



HEALTHY CLIMATE
NEW MEXICO

Health Professionals for Climate Action

[PRESENTER · DATE]

HEAT AND SMOKE

Leadership is needed to protect New Mexicans from the growing threat of heat and smoke.



ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

THE RUNOFF

Heat-related illnesses on rise in New Mexico amid record-high temperatures

BY PATRICK LOHMANN - AUGUST 7, 2026 4:00 PM

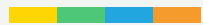




AGENDA

What we'll cover

01

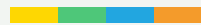


The need

Why heat and smoke demand dedicated state leadership

COVERED BY THE PREVIOUS PRESENTERS

02



The role

What a Heat and Smoke Officer, or new staff in the Public Health and Climate Program, would do

03



The opportunities

The benefits this work would unlock for New Mexico



These Hazards (Heat and Smoke) Share Critical Similarities:

- Under-recognized threat to public health
- Both impact human health directly
- *Can occur simultaneously and complicate response efforts*
- We lack sufficient data to understand exactly how bad it is, and evaluate our interventions
- *Require a coordinated all-of-society approach* to reduce impacts (policy, communities, institutions, and individual have a role to play)
- Many modest-cost initiatives could make significant improvements and save lives.



Because no one owns the issue of heat and smoke, we lack the leadership needed to make progress.

TODAY

- HSEM has never responded to a heat emergency
- Public Health considers its role as informational
- NMED only provides monitors near fires (smoke can travel thousands of miles)
- Communities are left “on their own” to figure out how to respond. No coordination.
- Critical safety resources are left unused because people don’t know how or when to respond.

WHAT 'S MISSING

- Leadership and ownership
- Coordination (with state and local governments, and communities)
- Sufficient data to understand the issue and evaluate our interventions
- Education/awareness building to these threats. The public is largely unaware of the health risks
- A state strategy to address heat and smoke

SECTION TWO

THE ROLE

The role and responsibilities of a Heat and Smoke Officer (HSO); or other titled employees within the DOH Public Health & Climate Program.

1. **Leadership**
2. **Awareness-building**
3. **Coordination**
4. **Support**





THE ROLE

What would Heat and Smoke positions do?



