Planning and Zoning Commission and with County staff. In turn, **key HIA recommendations focused on locating outdoor spaces near all residential areas and creating a trail network were incorporated into the new comprehensive plan and code.**
- Tactical urbanism: In May 2017 Doña Ana Communities United painted the Tornillo/Picacho intersection mural to manage traffic and increase a sense of community in the neighborhood. Because of this project and DACU's relationships with staff in multiple governmental departments, the **City of Las Cruces moved from an attitude of hostility toward creating a Citizen Guide for Tactical Urbanism. CLC not only has a positive attitude toward tactical urbanism but they have pledged to make available at least \$50K for neighborhoods to conduct their own tactical urban projects,** which may be run through Cruces Creatives, a local makerspace. DACU continues to work with CLC to broaden support for this initiative, by working with the City Art Board to formalize an agreement related to DACU's tactical urbanism work at the Community of Hope campus and by collaborating with residents to create two large tactical urbanism projects in the Nevada Neighborhood.
- Pedestrians and nonmotorized vehicles: Individual Doña Ana Communities United members and the team have provided input into all drafts of the City's Active Transportation Plan. As a result, **the final draft of the Las Cruces Active Transportation Plan prioritizes pedestrian safety and public transportation, including issues specific to people who utilize non-motorized forms of transit out of necessity (not choice) and issues specific to populations with varied abilities.** Moreover, two of DACU's members now serve on the City's Transit Advisory Board.
- Infrastructure improvement in colonias: Since 2017, Doña Ana Communities United has worked with residents in Chaparral to ensure that their recommendations are incorporated into the County's Department of Transportation-funded project to build a multi-use trail on Lisa Drive, Chaparral's main arterial. DACU has been collaborating with Doña Ana County Community Development Department staff to conduct participatory forms of community engagement, including caminatas (walks) and visits with residents in places where they naturally gather. **This is the County's first built environment project that incorporates this type of community input. The County planners plan to propose future projects that fully involve residents from other colonias with the New Mexico Department of Transportation.**

- Climate change/traffic safety/parks: In collaboration with the City of Las Cruces (CLC) Sustainability Officer, Doña Ana Communities United has worked since 2017 to pilot community engagement strategies which deeply involve residents in planning infrastructure improvements. Planning projects have focused on the construction of vegetated chicanes which gather rainwater and slow traffic and tactical urbanism strategies to manage traffic and build a sense of community. **With DACU's encouragement, CLC is moving to purchase a large vacant lot to pilot a new way of engaging residents to make decisions about how to develop public spaces in their neighborhoods.**
- Free bus passes for youth: Beginning in 2017, Together for Brothers conducted a Health Impact Assessment to analyze the health impacts of free bus passes on young people in Albuquerque. As part of the HIA, the young men developed and administered surveys in English, Dari, Persian, Spanish, Swahili, and Turkish to more than 300 individuals and collected qualitative narratives at community events. They presented their research results to city-level decision makers. Because of the young men's leadership, the **City of Albuquerque piloted a "free bus pass" program for youth during summer 2018.** The young men were featured on [New Mexico In Focus](#) PBS due to their policy impact and Mayor Keller recently highlighted the successful summer bus pass program in his newsletter.



