

Child Well-Being in New Mexico:

Data and Policy Recommendations

Presented to the

**Legislative Health and Human Services
Committee**

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What we will cover today

- Child well-being data
- Why the numbers matter
- How we got here
- What we can do about it



What is KIDS COUNT?

- Initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation
- State-by-state effort to track status of children across 16 indicators in four domains:
 - Economic Well-Being
 - Education
 - Health
 - Family and Community
- Based on government-collected data
- Calls attention to issues impacting child well-being
- Publish annual national and state data books
- Interactive KIDS COUNT data center



New Mexico's KIDS COUNT story:

In 2013 we fell to 50th

In 2014 & 2015 we were 49th

“Children are a sign. They are a sign of hope, a sign of life, but also a ‘diagnostic’ sign, a marker indicating the health of families, society and the entire world.” -Pope Francis, 2014

N.M. hits bottom in child well-being

State ranks 50th in 2013 National Kids Count survey

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By ELAINE TASSY
Journal Staff Writer
After circling the drain for more than two decades, New Mexico

Bottom of the ranks



A GROUP OF CHILDREN smile in their classroom at Jaramila in the heart of Albuquerque where they are being helped by the state's largest child welfare agency, the Children's Advocacy Center.

New Mexico came in 50th overall for the first time since the survey began, regularly ranking near last.

and community categories. It was 49th to Mississippi's 50th; in education, it was 49th to Nevada's 50th; and in health, it was 49th to Montana's 50th.

More data
To get more detailed data, calculated by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's report, and to create your own maps to see how your state compares, go to www.kidscount.org

NM last in nation for child well-being

Troubling statistics continue state trend

By Lindsey Anderson
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LAS CRUCES — No more “Thank God for Mississippi.” New Mexico is dead last in child well-being, according to the 2013 Kids Count report, taking the spot held by Mississippi since 1990.

The nonprofit Annie E. Casey Foundation, ranks the 50 states on 16 indicators of child well-being, including economic security, education and health.

New Mexico's drop to 50th is largely due to improvements Mississippi made in half of the indicators, especially the number of children attending preschool and children in families where the head of house lacks a high school diploma. Mississippi is now 49th.

New Mexico has never ranked above 40th since the

data was first compiled in 1990. Louisiana, Arizona and Nevada were also in the bottom five, while New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Minnesota and New Jersey were in the top five.

New Mexico saw significant increases of children in poverty, children whose parents lack secure employment and children living in households with a high housing cost burden — three of the four indicators of economic well-being — from the mid-2000s to 2011, according to the report.

“Child poverty is very bleak,” said Shirley Jaquez, director of Jardín de los Niños, which serves homeless and near homeless children in the Mesilla Valley. “When you start out with child poverty already being very high, when a recession hits, there's no way to go but down.”

“We see people lined up here at the soup kitchen, and the



THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION ranks the 50 states using 16 specific indicators to determine a child's well-being, including economic security, education and health.

lines are getting longer and longer,” Jaquez said.

Children in poverty, especially homeless children or those at risk of homelessness, are especially at risk of neglect and abuse, she said.

Kids Count is a “wake-up call” for legislators to improve the lives of New Mexico's children, she said.

Unstable employment forces families to choose between food, shelter and health care

for their children, Jaquez said. “For children what that means they're not going to get the health care they need when they need it,” she said. “They're people with far more brains and vision than I.

The kids aren't alright

National numbers not much better
How are your children doing? Your grandchildren?
According to statistics, if you're not doing well, your children and grandchildren are living in New Mexico, there's a good chance they're

gleaned hundreds of government numbers to create a Book: State Trends in Child Well-Being.

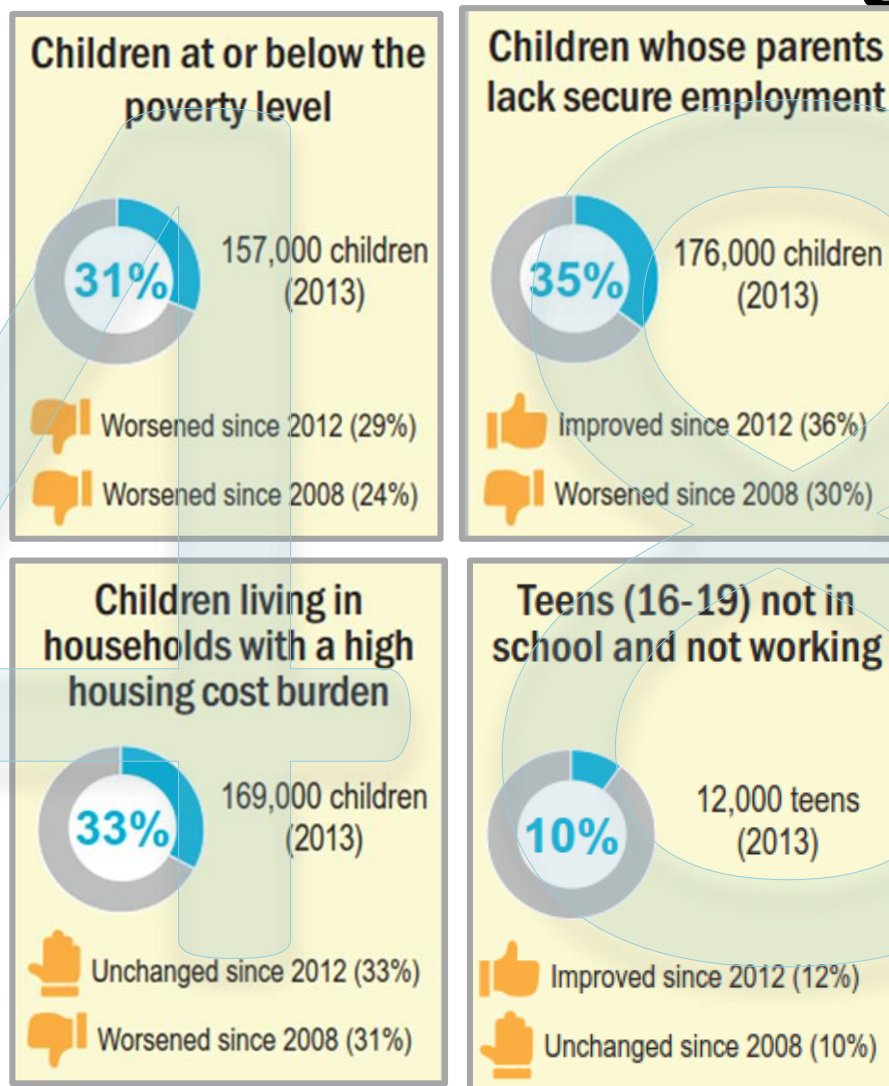
out this. And it seems disproportionate to the number we were No. 49 most of the last 23 years of the report. four categories they believe have a long-term impact on education, health, and economic well-being.

