



A group of project participants on a walk during the 2023 annual retreat, Sevilleta, New Mexico.

***Scaling Up New Mexico's
Value Chain Coordination Network
Final Review Report
October 2024***

Scaling Up New Mexico's Value Chain Coordination Network was a project funded by the United States Department of Agriculture through an Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Regional Food System Partnership (RFSP) grant that was led by the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association.



Final review and report were prepared and produced by Juan Abeyta & Bryan Crawford-Garrett.

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Unfortunately, we lost our lead evaluator, Christina Keibler, during the pandemic. She had established the data management plan and evaluation strategy for the project, and we conduct this work in her honor. We would like to recognize the University of New Mexico Evaluation Lab, specifically Dr. Melissa Binder and graduate researcher Natasha Davalos, as well as Bryan Crawford-Garrett and Juan Abeyta of the project Evaluation Hub for their contributions to the ongoing assessments and sharing of results with project partners which guided our actions.

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Finally, we want to recognize Denise Miller, Executive Director of the New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association, for her leadership in bringing together so many players in our food system to build stronger networks for a healthier New Mexico.

Executive Summary

The “Scaling Up New Mexico’s Value Chain Coordination Network” (*Scaling Up*) project ran from October 2020 until October 2024 and was led by the New Mexico Farmers’ Marketing Association (NMFMA). *Scaling Up* aimed to cultivate a more supportive, collaborative and resilient local value chain coordination ecosystem through helping food hubs and the producers they work with access expanding institutional market opportunities, increasing consumer demand for local food, and improving partner stability and operational capacity through shared resources, tools, and knowledge. Project participants included “Transactional Partners,” defined as food hubs and other entities involved in making food transactions, and “Support Partners,” which were state agency representatives, institutional procurement buyers, technical service providers, and other organizations involved in local food value chains. Over the course of the project, more than 80 individuals from nearly 40 partner organizations participated. *Scaling Up* utilized a Collective Impact process and structure to foster collaboration and inclusive systems change. This included utilizing a team group structure to work collaboratively on common project priorities and activities. Project participants self-selected which work team(s) to engage with. In addition to work teams, a Backbone Team, a Support Team, a Leadership Team, and an Evaluation Hub were established.

This final project review is meant to: i) document project processes and accomplishments; ii) present evidence of changes and results associated with project processes, workstreams, and activities; and iii) reflect on lessons learned and implications for the future. The review thus focuses on *what* was achieved; *how* it was achieved; and *what was learned* during the process. Findings presented are linked directly to data collected through the project and/or observation of project activities.

As the full report will show, the project met or exceeded nearly all of the quantitative targets that were set at the beginning of the grant. While it is important to acknowledge that there were several other contributing factors to obtaining these results, the project certainly succeeded in meeting or exceeding the vast majority of planned quantitative aims. Many of the indicators focused on numerical measures such as institutional purchases, hub sales and customer counts, numbers of partner food hubs offering different services, producers gaining knowledge in food safety, etc. In addition, the vast majority of partners reported experiencing various improvements in their work as a result of the project, as 90% of Support Partners and 84% of Transactional Partners reported improvements in stability and operational capacity across the two years this was assessed. Moreover, as a direct result of their organizations’ participation in the project, 75% of participants noted they had more dialogue on addressing community needs, 69% said they collaborated more with others to address systemic change, and 65% reported receiving strong peer support. This was demonstrated through the sharing and receiving of operational resources as well as through the sharing of human capital in technical knowledge and skills, communication, and support services, among others. Project participants also reported that they developed professional relationships and trust between new individuals and organizations enabling broader collaboration on issues affecting their roles in the food system in New Mexico.

Scaling Up was not, however, without its challenges, including the project operating within a broader context of historical inequities and distrust in New Mexico food systems, and the challenges of (re)building trust and relationships in a collaborative approach in this context. Inconsistent participation in the project team structures was also a challenge that resulted from organizational capacity constraints, staff turnover, time availability, varying levels of trust among participants, and competing priorities. Another considerable challenge the project faced related to the immense logistical barriers in transporting and distributing food to remote communities across the state. The project developed mechanisms for addressing the key challenges while also recognizing the long-term nature of systems change.

According to participants, *Scaling Up* fostered a deeper understanding of local food systems, including its history, landscape, and equity issues, all of which seem to contribute to a more resilient value chain coordination ecosystem. Given the decades of meaningful work to foster equitable and resilient food systems that preceded this project and the efforts that are sure to come in future years, it is important to consider what components of *Scaling Up* are expected to live beyond the life of the grant.

At this time, this includes the following project elements or structures:

- Newly developed or strengthened **collaborations, partnerships, and relationships** among key value chain actors in the local food system
- Concrete **capacities and skills** built and/or strengthened as well as **resources shared** between project participants
- A [New Mexico Local Food Commitment](#), a set of shared values and guiding principles developed by participants designed to be incorporated into future values-based institutional procurement work
- Several **important work streams** that will continue in various iterations:
 - **New Mexico Grown** Work Team activities, which will be subsumed under the work of the [New Mexico Grown Coalition](#);
 - An interim **sales broker** hired during the Transactional Hub Pilot project will continue to provide services between producers and buyers;
 - **Hub coordination** on areas and issues of common interest such as distribution routes, intra-hub sales, etc.;
 - The **Local Food Data Portal** will continue to be developed via the NMFMA, its data analytics partner, and institutional buyers;
 - **Middle of the value chain collaboration and investment** through the [New Mexico Economic Development Department's Food, Hunger, and Agricultural Program](#);
 - Extended **collaboration between RFSP partner organizations and NM's Office of the Governor's Food and Hunger Advisor**;
 - **Food safety and quality topics** that were led by the Food Quality Work Team will be transitioned to the NM Food Safety Community of Practice;
 - The **Evaluation** Hub will transition into the NMFMA's Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, and Learning efforts; *Scaling Up* reports will be made available on the [NMFMA's Research & Evaluation webpage](#).

I. Introduction

This report provides a final review of the “Scaling Up New Mexico’s Value Chain Coordination (NM-VCC) Network” (*Scaling Up*) project, which ran from October 2020 through September 2024. The project was led by the New Mexico Farmers’ Marketing Association (NMFMA) and included funding of nearly \$1 million from the United States Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Marketing Service through a Regional Food System Partnership (RFSP) grant, and approximately \$260,000 through a private foundation. Project partners included “Transactional Partners” (TPs), defined as food hubs and other entities involved in making food transactions, and Support Partners (SPs), which were state agency representatives, institutional procurement buyers, technical service providers, and other organizations involved in local food value chains. Over the course of the project, more than 80 individuals from nearly 40 partner organizations participated.

The overall project goal was “*to increase access for small and mid-size producers to new market opportunities, and to provide increased consumer access to healthy local food, especially for lower-income residents.*” This goal was to be achieved through the following objectives and outcomes:

Scaling Up Objectives:

- *Objective 1:* Increase consistent market opportunities and sales for small and midsize growers by at least \$1.8M (52% total increase) by 2023.
- *Objective 2:* Increase consumer demand for locally grown food, including by lower-income populations as indicated by at least a \$200,000 increase (20%+ total increase over 3 years) of SNAP/Double Up Food Bucks spending by 2023 (up from \$968,643 in 2019).
- *Objective 3:* Improve the stability and operational capacity of at least 75% of the Value Chain Coordination Enterprise Transactional Partners and 90% of the Support Partners through the development of shared resources, tools, and knowledge by 2023.

Scaling Up Outcomes:

- *Outcome 1:* To Increase Consumption of and Access to Locally and Regionally Produced Agricultural Products.
- *Outcome 2:* To Increase Customers and Sales of Local and Regional Agricultural Products.
- *Outcome 3:* To Develop New Market Opportunities for Farm and Ranch Operations Serving Local Markets.
- *Outcome 4:* To Improve the Food Safety of Locally and Regionally Produced Agricultural Products.
- *Outcome 6:* To Increase Capacity and Efficiency of the Local or Regional Food System.
- *Outcome 7:* To increase the resources and tools used by the NM-VCC Network Professionals to make their work more efficient and productive.

