



**NEW MEXICO FIRST**  
*People. Ideas. Progress.*

## **New Mexico First and Project SHARE NM Newsletter**

Stay Informed and Engaged

August 17, 2020

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### **Update on Health: Body, Mind, Spirit**

On August 5th, community members from across New Mexico came together to begin a month-long series of conversations about how to improve the health of our communities and residents. Throughout the Town Hall series, New Mexicans

are discussing our values, challenges, and assets to discover common ground, deliberate, and build consensus on policy recommendations that can move us forward to a healthier New Mexico.

For those of you who aren't able to join us, we'd like to share some of the highlights from our weekly sessions exploring several facets of our health system in New Mexico, with an aim toward reaching consensus on a slate of policy recommendations and collective action to improve New Mexico's health. You can find links to [background reports and presentations](#) on our NM First website. This week the newsletter focuses on New Mexico's health workforce.



## **Building the Health Workforce New Mexico Needs**

At the opening plenary on August 5th, Tracey Bryan set the stage with her presentation on [Building the Health Workforce New Mexico Needs](#). Tracey is the President and CEO of [The Bridge of Southern New Mexico](#), Chair of the State Workforce Board, and NM First Board member.

Tracey tells us that The Bridge story began when Doña Ana community members resolved to solve their high school graduation crisis, with graduation rates at the time under 50%. Today Doña Ana has the highest graduation rates in the state. Tracey notes that “It’s the same premise as this statewide town hall. If you bring the collective wisdom of New Mexico together to address a challenge, along with the people who can mobilize resources or policy to effect change, you will be successful.”

Building on that success, the next community goal was to build a skilled and ready workforce. Since healthcare is a major economic driver in Doña Ana County, as in many of our counties, The Bridge’s mission-aligned group of partners in the workforce talent development continuum worked together to develop a pathway to health careers. The pathway connects education, Workforce Connections resources, work-based learning opportunities, and maps out career progression in a host of areas. By creating seamless transitions from high school to community college to university, students and those wishing to enter these fast-growing careers have a map that shows them where to start or where to enter to have the greatest earning power for the long-term.

“To be successful, you have to change everything all at once. And we are just crazy enough to believe that we can do that!” Read [Tracey’s inspiring presentation](#).

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## **Building NM's Nursing Workforce**

Nurses are often cited as the backbone of healthcare, as well as its largest profession. Consistently ranked among the most trusted profession in America, nurses are present throughout the continuum of care and the continuum of life, providing physical and emotional support. Nurses are health promoters, health educators, advocates for patients and families, as well as caregivers. And nurses are in short supply, especially in New Mexico's rural counties. The [2019 Annual Report](#) of the NM Healthcare Workforce Committee found that only two counties – Bernalillo and Grant – met national benchmarks for an adequate number of RNs. To bring all counties up to these national benchmarks would require an additional 3,700 RNs practicing in those counties that lack them.

In May 2019, Governor Lujan Grisham established a Nursing Work Force Taskforce to develop a plan to meet this challenge. The Task Force was stewarded by the cabinet deputy secretaries for the Departments of Workforce Solutions (Lead: Ricky Serna), Higher Education, Health, and in consultation with Public Education. According to Sheena Ferguson, MSN, RN, and Task Force Convener, one of the recommendations is to “grow our own” and prime the nursing career pipeline by increasing the number of qualified applicants in high school to LPN to RN programs.

Mirroring The Bridge model described above, a current pilot program recruits students at Capital High School in Santa Fe beginning in their sophomore year to begin coursework that will launch them on a healthcare career pathway. While in high school, the students complete an LPN program and an internship at Christus St. Vincent's Regional Medical Center, then are able to matriculate into the RN degree program at Santa Fe Community College. They are offered full-time employment upon graduation at Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center.

Con Alma Health Foundation is supporting the program, providing books, supplies, and uniforms (medical scrubs) to students.

Sheena Ferguson, recently retired from her position as Chief Nursing Officer at UNM Hospitals, notes that this model is readily adaptable for other counties and other healthcare careers. For more information, contact Sheena at [nmsionnagh@gmail.com](mailto:nmsionnagh@gmail.com).