categories, there he cumulative o at the bottom. nt of this informal as well based

about our the problems. Among those try Helen Gar- of Doña Ana v Mexico, sult of decisions hing we do i these prob- al of us. Addressing them requires a sincere, not just governmental action. people with far more brains and vision than I.

“We as a nation look pretty dismal as well based on these numbers.”

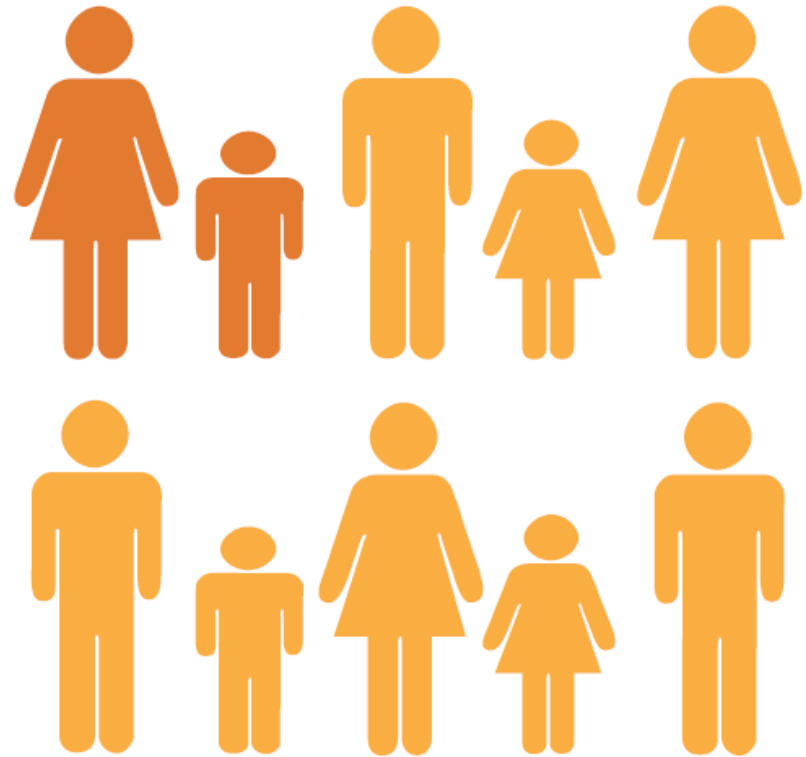
Economic Well-Being



NM has the 2nd highest poverty rate

