



ALIGNING OUR AGRIFUTURE

AUGUST 2020 REPORT



THANK YOU

Imagine the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque and New Mexico State University leveraged existing agricultural relationships to build an expanded, strategic partnership--what does that look like?

This appreciative question is what set us on a collaborative journey that started with a conversation in 2018. In July 2019, supported by a generous grant from the Thornburg Foundation, we began leveraging assets within agricultural networks to collectively move to the next level of performance.

As partners, NMSU and the Village of Los Ranchos realized the benefit of leveraging the growing “agriburbia” movement taking place across the U.S. by fostering multigenerational, community-driven programs that embody the agriculture of the future. **The heart of the project is to build trust within loosely connected local, regional, and state networks, then leverage those networks to create collaborative action. This collaborative actions supports community and economic development by developing capacity for leadership and advocacy.**

On August 19, 2019, we held the kick-off event for Aligning Our AgriFuture at the Larry P. Abraham Agri-Nature Center in the Village of Los Ranchos. The first event attracted 45 attendees who represented a network of community members, non-profits, volunteers, Master Gardeners, Cooperative Extension Service, K-12 schools, universities, businesses, local and state government, industry, and subject matter experts. Over the course of the year, we held five more convenings (two virtual) with a vibrant community of over 100 participants, representing more than 60 organizations. And the project continues to grow.

The Village of Los Ranchos is continuing Aligning Our AgriFuture as a nexus of engagement for volunteer networks, multigenerational teaching and learning, agritourism, and collaborative economic development. We wish to thank New Mexico State University, the Village of Los Ranchos, Thornburg Foundation, and all Aligning Our AgriFuture participants and leaders. A special thanks to Mayor Donald T. Lopez for his steadfast commitment and warm encouragement throughout this journey.



Lauren Goldstein, PhD
Organizational Development
Specialist, NMSU

Lauren Goldstein



Fergus Whitney
Agricultural Program Manager,
Village of Los Ranchos

Fergus Whitney

Photos in this report were taken between June 2019 and February 2020.

“Small-scale agriculture is defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in terms of gross cash farm income, with small-scale farms earning under \$350,000 annually. In the Village of Los Ranchos, the term generally means practicing agriculture on one acre of land or less.”

-Village of Los Ranchos 2035 Master Plan

“The Aligning Our AgriFuture project made an immediate impact on how we actively implement our long-term strategies for sustainable agriculture in the Village. We’ve reached goals and flown past milestones because the collaboration lets us move at the speed of trust.”

-Donald T. Lopez, Mayor of Los Ranchos and NMSU College of Engineering Alumni

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque was incorporated in 1958 from a desire for preservation of a rural lifestyle with open fields, unencumbered views and active cultivation of the land. Sixty-two years later, the Village is expanding that vision by establishing their community as a center for urban agriculture.

The Village’s 2035 Master Plan for Agriculture, updated with public input in 2019, clearly articulates the community’s intentional goals and provides a framework from which to begin strategic collaboration.

NMSU’s partnership is a natural fit as a land-grant university, and leverages existing Los Ranchos/NMSU relationships such as the statewide Cooperative Extension Service (**extension.nmsu.edu**), whose Bernalillo County agents teach nearly 20 workshops every year at the Larry P. Abraham Agri-Nature Center in Los Ranchos. Cooperative Extension provides the people of New Mexico with practical, research-based knowledge and programs to improve their quality of life.

Bernalillo County CES workshops include topics such as:

- Spring/Winter Gardening
- Cover Crops
- Soil Management
- Vertebrate Pest Control
- Grape Vine and Fruit Tree Pruning
- Diagnosing Plant Diseases and Disorders
- Pollinator Habitats
- Livestock Care: Peri-Urban Area
- Composting Basics



