



New Mexico Food Banks: Challenges, Impacts, and the Path Forward

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The five food banks serve New Mexicans at more than 600+ locations across the state.

ECHO, INC.

Region: Northwest New Mexico, Headquartered in Farmington

County Served: San Juan County

Distribution: 1.9 million pounds of food

THE COMMUNITY PANTRY

Region: Western New Mexico, Headquartered in Gallup

Counties Served: McKinley and Cibola Counties

Distribution: 2.2 million pounds of food

THE FOOD DEPOT

Region: Northern New Mexico, Headquartered in Santa Fe

Counties Served: Santa Fe, San Miguel, Harding, Mora, Los Alamos, Union, Colfax, Taos, Rio Arriba

Distribution: 11.7 million pounds

FOOD BANK OF EASTERN NEW MEXICO

Region: Eastern New Mexico, Headquartered in Clovis

Counties Served: Guadalupe, Quay, De Baca, Curry, Roosevelt

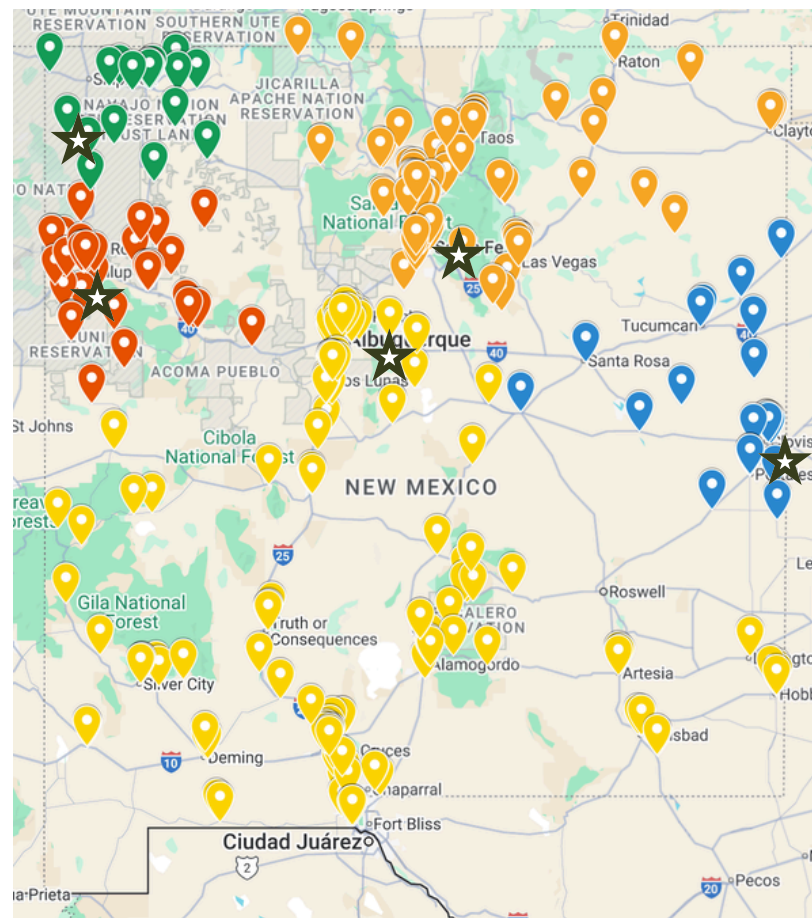
Distribution: 1.5 million pounds of food

ROADRUNNER FOOD BANK

Central and Southern New Mexico, Headquartered in Albuquerque

Counties Served: Bernalillo, Sandoval, Valencia, Torrance, Catron, Socorro, Lincoln, Chaves, Lea, Grant, Sierra, Otero, Eddy, Hidalgo, Luna, Doña Ana

