



Objectives

Our goal is to advance public policy to alleviate food insecurity, create resilient food systems, and focus support on critical needs as New Mexico moves forward with public policy related to pandemic relief and recovery efforts.

Food Insecurity Reflects Multiple Systems Failures

Rates of food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition in New Mexico reflect multiple systems failures. Therefore, our policy priorities are to:

- 1) Use data, plan, and coordinate to make informed and impactful decisions to fight hunger.
- 2) Strengthen supports to hunger response efforts.
- 3) Promote local food systems and agricultural resilience
- 4) Increase the monthly food budget for families of low-income
- 5) Use an equity lens to make sure that the needs of all are considered within the context of community and culture.

Data Affirming the Need for a Cross-sector Approach

- From late March through April 2020, the two largest food banks in New Mexico spent \$1.2M and \$450K on purchased food to respond to the increasing demand for support from the emergency food sector. Over 90% of Food Bank funding is from private philanthropy and individual donations. (1)
- New Mexico has the highest child hunger rates in the nation. 1 in 4 children in New Mexico are struggling with hunger. (2)
- New Mexico has the 3rd highest rate of senior food insecurity, putting them at increased risk for disease and chronic health problems. (3)
- A significant majority of New Mexico's counties have food insecurity at rates greater than the national average. (4)
- Most families participating in SNAP in New Mexico have 1 or more household members that are employed. (5)
- New Mexico's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 8.2 percent in *December 2020*, up from 7.2 percent in November and up from 4.8 percent a year ago. (6)
- While agriculture is a major economic driver in the state, over 95% of the food New Mexicans consume comes from out of state, and nearly all food produced in NM leaves the state. A stronger local food system would simultaneously help combat food insecurity and hunger while keeping more dollars in our local communities. (7)

Members

The Food, Hunger, Water and Agriculture Policy Workgroup is made up of a group of a cross-partisan coalition of policy makers, agricultural producers, ag and food-related businesses, the emergency food sector, people of faith, anti-poverty and anti-hunger advocates, researchers/academics, dietitians and health experts, educators, and public policy advocates. While participants come from many different communities and professions across New Mexico and have many different life experiences, there is a shared belief that working together to address food insecurity and strengthen local food systems will improve the health and nutrition of all New Mexicans. For questions about these priorities or for introductions to workgroup members, please **contact Lilly Irvin-Vitela at lilly@nmfirst.org**.

HB 207: Food, Hunger & Farm Act

Co-sponsored by Representatives Stansbury and Ferrary

- Create a durable framework for addressing hunger, food insecurity, and agricultural sustainability in NM
- Create a strategy that guides this work in Year 1 and which is updated annually and feeds into policy and budget recommendations for the agencies and the legislature in the subsequent years
- Provide direction and guidance to the agencies to help lead work in the areas of their mandates
- Provide authorization and direction to agencies in specific areas to solve persistent structural problems in the food system
- Provide \$750K to HSD in consultation with NMDA and other Departments to do the work and foster public and private partnerships

Address Root Causes of Food Insecurity*

- **Support SB 81 the NM Civil Rights Act** cosponsored by Senators B. O'Neill and S. W. Stapleton.
- **Support HB 98**, the Omnibus Tax Bill, sponsored by J. Martinez, which **opposes a NM Food Tax**.
- **Reject taxation of non-profit organizations** because they provide essential nimble capacity in responding to basic needs in New Mexico's COVID-19 relief and recovery efforts.
- **Support SB 393**, the Vibrant Communities Act sponsored by G. Ortiz y Pino to reform the Anti-Donation Clause.
- **Support HB 42** and **SB 339** to index the Low Income Comprehensive Tax Rebate to inflation for those making \$36k or less per year.
- **Support** the expansion of the **Working Families Tax Credit** to keep more money in family budgets and invest more in local economies.
- **Support HB 2** investment of \$156k for Workforce Solutions to ensure New Mexicans **are paid for their work** and to **reduce backlog of minimum wage** claims by funding 2 more full-time equivalent positions through the labor relations division.

