

A sketch of New Mexico's state disaster and resiliency planning

New Mexico Environment Department

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Introduction

This document provides a partial sketch of New Mexico's state-level disaster and resiliency planning, based on input from individuals contacted in Spring 2024. The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) appreciates the time and effort of the fourteen contributors, who appear on the last page. NMED and a few other agencies are over-represented here because an NMED staff member collected information from easily accessible sources. Many other New Mexico State agencies, agency bureaus, other organizations, and individuals are also active in disaster and resilience planning.

How New Mexico plans for disasters and resiliency

New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM)

DHSEM takes the lead on New Mexico's disaster planning and coordinates response efforts in any part of the State with State agencies, tribal entities, and other organizations (hereinafter "partners"). Disasters and emergencies can occur at any time and without warning. Whenever they occur, it is the responsibility of the local government to lessen the impacts to the jurisdiction and its citizens. Local governments are responsible for filling the immediate needs of their residents: sheltering, feeding, debris removal on roads for the continuation of emergency services, and restoration of public services. Federal assistance may become necessary when the impacts of a disaster or emergency overwhelm the resources of the State and local governments.

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended (Stafford Act), Title 42 of the United States Code (U.S.C.) §5121 et seq., 1 authorizes the President to provide assistance to individuals and to State and local governments to help them respond to and recover from a disaster. If an incident does not rise to the level of a federal disaster declaration, the New Mexico Disaster Assistance Program (DAP), administered by DHSEM out of its Recovery Bureau, may be implemented to provide financial or technical assistance to an impacted community. The New Mexico Governor's Authorized Representative has sole authority to make eligibility determinations for the New Mexico DAP and reserves the right to extend deadlines and make expedient changes in procedures according to the needs of a given incident or applicant. DHSEM stands ready to assist local governments in recovering from the impacts of a disaster or emergency. In addition to supplementing local resources, DHSEM also manages the New Mexico Public Assistance reimbursable grant program to supplement a local government's recovery efforts following a disaster or emergency declared by the Governor.

Key assets for DHSEM's response coordination are the National Incident Management System (NIMS), a year-round disaster planning process, and the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). When the SEOC activates for an incident or planned event, including wildland fires, storms, or human-caused events, all response partners need to be available. Partners, services, and supplies include fire fighters, water haulers, snowplows, de-icers, sandbags, hazardous materials removal, and others as needed.

DHSEM maintains the State Emergency Operations Plan. Last updated in 2016, DHSEM is updating it in 2024. This plan details how DHSEM will conduct its work during disasters and which partners will be involved. The plan includes specific annexes for specific hazards, prepared by subject matter experts. DHSEM assigns fifteen Emergency Support Functions to various partners. To ensure continual preparedness, DHSEM conducts a weekly coordination call with city / municipal, county, tribal, and private sector emergency managers. Representatives from fire departments, law enforcement, and State agencies that are active in disaster work are invited to join the call. Each weekly meeting focuses on the specific season, such as the fire season, flooding / monsoon season, or severe winter weather. As of April 2024, DHSEM was conducting a sandbag operation, filling sandbags through the State penitentiary system and distributing them wherever needed. DHSEM gets projections about rain and flooding incidents from weather service experts, then pre-delivers sandbags to those areas.

Please note that what many refer to as "resiliency," DHSEM refers to as "preparedness" and "mitigation." Mitigation can be done pre- or post-disaster. Pre-disaster mitigation is strategic: it stops a disaster from happening or reduces the impact of a disaster. This area of work includes a range of projects, such as building flood abatement and culvert enlargements to reduce flooding during storms, hazardous fuels reduction, and the drafting of local hazard mitigation plans.

The Mitigation Bureau within DHSEM maintains a state hazard mitigation plan, which identifies potential hazards, offers mitigation options for these specific risks, and spells out how to rebuild a community to be more resilient after a disaster. To determine priorities for that plan, DHSEM engages with local jurisdictions, other state agencies, and agencies assigned to emergency Support Functions (ESFs) to identify hazards across the state. DHSEM also identifies programs available to address identified hazards and to undertake mitigation measures to build resilient communities throughout the state.

