



NEW MEXICO FIRST
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New Mexico First and Project SHARE NM Newsletter

Stay Informed and Engaged

June 15, 2020



The Road Ahead

"With more than one-third of Americans saying they need health and safety assurances to re-engage in normal activities, consumer and employee confidence will be key to successfully reopening our economy and our businesses. Social distancing, face masks, enhanced cleaning, regular testing – businesses that actively and publicly embrace these efforts will be the first ones to rebound, building both the employee and consumer loyalty in the process."

Rob Black is President and CEO of the [New Mexico Association of Commerce and Industry](#) and a NM First Board Member.



Careful, Evidence-Based Decision-Making

New Mexico's Secretary of Health, Kathy Kunkel, reminds us that the COVID-19 pandemic is a long-term event that requires careful, evidence-based decision

making and policy planning going forward to both save lives and promote economic recovery.

New Mexico has developed public health "[gating criteria](#)" that help determine our State's phased plan for a safe and gradual reopening of the economy and society. Gating criteria are thresholds New Mexico must satisfy before beginning to relax social distancing restrictions and closures. In evaluating reopening, officials will consider the State's ability to decrease transmission and infection rates, provide adequate testing, effectively track potential cases and isolate persons who test positive and ensuring sufficient hospital capacity to treat serious cases. The nonprofit group [COVID Act Now](#) is one organization tracking the status of these gating criteria for New Mexico counties.

Phase 1 was launched in May, and Phase 2 took effect on June 1, with new rules for restaurants, hotels, retailers, houses of worship, salons, gyms, malls, and drive-in theaters. Here is a [quick review](#) of what has changed, what remains the same, and what is in the future.



Safety First!

As we move to re-emerge from COVID-19, both the health of New Mexicans and the health of New Mexico's economy depend on our continued attention and adherence to COVID safe practices. The opportunity to reopen workplaces comes with a responsibility to ensure workers are safe. [All Together New Mexico](#) specifies COVID-19 safe practices (CSPs) that are required for businesses and individuals to remain safe and open.

Is your workplace safe to reopen? The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has a quick [decision-tree](#) to help you decide, along with many [resources](#) for various industries. [Back to Work Safety](#), sponsored by the American Industrial Hygiene Association, also offers industry-specific guidance for both businesses and consumers.

Free COVID-19 Testing

The New Mexico Department of Health encourages all individuals with or without symptoms to be tested for COVID-19. ["Broadscale testing will ultimately result in more lives saved," said Secretary Kathy Kunkel. "Even as we reopen, COVID-19 is still out there, and we must continue to be vigilant."](#)

All testing is free. While you may be asked to bring your insurance card, if you have one, to a testing site, keep in mind that no health care providers may charge or bill you for copays or other costs for a COVID-19 test in our State.

To find testing centers and times, [visit the Department of Health Website](#) or call the COVID-19 Hotline: 1-855-600-3453.

All early childhood professionals are required to get tested! The Early Childhood Education and Care Department has [up-to-date listings](#) of dates and

sites where childhood professionals can be tested (in Spanish and English). The [NewMexicoKids.org](https://www.newmexikids.org) website has additional information in English and Spanish.

If you, a child care provider, a staff member, or a child, tests positive for COVID-19 at your facility, center, or home, you must complete this safety plan before reopening. Facilities must complete required airing out, cleaning, and sanitization. View the safety plan and the New Mexico [Business and Facility Response Resources](#) for Positive COVID-19 Cases packet.

The State has issued new [Health and Safety Guidance for N.M. Child Care Centers and Early Childhood Professionals](#), in English and Spanish, updated June 10, 2020.

Food Industry Workers. The Dept. of Health in partnership with N.M. Restaurant Association is encouraging the food industry to take advantage of free COVID-19 testing. According to Carol Wight, Chief Executive Officer of the [New Mexico Restaurant Association](#), "Making testing readily accessible to our industry protects our employees and customers, and we ask that every New Mexico restaurant consider doing their part to slow the spread of COVID-19 by encouraging their staff to get tested."

