



NEW MEXICO FIRST

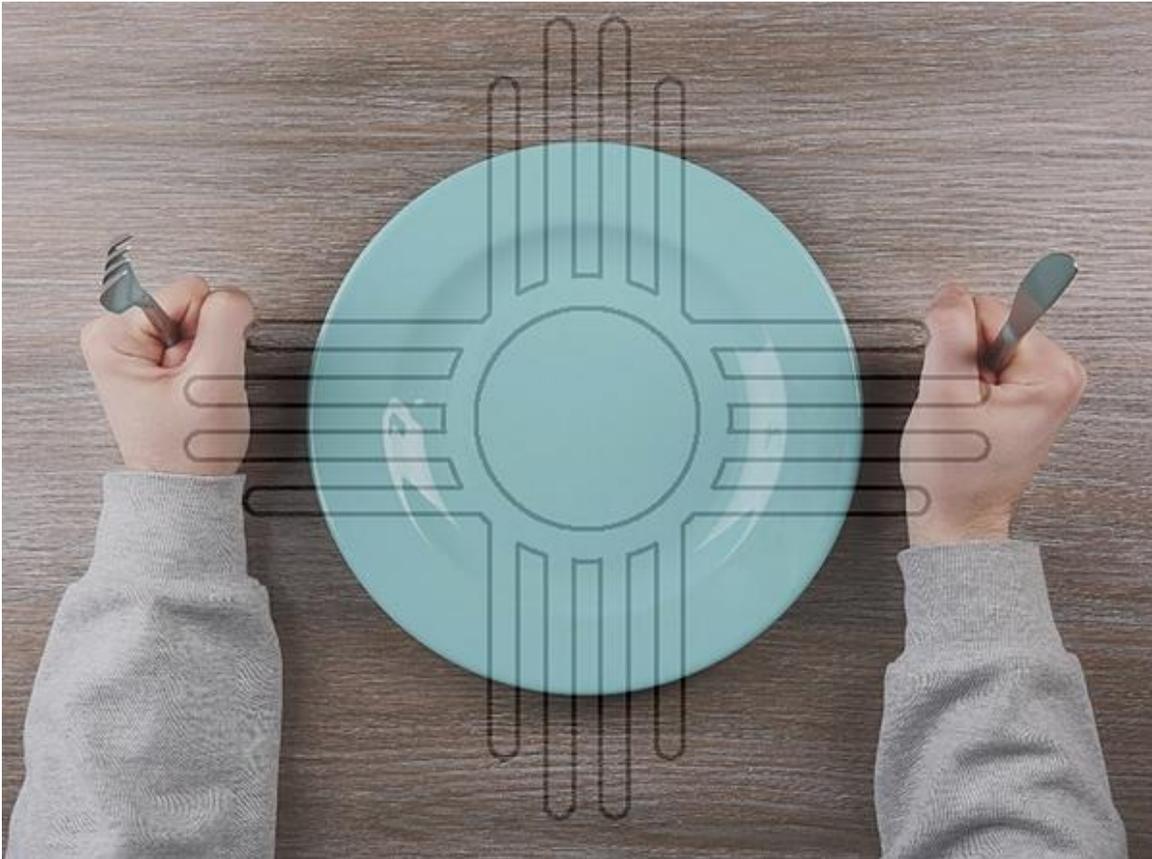
People. Ideas. Progress.

New Mexico First and Project SHARE NM Newsletter

Stay Informed and Engaged

July 27, 2020

Feeding New Mexico



Hunger Grows in NM

As closures and social distancing orders limit the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the impact is being felt in communities large and small. While changes taking place are disrupting the lives of nearly everyone in some way, food-insecure individuals will face particular challenges, and the number of people who experience [food insecurity](#) is expected to increase, as unemployment rates remain high or increase and time-limited supplemental income supports expire. (Food insecurity is generally defined in U.S. Census Bureau surveys as “sometimes not having enough to eat” or “often not having enough to eat” in the past week.)