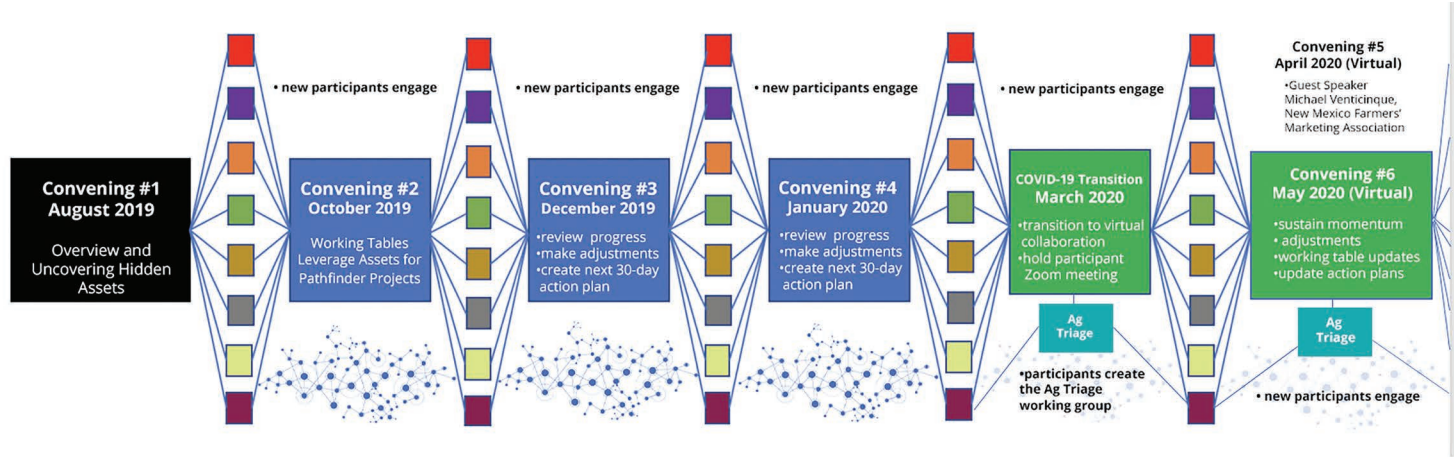
John Garlisch, Bernalillo County Cooperative Extension Agent (4-H/ Natural Resources) leads the “Community Connections” table at Aligning Our AgriFuture Convening #3, hosted by project collaborator Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque (December 2019).

Photos in this report were taken between June 2019 and February 2020.

ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS



Leveraging Assets to Create New Opportunities: Strategic Doing is a process that provides a system for forming quick collaborations and moving those collaborations directly to action and implementation. The process leverages loosely-connected networks of people and their assets--social, physical, skills, and capital. It provides a dynamic, action-based process that allows for new participants to engage at any time.



The 8 colorful networked boxes in the chart above represent a core team, new participants, and 6 working tables.

Funded by a generous grant from the Thornburg Foundation, NMSU and the Village of Los Ranchos hosted six convenings and networked dozens of smaller, connected meetings to bring stakeholder voices together in a facilitated, collaborative process called Strategic Doing. Participants in Aligning Our AgriFuture represent: Los Ranchos and ABQ metro area community members; K-12 programs; small-scale farmers and producers; businesses; non-profits; subject matter experts and advocates; universities; and local and state governments.

ALIGNING ASSETS

Working Groups

Each convening was designed to allow participation from new collaborators, and also to allow people to adjust their level of engagement in natural ebbs and flows. Strong leaders emerged at each working table. They helped keep momentum going between convenings by coordinating and communicating with participants.

Working groups, aligned with goals from the Village of Los Ranchos 2035 Master Plan for Agriculture, used the appreciative framing question below to start to align their existing assets to create new opportunities. These working groups created an enhanced capacity for advocacy and leadership at the local level.

Imagine we aligned our assets and strengthened our networks to...



Caption: A student participates in Albuquerque Public Schools' School Garden program at Lew Wallace Elementary.

Kateri Sava, APS Garden Specialist, is an engaged project collaborator in the Education and Youth working group.

Visit the APS School Gardens program page: www.aps.edu/coordinated-school-health/school-gardens.

Education and Youth:

...pursue a multigenerational approach to agriculture through continuing education and youth involvement...

Next Generation:

...engage developing and established small-scale farmers and educators to continue generational legacy in New Mexico agriculture...

