



NEW MEXICO FIRST
People. Ideas. Progress.

New Mexico First and Project SHARE NM Newsletter

Stay Informed and Engaged

May 4, 2020



Resource for Seniors

As the coronavirus spreads in the U.S. and across the globe, it's becoming more apparent that older adults are bearing the brunt. The [Centers for Disease Control](#) reports that older adults and people with underlying health conditions are twice as likely as younger, healthier adults to develop serious outcomes from COVID-19. The greatest risk of infection is among those who are in close contact with other people who have COVID-19. This includes family members and health care workers who care for infected people.

What can you do to protect yourself? It starts with staying home and avoiding contact with others who may have COVID-19. More advice for seniors from the Centers for Disease Control is available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Vietnamese](#), and other [languages](#).

[Learn More](#)



Stay Connected

The good intention to shield the over-70s from the effects of COVID-19 through social isolation brings its own risks of physical and mental health challenges. Social disconnection puts older adults at greater risk of feelings of aloneness and isolation, depression and anxiety that can also cause physical health problems. Seniors need to have people they can count on if a need arises.

In New Mexico, intergenerational family ties are honored and strong. "The relationship between grandparents and grandkids are important for mental and emotional health, as well as physical health," said [Alison Bryant](#), senior vice president of research for AARP. Grandchildren keep grandparents active and alert and both grandparents and grandchildren who felt emotionally close to each other had fewer [symptoms of depression](#).

Connecting Across Generational Lines

[Read one family's story](#) about connecting across generational lines.

How you can help

- **Volunteer to help seniors.** Help New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Dept. provide food and services to NM seniors. Email ALTSD-Volunteers@state.nm.us with the subject Line: READY TO HELP. In the email, identify the city/town you reside in and your phone number. The agency will then respond with more information.
- **Call local volunteer groups.** Call your local United Way, 211 and/or 311 to ask what you can do to help. In Albuquerque, [OneABQVolunteers](#) lists “social distancing friendly volunteer opportunities.”
- **Check on family and friends.** Help a family member, neighbor or acquaintance especially those who do not have family nearby. Run errands, make phone calls or Facetime, to check in, provide reassurance – keep relationships strong.

[Volunteer to Help](#)



Finding Food for Our Elders

For many seniors, mealtime at the local community center not only provided a nutritious meal, it was also an opportunity to socialize with friends and neighbors. Although the socializing has been curtailed, the need to provide nutritious food is critical for many seniors and New Mexicans with disabilities. Here are some resources.

Senior Food Hotline. The New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department (ALTSD) is running a hotline for seniors and disabled adults who need help accessing groceries. Leave a message with your name, phone number and city of residence and a department employee will call you back within two hours. You can call the hotline at 800-432-2080. Or use the live chat function on their [homepage](#) that allows you to get your questions answered quickly.

Food Distribution Sites. Many senior centers that offered meals are transitioning into food distribution centers where individuals can pick up to-go lunches and food. In some cases, those with physical, emotional or other limitations can request meal deliveries to their front door. Seniors, family members or friends/neighbors need to take the initiative and call their [local meal sites](#) to request these meals for our elders.

If you are responsible for a senior center and/or food distribution site and need help finding food supplies, Michael Venticinque, the Value Chain Coordinator for the [NM Farmers Marketing Association](#) is working overtime to find food producers and suppliers for senior centers, schools, food pantries and other food access sites. Contact Michael for more information: vcc@farmersmarketsnm.org

Grocery Stores. Many grocery stores are offering special shopping hours for older customers and high-risk groups. ALTSD has a list with [current information](#).

[New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department](#)

Other Resources for Seniors

AARP Tele-Town Halls. AARP is hosting a regular series of Coronavirus Information Tele-Town Halls on a range of topics, including caring for parents, kids and grandkids, supporting loved ones in care facilities, navigating telehealth, and coping and maintaining your well-being. Join in each Thursday at 11:00 for the latest information on the coronavirus by calling toll-free 855-274-9507. [View upcoming tele-town halls and replay past townhalls from this page.](#)

Area Agencies on Aging. New Mexico's four Area Agencies on Aging, or AAA's, administer, plan and support community-based services for individuals 60 and older, or age 55 and older in tribal programs. Most of the services coordinated through the AAA's are provided at the local level. Specific services offered by each AAA vary throughout the state. Still, each AAA offers a wide array of programs to help older New Mexicans and their families get the help and information they need. [Contact your local AAA.](#)

AARP Tele-Town Halls



Tip for Civility

Our ability to listen, speak, problem-solve on our own and with others are all impacted by stress. These abilities are challenged and compromised when stress is prolonged. Our elders have amazing resilience and many of them have lived through particularly challenging times pre-COVID-19 and have learned a thing or two from those lived experiences. Yet, the onslaught of information and disinformation and the complexity of the issues around COVID-19 add to stress. With the challenges of social isolation, as families and communities we must be especially considerate of the needs and wisdom of our elders at this time. When helping our elders to make sense of, navigate, and cope with these challenges some of the tips for a trauma-informed approach are particularly vital. See some tips below as adapted from a [trauma-informed resource](#).

- **Support emotional self-regulation.** Model the calm behavior you're trying to promote in others.
- **Prioritize relationships.** Find ways to connect and support each other.
- **Explain the “why” behind decisions.** Understanding why something (like a policy or practice) is happening can give people a sense of control and decrease a stress response.
- **Help people** know what to expect to the extent possible.
- **Don't make it personal, make it relational!** It's important to remember that emotional regulation and impulse control are more difficult during times of stress. People may not be showing up as their best selves during this period of fear and chaos.

Lilly Irvin-Vitela, President and Executive Director provided the parent and family tips. Connect with Lilly at lilly@nmfirst.org.

[Read More](#)



Democracy at its best!

Update Voter Registration by TOMORROW, May 5th!

If you are planning to vote in the 2020 Primary Election, you must be registered with a major political party (Democratic, Republican) before **May 5, 2020**. [Update your voter registration today in just a few minutes.](#)

Vote Absentee starting TOMORROW, May 5th!

Absentee voting begins on Tuesday, May 5, 2020, for the Primary Election. **The deadline to request an absentee ballot is May 28.** Go to NMVote, which contains the [absentee ballot portal](#).

[Update Registration & Vote Absentee](#)



Complete the Census; Tiny Census Concerts

Tiny Census Concerts

Inspired by NPR's Tiny Desk Concerts, we are inviting YOU to join us for our [Tiny Census Concerts](#), a series of concerts that highlight New Mexico's favorite creatives in support of participation in the Census!

Each concert brings musicians, dancers, spoken word artists, and visual artists right to your living room. Artists and special guests will help remind us all why your voice truly matters during the important 2020 Census.

Complete the Census today!

Every person in New Mexico needs to get counted to protect federal funding for healthcare, schools, roads, education, and more! **It's easy. It's online. It's important!**

[Complete the Census](#)

Our Mission

To be a catalyst for positive change by engaging citizens in policy and enabling action.

Our Core Values

Meaningfully engaging New Mexicans in public policy; Striving for and respecting consensus; Pursuing and respecting diverse points of views; Ensuring inclusion and transparency; Rising above partisan politics; Changing policy to improve people's lives; Creating an informed citizenry that is powerfully motivated; Reaching out statewide including rural and tribal communities; Partnering with others; Promoting civility and Democracy at its best!



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