



# Special Session & FY21 Emergency Relief & Recovery Funding Priorities

## Objectives

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

## Policy Workgroup Members

The Food, Hunger, Water and Agriculture Policy Workgroup is made up of a group of bi-partisan policy makers, agricultural producers, the emergency food sector, faith leaders, researchers/academics, 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 addressing water and food insecurity and strengthening local food systems requires working together. For questions about these priorities or for introductions to workgroup members, please contact Lilly Irvin-Vitela at [lilly@nmfirst.org](mailto:lilly@nmfirst.org).

## Cross-sector Approach

- New Mexico has the highest child hunger rates in the nation. 1 in 4 children in New Mexico are struggling with hunger. Our elders are not faring much better. (1)
- 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. (2)
- A significant majority of New Mexico's counties have food insecurity at rates greater than the national average.(3)
- Most families participating in SNAP in New Mexico have 1 or more household members that are employed.(4)
- In one week in March 2020 alone, there were 17K new unemployment claims in New Mexico.(5)
- 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 New Mexico leaves the state. A stronger local food system would simultaneously help combat food insecurity and hunger while keeping more dollars in our local communities. (6)

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

- 1) Use data to inform decision-making
- 2) Promote local food systems and agricultural resilience
- 3) Increase the monthly food budget for families of low-income
- 4) Use an equity lens to make sure that the needs of all are considered within the context of community and culture.

## 01 Address Root Causes of Food Insecurity

Priority #1

- **Reject** re-institution of a **Food Tax** in New Mexico.
- **Reject taxation of non-profit organizations** who provide essential and nimble capacity in responding to New Mexico's COVID-19 relief and recovery efforts.
- Increase staffing for State Departments responsible for administering **Public Benefits** to assure timely processing and administration of benefits and continuity of access to income supports to strengthen recovery and relief efforts.

## 02 Strengthen Food and Water Relief and Recovery

Priority #2

- Invest \$12.5M in HSD for **Emergency Relief and Recovery Efforts with Food Banks** for purchased food, health and safety supplies, transportation, and to enhance capacity.
- Protect \$1.2M already allocated to **Food Banks** to acquire, source, and distribute **Fresh Produce** from possible cuts. Protect \$500K allocated in February 2020 for **Shelf Stable Food** for food banks.
- Provide emergency funding to the Tribal Infrastructure Fund in IAD and the Water Trust Fund to leverage federal funding for **Tribal, Rural, and Frontier Water Needs** in New Mexico.
- Protect \$650K in PED to **Eliminate Co-pays for School Breakfast and Lunch**.
- Protect funding for **Summer Meal** programs statewide.
- Protect and expand **Senior Meal and Nutrition Programs** through ALTSD.

## 03 Invest in Local Food Systems & Resilient Local Agriculture

Priority #3

- Maintain NMSU base funding for **Cooperative Extension** for \$13,635,000 and for **Agricultural Experimentation Stations** for \$15,147,000 to provide support, leading-edge information, and technical assistance to agricultural producers.
- Maintain and expand investment to \$500K in ALTSD to support the **Purchase of NM Grown Fruits and Vegetables for Senior Meals Programs**.
- Maintain \$400K commitment in PED budget for **NM Grown Produce for School Meals**.
- Maintain \$227K in NMDA for the **Healthy Soil** program and maintain \$200K in NMDA for **Soil and Water Conservation Districts**.
- Protect \$150K for program support to NMDA to develop **New Mexico Local Food and Farming Systems** including value chain coordination and food safety systems that **Support the SNAP Double Up Food Bucks** program and local producer sales to retail and institutional outlets.
- Invest \$100K in DOH for the **Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program**.
- Invest in the Department of Agriculture to strengthen capacity in NM related to **Beef Inspection and Processing** to get more protein into the local food supply.
- Invest available 2020 CARES Act relief in NMDA to provide grants to farmers, ranchers, food hubs, and CSAs for a **New Mexico Food Box Program** that is more inclusive than the Federal effort and links to hunger relief efforts.

1 Rick Nathanson. Journal Staff Writer. May 2019 "New Mexico Again Leads the Nation in Child Hunger" <https://www.abqjournal.com/1310364/new-mexico-again-leads-nation-in-child-hunger.html>, retrieved November 2019  
 2 Reports from Roadrunner Food Bank and The Food Depot, April 2020  
 3 Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap 2017, <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2017/overall/new-mexico>, retrieved November 2019.  
 4 USDA Profile of SNAP Households, <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/NewMexico.pdf> retrieved November 2019.  
 5 NM First, Agriculture Resilience Backgrounder  
 6 US Department of Labor <https://www.dol.gov/ui/data.pdf> retrieved

See Supporting Organizations on Back

## Policy Workgroup Members and Advocacy Partners

- Adelante
- Agri Cultura Cooperative Network
- Center for Health Innovation
- Delicious New Mexico
- Farm to Table
- Food is Free Albuquerque
- Indigenous Life Ways
- Interfaith Hunger Coalition
- McKinley Collaborative for Health Equity
- National Young Farmers Coalition
- New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts
- New Mexico Association of Food Banks
- New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty
- New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association
- New Mexico First
- New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council
- New Mexico Social Justice and Equity Institute
- New Mexico Healthy Soils Work Group
- New Mexico Voices for Children
- South Valley Economic Development Center
- Storehouse NM
- The Montibon Company
- Think New Mexico
- Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque

## Other Workgroup Members

- New Mexico Appleseed
- New Mexico Department of Agriculture