21% of all New Mexicans live at or below the poverty level*

That's 2 out of every 10 New Mexicans

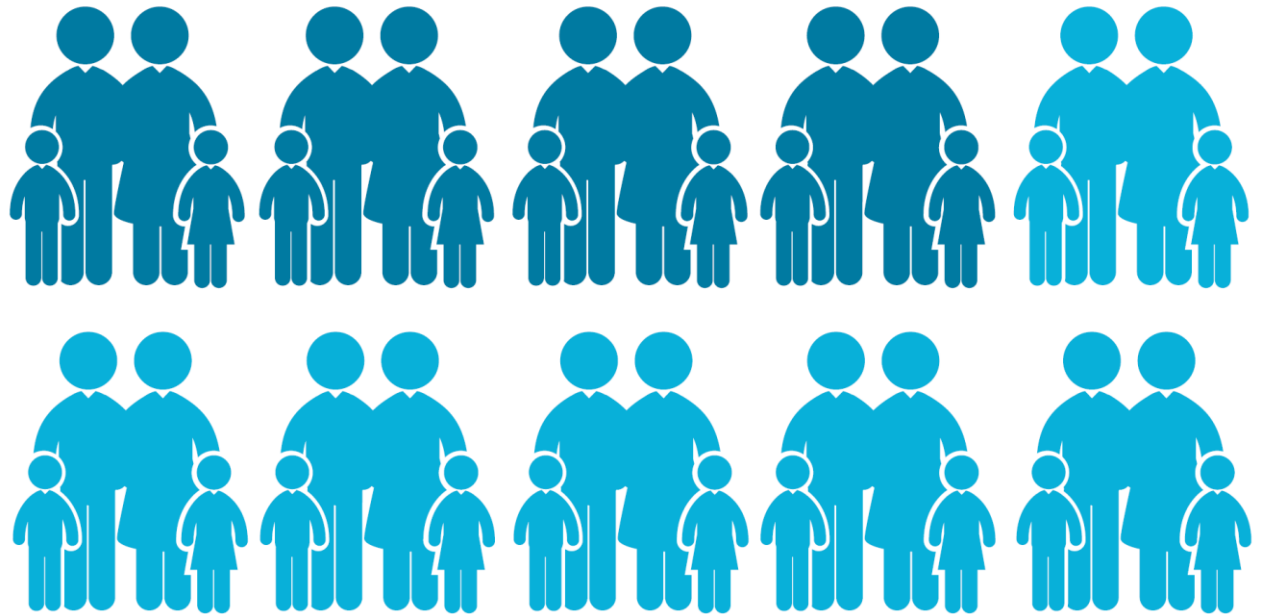


*\$23,850 a year for a family of four

NM has the 2nd highest rate of working families who are low income

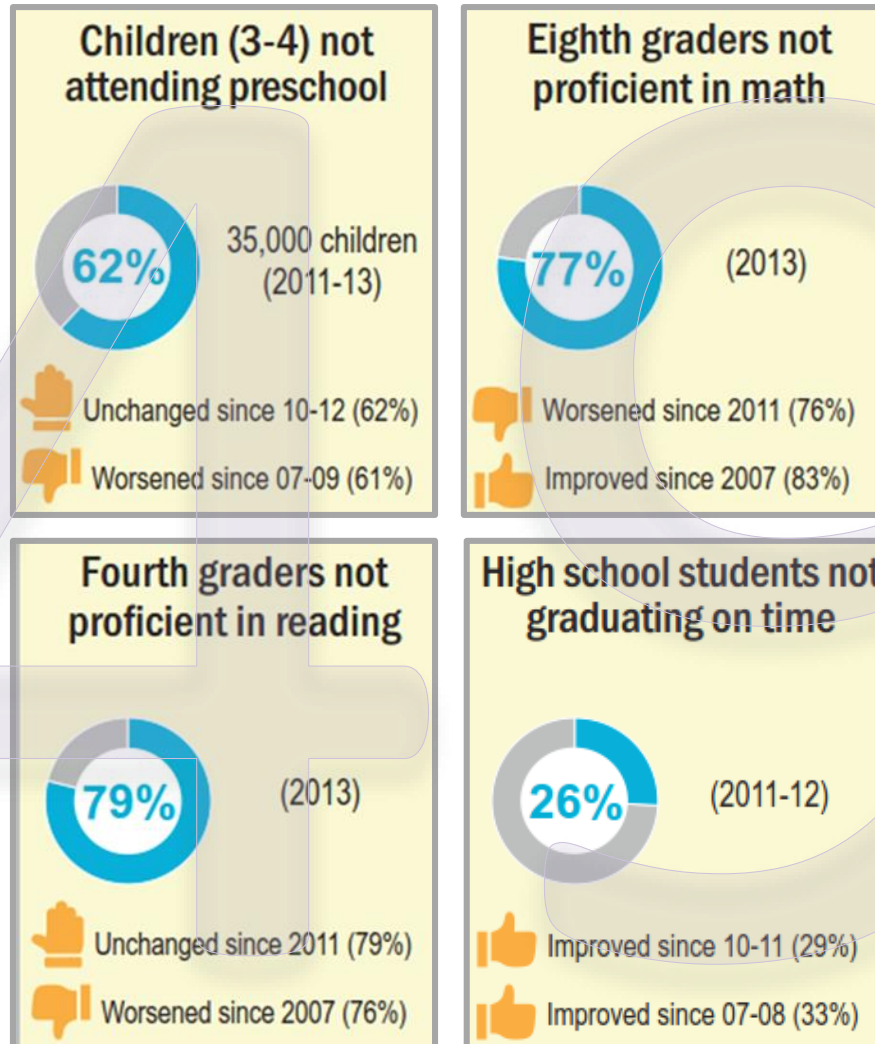
42% of our working families are low income

That's
more than
4 out of
every 10
families



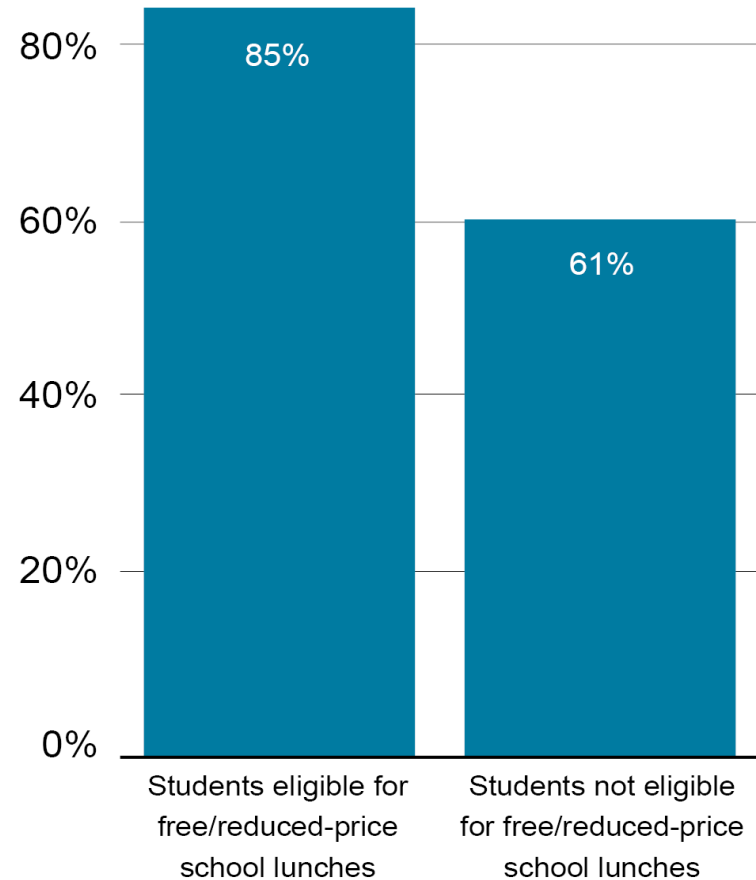
Source: Working Poor Families Project calculations of 2013 U.S. Census American Community Survey data