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## Valuing Diversity in our Health Workplace

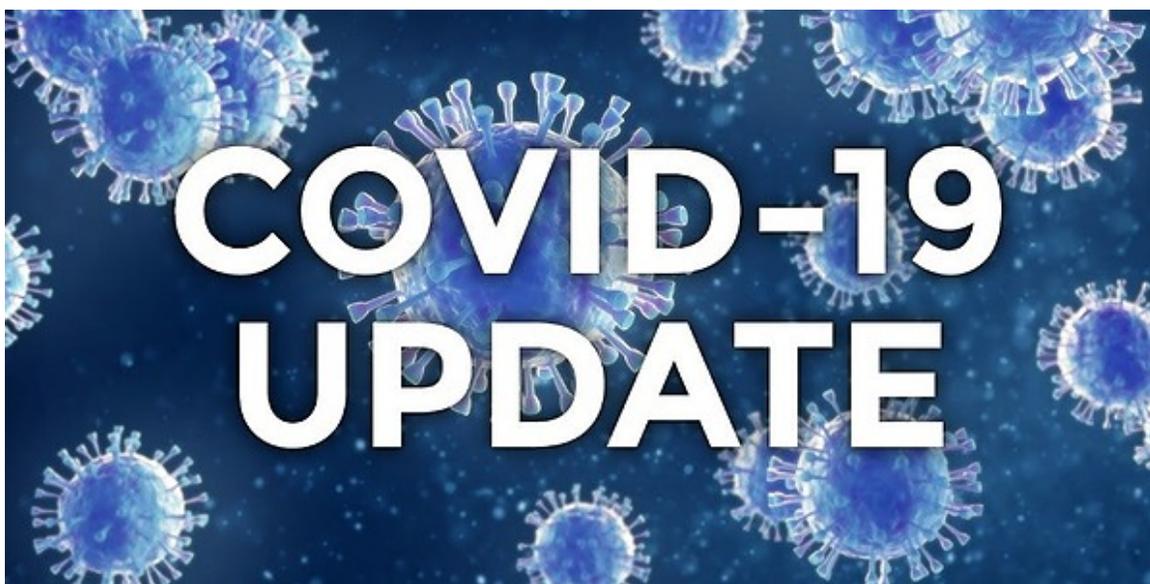
Town Hall participants found it easy to name the importance of having a diverse, culturally and linguistically competent health workforce. “Culture and language play a big role in how people perceive their health.” “Providers who look or talk like you produce better outcomes.” “Based on rapport and trust, health will improve. Communication is key.”

And there have been many recommendations as to how we can ensure that our health workforce is culturally and linguistically diverse and competent, from education and training programs for health professionals that require cultural competency skills, to recruiting our health workforce from among those who are from the communities to be served.

Robert Sturm, the Executive Director of the [NM AIDS Partnership](#), took it one step further in a recent Town Hall session. Robert reminded us that it’s not enough to ensure that health workers are culturally competent, or even that they come from the community to be served. If the healthcare organization isn’t culturally competent, the care provided won’t be either. What does this mean in an organization? Robert suggests “Supporting health providers’ different ways of

understanding. Not expecting everyone to behave the same once they're hired. Making sure that the language used around them isn't offensive. Promoting people who are diverse. Respecting their knowledge. There isn't just one way to be professional."

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## **COVID-19 Update**

While COVID-19 cases are starting to trend downward in New Mexico, we, like the rest of the country, are waiting anxiously to hear whether new relief efforts will become available as the pandemic stretches on. There are critical questions about paying for food, rent, or a mortgage, and going back to school or work. We will try to help keep us all up-to-date on our [COVID-19 information page](#). Here are a couple of updates.

