



NEW MEXICO FIRST
People. Ideas. Progress.

New Mexico First and Project SHARE NM Newsletter

Stay Informed and Engaged

July 20, 2020

Disabilities Resources





“The developmental disability community is made up of self-advocates, parents, and caregivers who work tirelessly to continue the forward movement and improvement in the quality of life for its members. While lawmakers and advocate groups have achieved much individually, it is important for our groups to work collaboratively in order to ensure that the ideas, experiences, and concerns of the developmental disability community are heard. It is by our continued work together that we can amplify our voices and achieve meaningful results.” Megan Garrigan, Board Secretary, Elevate the Spectrum & Joel Davis, Owner, Law Office of Joel Davis

Disabilities Resources

While it could be said that all of us confront disabilities of some kind, it can also be said that some of us may need more support than others to address those disabilities and ensure our place as valued participants in our communities. New Mexico has a fairly robust system of support for those with disabilities of various kinds. The system encompasses family-based support and advocacy programs like [Elevate the Spectrum](#), state agencies like the Dept. of Health’s

[Developmental Disabilities Supports Division](#), and organizations like UNM's Center for [Development and Disability](#), that connect individuals and families to the range of available resources. To learn more about the many assets to and resources for those with special needs, visit the free, open-source, on-line [SHARE NM Resource Directory](#).

Here is a look at a few of these resources.

Elevate the Spectrum is a grassroots non-profit organization dedicated to supporting New Mexico's autism community. The organization was started by a group of parents of children on the autism spectrum who came together to form the support system in their city that was lacking. They organized a monthly meet-up and resource fair to share information and connect. In 2019, Elevate the Spectrum became an official non-profit and grew to include members from around the state including self-advocates, parents, siblings, and providers to ensure all areas of autism are supported.

The work of Elevate the Spectrum encompasses educating the community about autism, advocating for inclusion and support for the autism community, and providing support groups for individuals on the spectrum. Follow Elevate the Spectrum on [Facebook](#) and [join a group](#) to gather information or to stay connected.

The Center for Development and Disability (CDD) Information Network offers a wide array of disability related materials and services for individuals with disabilities, families, healthcare professionals, school personnel, advocates, case managers, and others. The Information Network has tip sheets, tools, documents and websites for finding resources, navigating service systems, and supporting individuals with disabilities and their families. The Information Network: Resource

Directory is currently being updated, with the revamped version due to launch in September. The [Information Network Library](#) contains the largest collection of disability-related books, eBooks, and DVDs in the state. While the onsite library is closed due to COVID-19, you can view an on-line catalogue of electronic and audio books for children and adults. [This video](#) walks you through the process of selecting and checking out these resources.

For more information or assistance, call an Information Specialist at 800-552-8195 or 505-272-8549 or Library Services: 844-231-5003 or 505-272-0281. Or email HSC-InfoNet@salud.unm.edu

NM DOH Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) oversees three home and community-based Medicaid waiver programs. These include the [Developmental Disabilities Waiver](#) (Traditional Waiver), the [Medically Fragile Waiver](#) (Traditional Waiver), and the [Mi Via Self-Directed Waiver](#). DDSD also administers the [Family Infant Toddler \(FIT\) Program](#) for children up to three years old, with or at risk for developmental delay or disability.

On July 1, 2020, the DDSD launched the new [Supports Waiver Program](#) for eligible individuals who are on the Developmental Disabilities Waiver Wait List. The program provides a \$10,000 allocation to purchase from a menu of support options as well as the services of Community Supports Coordinator. If you have questions about whether this is a good option for you or your family members, the CDD Information Specialists are ready to advise you. Call 800-552-8195.

The Division has set up a [COVID-19 Page](#) with the latest information for DD providers with information, publications, and resources, specific to help manage the COVID-19 emergency.

There are also significant supports available through the [Department of Workforce Solutions](#) for adults with disabilities, through the [NM Commission for the Blind](#) and the [NM Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing](#).