Photo: Doña Ana Communities United



Photo: Together for Brothers

Environmental

- Prevention of a proposed CO2 pipeline: The Partnership for a Healthy Torrance Community, the New Mexico Department of Health, and Human Impact Partners released a Health Impact Assessment on a proposed CO2 Pipeline in Torrance county in July 2015. Although falling oil prices prompted Kinder Morgan – the project sponsor – to withdraw its application to the US Bureau of Land Management for the proposed Lobos CO2 Pipeline, the company reserves the right to revive the project if market conditions change. **The proposed project faced fierce community resistance, and this may have played a role in Kinder Morgan's decision.** Given that pipeline development could be proposed again, the HIA recommendations – for example that the County designate utility corridors for infrastructure development and include community input in that process – and the values outlined by residents as a part of the HIA process can serve as important guiding principles for future decisions about land use. As this was the first HIA done in Torrance county, it also provided the opportunity for community members to speak to decision makers about the importance of Health in All Policies.
- Uranium mining task force: In April 2015, the McKinley Collaborative for Health Equity released a Health Impact Assessment on uranium mining. Partners such as Conservation Voters of New Mexico, Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment, Red Water Pond Community Association, etc. have been using the HIA in their organizing efforts. **Currently, the McKinley County Commission is taking its first steps forward on a uranium task force.** The task force framework still needs to be crafted, but progress is being made. **This will affect City and County policy changes in transportation, emergency management and public safety protections from radiation exposure risks.**
- Community Emergency Management Plan- In August of 2015 Navajo Communities were disproportionately impacted by the Gold King Mine Spill that released 3 million gallons of toxic waste into the Animas and the San Juan rivers. Dr. Karletta Chief developed a comprehensive community-led study to explore the impacts to Navajo communities. She worked with San Juan Collaborative for Health Equity (SJCHE) Diné Centered Research and Evaluation Team (DCRE) member Janene Yazzie, Duane "Chili" Yazzie and the late Dr. Larry Emerson. **Because of the study, it was determined that the development of a policy to establish a Community-led Emergency Management Plan and protocols would help alleviate the disparities, distrust, and confusion that exacerbated the trauma and perceptions of exposure risks experienced by impacted Navajo Communities.** Unique to this initiative is consideration of the reality of historical trauma and the cultural connections to the San Juan River that define the vulnerabilities and impacts experienced by Navajo communities in the wake of these traumatic events. The SJCHE-DCRE will continue to work with the University of Arizona research team to develop the final plan and protocols and establish necessary policy changes in the Navajo Nation's emergency management plan.
- Amendments to the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act – The Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium (TBDC) conducted a Health Impact Assessment to inform the public and policy makers about the health outcomes that would develop if the Amendments to the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act to include the Downwinders of New Mexico were passed in Congress. The report was released in February 2017. The HIA report has been beneficial in providing information about the health needs of the Downwinders and how the Amendments would address those needs. **Through the sharing of the HIA report with the public and policy makers, a member of the TBDC Steering Committee, was invited to Testify before the US Senate Judiciary Committee on the need for the Amendments. This was a necessary first step in changing the current public policy that does not address the needs of the Downwinder communities of New Mexico.**

- City Integrated Pest Management Policy: Beginning in summer 2018, Doña Ana Communities United started working with residents in the Gallagher Park neighborhood to adopt the park and maintain it without the use of pesticides. This has built resident and City staff support for adoption of a City Integrated Pest Management Policy. **The Council has scheduled an upcoming work session to refine an integrated pest management proposal from the Parks and Recreation Department.**
- Public safety and human rights on fracking: The McKinley Collaborative for Health Equity provided education and technical assistance to the Diné Medicine Men and the Diné Hatalthlii Association on public safety and human rights concerns regarding “fracking” near sacred sites. The Navajo Nation Health Education Human Services Committee, Resources Committee and Navajo Council support the implementation of New Mexico Department of Transportation public safety regulations to install reduced speed signs and lights to deter traffic accidents and save lives. **In response, the New Mexico Department of Transportation will install “slow down” signage with lights near Nageezi and Huerfano Navajo Chapters.**
- Physical, behavioral, cultural, and spiritual impacts of oil and gas development: In 2018, the San Juan Collaborative for Health Equity (SJCHE) collaborated with partners in the Navajo Chapters of Counselor, Ojo Encino, and Turreon to develop a Health Impact Assessment - Hozho go na’ada Assessment of the physical, behavioral, cultural, and spiritual impacts of oil and gas development. The assessment, still underway, was developed with guidance from SJCHE’s Diné Centered Research and Evaluation team utilizing a Diné traditional lens with a decolonized approach. SJCHE will use the results of assessment to make health equity policy recommendations to Indian Health Service, the Checkerboard Health Services, and Navajo Nation. SJCHE will also make environmental policy recommendations to the Bureau of Land Management, Resource Management Plan and Environment Impact Statement, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Environmental Protection Agency regarding appropriate oil and gas well production sites; set-backs away from homes, schools, and public facilities; and other measures to mitigate health impacts from oil and gas development. **During November 8-9, 2018, the SJCHE and partners will host the U.S. National Environmental Protection Agency and other government entities for a three-day visit.** The visit will include a fracking tour, community forum, and a closing session focused on peacemaking, awareness, and sustainable solutions.



