

Child Welfare Matters



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Presented to the
**Legislative Health and Human Services
Committee**

September 20, 2016

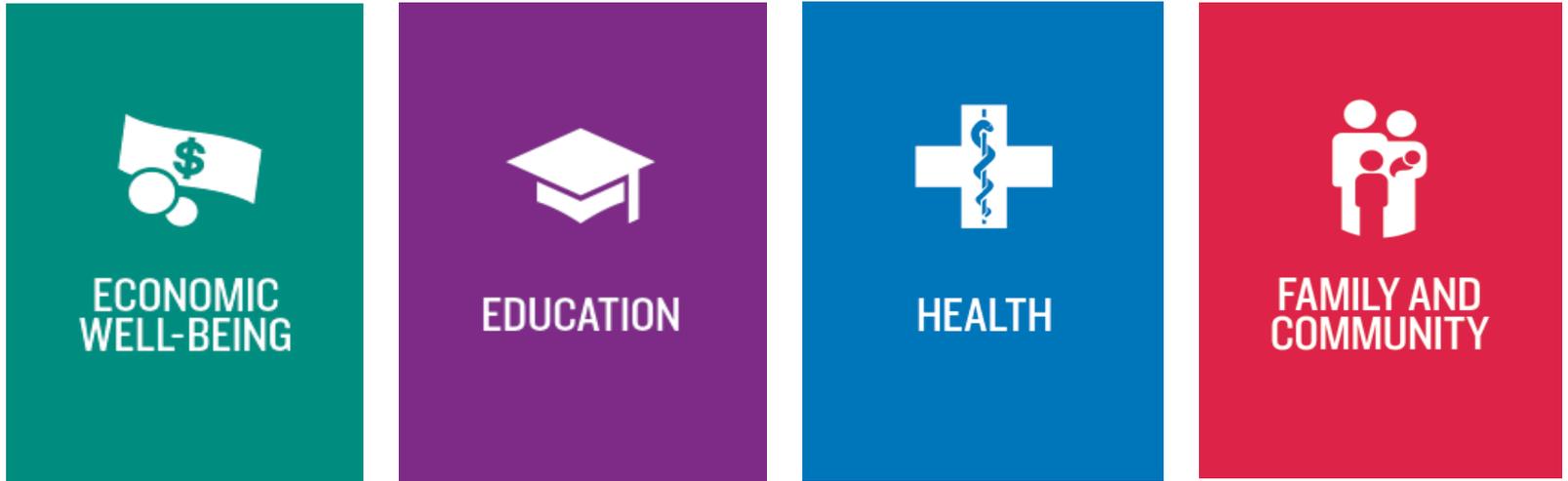


What we will cover today

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



What is KIDS COUNT?

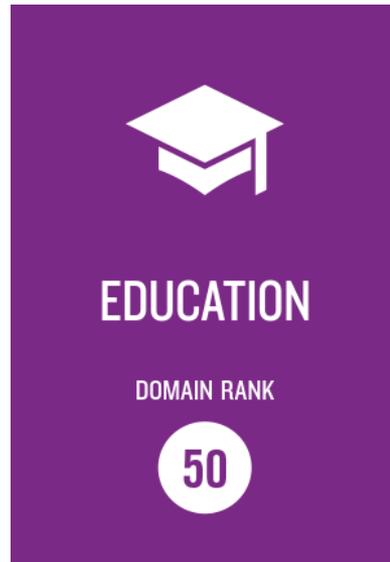


- Initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, NMVC is NM KC anchor
- Based on government-collected data
- Calls attention to child well-being issues
- Data in regular publications and on Data Center (datacenter.kidscount.org)