AgriTourism:

...elevate agriculture as a component of economic development through outreach activities, entertainment, hospitality, and direct sales...

Farming Resiliency:

...encourage the adoption of newer forms of agriculture, techniques, infrastructure, and water conservation...

Community Connections:

...build relationships within the wider community to create new opportunities...

Crops and Orchards:

...cultivate farm-industry best practices and information-sharing for production efficiencies and mutual benefits...

...What does that look like?

UNIVERSITY OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

The mission of the New Mexico State University system is to serve the diverse needs of the state through comprehensive programs of education, research, extension and outreach, and public service. As the state’s land-grant and space-grant university, and as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, NMSU fosters learning, inquiry, diversity and inclusion, social mobility, and service to the broader community.

Four strategic goals outlined in NMSU LEADS 2025, the university’s strategic plan, reflect the university’s mission and vision and are vital to NMSU’s success. These include advancing student success; elevating research and creativity; amplifying extension and outreach; and building a robust NMSU system.

Aligning Our AgriFuture fully embodies LEADS 2025 Goal 3: Amplify Extension and Outreach

- **Objective 3.1:** Be a leader in place-based innovation and in economic and community development
- **Objective 3.4:** Strengthen and elevate public-private engagement
- **Objective 3.5:** Amplify Cooperative Extension and outreach programs and services to increase support for businesses, individuals, and communities

“The Aligning our AgriFuture project is reflective of the multi-dimensional collaborations that NMSU is working to foster across the state and region to grow a diverse and robust economy.”

-Patricia A. Sullivan, PhD, Associate Dean of Engineering and Director, Office of Strategic Initiatives, New Mexico State University.



Project partner Engineering New Mexico Resource Network at NMSU is another statewide resource that leverages a network of industry, community, and academic partners to improve the quality of life, promote economic development, and enhance educational systems. engrnm.nmsu.edu

AMPLIFYING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As a result of the early success of Aligning Our AgriFuture, NMSU has leveraged the opportunity to scale the Strategic Doing process through its statewide community-facing outreach and economic development programs, including statewide efforts to grow a Clean Energy Economy, and offerings for business development and entrepreneurship. The images below illustrate workshops that took place in Fall 2019 and Spring 2020.

Another notable outcome of the Aligning Our AgriFuture project is a partnership between the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (IPCC), Roanhorse Consulting and NMSU Arrowhead Center. The partnership held a convening in February 2020 at IPCC in Albuquerque to bring together service providers, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders to link, leverage, and align existing resources to support the successful rollout of the Indian Pueblo Opportunity Center (IPOC) in 2021. IPOC is an inclusive Native American makerspace and business incubator that will serve members of the 19 Pueblos of New Mexico, along with non-Native community members, who are interested in starting businesses in the areas of agriculture, food-based production, and other creative industries including jewelry and pottery.



Taos, December 2019
Arrowhead Community Entrepreneurship Program



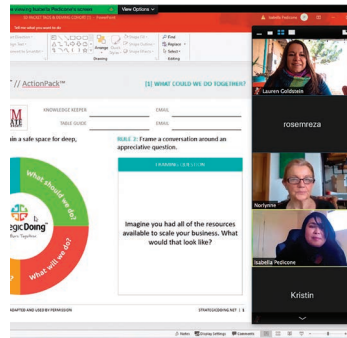
Las Vegas, January 2020
Arrowhead AgSprint Program Outreach



Deming, Feb 2020
Arrowhead Community Entrepreneurship Program



Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, February 2020
Indian Pueblo Opportunity Center Network Development



Zoom (Virtual), March 2020
Arrowhead Center BizSprint Program

OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS

A landscape of collaboration with multiple levels of engagement.