Distribution: 4.6 million pounds of food



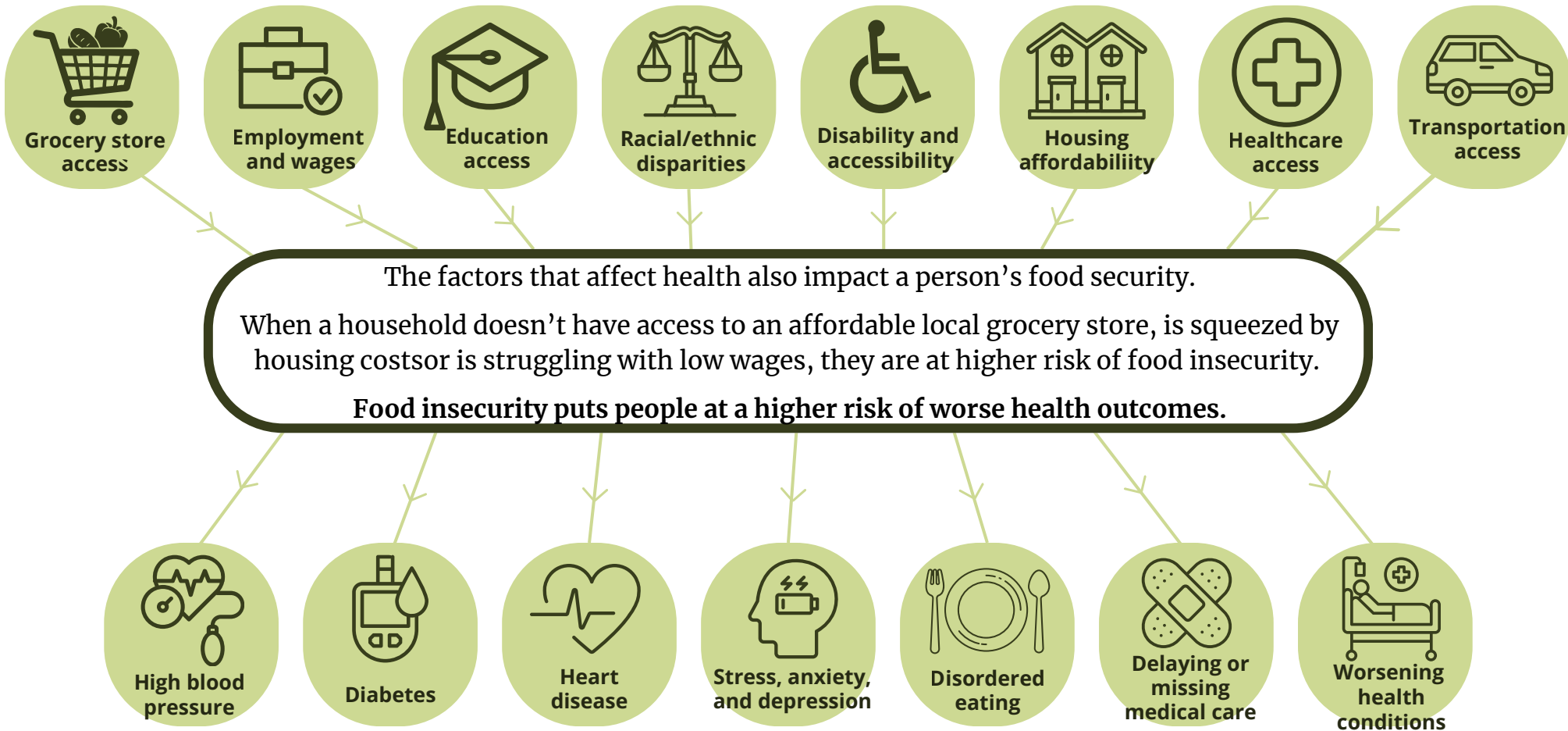
Note: Photographs used in this presentation are real photographs of food pantries, food, and distribution sites from the NM hunger-relief network.



HEALTH CARE
AUTHORITY

NMDA
New Mexico Department of Agriculture

Food Insecurity and Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)



SDOH are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age. SDOH have a major impact on people's health, well-being, and quality of life.

Just promoting healthy choices won't eliminate these and other health disparities. Instead, public health organizations and their partners take action to improve the conditions in people's environments.