[Feeding America](#) and [Roadrunner Food Bank](#) are using data from a [variety of sources](#) to estimate how the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) will affect food insecurity rates and the people who face hunger. The [report for New Mexico](#) is not good. Between 2018 and 2020, NM's overall rate of food insecurity increased from 15% to 21%, and the food insecurity rate for children increased from 24% to 34%. Counties varied considerably in their food-insecurity rates, with overall rates ranging from 12% in Las Alamos County to 27.5% in Luna and McKinley Counties. The rates for children ranged from 19.5% in Las Alamos County to 47.4% in Catron County. A [second analysis](#), using the U.S. Census' new Household Pulse Survey, confirms this trend nationally, but cautions us that high rates of child food insecurity are still lower than the even higher rates of food insecure households with children (27% nationally). Parents often ensure their children eat, even when that means skipping meals themselves. Reports of this practice have increased during the pandemic.

The analysis is ongoing, and new data will be posted when it becomes available, along with an [interactive map](#).

Impact of Food Insecurity on Children and Our Communities

Two studies by [Children's Health Watch](#) add to the research documenting the negative impact that food insecurity has on children's health and development. "[Too Hungry to Learn](#)" concludes that by kindergarten, food insecure children are too often cognitively, emotionally, and physically behind their food secure peers.

These effects carry through the early school years, hampering their ability to achieve educational success.

These early set-backs, moreover, have implications for our nation's economy and social vitality. "[Feeding our Human Capital](#)" argues that early and ongoing experiences of food insecurity add to healthcare costs, reduce the skills and productivity of our workforce, and weaken our communities. We know that the well-being of communities is comprised of the well-being of individuals and families. With such high hunger rates in NM, it's not surprising that other systems are comprised, such as health, education, and the economy.

Investing in our nation's future through federal food and nutrition programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) and CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) is a key strategy for New Mexico to ensure that children and seniors, in particular have access to sufficient, healthy food for optimal growth and development. Without reliable, concrete supports the vicious cycle of poverty and all its ills will continue (see NM First's [Cliff Effects and Churning Report](#)).



New Mexicans Respond

[The New Mexico Food Bank Association](#) and its members are continuing to meet the challenge of feeding New Mexicans and have grown services exponentially to meet the increasing demand for food. NM is a national model in using mobile food distributions to deliver food to rural and frontier communities. Over 90% of the support for our food banks and pantries comes from philanthropy and private donations. Find the [food bank serving your area](#) to see how you can help by donating and volunteering.

[Presbyterian Healthcare Services Community Health](#) continues to offer free meals for children at seven hospitals across the state, including during the summer months. The program provides free, nutritious food to children 18 years and younger, regardless of income, as part of Presbyterian's partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the New Mexico Children,

Youth and Families Department (CYFD).

Demand for the meals has increased dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic, with Presbyterian hospitals providing 600% more meals in March, April and May compared to the same months in 2019.

In addition to the free meal program, Presbyterian has two Food Farmacy sites that provide free food for select patients in need and offers the Healthy Here Mobile Farmers Market, as well as free virtual classes on healthy cooking, gardening and chronic disease management.

Check out a listing of [sites and mealtimes](#).

All Nations Wellness and Healing Center, a program of [First Nations Community Healthcare](#) in Albuquerque, hosts an Indigenous Plate Program, serving warm meals to individuals who experience hunger due to having limited financial resources. [Breakfast](#) and [lunch](#) are provided Monday – Friday. Phone 505-717-2704 or 505-717-2873 for more information.



Additional Food Resources

For Students: The [NM Out-of-School Time Network](#) has information on a number of food resources for New Mexico's school children and their families.

For Seniors: The [NM Aging and Long-Term Services Department](#) provides meals and nutrition services to seniors and persons with disabilities. 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.

For Everyone: To find food resources in your community, add your location to [this search](#) of SHARE New Mexico's Resource Directory.



Funding Opportunities

[Con Alma Health Foundation](#) invites nonprofits to apply for grants to provide basic needs to immigrants who are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and unable to access federal and state resources. Con Alma will award grants to help nonprofits provide such basic needs as crisis intervention, food distribution, housing assistance, case management, civil rights and advocacy, and health care supplies and assistance. Con Alma will accept grant applications from Tuesday, July 21 through 5 p.m. August 14. Grants will range from \$7,500 to \$15,000. For more information visit [Con Alma's COVID-19 Emergency Assistance Opportunities page](#).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will host a webinar on the Farmers to Families Food Box Program to discuss a [new solicitation opportunity](#) on July 28, 2020, at 3 p.m. ET. The webinar will discuss technical details of the USDA's solicitation for the next round of purchases for the program.