Education



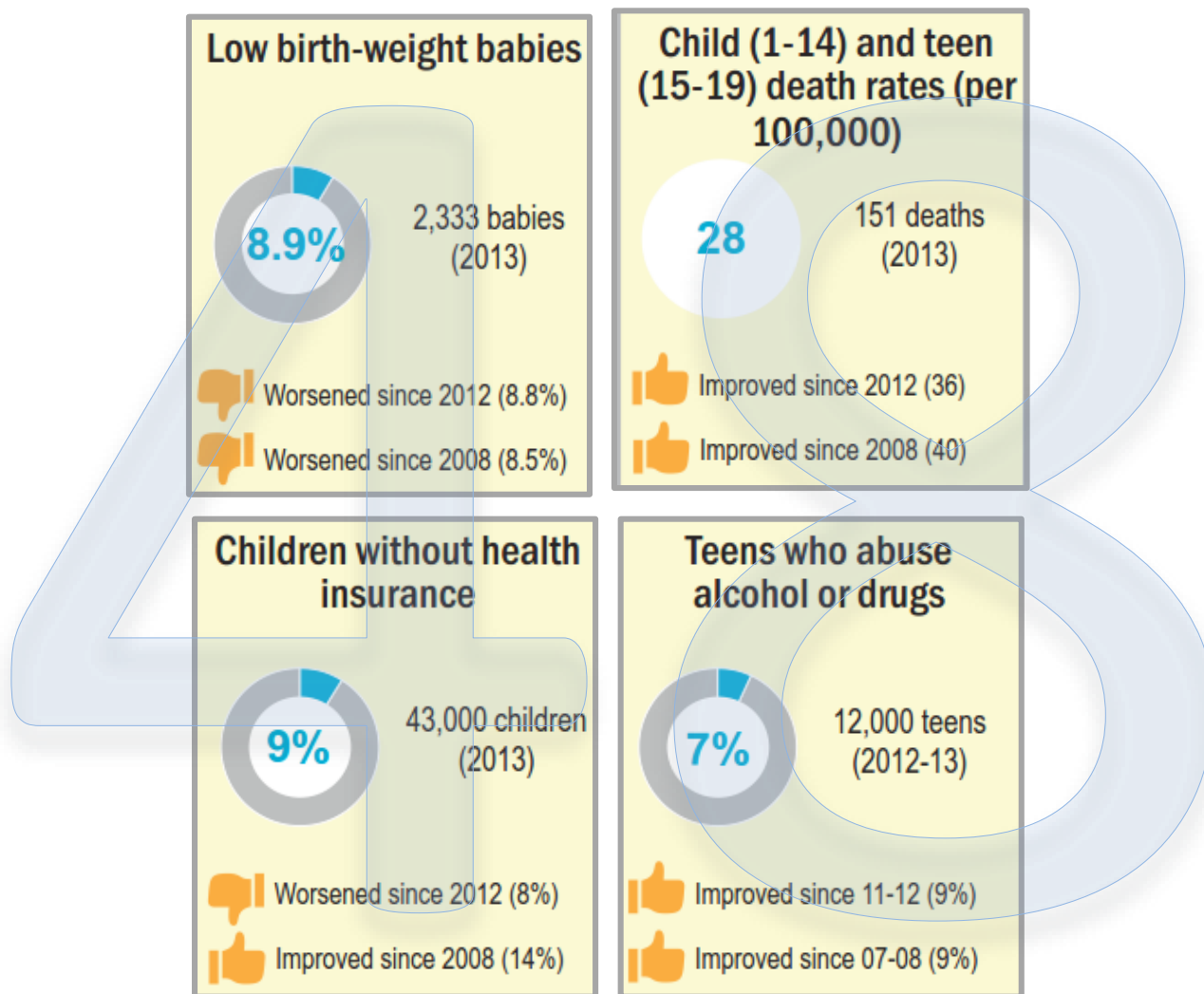
Income levels impact education

Fourth Graders Who Scored Below Proficient in Reading by Family Income



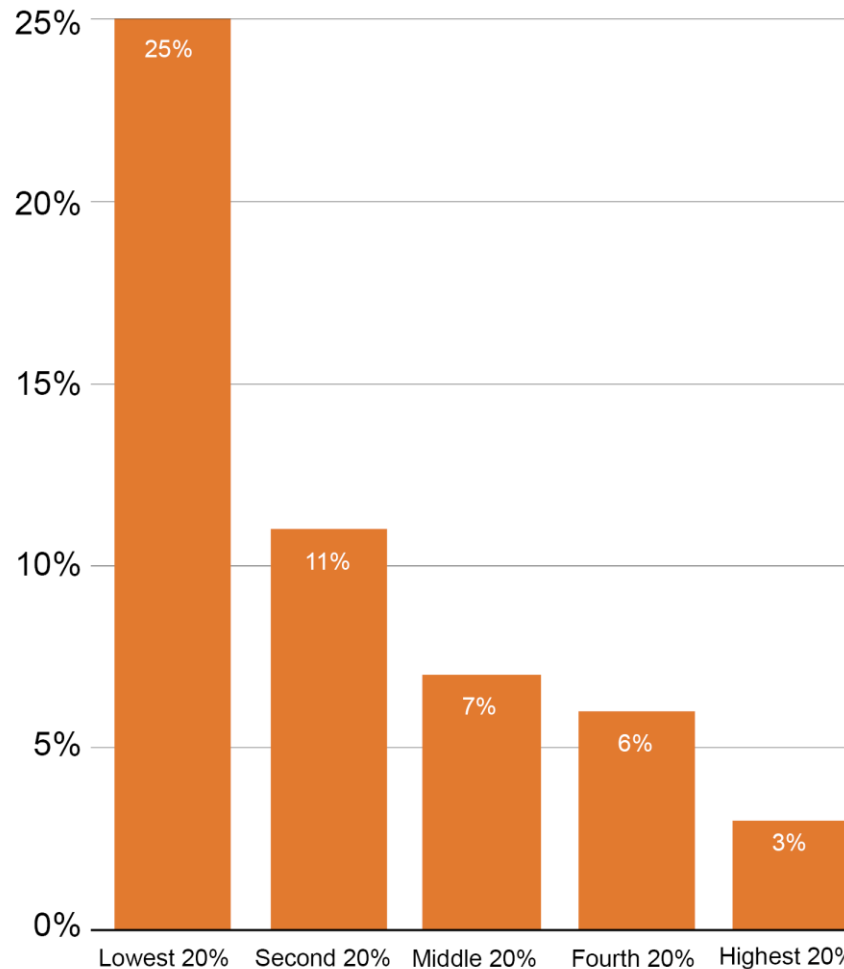
Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2013