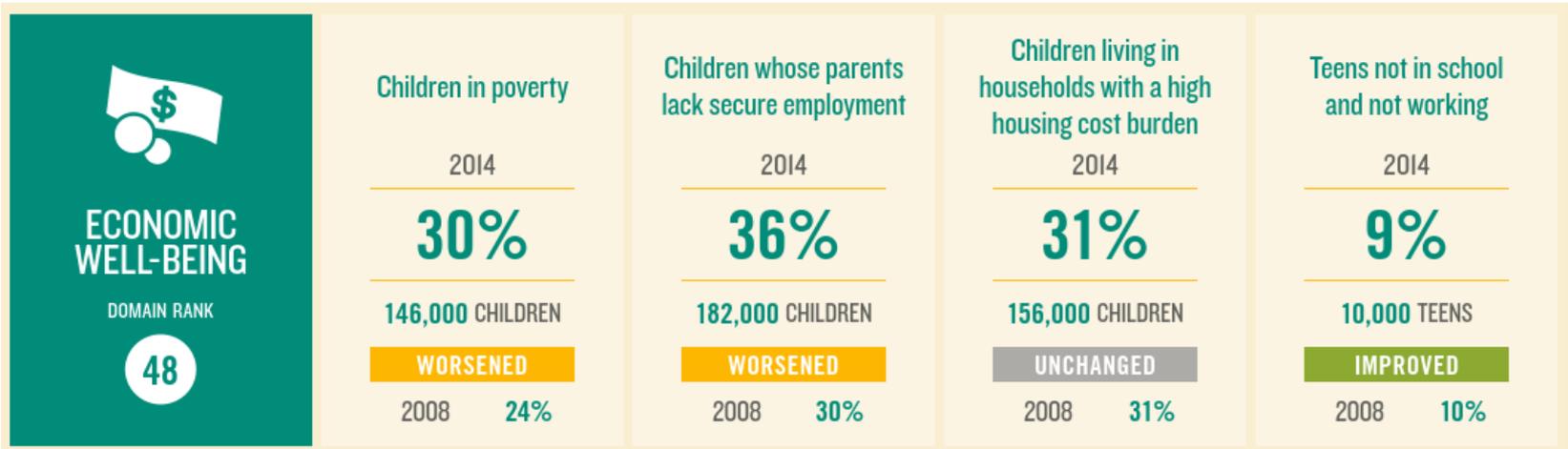
We are ranked 49th in child well-being

And some indicators are particularly alarming



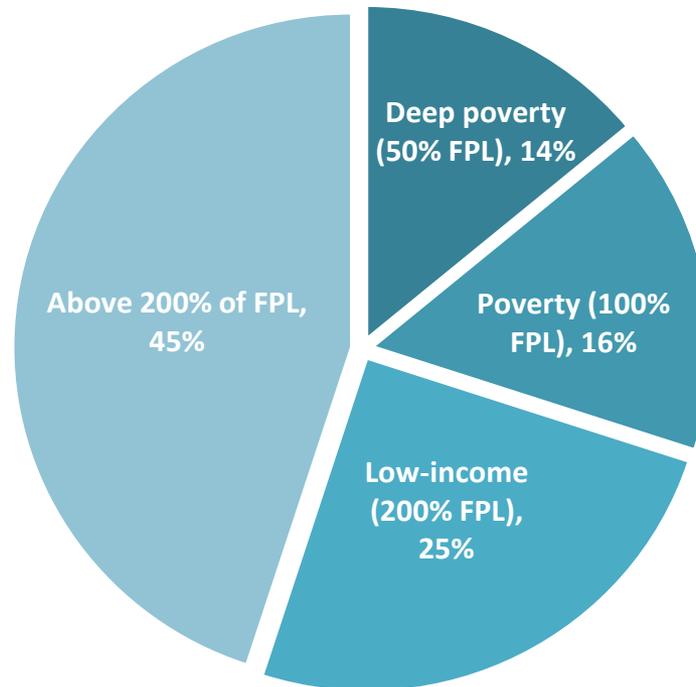
Economic well-being of kids in NM

There are some short-term improvements, but long-term trends are negative



Most NM kids are in low-income households or living in poverty

Percent of NM kids by income group,* 2014

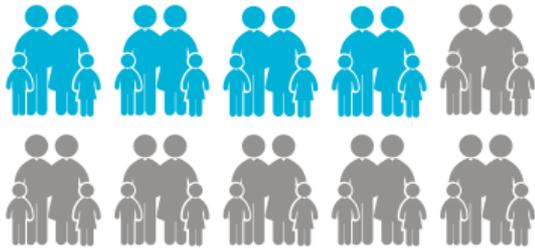


* The federal poverty level in 2014 was \$23,850 for a family of four.

Source: US Census, American Community Survey data, 2014

Working families in NM face major challenges

2nd worst rate of working families that are low-income

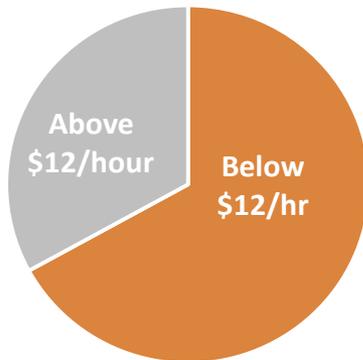


42% of our working families are low-income

NM has highest rate of poverty in the US among:

- the employed
- people who work full-time
- people with a bachelor's degree or higher

67% of jobs in NM pay low wages



Highest long-term unemployment rate in the US

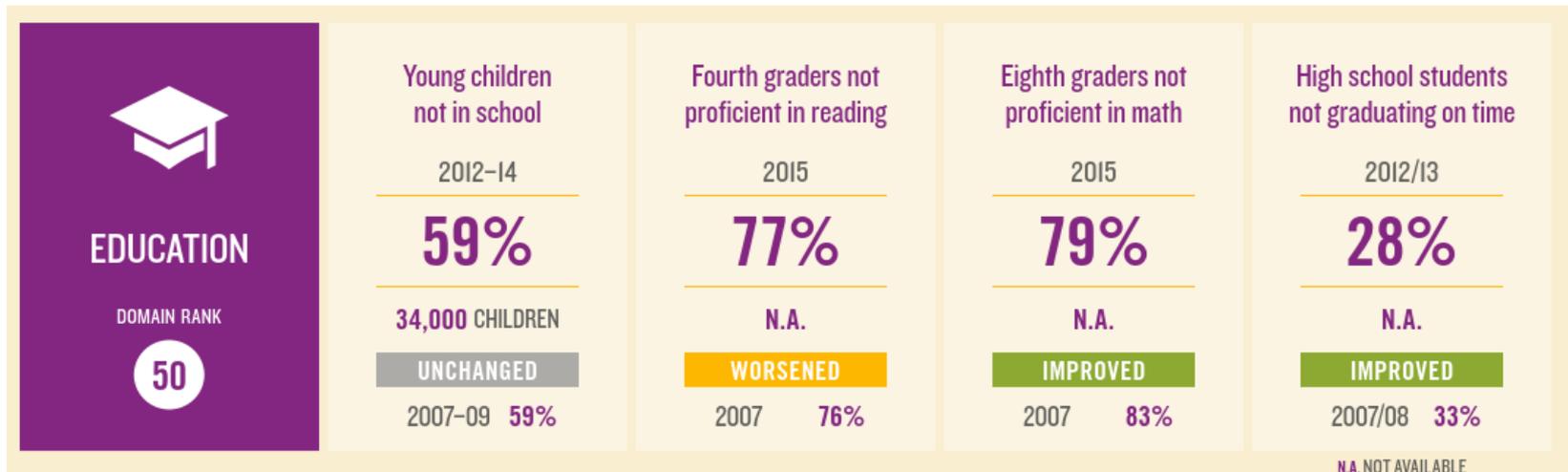


45% of our unemployed have been looking for work for more than 6 months

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey data, 2013 and 2015; BLS data from 2014 and 2015

