



A
Campaign
for a Better
New Mexico
2016 Draft

Updated June 2016



New Mexico Voices for Children

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While the national KIDS COUNT Data Book serves as the framework for this campaign, the policies and conclusions presented are those of the author(s) alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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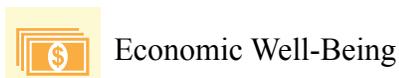
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Key to the symbols used in this campaign

KIDS COUNT Domains:



Economic Well-Being



Education



Health



Family and Community

Legislative Actions or Appropriations:



This should lead to improvement in child well-being or, at the very least, will not make things worse



This will not lead to improvement in child well-being or may even make things worse



There was no action on this issue or likely change in child well-being



It is uncertain how this will impact child well-being

Letter from the Executive Director

June 2016

Dear Friends and Fellow Advocates,

The future of our state depends upon making smart investments today. New Mexico's leaders, inventors, small business owners, and teachers of tomorrow are today's babies, toddlers, and school kids. When we ensure that all children can access the opportunities that will put them on a path to academic and life success, we ensure that New Mexico will prosper. When we make child well-being a low priority, we do so at our own peril.

2016 marks the third year of the *NM KIDS are COUNTing on Us: A Campaign for a Better New Mexico*. Sadly, as we update this campaign to reflect the results of the 2016 legislative session and the 2016 national *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, we have very little good news to report. To begin with, it was a 30-day budgetary session, meaning legislators were unable to tackle many of the issues that are central to this campaign. Beyond that, 2016 may well be remembered as the perfect storm for a budgetary disaster. We had warned lawmakers that they would face three budgetary concerns this session:

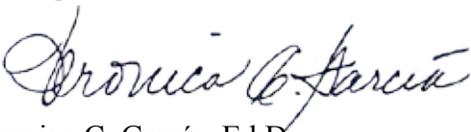
1. The upcoming budget would require that New Mexico pay a portion of the cost to cover low-income adults who enrolled in Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. Some 200,000 people were enrolled, but the federal government had been picking up the entire cost thus far;
2. Additional money that was coming from the Land Grant Permanent Fund to support K-12 education would expire this year, meaning that funding would either have to come from the general fund budget or K-12 would have to be cut; and
3. A big portion of the corporate income tax cuts enacted in 2013 would be phased in this year, even though the cuts were not generating the economic activity we'd been promised, leaving the state with less tax revenue than anticipated.

Add to this storm the fact that oil and natural gas prices, which had been low for a while, continued to drop. Giving big tax cuts to some corporations made us more dependent on the tax revenue we received from oil and gas extraction, so the decrease of this key revenue source was even more problematic than it would have otherwise been.

While a handful of legislators sought to raise more revenue by ending tax cuts for the wealthy that have not helped our economy or by putting the phase-in of corporate tax cuts on hold, the majority opted, instead, to cut spending. As you will see in the following pages, this was not a budget that put our children and working families first. They deserve better.

This document is a work-in-progress. Not only do we update it annually, we also ask for your input on policy recommendations and your fresh and innovative approaches to improving child well-being in New Mexico. We will specifically seek your input during this year's fourth annual KIDS COUNT Conference, but please feel free to send your comments and ideas on how we can improve this agenda at any time by emailing me at vgarcia@nmvoices.org.

Best regards,



Veronica C. García, Ed.D.
Executive Director, New Mexico Voices for Children

New Mexico KIDS COUNT Profile

This campaign is based on the 4 domains and 16 indicators in the national *KIDS COUNT Data Book*

National Rank (2016): 49th 🏠 Unchanged since 2015 (49th)

Domains	Indicators of child well-being			
 <p>Economic Well-Being National Rank: 48th</p>	<p>Children at or below the poverty level</p> <p>146,000 children (2014)</p> <p>30%</p> <p>👍 Improved since 2013 (31%) 👎 Worse than US average (22%)</p>	<p>Children whose parents lack secure employment</p> <p>182,000 children (2014)</p> <p>36%</p> <p>👎 Worsened since 2013 (35%) 👎 Worse than US average (30%)</p>	<p>Children living in households with a high housing cost burden</p> <p>156,000 children (2014)</p> <p>31%</p> <p>👍 Improved since 2013 (33%) 👍 Better than US average (35%)</p>	<p>Teens (16-19) not in school and not working</p> <p>10,000 teens (2014)</p> <p>9%</p> <p>👍 Improved since 2013 (10%) 👎 Worse than US average (7%)</p>
 <p>Education National Rank: 50th</p>	<p>Young children not in school</p> <p>34,000 children (2012-14)</p> <p>59%</p> <p>👍 Improved since 11-13 (60%) 👎 Worse than US average (53%)</p>	<p>Fourth graders not proficient in reading</p> <p>(2015)</p> <p>77%</p> <p>👍 Improved since 2013 (79%) 👎 Worse than US average (65%)</p>	<p>Eighth graders not proficient in math</p> <p>(2015)</p> <p>79%</p> <p>👎 Worsened since 2013 (77%) 👎 Worse than US average (68%)</p>	<p>High school students not graduating on time</p> <p>(2012-13)</p> <p>28%</p> <p>👎 Worsened since 11-12 (26%) 👎 Worse than US average (18%)</p>
 <p>Health National Rank: 44th</p>	<p>Low birth-weight babies</p> <p>2,282 babies (2014)</p> <p>8.8%</p> <p>👍 Improved since 2013 (8.9%) 👎 Worse than US average (8%)</p>	<p>Children without health insurance</p> <p>36,000 children (2014)</p> <p>7%</p> <p>👍 Improved since 2013 (9%) 👎 Worse than US average (6%)</p>	<p>Child (1-14) and teen (15-19) death rates (per 100,000)</p> <p>31</p> <p>165 deaths (2014)</p> <p>👎 Worsened since 2013 (28) 👎 Worse than US average (24)</p>	<p>Teens who abuse alcohol or drugs</p> <p>9,000 teens (2013-14)</p> <p>5%</p> <p>👍 Improved since 12-13 (7%) 👍 Same as US average (5%)</p>
 <p>Family and Community National Rank: 48th</p>	<p>Children in single-parent families</p> <p>193,000 children (2014)</p> <p>41%</p> <p>👍 Improved since 2013 (43%) 👎 Worse than US average (35%)</p>	<p>Children in families where household head lacks high school diploma</p> <p>89,000 children (2014)</p> <p>18%</p> <p>👍 Unchanged since 2013 (18%) 👎 Worse than US average (14%)</p>	<p>Children living in high-poverty areas</p> <p>135,000 children (2010-14)</p> <p>26%</p> <p>👎 Worsened since 09-13 (24%) 👎 Worse than US average (14%)</p>	<p>Teen (15-19) birth rate (per 1,000)</p> <p>38</p> <p>2,543 births (2014)</p> <p>👍 Improved since 2013 (43) 👎 Worse than US average (24)</p>

Source: *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2015 and 2016
NEW MEXICO VOICES FOR CHILDREN

Get more KIDS COUNT data at datacenter.kidscount.org/data#NM



All Domains

Overarching Policy Solutions

Because the 16 indicators of child well-being are inter-related—as are the policies that would improve them—many of the recommendations address multiple indicators. We have placed these overarching policies separate from the policies that address the indicators more specifically.