Photo: San Juan Collaborative for Health Equity - DCRE Team



Photo: Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium

Food & Agriculture

- Urban Agriculture and Food Plan: In 2016, DACU worked with La Semilla and the City of Las Cruces to write an Urban Agriculture and Food Policy Plan, which was adopted by the City in June of that year.
- Improving the quality and quantity of food in southwest New Mexico – During October 2015, the National Center for Frontier Communities completed an Health Impact Assessment where they determined health impacts of emergency food supplies on The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) recipients in rural and frontier communities and gathered local data on both the quantity and quality of food supplies distributed via the local food distributors/food pantries. **In turn, Representative Michelle Lujan Grisham introduced H.R. 4967 – the Food Bank Assistance Act of 2016. The NCFC worked with staff to ensure that the proposed increase in TEFAP administrative funds trickle down to support infrastructure support in local food pantries.**
- Leverage funding to invest in rural and frontier food pantry infrastructure: In 2017, in response to its Health Impact Assessment recommendations, the National Center for Frontier Communities convened two regional meetings with food pantries from Catron, Grant, Hidalgo and Luna Counties. Mapping of current infrastructure took place and the concept was born to develop “duel hubs”, central locations in Deming and Silver City that meet the economic development needs of local growers and the bulk buying and distribution needs of the region’s food pantries. **This led to the small-scale piloting of a food hub in April 2018.**
- Implementation of acceptable nutrition standards: As part of its Health Impact Assessment recommendations, the **National Center for Frontier Communities worked with the Southwest Food Policy Council to develop nutrition standards which were shared with food pantries and Road Runner Food Bank.** The local pantries were encouraged to have their boards or organizations adopt these nutrition standards. NCFC has met with Road Runner Food Bank to get clarification on all regulations regarding repacking of large quantities of food distributed these to the pantries.
- Food sovereignty – In 2018, the San Juan Collaborative for Health Equity worked with its fiscal sponsor Indian Country Grassroots Support (ICGS) to provide hands on labor assistance to a single mother farming several family alfalfa, corn and vegetable plots and maintaining livestock in the Navajo Nation Shiprock breadbasket. They mapped resources, challenges, and sharing economy options from start to finish in circumstances where farming was done traditionally and was the primary livelihood. The mapping showed that the customary sharing economy is still alive but urgently needs to be better organized. The next step is to present the maps to chapters in food sharing economy workshops and begin organizing actual customary tribal collectives.

Before this, in 2017, ICGS surveyed farmers and ranchers at a higher infrastructure level. This resulted in a **March 17, 2018 resolution calling for a referendum vote to reform land use and to require that reservation land be managed according to customary tribal principles. The resolution was signed by the Navajo Nation Western Agency Council, which is the largest Agency on the reservation comprising 18 tribal chapters.**

- Strengthening cultural identity of Diné children through food: The San Juan Collaborative for Health Equity has been working with the Iina Baa Hozho (IBH) Committee to create sustainable growth learning opportunities at Newcomb and surrounding schools where participants develop the skills, awareness, and abilities to strengthen their identity and culture. The guiding principles support a long-term *vision to promote communication, collaboration and learning*. The focus areas are mental health, suicide prevention, substance abuse, food and water security/food sovereignty. In Spring 2018, the Project worked with Newcomb's Food Security academic program to build a hoop house, learn about aquaponics, and share knowledge of how animals and plants co-exist. They also worked with the New Mexico State University Agriculture program to offer opportunities to learn about wellness through food. In partnership with IBH and the University of New Mexico-TREE Center, **SJCHE will implement the Native Family Listening Project in the Central Consolidated School District for 4th and 5th graders in Spring 2019.**
- Education on soil health and the removal of agricultural regulatory barriers: McKinley Collaborative for Health Equity established a partnership with Skeets Farm and Indigenous Life Ways to begin educating farmers on soil health techniques. First, they are training the public on the importance of soil health and then will begin to organize around the United States Department of Agriculture regulatory barriers (i.e. requirements about plowing, fertilizer, and high use of water) which impact farmers and the current efforts to heal the soil by providing microorganism back to the earth. They will use the Executive Order 13563 Regulatory Planning and Review.