Health



Income levels impact food purchases

Average Spending on Food as a Share of Income (2013-14)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics,
Consumer Expenditure Survey, 2013

Despite school meal programs and SNAP, many NM kids still don't get enough to eat

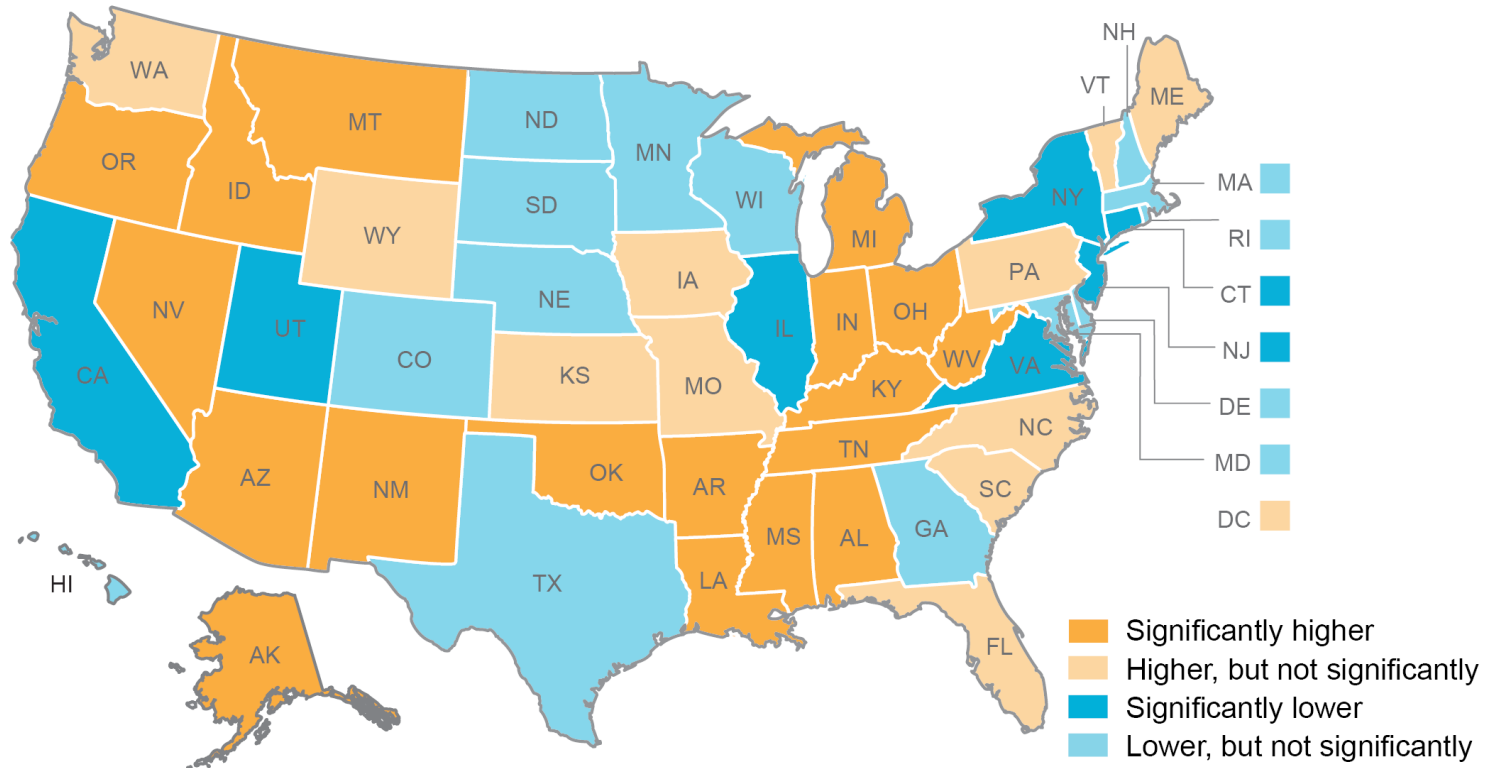
28% of New Mexico's children are 'food insecure'