Diverse, Innovative Programs Serving New Mexicans in all 33 Counties

Native Partnerships



Senior Centers



Military Partnerships



Public & Charter Schools



Hospitals & Clinics



Income-Based Housing



Religious Organizations



Homeless Shelters



Locker Systems



Rural Distributions



Mobile Grocery Units



Basic Needs



The Community Pantry's Hope Garden

A place for personal growth and plant growth

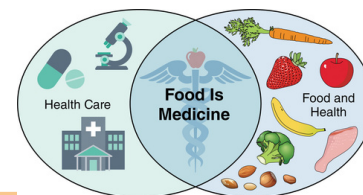
- Empowers local families to grow their own food
- Demonstrates healthy production practices:
 - water harvesting, composting, crop rotation, seed propagation
- Includes raised beds, ADA accessible garden boxes, and multiple hoop houses
- Garden boxes and a seed exchange is available to help families grow food at their own homes



Roadrunner Food Bank

Leading the way in Food Is Medicine Work

- Roadrunner Food Bank serves as the convener and leader of the New Mexico Food Is Medicine Collaborative, bringing together over 125 stakeholders from across the state, representing public, private, and non-profit organizations
- Roadrunner is preparing to become a Medicaid provider with Medically Tailored Groceries and Community Health Worker services in the next month



The Food Depot's MCO Partnerships

Bridging healthcare and food access

- Current partnership with Presbyterian Healthcare Services
- Increasing access to maternal healthcare for expectant women
- Providing resources to diabetic clients to provide extra support with cooking, exercise, and daily living
- Conducting focus groups to improve quality of care
- Stocking specific distributions with “diabetic boxes” for clients who are pre-diabetic or diabetic

Statewide focus on healthy, culturally-appropriate food distributions



The Food Depot's Wraparound Services

Resource Navigation

- Employs two full-time, bilingual Resource Navigators (case managers)
- Assisted over 2,500 New Mexicans in the first six months of 2026
- Top Requests:
 - Utility and Rental Assistance
 - Food Access
 - Diapers/Basic Needs
 - SNAP



CONNECT

The Food Depot is a founding member of the Santa Fe CONNECT Network. The network helps organizations easily refer clients to each other for needed services through a closed-loop referral system.

Diaper Depot

The Food Depot distributes diapers in Santa Fe and Española. Additionally, 25 nonprofit partners, including colleges, shelters, church pantries, and childcare centers distribute diapers across Northern New Mexico. In FY26, Diaper Depot distributed packs of diapers over 11,000 times.



Roadrunner

- Community Health Workers use a Social Determinants of Health screening process, creating connections to needed resources for individuals and families accessing food including:
 - Public benefits such as SNAP, WIC, Medicaid, Medicare Advantage, etc.
 - Energy assistance, housing, childcare, transportation support, etc.
 - Education
 - Workforce development,
 - Job placement services, etc.



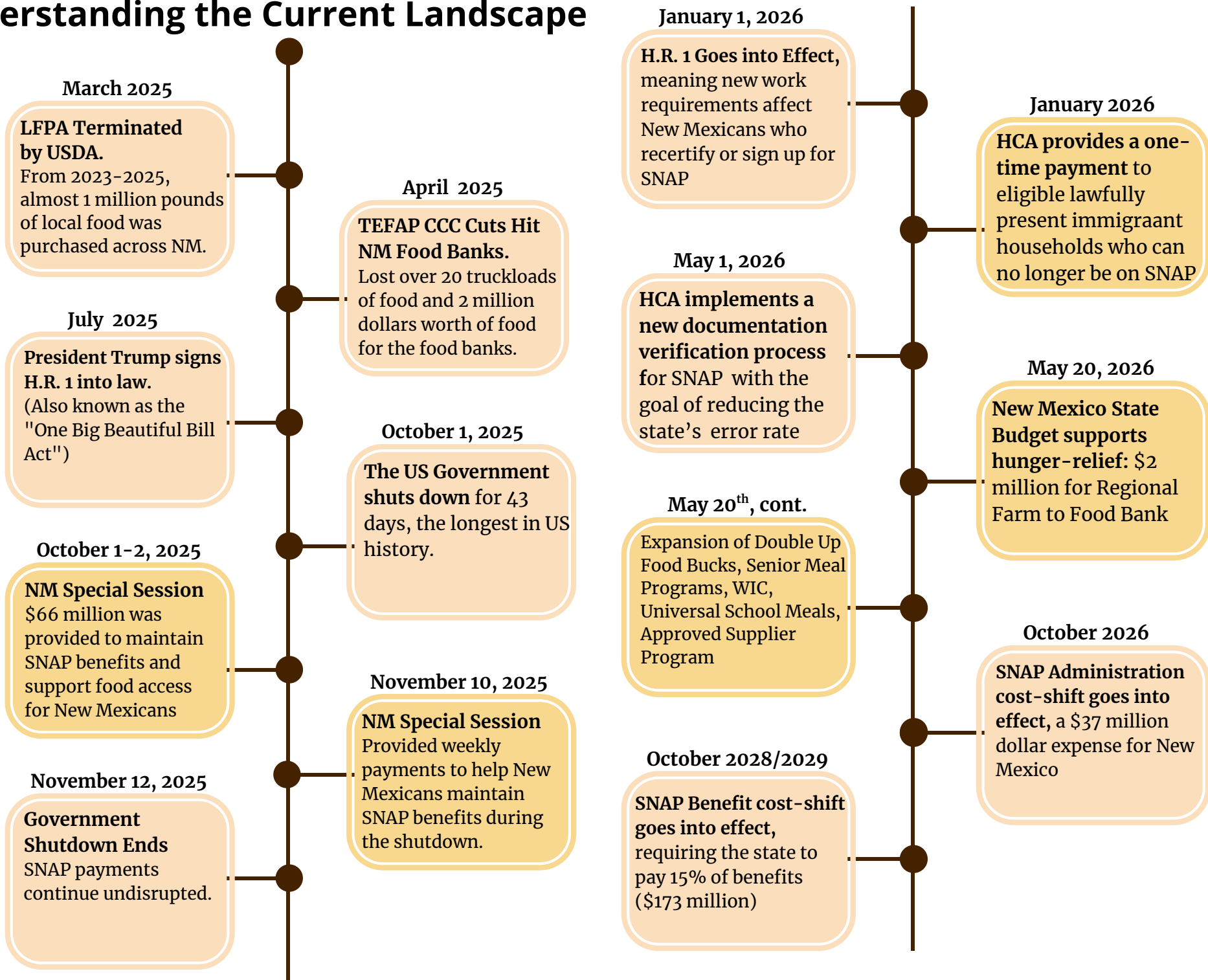
ECHO, Inc.

