

Ensuring Access to 10 Vital Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic

New Mexico State University's *100% New Mexico Initiative* in San Miguel County



Purpose: This brief describes results of a qualitative case study conducted by Chapin Hall of San Miguel's application of the 100% New Mexico initiative to ensure access to 10 vital services during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

100% New Mexico Initiative

The Anna, Age Eight Institute (Institute) at New Mexico State University was formed in 2018 to empower the local champions who build the vital services to ensure trauma-free and thriving children, students, and families.ⁱ

The Institute's 100% New Mexico initiative is guided by research focused on the social determinants of health and ensuring access to vital services to increase health, safety, school achievement, job

readiness and resilience.ⁱⁱ

The Institute began as the result of the book written by founders Dr. Katherine Ortega Courtney and Dominic Cappello, *Anna, Age Eight: The Data Driven Prevention of Childhood Trauma and Maltreatment*. A second book, *100% Community: Ensuring 10 vital services for surviving and thriving* provides the framework and tools to increase access to 10 vital services among all New Mexicans.ⁱⁱⁱ

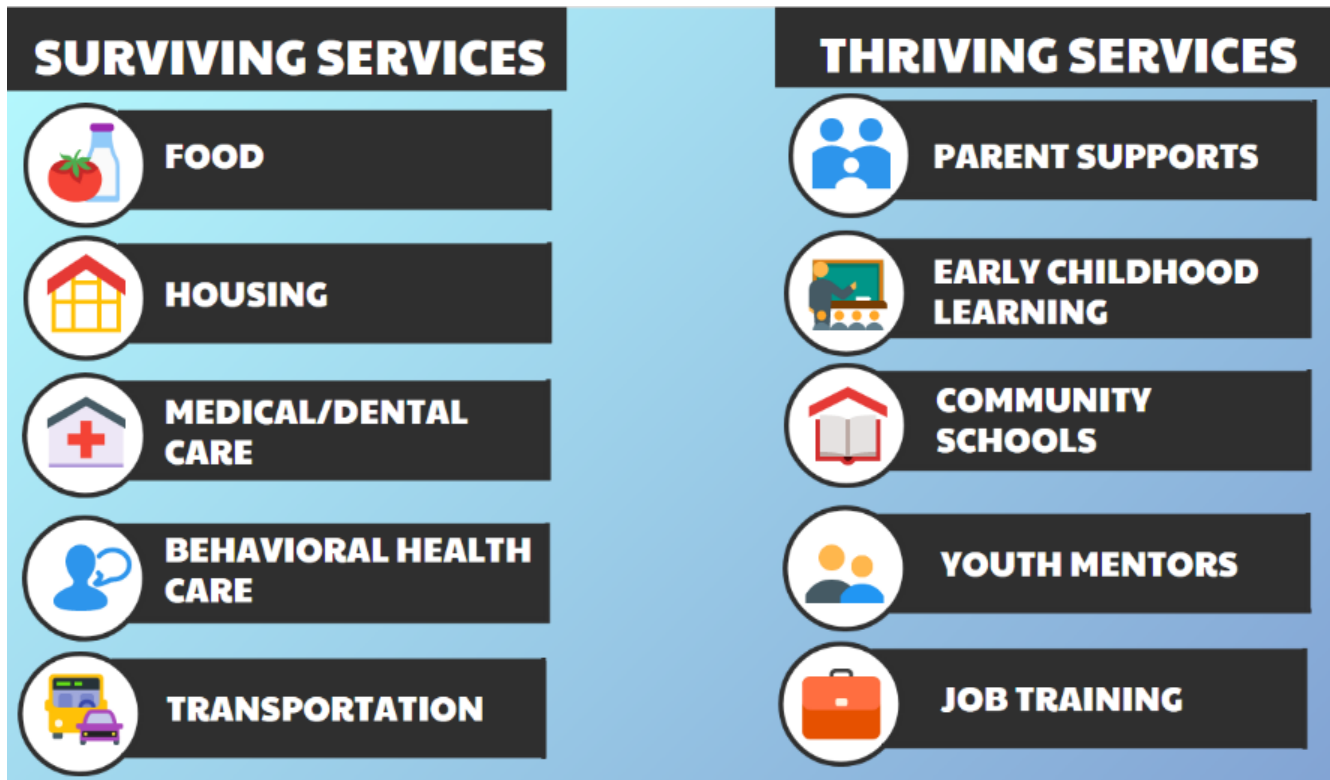
Counties use a data-driven collective impact model and 10 local action teams centered in service sectors of surviving and thriving (see Figure 1). As of 2021, 100% New Mexico was being implemented in eight counties, including San Miguel County.

ⁱ <https://annaageeight.nmsu.edu>

ⁱⁱ For example, see <https://annaageeight.nmsu.edu/resources/adversity-research.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Cappello, D., & Courtney, K.O. (2019). *100% Community: Ensuring 10 vital services for surviving and thriving*. Independently published.

Figure 1. 100% New Mexico's 10 Vital Services



San Miguel County's 100% New Mexico Initiative

In San Miguel, community members initiated a partnership with the Institute and began meeting as a book club in February 2020. This core team, comprised of leads and co-leads representing the 10 vital service sectors, then developed and worked through a plan of action. Action teams representing the different service sectors started meeting just as the COVID-19 global pandemic hit New Mexico.

