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*People. Ideas. Progress.*

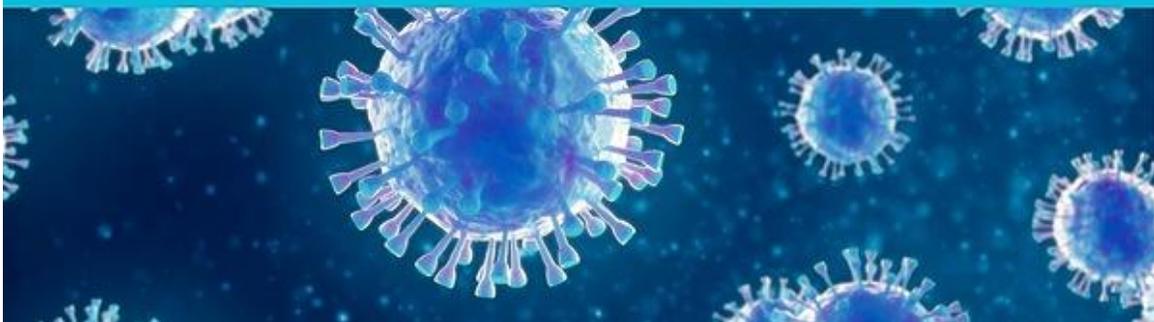
## **New Mexico First and Project SHARE NM Newsletter**

Stay Informed and Engaged

November 30, 2020

# **CORONAVIRUS**

UPDATES • INFORMATION • RESOURCES



# COVID-19 Updates, Information, and Resources

One of the most challenging aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the uncertainty around what it is, its impact on the health of New Mexicans and our communities, and how best to mitigate its effects in the short term and ultimately eliminate this devastating disease. The information swirling around us seems to be constantly changing and overwhelming.

To healthcare providers who are at risk to themselves while tending to the increasing numbers of COVID victims, to students, their families, and teachers who are learning new ways to educate on the fly, and to those who are finding it hard to pay the rent or mortgage or put food on the table, COVID-19 is an ever-present threat. Our well-being depends on us staying informed, engaged, and reaching out to others with information and resources.

This newsletter was originally launched to help New Mexicans navigate the flood of updates, information, and resources around COVID-19. We've discovered that there are other sources of information to help us understand and effectively respond to these challenges. While [national](#) and [state](#) agencies provide us with official sources of information, a number of community-based websites help us understand what is happening on the ground. Here are a few. Let us know who is providing trusted information in your community. Contact [wendy@nmfirst.org](mailto:wendy@nmfirst.org).

[#AllTogetherSantaFe](#) has mobilized a team across city and county agencies to answer your questions about impacts, resources, programs, ways to cope and connect, and ways to help others who are impacted by health risks and economic disruption due to COVID-19.

[Enchanted Circle Community Organizations Active in Disaster \(EC COAD\)](#) is a group of various private sector, public and nonprofit sector organizations working together to foster effective preparedness, response, and recovery of the people of the Enchanted Circle as needed, especially in times of disaster. Partners work closely with each other to minimize duplication of effort and maximize resource and communication efficiency.

[Grant County Coronavirus Update](#) website hosts a clearinghouse of local, state & federal resources to help keep you, your family & our community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic and help you find resources to get you through the economic fallout.

[NM Food, Hunger, Water, Agriculture Policy Action Teams](#), established by Representative Melanie Stansbury in 2019 and hosted by NM First, are currently in emergency response mode. If you would like to help the COVID-19 food and water emergency efforts, visit [the Action Teams website](#) for information about meeting schedules. To join an action team, mail Sharon Berman at [sharon@nmfirst.org](mailto:sharon@nmfirst.org).

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## **New Mexico: Red to Green**

[NM infection rates](#) have dropped from their unprecedented high of 3,664 new cases on November 19th to 1,435 new cases on November 29th. However, we are warned that the Thanksgiving holiday will result in some [misleading numbers](#) for a couple of weeks. Numbers may drop during the holiday week, then spike in the week following. This is likely due to a drop in testing during the holidays. The data we see this week may reflect not only actual increases in cases, test, and deaths, but also the potentially very large backlog from the holiday.

Effective December 2nd, Gov. Michelle Lujan announced that a tiered framework for reopening will be based on countywide prevalence of COVID-19. Under a "Red to Green" system, New Mexico counties with lower test positivity and per-capita infections will operate under fewer restrictions, enabling local communities to reduce restrictions as soon as public health data show the virus is retreating within their borders.

The New Mexico Department of Health's [map displaying counties' status](#) (red, yellow or green) based on COVID-19 prevalence rates will be updated by every other Wednesday. Beginning with the next update on Wednesday, December 2nd, counties will operate under [one of three tiers of restrictions](#) based on those metrics.

Nothing about this virus has changed,” said Gov. Lujan Grisham. “And what we can all do to fight it – and to help members of our local communities avoid infection and get back to more safe day-to-day activities – hasn’t changed either. Avoid gatherings. Wear a facemask. Avoid spending time with non-household members. Stay at home whenever – whenever – you can. These are best and indeed our only tools as we seek to prevent and minimize the illness and suffering and death so many of our neighbors in this state continue to grapple with.”