Scaling Up utilized a collective impact process and structure to foster collaboration and inclusive systems change. Dynamic governance was employed for decision-making.

After the introduction, the report proceeds as follows: Section II presents the scope of this review while Section III provides context and background for the project. Section IV summarizes project approaches, processes, structure, and accomplishments; Section V presents project results and outcomes as compared to planned targets; and Section VI concludes with a discussion of key challenges, lessons learned, and implications for the future. An appendix is also included with links to additional project resources and data.

II. Scope of Final Review

The purpose of the *Scaling Up* final review is to: i) document project processes and accomplishments; ii) present evidence of changes and results associated with project processes, workstreams, and activities; and iii) reflect on lessons learned and implications for the future. In this way, the review looks at achievements and challenges of the project and provides suggestions for future similar types of programs.

The review is guided by the following questions:

- To what extent did the project meet planned goals, objectives, and expected outcomes?
- How effective were the project processes that were used and structures that were put in place?
- How was Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) integrated into the project?
- How did the project incorporate monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning?
- To what degree has the project interacted with, influenced, and contributed to broader efforts to address systemic issues in New Mexico's local food systems?
- What project elements are likely to last beyond the life of the project?

In short, the review focuses on *what* was achieved; *how* it was achieved; and *what was learned* during the process. Findings presented are linked directly to data collected through the project and/or observation of project activities. The review was led by the project Evaluation Hub leadership, which included the NMFMA's Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning Lead and the Project Facilitation and Evaluation Consultant (contracted by the NMFMA). It is important to note that these two individuals also participated in various project structures and led or co-led certain project activities. In this way, the review team brings a significant amount of knowledge about the project but does not bring external objectivity to this review.

III. Context

The RFSP grant awarded to the NMFMA was funded through the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service during their inaugural Regional Food System Partnerships round of funding in Fiscal Year 2020. A total of \$9.33 million was granted by the USDA to 23 projects across the country that year in two project categories: Planning & Design (13 funded projects), and Implementation & Expansion (10 funded projects). *Scaling Up* was an Implementation & Expansion project designed to "strengthen successful public and private collaborations of New Mexico Value Chain Coordination Entities (VCCEs) in order to develop the long-term economic viability of the state's agriculture producers, while providing increased consumer access to healthy, local food, especially for

lower-income populations.”¹ To achieve project objectives and outcomes, *Scaling Up* aimed to improve shared resources and reduce administrative and technical barriers for those participating in the project’s collaborative structure.

A Collective Impact process was built into *Scaling Up* from the outset as it seemed to be an appropriate way to address the challenges the project sought to take on. In recent years Collective Impact has become a popular model for addressing systems-based issues, including within food systems.² The model is based on five main strategies: developing and utilizing a common agenda; implementing mutually reinforcing activities; continuous communication; shared measurement; and having backbone support to coordinate the work. Recent experiences with Collective Impact have also emphasized the importance of a flexible and adaptive - rather than rigid - approach.³

Structuring work through collaborative networks - via Collective Impact or other processes - is also increasingly common in food systems work. For example, there are food hub networks that have been established in several states or regions across the country, and these networks support a range of activities such as information sharing, coordinating hub-to-hub transactions, peer support, seeking funding or capital, etc. Importantly, many hub networks seem to be going beyond just sharing information to higher levels of collaboration that provide mutual benefits.⁴ Food system networks in other parts of the world are often organized through Multi Stakeholder Platforms (MSPs), which are formed with stakeholders across various food system sectors who come together to address particular challenges of common interest. MSPs are based on long-term relationships, knowledge exchange, and sharing risks and benefits. One of the critiques of MSPs to date, however, is that there are not as many platforms that have focused on transportation and distribution - i.e., the middle of the supply chain.⁵

For all of these types of networks, sustainability and securing financial resources to maintain them are serious challenges. Measurement of network collaboration can also be difficult. For *Scaling Up*, the project’s Evaluation Hub led a participatory process with participants to define how to measure the project objective of improving the stability and operational capacity of partners. This resulted in shared definitions of “organizational stability,” “operational capacity,” and “sharing of resources, tools, and knowledge” across several relevant categories, which is explained further in Section IV.D.

¹ For more information about the first round of USDA RFSP grants, please see:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/RegionalFoodSystemPartnershipsProgramDescriptionofFunds2020.pdf>

² Hoey, L., Colasanti, K., Pirog, R., & Fink Shapiro, L. (2017). Implementing Collective Impact for food systems change: Reflections and adaptations from Michigan. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 7(2), 101-115. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2017.072.014>

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems. *In It Together: Examining the Role of Food Hub Networks in Supporting Hub-to-Hub Collaborations*.

⁵ Owili, J., Pittore, K., & Likoko, E. (2021). *Multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) and food systems policies in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Vietnam; Mapping of MSPs and policies to promote a shift towards a food system framing for healthier diets*. Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, Wageningen University & Research. Report WCDI-21-156. Wageningen.

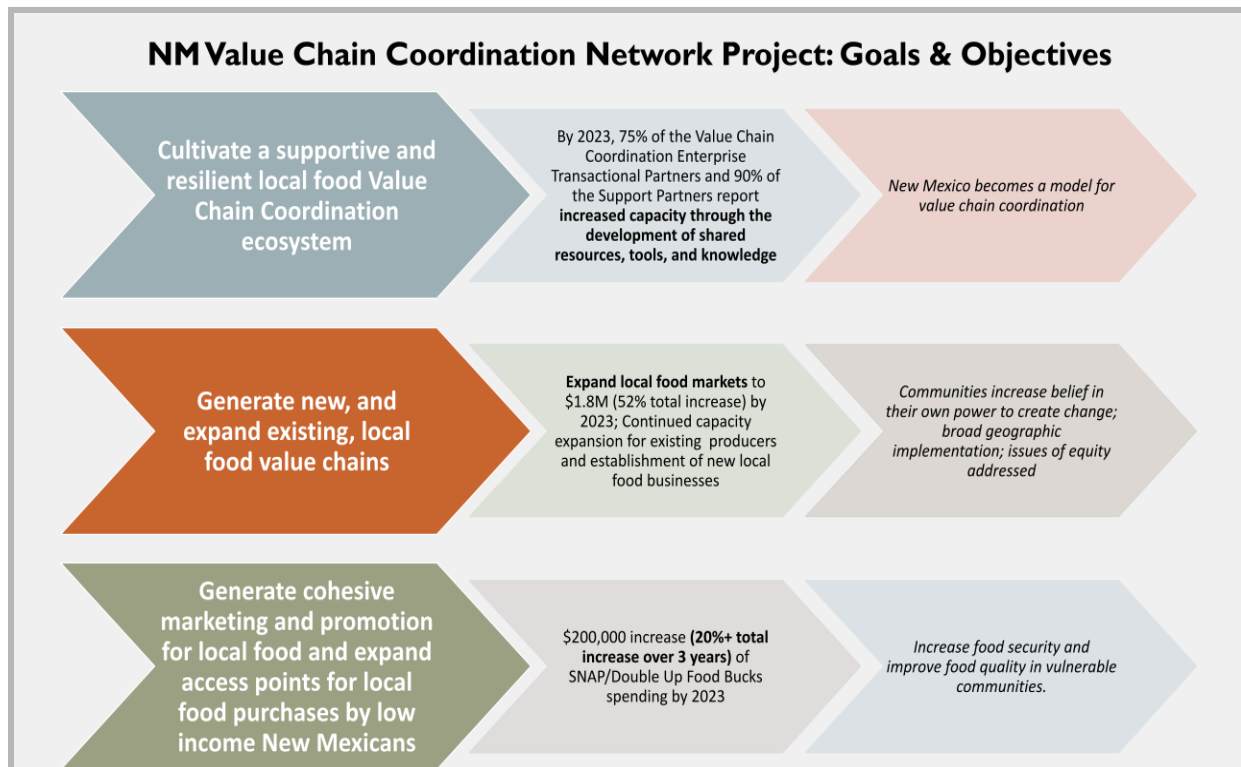
It is additionally important to note that *Scaling Up* start-up was delayed by COVID-19, as project partners were working around the clock to attempt to respond to the myriad food system challenges brought on by the pandemic. At the same time, *Scaling Up* has benefited from the significant investments in local food systems made by the State of New Mexico and the federal government over the past several years. In particular, Governor Michelle Lujan-Grisham’s *Food Initiative* was initiated in 2022 and is a comprehensive commitment from the State to building a robust food system that measurably reduces hunger and improves equitable access to nutritious, culturally meaningful foods for all New Mexicans. New Mexico Grown - the state’s farm to institution local procurement program - is a key part of the *Food Initiative* and provides a reliable and growing source of demand for local food. Over a 5-year period, NM Grown has gone from a market of approximately \$525,000 for local institutional food purchase in FY21 to a projected \$5.1 million market in FY25, representing an extremely important market opportunity for food hubs and other local producers to tap into. The operating context for the project was therefore shaped by both historic food system disruption and unprecedented resources for and prioritization of strengthening local food systems.