That's almost
3 out of every **10**
New Mexico kids



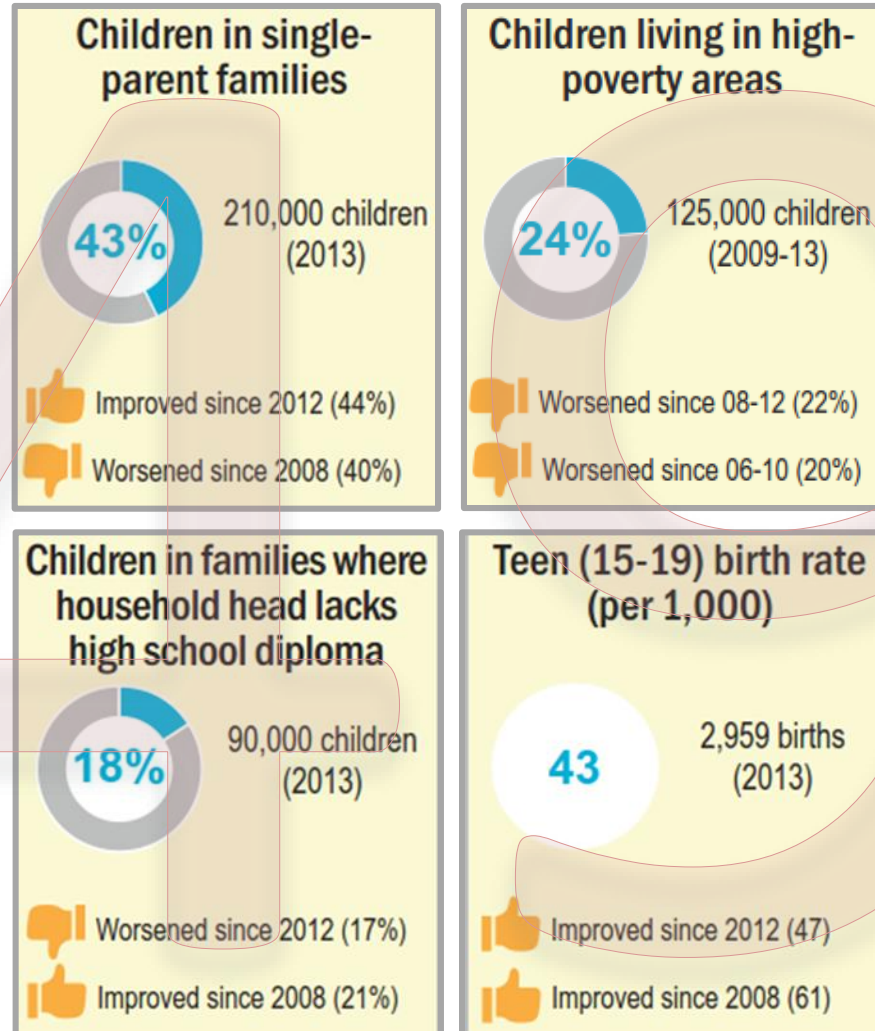
Most NM children experience trauma

Percentage of Children Who Have Experienced at Least Two Traumas,
Compared to the National Average



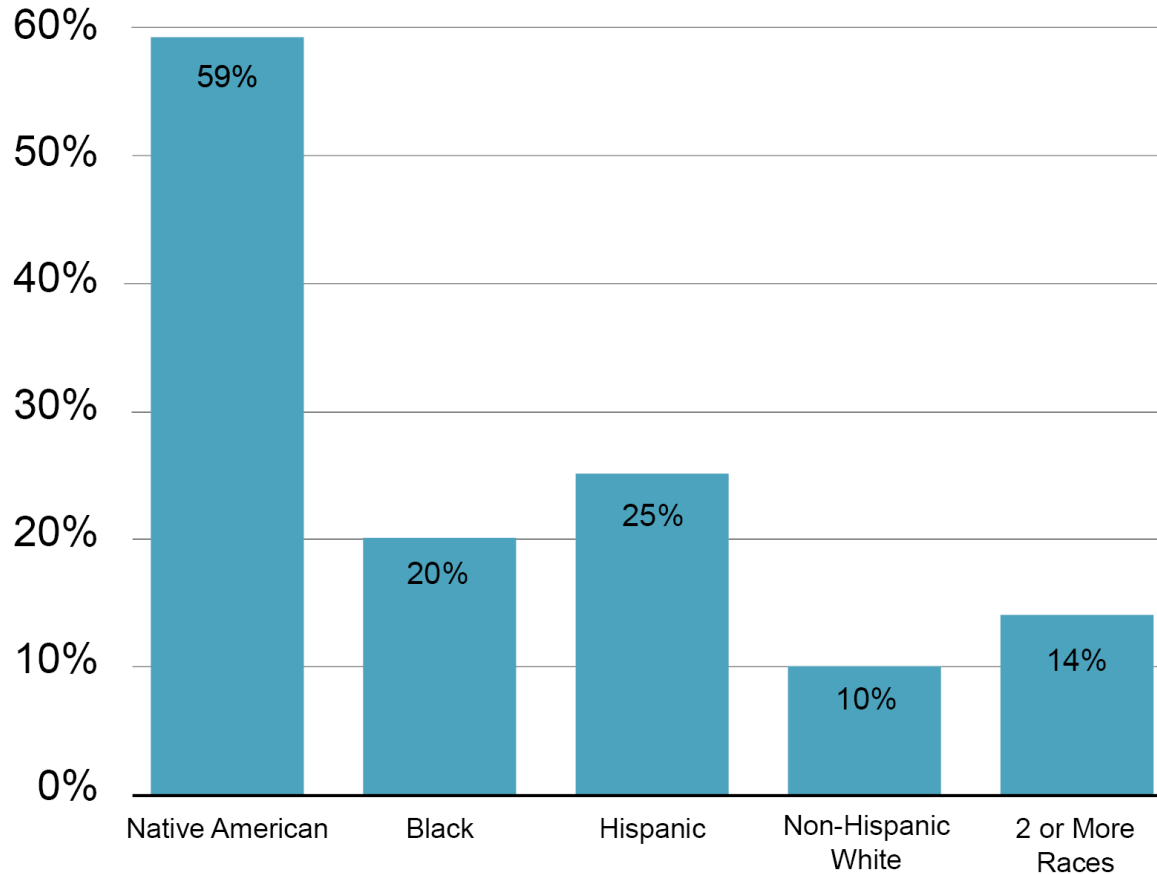
Source: *Health Affairs*, as reported in *The Atlantic*, Dec. 11, 2013

Family and Community



Race and place matter

Children Living in Areas of Concentrated Poverty by Race/Ethnicity



Source: Population Reference Bureau analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey

www.nmvoices.org

Each piece contributes to overall well-being



Damaged and missing pieces lead to:

- Higher rates of child abuse and neglect
- Higher rates of teen parents
- Higher drop out rates
- Lower college attendance rates
- Higher rates of violent crime
- Higher poverty rates as adults



Positive and comprehensive support systems lead to:

- Fewer incidences of child abuse
- Lower rates of food insecurity
- Better 4th grade reading scores
- Higher graduation rates
- Improved career achievement and productivity
- Reduced costs in remedial education and criminal justice expenditures
- Better health outcomes

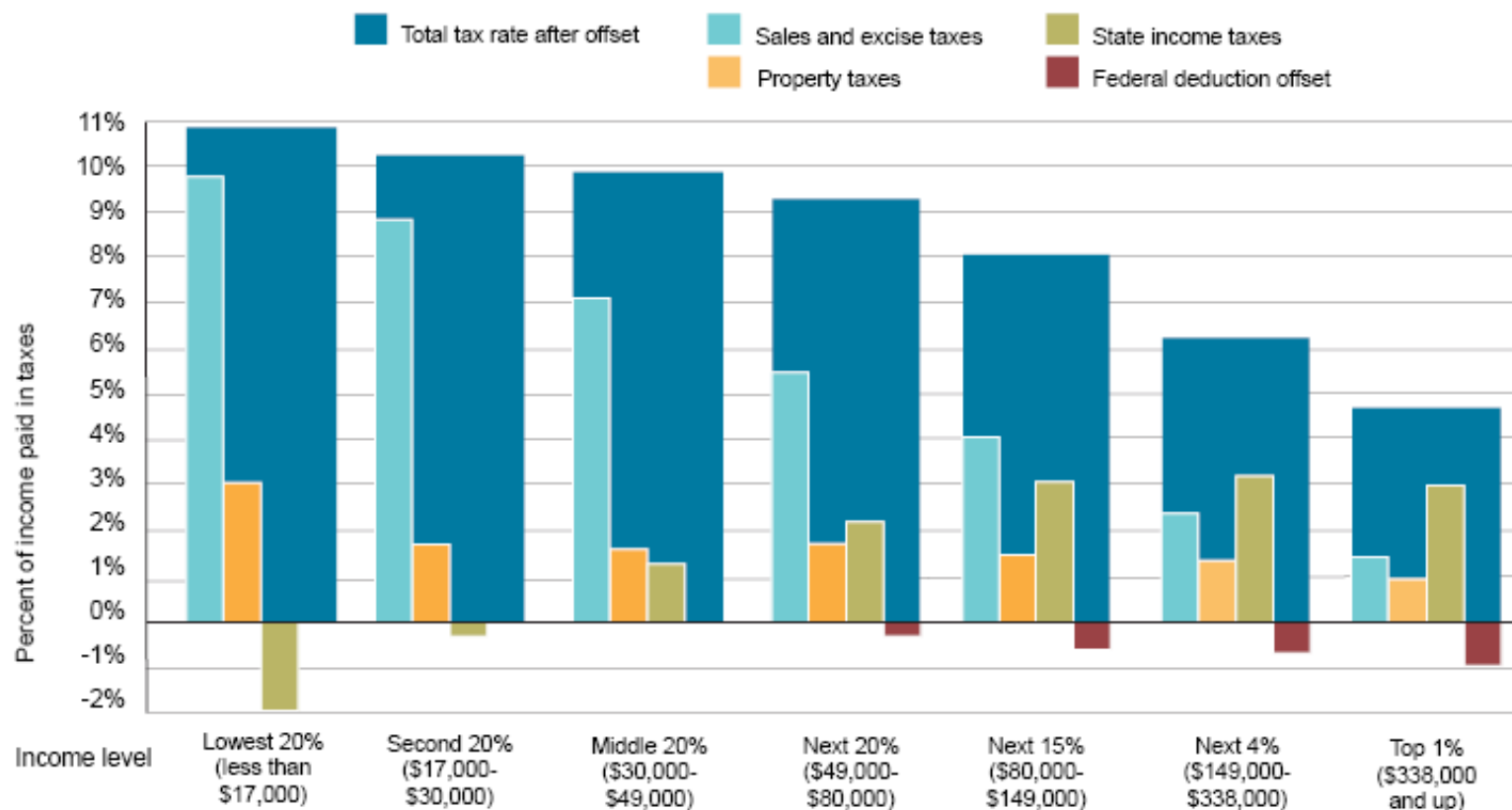


How we got here

- 11th deepest cuts (9%) in the U.S. to per-pupil K-12 spending
- 7th deepest cuts (32%) in the U.S. to per-pupil higher education spending, leading to steep tuition increases
- Cuts to special education funding, resulting in an even greater loss of federal dollars for special education
- Fewer children have access to early care and education programs now than in 2010
- Enrollment in child care assistance has dropped by 30%
- Eliminated funding for outreach to enroll children in Medicaid
- Cut U.I. benefits, including the increment for children of unemployed workers
- Tax cuts have made our tax system even more regressive and we have less revenue available for essential services

Our tax system asks the most of those who can afford it least

NM Families with the lowest incomes pay the highest rates in state and local taxes



Source: *Who Pays?*, Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, 2015

What we can do about it

Policy Recommendations to Improve Child Well-Being



Make children a priority in *all* policy

- Adopt the ***Campaign for a Better New Mexico*** or develop your own Children's Agenda
- Appoint and empower a Children's Council similar to the Jobs Council
- Kickstart the Children's Cabinet
- Fully fund ECE, K-12, higher education, and Medicaid



Improve our tax system

Child poverty is a longstanding pervasive issue and we need a set of targeted initiatives to end child poverty

- NM's tax system is grossly unfair to working families
- 75% of families pay more than **double** what the richest families pay in state and local taxes as a share of their incomes
- Most tax policy is designed to help business succeed, not kids and families



The Earned Income Tax Credit and NM's Working Families Tax Credit

- EITC injects \$500 million into NM economy
- NM's Working Families Tax Credit returns \$50 million to working families
- 97% goes to working families with kids
- Without these 2 credits, 40,000 *more* NM families would be in poverty

“The best anti-poverty, the best pro-family, the best job creation measure to come out of Congress.”

