

# 2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION PRIORITIES



New Mexico's elected officials have an extraordinary opportunity to advance the well-being of all of our children, families, and communities during the 2023 legislative session. A historic revenue surplus – if combined with new, more reliable revenue streams – would allow for greater investments in programs and services that will improve family economic security, make health care more affordable, and expand and improve a birth-to-career education system that helps our children succeed. Attention to equity should be at the center of all policy improvements. New Mexico should move forward with an eye towards how we transform our budget and policy systems so they are fair, equitable, accessible, and built on a more diverse and stable revenue system that will ensure the programs that matter most for kids, families, and our economy are robustly supported now and in the future. For more information on how the legislative sessions work, please see our state budget guide. To find out how you can get involved in the process on issues that matter to you, please see our advocacy guide.

Here are some of our 2023 Legislative priorities:

## TAX POLICY

- Improve tax equity and adequacy by increasing the state's Child Tax Credit to up to \$600 for the lowest-earning families and making the credit permanent.
- Diversify and stabilize state revenues by raising revenue from new sources and protecting current sources by opposing tax cuts that do not advance equity or adequacy in the tax code.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

- Protect and preserve funding streams for early childhood care and education (ECCE) services, and support the use of federal funding to build systems capacity.
- Make additional investments in ECCE to support recent improvements to the child care assistance program, including expanded eligibility and copay eliminations, increasing wages and supporting career ladders for ECCE workers, improve infant/toddler teacher

pay parity, and create tribal early childhood funding streams.

## EDUCATION

- Make improvements in K-12 education including: fully funding and implementing the Hispanic, Indian, Black, and Bilingual Multicultural Education Acts; significantly increasing school employee salaries; increasing instructional hours; continue increasing targeted funding through the “at-risk” index; and expanding funding for community schools and school-based health centers.
- Make investments in higher education to: maintain and increase funding for the Opportunity Scholarship; create more flexible, need-based financial aid opportunities; and for teacher pipeline programs.

## FAMILY ECONOMIC SECURITY

- Support programs to address child hunger and strengthen food security.
- Increase the state’s minimum wage.
- Improve rental protections and address housing stability in the state.
- Make paid family medical leave available for all New Mexico workers.
- Increase TANF cash benefits to help families meet basic needs and take steps to reduce barriers to program participation that would otherwise result in the loss of benefits.
- Modernize the state constitution’s anti-donation clause to allow greater access

to state funds for community-based services.

- Ensure that all residents are able to access the safety net benefits they need, regardless of immigration status.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH

- Act on environmental health and climate change by: requiring reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; creating a public health and climate resiliency program to improve climate adaptation and mitigation for communities threatened by extreme weather events; and increasing state agency budgets to ensure adequate staffing and more regulatory enforcement.
- Invest in health care by: ensuring full funding of Medicaid; ending the Medicaid Waiver waiting list for those with disabilities; improving access to affordable health care coverage through the proposed Medicaid Forward plan; and making prescription drugs more affordable.
- Enact new measures to reduce child gun deaths and improve gun safety.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- Improve equity and human rights by reducing or abolishing most criminal justice fines and fees and ending debt-based driver’s license suspensions, which tend to disproportionately impact economically marginalized families and families of color.