Ensure that enough tax revenue is collected so that the state budget can fund programs that improve and support the well-being of New Mexico’s children, families, and communities.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Our system of governance is the way we accomplish things collectively that we could not accomplish as individuals, such as providing an education to everyone.
- The investments we make in ourselves and each other do more than improve the quality of our lives—they also help drive our economy.
- Children benefit from these investments too, since their well-being depends on the well-being of their families.
- New Mexico’s post-recession revenue picture had been improving, but corporate tax cuts passed in 2013 have not led to any economic development and have made us too dependent on revenue from oil and gas extraction. This, combined with a sharp drop in oil and gas prices, led to a nearly complete lack of new revenue for FY17.
- For more information on how the state could raise revenue, check out our fact sheet here: <http://www.nmvoices.org/archives/7258>

2016 Legislative Action

- Several tax cuts for businesses were considered but, fortunately, none was passed.
- Unfortunately, and despite extreme revenue shortfalls, attempts to increase revenue and delay the phase-in of the corporate tax cuts of 2013, also failed.

Enact a more progressive income tax so those with the highest incomes pay their fair share.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- New Mexico’s state and local tax systems hit those with the lowest incomes the hardest. A New Mexican with an income less than \$17,000 pays more than 10% of their income in state and local taxes while someone with an income over \$323,000 pays less than 5% in those same taxes.¹

- Personal income tax cuts for the highest brackets and the capital gains deduction were supposed to create jobs. They have failed miserably.

2016 Legislative Action

- As in 2015, several bills that would have raised the income tax rate for the highest earners, as well as bills to repeal the ineffective capital gains deduction, all failed.

Mandate a tax expenditure budget (TEB) and require accountability measures for tax breaks that are intended to create jobs.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- A TEB is an annual accounting of all tax credits, exemptions, and deductions that have been enacted over the years. Legislators have passed bills mandating a TEB in statute on three separate occasions—only to have them vetoed by two different governors.
- Over the last dozen years, billions of dollars in personal and corporate income tax breaks have been handed out in an attempt to draw jobs to the state. These tax cuts required few, if any, accountability measures, meaning businesses got the benefit whether they created new jobs or not.

2016 Legislative Action*

- The Legislature did not act on this issue in 2016.
- However the tax department, under executive order, does produce a TEB every year. While it was limited at first, it has improved with each new release.

Enact economic development initiatives that create high-wage jobs, increase revenue, and invest in our workforce.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Our use of tax cuts to create jobs is not only ineffective but it drains the state coffers of the money needed to fund our schools, public safety, and other vital services.
- Investments to improve the educational levels and skills of our workforce will help attract good jobs to the state.

2016 Legislative Action/Appropriations**

- \$6 million was appropriated for JTIP (Job Training Incentive Program).

*As this was a budget session, very little legislation that pertained to issues apart from the budget or revenues could be considered.

**All appropriation amounts represent new state funding for fiscal year 2017 that was added to the spending level of the previous budget year for that department, program or service.



All Domains

Overarching Policy Solutions (continued)

Ensure that children receive the financial and emotional supports they need during and after a parent’s incarceration.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Having a parent incarcerated is traumatic for children and can have lasting effects on their development and well-being, and often adds to the generational pull of poverty.
- Incarceration can also put families in economic peril, leaving them scrambling to cover basic needs along with legal and other court fees.
- 10% of NM children have a parent who has been incarcerated during the child’s lifetime.²

2016 Legislative Action

- No legislation to address this issue was considered.



Economic Well-Being

Overarching Policy Solutions

Support programs that take a two-generation approach to improving family economic security.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- A two-generation approach is one that addresses the critical needs of children (food, housing, health care, education) while helping parents improve their economic situation.
- While there are many state services that address the needs of the whole family, there is little coordination between them to ensure that all needs are being met.
- To adequately integrate services offered in numerous departments and avoid duplication, policy-makers need to work on a focused approach.
- The Children’s Cabinet, which already exists in law, needs to be revitalized and supported.

2016 Legislative Action

- No legislation to create new programs or initiatives specific to the two-generation approach was passed.

Prioritize a two-generation approach within the TANF program so the primary focus is to provide opportunities to strengthen families through high-leverage education/job training, parenting supports, and early childhood care and education services.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) is designed to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency. Although it’s a federal program, states have great latitude in who is served and how.
- In NM, TANF is almost entirely focused on having parents engaged in work and work-related activities instead of providing them with job training and educational opportunities to earn credentials and work skills that can get them on the path to economic security.
- TANF is an ideal program for a coordinated two-generation approach, but better coordination is needed.

2016 Legislative Action

- The Legislature did not act on this issue in 2016.

Ensure that all workers can earn at least one week of paid sick leave.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Parents should never have to choose between going to work or staying home with a sick child, but those without paid sick leave often have to make that choice.
- Paid sick leave has numerous benefits for employers, employees, and the public, much of it from cost savings.
- New Mexico has the highest rate in the nation for workers without paid sick leave.³

2016 Legislative Action

- No legislation to require employers to offer paid sick leave was considered.
- Fortunately, SB 211, which would have kept city or county governments from enacting sick leave requirements, failed.

Enact policies to end wage theft.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- When parents are cheated out of their rightful wages they have less money to provide for their families.
- The victims of wage theft are usually the most vulnerable workers: immigrants and those who work for low wages.

2016 Legislative Action

- The Legislature did not act on this issue in 2016.

Economic Well-Being

Overarching Policy Solutions (continued)



Enact a rate cap of 36% APR (including fees) on all predatory lending products.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Predatory lenders target the low-income and can quickly trap them in an endless cycle of increasing debt, with interest rates often topping 1,000%.

2016 Legislative Action

- HJR 7 would have allowed voters to decide whether to cap interest rates at 36%, but it failed.
- A memorial (SM-27) to study the feasibility of offering low-cost small loans to state employees was passed.

Enact policies to end food insecurity.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- NM has the third highest rate of child hunger in the nation.⁴ Hunger impacts a child's brain development, growth, and ability to perform well in school.
- 42% of NM children rely on SNAP (food stamp) benefits⁵ and 66% of the state's K-12 students qualify for free or reduced-price meals at school.

2016 Appropriations

- \$390,300 was appropriated for "Double Up Food Bucks," so 25,000 food insecure SNAP users can receive double value for their purchases of fresh, local produce at participating farmer's markets.



Indicator: Children in Poverty

Extent of the Problem

- 30% of New Mexico children live at or below the poverty level. Native-American and Hispanic children, however, suffer from disproportionately high poverty rates of 44% and 34%, respectively. The poverty level is an annual income of less than \$25,000 for a family of four.