IV. Project Approaches, Processes, Structure, & Accomplishments

A. Logic Model

During the start-up phase of *Scaling Up*, participating partners developed an overall logic model for the project, as well as logic models for each of the three objectives. These are presented here.

Overall Logic Model:



Logic Model for Objective 1, Increase consistent market opportunities and sales for small and midsize growers

NM Value Chain Coordination Network Project: Logic Model					
Strategic Action	Steps	Inputs	Outputs	Near-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
Generate new, and expand existing, local food value chains.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Establish baselines •Build relationships •Identify gaps in representation •Identify and develop market opportunities •Decolonize processes/ resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Admin & Support Teams •Working Groups •Existing value chain partners •New value chain partners •Existing organizational funding/ resources •New funding opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Increased number and depth of relationships and transactions between producers and buyers (including Institutions, grocery stores, and CSAs) •Inclusive processes •Improved and expanded access to infrastructure (transportation, storage, distribution, etc.) •Additional funding/resources for bridging gaps. 	Expand market yield \$1.8M (52% total increase) by 2023; Continued capacity expansion for existing producers and establishment of new local food businesses.	<i>Communities increase belief in their own power to create change; broad geographic implementation; issues of equity addressed</i>

Logic Model for Objective 2, Increase consumer demand for locally grown food, including by lower-income populations

NM Value Chain Coordination Network Project: Logic Model					
Strategic Action	Steps	Inputs	Outputs	Near-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
Generate cohesive marketing and promotion for local food (including Double Up, WIC, Senior FMNP) and develop/ expand access points for local food purchases by low income New Mexicans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Establish baselines •Develop systems for tracking sales •Identify and generate synergistic marketing opportunities •Share existing resources/tools and maximize impact. •Identify and address gaps in local food access for low income New Mexicans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Admin & Support Teams •Working Group •Existing individual VCCE marketing resources and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Marketing and promotion plans and tactical tools. •More/expanded local food offerings in low-income communities and outlets. •Additional funding and resources for ongoing work. 	<i>\$200,000 increase (20%+ total increase over 3 years) of SNAP/Double Up Food Bucks spending by 2023</i>	<i>Increase food security and improve food quality in vulnerable communities within NM.</i>

Logic Model for Objective 3, Improve the stability and operational capacity of TPs and SPs

NM Value Chain Coordination Network Project: Logic Model					
Strategic Action	Steps	Inputs	Outputs	Near-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
Cultivate a supportive and resilient local food Value Chain Coordination ecosystem.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Establish baselines •Onboard VCCE partners •Trainings •Asset mapping •Establish shared values and language •Develop value chain metrics •Identify and address gaps in resiliency at different levels of VC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Admin & Support Teams •Working Groups •Existing expertise •Outside experts •Databases and other tech solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Baseline data •Work plans for each Work Team •Slack for communications •Shared Value Statement •Process protocols 	By 2023, 75% of the Value Chain Coordination Enterprise Transactional Partners and 90% of the Support Partners report increased capacity through the development of shared resources, tools, and knowledge.	<i>New Mexico becomes a model for value chain coordination.</i>

B. Use of Collective Impact & Dynamic Governance

A food system consists of a complex and diverse network of actors. Attempting systems change within that sector requires a framework that can effectively engage participants in a process to achieve outcomes. The Collective Impact process is designed to foster collaboration and be inclusive and equitable while addressing change.

Scaling Up established the Collective Impact process as the fundamental guide for implementing the project goals. The Collective Impact structure was therefore used to engage project participants into self-identified work teams. Sociocracy, also referred to as Dynamic Governance, was the decision-making process employed. The process was intended to establish a culture of collective problem-solving. The success of a collective impact initiative is as much about the relationships and trust among the individuals and organizations involved as it is about creating the conditions to enable and support collaboration.

All project participants received training in Dynamic Governance and the Collective Impact frameworks. In addition, there was ongoing emphasis throughout the project duration on community engagement and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). Project participants collectively went through the framework shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Collective Impact Framework

INDICATOR	UNIT OF MEASURE	HOW DETERMINED
Shared Vision	<p>a) Common understanding of the problem</p> <p>b) Shared vision for change (common agenda)</p>	<p>a) Project goals and objectives established</p> <p>b) Logic models established; project mapping; developed and adopted a New Mexico Local Food Commitment, a set of shared values and guiding principles⁶</p>
Shared Measurement	<p>a) Agreement on collecting data/metrics and shared accountability</p> <p>b) Data management plan has been established</p>	<p>a) Metrics and benchmarks established</p> <p>b) Implementation of data management plan</p>
Mutually Reinforcing Activities	<p>a) Partners (teams) have defined areas they will address</p> <p>b) Coordination through a joint plan of action</p> <p>c) Sharing of values and experience</p>	<p>a) Teams self-organize and prioritize activities</p> <p>b) Project structure established incorporating decision circles</p> <p>c) Use of dynamic governance</p>
Continuous Communication	<p>a) Communications plan has been established</p> <p>b) Feedback loops have been established between the backbone, support and leadership teams</p>	<p>a) Implementation of communications plan</p> <p>b) Regularly scheduled meetings, reporting and outreach between teams; open online office hours</p>
Backbone Support	<p>a) The collaborative has identified the organizations and individuals that will play the backbone role</p> <p>b) The backbone team has the necessary skills to implement activities</p>	<p>a) NMFMA lead sponsorship role; fiscal agent; grant management; consultants provide project management & evaluation.</p> <p>b) Experienced subject matter personnel on team</p>

⁶ See Appendix, [NM Food Local Food Commitment \(2024\)](#)

Stakeholder & Community Engagement	<p>a) Key stakeholders have been identified and invited to participate</p> <p>b) Ongoing dialogue between stakeholders on addressing community needs</p>	<p>a) Continuous onboarding of organizations as identified</p> <p>b) Assessed by UNM Evaluation Lab annual surveys⁷</p>
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)	<p>a) The collaborative has implemented DEI principles and practices in its work; the interventions and strategies are designed to reduce or eliminate disparities</p> <p>b) The backbone team models and practices their commitment to DEI in their leadership, composition, policies and practices</p>	<p>a) continuous activities designed to highlight DEI awareness and practices, such as monthly DEI sessions and annual participation in the Food Solutions New England 21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge; DEI is a universal collaborative and individual partner organization commitment</p> <p>b) Conduct Backbone Team member DEI survey, as well for all teams established⁸</p>
Shared Power	<p>a) The collaborative has established a decision-making process that builds trust & understanding</p> <p>b) The decision-making process engages all participants</p> <p>c) Participants have access to resources</p>	<p>a) Use of dynamic governance process (sociocracy)</p> <p>b) Use of decision circles</p> <p>c) Team proposal process for funding programmatic activities</p>

C. Transaction Partners and Support Partners

As noted in the Introduction, *Scaling Up* included two main types of partners: Transaction Partners (TPs) and Support Partners (SPs). The number of partners per type and per year is provided in Table 2, though it is important to keep in mind that participation for some participants was very fluid. As a result, exact numbers were challenging to track, especially for those who were not regular participants. Several organizations also had multiple individuals that participated in the *Scaling Up* project.