**Coordinate Statewide
Heat Mitigation &
Preparedness**



**Support and Promote
early warning & alerts**



**Track heat and smoke
data, and share the
data widely.**



**Help Guide state
climate-health
investment**



**Create and support a
statewide coalition of
stakeholders**

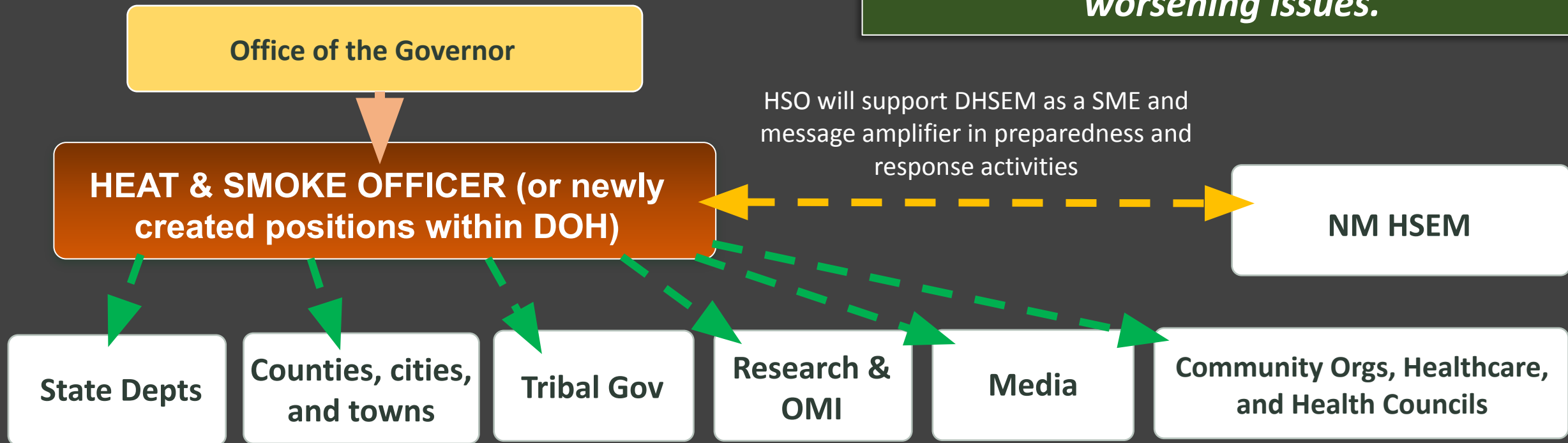


**Bridge academia,
practitioners,
stakeholders, and media**



One Possibility For The Positions

Mandate of the new administration to bring together state departments and buy-in from communities to address these worsening issues.



This position(s) would have a mandate to work across state departments to ensure awareness, coordination, and support for local communities



How does the HSO fit into threat-based activities?

HEAT & SMOKE POSITIONS

- LEADERSHIP
 - ✓ AWARENESS
 - ✓ COORDINATION
 - ✓ SUPPORT





First-year priorities – building the foundation

1

Collect the data

2

Assess risk & gaps

3

Stand up tiered,
aligned early
warning systems

4

Build the statewide
coalition

Understanding the problem and ensuring communities have access to critical information. Stimulate statewide awareness and coordination among agencies.



Second-year priorities – low hanging fruit

1

Support Gov
and Legislature:
opportunities

2

Statewide
awareness-building
campaign

3

Lower-cost
Infrastructure to
support access.
Support Local action.

4

Grow the statewide
coalition

Translating data into awareness and action. Lay the groundwork for collaboration and coordination.



Third-year priorities - investment

1

Position state and
local communities
for Fed resources

2

Track data and
evaluation of
interventions

3

Infrastructure
investments to
facilitate resilience

4

Support NM health
and Emergency
Response systems in
building heat and
smoke plans

Through data and community buy-in, identify what investments will make the greatest difference.



Fourth-year priorities - sustainability

1

**Build expertise and
institutionalize
awareness**

2

**Leverage coalition
to identify**

3

**Infrastructure
investments to
facilitate resilience**

4

**Work with
neighboring states
to create regional
initiatives**

With data, buy-in, and investments we can lay the foundation for long-term growth and impact.



THE OPPORTUNITIES

What New Mexico could achieve



Healthier and happier communities



Reduce costs associated with these hazards (e.g. energy, healthcare, etc.)