The New Mexico Department of Agriculture is accepting grant applications for its Healthy Soil Program. The act's purpose is to promote and support farming and ranching systems and other forms of land management that increase soil organic

matter, aggregate stability, microbiology and water retention to improve the state's soil health, yield and profitability. New Mexico farmers and ranchers interested in applying must do so by 5 p.m. Monday, Aug. 31 through an Eligible Entity, such as a Soil and Water Conservation District; a tribe, nation, or pueblo; or a land grant or acequia. [Learn more](#).



Census

Making sure we get a complete and accurate count of all New Mexicans requires the participation and collaboration of all New Mexicans, including partners at the state, tribal, and local level to count everyone once, only once, and in the right place.

You can help! First, make sure that everyone in your household has been counted. It's quick and easy to do. [Start here](#). Then, encourage your community to respond to the census online or by phone. We need trusted community voices like yours from local communities to help count every resident in New Mexico. Stay informed by following [iCountNM](#) on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and help spread the word to your friends, family, and followers.



Register to Vote

In New Mexico, you can register to vote on-line. Visit the [Secretary of State's website](#) to learn more and register to vote today. Do you think you're already registered to vote but want to make sure? Visit the [Voter Portal](#) and enter your information to double-check that you're registered and ready to participate in the next election. By taking care of this now, you avoid the fall rush and can have peace of mind that your voice will be heard in the upcoming general election.

Tip for Civility

Many New Mexicans reside within civic and healthcare deserts. Healthcare deserts are places where access to care is significantly restricted, characterized by long waits, few providers, and the absence of key services to promote health, prevent illness, and provide intervention and treatment. As a result, they tend to be communities characterized by health outcomes that are comparatively worse than others. [Kei Kawashima-Ginsberg and Felicia Sullivan](#) describe civic deserts as places “characterized by a dearth of opportunities for civic and political learning and engagement” and a lack of “youth programming, culture and arts organizations and religious congregations.”

In a [2016 CIRCLE poll of Millennials](#), youth in civic deserts were less likely to believe that their voice can make a legitimate difference, that politics matter, that organized citizens can impact public policy, and that strong institutions are important to a healthy society. According to the [poll released in June 2020](#), 83% of youth believe they have the power to change the country and 79% report that they understood their role as change agents because of issues brought to light during the pandemic. In contrast to this youth voice, the view of adults about the state of our democracy is troubling. A 2020 Pew survey on [How Americans View Trust, Facts, and Democracy Today](#) reports that "about 6 in 10 adults now say they have little or no confidence in the wisdom of the American people when it comes to making political decisions while 39 percent express at least some confidence."

The need to engage multi-generational groups on the issues that most impact our lives, is critically important to New Mexico. Efficacy and buy-in to self-governance can increase when people learn together through hands-on efforts such as our Health: Body, Mind, and Spirit Town Hall. As a largely rural state with historically low voter turn-out and civic engagement, collective action and collective impact efforts work well because they align with values around family and community

and foster multi-generational work to strengthen New Mexico. During the statewide community conversations leading up to the town hall, at least 18% of the participants were 22 or younger. Youth need to be engaged in public policy, not only so we can carry forward larger community efforts, but because they also have so much to teach us.

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.

REGISTER NOW

**New Mexico First Statewide
2020 Health: Body, Mind, & Spirit
Virtual Town Hall
Aug. 5 - Sept. 2, 2020**



REGISTER FOR FREE

Participants from across the state will come together at the 2020 Healthcare Town Hall to share ideas, look for solutions, and find common ground to make New Mexico healthier.

Community members will:

- Listen and be heard
- Explore diverse perspectives
- Build recommendations to optimize health
- Decide on action steps that we can achieve together

Please save the date and spread the word!

For more information, subscribe to our email list at www.nmfirst.org.
Town hall details will be shared via email and on our website.

www.nmfirst.org

info@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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