Additionally, DHSEM's Preparedness Bureau gathers information from local jurisdictions, other state agencies, and ESFs to create the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA). The THIRA highlights the 5-7 top potential events that would have the worst impacts for New Mexico. DHSEM submits an updated THIRA to FEMA every 3 years, and it guides DHSEM's mitigation work for the following 3 years. For example, if a top current threat is wildfire, DHSEM would encourage agencies to work on defensible spaces, and the Preparedness Bureau would provide trainings on escaping a fire. After SEOC subject matter experts complete their disaster planning, the Preparedness Bureau trains other staff who work at the SEOC. In

addition, a Homeland Security grant program enables the Bureau to provide anti-terrorism planning, training, and exercises for local jurisdictions.

The Preparedness Bureau works with city / municipal, county, tribal, and non-governmental emergency managers, as well as with other partners. The Bureau provides training and exercises for emergency managers and other first responders, non-profit volunteers, and the public. This Bureau also promotes communication and relationship-building between preparedness stakeholders.

New Mexico Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD)

GCD started a disaster preparedness project 8 years ago, primarily focused on improving emergency services for people with visual, hearing, and/or mobility challenges. This effort included creating a state advisory group, as FEMA encourages states to do, called the New Mexico Disability Emergency Planning Advisory Council (DEPAC). DEPAC consists of people with disabilities, professionals who serve the disability community, and emergency managers. DEPAC works to improve services, advocate, and train people with disabilities for disaster preparedness, all in collaboration with various organizations. GCD and DEPAC have undertaken several initiatives:

- A statewide presentation to emergency managers and people with disabilities
- Supporting one local advisory group in Santa Fe, housed under the Mayor's Commission on Disability
- Mapping all disability-related resources statewide and giving a list to local emergency managers
- Compiling information on notification systems that are different between counties, cities, and throughout the State, to ensure that New Mexicans with disabilities can receive accessible notifications
- Making presentations to emergency managers and people with disabilities, on topics such as 1) how to be inclusive of people with disabilities when undertaking planning; and 2) planning for needs related to durable medical equipment, transportation, medications, and sign language
- Producing a preliminary COVID-19 After Action Report (AAR), which presents COVID-related strategies for being inclusive and addressing the needs – housing, employment, access to healthcare, and more – of people in 7 disability groups. The AAR is available in ASL, large print, English and Spanish. This report was produced after an accessible survey was sent out to all persons with a disability and caregivers statewide through a partnership with Presbyterian Community Health Epidemiologist, using an online Qualtrics system. Accessible formats were in American Sign Language (ASL), Plain Language, Spanish, and Large Print. The AAR is posted to the GCD's website.
- Producing a 40-page Evacuation Handbook, available in English and Spanish. The Handbook website includes a link that provides accessibility to the Handbook for people with visual impairments.

- Completing a statewide functional emergency management test based on a scenario of two trains – one loaded with passengers and one loaded with chemicals – crashing into each other because of an earthquake. This could potentially happen in the next 50 years on the train tracks between Albuquerque and Santa Fe. DEPAC is now creating standard operating guidelines for a disaster of this kind.
- Setting up Joint Information Centers (JICs) through an operating standard guideline which includes a communication plan to distribute emergency information to people with disabilities through the organizations that serve them.
- Working to set up a statewide phone number, primarily for people with hearing disabilities, that will be connected to 911 so this population can get help via text during emergencies. Two cities (Santa Fe and Albuquerque) have been chosen for a test run of the operation of this text-to-911 system.
- Facilitating the creation of two groups whose members are primarily people with disabilities but also include some representatives from organizations that serve those populations:
 - New Mexico Disability Emergency Planning Advisory Group (DEPAC)
 - Disability Access and Functional Needs Coalition (DAFNC)

GCD is reaching out to people with disabilities and working with all levels of government to be more inclusive of people with disabilities. GCD’s next presentation is about the “whole community approach” to disasters that FEMA supports. This approach is centered around inclusive planning, rescue, and response, including information about Disability Awareness, Services Animals and Accessible Shelters.

