

EQUINE SHELTER RESCUE FUND APPROPRIATION AND IMPROVEMENTS

The Problem: New Mexico's Equine Shelters Are At Capacity and Underfunded

- **The State of New Mexico (including Law Enforcement) relies on a network of nonprofit equine shelters** to take in and care for owner-surrendered, stray, and abused equines (horses, donkeys, and mules).
- Unlike dog & cat shelters, New Mexico currently has **no government-run equine shelters**, and nonprofit equine shelters receive **little and irregular government funding**. (See Equine Shelter Rescue Fund Appropriation timeline on page 2.)
- The New Mexico Legislature created the Equine Shelter Rescue Fund in 2013 (led by Sen. George Muñoz), an expenditure fund to support the services that licensed equine shelters provide in feeding and caring for abused and homeless equines—**but it has never had a reliable, substantial funding stream**.
 - **The tax check-off donations are minimal (typically around \$10K /year).**
 - **The legislature has appropriated state funding only 4 out of the 14 years the Equine Shelter Rescue Fund has existed.**
- Equine sheltering and care needs are urgent and growing. Some factors that may put more pressure on the equine shelter network in the coming years are:
 - Increased costs of caring for equines, leading to more owner surrenders or neglect of equines.
 - Ongoing drought diminishing natural forage availability for grazing.
 - Disruption to equine slaughter export as an outlet for unwanted equines, such as the New World Screwworm, and federal legislative bans.

Move, Improve, and Fund the Equine Shelter Rescue Fund

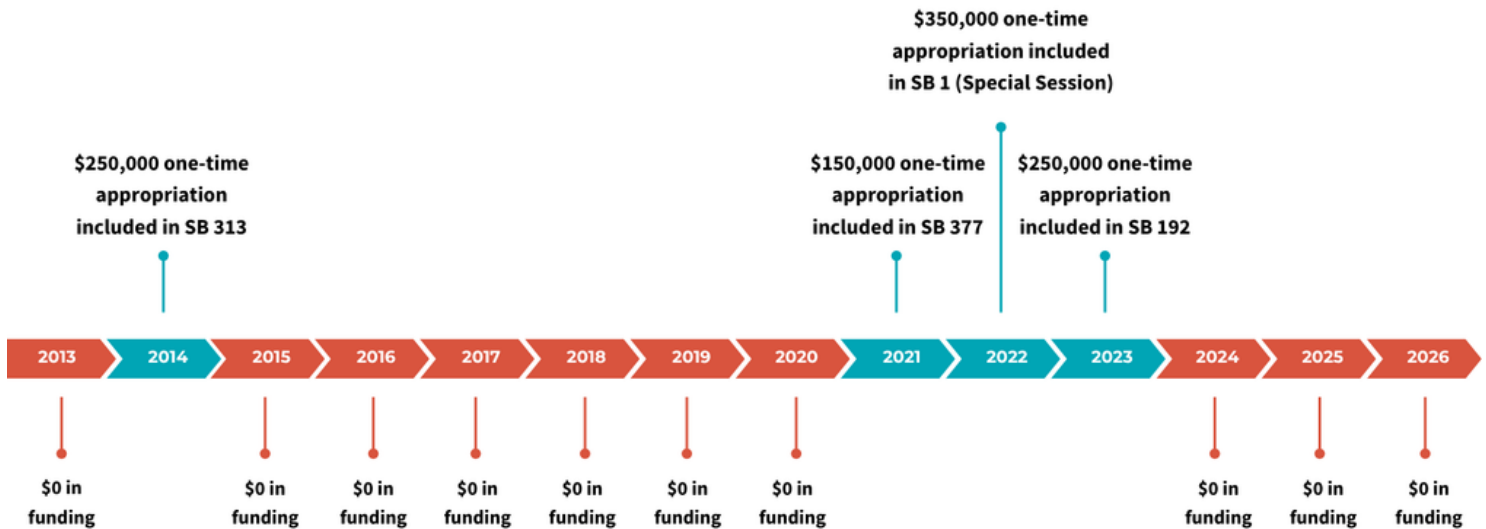
- **The Equine Shelter Rescue Fund requires \$1,000,000 in annual funding to meaningfully support New Mexico's licensed equine shelters.**
- The Livestock Board and the Department of Agriculture agree that moving administration of the Equine Shelter Rescue Fund to the Department of Agriculture would alleviate the current “bandwidth issue” the Livestock Board has faced with the staff time needed to properly manage the Equine Shelter Rescue Fund.



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Timeline of Appropriations to the Equine Shelter Rescue Fund since 2013

Timeline of Appropriations to the Equine Shelter Rescue Fund



About New Mexico's Equine Shelters

- New Mexico's network of licensed nonprofit equine shelters take in vulnerable equines from a variety of sources, including owner-surrendered, stray, abandoned, and abused animals. But lack of funding limits the life-saving care and safe placement shelters can provide, and increases the chances of horses being auctioned to kill buyers and entering the slaughter pipeline.
- If not for these equine shelters, the horses, donkeys, and mules taken into NM Livestock Board or other law enforcement custody would remain the responsibility of the state—to either auction, place for care, euthanize, or (for lack of options) remain in an abusive situation.**
- For the years 2023 through 2025, licensed equine shelters took in 391 equines, 196 of which (50%) came from law enforcement.**
- The Equine Shelter Rescue Fund, established in 2013 and currently administered by the Livestock Board, helps to cover some of the costs shelters incur in caring for the equines taken in from the state. The Equine Shelter Rescue Fund has been funded with small annual tax check-off donations and intermittent one-time state legislative appropriations.