⁷ See Appendix, [Scaling Up New Mexico's Value Chain Coordination Network: Operational Capacity, Stability, and Shared Resources Annual Survey and Summary Results \(2024\)](#)

⁸ See Appendix, [RFSP Project DEI Self-Assessment Presentation \(2023\)](#)

Table 2. RFSP Partners Snapshot

	TPs	SPs	Total
# of Individual Participants	40	44	84
# of Participating Organizations	20	17	37

Partners were offered compensation for the time they spent working on project activities. Many participants were therefore compensated for project participation. Partner staff invoiced the NMFMA for the hours spent on the RFSP at the end of each calendar year, and all participation was compensated at a standard agreed-upon hourly rate. Individuals representing state government agency partners were not allowed to receive compensation from the grant as their participation was an in-kind commitment from agency partners.

D. Project Group Structure & Key Highlights

Based on the Collective Impact model, the project utilized a team group structure to work collaboratively on common project priorities and activities. Project participants self-selected which work team(s) to engage with. In addition to work teams, a Backbone Team, a Support Team, a Leadership Team, and an Evaluation Hub were established. Following is a description of the roles of each team along with a few key highlights or accomplishments.

Backbone Team

The Backbone Team (BT) served as the nexus for overall project management. The BT helped guide strategy and implementation of project goals and objectives. In that administrative role the BT facilitated planning sessions and meetings, monitored progress towards established goals and objectives (in conjunction with the Evaluation Hub), supported project initiatives and activities either directly or by securing outside technical assistance, shared project assessments and resources with participants and provided advocacy for project collaborations both internally and externally.

The Backbone Team organized regular full project meetings, which included quarterly virtual Zoom gatherings, an in-person 3-day annual retreat (in 2021, 2022, and 2023), and a half-day in-person close-out event in September 2024. Monthly DEI-focused calls as well as monthly project office hours were also organized. The office hours were used to onboard new project participants as well as address common topics of interest.

Leadership Team

Each project team selected a delegate (and alternate) to serve on the Leadership Team (LT). The role of the LT was to:

Leverage limited human & material resources

- Avoid duplication
- Match skills to work
- Identify areas needing resources or addressing

Seek opportunities for collaboration

- Establish a culture of collective problem solving between project teams
- Create allies/partnerships with external networks, organizations & individuals
- Increase reach into different sectors of the community

Support Evaluation

- Shared data
- Establish a community of learning and encourage participation in evaluation

Advocacy & Policy

- Informed by impacted communities, provide advocacy for policy and systems change
- Be ambassadors and enhance the project’s public standing

The LT reviewed and approved all proposals for allocating resources (fiscal, human, organizational) to project activities and initiatives. During the final year of the project, the LT and BT worked together with project participants to develop guiding principles for food systems work in New Mexico.

Support Team

The Support Team (ST) consisted of individuals embedded into each work team to assist with administrative and team functions such as scheduling and facilitating meetings, recording activities, helping to develop proposals for submission to the LT for funding, and reporting.

Following is a more detailed listing of the functions of the LT and the ST:

	LEADERSHIP TEAM	SUPPORT TEAM
Member alignment with the stated mission and goals	<p>Shared Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commitment to collective impact goal - long-term (multi-year) commitment to work on project <p>Shared Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proven record of collaboration - Commitment to social justice (racial, economic, gender equity, etc.) - Agree to Dynamic Governance structure 	<p>Shared Vision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commitment to collective impact goal - long-term (multi-year) commitment to work on project <p>Shared Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proven record of collaboration - Commitment to social justice (racial, economic, gender equity, etc.) - Agree to Dynamic Governance structure

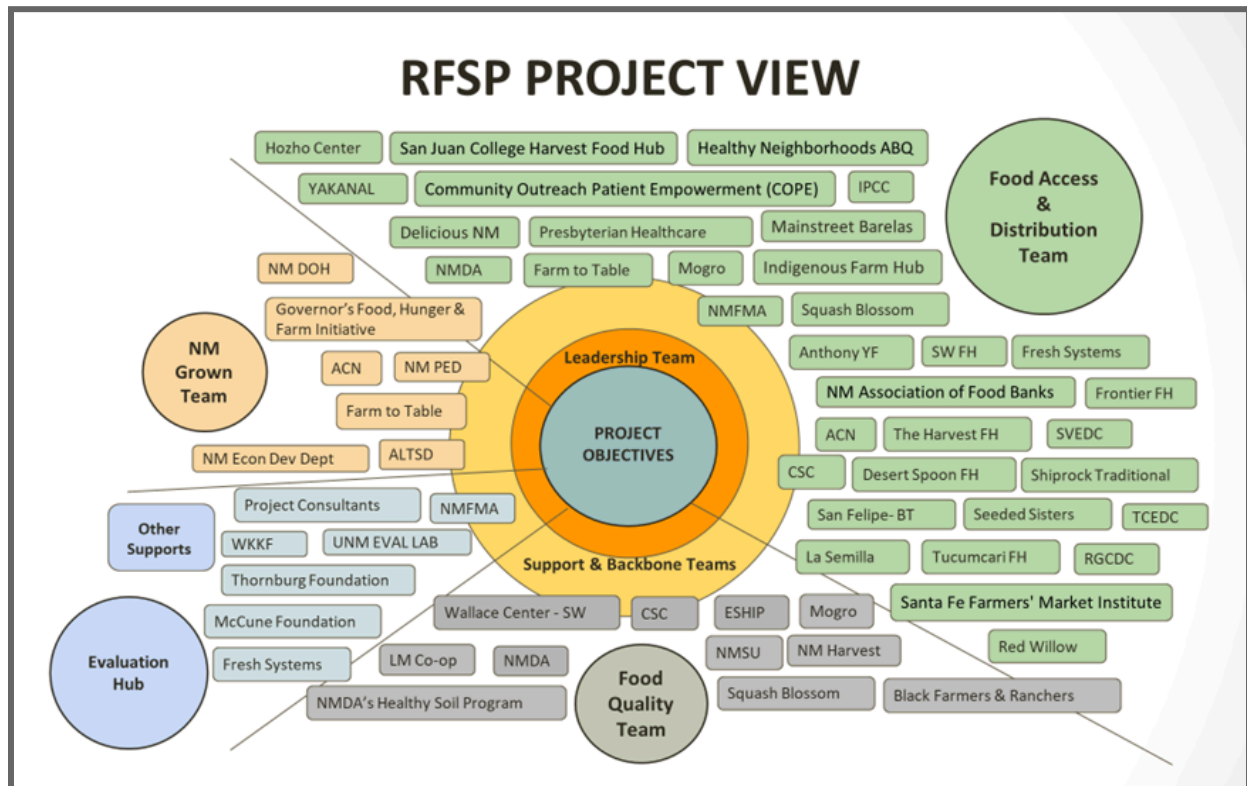
Member's capacity to contribute	Commitment to participate as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attend regularly scheduled meetings - Engage in collective impact activities - Provide access to expertise, knowledge, resources, networks, etc. 	Commitment to participate as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attend regularly scheduled meetings - Engage in collective impact activities - Provide access to expertise, knowledge, resources, networks, etc.
Specific skills	Provide project oversight: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leverage limited human & material resources (avoid duplication; identify areas needing addressing or support) - Establish a culture of collective problem solving between project teams - Provide advocacy for policy and systems change - Be ambassadors and enhance the project's public standing - Create allies/partnerships with external networks, organizations & individuals 	Provide technical support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Match skills to work - Establish a culture of collective problem solving among team members - Facilitate work meetings; monitor progress on activities - Help onboard and integrate new team members - Ensure team activities are Informed by impacted communities - Help teams develop proposals
Support evaluation	Establish a community of learning and utilizing evaluation to assess progress	Encourage participation in evaluation and assist with data collection
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Represent interests and activities of your team - Share news/info on interests & activities of the other teams with your team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate communication as necessary to accomplish tasks