New Mexico Environment Department (NMED)

NMED Cabinet Secretary James Kenney represents NMED on DHSEM’s New Mexico State Emergency Response Commission (SERC). SERC appoints Local Emergency Planning Committee members (LEPCs) and reviews local emergency response plans. Each LEPC’s membership includes, at a minimum, local officials including police, fire, civil defense, public health, transportation, and environmental professionals, as well as representatives of facilities subject to emergency planning requirements, community groups, and the media.

NMED plans for disasters and develops resiliency planning as outlined in specific, key documents that have been developed under multiple jurisdictions and through collaborative efforts with DHSEM and its other partners. This planning includes a continuous, evolving set of anticipated actions that maximize opportunities and guide response operations. Planning as an ongoing process is based on current information and understanding, and it is subject to revision. Key NMED planning documents are listed here and described just below:

- National Response Framework
- State of New Mexico Hazard Mitigation Plan
- New Mexico All Hazard Emergency Response Plan

- Emergency Support Function 10 (ESF-10)
- Oil and Hazardous Materials Annex
- NMED Spill Response Plan

National Response Framework (NRF)

The NRF provides foundational emergency management doctrine for how the Nation responds to all types of incidents. The NRF is built on scalable, flexible, and adaptable concepts identified in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) to align key roles and responsibilities nationwide. In the context of a threat or hazard, in anticipation of a significant event, or in response to an incident, agencies and organizations involved in emergency response can partially or fully implement the structures, roles, responsibilities and procedures described in the NRF. This allows for a scaled response, delivery of specific resources and capabilities, and a level of coordination appropriate to each incident.

State of New Mexico Hazard Mitigation Plan

The New Mexico State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP or “the Plan”) was developed as a cooperative effort of State agencies and other partners under the coordination of DHSEM. From SHMP: *This 2023 update to the New Mexico State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP) is intended to guide New Mexico’s mitigation program to reduce the impacts of significant hazards to the State, to include threats to life, property, critical facilities, the economy, the environment, and historic/cultural resources. It serves as a public and private sector reference document and management tool for mitigation activities throughout the State. It is also intended to meet the State planning requirements of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended, and other federal and State requirements as detailed in Section 1.4. This statewide Plan is administered by the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) and the State Hazard Mitigation Planning Team (SHMT) for the State of New Mexico.*

New Mexico All Hazard Emergency Response Plan

The purpose of the New Mexico All Hazard Emergency Response Plan is to establish the New Mexico Emergency Operations System, which organizes the response to emergencies and disasters while providing for the safety and welfare of the public. It sets forth the lines of authority, responsibilities, and organizational relationships, and shows how all actions will be coordinated among State, federal and local governments.

All relevant agencies work under specific, numbered Emergency Support Functions, such as ESF #1 - Transportation or ESF #4 - Firefighting. NMED and EPA work under ESF #10 - Oil and Hazardous Material Response. NMED’s 2 incident response staff serve as go-betweens for NMED’s bureaus and DHSEM staff to coordinate ESF #10 activities. Actions and activities that are undertaken to develop hazardous materials response capabilities may include planning, training, orientation sessions, and exercises for ESF #10 personnel at various levels (i.e., County,

State, Regional, and Federal) and other emergency support functions that will respond with ESF #10. This involves the active participation of inter-agency preparedness organizations, which regularly collaborate on such activities. As one example of its ESF #10 duties, NMED provides data from its various types of monitoring to DHSEM's emergency management system during disasters.

ESF #10 - Oil and Hazardous Materials Annex

The scope of Emergency Support Function 10 (ESF #10) includes the appropriate actions to prepare for and respond to a threat to public health, welfare, or the environment caused by actual or potential oil and hazardous materials incidents. For purposes of this document, "hazardous materials" is a general term meaning hazardous substances, pollutants, and contaminants. Hazardous materials include chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear substances, whether accidentally or intentionally released. ESF #10 may be used to take actions and respond to environmental contamination beyond what is covered by the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan.

NMED Spill Response Plan

The NMED Spill Response Plan (SRP) is a comprehensive agency plan created to align with NMED's mission and responsibilities in responding to spills and releases in New Mexico. It streamlines NMED's spill response by assuring that NMED conducts proper and timely communication between the right bureaus, other State agencies, and local municipalities and Tribal entities; responds with proper urgency to after-hours reports and emergencies, whether communicated by the EPA, the Governor's office, a Responsible Party or a citizen; and carries out proper enforcement as authorized under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), The Clean Water Act and pertinent New Mexico Rules and Regulations.