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## **Grants**

[First Nations Development Institute's](#) COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund is designed to distribute funds efficiently and swiftly to Native nonprofit organizations and tribal programs that need it most. Initially, funds are being prioritized in high-concentration areas – California, New Mexico, the Pacific Northwest, New York, Navajo Nation, Hopi Tribe and COVID-19 hotspots. The entire amount of any donations and grants received from foundations will reach Native communities directly. [Donate here!](#)

The [New Mexico Foundation's](#) Vecino, Neighbor Helping Neighbor Fund is willing to consider additional requests on a case-by-case basis. The Native America Relief Fund will be offering grant opportunities in the fall. Visit [the website](#) for more information or to donate to these funds.

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## **Assistance**

[McKinley Mutual Aid](#) is accepting requests for community care packages for households who reside in the service area of McKinley County, including Navajo Nation and Zuni (A: shiwi) Pueblo families in need of food, water, and other supplies. Complete the [online request form](#), or call McKinley Mutual Aid at (505) 862-9799.

[Indian Country Grassroots Support](#) is a nonprofit founded by retired Diné judges, peacemakers and law professors with deep tribal community roots and ongoing concern and commitment for future generations. The group is supporting COVID relief efforts, including the following two.

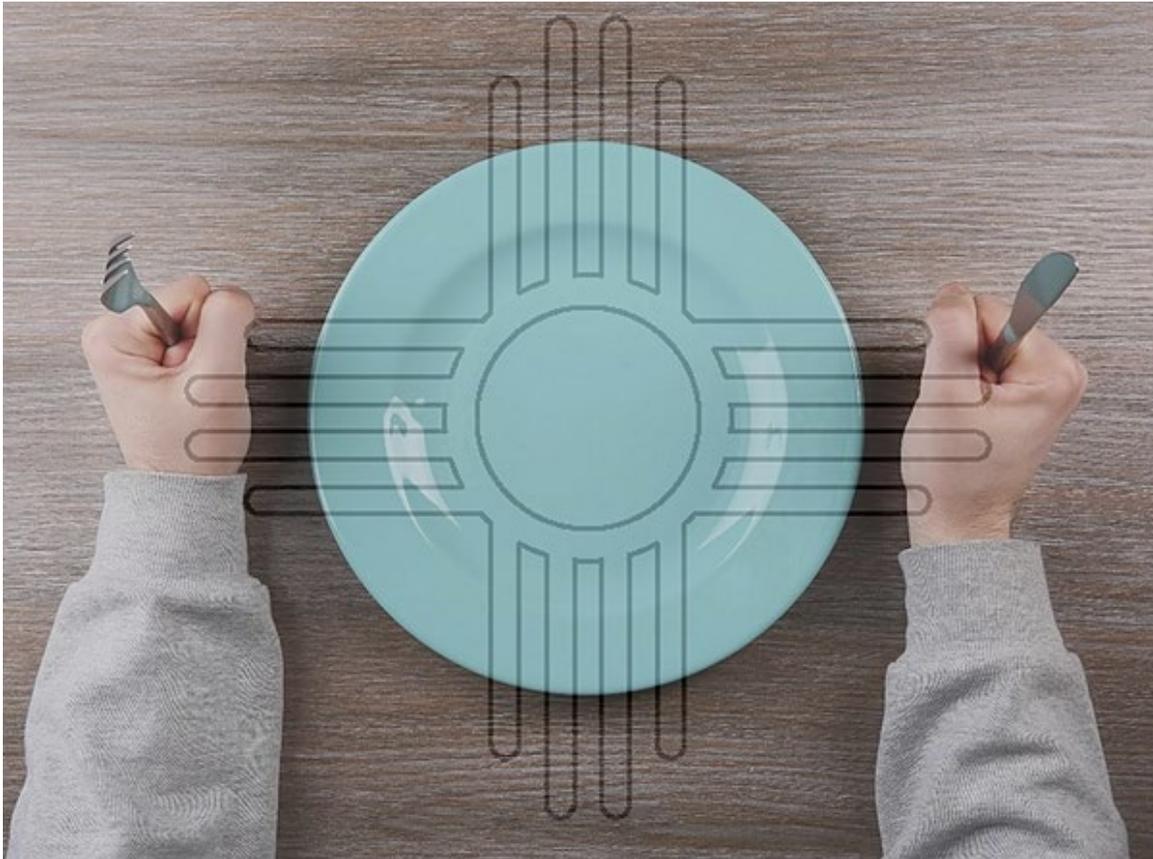
[Navajo Family Voices](#) is the first tribal affiliate of the Family Voices national organization and Family-to-Family Health Information Center on the Navajo