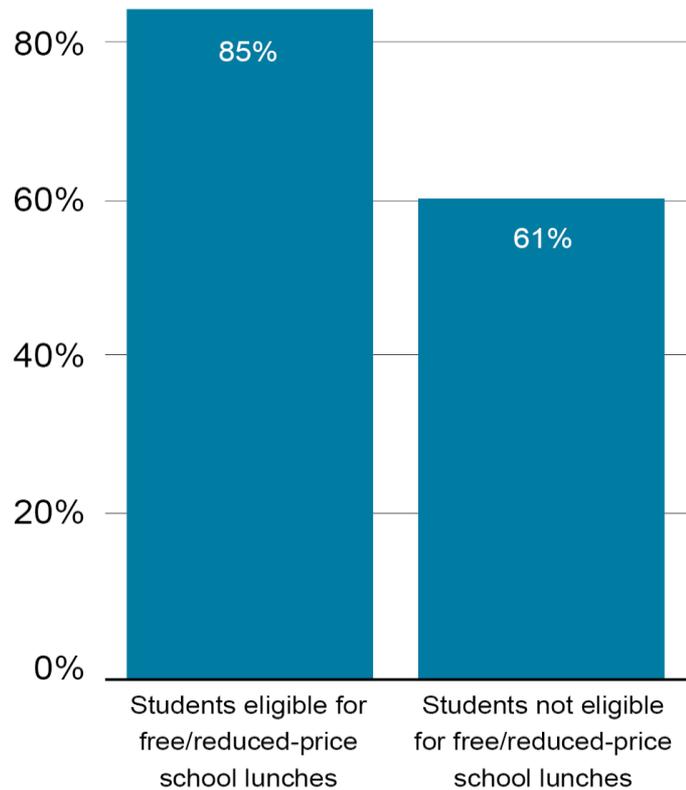
Educational well-being of kids in NM

Short-term trends are mixed, but long-term trends are positive



Income levels impact education

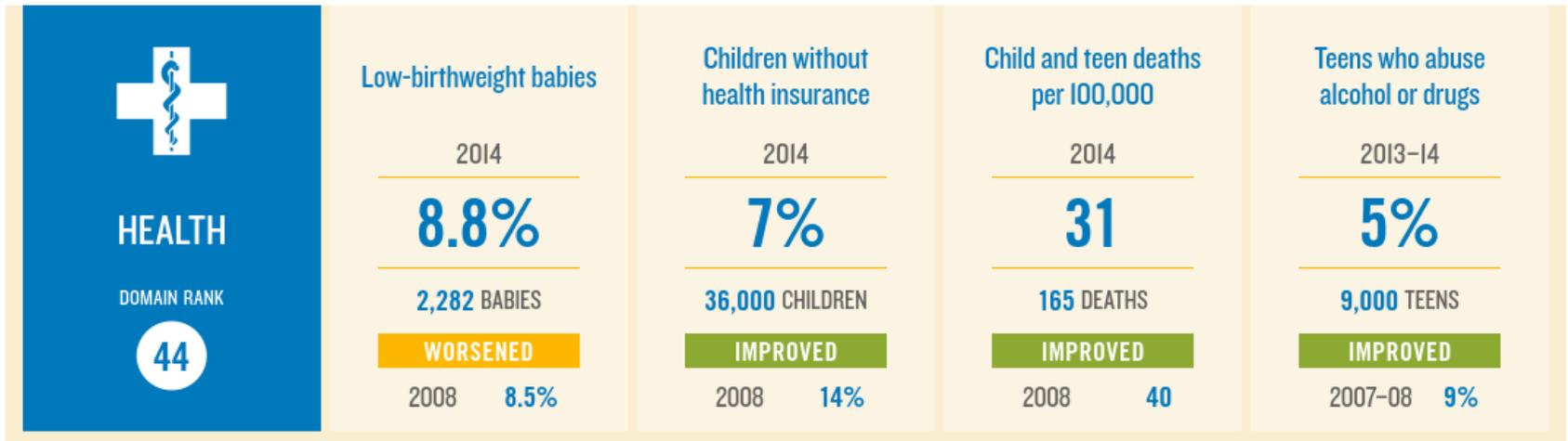
Fourth Graders Who Scored Below Proficient in Reading by Family Income



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

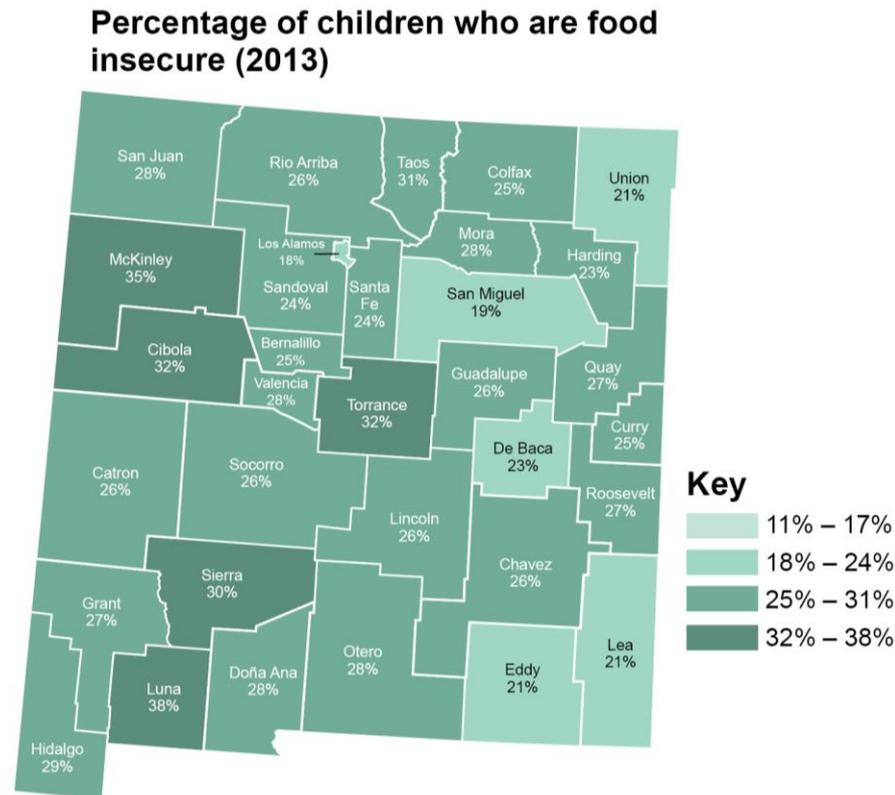
Health of kids in NM

There are significant improvements in both the short- and long-term



Too many New Mexico kids don't have enough to eat

27% of New Mexico's children are food insecure, 2nd highest rate in US



Source: *Map the Meal Gap*, Feeding America, 2015

www.nmvoices.org

SNAP benefits are not adequate to address food insecurity



80% of SNAP benefits are used up within the **first half of the month**

Exhaustion of SNAP benefits at the end of the month **decreases test scores**



Very low-income New Mexicans not receiving SNAP spend **\$215 million** a year on groceries