In preparation for response to an environmental emergency, NMED notifies and maintains open communications with other State agencies listed below when the following scenarios occur:

- Oil and gas related spills and releases that involve the petroleum and mineral extraction process:
 - Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD)
 - Oil Conservation Division (OCD)
 - NM State Land Office (NM SLO)
- Environmental issues that affect wildlife:
 - NM Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF)
- Environmental issues that may affect water quantity issues:
 - NM Office of the State Engineer (NM OSE)
- Environmental issues that affect human health:
 - NM Department of Health
- Environmental issues that intersect with infrastructure:

- NM Department of Transportation
- Environmental issues that affect cultural properties:
 - NM Department of Cultural Affairs

NMED will also notify the following federal agencies under certain circumstances:

- EPA Region 6 if an On-Scene Coordinator or EPA's enforcement capabilities are needed
- Bureau of Land Management if spills or emergencies occur on BLM lands
- US Fish and Wildlife Service if wildlife is endangered

NMED Points of Contact

- Stephen Connolly, Incident Response Coordinator, Hazardous Waste Bureau, stephen.connolly@env.nm.gov, 505-470-8495
- Peter J. Garcia Sr., Assistant Incident Response Coordinator, Hazardous Waste Bureau, peterj.garciasr@env.nm.gov, 505-490-5868
- Aaron Coffman, Compliance and Technical Assistance Program Manager, Hazardous Waste Bureau, aaron.coffman@env.nm.gov, 505-690-5211
- Rick Shean, Division Director, Resource Protection Division Director, rick.shean@env.nm.gov, 505-629-6494

NMED's Drinking Water Bureau (DWB)

DWB:

- Provides information to public water systems (PWS) to emphasize importance of developing and maintaining an emergency response plan
- Informs water systems of the benefits of completing a risk and resiliency assessment. These assessments are not collected by DWB, but they must be certified by the PWS to the EPA.
- Work with PWS to identify vulnerabilities, and work with regional partners to consider potential solutions. These may include emergency interconnection, shared resources, alternate water sources, water haulers, the NM Water / Wastewater Agency Response Network (WARN) program, and other options.

DWB works with various TA providers, Councils of Governments (COGs), and various state agencies to help water systems improve their technical, financial, and managerial capacity. DWB maintains a web-based Emergency Response Story Map that outlines resources and planning guidance for public water systems.

[Emergency Response Story Map \(arcgis.com\)](https://storymaps.arcgis.com)

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/2f2671d2864d4a20b9ee57a07628a3f7>

NMED's [Drinking Water Bureau \(nm.gov\)](http://nm.gov)

https://www.env.nm.gov/drinking_water/

If a water system is experiencing an emergency, DWB staff will reach out to ensure the system is coordinating with their County Emergency Manager, the DHSEM Emergency Operation Center, and other stakeholders if the situation is ongoing or requires assistance. DWB provides technical assistance, on-site surveys, liaison services with other State agencies, and potential funding options.

DWB is helping plan and recruit participants for EPA Region 6's Emergency Drinking Water Supply Workshop on May 16, 2024. Invitees include: DHSEM, FEMA, County and Local Emergency Managers, NM National Guard, public water systems, federal water systems, agency partners, Red Cross, NM Department of Health, and Tribal Nations.

DWB provides training by request to water systems, at regional water system meetings, and at various conferences and events, including the NM Rural Water Association's Emergency Response Planning event held in April 2024. Topics include:

- Emergency Response Planning
- Wildfires and water quality
- Funding Opportunities
- Laws, Regulations, and Reporting

Recent efforts include the following:

- DWB is working on policies to comply with the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (AWIA) and the Emergency Right-to-Know Act of 1986 (EPCRA).
- DWB is coordinating with TEEEX (www.teex.org) to teach the MGT-343 Disaster Management for Water and Wastewater Utilities class on October 30-31, 2024, in Albuquerque, NM. TEEEX will also be teaching the MGT-452 Physical and Cybersecurity for Critical Infrastructure class on January 22, 2025 in Albuquerque, NM.
- The DWB Emergency Response Coordinator joined the NM Association of Emergency Managers and, in April 2024, completed the FEMA National Emergency Management Basic Academy training program.