Faster, more effective coordinated response



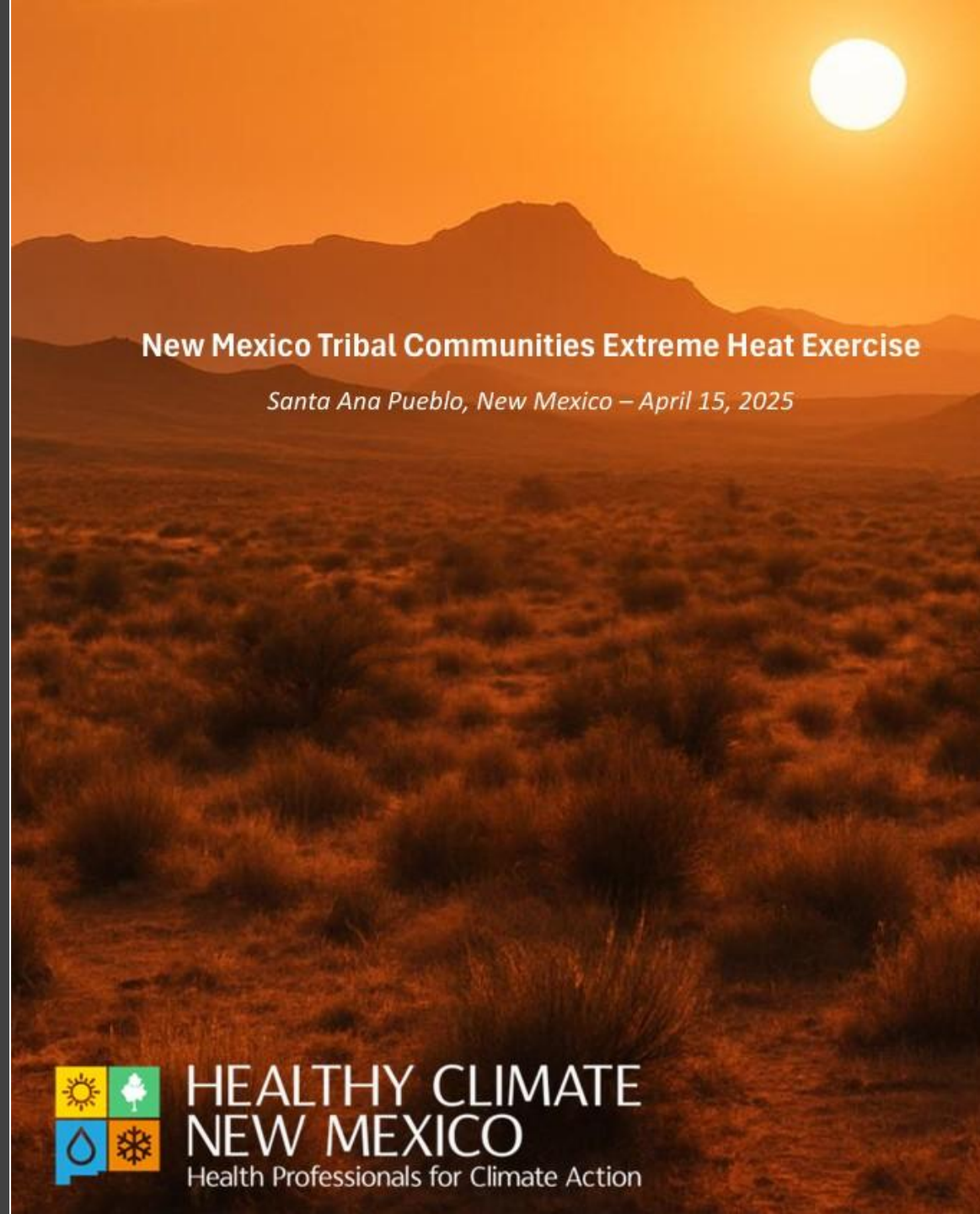
Fewer preventable injuries and deaths

SECTION THREE

THE OPPORTUNITIES

While climate change poses the greatest threat to public health in our lifetime, addressing it could be the greatest opportunity to improve health and wellbeing for all people.

(HCNM is actively addressing it, alongside Tribal & Local Communities)



New Mexico Tribal Communities Extreme Heat Exercise

Santa Ana Pueblo, New Mexico – April 15, 2025



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THE OPPORTUNITIES – EXISTING AND ANTICIPATED RESOURCES

Funding and partnerships

- Federal climate & health funds – likely to increase in the coming years
- The Legislature – directing state resources to where they will be most effective. Add to the annual budget!
- Existing health care and public health funding – leverage HPP, PHEP, and other existing funds to address these hazards*
- Tribal & local governments – support local efforts to adapt and respond
- Universities & research partners – turning research into action





The Ask #1: Create the Public Health & Climate Program

Create the Statewide Public Health and Climate Program within the Department of Health Epidemiology and Response Division. 2025 House Bill 108 (HB108), is being reintroduced.