- Economic Council Helping Others, Inc.
- 1 of 5 Community Action Agencies in NM
- Alongside food, ECHO provides
 - emergency assistance programs
 - rental and utility assistance
 - affordable childcare
 - hygiene, diaper and incontinence kits
 - school supplies

ECHO provides access, opportunities, and resources while ultimately helping New Mexicans achieving long-term economic self-sufficiency.



Understanding the Current Landscape



Challenge:

SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

CLIENTS



SNAP participation has decreased statewide since H.R. 1 was passed in July 2025.

More than 25,000 New Mexicans have lost their SNAP benefits, including nearly 13,000 children.

Children have experienced the largest decrease in SNAP participation of any age group in New Mexico.

NM FOOD BANKS



For every meal a food bank provides, SNAP provides nine.

When a household's SNAP Benefits decrease, or they lose assistance entirely, they turn to food banks and food pantries to fill the gap.

One client shared that his SNAP benefits only cover the equivalent of about two bags of groceries each month. "It's hard. I need the extra help, which is why I attend your distributions," he said.

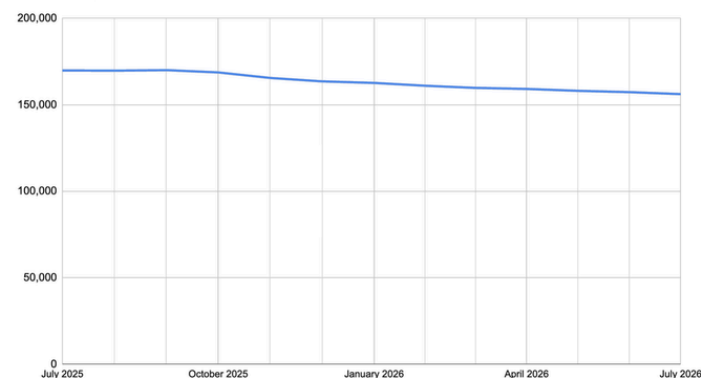
COMMITMENTS

New Mexico's food banks commit to preparing for expanded support of people who may lose their SNAP benefits.

We commit to continuous learning about changes to SNAP eligibility, partnering effectively with HCA, and sharing knowledge with elected officials.

To achieve this, we ask legislators to continue supporting HCA in the state budget, fully staff ISD, and continue to support SNAP funds for New Mexico's families.

SNAP Participation - New Mexico Children



Source: NM Health Care Authority (HCA). Data as of August 6, 2026.

Challenge

Cost of Living: Food and Fuel for New Mexicans

CLIENTS



Rising grocery and fuel costs continue to squeeze household budgets.