Low-income* New Mexicans miss, on average,

3 meals per week

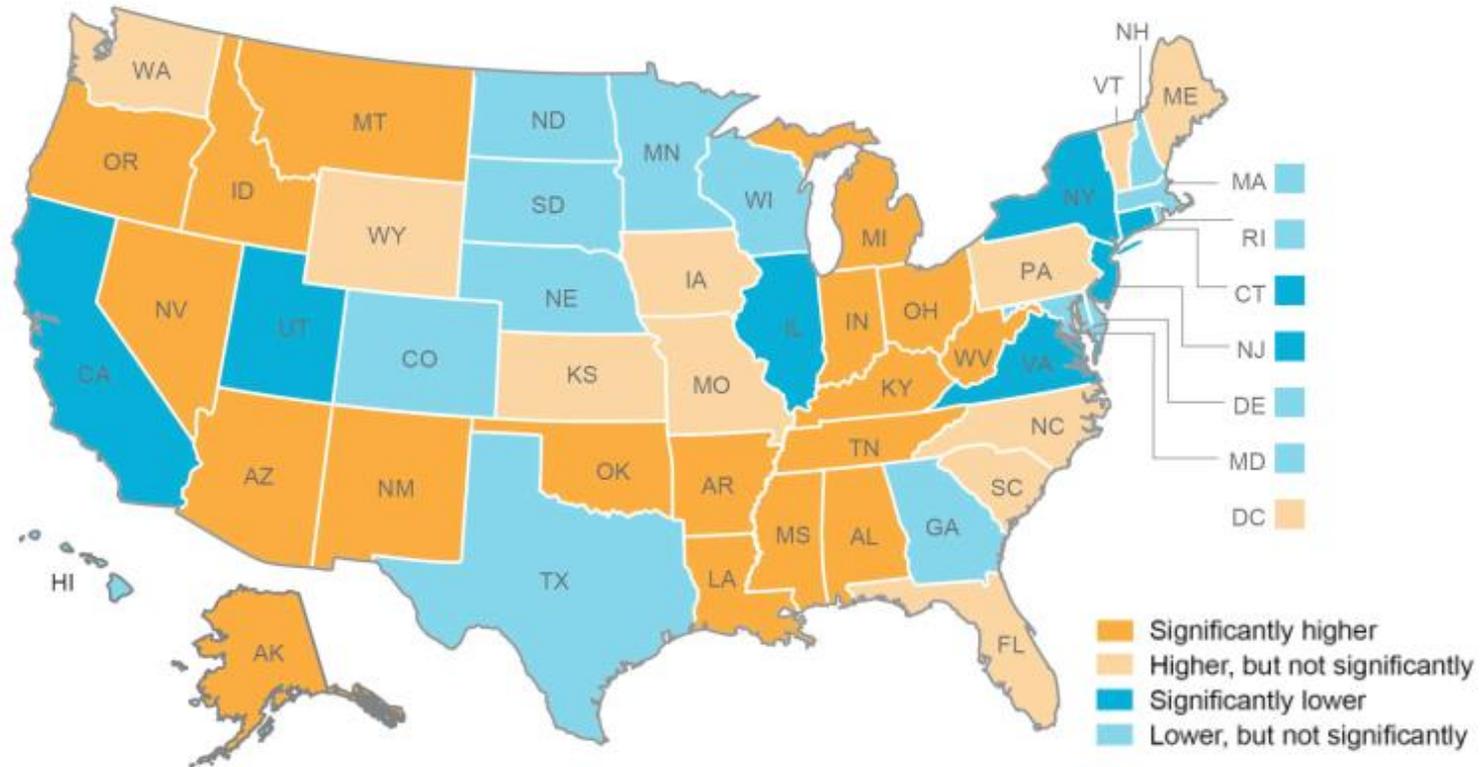


*\$31,244 for a family of 3 (185% of FPL)