Work Teams

At the outset of the project, *Scaling Up* established four Work Teams for project participants to self-select into. These included: Food Access; Food Hub Capacity; Food Quality; and NM Grown. In early 2022, the Food Access and Food Hub Capacity teams combined into one team that was renamed Food Access & Distribution.⁹ Work Teams met via Zoom on a regular basis - for most teams this was twice per month. Based on Dynamic Governance principles, the Work Teams used consent-based decision-making to establish their own priorities and near-term projects to pursue. During Work Team meetings, discussion rounds were used to ensure all participants had a chance to share

⁹ The original Food Access and Food Hub Capacity teams merged as a result of challenges both teams were facing with participation. There also seemed to be substantial crossover between the members of each work team as well as overlapping objectives. Merging the two teams therefore seemed like a solution that would be beneficial to both work teams.

their perspectives. In addition, each Work Team nominated one delegate to the Support Team and one delegate to the Leadership Team, and these delegates were renewed or changed once per year. The Support Team delegate was expected to facilitate Work Team meetings. Each Team also had someone responsible for note-taking during meetings. To initiate Work Team efforts, the Backbone Team hired a contractor to lead the teams through a Strategic Doing process that helped identify initial priorities and action items. It was then up to each team to decide if and how to utilize the outputs of Strategic Doing. Shown below is a snapshot of the focus areas with the corresponding project team member organizations and allied institutions.



Following is a summary of Work Team and Special Initiative accomplishments:

New Mexico Grown	
<i>Purpose</i>	To improve the New Mexico Grown program to fulfill the needs of producers/buyers in developing sustainable purchasing relationships.
<i>Priorities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To provide information and networking opportunities for NM Grown stakeholders to learn more about the program and the Approved Supplier Program - how it works, who's involved, etc. Example- NM Grown Regional Networking Events - To explore technical program components such as recipe suggestions for incorporating NM Grown products into meals, and considerations for adding value-added products into the program

<i>Main Projects</i>	Regional Events: From 2022-2024, the NM Grown Work Team organized and held 6 regional learning and networking events across the state for buyers, producers, hubs, and other stakeholders. Events were held in rural and urban areas, and one event was specifically focused on NM Grown in Tribal communities. The Work Team established a strategic framework with similar goals and objectives for all of the meetings so that the event series would have consistency across geographies. Participation was typically between 40-75 individuals and included a project food hub or Transactional Partner host and a farm tour or food preparation demonstrations.
<i>Other Workstreams</i>	Developing new resources to support marketing for local producers, menu planning for buyers, and forward contracting practices.

Food Quality (FQ)	
<i>Purpose</i>	Farmers and food hubs have access to resources including information and supplies to ensure food safety and quality
<i>Priorities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For food hubs and support partners to identify and share information and resources on food safety and quality practices - To identify gaps in food safety supplies for hubs and the producers they work with and to help address immediate-term gaps while also exploring longer-term systemic solutions, such as bulk/ group procurement, storage, and distribution
<i>Main Projects</i>	<p>Boxes: Through <i>Scaling Up</i>, the FQ Work Team initiated two purchases and distributions of boxes to food hubs and the producers hubs work with - this included nearly 12,500 boxes in 2022 and more than 13,500 boxes in 2024. The original box project emerged from a recognition of the significant hub and producer need for basic supplies such as boxes. Bulk purchasing provided a lower price per box than if each hub had purchased on its own. The hubs distributed boxes to many of the hundreds of farmers that hubs work with and source from, while some boxes were used by the hubs themselves for their own food box sales (for CSAs, institutional buyers, and other programs using produce aggregated from farmers in their network). A small percentage of boxes was also provided directly to farmers.</p> <p>Supplies: In 2023, FQ offered interested hubs/TPs funding to support food safety and quality efforts based on hub needs for supplies, materials, equipment, and technical information. To implement this project, FQ developed a detailed list of in-demand food safety supplies and materials (for durable goods & equipment; disposable/ reusable goods and other supplies; cleaning supplies, cleaners, sanitizers, and PPE; and pest control) and shared this list with hubs to provide illustrative examples of uses for the supplies funding. A total of 9 of 12 invited TPs participated, and those that participated were able to address their own food safety resource gaps, with one hub noting that the purchases “helped us to start</p>

	<p>preparing for our GAP certification this year,” while another reported that the supply initiative provided significant benefit to the hub, as “cost of supplies that enhance food safety of food hub operations and their producers can be significant.” The 2023 Supplies project was complemented by the NMFMA providing approximately 15,000 boxes along with case-liners, disinfectant, and sanitizer test strips to hubs through another funding source.</p>
<p><i>Other Workstreams</i></p>	<p>HGAP+ Technical Assistance for Hubs and Farms: <i>Scaling Up</i> provided resources for qualified food safety experts to provide technical assistance and financial support to nine hubs and farms in becoming HGAP+ certified, which was a requirement for continuing to sell to New Mexico Grown institutional buyers.</p> <p>QMS: Through <i>Scaling Up</i>, project partners further developed and refined the NM Grown Approved Supplier Program Quality Management System (QMS)</p>

Food Access & Distribution (FAD)	
<i>Purpose</i>	Develop relationships and better understanding of roles and needs of food hubs and Support Partners to promote food access
<i>Priorities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop common language and definition of what is a food hub, what do they do, and how to increase public understanding of food hubs - Identifying and characterizing existing hubs
<i>Main Projects</i>	<p>Food Hub Resource Map: In 2023-2024 the FAD team worked to develop a project scope for creating a resource map to help producers and buyers better connect to food hubs, with the plan for the map to be housed on the NM Grown website. Specifically, the map would provide information about food hubs and the resources and attributes they have. Ultimately, this project was not completed as the FAD Team disbanded when key members became involved in the Transactional Hub Pilot (described below), and they no longer had the capacity to participate in both Teams. Preliminary mapping work may still be used to advance this project initiative post-grant.</p> <p>Food Hub Profile Survey: FAD developed and administered a survey in 2022 for participating food hubs in an effort to better understand hub marketing practices and to create standard profiles of hubs for promotion and internal understanding of each other’s hubs. This effort helped lead to an exercise at the 2022 annual retreat in which hubs presented posters with details about their hub during a poster session with all project participants at the 2022 annual retreat. It also fostered deeper understanding between the food hubs of each others’ work.</p>

Other Workstreams	Distribution Task Force: Through the FAD team, a separate task force was set up in early 2023 to specifically look at distribution challenges and opportunities among hubs. See details under “ Special Initiatives. ”
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Special Initiatives

In addition to the various Work Group projects, there were a number of other initiatives that *Scaling Up* participants collaborated on during the project.

These include:

1) **Transactional Hub Pilot project:**

At the 2023 RFSP Annual Retreat, a group of project participants elected to undertake a hub-to-hub transactional project to assess the feasibility of a formalized food hub network. The intentions of the pilot were:

- Experimentation - to test the viability of establishing a transactional hub network to enable hubs to compete in institutional markets;
- React and try again - better define questions, challenges and opportunities based on transaction experiences; and
- Gather information to inform the entire network going forward.