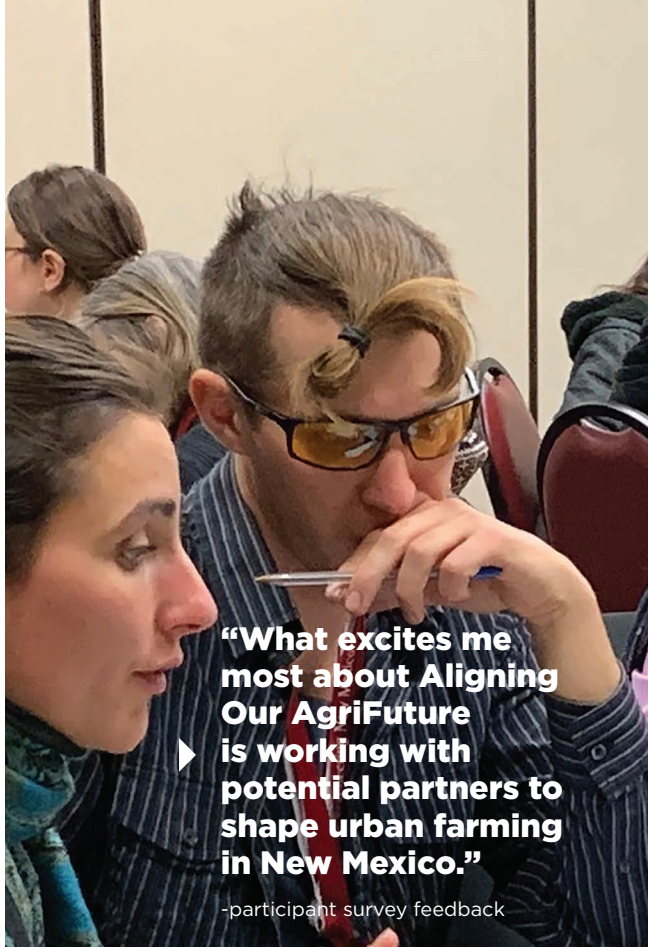
- partnership collaboration with New Mexico First leadership
- partnership collaboration with Indian Pueblo Cultural Center leadership
- full-time administrative assistant position created at Larry P. Abraham AgriNature Center
- enhanced relationship between the AgriNature Center and Rio Grande Community Farm, including framework for a shared farm equipment agreement
- enhanced agricultural network between Village of Los Ranchos and Village of Corrales
- reorganization of Los Ranchos Agriculture Committee to support project continuity
- community leader and dedicated project participant established as facilitator for Aligning Our AgriFuture Phase II
- ABQ Public Schools School Garden Conference and Virtual Binder
- ABQ BioPark and Conservation Corps clearing of AgriNature fields post-harvest
- \$10K follow-on funding from Albuquerque Community Foundation to build out cold storage in shipping container for urban gardening education at AgriNature Center
- joint grant proposal submissions between Explora/Los Ranchos Elementary/Mandy’s Farm
- Bernalillo County Master Gardeners and Trees New Mexico orchard collaboration
- Steel Bender Brewery and NMSU Pollution Prevention and Energy Efficiency program relationship
- a Strategic Doing session with Indian Pueblo Cultural Center/ Indian Pueblo Opportunity Center
- implementation of community survey on COVID-19-related needs and subsequent action plans
- increase in offerings in Cooperative Extension Service classes at AgriNature Center
- private and federal joint grant proposal submissions between new project networks
- increase in shared volunteer networks between participants
- increase in trust in collaborative networks as evidenced by exponential community participation



Lauren Goldstein, project facilitator, gives an overview to participants at Convening #1 at the Larry P. Abraham Agri-Nature Center.



Aligning Our AgriFuture successfully transitioned to a digital space in March 2020 after the onset of COVID-19. The Village of Los Ranchos continues to coordinate with participants for Phase II of the project.



“What excites me most about Aligning Our AgriFuture is working with potential partners to shape urban farming in New Mexico.”

-participant survey feedback

Aligning Our AgriFuture Participants:

104 unique participants representing 64 affiliations constituted a total attendance of 265 across six project convenings.



“Although I was connected with many folks through my position outside of the convenings, Aligning our Agrifuture has allowed me to have honest conversations with partners interested in increasing youth engagement to agriculture especially in Los Ranchos.”

-participant survey feedback



Kids create their own acequia systems at summer 2019 iExplora! Farm Camp at the Agri-Nature Center.

iExplora! is an engaged Aligning Our AgriFuture project collaborator.