How This Can Hurt New Mexico

- Poverty impacts children in many ways, and the younger the child, the more detrimental the impact. A major predictor of a child's success rate at school is their family's economic level.

- Children in poverty are more likely to suffer from adverse childhood experiences—food insecurity, homelessness, parents with untreated addictions and mental illnesses, etc. These kinds of trauma produce toxic levels of stress and inhibit brain development.
- Poverty can lead to food insecurity. 28% of NM children are food-insecure. This is the third highest rate in the nation.⁶
- Since children are dependent on their parents for their economic security, child poverty cannot be wiped out without addressing the economic security of working families.



Policy Solutions: Children in Poverty

Raise the statewide minimum wage, index it to rise with inflation, and raise the tipped wage to 60% of the minimum wage.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Raising the minimum wage creates jobs and economic activity.
- Nearly 20% of New Mexico children have at least one parent who would benefit from raising the state minimum wage to \$8.50.⁷
- New Mexico's minimum wage has lost 10% of its purchasing power since it was last raised in 2009.⁸

2016 Legislative Action

- Several bills were introduced that would have raised the minimum wage, but all failed.
- Fortunately, SB 211, which would have kept city or county government from enacting or enforcing a higher minimum wage, also failed.

Increase the Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC), Low Income Comprehensive Tax Rebate (LICTR), and Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Refundable tax credits lift families out of poverty and help make New Mexico's tax system more fair. In 2012, 300,000 New Mexico children benefitted from the WFTC.⁹
- Children become stressed when families lose electricity or gas service because they can't pay their heating bills. This stress can impact everything from a child's health to their ability to do homework.

2016 Legislative Action/Appropriations

- HB 79 would have raised the value of the state's WFTC from 10% of the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to 20%. It failed.
- No new state funding for LICTR or LIHEAP was appropriated.



Economic Well-Being

Policy Solutions: Children in Poverty (continued)

Support and promote the availability of resources and assistance for grandparents helping to raise their grandchildren, including access to financial resources, legal services, food and housing assistance, medical care, and transportation.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- More than 33,000 New Mexico children are living with a grandparent who is responsible for their well-being.¹⁰
- Because most of these children are not under the protection of the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD), they cannot receive the services that foster children receive.
- Grandparents often lack the legal status that would allow them to apply for the benefits that their grandchildren would be eligible for if they were in foster care.

2016 Legislative Action



- SM 1, which requests that a task force be convened to study and recommend policy changes to the availability of resources and assistance for grandparents raising grandchildren, was passed.



- SB 96 would have appropriated \$100,000 toward assistance for grandparents raising grandkids, but it failed.

Fund navigators to ensure that kinship foster care families have access to public benefits for which they are eligible.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- When the state must remove a child from their home, it's preferable to place the child with a relative, if a suitable one is available, than in foster care. Unlike seasoned foster parents, many kinship caregivers have never had to apply for the benefits that foster children can receive, and navigating the many programs is daunting.
- Navigators give these families the personal support and guidance they need.

2016 Legislative Action/Appropriations



- SB 88, which would have directed agencies to provide outreach and education for kinship caregivers regarding public assistance and tax relief, failed.



Indicator: Children Whose Parents Lack Secure Employment

Extent of the Problem

- 36% of New Mexico children have parents who lack full-time, year-round employment. The rate is 55% for Native-American children.

How This Can Hurt New Mexico

- Children whose parents lack full-time, year-round work are more likely to live in poverty. Parents lack secure employment for a number of reasons, but most often it is because they lack the education or work skills needed to get stable jobs in growing industries. Without education and skills, they may also get stuck in part-time or seasonal jobs.
- Parents who lack secure employment are also unlikely to receive benefits such as employer-sponsored health insurance and paid sick leave. This places additional stresses on parents and children.



Policy Solutions: Children Whose Parents Lack Secure Employment

Expand access to high school equivalency, ABE, job training, and career pathways programs.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- The more education a parent has, the more money they earn and the lower their rates of unemployment.
- Children's success rates in school are closely tied to their parents' educational levels. Increasing parental education has the added benefit of improving school outcomes for their children.
- NM's Adult Basic Education (ABE) system is fragmented, underfunded, and provides too few classes and isolated workforce-training opportunities. Career pathways programs like I-BEST (Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training), which combines ABE and skills training, have gotten good results and should be expanded.
- NM should leverage the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and use TANF funds to invest in career pathways programs like I-BEST.

2016 Legislative Action/Appropriations



- No new money was appropriated for adult basic education. Given inflation, flat funding represents a cut.



- While \$6 million was appropriated for JTIP (Job Training Incentive Program), this program is not geared specifically to meet the needs of low-skilled adults who require basic education in addition to skills training so this may have little impact on this particular population.



Economic Well-Being

Policy Solutions: Children Whose Parents Lack Secure Employment (continued)

Protect the unemployment insurance (UI) trust fund and reinstate benefits for child dependents.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- UI benefits boost the local economy while helping tide victims of a downturn over until they can find work.
- Prior to the recession, New Mexico UI recipients received a small additional benefit for each dependent child. That child benefit was cut in 2011, even though the state was (and still is) lagging the nation in economic recovery.

2016 Legislative Action

-  • HB 283, which lowers insurance rates for employers, was enacted. Unfortunately, this could lead to further depletion of the already-low UI Trust Fund.
-  • No legislation to restore dependent benefits to their original levels was considered.

Restore eligibility for child care assistance to twice the poverty level.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- High-quality child care is more expensive than tuition at NM universities, and few low-income working families can afford such care without assistance.
- Because of budget cuts, eligibility for child care assistance is still down at 150% of the poverty level.

2016 Legislative Appropriations

-  • No new state funding for child care assistance was appropriated. Given inflation, this represents a cut.



Indicator: Children Living in Households with a High Housing Cost Burden

Extent of the Problem

- 31% of New Mexico children live in households that spend 30% or more of their income on housing. The rate is 38% for Hispanic children.

How This Can Hurt New Mexico

- When families spend 30% or more just on housing, they have less money to spend on other necessities like food,

medication, and utilities.

- High housing costs can force families into substandard housing, which can have serious health hazards for children.



Policy Solutions: Children Living in Households with a High Housing Cost Burden

Increase funding for the state's Housing Trust Fund and increase federal HUD funding.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Children do better, and families are more stable and move less frequently, when they own their home.
- The state's Housing Trust Fund provides low-interest loans for organizations building housing for low- and moderate-income families and individuals.
- Among other services, HUD offers rental assistance for low-income families. Like all income supports, housing assistance supplements a family's budget, which frees up money for other necessities like groceries, gasoline, and utilities.

2016 Congressional Action/Appropriations

-  • No new state funding was appropriated for the Housing Trust Fund.
-  • Federal housing funds have remained relatively flat.

Safeguard the Home Loan Protection Act from repeal or weakening.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- The Home Loan Protection Act helped protect many families from the predatory lending practices that contributed to the national foreclosure crisis that began in 2007. Attempts have been made to repeal or weaken the law.