Strengthen Hunger Relief & Recovery*

- **Support HB 132** co-sponsored by Representatives Ferrary, Stansbury et al. to invest \$5M in HSD for **Emergency Hunger Relief for Statewide Food Banks**.
- **Support HB 133** co-sponsored by Representatives Ferrary, Bash et al. to **Reduce College Student Hunger** by providing \$100K to HED for partnerships between higher education and food banks.
- **Support HB 243** to increase the NMDA budget from \$360K to \$700K for **SNAP Double Up Food Bucks** program. State appropriation allows for match for federal funding, leveraging \$6.6M federal grant 2021-2025.

References

- 1 Reports from Roadrunner Food Bank and The Food Depot, April 2020
- 2 Rick Nathanson. <https://www.abqjournal.com/1310364/new-mexico-again-leads-nation-in-child-hunger.html>, May '19
- 3 https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/Senior%20Hunger%20Infographic_2019.pdf
- 4 Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap
- 5 USDA Profile of SNAP Households, <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/NewMexico.pdf> retrieved November 2019.
- 6 NMDWS data retrieved from www.dws.state.nm.us retrieved January 2021.
- 7 NM First, Agriculture Resilience Backgrounder

Invest in Local Food Systems & Resilient Local Agriculture*

- **Support HB 117** and **HB 2**, sponsored by Reps. Lundstrom and Small, for continuation of funding for the **Cooperative Extension** \$13,185,900, **Agriculture Experiment Stations** \$14,542,700 and **Centers of Excellence** \$250,000, and to **maintain** and expand on \$200K to NMDA for **Soil and Water Conservation Districts**.
- Support investments in **agricultural literacy and ag education** including but not limited to 4-H, FFA, Ag in the Classroom, ag-based CTE pathways, and other local and regional Pre-K through 12+ agricultural education efforts.
- **Maintain** state appropriation in NMDA budget of \$150,000 for **Value Chain Coordination and Food Safety Programs**.
- **Support SB 101** and HB, sponsored by Senators Woods and Sedillo-Lopez and Rep Zamora for 100K to NMDA to support **Agricultural Workforce Development** earn while you learn opportunities.
- **Maintain** \$400,000 state funding in NMPED for the **NM Grown Program for school meals**.
- **Support SB 185** for \$250K investment to ALTSD for the Purchase of **NM Grown Fruits and Vegetables for Senior Meals** Programs.
- Support **HB 170** \$100K investment ECECD **NM-Grown Produce in Child Care Centers**, sponsored by Reps Armstrong and Dow.
- **Support SB 229**, sponsored by Sen. Hamblen for the **Healthy Food Financing Act** for NM farms, food hubs, & food businesses to increase access to nutritious food, create quality jobs, diversify our economy, and bring in up to \$2 million in federal funding into NM.
- Support **HB 33**, **HB 121** to invest in efforts to strengthen capacity in NM related to **Beef Inspection, Processing & Marketing** to get more protein into the local food supply.
- **Maintain** \$227K to NMDA for the **Healthy Soil Program**.
- **Support HB 89** so tax refunds may be donated to the **Healthy Soil Program**.

***Bill Numbers will be inserted as soon as they become known**

Policy Workgroup Members and Advocacy Partners 2021 Legislative Session

Adelante
Agri-Cultura Cooperative Network
Center for Health Innovation
Casa de Peregrinos Emergency Food Program
Covenant Pathways
Farm to Table
Food is Free Albuquerque
Interfaith Hunger Coalition
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry - New Mexico
McKinley Collaborative for Health Equity
New Mexico Acequia Association
New Mexico Association of Food Banks
New Mexico First
New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council
NM Healthy Soil Working Group
New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty
New Mexico Social Justice and Equity Institute
New Mexico Thrives
New Mexico Voices for Children
Save the Children Action Network
Shiprock Traditional Farmers Cooperative
Storehouse New Mexico
The Montibon Company
UNM Basic Needs Research Team
Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque

Other Policy Workgroup Members

New Mexico Department of Agriculture