Fuel costs have increased by 26.7% over the past year. Grocery prices have increased by 33% since the beginning of 2019.

- Ground chuck, 100% beef, per lb.:
 - Jan. 2019: \$3.73
 - June 2026: \$6.98
- Milk, fresh, per gallon:
 - Jan. 2019: \$2.91
 - June 2026: \$4.32
- Oranges, Navel, per lb.:
 - Jan. 2019: \$1.34
 - June 2026: \$1.54

NM FOOD BANKS



The increase in fuel and food costs has also impacted food banks' budgets.

Roadrunner Food Bank and The Food Depot truck drivers log over 1 million miles each year delivering food to partner agencies and communities across central, southern, and northern New Mexico.

GRO Funding has helped New Mexico's food banks purchase more food as costs continue to rise.

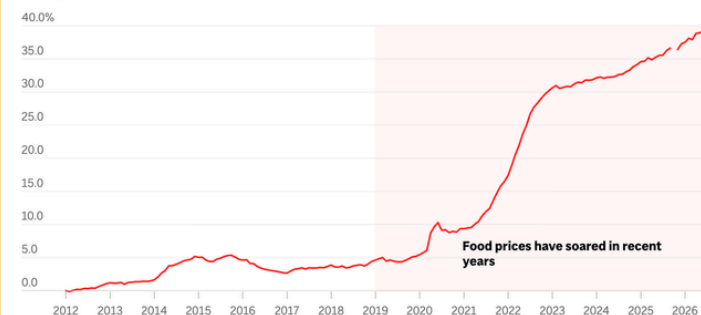
COMMITMENTS

New Mexico's food banks commit to shared purchasing strategies to lower food acquisition costs. Additionally, food banks will continue to purchase locally and regionally to reduce fuel and freight costs.

We will regularly review distribution routes for efficiency and impact.

To achieve this, we ask the legislators and state officials to continue funding the NM food banks and engaging with our work.

Change in at home food prices, U.S. cities



Seasonally adjusted; Oct. 2025 data missing due to government shutdown
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics / Graphic: Phil Holm

Challenge:

Food Access

CLIENTS



Nearly 1/3 of New Mexicans live in a food desert, the 2nd highest percentage of a population in the nation.

In 2023, NM had the fewest full-service grocery stores per capita (13.7 stores/100k residents).

Retailers in 72% of New Mexico counties are at high risk of financial hardship due to declining SNAP participation.

Clients living in rural communities have to travel considerable distances to visit food distributions.

NM FOOD BANKS



New Mexico's food banks have less access to retail/grocery store donations compared to other similar-sized food banks.

Nearly 17% of Roadrunner and The Food Depot's food comes from retail donations through the food banks' Food Rescue programs. As a result, food banks must allocate more of their budgets to purchase healthy food. NM food banks are using GRO Funds to purchase nutritious food and build distribution capacity in rural and frontier communities.

COMMITMENTS

New Mexico's food banks commit to continuing to use data-informed practices to add food distributions to the most unserved or underserved areas.

We will use GRO funds to build the capacity to distribute food closer to people living in rural and frontier communities.

To achieve this, we ask the legislators to invest in rural economic development and explore ways to support grocery access in rural communities.



Challenge:

USDA Foods, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

CLIENTS



Through TEFAP, clients receive nutritious food grown by American farmers and distributed by local food banks.

As the amount of TEFAP food has decreased nationally, the state has supported food-insecure communities through GRO Funds for food banks.

These funds allowed the food banks to purchase more nutritious foods to replace the missing TEFAP items.

TEFAP funding is vulnerable to government shutdowns. Congress must approve funding in order for the USDA to make purchases.

NM FOOD BANKS



Food banks across the country have experienced a 30% decline in TEFAP food, with an additional 25% decrease projected for FY26.

The Community Pantry has received 70% less TEFAP food since 2024.

Roadrunner Food Bank's TEFAP food is down almost 50% from two years ago.

The Food Depot has received 33% less TEFAP food in FY26.

COMMITMENTS

New Mexico's food banks commit to partnering with HCA to select appropriate foods to maximize the state's TEFAP allocation.

Food banks will engage in advocacy with NM's federal delegation and national-level organizations to encourage increased food in the TEFAP program.