2016 Legislative Action

-  • No legislation that weakens the Act was passed.

Increase funding for individual development accounts (IDAs) for parents and children.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- IDAs are a public-private initiative that offer financial incentives for low-income New Mexicans to save money in order to purchase a home or pay for college.

2016 Appropriations

-  • No new funding was appropriated for IDAs.



Economic Well-Being

Indicator: Teens Not in School and Not Working

Extent of the Problem

- 9% of New Mexico teens ages 16 to 19 are neither enrolled in school nor working.

How This Can Hurt New Mexico

- Teens who are not in school but do not become part of the workforce are at risk for poor outcomes as adults—even if they graduated.



Policy Solutions: Teens Not in School and Not Working

Enact initiatives to lower the cost of college such as: making lottery scholarships need-based; restoring the College Affordability Fund; lowering interest rates for student loans; and ending the predatory practices of private, for-profit colleges.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Despite our high poverty rate, New Mexico only awards 25% of its financial aid on the basis of student need, while the national average is 74%.¹¹
- With lottery tickets sales having peaked, and both demand for the lottery scholarship and tuition costs increasing, the trust fund is in real danger of being depleted. Making the lottery scholarship need-based would preserve it for those who would otherwise be unable to attend college.
- Crushing student debt is becoming a national crisis and will impact future generations of children.
- For-profit colleges often push debt on their students but then don't deliver on job placement promises.

2016 Legislative Action/Appropriations

-  Higher education received the deepest funding cut of all, losing nearly \$20 million. Funding was also cut during the recession. As a result, over the last six years, tuition and fees have increased by 46% at 4-year public universities and by 34% at 2-year colleges in NM.
-  Attempts to make the lottery scholarship need-based failed.
-  As in 2015, \$1 million in new funding was requested for the College Affordability Fund, but was denied.
-  SB 79, which would have transferred any unclaimed lottery prize money to the scholarship fund, was passed, but vetoed by the governor.



Past Policy Victory

Waive tuition at New Mexico universities for youth who have aged out of foster care.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Youth who age out of foster care have few, if any, support systems. Waiving their tuition enables those that do not qualify for the lottery scholarship to attend college and it costs the state relatively little.

2014 Legislative Action



- Legislation to do this was enacted in 2014, and the take-up rate among former foster youth has been higher than expected.



Education

Overarching Policy Solutions

Increase spending on high-quality home visiting/parent coaching.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Home visiting services can reduce the incidence of child abuse, improve child and maternal health, and improve school performance.
- Although children from low-income families would benefit tremendously from these services, only a tiny fraction receive them.

2016 Appropriations



- \$1.1 million in new funding was allocated for home visiting. This should serve more than 200 new families.

Increase funding for the Family Infant Toddler (FIT) program.

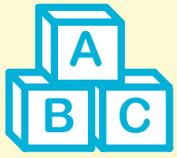
How This Can Help New Mexico

- FIT provides early intervention and positive child developmental services for families with infants or toddlers who have or are at risk for developmental delays.
- These services are essential for success in school and save money by reducing the need for special education.

2016 Appropriations



- FIT was cut by nearly \$1 million.



Education

Overarching Policy Solutions (continued)

Increase funding for child care to incentivize and adequately compensate for quality.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- The state's child care assistance program was created as a work support for parents—not as an educational support for children. In order for child care to improve school outcomes, higher levels of quality are required.
- Providers who offer higher-quality care receive higher reimbursements from the state, but the increases are not enough to cover the costs of the quality improvements.

2016 Appropriations



- No new state funding for child care assistance was appropriated. Given inflation, this represents a cut.

Ensure support for community schools that offer school-based health care, after-school and mentor services, English as a second language classes, etc.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Community schools can be more flexible in adjusting practices to meet the unique needs of their students.
- Community schools are welcoming places that encourage more parental interaction.
- Before- and after-school programming have a positive impact on student performance.

2016 Legislative Action/Appropriations



- No legislation was considered and no new funding was appropriated for community schools.

Pass a constitutional amendment to support early care and education with a small percentage of the Land Grant Permanent Fund.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Sustainable funding for early childhood services could come from the state's \$14 billion permanent fund making these services available to many children not receiving them. New Mexicans, who overwhelmingly support this initiative, deserve the chance to vote on this issue.

2016 Legislative Action



- Once again, joint resolutions to send the issue to the voters failed.

Increase training, technical assistance, compensation, and retention incentives for pre-K and other early learning providers.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- We want high quality from our early childhood providers, but many earn very low wages and cannot afford additional training expenses. Technical assistance programs and T.E.A.C.H. scholarships provide the professional development needed for high-quality programs.

2016 Legislative Appropriations



- \$50,000 in new funding was appropriated for professional development.

Sufficiently fund K-12 education, starting with restoring per-pupil, inflation-adjusted funding to pre-recession levels.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- During the recession, New Mexico made some of the deepest cuts in the nation in K-12 per-pupil spending.¹² Even recent increases have not brought us back up to pre-recession levels when adjusted for inflation. As a result, students are in over-crowded classrooms and there are fewer resources.
- Services that mitigate the impacts of poverty—such as breakfast in the schools and smaller class sizes—must be fully funded because they make a difference in learning outcomes.

2016 Legislative Action/Appropriations



- K-12 spending was increased overall by \$6.8 million, representing an even smaller increase than last year. As this is an increase of 0.2%, and fixed costs such as utilities and insurance continue to go up, this actually represents a spending cut.



- The additional funding for K-12 from the Land Grant Permanent Fund that voters approved back in 2003 has expired. A joint resolution to continue that funding failed, despite the enormous size of the permanent fund and the lack of state general fund revenue.

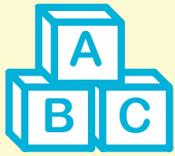


- \$50,000 was directed from the Indian Education Fund for tribal colleges to partner with high schools to collaborate on dual credit programs.

Raise compensation for teachers, principals, and other student support staff.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- New Mexico ranks 45th in the nation in teacher pay.¹³ If we want quality professionals in our schools—including librarians, nurses, counselors, and others—we need to pay them well.



Education

Overarching Policy Solutions (continued)

2016 Appropriations



- \$5.4 million in new money was appropriated to raise minimum level 2 and level 3 salaries by \$2,000.
- \$1.25 million was cut for retention of teachers and school leaders.

Revisit zero-tolerance policies and penalties in order to keep more students in school.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Many schools across the nation are revisiting their zero-tolerance policies because they tend to criminalize students who may simply have made an error in judgement.
- While suspensions and expulsions have decreased in New Mexico, rates remain disproportionately high among Native-American and African-American students, in conflict with PED anti-discrimination rules.

2016 Legislative Action



- No legislation was passed that would have addressed this issue.

Expand programs that increase school attendance.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Children aren't learning when they're not in school, but absenteeism and truancy are problems in New Mexico, as 14% of students are habitually truant.¹⁴
- Non-attendance increases the likelihood of poor achievement and students dropping out.