The pilot was implemented from January - August 2024. Over the course of the pilot, participating hubs developed a product catalog, defined product standards and descriptions, established a pricing structure, initiated sales transactions, coordinated product procurement and delivery, and identified an interim network sales broker to make transactions. Sales totaled \$76,813 during the pilot, and the broker hired during the pilot was able to continue to provide services for several more months. An internal study of the pilot was completed in September 2024.¹⁰

2) **New Mexico Local Food Data Portal:**

The Local Food Data Portal is designed to provide information about local food purchases being made through NM Grown program. The Portal allows institutional buyers to submit local food purchasing data, and the data is linked to Local Food Dashboards that offer data visualizations and detailed reports showing information about local food purchases on the buyer and supplier sides. The overall purposes of the NM Local Food Data Portal are:

- To provide an easy-to-use, streamlined mechanism for entering, storing, analyzing, and showcasing all NM Grown local food purchases;
- To be able to empirically show various components of NM Grown purchasing and identify trends in terms of: geographic sources of purchase and supply, purchases (\$ amounts and volumes) by food product types, etc.;
- To share information about NM Grown purchases and sales with key stakeholders (buyers, suppliers, policymakers, etc.); and

¹⁰ See Appendix, [Transactional Hub Pilot Study \(2024\)](#)

- To better understand the functioning of the NM Grown “marketplace,” which can help illustrate current benefits of the program and improve the program in the future.

During the *Scaling Up* project, the Backbone Team explored with food hubs the possibility of incorporating food hub purchasing and sales data into the Local Food Data Portal. After several discussions with the hubs and the data analytics contractor, it was determined that it would be too complicated to add data entry for hubs into the Portal functioning, since it was originally designed for institutional buyers and since hubs utilize different platforms and templates for tracking their purchases from producers and sales to buyers. The efforts on the Portal thus focused on expanding to other institutional buyers, including Early Childcare sites and food banks.

3) Distribution Task Force:

The Distribution Task Force was established in early 2023 and had a number of meetings to discuss common challenges for hubs and producers related to food distribution in New Mexico - especially the financial and operational challenges of reaching rural and other hard-to-reach areas. The Task Force eventually developed a scope of work for a landscape study of barriers in distribution for farmers and food hubs. While this study was not ultimately undertaken, the work of the Task Force did help lay the foundation for the Transactional Hub Pilot project initiative, which is described above.

Evaluation Hub

Scaling Up also established an Evaluation Hub, which consisted of the NMFMA’s Research and Evaluation Lead and the Project Facilitation and Evaluation Consultant, and a team from the University of New Mexico’s Evaluation Lab (UNM Eval Lab), which focused on evaluating the project’s third objective of improving the stability and operational capacity of partners through the development of shared resources, tools, and knowledge. Evaluation efforts were guided by a Monitoring, Evaluation, Research & Learning (MERL) Plan, which was originally drafted in 2021 and updated periodically throughout the duration of the project. The plan included project indicators and targets as well as information related to Collective Impact assessment, key MERL activities, and data management.¹¹ During the project’s initial period, the Evaluation Hub developed and produced a Community Based Research Toolkit, which was intended to serve project partners by providing an introduction to applied research. The toolkit was also meant to serve partners by providing a base for conducting small to mid-sized community-based research projects within their own organizations and communities.¹²

At the inaugural project annual retreat, the Evaluation Hub organized focus groups to help define key terms of the project’s third objective, namely: stability, operational capacity, and shared resources, tools, and knowledge. The aims of the focus groups were therefore to: elicit how partners understand stability and operational capacity;

¹¹ See Appendix, [RFSP MERL Plan](#), (drafted 2021, updated 2023, and finalized 2024)

¹² See Appendix, [RFSP Community Based Research Toolkit \(2022\)](#)

identify tools, resources, and knowledge barriers; and consider how tools, resources, and knowledge could be shared. The focus groups yielded a series of concepts that helped define the key terms and metrics for measuring Objective 3,¹³ which were then utilized in developing the annual survey that the UNM Evaluation Lab implemented with participants at the end of 2021, 2022, and 2023. Based on each of these annual surveys, the UNM team prepared reports and presentations on stability, operational capacity, and shared resources. The final year's report incorporated qualitative findings and analysis based on key informant interviews conducted by the UNM contractor during the 2023 annual retreat.¹⁴

The report from the final year showed that 90% of TPs and 84% of SPs experienced improvements in one or more areas enhancing their organization's stability and operational capacity. In addition, as a direct result of their organizations' participation in the project approximately three-quarters of respondents had more dialogue on addressing community needs while two-thirds of respondents collaborated more with others to address systemic change. These changes were demonstrated through the sharing and receiving of operational resources such as networking links, business resources, and food production and distribution information, among others, as well as through the sharing of human capital in terms of technical knowledge and skills, communication, peer support, and other services. Project participants reported that they developed professional relationships and trust between new individuals and organizations enabling broader collaboration on issues affecting their roles in the food system in New Mexico. The project also fostered a deeper understanding of local food systems, including its history, landscape, and equity issues, contributing to a more resilient value chain coordination ecosystem.

The *Scaling Up* Evaluation Hub also administered two annual surveys to gather quantitative project data; one survey was for all participating food hubs/ Transactional Partners, and the other was for institutional buyers. The data gathered through these two surveys was used for measuring many of the quantitative indicators in Objectives 1 and 2.

The Evaluation Hub documented, summarized, and shared survey results and findings at quarterly and annual project meetings, which provided participants opportunities for reflection, learning, and adapting. Data, in a digestible format, was typically prepared and shared by the Evaluation Hub with project participants for questions and discussion. This was an important part of the project's formative/developmental evaluation process to provide regular feedback loops and offer project participants opportunities to learn from project data on an ongoing basis and modify priorities, approaches, or activities accordingly.

¹³ See Appendix, [Defining Stability, Operational Capacity, and Shared Resources, Tools, and Knowledge: Results from the RFSP Partners Focus Groups \(2021\)](#)

¹⁴ See in Appendix: [Scaling Up New Mexico's Value Chain Coordination Network: Operational Capacity, Stability, and Shared Resources Annual Survey and Summary Results \(2024\)](#); and [Operational Capacity, Stability, and Shared Resources in the RFSP: Annual Survey Report \(2023\)](#); and [Operational Capacity, Stability, and Shared Resources in the RFSP: Annual Survey Presentation \(2022\)](#)

V. Overall Project Results

This section presents quantitative data on the objective and outcome-level indicators and targets that were established at the outset of the project. Out of 22 total indicators, the project met or exceeded 100% of the target for 17 of the indicators; met 90-99% of the target for 3 indicators; and met 80-89% of the target for the remaining 2 indicators. While it is important to acknowledge that there were many other contributing factors to obtaining these results, the project certainly succeeded in meeting or exceeding the vast majority of planned quantitative aims. Moreover, the results especially related to Objective 3, Operational Stability and Capacity, are validated by the three Objective 3-specific annual surveys and reports led by the UNM team and the qualitative findings in the final UNM report (which were summarized in the previous section, and detailed findings are available in the report links in the Appendix).

a. Objective Level Results

Indicator	Baseline	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	Target	% target met
Food hub sales and NM Grown purchases increase by at least \$1.8M by end of 2023	\$3,500,000	\$2,523,000	\$2,805,000	\$5,120,389	\$10,448,389	\$5,300,000 Year 3	97%
SNAP/Double Up Food Bucks spending increases by at least \$200,000 by end of 2023	\$968,643	\$2,544,073	\$2,374,541	\$1,714,153	\$6,632,767	\$1,168,643 in year 3	147%
Stability and operational capacity improved for at least 75% of TPs and 90% of SPs by end of 2023	N/A	N/A	80% - TPs 96% - SPs	90% - TPs 84% - SPs	84% - TPs 90% - SPs	75% - TPs 90% - SPs	112%- TPs 100% - SPs