Food banks will fully exhaust all federal food program supplies in support of their missions and raise funds to purchase food to fill gaps.

To achieve this, we ask the legislators and state officials to continue funding the NM food banks and engaging with our work.





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Appendix

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Appendix continued

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GRO Funds Year ONE

Roadrunner Food Bank

- Sourced 9,092,602 pounds of food, 70% of which was produce
- Added 10,557 cubic feet of refrigerated space and 7,557 cubic feet of freezer space to their partner agency network
- Purchased eight vehicles for food rescue and home delivery for partner agencies
- Added six semi-tractors and 14 semi-trailers to launch and support the Fresh Stop Mobile Market program (92 new sites)
- Upgraded a cargo van for a street feeding program in southern NM
- Added 600 square feet of dry storage space in Carlsbad, a 500-square-foot cooler with pallet racking and electrical infrastructure in Mescalero, and nearly 150 square feet of walk-in freezer space and pallet racking in Albuquerque
- Launched a refrigerated locker pilot program in Albuquerque
- Purchased produce, protein, and eggs from the Frontier Communities Frontier Food Hub to provide to partner agencies in Catron, Luna, and Grant counties
- Purchased a refrigerated cargo van and a refrigerated box truck for Frontier Food Hub



GRO Funds Year ONE

ECHO, Inc.



- Added 840 cubic feet of refrigerated space, 840 cubic feet of freezer space, and 6,400 cubic feet of dry storage space to the Farmington warehouse
- Added 2 refrigerated cargo vans to serve rural and tribal communities
- Provided six partner agencies with additional equipment, including refrigerators
- Purchased more produce and proteins to increase healthy options for clients



GRO Funds Year ONE

The Food Depot



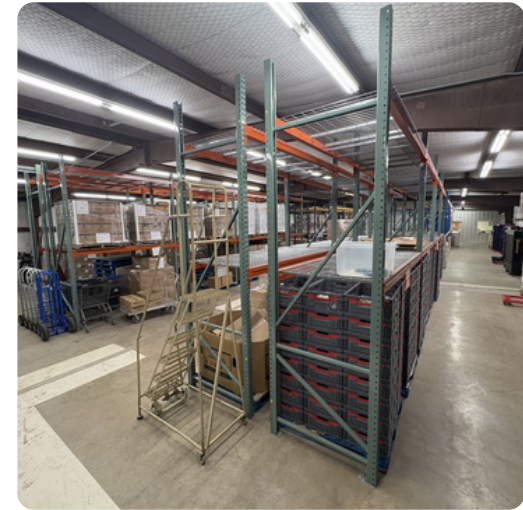
- Expanded the capacity of its Food Mobile program with the purchase of three custom food distribution trailers
- Renovation of The Food Depot's no-cost market in Española, Casita de Comida
- Purchased a refrigerated semi-trailer, adding 22 pallets of cold storage space
- Increased its investment in local food by 518%, with over \$420,000 in local food purchased over the course of the fiscal year, through a combination of GRO funding and privately raised dollars
- Purchased more culturally familiar foods at distributions, including foods for the Food Mobile specifically requested by partners in the northern Pueblos
- Established new partnerships with NM Highlands University, Tesuque Pueblo, and Casa Milagro, extending food access to college students, Native communities, and adults with mental health challenges
- Purchased more food as demand surged more than 20% in October and November 2025



GRO Funds Year ONE

Food Bank of Eastern New Mexico

- Modernized operations, including expanding their warehouse to include 64 additional pallet racks
- Increased storage capacity to support larger food purchases and more efficient inventory management
- Allowed FBENM to leverage additional public and private investments to create Eastern New Mexico's first refrigerated mobile market, expanding food access in rural and underserved areas. The "Mobile Mercado" will launch in 2027
- Purchased nutritious food to supplement donated and USDA foods, including 33,477 pounds of local beef and eggs
- Site improvements for the "La Puerta Pantry Pickup" area where the food bank will install it's self-service food locker system in Fy27



GRO Funds Year ONE

The Community Pantry

- Expanded operational capacity at their Gallup and Grants locations for mobile distributions to rural and tribal communities
- Increased partner agency capacity through cold and hot storage, food safety and food preparation equipment
- Purchased equipment for the farm that helped clear land, construct raised beds and a hoop house, and create opportunities for community engagement in hands-on agricultural activities
- Increased nutritional value and variety of distributed food