Most NM children experience trauma

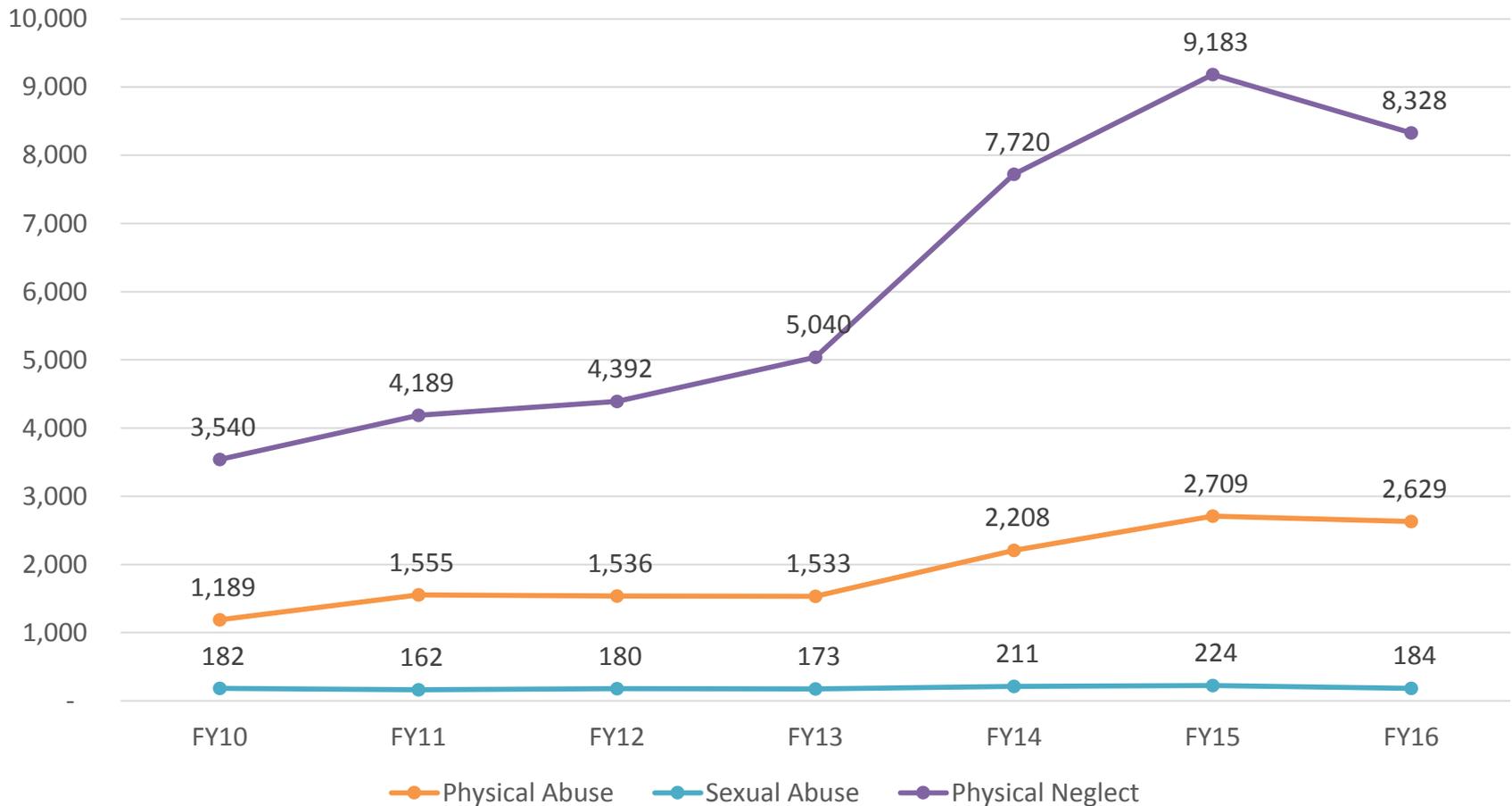
Percentage of Children Who Have Experienced at Least Two Traumas, Compared to the National Average



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

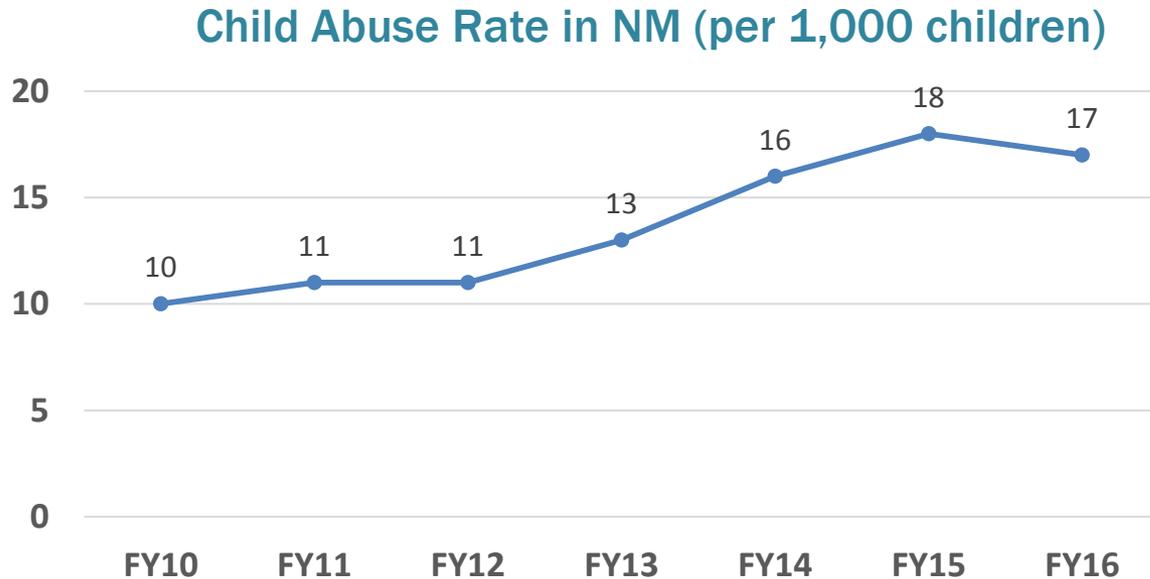
Too many NM kids experience abuse

Substantiated Cases of Maltreatment in NM Over Time



Source: NM CYFD, Protective Services, 360 Yearly Report, FY16

Abuse has increased over time

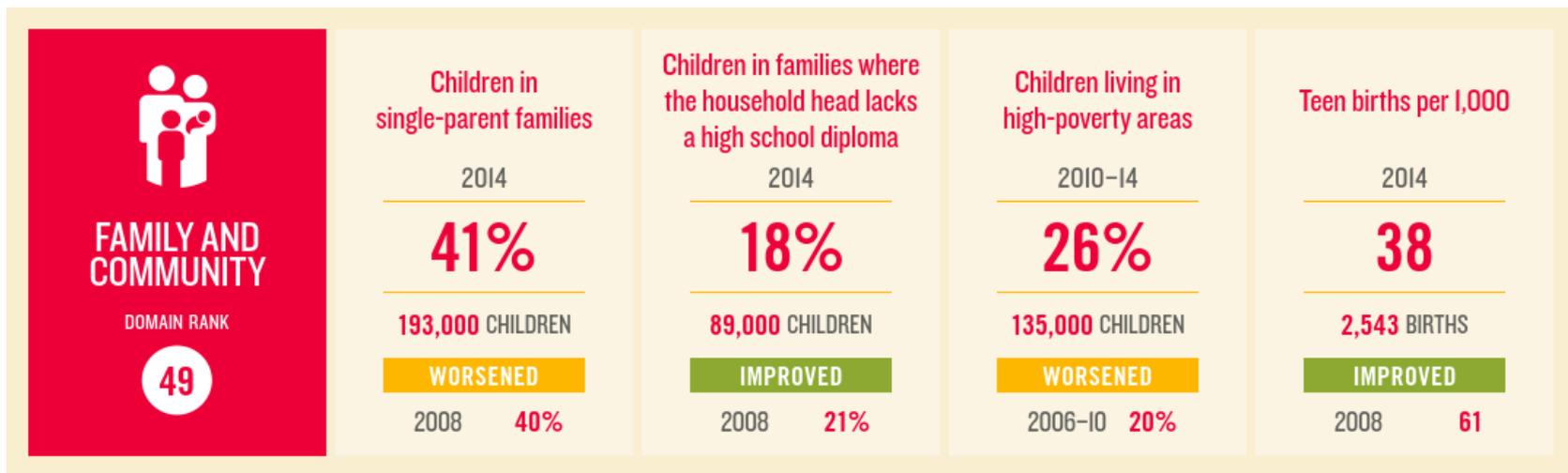


- Caseworker turnover rates of 30%
- 12% of victims subject to additional abuse within 6 months