2016 Appropriations



- No new funding was appropriated to combat truancy.

Reduce class sizes for children in high-poverty areas.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Studies show that class size matters. Children in high-poverty areas are more likely to start school behind and, therefore, will need more individual attention.

2016 Appropriations



- No new funding was appropriated to reduce class sizes in high-poverty areas.



Indicator: Children Not Attending Preschool

Extent of the Problem

- 59% of New Mexico children ages 3 and 4 are not attending a preschool program such as pre-kindergarten or Head Start. Rates are actually best for Native American kids, at 53%. The rate for non-Hispanic white kids is 59% and 64% for Hispanic kids.

How This Can Hurt New Mexico

- More than 80% of brain development occurs within the first five years of life, and is dependent upon nurturing and stimulating experiences. High-quality preschools foster robust cognitive, social, and behavioral skills development, and help prepare children for success in school.
- Numerous studies have shown that high-quality early childhood care and education services help children succeed in school and in life. These programs lower the need for spending on special education and remediation, increase high school graduation rates, lower the rates for juvenile crime and teen pregnancy, and increase a child's earning potential.



Policy Solutions: Children Not Attending Preschool

Increase spending on high-quality pre-K so it is available to all 4-year-olds.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- New Mexico's state-funded pre-K has been studied and found to be effective at improving student success in school.¹⁵ Funding needs to be expanded and other infrastructure put in place so pre-K is available to all 4-year-olds.

2016 Appropriations



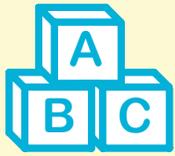
- No new money was appropriated for NM Pre-K for 4-year-olds. Given inflation, this represents a cut.



- \$800,000 was appropriated for NM Pre-K for 3-year-olds. The new funding should serve an estimated 195 children.



- \$5 million in capital outlay funding was set aside to build several new NM Pre-K classrooms.



Education

Policy Solutions: Children Not Attending Preschool (continued)

Pass President Obama's Preschool for All proposal.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- America is one of the few wealthy nations to lack a comprehensive plan for early learning. We don't even have national safety standards for child care. The President's proposal would be a big step forward for our youngest children and would give states the financial support they need to expand their most effective programs.

2016 Congressional Action



- Congress still has not acted on this issue.



Indicator: 4th Graders Not Proficient in Reading

Extent of the Problem

- 77% of New Mexico 4th graders are not proficient in reading. The rates are a staggering 93% for Native-American 4th graders and 83% for Hispanic 4th graders.

How This Can Hurt New Mexico

- Children who are not reading at grade level by the 4th grade are far more likely to drop out. Up through 3rd grade, children are learning to read. In 4th grade and beyond, children are reading in order to learn new subjects—so children not reading at grade level will have trouble mastering other subjects.



Policy Solutions: 4th Graders Not Proficient in Reading

Increase learning opportunities by expanding the school day and year, and expand K-3 Plus to 8th grade for low-income students.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- K-3 Plus increases the number of days in the school year for low-income students in kindergarten through 3rd grade. Students who are behind need additional quality instructional time.

- The need for additional days of instruction for low-performing and low-income students does not end at 3rd grade and neither should this valuable program.
- Children in low-income families are more likely to fall behind over the summer break than children from middle- and upper-income families because they lack access to affordable enriching summer activities.

2016 Legislative Action/Appropriations



- No new funding was appropriated for K-3 Plus. Given inflation, this represents a cut.



- Funding for after-school and summer enrichment programs was cut.



- No legislation to expand K-3 Plus to 8th grade was considered.

Increase the availability of reading coaches and support evidence-based reading initiatives.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Students with poor reading skills (which often includes children from low-income families) need specialized attention to improve their literacy skills. The earlier the better.

2016 Appropriations



- No new funding was appropriated for the early reading initiative. Given inflation, this represents a cut.



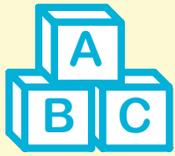
Indicator: 8th Graders Not Proficient in Math

Extent of the Problem

- 79% of New Mexico 8th graders are not proficient in math. The rates are 89% for Native-American 8th graders, 88% for Blacks, and 83% for Hispanics.

How This Can Hurt New Mexico

- Middle-school students who are behind in math are not prepared for the much higher level of mathematics required in high school and college.
- Math skills have become more and more important in today's high-tech work environment.



Education

Policy Solutions: 8th Graders Not Proficient in Math

Expand after-school, mentorship, and tutoring programs.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Children from low-income families are less likely to have highly educated parents to provide homework assistance, so mentors and tutors are needed.
- After-school programs can lead to academic and behavioral gains while providing safe learning environments.

2016 Appropriations

- Funding for after-school and summer enrichment programs was cut.

Provide math coaches and professional development for math teachers.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Teachers who are certified in math can provide focused instruction and better prepare students for high school.
- Teachers require additional on-the-job training to improve their skills and boost student outcomes.

2016 Appropriations

- See the \$6.8 million appropriation under ‘Sufficiently fund K-12 education’ on page 12.



Indicator: High School Students Not Graduating on Time

Extent of the Problem

- 28% of New Mexico high school students do not graduate on time. Rates are highest among Blacks (35%) and Native Americans (28%).

How This Can Hurt New Mexico

- Students who do not graduate from high school on time are less likely to continue on to college, are less employable, and more likely to earn low incomes.



Policy Solutions: High School Students Not Graduating on Time

Provide more school counselors.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Teenagers require counseling support, but counseling loads are so high that students are not given the help they need.

2016 Appropriations

- See the \$6.8 million appropriation under ‘Sufficiently fund K-12 education’ on page 12.

Identify students in 9th grade who require additional learning time and provide free summer school, after-school, and online learning opportunities.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Students who come to high school behind require additional time and support to meet learning standards.

2016 Appropriations

- Funding for after-school and summer enrichment programs was cut.

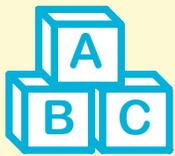
Provide relevant learning opportunities through service learning and dual credit parity to better prepare students for career or college.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Students who are not likely to attend college still need work skills. Service learning programs help reduce teen pregnancy, and provide students with civic engagement and work-related experience.

2016 Appropriations

- The state’s career readiness program received no new funding over the previous year. Given inflation, this flat funding represents a cut.
- Also see the \$6.8 million appropriation under ‘Sufficiently fund K-12 education’ on page 12.



Education

Policy Solutions: High School Students Not Graduating on Time (continued)

Provide professional development for teachers on the use of technology.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Special training is needed to engage students who utilize technology as a means of learning.

2016 Appropriations

- See the \$6.8 million appropriation under ‘Sufficiently fund K-12 education’ on page 12.

Support dropout recovery programs.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Online learning and special summer schools or after-hours programs with flexible learning environments help students who have dropped out return to school and graduate.

2016 Appropriations

- Dropout prevention programs received no new funding over the previous year. Given inflation, this flat funding represents a cut.
- Also see the \$6.8 million appropriation under ‘Sufficiently fund K-12 education’ on page 12.