Whereas the target for food hub sales and NM Grown purchases was \$5.3 million in year 3, the actual total was \$5.12 million, including \$1.94 million in hub sales; \$1.1 million in school purchases; \$530,000 in senior center purchases; \$171,400 in early childhood center purchases; and \$1.38 million in food bank purchases. Year 3 SNAP/ Double Up Food Bucks spending - a proxy for local food demand - was just over \$1.7 million, with the target being approximately \$1.17 million. Finally, 90% of SPs reported improvements in stability and operational capacity across the two years this was assessed, exactly meeting that target, and 84% of TPs reported improvements against a target of 75%.

b. Outcome Level Results Tables

Outcome #1: To Increase Consumption of and Access to Locally and Regionally Produced Agricultural Products

Indicator	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	Target	% target met
Total # of project beneficiaries/ stakeholders reached	211,000	275,855	267,740	754,595	300,000 total	252%
The # of stakeholders that will report buying, selling, aggregating, storing, producing, and/or distributing locally or regionally produced agriculture products	78	389	534	1,001	500 total	200%
The number of beneficiaries that will gain knowledge on how to access, produce, prepare, and/or preserve locally and regionally produced agricultural products	9,000	4,123	8,137	21,260	10,000 total	213%

For this project, the total number of project beneficiaries/ stakeholders reached was defined as: # of meals served through NM Grown (schools, senior centers, pre-schools, and food banks); # of food hub customers; and # of producers that food hubs sourced from. The total reached over the three years was more than 750,000 beneficiaries, and 300,000 was the target. The number of stakeholders buying selling, aggregating, storing, producing and/or distributing locally produced products was defined as: # of schools, senior centers, and pre-schools purchasing and distributing food; # of food pantries distributing food; and # of producers food hubs source from. The target was 500 over 3 years, and the actual total was nearly twice this number, at 1,001. Finally, the number of beneficiaries that will gain knowledge on how to access, produce, prepare, and/or preserve locally and regionally produced products was defined via proxy as the total number of food hub customers. The total reach was more than twice the target (21,260 compared to 10,000).

Outcome 2: To Increase Customers and Sales of Local and Regional Agricultural Products

Indicator	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	Target	% target met
Sales increased via NM Grown purchases and food hub sales from \$3.5M at baseline to \$5.3M end of year 3	\$2,523,000	\$2,805,000	\$5,120,389	\$10,448,389	\$5.3 M in year 3	97%
Food hub customer counts increased from 7,000 at baseline to 10,000 end of year 3	9,000	4,123	8,137	21,260	10,000 in year 3	81%

The initial indicator from Outcome 2 is the same as the Objective 1 indicator. For food hub customer counts, the Year 3 total was only 81% of the target. This number was under-reported especially in Year 2 and Year 3 because there were multiple hubs that did not provide information on their customer counts in these years.

Outcome 3: To Develop New Market Opportunities for Farm and Ranch Operations Serving Local Markets

Indicator	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	Target	% target met
# of new and/or existing delivery systems/ access points reached that expanded and/or improved locally produced product or service offerings						
# of Transactional Partners (TPs) with Community Supported Agriculture programs	2	7	5	14	4	350%
# of TPs that process, aggregate, distribute, or store locally and regionally produced agricultural products	4	10	14	28	10	280%
# of TPs that reported an increase in revenue	12	6	4	22	14	157%
# of project partners that reported gaining knowledge about new market opportunities	8	21	10	39	14	279%

For Outcome 3 indicators, there were varying results year-to-year but the totals surpassed the targets for all four indicators. The number of TPs reporting an increase in revenue was the only indicator that decreased each year, and this was in part due to some hubs not providing this information especially in Year 2 and Year 3.

Outcome 4: To Improve the Food Safety of Locally Produced Agricultural Products

Indicator	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	Target	% target met
# of individuals that will learn about prevention, detection, control, and intervention food safety practices	56	135	180	371	400	93%
# of individuals that report increasing their food safety knowledge & skills	56	135	180	371	350	106%
# of growers or producers who will obtain on-farm food safety certifications (i.e., number of NM Grown Approved Suppliers)	47	85	125	257	300	86%

The number of individuals learning about prevention, detection, control and intervention food safety practices includes the number of participants that went through the Tier I and Tier II food safety trainings developed and organized by the NMFMA and its food safety training partners. The number of individuals reporting having increased their food safety knowledge and skills was taken from post-training surveys that were completed by food safety training participants, in which 100% of respondents reported some increase in knowledge or skills. Finally, the number of producers obtaining on-farm food

safety certification is defined by the number of producers that applied for and were admitted to the NM Grown Approved Supplier Program, which is a food quality assurance program that provides producers in New Mexico access to institutional local purchasing while also ensuring food safety, quality, and product specification requirements are met.

Outcome 5: To establish or expand a local and regional food business enterprise.

Not Applicable: This RFSP project did not include what the USDA provided as Outcome 5 for RFSP grants, so there is no data to report on for Outcome 5.

Outcome 6: To Increase Capacity and Efficiency of the Local Food System

Indicator	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	Target	% target met
# of partners engaged, including those representing diverse, non-traditional entities	30	32	32	94	15 in year 3	213%
# of partners that gained knowledge on how to access resources, provided technical assistance or training to partners, or secured additional funding as a result of partnership involvement	30 total (gained knowledge and/or received TA)	56 total (29 knowledge, 17 (TA), 10 (funding))	35 total (17 knowledge, 11 (TA), 7 (funding))	121	15 in year 3	233%
Amount of non-federal financial, professional and technical assistance resources measured in dollars secured as a result of partnership activities	\$245,000	\$24.7 M	\$58.0 M	\$82.95M	\$400,000	20,736%

Results for all three indicators in Outcome 6 far exceeded the targets - including for partner engagement and for additional resources that became available to support local food systems initiatives in New Mexico. Importantly, this included \$24.7 million in Year 2 and \$58 million in Year 3 of funding through the State of New Mexico and Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham’s *Food Initiative*, which is a comprehensive commitment to building a robust food system that measurably reduces hunger and improves equitable access to nutritious, culturally meaningful foods for all New Mexicans. While *Food Initiative* funding is not a direct result of the RFSP (as the RFSP did not specifically dedicate project resources to advocacy), there were multiple project partners involved in the advocacy efforts. Moreover, project partners helped lay the groundwork for more state investment through the successful implementation of NM Grown and other local food systems strengthening activities.

Outcome 7: To increase the resources and tools used by the NM-VCC Network Professionals to make their work more efficient and productive

Indicator	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	Target	% target met
# of partners who will share in the benefits from new tools developed such as the database, QMS, and producer trainings	N/A	14	8	22	15	147%
# of partners that gained specific leadership skills and/or other organizational capacity building skills	N/A	Lead. 14 Cap. 17	Lead. 12 Cap. 9	52	14	371%
# of partners that gained new tools or metrics for measuring the effectiveness of their organization's value chain work	N/A	12	6	18	14	129%
# of partners that felt peer support was an important project outcome	N/A	29	16	45	12	375%

Targets were also exceeded for all four indicators under Outcome 7, which measured partner resource sharing and capacity building. These results complement the qualitative findings from the UNM 2024 survey.

VI. Discussion

The final section of this report presents key challenges and lessons learned from *Scaling Up* as well as future implications, including highlighting the elements of the project that seem most likely to continue beyond the end of the project.