The program will enhance interagency collaboration to address health equity, mitigate health impacts of extreme weather, and support climate change adaptation efforts across New Mexico, to include protections against Heat and Wildfire Smoke as well as other threats. Key responsibilities: assist local communities to develop health resilience action plans, provide expertise to aid county and tribal public health councils in climate-related planning and response, and facilitate engagement with communities most affected by extreme weather events. The bill appropriates \$1.1 million from the general fund for FY26 to support the program's implementation.



The Ask #2: Create (a) Heat & Smoke Officer position(s), with Specific Responsibilities.



Create a position(s) either within the Public Health and Climate Program at the DOH Epidemiology and Response Division, OR a new separate office within the Governor's office to be sure two greatest threats to human health from emergencies in New Mexico are addressed: High Heat and Wildfire Smoke.

The Arizona Heat Officer is in their Health Department, a position created by Executive Action.

MISSION:: Uplift and encourage proactive heat-related action at the state, local and tribal levels to protect New Mexicans health. The office will coordinate protections against, and responses to the impacts of, heat and wildfire smoke. It will **organize events, provide information on risks and interventions, and create report cards** modeled on those of the



Children's Cabinet. [binet.](#)

THE ASK

What the Heat & Smoke Work requires

01 Establish the position(s)– HSO + or positions with these responsibilities

[Create the position by statute or executive order]

02 Funding - annually - write into the budget

[Modest staffing and implementation funding – 3 positions, funding to ensure effective work]

03 Set a cross-agency mandate

[Grant the authority to coordinate and act]

04 Expand Coordination, Communication among Local and State agencies and non-profit and community groups



AZ Chief Heat Officer Dr. Eugene Livar with HCNM Nate Matthews-Trigg at the annual American Meteorological Society Meeting in Washington D.C.





The Ask #3: Establish an Extreme Weather Resilience Fund

\$40 Million / 3 Years | Legislation: HB 42 / SB 5 (2023) & HB 104 (2024)

Core Purpose & Local Focus

Assist local communities in preparing for and responding to public health risks and climate threats (heat, wildfires, floods) while responding directly to local needs.

Flexible Grant Terms

Grants up to **\$250,000** distributed over **5 years**, designed with **no match required** to reduce barriers for local applicants.

Targeted Equity Allocation

Dedicate at least **50%** of all funds directly to small communities with populations under 100,000.

Funding Multiplier

Grants serve as seed capital that can be actively used to leverage federal or other matching funds, maximizing total impact.



Examples of Community and Tribal Grants for Heat Relief

Shade Structures

Installation of permanent or temporary structures to protect public spaces from extreme heat and direct sun exposure.

Personal Cooling Kits

Distribution of cooling towels, portable fans, electrolyte packs, and protective gear for vulnerable residents.

Water Fountains

Deployment of public drinking stations and refill points to maintain community hydration during peak heat days.

Bus Stop Conversions

Upgrading transit hubs with integrated shade roofs, comfortable seating, and public water access.

Back-Up Generation

Solar power systems and microgrids to ensure continuous cooling center operation during power outages.

Emergency Cooling Equipment

Rapid-response cooling centers equipped for severe heat-related illness and medical support.

Thank You

Health Professionals for Climate Action



Get in Touch

Reach out to collaborate or learn more about our climate resilience initiatives.

WEBSITE

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Follow Our Work

Stay updated on our latest public health advocate campaigns and community events.



@healthyclimatenm



Healthy Climate New Mexico



Examples of Community and Tribal Grants for Heat Relief

Community Assessment & Planning

Funding dedicated to evaluating local vulnerabilities, developing climate resilience strategies, and coordinating tribal & municipal heat response plans.

Key Focus

Local needs identification, risk mapping, & strategic response framework development.

Home and Workplace Safety Supplies

Monitoring Devices

Heat and air quality monitoring devices to track environmental risk in real time.

Air Conditioners

Heat pumps or window A/C units for immediate indoor cooling relief.

Box Fans & Filters

Box fans equipped with added filters for dual air circulation and air purification.

High-Risk Population Support

Targeted support systems for vulnerable individuals with health co-morbidities.