Visit iExplora! at www.explora.us.

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN

Aligning Our AgriFuture Project Participants

- AgrAbility
- AgriCultura Network
- Albuquerque Public Schools School Garden Program
- Bernalillo County Master Gardeners
- Bluefly Farms
- Brawley and Company
- Burque Bee Farms
- Chispas Farm
- City of Albuquerque, ABQ BioPark
- City of Albuquerque, City Forester
- City of Albuquerque, Open Space
- Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District
- College of Santa Fe
- Creative Startups
- Crossed Sabers Hop Company
- DKD Engineering, Inc.
- iExplora!
- Food is Free Albuquerque
- Grow the Growers
- HorseSense
- Independent and Local Landowners
- Independent Volunteers
- Indian Pueblo Cultural Center
- Jenifer Romero Consulting
- Kauffman Forward Cities
- Lazy JJ's Farm/George I. Sanchez Collaborative School
- Loose Leaf Farm
- Los Poblanos Historic Inn & Organic Farm
- Los Ranchos Elementary/Code of the West
- Los Ranchos Growers' Market
- Los Ranchos Schulte House Project
- Mandy's Farm
- New Mexico Ag in the Classroom
- New Mexico Department of Agriculture
- New Mexico Department of Public Safety, Cabinet Secretary
- New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau
- New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association
- New Mexico First
- New Mexico Fresh Foods
- New Mexico Healthy Soil Working Group
- New Mexico Hops Growers Association
- New Mexico Tourism Department
- NMSU Bernalillo County Cooperative Extension Service
- NMSU College of Engineering
- NMSU Engineering New Mexico Resource Network
- North Valley Academy
- Office of Senator Tom Udall, Field Representative
- Office of Senator Tom Udall, Special Projects Coordinator
- Plant for the Planet
- RCJ Orchard, LLC
- Red Hat Hops, LLC
- Rio Grande Community Farm
- SouthWest Organizing Project
- The Montibon Company
- Thornburg Foundation
- University of New Mexico Sustainability Studies
- Village of Corrales, Farmland Preservation & Agricultural Commission
- Village of Corrales, Mayor
- Village of Los Ranchos, Fourth Street Improvement Project
- Village of Los Ranchos, Agriculture Committee
- Village of Los Ranchos, Lavender in the Village
- Village of Los Ranchos, Planning and Zoning
- Village of Los Ranchos, Mayor, Trustee, and Village Administrator
- Warrior Farmer Project
- World Alliance for the Volunteer Economy

“Agriculture is an important section in Vision 2035 (the Village of Los Ranchos Master Plan) and is also interwoven throughout the plan. I was excited to see such quick turnaround implementing action, and appreciated how closely the AOA project tied with the goals we identified in Vision 2035. The close ties to the long-range Vision 2035 Strategic Plan and with Village staff in multiple departments meant that AOA really was a partnership rooted in the Village.”

-Tiffany Justice, Village of Los Ranchos Planning & Zoning Director

No Thornburg Foundation funds were contributed to any candidate for elective office of a government entity, contributed to a political party, or used for lobbying purposes under Internal Revenue Service definitions.
Photos in this report were taken between June 2019 and February 2020.

NEXT STEPS



- To subscribe to email updates from the **Larry P. Abraham Agri-Nature Center**, contact **Sabrina Apodaca, Administrative Assistant**, sapodaca@losranchosnm.gov, (505) 355-1462 and visit the **Agri-Nature Center on Facebook**.
- To learn how to get involved with the Aligning Our AgriFuture project, contact **Fergus Whitney, Village of Los Ranchos Agricultural Program Manager**, fwhitney@losranchosnm.gov, (505) 344-6582
- To see all upcoming events, webinars, and classes offered by NMSU Bernalillo County Cooperative Extension, visit bernalilloextension.nmsu.edu
- To learn more about Strategic Doing at New Mexico State University, visit nmsu-engineering.zohobackstage.com/StrategicDoing.
- To explore the vibrant Village of Los Ranchos visit losranchosnm.gov



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