Photos: Skeets Farm

Reintegration Instead of Incarceration



Photo: San Miguel Health Impact Assessment Team and Partners

- Resolutions in support of reintegration instead of incarceration – In 2015 the San Miguel County Detention Center Citizen Advisory Committee's completed a Health Impact Assessment focused on a proposed reintegration center rather than incarceration. Since its release in 2015, the HIA has had positive policy implications on the community. It has commanded attention from decision makers and led to the adoption of many of the report's recommendations. **Resolutions, in support of the San Miguel HIA on reintegration findings and recommendations were unanimously passed by: The San Miguel County Board of Commissioners, The City of Las Vegas, the San Miguel County Family and Community Health Council, and the Guadalupe County Behavioral Health Crisis Task Force.** The HIA has become highly visible and is frequently referenced in county commission meetings, both by elected officials and the community during public input. **Construction is now complete on the reintegration center.**
- Programming for the San Miguel County Reintegration Center - The Health Impact Assessment focused on the proposed reintegration center and its recommendations continue to be supported by the warden and the San Miguel County Board of Commissioners. In fact, the support for recommendations around programming have been elevated. **In a vote earlier this year, the San Miguel County Commission approved a case manager position. Additionally, the San Miguel County Detention Center has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$8,045 from the New Mexico Community Foundation to purchase a hoop house, gardening tools, drip system and the seeds needed to start a gardening program.** The gardening program will have an educational component and will be part of the daily programming within the reintegration center.
- Services for Women at the San Miguel County Detention Center - The San Miguel Reintegration Center and its services were initially only intended for men. However, **because of the advocacy of women of color who were formerly incarcerated, the reintegration center's services are now available to the women's pod in the detention center.** Following the completion of the Health Impact Assessment, women of color who were formerly incarcerated led and participated in a series of HEP sponsored gatherings. Through this process, these women shared their personal narratives and experiences with incarceration, addiction and recovery with the warden and service providers. They educated them about the importance of reintegration services being provided not just to men, but to women as well. In response to this, the warden agreed to allow services in the women's pod.

Employment

- Complaints filed about employment violations in McKinley county: In 2015, the McKinley Workers Justice Coalition, via partnerships between Somos Gallup, McKinley Collaborative for Health Equity, and the McKinley Community Health Alliance conducted a Health Impact Assessment on wage theft in Gallup. Wage theft is when workers are not paid overtime, misclassified as contractors, asked to work off the clock, or not paid minimum wage. The McKinley Workers Justice Coalition is utilizing the HIA to educate decision makers and the community about wage theft. Through presentations, over 600 people have been introduced to the HIA findings and recommendations. **Because of the HIA process, in 2017, six workers in McKinley county, representing Native American and Latino immigrant backgrounds, filed complaints about employment violations.**
- Lawsuit against the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions: The Health Impact Assessment on wage theft has been instrumental in ensuring a victory for workers. In December 2017, **Somos Un Pueblo Unido and other workers' rights organizations announced an unprecedented agreement in a lawsuit against the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions for failing to enforce the anti-wage theft law.** Now the agency must ensure that wage theft victims, especially those in rural communities, have access to a fair process for their complaints.
- Navajo Nation preliminary support for the HIA report on wage theft's recommendations: On January 29, 2018, Anna Rondon and Emerson Toledo of McKinley Collaborative for Health Equity and Chris Hudson of McKinley Community Health Alliance had an introductory meeting with the Navajo Nation Council's Health, Education, Human Services Committee where they shared findings from their Health Impact Assessment report on wage theft. **Chairperson, Jonathan Hale expressed support for the report and its recommendations to prevent wage theft and protect workers' rights in the thirteen border towns surrounding the Navajo Nation.**



*Photo: McKinley Community Health Alliance
& McKinley Collaborative for Health Equity*