Testing will be available from 8:00 to 11:00 AM every Monday, beginning June 15. Appointments are required and must be scheduled by noon the preceding Friday by calling a local public health office. Testing is free, but those who have insurance should bring their card with them. [Find a location and phone number near you.](#)

Safety Training for Food Producers. New Mexico Cooperative Extension builds capacity among agriculturalists to advance food safety. They are providing a

remote two half-day training event via "interactive remote video conferencing" "Zoom" that is intended for New Mexico fruit and vegetable growers and others interested in learning about the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), and co-management of natural resources and food safety, and details on how to develop a farm food safety plan. This training is available remotely on June 29th and 30th and is a great way to reinforce or build knowledge. [Register here](#).

The [New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association](#) also provides tiered training on food safety for producers. During the COVID-19 crisis, all in-person training has been replaced with an online course. Read the complete list of training requirements and how to get started in the [FAQs here](#). These training support the requirements for the New Mexico Public Education Department's Approved Supplier Program. While the deadline has passed for the training for the next school year, visit the [NMFMA website](#) to stay informed.



Access to Healthy Food

Many New Mexicans are still wondering where to find affordable, healthy food. Here are the latest resources to meet that concern.

Apply for SNAP. The maximum SNAP benefit will be available to participants through June. Call 1-855-637-6574 to complete an application over the phone or apply online at [Yes New Mexico](#). If you need help filling out the application, call 1-800-283-4465 to speak with a customer service caseworker.

Families with school-age children who are eligible for reduced or free-lunch meals can apply for **Pandemic-Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT)** to receive funding to replace the meals students would have received during the school year. You do not have to participate in SNAP or TANF for these benefits, and you can still

collect "grab and go" meals. **Call (505) 660-4822 to apply.**

More information on sites providing food and/or meals for children and seniors is provided in the [June 1, 2020 newsletter, available here.](#)

Tip for Civility: Key Ingredients Of Safe And Principled Civic Engagement

Some of the key ingredients of a safe and principled civic engagement include:

Good faith-people are engaging because they genuinely believe that an idea, issue or situation can be improved by engaging in principled dialogue. A foundation to principled dialogue is enlightened self-interest, the belief that our needs and interests are more likely to be met by working together instead of advancing one's interests unilaterally. Principled dialogue is also predicated on a willingness to understand the values and interests of others who will be participating in principled dialogue.

Inclusion-Principled dialogue requires that we engage in conversations with many stakeholders who hold diverse perspectives and lived experiences. Representation of individuals and communities that are impacted by decisions matters. "Nothing about us is for us without us" is a common framing of this principle. Mistaking comfort for safety has a destructive impact on the legitimacy of civic engagement. If we only engage others who we feel a high degree of comfort within dialogue, then rather than building community and consensus we run the risk of building factions. To be inclusive, safety cannot be assumed; we need to ask participants what they need to achieve a safe and principled conversation to address what may well be uncomfortable topics and we have to

be willing to do that with meaningful representation from a variety of stakeholders.

Transparency-As process designers or process participants, clarity about why a process has been designed a certain way; what the process and outcome goals are; and who has made decisions at each stage of the design and implementation of dialogue and decision-making is necessary for people to buy into the legitimacy of a civic engagement effort. Lack of transparency rightfully raises questions among participants about power, equity, and the authenticity of democratic processes.

The Tip for Civility section is authored by Lilly Irvin-Vitela, President and Executive Director of New Mexico First. She invites you to connect! Email her using the button below.

[Email Lilly](#)



OP-ED: Legislature Should Strengthen and Sustain a Health Democracy During Pandemic

New Mexico First, Lilly Irvin-Vitela on behalf of the New Mexicans for Ethics Coalition, Kathleen Sabo, Ethics Watch, and Sydney Tellez, Common Cause.

Now, more than ever, New Mexicans count on our citizen legislature to fulfill the public trust by approaching the June 18 Special Session with transparency, inclusion and equity.