Provide support for vulnerable students (those experiencing homelessness, who are incarcerated, need special education, are English language learners, etc.) who are at risk for dropping out.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Students who are at risk for dropping out need extra support through specialized curriculum and programs and/or additional time so they can graduate.

2016 Appropriations

- No new funding was appropriated for interventions and support for students, struggling schools and parents. Given inflation, this represents a cut.

Increase funding for evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- High school students who become pregnant are at increased risk for dropping out.

2016 Appropriations

- Once again, GRAD, the state’s teen pregnancy program received no new funding over the previous year. Given inflation, this flat funding represents a cut.



Health

Overarching Policy Solutions

Support early childhood services committees within county and tribal health councils in order to integrate health care with social, emotional/behavioral, and cognitive development for young children.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Local communities are the experts on the types of programs and service models required to address their unique needs.
- Health councils help establish community and state networks for planning, collaboration, needs assessments, training, data collection, resource sharing, implementation of promising and evidence-based practices, and public health campaigns.

2016 Appropriations

- No new funding was appropriated for county and tribal health councils. Given inflation, this represents a cut.

Expand and adequately fund school-based health centers (SBHCs).

How This Can Help New Mexico

- SBHCs can offer a wide range of services that students without a medical home might not otherwise receive.
- SBHCs save students from missing classes and their parents from leaving work in order to get to an off-campus doctor’s office.

2016 Appropriations

- \$300,000 was cut from school-based health services, which will result in five centers having to close their doors.



Health

Overarching Policy Solutions (continued)

Require and fund child screening for adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Adverse childhood experiences—such as child abuse and homelessness—can impair healthy brain development and have life-long negative consequences.
- The earlier such experiences can be treated, the better the child’s outcomes.

2016 Legislative Action



- SB 24, developed at the request of the J. Paul Taylor Task Force, would have directed HSD to ensure that a number of behavior and developmental screenings and services be provided, but the bill failed.

Pass and fund legislation to license dental therapists to provide limited dental care under the supervision of a dentist, especially in rural, tribal, and other under-served communities.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- New Mexico needs more dentists. More than 40 percent of New Mexicans live in federally designated Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas.¹⁶
- Dental therapists provide quality, cost-effective dental services; training these professionals in the state also leads to more economic and career opportunities for our citizens.

2016 Legislative Action



- Legislation to license dental therapists was ruled not germane, so it was not considered this session.

Ensure that all workers can earn at least one week of paid sick leave.

- Information on this policy solution can be found on page 7.



Indicator: Low Birth-Weight Babies

Extent of the Problem

- 8.8% of New Mexico babies are born weighing less than 5.5 pounds. Rates are highest among Blacks (14%).

How This Can Hurt New Mexico

- Low birth-weight babies are at greater risk for developmental delays and chronic health problems, which can impact their ability to succeed in school.
- Teens and mothers who get late-term or no prenatal care are at the highest risk.



Policy Solutions: Low Birth-Weight Babies

Expand outreach to pregnant women to enroll them in Medicaid early in their pregnancies.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- The earlier in her pregnancy a woman can begin to receive prenatal care, the better the outcomes for her and her baby. This not only improves child outcomes, it also saves the state money in the long term.

2016 Appropriations



- For the third year, no new funding was appropriated for outreach to enroll pregnant women in Medicaid.

Expand and fully fund health and nutrition programs for pregnant teens.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Teens are the demographic most likely to have low birth-weight babies as they are more likely to be low income, have less access to resources and supports like prenatal care, and have less education, so it makes sense to target this group for prevention programs.

2016 Appropriations



- For the third year, no new funding was appropriated to expand these programs.

Fund home visiting under a Medicaid waiver to draw down federal funding.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- For every dollar New Mexico spends on health care through Medicaid, the federal government chips in almost three more. If the state offered evidence-based home visiting programs under a Medicaid waiver, many more children and families could be served.
- Because home visiting starts prenatally, it leads to healthier births.

2016 Legislative Action/Appropriations



- While some funding for this was considered for this purpose, it was ultimately not included in the budget.



Health

Indicator: Children without Health Insurance

Extent of the Problem

- 7% of New Mexico children lack health insurance. The rate of uninsurance for Native-American children is 11%.

How This Can Hurt New Mexico

- Children need regular well-baby and well-child checkups in order for developmental delays to be diagnosed and treated. Without treatment, developmental problems can greatly impact a child’s ability to succeed at school.
- Children do better at school when they are healthy and any vision or hearing issues have been addressed.
- Children need immunizations to protect them from childhood diseases.



Policy Solutions: Children without Health Insurance

Restore outreach and enrollment assistance for Medicaid for kids.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Medicaid is the single largest provider of health coverage for children in New Mexico.
- Over the last several years, the state has not funded outreach to parents whose children are eligible but not enrolled. It’s estimated that thousands of children are eligible for Medicaid coverage but are not enrolled.

2016 Appropriations

- For the third year, no new state funding was appropriated for outreach.
- Medicaid was significantly underfunded this year. By allowing a \$86 million shortfall in state funding, New Mexico forgoes receiving more than \$300 million in federal funding. Besides cutting provider rates, it’s likely benefits will be cut and/or co-pays will be increased. What’s more, thanks to the Medicaid expansion, health care is the only sector adding jobs in New Mexico. This under funding could dampen the only bright spot in the state’s economy.

Simplify the enrollment and recertification process for Medicaid and enact express-lane enrollment.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Enrolling children in Medicaid is one hurdle, but keeping them enrolled is quite another. Since parents must recertify their child’s eligibility for Medicaid every year, that process needs to be less onerous.
- Express-lane eligibility would allow the state to more quickly enroll children using eligibility information from other services such as Head Start and SNAP.

2016 Legislative/Administrative Action

- No legislation to address these issues was passed.
- What’s more, the state’s Human Services Department is in contempt of a court order to improve their processing of Medicaid and SNAP applications and renewals. Express lane enrollment would help with compliance.



Past Policy Victory

Expand Medicaid to age 26 for youth who have aged out of foster care no matter where they live.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- The Affordable Care Act ensures that youth who have aged out of foster care can stay on Medicaid until they are 26. Until now, though, NM has covered those youth who aged out of care here, but not those from other states.
- These young people typically have high health care needs and deserve our full support during these transitional years into adulthood.

2015 Legislative Action

- Legislation to cover former foster youth up to age 26 no matter where they aged out of foster care was enacted.

Integrate the health insurance marketplace with Medicaid so that there is “no wrong door” for enrollment.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Parents are more likely to take their child to the doctor when they have insurance themselves. Fortunately, NM expanded Medicaid to low-income adults under the Affordable Care Act.
- The state’s health insurance exchange—where most individuals will go for insurance—should assist those who qualify for Medicaid with that application process.