- Ronald Reagan on the EITC



Big impact/no cost initiatives

No cost to the general fund

- Increase the Minimum Wage
- Assure college affordability
- Expand paid sick leave & family medical leave
- End predatory lending practices like payday, car title, rent-to-own and tax refund lending by capping interest rates at 36%
- Invest a fraction of the Land Grant Permanent Fund in early care and education



Early care and education

- Current funding is serving only a fraction of our eligible children
- Eligibility for Child Care Assistance is below 2001 levels (child care costs more than UNM)
- Enrollment in Child Care Assistance is 30% **lower** than it was in 2010
- NM needs a strong commitment to ECE and a stable and robust source of funding



Fully fund early childhood care and learning programs

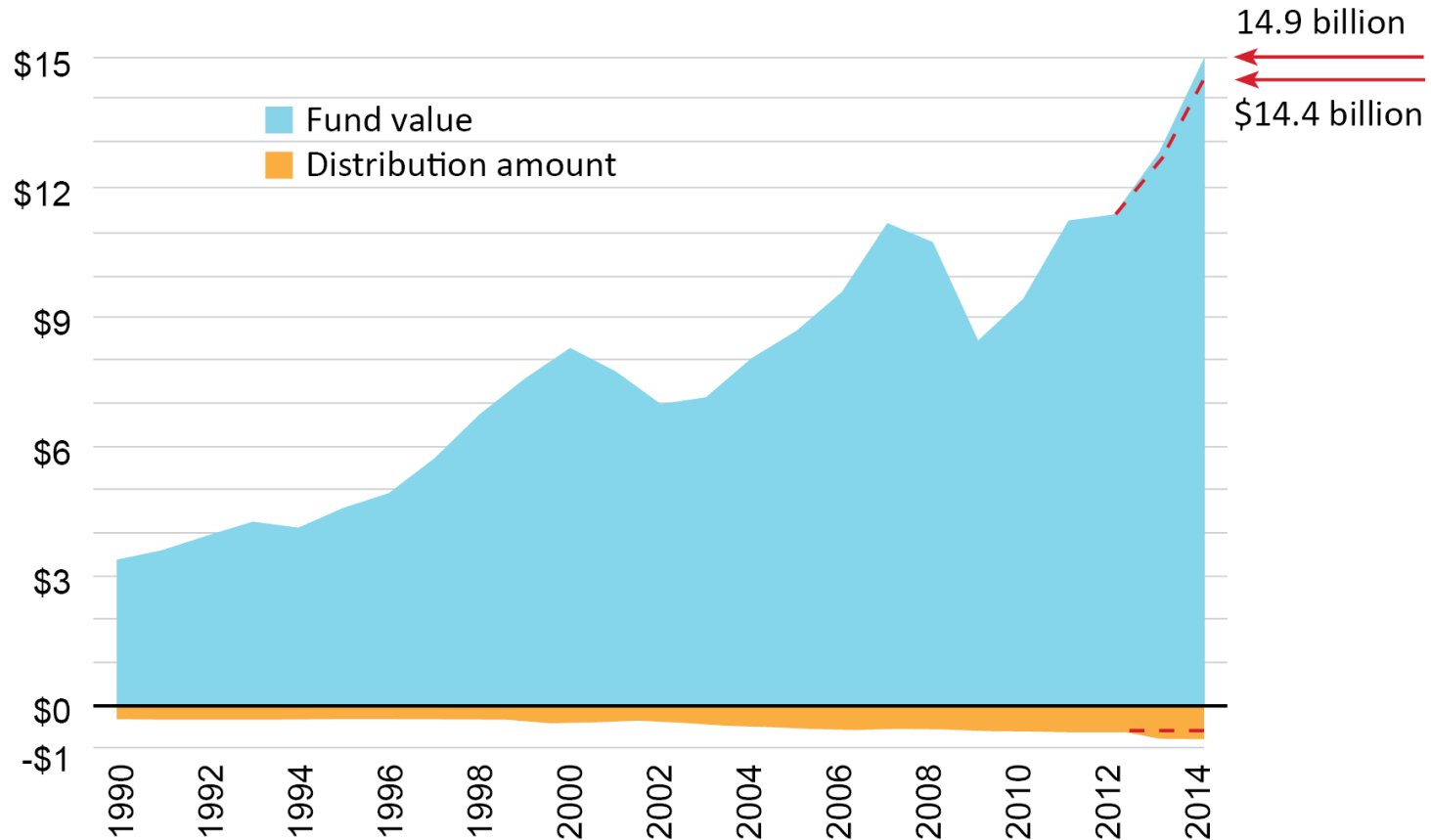
Invest 1.5% of \$15 billion LGPF

- Would fund home visiting, child care assistance, NM pre-K, and workforce development
- The only adequate, stable funding source
- Does not raise taxes
- LGPF will continue to grow
- ECE provides better ROI than the stock market



Our Permanent Fund is robust

Value of the LGPF with and without 1.5% Investment in Early Childhood Services



Sources: State Land Office and Investment Council reports and audits, NM Voices estimates

Fully fund early childhood care and learning programs

Draw down federal Medicaid funds for home visiting

- Medicaid funds evidence-based model
- Home visiting improves parent involvement in education, and decreases child abuse
- A NM investment of just \$500,000 is matched with \$1.2 million in federal funds
- Legislative appropriation has been vetoed by the governor several times



Medicaid and SNAP

- Maximize enrollment in all federally funded health and nutrition programs
- Simplify enrollment and recertification
- Implement express lane eligibility
- Expand outreach efforts especially to women of child-bearing age to assure healthy births



“The common good, on the other hand, is much more than the sum of individual interests. It moves from ‘what is best for me’ to ‘what is best for everyone.’ It embraces everything which brings a people together: common purpose, shared values, and ideas which help us to look beyond our limited individual horizons.”

-Pope Francis, 2015