Table 3. Key Challenges and How They Were Addressed

Key Challenge	How Challenge Addressed
The project operated within the broader context of historical racial and other inequities and distrust in New Mexico food systems.	From the onset of the project issues such as the history of settler colonialism in New Mexico and its impacts on agriculture were directly addressed. The first annual retreat of project participants featured a panel on the <i>Historical and Cultural Perspectives on Agriculture in New Mexico</i> . ¹⁵ There were also ongoing monthly discussions on a variety of relevant topics including <i>Food Insecurity in NM</i> , <i>Honoring African American Farmers</i> ¹⁶ , and <i>Pathways Towards Food Sovereignty</i> among others.
Building trust and relationships in light of historical context.	Project partners developed and adopted a set of guiding principles for organizations that work in the food system - the New Mexico Local Food Commitment. This values-based framework is intended to provide guidance and accountability

¹⁵ Link to Recording: [Panel: Historical and Cultural Perspectives on Agriculture in New Mexico](#)

¹⁶ Link to Presentation: [Honoring African American Farmers](#)

	for those working in food systems in New Mexico. ¹⁷ It addresses food access, land, economy, producers, and labor among other issues. The framework was developed in the project's final year. <i>Ideally the framework would have been developed near the outset of the project and reviewed and revised by participants each subsequent year.</i>
Inconsistent participation in project structures (LT, ST, Work Teams), as a result of: organizational capacity constraints and staff turnover; varying levels of trust among participants; time availability; and competing priorities.	Participation ebbed and flowed throughout the project, which was a challenge with some teams more than others both in terms of the number and consistency of regular participants showing up. This was primarily addressed through thorough documentation of meeting notes, working to include inconsistent participants as much as possible via Collective Impact and Dynamic Governances processes, and by a smaller group of consistent team members taking on the bulk of tasks and action items to move forward with team projects and priorities.
Work Team members being responsible for facilitating and process-managing their own Work Teams.	During project start-up and at the beginning of the final year of <i>Scaling Up</i> , the BT arranged for external facilitation support for the Work Teams utilizing the Strategic Doing approach. The external facilitation was meant to help kickstart work planning and identifying priority tasks, which the Work Teams would then move forward on their own. At times the lack of external facilitation hindered Work Team process and progress and/or created significant burdens on those responsible for facilitation and process-management.
Logistical barriers to transporting and distributing food especially to hard-to-reach communities in NM.	This was addressed through special initiatives described above, namely the establishment of the <i>Distribution Task Force</i> and the <i>Transactional Hub Pilot project</i> .
Ensuring Work Team short-term projects would still contribute to addressing longer-term systemic issues.	All proposals for discrete Work Team projects to be funded via the Leadership Team had to include how the projects were aligned to the overall project goals and objectives as well as the sustainability of the planned initiative. In addition, each Work Team's priorities fit within and aligned with efforts to strengthen the broader local food system in New Mexico.

Table 4. Key Learning & Implications for the Future

Key Learning	Implications for the Future
Importance of using Collective Impact and Dynamic Governance-type approaches for a	Numerous project participants developed new skills in facilitation, Collective Impact

¹⁷ See Appendix, [New Mexico Local Food Commitment \(2024\)](#)

<p>project focused on process, relationships, and collaboration. These approaches helped honor project process, as, by definition, the approaches mean that process matters.</p>	<p>approaches, Strategic Doing, incorporating diverse voices, and more, while others experienced all of these, which will be beneficial for the participants when working on any collaborative efforts in the future.</p>
<p>Many project participants formed meaningful professional and personal relationships as well as connections and partnerships through the project.</p>	<p>The relationships that were strengthened and new partnerships that were formed through <i>Scaling Up</i> will last beyond the project.</p>
<p>Relationship and trust-building (or rebuilding in some cases) require time and space, and are absolutely critical to fostering more equitable local food systems.</p>	<p>While not perfect, the project structures did help provide time and space for relationship and trust-building. It will be important for project participants and other food system stakeholders to carve out spaces in the future to continue to develop relationships.</p>
<p><i>Scaling Up</i> provided numerous types of learning opportunities for project participants - through organizing external speakers and panels, holding monthly office hours and DEI calls, sharing resources, and through the use of a developmental evaluation approach that focused on iterative learning and adapting based on project data.</p>	<p>Through the project, participants gained a deeper understanding of New Mexico's local food systems, including history, landscape, relationships, and inequities, as well as related current challenges. In addition, participants shared numerous resources with one another (through both formal project structures and informally). The learning and increased understanding will last beyond the project.</p>
<p>Project processes including use of Collective Impact and Dynamic Governance as well as establishing guiding principles, helped the project to address systemic challenges and align shared values.</p>	<p>The Local Food Commitment (Guiding Principles) will live beyond the life of the project, as will many of the participants' efforts to equitably improve local food systems in the state (see details below).</p>
<p>This type of undertaking requires a significant level of resources (time, staff, funding) and structures (BT, LT, ST, etc.), the long-term funding and staffing sustainability of which is very difficult to maintain.</p>	<p>Stakeholders will find a way to sustain the structures that are most beneficial and add value to/ are aligned with the work project participants and their organizations are already doing.</p>
<p>A growing and consistent market for institutional local food procurement along with investment by the state and federal government in local food systems helped foster an enabling environment for participants to collaborate.</p>	<p>In the near-term, these investments seem likely to continue and therefore will continue to encourage local food system stakeholder collaboration.</p>

Given the decades of meaningful work that preceded this project to foster a more equitable food system in New Mexico and the efforts that are sure to come in future years, it is important to consider what components of *Scaling Up* are expected to live beyond the life of the grant. At this time, this includes the following elements:

- ***Newly developed or strengthened collaborations, partnerships, and relationships*** among key value chain actors in the local food system
- ***Concrete capacities and skills built and/or strengthened as well as resources shared between project participants***
- A [New Mexico Local Food Commitment](#), a set of shared values and guiding principles developed by participants designed to be incorporated into future values-based institutional procurement work
- ***Workstreams that will continue in various iterations:***
 - **New Mexico Grown** Work Team activities will be subsumed under the work of the [New Mexico Grown Coalition](#), which is a network of public institutions, community-based organizations, and individuals working to strengthen community food systems across the state;
 - The interim **sales broker** hired during the Transactional Hub Pilot will continue to provide services between food hubs/producers and institutional buyers - at least for several more months and possibly longer (funding depending);
 - **Hub coordination** on areas and issues of common interest such as distribution routes, intra-hub sales, etc.- this could include continuing the Hub Pilot or other collaborative efforts;
 - The **Local Food Data Portal** will continue to be developed via the NMFMA, its data analytics partner, and institutional buyers, with initial dashboard reports being made available by late 2024/early 2025;
 - **Middle of the value chain collaboration and investment** through the [New Mexico Economic Development Department's Food, Hunger, and Agricultural Program](#), which supports the intersection of economic development in New Mexico's food and agricultural sector with increased food security for New Mexicans;
 - Extended **collaboration between RFSP partner organizations and NM's Office of the Governor's Food and Hunger Advisor**;
 - **Food safety and quality topics** that were led by the Food Quality Work Team will be transitioned to the NMFMA-led NM Food Safety Community of Practice;
 - The **Evaluation** Hub will transition into the NMFMA's MERL efforts, and *Scaling Up* reports and other resources will be made available on the [NMFMA's Research & Evaluation webpage](#).

Additional, yet to be imagined, collaborations are likely to emerge as well.

Appendix: Additional Scaling Up Project Resources

[New Mexico Local Food Commitment \(2024\)](#)

[Scaling Up New Mexico's Value Chain Coordination Network: Operational Capacity, Stability, and Shared Resources Annual Survey and Summary Results \(2024\)](#)

[Transactional Hub Pilot Study Report \(2024\)](#)

[Operational Capacity, Stability, and Shared Resources in the RFSP: Annual Survey Report \(2023\)](#)

[RFSP Annual Retreat Report \(2023\)](#)

[RFSP DEI Self-Assessment Presentation \(2023\)](#)

[Operational Capacity, Stability, and Shared Resources in the RFSP: Annual Survey Presentation \(2022\)](#)

[RFSP Community Based Research Toolkit \(2022\)](#)

[RFSP Annual Retreat Report \(2022\)](#)

[Defining Stability, Operational Capacity, and Shared Resources, Tools, and Knowledge: Results from the RFSP Partners Focus Groups \(2021\)](#)

[RFSP Annual Retreat Report \(2021\)](#)

[RFSP MERL Plan \(drafted 2021, updated 2023 and finalized 2024\)](#)