Health

Policy Solutions: Children without Health Insurance (continued)

2016 Executive Action



- Two years into the Medicaid expansion, the administration is still not following the federal requirement for ‘no wrong door’ policies. Fortunately, enrollment of adults in Medicaid far exceeded expectations and resulted in a big jump in enrollment of eligible children.



Indicator: Child and Teen Death Rate

Extent of the Problem

- New Mexico’s child and teen death rate is 31 deaths per 100,000 children aged 1 to 19. The rate is 38 per 100,000 Native-American children and teens.

How This Hurts New Mexico

- The vast majority of child and youth deaths are preventable, as most are caused by accidents, homicide—including child abuse—or suicide.
- As motor vehicle safety standards have increased—along with access to guns—it’s projected that deaths by guns will surpass deaths by automobile accidents among children and youth in just a few years.¹⁷
- New Mexico’s suicide rate is one-and-a-half to two times higher than the national average. The suicide rate for Native American youth is three times the national average.¹⁸



Policy Solutions: Child and Teen Death Rate

Enact gun safety laws to limit unauthorized child access to guns.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- The use of child safety seats has led to a big decrease in child deaths due to car accidents. Sadly, similar commonsense safety measures for guns—such as child safety locks—have been blocked by gun manufacturers.

2016 Legislative Action



- HB 336, which improves how New Mexico reports to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, was passed and signed.

Adequately fund evidence-based child abuse prevention programs and strengthen CYFD’s role in child abuse prevention.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- The best way to stop the often-generational cycle of child abuse is to prevent it from happening in the first place. Prevention is also much less costly on both human and financial terms.

2016 Appropriations



- Home visiting programs are shown to reduce the incidence of child abuse. The program received a small funding increase of \$1.1 million this year. It will still only reach a tiny fraction of the families who could benefit the most.



- The lack of affordable child care is a risk factor for child abuse, but no new state funding was appropriated for child care assistance. Given inflation, this represents a spending cut.

Increase funding for child protective services to expand staff levels and reduce case loads.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- New Mexico’s child protective service workers have large case loads. When this happens, not all children get the protection they need, which can result in serious injury or death.
- Abuse is an adverse childhood experience (ACE) that impacts a child’s overall (intellectual, physical, and emotional) development, and can lead to mental illness and premature death.

2016 Legislative Appropriations



- CYFD received \$1.7 million in new funding to hire 22 more child protective caseworkers and increase support services. While it still falls well short of the need, it is an increase.



Past Policy Victory

Increase funding for child protective services to expand staff levels and reduce case loads.

2015 Legislative Action



- The Children, Youth and Families Worker Loan Repayment Act, which repays student loans for some social workers employed at CYFD, should help with recruitment and retention.



Health

Policy Solutions: Child and Teen Death Rate (continued)

Create a citizen oversight or review board for all CYFD child abuse cases that result in death.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- When a child dies as a result of abuse or neglect, independent oversight is needed to determine how such tragedies can be prevented. This means investigating all state and local agencies involved and protocols followed.

2016 Legislative Action



- No legislation to create a citizen review process for deaths from child abuse of children in the CYFD system was considered.

Increase funding for suicide prevention programs.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- More and more youth are ending their lives when they are unable to cope. They need strategies to help them handle difficult situations and give them a sense of hope that life is worth living.

2016 Appropriations



- For the third straight year, no new funding was appropriated for suicide prevention programs. Given inflation, flat funding represents a cut.



Indicator: Teens Who Abuse Alcohol or Drugs

Extent of the Problem

- 5% of New Mexico teens ages 12 to 17 had abused or were dependent on alcohol or drugs during the year prior to taking the survey.

How This Can Hurt New Mexico

- Teens who abuse alcohol or drugs are much more likely to become involved with the criminal justice system, engage in other high-risk activities, and do poorly in school and drop out.
- Drug and alcohol use can lead to physical and mental health problems, and is often also a factor in youth suicide.



Policy Solutions: Teens Who Abuse Alcohol or Drugs

Expand mental health programs for children, youth and families.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Many people who turn to illicit drug use or alcohol abuse are attempting to self-medicate their untreated mental illness. Increased access to mental health treatment has numerous advantages.

2016 Legislative Action/Appropriations



- Funding for behavioral health services was cut by \$800,000. This despite the fact that the state's behavioral health system is still in crisis due to the shake up in 2013.



- Legislation was passed again this year to reconvene the J. Paul Taylor Task Force, which focuses on coordinating behavioral health services for children.

Allow treatment instead of incarceration for drug and alcohol offenses.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Incarceration without treatment leads to high rates of recidivism—particularly when the illegal behavior stems from drug or alcohol abuse.

2016 Legislative Action



- No legislation to allow treatment instead of incarceration was introduced.



Family and Community

Indicator: Children in Single-Parent Families

Extent of the Problem

- 41% of New Mexico children live with an unmarried parent. Rates are highest among Native-American children, 65% of whom live in single-parent families.

How This Can Hurt New Mexico

- Children living in single-parent families are more likely to live in poverty—especially those living with single mothers, who still earn less than men.



Family and Community

Indicator: Children in Single-Parent Families (continued)

- Children in families headed by a single mother are more likely to drop out of school, become teen parents, and experience divorce as an adult than children in two-parent families.



Policy Solutions: Children in Single-Parent Families

Expand funding for mentorship services.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Programs that decrease teen births would help reduce the rate of single-parent families. Programs can foster self confidence, give young women direction for their future, and educate them about the benefits to the child of being raised in a two-parent family.

2016 Appropriations

- For the second year, no new funding was appropriated to expand mentorship programs.

Maintain current Medicaid eligibility for family planning services.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Unintended pregnancies put additional emotional and financial stress on families.
- Currently, family planning services are covered under New Mexico's Medicaid plan. However, there have been attempts to defund them.

2016 Legislative Action

- No attempts were made to change eligibility levels for or defund Medicaid coverage for family planning. However, Medicaid was severely underfunded this year and this will likely result in benefit cuts.

Restore eligibility for child care assistance to twice the poverty level so single parents can work.

- Information on this policy solution can be found in the Economic Well-Being domain on page 10.



Indicator: Children in Families where Household Head Lacks a High School Diploma

Extent of the Problem

- 18% of NM children live in families where the head of household lacks a high school diploma. The rate is highest for Hispanic children at 24%.

How This Can Hurt New Mexico

- A child's success in school is closely tied to parental levels of education. Parents without a high school education are less likely to be able to assist their children with homework and may be less inclined to impress upon them the value of education.
- Parents without a high school diploma tend to end up in low-wage jobs that do not offer benefits such as health insurance. They also have higher rates of unemployment so their families are less economically secure than families where the household head has more education.



Policy Solutions: Children in Families where Household Head a Lacks High School Diploma

Provide additional need-based financial assistance for low-income and low-skilled adults seeking access to post-secondary education, job training, and career pathway programs.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- NM distributes just 25% of its college financial aid on the basis of student need. This is much lower than the national average of 74%.¹⁹
- Need-based financial aid is vital for returning students because they do not qualify for the lottery scholarship and may have a family to support while they advance their education.