Nation. Families of children and youth with extra health needs provide help and support to other families on the Navajo Nation. The website is a “first-stop” for information on various types of COVID-19 support, including “truck to trunk” distributions of food, home internet assistance, and [Strong Hearts Native Helpline](#) for domestic abuse: 1-844-7NATIVE

[Northern Diné COVID-19 Relief Effort](#) is a coalition serving 20 northern Navajo Nation Agency communities, centered in Shiprock. The goal is to add to and share highly limited community resources to fulfill essential supplies of food, water, cleaning and other supplies. You can [donate here](#).

Deadline Extension - Early Childhood Stabilization Grants. The deadline for licensed childcare providers to apply for the Child Care Stabilization and Recovery Grant has been extended to 5:00 p.m. on August 27, 2020. To be eligible, your business must have severely curtailed business operations or experienced a revenue decline since March 16, 2020 or been forced to close. More information and the application link are available on the [New Mexico Kids website](#).

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## Food Update

Food insecurity (sometimes or often not having enough to eat) remains a growing problem exacerbated by the COVID-19 emergency. According to recent [data from the Census Bureau](#), the majority of people reporting food insufficiency say it is due to inability to afford food more so than inability to go out to get food or lack of supply of food.

Medicaid reaches many people who may be facing food insecurity. Among Medicaid adults, 23% reported food insufficiency the week ending July 21, 2020, up from 20% in the week ending March 13, 2020. Despite significant overlap between program income eligibility limits, less than half (47%) of all Medicaid enrollees were enrolled in SNAP in 2018, and only about half (54%) the Medicaid

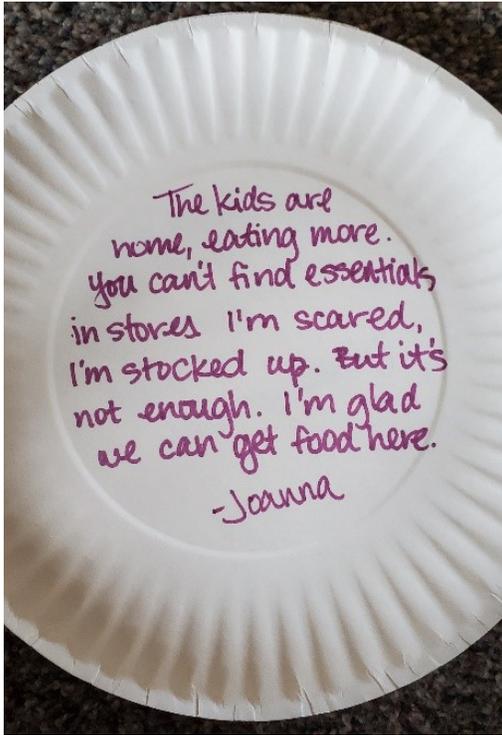
children under 5 were enrolled in WIC.

The [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) examines these relationships and suggests recommendations for how Medicaid can play a role in connecting people to nutrition assistance programs. Medicaid programs can coordinate eligibility and enrollment systems and processes with nutrition assistance programs. They can also help connect enrollees with food resources more directly, such as by screening enrollees for food needs and directing them to community resources.

[Learn More](#)

The [New Mexico's Food, Hunger, Water, Agriculture Policy Action Teams](#) are currently in emergency response mode. This work group has been meeting since the Summer of 2019. The work group includes policy makers, the emergency food sector, farmers, ranchers, resilient agriculture advocates, faith communities, anti-hunger and anti-poverty advocates, human rights advocates, health providers and advocates, local food system advocates, researchers, philanthropy, and more. The large policy work group and the several action teams are working together to help coordinate community responses to complement government efforts during the COVID-19 emergency. You are invited to join these efforts to support your fellow New Mexicans. New Mexico First and other policy work group partners will be testifying at the Health and Education Committee meeting in September.