NMED's Environmental Health Division (EHD)

While much is known about social determinants of health and their impact on disaster and resiliency, environmental determinants of health are rarely considered. Any approach to planning for disaster in underserved communities must include identification and prioritization of environmental determinants of health. EHD is developing capacity to contribute to disaster and resiliency planning, especially concerning priority areas such as heat, infectious illness, and water contamination. EHD staff have explored ways to implement resiliency planning systematically with the NM Alliance of Health Councils, through grant-funded programs. County and tribal health councils currently develop community health profiles for specific jurisdictions through the Department of Health. EHD is developing funding to assist twelve health councils to

identify prioritized *Environmental* Determinants of Health (EDOH). Four EDOHs will be selected as priorities to be addressed by the Division for purposes of disaster prevention and resiliency planning. Results of the effort will be shared with New Mexico DOH for possible inclusion in the State Health Improvement Plan.

EHD was funded through a federal grant by the US Department of Health to assist employers to prevent the spread of COVID-19 through the workplace. The program was recognized by the Office of the Inspector General as more effective than the national Occupational Safety and Health Administration's program, but was it disbanded when the grant ended. The New Mexico's Occupational Health and Safety Bureau (OHSB) is working to develop a special emphasis program addressing and preventing the spread of infectious illness through the workplace.

OHSB is also currently developing a Heat Standard for employers in vulnerable industries, to assist them to protect workers in the event of extreme heat. OHSB conducts trainings for workers and employers addressing heat safety that can be modified for the general population.

EHD responds regularly to disasters involving water contamination in specific communities, temporarily closing businesses that produce or serve food to prevent disease outbreaks.

EHD currently regulates 330,000 Onsite Liquid Waste Systems. Because water is scarce in New Mexico, EHD is developing a Liquid Waste Assistance Fund to assist residents to repair, replace or decommission failing onsite liquid waste systems for the purpose of preventing a widespread, catastrophic water shortage caused by septic contamination.

New Mexico Department of Health (DOH)

DOH has an emergency operations plan to meet the health and medical needs of the state. It covers the public health of New Mexicans and the health delivery system. DOH's plan is a sub-annex to DHSEM's plan. DOH is the lead on Emergency Support Function (ESF) #8. Several annexes to the DOH plan address issues such as health hazards, infectious diseases, chemical threats, health responses to natural hazards, human-caused events, and responses to cyber threats. DOH maintains and updates those plans every few years, or as needed, based on lessons learned from exercises and from real-world responses.

DOH also conducts resiliency planning, including the Hospital Vulnerability Analysis (annual) and the Public Health Risk Assessment (every 5 years). These plans cover all the jurisdictions around the state. They identify key hazards that communities may face and equitable capacities needed to respond in those communities. A relative risk rating is assigned to each community. This Analysis and the Assessment identify which mitigations are priorities, thereby providing planning priorities for each jurisdiction. Because resources are limited, activities may focus on improving training, building relationships, additional planning, and conducting exercises.

DOH staff participated in the creation of New Mexico's draft State Climate Adaptation Plan (SCARP). In May 2024, DOH will co-sponsor the Partners in Preparedness summit for 530 participants, where the SCARP will be introduced.

New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD)

EMNRD led the process to create the first New Mexico State Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan (SCARP), which was released in April 2024. New Mexico faces changing climate conditions, and state and local entities must anticipate and prepare to meet these climate challenges, which are expected to disproportionately impact the most vulnerable populations and infrastructure. As the state faces mounting challenges, including extreme heat, wildfires, droughts, storms, heavy precipitation, and associated health risks, the Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan provides a blueprint for a more resilient New Mexico. Through inter-agency collaboration and the development of this Plan, State agencies have begun to incorporate climate adaptation into their programs and operations, aligning with the state's vision for a clean energy future, protection of natural and cultural heritage, and the safeguarding of human health and safety.

