



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

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

Stay Informed and Engaged

October 5, 2020

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*“Ordinary people with extraordinary vision can redeem the soul of America by getting in what I call good trouble, necessary trouble. Voting and participating in the democratic process are key. The vote is the most powerful nonviolent change agent you have in a democratic society. You must use it because it is not guaranteed. You can lose it.” ~ Late U.S. Representative John Lewis*

## NEW MEXICO FIRST COUNTDOWN



### Plan to Vote

**Make sure you are registered to vote.** You can look up your voter registration record and verify that your information is correct using [New Mexico's voter registration lookup tool](#). Register online or by mail by **tomorrow, October 6th**. Register in person by **October 31st**.

- **Decide how and when you will vote.**
  - Mail-in Ballot: Any New Mexican registered voter can request an absentee/vote by mail ballot. [Requests for absentee ballots](#) must be

received by October 20th and absentee ballots must be received by November 3rd, 7:00 PM.

- Vote Early: Early in-person voting is open October 17th - October 31st, but dates and hours may vary based on where you live. Check with your [local elections office](#).
- Vote on Election day: Tuesday, November 3rd. [Locate your polling place](#).
- **Learn about the candidates and issues.** The [League of Women Voters](#) has launched their online Voter Guide, Vote411, with information on all New Mexico elections. Enter an address to see all the races that will be on your ballot in this election, information on candidates and where they stand on the issues. The four Local Leagues will still distribute their printed Voter Guides for their areas, as they've done in the past.
- **Be healthy and safe.** Voting shouldn't be at the risk of life and health. [Find tips](#) on how to cast your vote and protect your health, including accessibility options for voters with handicaps.

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## Census Alert: NEW Deadline Looms

The courts have ruled that the Census will continue to collect information through October 31st. Thanks to our dedicated NM census workers, 99.2% of our households have been counted, and we are almost with reach of our goal of a 100% count. Help friends and neighbors get counted. Respond TODAY, [online](#), by [phone](#), or by [mail](#).

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## Vice Presidential Debate Watch Parties

Join us for the upcoming New Mexico First Debate Watch Party to discuss Vice Presidential Debate scheduled for October 7, 2020! You can join the statewide discussion one of two ways and join either the Night Owl Session or an Early Bird Session. The Night Owl Session will take place on Wednesday, October 7, immediately after the debate and the Early Bird Session will take place on Thursday, October 8 at 8:00 AM. For more information, visit:

<http://nmfirst.org/events/debates>

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## Redistricting: What is it and Why is it Important?

This year's Census and elections both are key to determining our representation in our state and national legislatures. Next year our elected representatives will be looking at census results to determine the number of elected representatives and the areas they will represent. NM's [history of redistricting](#) has been marked by partisan conflict, court involvement, and expense to the taxpayer. Hopefully, we can avoid these pitfalls in this next round.

New Mexico First is convening a statewide taskforce to develop recommendations for this next round of political redistricting. Retired NM Supreme Court Justice Edward Chavez and retired NM Court of Appeals Judge Roderick Kennedy were selected as the taskforce's co-chairs, which will begin convening virtually on October 5, 2020. From among 140 nominees, 25 people were selected from diverse cultural groups, geographic locations, and political perspectives. Chief Justice Chavez notes, "In these loud and chaotic times, we hope to produce a strong roadmap to help the legislature and executive produce a calm and fair process of redistricting New Mexico next year."

Members of the public can [observe taskforce meetings](#) and participate in public

comment at the end of each session. A [background report](#) from New Mexico First provides nonpartisan information about the importance of redistricting to free and fair elections.

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## Getting Food to Hungry New Mexicans

The pandemic and its economic impact have left many of our neighbors facing hunger for the first time. With 1 in 3 children at risk of hunger and 1 in 5 people overall, our New Mexico food banks and food pantries have stepped up efforts to increase food distributed across our state. We encourage you to get involved. Give time and volunteer, donate funds or give food. To find a food bank or food pantry in your community, add your location to [this search](#).

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## CDC Issues National Eviction Moratorium

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a [new order](#), effective from September 4th through December 31st, 2020, that provides protection from eviction to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. Although

many questions about the order remain, this emergency action appears to prohibit new and previously filed evictions of tenants who provide their landlords with a signed declaration stating that they meet a prescribed set of criteria. [NM Legal Aid's website](#) has links for the necessary declaration and instructions in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

NM Legal Aid notes that if your landlord takes any action to evict you for nonpayment after you have given them the declaration, this is a federal crime which should be reported to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Albuquerque (505) 346-7274 or Las Cruces (505) 346-7296 (Las Cruces). Contact NM Legal Aid for more information or assistance. Call toll free: 1-833-LGL-HELP (1-833-545-4357).

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## **COVID-19 Relief Funds**

The [Grocery Worker's Relief Fund](#), sponsored by [Kendall-Jackson](#) and [United Way Worldwide](#), recognizes the essential contributions of front-line grocery workers during the COVID pandemic. Beginning on October 1st, eligible grocery workers in the United States can apply to receive up to \$250 in the form of a cash card. [Visit the website](#) to apply for or donate to the fund.

The [Spark Justice Fund](#), housed at the Borealis Philanthropy, is accepting applications now through October 20, 2020 from grassroots organizations working to end cash bail, transform pretrial justice and build power in communities most impacted by incarceration. The rapid response funding is intended to meet the needs arising out of the current COVID-19 pandemic in jails and in communities. [Download the complete RFP](#).

For additional information and resources, visit [SHARE's COVID-19 page](#).

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## Tip for Civic Engagement

Consider ways you can set and hold a tone for respectful engagement around policy in your everyday life.

Following the First Presidential Debate, New Mexico First worked with our co-sponsors the Commission on Presidential Debates and the New Mexico Black Voters Collaborative to host a Debate Watch party. 40 people attended the Night Owl Session and 9 people attended the Early Bird Session. This was fewer people than had registered. A few people mentioned that they had second thoughts about attending following the debate due to the tenor of the debate. Several participants reported back afterward how affirming it was to have a space for dialogue and discussion that was healthy and productive. While the focus of the watch party discussions was on trying to understand where the candidates stand on issues, a couple other themes emerged:

1. the importance of respectful dialogue
2. the value of public spaces to explore issues with people who see and understand the world in diverse ways

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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