[Learn More](#)



September is Hunger Action Month, and we will be bringing you more information about how you can help address hunger in New Mexico. But you don't have to wait until September to donate to your local food banks and pantries. Check in at the [NM Association of Food Banks](#). Find local food pantries and meal programs by entering your location (city, county or zip code) into [this search](#) of the SHARE Resource Directory.

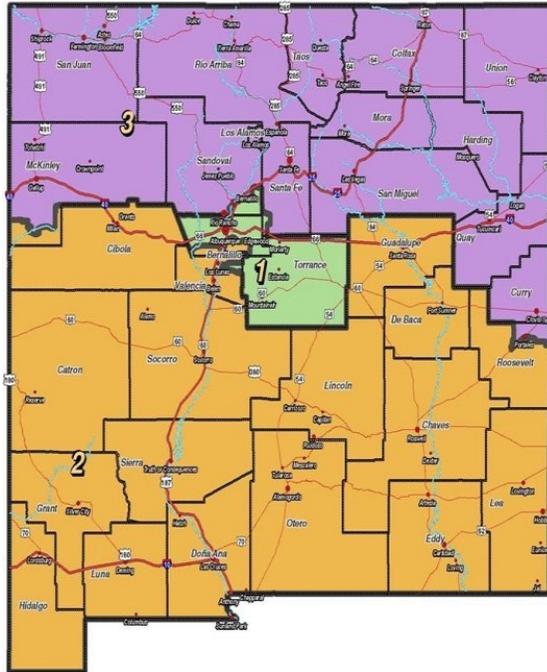


**URGENT CENSUS ALERT**

Time is running out to be counted in the Census! On August 6th, the US Census Bureau announced that it will end self-response options as well as field data collection by September 30, 2020. As of today, only 53% of NM households have completed the Census. [Check response rates](#) for your city, county, congressional district, or tribal area.

Missing just 1% of New Mexicans means the loss of \$780 million dollars over the next 10 years. Help make sure we get our fair share of our tax dollars. If you know someone who has not yet responded, please encourage them to do so today.

- Online: <https://my2020census.gov/>
  - By phone:
    - English: 1-844-330-2020
    - Spanish: 1-844-468-2020
    - Telephone Display Device: 1-844-467-2020
    - [Other language options](#)
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## Your Public Comment on New Mexico Redistricting is Sought!

Redistricting is important! New district boundaries will be decided for both congressional and state legislative districts. At its core, redistricting determines which politicians represent which communities. Redistricting directly affects who holds and wields political power. New Mexico First strongly believes voters should choose their elected officials rather than elected officials choosing their voters.

In partnership with Fair Districts New Mexico, on August 18th, New Mexico First President Lilly Irvin-Vitela will address the Interim Committee Courts, Corrections & Justice on redistricting! It starts at 2:30 pm MST. Click on [this link](#) to watch.

Your public comment on redistricting at this committee is sought! There are a few steps that must be taken for you to make a public comment. We suggest you log

on here no later than to 2:00 pm on Tuesday to register for public comment. Your comments need not be lengthy, though speak for as much time as you are comfortable. Please share your name, town, and any organizations you may represent, the number of members, and your organization's concerns about fair redistricting in 2021. As always, with public comment, please be patient as schedules are not always exact, and presentations sometimes run overtime. If you wish to submit the public comment as an attendee during the public comment period designated for the meeting, please [click here](#).

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Nina  
Otero-Warren



Ida B. Wells-  
Barnett



Alice Paul



Mabel  
Ping-Hua Lee



Zitkala-Sa

## **American Women and the Right to Vote**

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, when women won the right the vote in the United States. The milestone followed at least 100 years of active organizing and protest by women from all communities across the nation. And still the movement continued, as the 19th Amendment failed to secure voting rights for all women.