The Plan was developed through a series of workshops with state agencies held in 2023, which focused on fostering cross-departmental collaboration, enhancing understanding of climate impacts, and creating a shared framework for resilience efforts. The group identified six major resilience themes: Community and Culture, Ecosystems and Natural Resources, Human Health and Wellness, Water Systems, Infrastructure and the Built Environment, and Local Economies. For each theme, the Plan contains a list of strategies and some initial priority actions to implement the strategies. In Spring 2024, EMNRD will host a series of Community Conversations in which residents across the state will be able to provide feedback to make the Plan more responsive to their local needs.

How New Mexico engages with disadvantaged and vulnerable communities around disaster and resiliency planning

New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM)

In general, DHSEM coordinates more often State and Tribal entities and with city / municipal and county emergency managers. The agency counts on its city / municipal and county partners to engage directly with local disadvantaged communities, such as those facing higher levels of industrial pollution and poverty as well as other socioeconomic factors. DHSEM also counts on those emergency managers to engage directly with local vulnerable populations, such as people with hearing, vision, or mobility impairments. DHSEM understands that local emergency managers know, and are known by, their communities best. DHSEM does not want to duplicate

the work of local emergency managers. However, DHSEM staff do not track whether those managers reach out to disadvantaged communities or vulnerable populations.

DHSEM does work directly with Tribal entities, and all Tribal lands are considered disadvantaged by US EPA. Tribal staff are invited to attend any of DHSEM's community meetings. In addition, DHSEM has a Tribal Liaison who maintains regular contact with those entities.

During the 2022 wildfires, staff saw that more planning was needed to address the needs of vulnerable communities, such as evacuations for people with hearing, vision, or mobility impairments. Using GIS, DHSEM can map out where people have access and functional needs. But some of that information is difficult to obtain, so DHSEM has worked with selected State agencies to build an internal information base.

DHSEM currently has a contractor reviewing DHSEM's plans and ensuring the utmost compliance with ADA. DHSEM is working with the Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD) to improve access to emergency services. In a collaborative partnership, DOH, DHSEM, and GCD agreed that a one-year Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Coordinator would work for the State of NM to focus on making information accessible through best practices, supported by research. The work of this position is assisting the state of NM to become inclusive of people with disabilities before, during and after a disaster. The collaborative partners agreed to collaborate to determine next steps after June 30th, 2024, when funding expires for the AFN coordinator position.

New Mexico Environment Department (NMED)

During and after disasters, NMED publishes information in local newspapers. In addition, NMED staff personally visit and share information with affected disadvantaged communities. As an example, during and after the Hermits Peak/Calf Canyon wildfire, staff visited community gatherings including resource fairs, social gatherings, and county fire stations. Staff spoke in town squares, on Facebook Live, and on radio programs for rural areas. Staff went in person to disseminate information in a community-friendly way and in the language used locally. They were sometimes accompanied by staff from the Forest Service, or from NM Departments of Agriculture, Health, and/or Human Services. One of NMED's incident response staff members, who participated in many of these actions, is fully bilingual.

For example, after the wildfires that affected Las Vegas, NM, NMED staff from the Hazardous Waste Bureau spoke from the bandstand at the Las Vegas City Fiestas about the debris removal program for disposing of waste materials from the fire.

NMED's Water Protection Division (WPD)

WPD's engagement with disadvantaged and vulnerable communities varies depending on the initiative. For regionalization, these engagement processes are still being thought out because WPD's regionalization program is not yet created. For water reuse regulatory development, rulemaking follows a very specific process outline in WPD's Public Involvement Plan (posted in English and Spanish), which is governed by NMED's Public Involvement Policy.

NMED's Drinking Water Bureau (DWB)

Many of New Mexico's water systems, particularly those in low-income and moderate-income communities, need repairs, upgrades, connections, and/or removal of contaminants. These actions boost community resiliency. DWB reaches out to water systems in low-to-moderate income communities to assist them in identifying and applying for potential funding sources that would provide them with favorable terms for their projects. DWB also assists water systems that are struggling with reporting requirements, as this issue often bars them from receiving funding.

NMED's Environmental Health Division (EHD)

Engaging vulnerable communities in planning is a major priority for EHD, but EHD does not currently systematically do this work. This Division has a grant to engage communities in New Mexico's northwest and southeast regions for a health impact assessment to address emissions caused by oil and gas facilities. EHD is preparing to resubmit a grant that will enable the Division to develop resiliency plans with one dozen health councils statewide and another grant to address resiliency in Rio Arriba County.