Source: NM CYFD, Protective Services, 360 Yearly Report, FY16, and FY16 Q4 Performance Measures Report

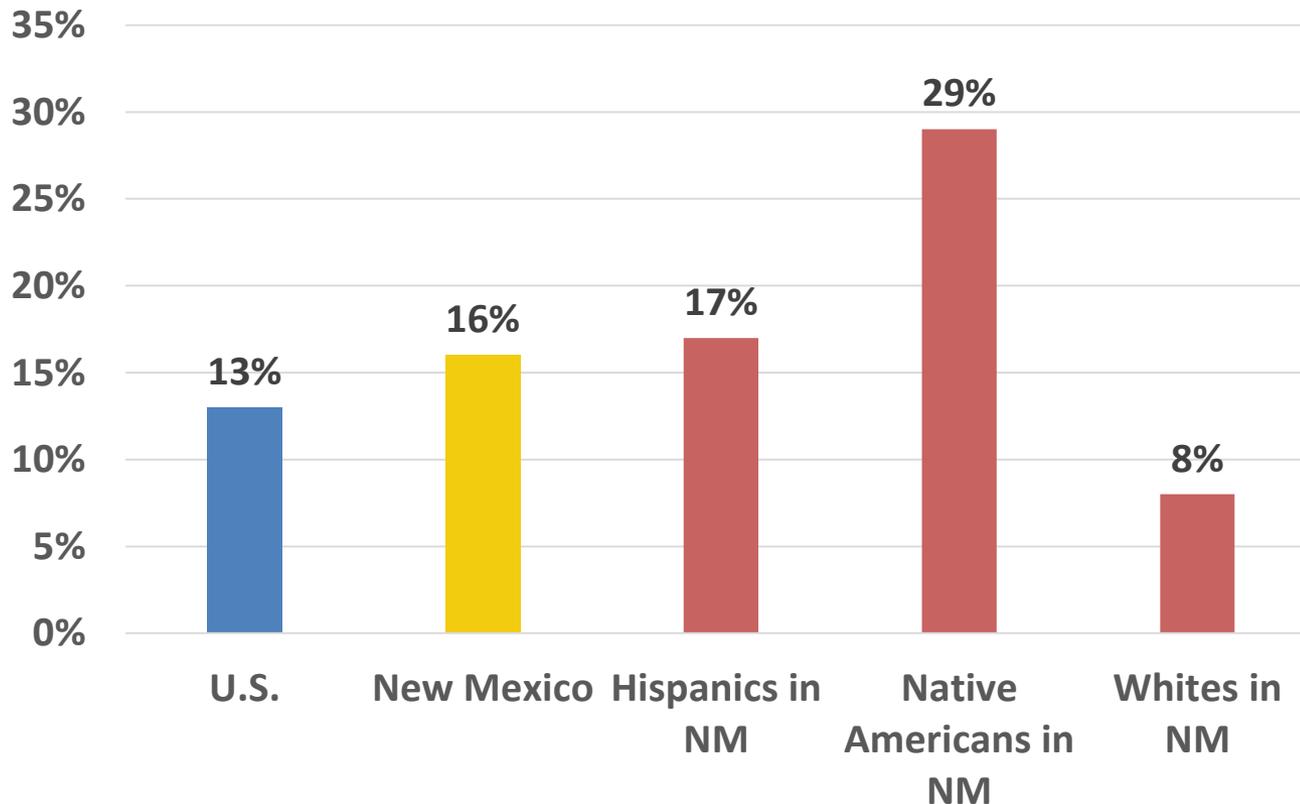
Family and community well-being for kids in NM

Short-term trends are positive, but long-term trends are mixed



Too many NM kids live in unsafe places

Children Living in Unsafe Communities by Race/Ethnicity



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, National Survey of Children's Health., 2012

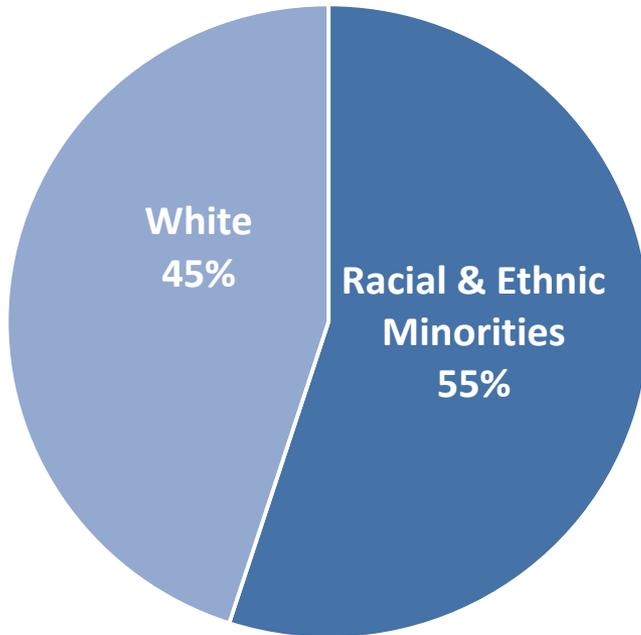
Disparities exist in every indicator

Indicator	Hispanic	Native American	White, non-Hispanic
Children in Poverty	34%	44%	15%
Young Children Not in School	64%	53%	56%
4th Graders Not Reading Proficient	83%	90%	61%
8th Graders Not Math Proficient	84%	88%	65%
Children Experienced Two or More ACEs	29%	31%	22%
Child Maltreatment (per 1,000 kids)	15	12	14