Because the U.S. Constitution leaves it up to the states to decide who has the right to vote, many women and men of color were kept from the polling booths. Native Americans were not even citizens until the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, and it still took over forty years for all fifty states to allow Native Americans to vote. In 1948, New Mexico amended our state constitution to allow “Indians not taxed” to vote. Maine was the last, in 1967, to allow all Native American to vote. The McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 finally lifted all restrictions on all Asian immigrants becoming naturalized citizens, allowing them to exercise their right to vote. Jim Crow laws kept African American women and men from voting booths until the Civil Rights Act of 1965 and subsequent re-authorization began to break down barriers.

Nevertheless, we can celebrate the progress we’ve made and recommit ourselves to the ongoing work of making our country a “more perfect union.” Tune in to 100 Years Celebration - Centennial Online Event Honoring Women’s Right to Vote, a week-long virtual celebration from Tuesday, August 18 through Wednesday, August 26, 2020. The event, sponsored by the State of New Mexico, the City of Albuquerque, and the NM League of Women Voters, will feature a multitude of virtual activities and entertainment including poetry, music, photos and history about women, by women.

Follow ABQ Special Events on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) for daily posts throughout the week. You'll be introduced to a Suffragist daily throughout the celebrations and be able to play games while learning about the Women's Suffrage Movement. Join us!

[Learn More](#)

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# DEBATEWATCH 2020

## Cast an Informed Vote

**Who:** New Mexicans

**What:** Cross-partisan Debate Watch Party

**Where:** From the comfort of your home

**When:** Immediately following the debates and/or the following day.

- There are 4 debates in the Fall of 2020: Sept. 29, Oct. 7 (VP), Oct. 15 (Town Hall), Oct. 22
- The debates begin at 7PM Mountain Time Zone
- Two Options to Join the Watch Party

- Night Owls- Join the dialogue that follows immediately after by clicking on the link you will receive in the registration confirmation.
- Early Birds- Sept. 30, Oct. 8, Oct. 16, Oct. 23 8:00 am-9:30 am

**How:** Register, watch, listen, join a facilitated remote dialogue to discuss your observations with a politically diverse group of people. By registering and attending, you are agreeing to:

- [Be open to other points of view.](#)
- [Show respect. Listen respectfully as others comment.](#)
- [Look for areas of commonality: agree where you can.](#)
- [Be focused: keep your comments focused on the debate issues rather than style or personality.](#)
- [Please turn off the pundit commentary. We're interested in each of your thoughts and analysis.](#)

[Register Here](#)

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## Tip for Civic Engagement

When people come together to strengthen community, it may be around broad goals or specific issues that have already been identified and commonly agreed upon as priorities. Efforts that address community issues and build healthier patterns of relating tend to create the most positive impacts with the fewest unintended negative consequences. More inclusive and relationship-based approaches to civic engagement tend to also create the most durable capacity to

address the broad goals and immediate issues while strengthening capacity to endure changes in community and pivot effectively to respond to emerging needs. Being inclusive and relationship-based is not only a kinder and more just way to approach our work—especially around health. It is more effective, more impactful, and more grounded in New Mexico’s greatest assets...our culture and human capital.

Jere Pawl, the Godmother of Infant Mental Health, often extolled the “Platinum Rule” when it came to understanding why relational practices are so important to people seeking services as well as providers. The Platinum Rule is to “do unto others as you would have them do unto others.” If you want parents to celebrate the milestones their child reaches and see their children in a strength-based way that is deeply connected to family and culture, then as promoters of infant mental health, family assets and strengths must also be honored in the context of their family and culture. A provider’s strengths and assets must also be valued and respected in the system or program they work within. Family-friendly employment policies and opportunities for the health workforce are a critical ingredient of both workforce development and the delivery of quality care. Skillfully-offered and delivered reflective supervision can provide professionals with the opportunity to explore their beliefs, values, and biases so they are able to deliver care with greater competency. In the absence of a healthy parallel processes, it’s incredibly challenging to produce healthy outcomes.

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](mailto: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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