

Multicultural Subcommittee of the COVID-19 COMMUNITY TASK FORCE

Meeting Minutes

Friday, May 22, 2020 | 3:00 - 4:00 P.M.

Google Meet | Online

Members: Chair Nubia Peña, Co-Chair Byron Russell, Co-Chair Ze Min Xiao, Jess Anderson, Dr. Marc Babitz, Juan Becerra, Rebecca Chavez-Houck, Mike Haddon, Emma E. Houston, Dustin Jansen, Celina Milner, Dr. Len Novilla, Asha Parekh, Ming Wang, Yehemy Zavala Orozco

Absent: Aden Batar, Silvia Castro, Neelam Chand, Dulce Díez, Jake Fitisemanu Jr., Deneiva Knight, Mikelle Moore, Tami Pyfer

Guests: Joél Arvizo-Zavala, Rozanna Benally-Sagg, Terry Foust, Jenny Hor, Claudia Loayza, Nate McDonald, Katherine Potter, Tinesha Zandamela

Welcome – Byron Russell, Co-Chair

Byron Russell welcomed attendees to the meeting.

Penna Powers Campaign – Nate McDonald

Penna Powers is a local ad agency that the state contracted with to produce mass media campaigns in regards to the pandemic. Their focus is on branding the state's coronavirus website as the main source of information. They work under the direction of the coronavirus task force communications team and the Governor's Office.

The first phase of the media campaign extended from March 16 to May 24 targeting the general public. It included television, streaming services, radio, outdoor media and digital platforms. The second phase is from May 25 to August 30 and will focus on multicultural groups and high risk populations, which includes those over the age of 65. The campaign will specifically prioritize Latino and Spanish-speaking communities because they have mass media channels already built. Grassroots outreach is not part of the campaign efforts but a focus on other cultural groups will be through digital media. The campaign will also be considering multigenerational households because of their close proximity to the high risk population. After August, the state will reevaluate the needs and next steps.

The subcommittee recommended the inclusion of KRCL and Navajo-based radio stations. The coronavirus task force communications team will meet with the Multicultural Subcommittee communications workgroup to further strategize diverse outreach efforts including sharing diverse media contacts.

Utah Department of Workforce Engagement – Nate McDonald

Through federal assistance, the unemployment insurance division of the Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS) has been the primary resource in replacing lost wages. The department made the decision to focus on thoroughly processing claims rather than chasing call wait times, which has resulted in longer holds. In helping community members navigate these challenges, DWS is recruiting native Spanish speakers familiar with their programs and creating a translatable reference sheet for community health workers to provide greater outreach efforts. They are in the process of opening employment centers located in areas in the low-risk, or yellow, phase of the health guidance system. These centers will have a slow rollout to manage social distancing and will require all patrons to wear masks and check for symptoms.

Additionally, DWS was asked to review and shorten the eligibility guidelines and application requirements for various programs. Community members do not apply or finish their applications because of the large undertaking and time constraints. Others are disqualified because they provide incorrect responses based on their limited understanding of the questions being asked. DWS follows federal guidelines in regards to the eligibility criteria and applications but will consider federal waivers and changes made by other states to maximize access to services.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service did not grant Utah a waiver for the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer program but DWS hopes to submit a plan for the upcoming school year. The announcement of the program required the coordination of the department, the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) and local education agencies (LEAs) because the latter two administer programs for free or reduced cost meals. This complicated the process as DWS does not have access to the information collected by USBE or LEAs and a system needs to be built to compile the eligibility requirements, which DWS is working on with the Utah Department of Technology Services.

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Lastly, a Salt Lake County housing entity estimated that 31 percent of applications for funding assistance were from Spanish-speaking families.

Intermountain Healthcare Utah Testing Event – Terry Foust

Intermountain Healthcare hosted a testing event for the Latino and Spanish-speaking communities in Provo and tested symptomatic and asymptomatic persons. They provided outreach within Title I school boundaries and the respective apartment complexes and received referrals from the Utah County Health Department and local safety net clinics. The screening totals and case rates are still pending.

The event was held in partnership with the United Way of Utah County, Centro Hispano, Latinos in Action, Mountainlands Community Health Center, Food and Care Coalition, the Utah County Health Department, Wasatch Behavioral Health, the Provo City Housing Authority and Community Action Services. The latter organization distributed one hundred boxes of food.

Additionally, the event had the capacity to test more people. The group is looking to expand their promotional outreach and provide mobile unit testing in other communities including Ogden.

Communications – Juan Becerra

The goals of the communications workgroup include:

- making information easy to understand;
- reaching various diverse communities;
- centralizing information (e.g. websites, hotlines, chat features);
- engaging in all forms of media with subject matter experts for those who lack digital literacy;
- producing translated information in a timely and efficient manner;
- using emergency channels to connect with hard to reach populations;
- creating a list of talking points for consistent messaging; and
- supporting the other workgroups with their communication needs.

They will finish an interfaith public service announcement and will focus more heavily on reaching Native populations next week.

Funding Request – Byron Russell, Co-Chair

The subcommittee will submit a formal budget request to the Governor's Office for funding opportunities on June 1. This will also include requests from the workgroup leads. If approved, the subcommittee will tentatively split the finances in the form of grants for community-based organizations, innovative projects developed by the workgroups and a leading donation to the Community Foundation of Utah to encourage corporations and philanthropic foundations to match the state's grant. Funding must be used by December 31.

In providing resources for undocumented populations, the subcommittee hopes to direct funding in other ways. These include granting funds to external partners and receiving funding from the private sector through the Community Foundation of Utah initiative.

Other Business

UC Berkeley developed a heat map focusing on the racial disparities in COVID-19 rates of infection in the U.S. A lower ranking indicated fewer disparities and vice versa. Utah ranked 40 out of 46 states measured.

The subcommittee sent formal invitations to organizations interested in partnering. Those who accept will form the resource partner coalition.

Action Items

- Claudia Loayza will send Nate McDonald a list of diverse media contacts.
- Nate McDonald will email the subcommittee a list of opened employment centers.
- Juan Becerra will forward a media request made by a member of the Latino member to Nubia Peña.

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- Nubia Peña, in collaboration with Comunidades Unidas, the Utah Department of Health Office of Health Disparities and Intermountain Healthcare, will create talking points for the Latino media in addressing the population's higher rates of COVID-19 cases.
- Workgroup leads will submit a brief report on their efforts by June 1.

Next Steps

The resource partner coalition town hall is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, June 18, 2020.

Next Meeting

Friday, June 5, 2020 from 3-4 P.M. through Google Meet with updates from:

- Health access
- Digital equity
- Economic sustainability