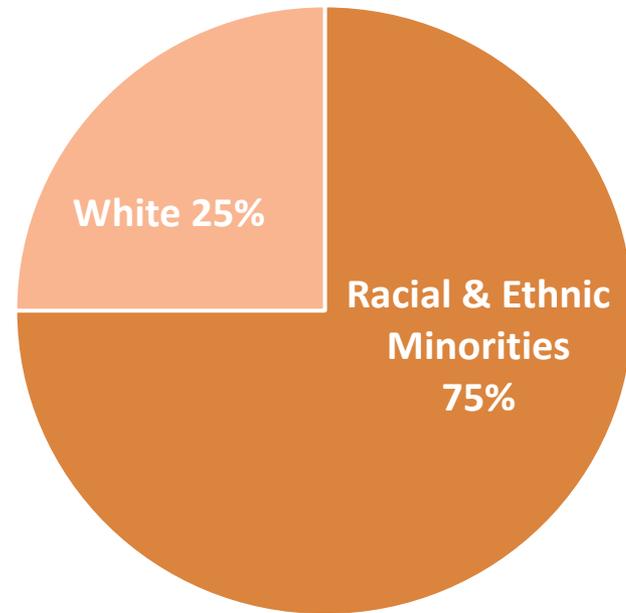
NM is ahead of the demographic trend

Child Population by Race and Ethnicity

United States, 2030



New Mexico, 2014



Nobody likes to hear the bad news, but there's good news too

Research shows that policy matters, and that positive and comprehensive support systems lead to:

- Better health outcomes
- Lower rates of food insecurity
- Lower rates of child maltreatment
- Better test scores
- Higher graduation rates
- Cost savings in remedial education



Progress IS possible

And we're making some important gains

- 74,000 more NMs have health insurance this year as compared to last.
- Since 2010, nearly 5,000 more NM kids gained access to pre-K.
- 2,000 more NM families receive home visiting.
- Big improvements in teen drug use and birth rates.

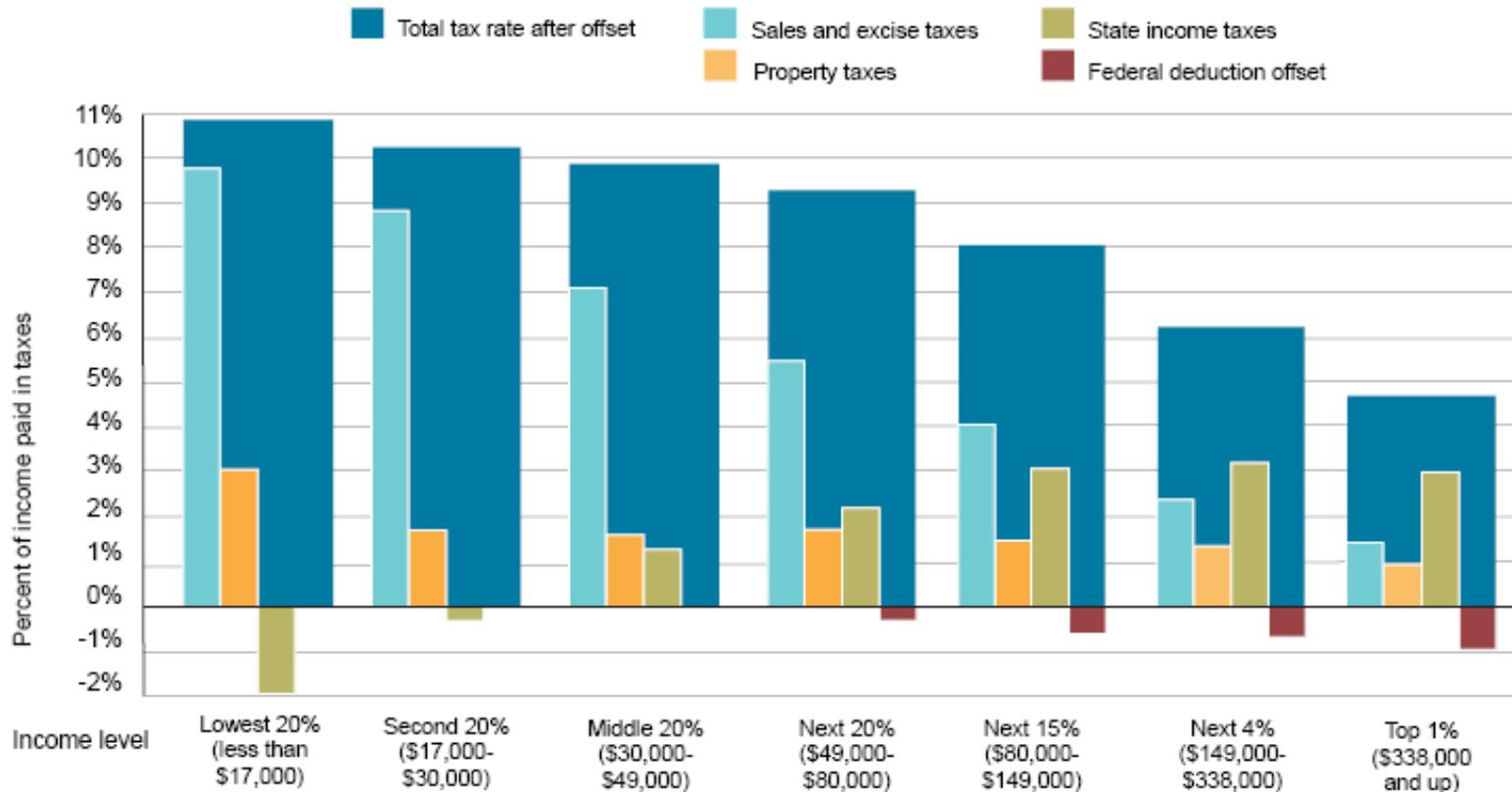


How we got here

- 10.7% cut in per-pupil K-12 spending from 2008-2014.
- 30% cut in 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 preschool programs now than in 2010.
- Enrollment in child care assistance has dropped by 30% since 2010.
- Cut U.I. benefits, including the increment for children of unemployed workers.
- \$400 M in planned cuts to the Medicaid program in this fiscal year.
- 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

Make children a priority in *all* policy

- Adopt the ***Campaign for a Better New Mexico*** or develop your own Children's Agenda.
- Legislature could appoint and empower a Children's Council similar to the Jobs Council.
- The Executive should kick-start 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.
- Our tax policy has been driven by a false promise to create jobs, but has made it harder for kids and families to succeed.



