Seizing the Moment for Kids and Families

NM Voices for Children
KIDS COUNT Conference
October 21, 2021

Amber Wallin, MPA, Deputy Director
Pandemic and recession impacts shine light on our past and provide a unique moment to reshape our future.
What is your story?
KIDS COUNT tells a story of opportunity.
2021 KIDS COUNT rankings

49th overall using pre-pandemic data
Pandemic impacts on family well-being

- 21% of NM parents unsure how to pay rent
- 38% of NM parents had difficulty paying for basic household expenses
- 31% of NM households with children were not eating enough
- 40% of NM parents with children under 5 with child care disruptions in the past month because of COVID-19

As of September 2021

www.nmvoices.org
The health and economic impacts of COVID-19 were highly inequitable across lines of income, race, and gender.
Low-wage workers hardest hit by COVID-19

Percent change in employment: In New Mexico, as of June 27 2021, employment rates among workers in the bottom wage quartile decreased by 12.7% compared to January 2020 (not seasonally adjusted)

![Graph showing employment rates among workers in different wage quartiles.]

Data source: Earnin, Intuit, Kronos, Paychex
Pandemic and recession impacts have not been race neutral.
COVID-19 disproportionately harmed people of color

- Hispanic workers saw steepest employment losses and have the most ground to make up to reach pre-pandemic employment
- Native Americans make up 11% of NM population, but last year made up 30% of COVID cases
- Low-income residents of mostly non-white communities died of the coronavirus at 9 times the rate of low-income residents of largely white areas
Pandemic and recession impacts have not been gender neutral.
COVID-19 has caused gender inequities to grow, especially among parents

- Women = 47% of NM workers; 64% of frontline workers
- More mothers than fathers have lost wages, decreased work hours, and exited the labor force
- Mothers with young children have reduced their work hours 4 to 5 times more than fathers
- Men gained 220,000 jobs in September, but women lost 26,000 jobs
Inequities persist for BIPOC women

- Women’s labor force participation rate lowest since 1988
- Even higher unemployment rates for Black women, Hispanic women, and other demographic groups
- Asian women faced the worst change in unemployment during the recession
- The gender wage gap has increased especially for Hispanic, Native American, and Black women
- Immigration restrictions and language barriers make for higher hurdles for immigrant and refugee families
But there’s good news too.
77% of NM kids are children of color.
Data show many bright spots

- Over time, women’s educational and economic opportunities have grown
- Black, Asian, and Hispanic women have high rates of labor force participation
- Black, Hispanic, and Native American women most likely to lead their households
- 42% of our Native American children are bilingual
- Enrollment in high-quality early care and ed programs up
- Teen births down
Data doesn’t tell the whole story.
Policy matters, and progress is possible.
Policy improvements for families

• Paid sick leave
• Income tax cut for 70% of NM families with children
• Tax relief for working parents
• Food security investments
• Relief for immigrant families left out of federal relief
• Most family-friendly child care assistance program
• (ARPA) Federal Child Tax Credit expansions
• (ARPA) Major federal investments in child care, education, health, and housing systems relief
Moving forward
Prioritize women, children, and families of color in public policy

- Extend postpartum medicaid coverage
- Robustly support child care assistance, pre-k, and home visiting programs
- Provide robust safety net supports
- Combat food insecurity
- Fully fund and support classrooms and the programs that matter most for children of color
- Diversify and stabilize revenue
“We will not march back to what was, but move to what shall be.”

Amanda Gorman, National Youth Poet Laureate, 2021