Disabilities, Food, and Farming

[Mandy's Farm](#) creates opportunities for individuals with a variety of disabilities to learn valuable skills and make contributions to the agricultural industry. Mandy's Farm is a partner along with the NMSU Cooperative Extension and NM Technology Assistance Programs in [AgrAbility](#), a USDA funded Occupational Therapy Program. Mandy's Farm also developed the [Vocational Access and Meaningful Opportunities for Success \(VAMOS\) Program](#). This program provides support for service recipients and family caregivers, and assists adults with

developmental disabilities to gain successful employment in the community at minimum wage or higher.

New Mexicans with disabilities may access food through the [NM Aging and Long-Term Services Department](#). While service delivery options have changed during the pandemic, support can be accessed online at the link above or by calling the Aging and Disability Resource Center 1-800-432-2080 Toll Free or 1-505-476-4937 TTY.

Federal Grant Opportunities

Each week, our Congressional representatives put out a listing of new grant opportunities offered by various federal departments. We've listed a [selection of grant opportunities](#) from the latest newsletter that may be of interest. To sign up and receive weekly listings, email Sarai Torres, the Economic Development and Special Initiatives Aide for US Senator Martin Heinrich at Sarai_Torres@heinrich.senate.gov.



Stay Safe New Mexico

As trusted voices in our communities, we need to follow and share the latest guidelines from the New Mexico Department of Health. The state needs our help to get the word out. Please share the signs for face covering requirements and quarantine protocol for out-of-state travelers, with your colleagues. Set an example and encourage others to follow these guidelines.

- [Face Coverings Required](#)
 - [14-Day Quarantine for Out-of-State Travelers](#)
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Be an Election Protection Volunteer

Common Cause NM is looking for volunteers to help this election season as voters face new challenges to accessing the ballot box. You can make a difference and help answer questions about voting by mail, early voting and in-person voting during this pivotal election. Throughout the election cycle, volunteers provide voter information, document problems encountered when voting, and work with partners on the ground to identify and remove barriers to voting. Election protection focuses on the voter – not on the political horse race – and provides guidance, information and help to any American, regardless of their voting choices. [Volunteer!](#)



Children Count!

Parents, grandparents, and caregivers, please remember to include all your children on the census form. Let us make sure all children are counted in the 2020 Census. All children deserve their fair share of the resources they need to thrive and age with dignity: beginning with childcare, public schools from pre-K to college, employment opportunities, and health care at every life-stage. If you would like help completing your census form over the phone, call Census employee, Mercy Alarid, at (505) 715-3275.

The Census is at the Door

The Census Bureau is preparing to follow up with New Mexicans who haven't yet responded to the Census. Thousands of census-takers will go door-to-door to

collect information from households. As part of the hiring process, these employees must swear a lifetime oath to protect responses to the census, and the oath must be taken in person. The Bureau is now looking for sites where census-takers can be sworn in safely.

Here's [how to identify a census employee](#). If a census taker comes to your house, please help them make sure that you and all the members of your household are counted.

Tip on Civic Engagement

A common saying in policy change work, that is people-centered and based on the specific needs of certain population is, “Nothing about us without us is for us!” Individuals and families who have special needs and exceptional abilities, or have someone they love who is exceptional, have ample opportunity to advocate out of necessity.

During a recent community conversation, that was designed to prepare NM First and communities for our statewide Town Hall, Health: Body, Mind, and Spirit, people from the disability rights community shared insights on health values, beliefs, assets, challenges, and policy opportunities. One participant shared the impacts of COVID 19 on both formal and informal support systems.

Without that direct lived experience being expressed so authentically and powerfully, an important and valuable perspective would have been missed. It is important to remember that policy is more durable and has fewer hurtful unintended consequences when the people most impacted, and those closest to them are actively engaged in decision-making and policy change efforts.

This section is authored by Lilly Irvin-Vitela, President and Executive Director of New Mexico First. She invites you to connect! Email her at lilly@nmfirst.org.

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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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