## Special Legislative Session Provides Funding and Relief

The NM legislature met for a special session on Tuesday, November 24rd, to pass a \$300 million relief package to help families, communities, and businesses across the state. Thanks to [New Mexico Thrives](#) for these highlights from [House Bill 1, Funding & Coronavirus Relief](#)

- \$200,000 for the courts for personal protective equipment and other accommodations to comply with COVID-safe practices
- \$194 million for the Department of Workforce Solutions to provide a one-time supplemental unemployment payment of \$1,200 to anyone who is or was eligible for unemployment insurance benefits
- \$100 million for grants to small businesses and nonprofits
- \$5 million to provide \$750 per household for those who did not receive a federal stimulus payment
- \$15 million for rent and mortgage assistance and assistance for the homeless
- \$10 million to the Department of Health for contact tracing, testing and vaccine implementation
- \$5 million to the food banks for hunger relief (see article below)

The small business and nonprofit grants will be administered by the New Mexico Finance Authority. The grants are expected to become available soon and the funds will be distributed before December 31. The application has not been created yet. [New Mexico Thrives](#) advises us that if we want to be ready when the application becomes available, we need to gather information about revenue losses and increased demand for services. Be ready to explain how you will use the funding to serve the community.



## Support for Emergency Food Sources

The \$300 million relief package passed during the special session included \$5 million in funding for food banks to provide meals to thousands of families struggling to put food on the table. [Representative Melanie Stansbury](#) expressed her thanks. “We are so incredibly grateful for the work the food banks, pantries, shelters, and meal programs across the state do to help feed New Mexicans. And we are especially thankful this relief is coming in time for the holidays.”

Mag Strittmatter, President and CEO of [Roadrunner Foodbank](#) concurred. “This Special Session was extremely significant for Roadrunner Food Bank and our four partner food banks. We will all be able to acquire the many millions of meals needed to help the growing number of food-insecure neighbors in the state, while

in the throes of this pandemic. We are so grateful to all who helped make this possible!”

“On behalf of the five New Mexico food banks, I thank our legislators for acknowledging the increased need for emergency food assistance by approving \$5 million for food bank services,” said Sherry Hooper, executive director of [The Food Depot](#) and President of the [NM Association of Food Banks](#). “During the special session, legislators demonstrated their concern for hungry New Mexicans and their commitment to ending hunger in our state during this pandemic.”

"The fact that this special assistance received such broad bipartisan support is a sign that New Mexicans are working together to address the immediate hunger needs of the people in our state," said Carlos Navarro, convener of the [Interfaith Hunger Coalition](#).

[Representative Joanne Ferrary](#) from Las Cruces, a long-time advocate for food security, encouraged us to keep up the work. “I too am so thrilled and relieved to know NM really does care about making sure we can reach every child, family, and senior through the extensive distribution and outreach that the Foodbanks and food pantries have set up across the State! We need to continue this support as well as other policy recommendations identified by the Food, Hunger, Water, and Agriculture Policy Group.”

New Mexico First invites all interested stakeholders to participate in the Food, Hunger, Water, and Agriculture Policy Workgroup. Visit the [Workgroup website](#) for more information about meeting times and notes. To join an action team, mail Sharon Berman at [sharon@nmfirst.org](mailto:sharon@nmfirst.org).

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## **We are stronger together!**

### **Emergency Grants**

The **New Mexico Foundation** is currently making **emergency grants from the Vecino, Neighbor Helping Neighbor Fund** to non-profits that support communities impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. If you are a nonprofit or tribal entity in New Mexico interested in applying for funding, go to the [foundation's website for more information](#).

### **Tele-Behavioral Health Services**

NM Human Services Dept. is offering free tele-behavioral health services for those impacted by COVID -19. Those eligible include New Mexicans with serious mental illness, substance use disorder or other mental health needs, as well as healthcare workers in need of support. Five NM behavioral health providers will provide culturally appropriate wellness services as well as linkages to services and supports (housing, food, employment). [Learn more](#).

## Tip for Civic Engagement

Navigating systems can be daunting. People can feel lost in the shuffle, discouraged, and frustrated. While many people within systems and institutions have been learning valuable lessons during the pandemic to achieve more responsive, creative, and people-centered approaches, roadblocks are common. It's hard to be patient when you have a sense of urgency that is exacerbated by the combination of health and economic crisis. Some tips for civic engagement seem particularly important when we are tired or emotions are running high:

- Remember, no matter where you stand within a system, that there is another person on the other end of the communication with their own experiences, thoughts, and circumstances. A relational approach is most often the most effective approach.
- Ask questions. If you're stuck or headed in the wrong direction when trying to problem solve, ask for recommendations. Sometimes the person who is not "the" resource person, may have ideas about whom else you might ask.
- Stick with it. You matter. The issues you care about matter. Find others with similar concerns and share information, ideas, and strategies. We are stronger together.

This tip is authored by New Mexico First President and Executive Director, Lilly Irvin-Vitela. She can be reached at [lilly@nmifrst.org](mailto:lilly@nmifrst.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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