EHD is partnering with the NM Alliance of Health Councils on another grant that will allow this Division to address climate resiliency as it pertains to food statewide, through the health councils. All these efforts are short term, and most cover only parts of the State as they are grant funded.

New Mexico Department of Health (DOH)

DOH accesses disadvantaged and vulnerable communities directly. The federal government has provided specific objectives that DOH incorporates into its workplans. Although Health Equity is a new focus, DOH has had an Access and Functional Needs Coordinator whose job description is very similar to the health equity preparedness role. DOH holds an annual summit and brings in those who serve or represent disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. Together they identify ways to better manage services for people with disabilities, communities with Limited English Proficiency, seniors, and low-income communities.

For specific plans and planning processes, DOH identifies and brings in additional groups. For example, DOH holds an annual Tribal preparedness summit. One partner in this summit is the Southern Ute Indian tribe. During the 2015 Gold King Mine spill in Southern Colorado, that tribe

reached out to alert DOH that highly contaminated water was heading toward New Mexico. DOH reached out to NMED and Navajo Nation. The water to San Juan was turned off to reduce the spread of pollution. These protective actions were all accomplished through relationships that had been developed with stakeholders in disadvantaged communities.

Challenges in implementing resiliency plans

New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM)

Local jurisdictions' interpretations of their primary threats may differ from the State's assessment, leading to variations in the thresholds or triggers for those threats. This misalignment can impede the effective implementation of resilience plans in these regions. Therefore, joint planning between state, local, tribal, and territorial entities is crucial to ensure that all perspectives are considered and that resilience plans are comprehensive and effective.

Both at the local and State levels, insufficient staffing poses a barrier to creating and executing the numerous necessary disaster and resilience plans. This staffing issue arises from difficulties in recruiting and retaining personnel, which is exacerbated by the competition with higher-paying salaries offered by private organizations. Additionally, many DHSEM positions require individuals with specialized education and significant experience in disaster management, who can be challenging to find.

Ensuring sufficient time and funding to address priorities continues to be an ongoing focus. DHSEM staff are consistently mindful of the need to balance their time and resources effectively, given the diverse demands they face in completing essential resilience work. Particularly when real-world incidents occur, adjustments may be necessary, sometimes requiring plans to be temporarily paused.

NMED's Drinking Water Bureau (DWB)

Challenges include:

- Aging water system infrastructure and the cost of improvements. New Mexico's water systems often don't have the debt capacity to make small improvements, much less to improve resiliency by addressing potential risks. Smaller water systems have smaller incomes. They are understandably reluctant to take on loans they can't afford to repay, even if the interest rate is 0% and up to 90% of the loan can be forgiven.
- Increases in regulations and reporting make voluntary programs less appealing. DWB has a host of voluntary programs and planning options that often don't get utilized because of the regulatory requirements. Some examples:
 - Source Water Protection Plan
 - American Water Works Association Water Audit
 - Area Wide Optimization Program
 - Asset Management Plan
 - Vulnerability Assessment
 - Cybersecurity Assessments

- Many water systems lack awareness of the topic of resiliency.
- Many water systems lack staff and resources.

NMED's Water Protection Division (WPD)

WPD's climate resiliency efforts center on programs that will support the ability of communities to withstand drought, as well as increased challenges to surface water quality from wildfire impacts, changes in water temperature etc. The scope of potential impacts to surface water quality is so large that funding it and preparing communities for the range of impairment sources are both challenges.

Specific challenges vary depending on the program. Typically for communities that are facing water availability issues – through water reuse or regionalization – the key barriers are securing public funding and government support. Challenges with government support include insufficient resources as well as program or regulatory guidelines that are difficult to comply with.

New Mexico Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD)

Local emergency managers do not have enough awareness of people with disabilities and are not very inclusive of them. At one time, the NM Emergency Managers Association had an Access and Functional Needs Committee, but it has essentially lapsed. Staff from the GCD give presentations at that Association's conferences and to local communities about how to prepare and be inclusive. GCD staff assert that people with disabilities and emergency managers need to talk to each other regularly.