2016 Appropriations

- No new funding was appropriated for these purposes.

Expand access to high school equivalency, adult basic education (ABE), job training, and the career pathways pilot program I-BEST.

- Information on this policy solution can be found in the Economic Well-Being domain on page 9.



Family and Community

Indicator: Children Living in High-Poverty Areas

Extent of the Problem

- 26% of New Mexico children live in areas where the overall poverty rate is 30% or higher. Rates are more than double that for Native-American children, 59% of whom live in high-poverty areas.

How This Can Hurt New Mexico

- High-poverty areas are plagued by a whole host of social problems—crime, street violence, drug use, substandard housing, etc.—that put children at risk.
- Residents in high-poverty areas are also more likely to feel disenfranchised and powerless, and are, therefore, less likely to demand public services—like parks and recreational facilities—that residents in higher-income neighborhoods take for granted.



Policy Solutions: Children Living in High-Poverty Areas

Create or expand incentives for developers to build mixed-income housing developments.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Mixed-income neighborhoods are more stable than low-income areas and residents tend to be more invested in keeping their neighborhood infrastructure from falling into disrepair.

2016 Appropriations

- No new funding was appropriated for incentives to build mixed-income housing developments.

Increase funding for individual development accounts (IDAs) for parents and children.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- IDAs are a public-private initiative that offer financial incentives for low-income New Mexicans to save money in order to purchase a home or pay for college.

2016 Appropriations

- No new funding was appropriated for IDAs.

Reduce class sizes for children in high-poverty areas.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Studies show that class size matters. Children in high-poverty areas are more likely to start school behind and, therefore, will need more individual attention.

2016 Appropriations

- No new funding was appropriated to reduce class sizes in high-poverty areas.



Indicator: Teen Birth Rate

Extent of the Problem

- New Mexico's teen birth rate is 38 births per 1,000 female teens ages 15 to 19. Rates are 56 per 1,000 for both Hispanic and Native-American teens.

How This Can Hurt New Mexico

- Few teens are equipped for the emotional and financial rigors of raising a child.
- The children of teen parents are more likely to become teen parents themselves.
- Young women in poverty who see no future for themselves are less likely to delay childbearing than young women who believe they can attend college and attain a satisfying career.



Policy Solutions: Teen Birth Rate

Provide relevant learning opportunities through service learning.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Service learning programs help reduce teen pregnancy, and provide students with civic engagement and work-related experience.

2016 Appropriations

- The state's career readiness program received no new funding over the previous year. Given inflation, this flat funding represents a cut.
- Also see the \$12.5 million appropriation under 'Sufficiently fund K-12 education' on page 12.



Family and Community

Policy Solutions: Teen Birth Rate (continued)

Increase funding for evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Young women at risk for teenage pregnancy can benefit from programs that foster self confidence, give them direction for their future, and educate them about the benefits to the child of being raised in a two-parent family.

2016 Appropriations

- GRAD, the state's teen pregnancy program received no new funding over the previous year. Given inflation, this flat funding represents a cut.

Expand school-based health centers (SBHCs).

How This Can Help New Mexico

- SBHCs can supply teens with information about sex and reproduction they might not feel comfortable asking about in other settings.

2016 Appropriations

- \$300,000 was cut from school-based health services, which will result in five centers having to close their doors.

Expand evidence-based and age-appropriate sex education; defund abstinence-only programs.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Whether teens are sexually active or not, they need basic information about sex and procreation.
- Abstinence-only programs are ineffective at reducing teen birth rates.

2016 Appropriations

- No new funding was appropriated for evidence-based sex education.

Increase funding for evidence-based programs (such as home visiting) that prevent or delay second births by teen mothers.

How This Can Help New Mexico

- Parenting a child is hard work—and it's made more difficult if the parent is also still a child. Home visiting offers positive parenting role models and connects parents to important resources. In turn, these programs set children up to succeed in school, which lowers the chances that they will become teen parents themselves.

2016 Appropriations

- Legislative action on home visiting can be found in the Education domain on page 11.
- No new funding was appropriated for any other programs that prevent or delay second births by teen mothers.

Endnotes

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7. *New Mexico's Wage Race to the Bottom: Raising and Indexing the State Minimum Wage to Break the Free Fall*, Gerry Bradley, MA, New Mexico Voices for Children, January 2013
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9. New Mexico Voices for Children analysis of tax year 2012 Internal Revenue Service data provided by the Brookings Institute
10. *The State of America's Children*, Children's Defense Fund, 2014
11. Analysis by CFED of National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (academic year 2011-12), Working Poor Families Project
12. *Most States Funding Schools Less Than Before the Recession*, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, September 2013: <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=4011>
13. *Ranking of the States*, U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences National Center for Education Statistics
14. "12-13 SY Habitually Truant Students by District and School Type," NM PED
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16. HB-349 Fiscal Impact Report, Legislative Finance Committee, 2015
17. *Young Guns: How Gun Violence is Devastating the Millennial Generation*, Center for American Progress, February 2014
18. New Mexico Suicide Prevention Coalition: <http://www.nmsuicideprevention.org/>
19. Analysis by CFED of National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (academic year 2011-12), Working Poor Families Project

Take Action!

How You Can Help Make This Campaign a Reality

If you want to help make New Mexico a better place for children and families, there are two simple but impactful things you can do:

1. Make a **donation** to NM Voices

Our supporters have helped us achieve many **policy wins**. Here are a few:

-  Working with allies, we helped make the case for funding a program that will help low-income New Mexico families purchase more fresh fruits and vegetables.
-  While analyzing last year's budget recommendations, our researchers noticed that the state had more than \$20 million in federal funding for child care assistance that it was failing to spend—despite having a waiting list for services.
-  Since we began advocating for increased funding for early care and learning programs about five years ago, funding has been increased by 60 percent. While that's a big increase, the un-met need remains large, as well.

As a donor you are helping sustain our work on behalf of New Mexico's children. Your support helps us:

- Research and analyze public policies that can both help and hurt children and their families.
- Influence the public dialog about child well-being and the need for greater investments.
- Educate lawmakers and voters about these policies and how they would impact our state.

In fact, one of our most powerful tools—working directly with legislators on specific policies—can **only** be paid for with donations from individuals like you.

Make a **donation** on our website (www.nmvoices.org).

2. Become a **citizen co-sponsor** of *NM KIDS are COUNTing on Us*

As a citizen co-sponsor you are pledging that:

- You believe New Mexico can—and should—do better by its children.
- You support the policies and principles laid out in this campaign as a framework for improving child outcomes.
- You will contact your state and national elected officials when key legislation is being considered that will impact child and family well-being. We'll make it easy for you with our email Action Alerts. Each Action Alert will contain background information on the legislation, contact information for your elected officials, and even a script for what you might say or write.

Sign up to be a **citizen co-sponsor** on our website (www.nmvoices.org).



Please help us make New Mexico's kids the state's top priority!

Thank you!



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