May 8, 2020, the New Mexicans for Ethics Coalition, a member organization, and 30 additional organizations aligned to share an [open letter to legislators](#) to suggest ways to strengthen and sustain a health democracy. [READ MORE HERE.](#)

[Read More Here](#)



Vote By Mail

With the primary elections behind us and the national election on November 3rd approaching, the [League of Women Voters of New Mexico](#) is requesting the Governor to add to the special session agenda a call for legislation that will protect public health and provide the opportunity for the maximum participation in the general election.

The League suggests that the special election clause (vote by mail) in present law be extended to elections when there is a declared public health emergency. This simple solution of vote by mail will protect New Mexicans in times of emergency. [Read the letter here.](#)



Tell your Legislators that we Won't go Back! The State Budget and the Special Legislative Session

Background: The safety measures needed to slow the spread of the coronavirus have also put the brakes on New Mexico's economy. This means the state will not collect as much revenue – to pay for education, health care, roads, public safety, and more – as was expected when the Legislature crafted the budget for the coming fiscal year.

We've been here before but this time we know not to make the same mistakes we did the last time. During the last recession, lawmakers handled the loss of revenue by enacting a series of stingy state budgets – making big cuts to education, our courts, environmental protection, and other public services that we all depend upon. Not only did these cuts hurt families and businesses, they also put our economic recovery in low gear, and we were slower to recover than nearly any other state in the nation.

Action Needed: It's time to tell lawmakers that we won't go back to harmful state

budgets that hobble the services we and our businesses depend upon. Instead, we must repeal the ineffective tax breaks that were given out over the last 15 years to the wealthy and well-connected and invest that money where it will be put to work to rebuild our economy – in our people and communities. We also need to remind them that while they're looking for new revenue, taxing food is off limits. Too many New Mexico kids and families are already unsure about where the next meal is coming from and taxing food will only make that worse.

Please call the governor's office and your state legislators and urge them to not make deep budget cuts in the June special session.

What You Might Say: "I'm calling/emailing to urge you to keep the budgets for our schools, health care, and other services whole. Instead, please repeal ineffective tax breaks handed to the wealthy and well-connected that have cost the state so much money while producing so few jobs. And don't look for new revenue by taxing food. The cost of the recovery cannot be laid at the feet of New Mexico's families. Thank you."

Contact Info: Call Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's office at 505-476-2200, or [email her via a form here](#). Then contact your state representative and senator. [Find out who your legislators are and how to contact them here](#). Please note: their offices at the state Capitol are not staffed, so you will need to use their email address or the alternate phone number listed.

Source: [New Mexico Voices for Children](#)



Only 50% of New Mexicans Have Responded to the Census!

Only 50% of New Mexicans have responded to the census compared to 61.5% nationwide. We need to do better! Participation in the Census is important because it helps determine allocation of resources. According to the N.M. Human Services Department, a 1% undercount in N.M. would mean the loss of \$780 million dollars over the next 10 years. Census numbers also impact political representation. Most state and federal officials represent districts that are designed to reflect equalized populations. The shape and size of political districts changes every 10 years to reflect the growth or decline of populations.

Redistricting is the process of redrawing district boundaries to guarantee equal voter representation through equal, or equivalent, population counts.

Reapportionment happens at the federal level and is driven by the Census.

Reapportionment is a process to allot seats in a legislative body based on population changes.

The U.S. House of Representatives currently has a total of 435 seats, distributed among the states according to census population figures. The U.S. Senate has 100 seats — two per State, regardless of population which is not impacted by the Census. In New Mexico, where there is a history of significant under counting of communities of color, rural, and frontier communities, under counting contributes to under representation in the drawing of political districts. For more information on why completing the Census matters, [click here](#).

New Mexico First is Hiring!

Join our team! New Mexico First is hiring a Strategic Civic Engagement and Policy Manager. The Strategic Civic Engagement and Policy Manager is responsible for managing stakeholder engagement and selected projects within assigned policy areas, in this case, agricultural resilience. [Read more about the position here.](#)

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Our Mission. Our Values.

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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