Continued efforts are being made to introduce a whole-community approach in the State through a series of all-day trainings on Emergency Preparedness in various locations in NM (Las Cruces, Taos, Gallup, Roswell, Albuquerque, and possible other locations). Trainings are offered to everyone in the local region, so that opportunities for connections, discussions, awareness, and collaboration can be made between first responders, emergency managers, service providers of people with disabilities, and people with disabilities. The series of trainings are being offered from the perspective of people with disabilities that includes disability awareness, service animals and accessible shelters.

New Mexico Department of Health (DOH)

DOH always faces significant challenges in implementing its resiliency plans. Staffing is one of the biggest. Some mitigation strategies require high-level staff to respond. It is challenging to be able to retain those high-level staff, especially in rural areas but even in Santa Fe. NM DOH lost numerous staff during and after the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, including many to retirement. Staffing has become more challenging over the past few years. Workforce in general is a very large challenge beyond NM DOH and across New Mexico.

DOH's Health Emergency Management program is 100% federally funded. Funding for this program has not increased over the past several years while salaries and operational costs have increased. In real terms, this program now has less money to do its work.

Especially in areas of the state where one person may be doing multiple core service jobs in a small community, people are stretched so thin and wearing so many hats that getting them to do one more thing – related to resiliency – is overwhelming for them.

How ECOS / ASTHO / EPA ORD could connect States and assist with planning for future disasters

New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM)

It would be very helpful to understand how ECOS / ASTHO / EPA ORD do their own planning. So many plans are created, but there is often a disconnect between them. Staff assert that we need to reach out and talk with each other more about our plans, and that we should conduct joint planning between local and State levels and between State and federal levels.

Companies with certain amounts of hazardous materials must send their Tier 2 reports, in compliance with the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), to DHSEM's Preparedness Bureau.

- Does ECOS / ASTHO / EPA ORD have any guidance, such as best practices, on how to collect those reports? For example, is there recommended software through which DHSEM could require companies to submit their reports?
- How could DHSEM best use the collected information to make decisions that are more data-driven?

DHSEM is required to be informed of hazardous materials that are stored within the borders of the state, but the agency is not required to be informed of hazardous materials that pass through NM to another destination.

- Do ECOS / ASTHO / EPA ORD have information on hazardous materials that travel through NM?
- Many organizations have various pieces of that kind of information. How can we know more, collaborate better, and use that information in the best way possible?
- On a related note, DHSEM is working on commodity flow studies, which cover all types of materials (including hazardous) that enter or exit New Mexico. Is there another organization that already has that information? If so, how can we communicate and share better?

New Mexico Environment Department (NMED)

- Find ways to reduce the red tape when a disaster occurs. Minimize response time and get boots on the ground immediately. Go into action right away, then follow up with the paperwork and other administrative processes afterward.
- Lobby legislators as needed to accomplish those changes.

NMED's Drinking Water Bureau (DWB)

ECOS / ASTHO / EPA ORD could provide funding to partner agencies to assist NM's public water systems.

NMED's Environmental Health Division (EHD)

If funding existed that would enable EHD to partner with health councils across the State, EHD would pursue it, especially if it were long term or provided incentives to the State to fund the partnership long term.

It would be helpful if ECOS / ASTHO / EPA ORD could provide best practices, especially for working with disadvantaged and vulnerable communities around environmental health issues in relation to disasters and resiliency.

Also, the 3 organizations could connect NMED's EHD with similar Divisions or Bureaus in other states so that we can learn from each other.

New Mexico Department of Health (DOH)

DOH's Bureau Chief for the Health Emergency Management Bureau is a member of the Directors of Public Health Preparedness group for ASTHO, representing DOH and New Mexico. The group is comprised of high-level preparedness staff from all US states and territories. DOH and other members bring their priorities and ideas to discuss together. The group shares best practices among its members in regular updates. Additional best practices could be helpful.

NMED's Water Protection Division (WPD)

- Provide best practices for developing outreach guidance for communities with small and aging water systems.
- Provide messaging guidance on preparing for future impairments to surface water sources threatened by climate impacts.

List of Contributors

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