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.
- If tax reform is debated, lawmakers should consider increasing the WFTC to at least 15% of the federal EITC.

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

- Ronald Reagan on the EITC



Raise new revenue to avoid more harmful budget cuts

- Freeze the big corporate tax cut.
- Enact combined reporting of all corporate taxes.
- Repeal the capital gains tax break.
- Enact a new PIT increase or surtax on high incomes.
- Enact a new health care provider assessment fee.
- Raise tobacco and alcohol taxes.
- Repeal ineffective or wasteful tax breaks.
- Tax internet sales.

Big impact/no cost initiatives

No cost to the general fund

- Increase the minimum wage.
- Make college affordable.
- 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 tuition at UNM).
- Enrollment in child care assistance is 30% **lower** than it was in 2010... 500 more families have **lost** child care since the Governor announced in April that she was **expanding** eligibility.
- NM needs a strong commitment to ECE and a stable and robust source of funding.



Fully fund early childhood care and learning programs

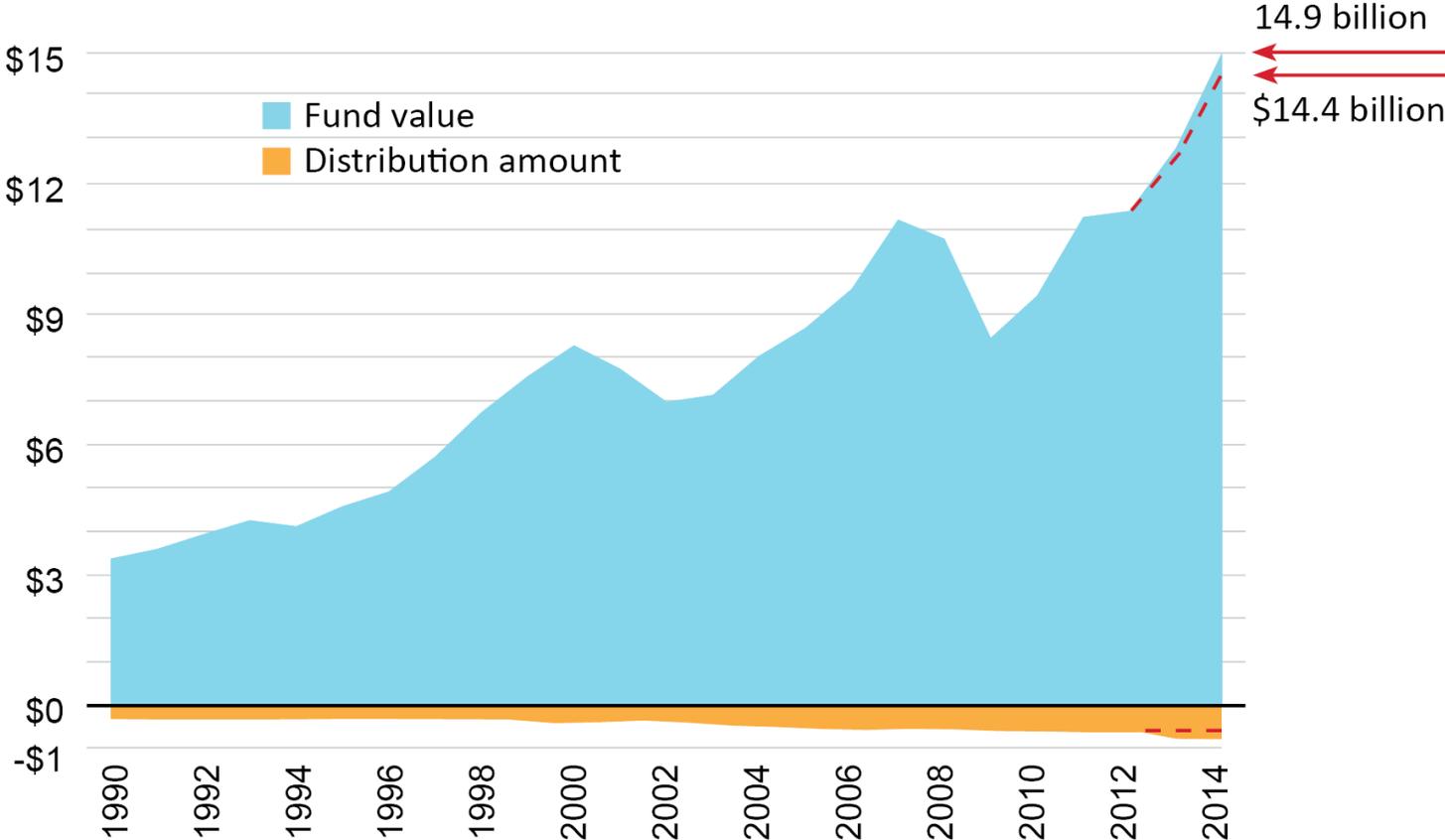
Invest 1.5% of \$15 billion LGPF

- Would fund home visiting, child care assistance, NM pre-K, and workforce development.
- A dedicated, 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 education 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.



Fully fund child abuse prevention

- Prioritize early childhood care and education.
- Add ACEs screening to EPSDT.
- Reduce child protective services vacancy rate.
- Ensure adequate compensation and ongoing, extensive training for caseworkers.
- Restore and increase behavioral health services for families.



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.



A photograph of a family of four—two women, a man, and a young girl—smiling together in a kitchen. The man is in the back center, the woman on the left is in the foreground, the girl is in the center, and the woman on the right is in the foreground. The background shows wooden kitchen cabinets.

**We're all in this
together.**