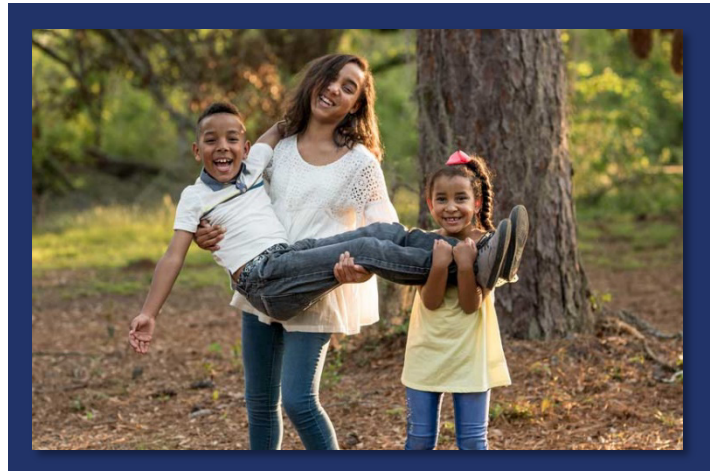
What We Did

Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago designed and conducted a case study of how San Miguel applied the 100% New Mexico initiative to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. The purpose was to document the challenges and strengths of the San Miguel community in the crisis and investigate how the San Miguel initiative used the core components to increase the delivery of 10 vital services.

In June 2021, Chapin Hall conducted four interviews with initiative members and focus groups with two action teams (n = 9). The interviews and focus groups explored: challenges confronted by community residents and families as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, experiences developing 100% New Mexico in San Miguel, and feedback on supports needed to pursue the goals and projects prioritized by the action teams. We also reviewed documents detailing San Miguel's 100% New Mexico initiative during its first year of implementation. This case study is part of a larger evaluation examining the 100% New Mexico initiative across eight New Mexico counties.

What We Found

San Miguel stakeholders formed a book club to read *100% Community* and discuss how to customize the model to meet local needs. They then formed 10 action teams, each one focused on identifying and addressing barriers in one of the vital service sectors. They used monthly team leader meetings to focus on providing updates and multisector problem -solving to address gaps confronted by community residents as part of the COVID-19 public health crisis.



New cross-sector strategies to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of San Miguel’s 100% New Mexico initiative reported having new confidence engaging other sectors serving community residents and families. Through weekly “power hour” meetings, initiative members forged robust personal and professional relationships with other leaders representing the vital service sectors. They also gained more comprehensive understanding of key assets in each sector. These deeper relationships, combined with new knowledge about their community, equipped action team members to design cross-sector COVID-19 responses to the challenges community members faced. For example, spearheaded by the community schools action team, the San Miguel 100% New Mexico initiative distributed masks, children’s books, and other resources to community members at a parade hosted at New Mexico Highlands University. San Miguel’s 100% New Mexico initiative also used the framework of ensuring 10 vital service sectors in their successful \$1.4 million request to the New Mexico Legislature to develop a youth community center.

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“We had been working to develop a model for a youth center [before knowing about 100% New Mexico]. **The structure for the youth center proposal really came to be about the 10 vital service sectors...**We have a youth center open today.”

– 100% San Miguel member

Interview and focus group participants stressed the strong alignment between the focus on ensuring 10 vital services and the gaps that were most critical to bridge in promoting the well-being of community members. The 100% New Mexico team structure coordinated their mobilization in response. Initiative members also noted that while their current cross-sector strategies had been supported through their work as volunteers, additional capacity would be critical in transitioning from their focus on the COVID-19 pandemic to designing new systems of care and safety for community residents and families.

New strategies to strengthen access to existing resources. San Miguel's 100% New Mexico members launched multiple strategies to increase access to existing resources, including:

1. **Radio program:** Key community leaders involved with the 100% New Mexico initiative have hosted a weekly discussion program to promote accurate, up-to-date information about COVID-19 and community responses.
2. **Youth hotline:** Led by the Mentoring action team, San Miguel's 100% New Mexico members created a hotline to connect young people with critical resources from across the service sectors.
3. **Family service resource directory:** Updating a family service resource directory is part of the 100% New Mexico initiative's 7-step process. Members of San Miguel's 100% New Mexico initiative compiled a comprehensive listing of community services addressing each of the 10 vital sector areas. This family service resource directory is now available to community residents online.
4. **Cross-sector outreach:** Action teams used social media and email listservs to cross-promote food pantry and other community resource events. These efforts aimed to increase San Miguel County residents' access to timely, accurate information about available supports at a time when the pandemic decreased the resources of many community organizations or required them to close.
5. **100% San Miguel County survey:** Action teams were conducting the 100% survey to identify barriers to vital services at the time of the study. Strategies going forward will be informed by these survey results.

Increased focus on who else needs to be at the table in improving systems of care and safety. A number of San Miguel leaders with critical expertise have already joined this local 100% New Mexico initiative. But initiative members stressed the importance of inviting more community members and city agencies to the table. Initiative members also reported that intentionally reflecting on how projects had gone and what could be changed for next time—the 100% model's emphasis on continuous quality improvement—had helped them identify new opportunities in responding to COVID-19 and also elevated where expanded capacity is needed to advance potential solutions.

Recommendations

1. **Continue to focus on ensuring access to the 10 specific vital services for San Miguel families.** San Miguel initiative members have leveraged the 100% New Mexico framework to identify and develop coordinated responses addressing family and community needs exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Building from this foundation will strengthen the county's capacity to ensure access to the 10 vital services in future public health emergencies.
2. **Partner with local and state decision makers to bolster the resources that San Miguel County can leverage to coordinate its 100% New Mexico initiative.** Accomplishments such as assessing the capacity of family-serving agencies and creating a family service resource directory surfaced critical opportunities to improve the use and effectiveness of existing resources. Local coordination across service sectors and project management leadership is needed to continue to advance solutions that reflect the priorities and needs of San Miguel residents and families.