

**OUR MISSION:** Improve the status, well-being and racial/ethnic equity of New Mexico's children, families, and communities in the areas of health, education, and economic security by promoting public policies through credible research and effective advocacy.



# Who We Are

Originally the Coalition for Children, New Mexico Voices for Children (NM Voices) was founded in 1987 by three pediatricians who sought to change the root causes of poor child wellbeing—poverty, inadequate nutrition, violence, pollution, and homelessness. Such entrenched problems would only be solved by changing the systems that perpetuated them-changes that would come from educating lawmakers and other leaders about real solutions. Thirty-plus years later, New Mexico Voices for Children, a nonpartisan, statewide advocacy organization, still works to create systems-level, sustainable change to improve the lives of New Mexico's children.

# **Dur Impact**

We provided the economic argument used to advocate for the 2013 Medicaid expansion, resulting in the health insurance enrollment of more than 40,000 children. We spearheaded the Working Families Tax Credit, enacted in 2007 and expanded in 2009, which returns \$58 million to lowincome working families and benefits nearly 300,000 children every year.

We provided data and advocated for minimum wage increases at city, county and state levels; the 2009 statewide increase allowed 161,000 low-wage workers to earn an additional \$250 million in the first two years. Our analysis of the state budget uncovered \$20 million in federal funds that the state was neglecting to spend on child care assistance, despite maintaining a wait-list. This led to **immediate** eligibility for child care expanded to 1,000 families. Through the Invest in Kids NOW! coalition, our advocacy resulted in an **increase** of more than 240 percent in early childhood education funding from 2011 to 2018.

## Our Three Strategic Pillars



#### FAMILY ECONOMIC SECURITY

Children do best when their families have economic security that comes from having good jobs that pay family-sustaining wages.



#### CRADLE-TO-CAREER EDUCATION

Every family and individual should have access to an affordable, evidencebased, and high-quality prenatal and cradle-tocareer system of care and education.



#### HEALTH CARE & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Our communities cannot be healthy when so many children lack access to a comprehensive and high-quality system of health, prevention, and wellness resources.

We do **COMMUNITY OUTREACH** statewide to learn about the issues communities face, educate about tax and budget issues related to child well-being, and share advocacy tools. In 2018, we conducted eight workshops in seven communities outside the Albuquerque metro area, reaching, teaching, and learning from some 250 community members.

We **RESEARCH** data and policies to determine the challenges our children and families face and how they can be overcome. For example, our research on the kinds of workers who would be helped by a higher minimum wage helped dispel common myths about minimum wage workers and has been used by ourselves and numerous partners to advocate for city-, county-, and statelevel increases.

We **COMMUNICATE** our research findings to lawmakers, opinion leaders and influencers, and the general public to increase political will for enacting public policies. Our *Roadmap to a Stronger New Mexico* is an example of how we package and spread information about how much damage eight years of flawed tax cuts has done to our state and what kinds of investments will improve outcomes for our children.

We **ADVOCATE** by educating lawmakers about the potential impacts – both positive and negative – of the public policies they are considering. In 2017, we helped convince lawmakers to defeat a harmful tax on groceries.



"Each of the great social achievements of recent decades has come about not because of government proclamations, but because people organized, made demands, and made it good politics to respond."

> James Grant former Executive Director of UNICEF



### Why Tax & Budget?

Since all levels of government have a role to play in many of these support systems – and that role often includes funding programs and services – we do a significant amount of work on fiscal policies. In fact, we are a leader in New Mexico working on state tax and budget policies as they relate to the poor.

It can help to think of the state budget as a pie. Taxes are the ingredients that go into making the pie. How the pie is sliced represents how the money is spent – with slices for education, health care, public safety, and so on. How the pie is sliced is important, but we must also look at where the ingredients come from – how the responsibility for paying taxes is shared – and how large the pie needs to be in order to achieve a prosperous future for all.

OUR TAX AND BUDGET WORK, BY THE NUMBERS:



Tax revenue is collected

Tax revenue is budgeted

Tax revenue is spent on services & programs Services & programs improve child & family outcomes

## Making KIDS COUNT

Advocacy is more powerful when backed by data and evidence. Each year NM Voices publishes the New Mexico KIDS COUNT Data Book, upon which many rely to get a clear picture of just where the well-being of our children stands. The KIDS COUNT program allows us to advocate for the unmet needs of our state's children by identifying and tracking 16 indicators of child well-being. These indicators tell us about important issues such as the percentages of children living in poverty and single-parent families, teen birth rates, and more. We aim to create public accountability and the political will to enact policies that help meet the needs of children and families.

## Be a Voice for Children

Please support the work of NM Voices and help us move the needle on child well-being.

Visit **www.nmvoices.org/ donatenow** to sign up for a monthly gift or a one-time donation.



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