Photo: Somos Un Pueblo Unido

Racial Justice

- Racial Justice education for community stakeholders: The San Juan Collaborative for Health Equity is working to **provide Racial Justice community education and trainings to the San Juan County government** - program providers, decision-makers, tribal leaders, students, etc. They have been utilizing W.K. Kellogg's Racial Healing's five principles in conjunction with Diné spiritual healing and thinking wellness. The SJCHE team held a meeting on October 8th, to discuss outreach efforts, agendas, venues and schedules for a future training in Farmington on December 2018. The team will work towards a Racial Healing event that's larger and inclusive, given recent national events. This effort builds on the Food Justice and Racial Justice Symposium SJCHE and partnering organizations held in April 2018 with 85 diverse participants. Within this effort, SJCHE continues to collaborate with the Somos Un Pueblo Unido chapter in San Juan county on racial injustices which overlap between Diné and immigrant community members, such as racial profiling.
- Navajo Nation Genetics Research Policy- Since October 2016, the **Diné Centered Research and Evaluation Team developed under San Juan Collaborative for Health Equity has played a central role in informing the Genetics Research Policy**. The policy is being created to replace a moratorium on Genetic research that has been in place on the Navajo Nation since 2002. With technological and research advancements made in the field of genetic research, Navajo Nation leadership felt it was important to open pathways to participate in genetic research that could further explore and understand impacts on exposure to environmental toxins and other genetic ailments impacting Navajo communities. This would create opportunity for meaningful treatments, intervention, and protection standards. **The DCRE team plays a vital role in educating decision makers and the public that all sources of genetic material (plants, animals, etc.) need to be considered to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples and ensure responsibility to all forms of life for ethical and moral research methodology and protocols.**
- Indigenous Peoples in All Policies – Based on McKinley Collaborative for Health Equity's participation in the 2018 Equity Summit and growing relationship with Policy Link, they are working to **elevate Indigenous peoples' issues within federal policies that pose health threats to first peoples**. This is an upstream approach to bridge gaps in information within states, counties, and municipalities and connect with Native Nations and urban Indian Centers. They will share federal American Indian policies that are an undue burden for American Indians. They will utilize the Executive Order Regulatory Planning and Review 13563 by Obama Administration. National partners in this collaboration include: Policy Link, National Congress of the American Indians, and Natives Americans in Philanthropy. The working group has a meeting scheduled for November 2018.
- Indigenous Peoples Commission: In March 2018, the **City of Gallup passed an ordinance to create an "Indigenous Peoples Commission"** which has the responsibility to advise the city council, and the community, "concerning matters of cultural diversity, fairness, equal opportunity, and respect for Indigenous peoples and cultures." The purpose is to create a process where Indigenous peoples will have an audience with the commissioners to hear oral and written complaints. The Commission is also tasked to work with other entities to facilitate training for organizations "to reduce the incidence of discrimination and culturally insensitive behaviors and attitudes." The US Department of Justice will be invited to provide historical background on the discrimination in employment lawsuits against the City of

Gallup hiring practices. Community organizations and members look forward to public input during the upcoming public hearings. **The McKinley Collaborative for Health Equity has provided background information from the entities to spiritual leaders within the community and have assisted with strategy development.**

- Language and cultural access policies – Beginning in 2017, the New Mexico Asian Family Center, via Global 505, conducted a Health Impact Assessment focused on language and cultural access policies which need to be implemented on a city-wide level to advance the success of immigrants and refugees in Albuquerque. Currently, Global 505 is working with the City of Albuquerque's Equity and Inclusion Office to implement the HIA recommendations. **Already, the City has done an internal analysis of language access policies that exist within all city departments, and has moved to provide model policy development, implementation, and enforcement with support of Global 505 for those entities under city purview, including the ABQ Police Department.** Additionally, they will look more deeply at cultural access policies for the city, which includes re-examining how access to education, transportation, and job training programs are structured to be more inclusive and accessible for immigrant and refugee populations. Global 505 serves as the main steering committee member that provides guidance to the City through the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs.



Photo: Global 505 and HEP Partners