



**NEW MEXICO FIRST**  
*People. Ideas. Progress.*

For Immediate Release: September 15, 2020

Contact: Lilly Irvin-Vitela, [Lilly@nmfirst.org](mailto:Lilly@nmfirst.org) or 505-234-0694

## **New Mexico First Is Pleased to Welcome Four New Board Members FY21 Executive Committee Elected at Fall Board Meeting**

New Mexico First announces the appointment of four new members to its Board of Directors, as well as the full slate of officers. During the September board meeting, the New Mexico First Board of Directors voted to install four new board members. Joining the board of directors are Melissa Ontiveros, Nichole Rogers, Henry Brutus, and Mayor Don Lopez. "All four of our newest Board members are leaders who share core characteristics with our existing board, the spirit of democracy-building, cross-partisanship, and civic engagement. They bring additional talents, expertise, and energy to our mission. We are very fortunate to add their wisdom and commitment to service to our board as we continue to partner with communities to strengthen New Mexico," said Lilly Irvin-Vitela, NMF President and Executive Director.

Henry Brutus is Executive Director at La Casa Inc. La Casa is a nonprofit organization that focuses on domestic violence prevention, awareness, advocacy, and support. Henry is pleased to serve on the New Mexico First Board and noted, "I love what NMF stands for and its focus on making the state of New Mexico stronger. I am honored and humbled to join this impactful organization that is working to improve life for all New Mexicans."

Melissa Ontiveros is a Special Operations Coordinator for Community Action Agency of Southern New Mexico, the largest nonprofit agency in New Mexico. Melissa is developing the Thriving Families program; the program is a trauma-informed whole family approach that leverages resources to meet families' needs, strengths, and goals. Melissa is pleased to serve on the New Mexico First Board and noted, "I am honored to be part of an organization that unites all New Mexicans while rising above partisan politics and recognizing rural and tribal areas and incorporating diverse points of views, cultures, and traditions to confront the needs of all areas of New Mexico to improve policy to create a healthier and prosperous New Mexico."

Nichole Rogers is a Staff Development Specialist at UNM Hospitals in the Department of Nursing Excellence. Nichole's background in customer service, leadership development, and process improvement has given her a passion for capacity building. Nichole is pleased to serve on the New Mexico First Board and noted, "I am honored to serve on the New Mexico First board so we can work together to enable positive change through action. Ensuring inclusion and transparency is something I am passionate about, and think serving in this way is a perfect match. Thank you for the opportunity to serve."

Donald T. Lopez (Don) is the Mayor of the Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque. Don has over 49 years of total engineering and management experience. Mayor Lopez is pleased to serve on the New Mexico First Board. Mayor Lopez is pleased to serve on the New Mexico First Board and noted, "My favorite motivational statement from the famous Anton Myrer book is, 'For the rest of my life, I will always remember that I was once an eagle.' The quote is about a special man and a soldier. I will use Anton Myrer's lessons learned as motivation to help New Mexico First accomplish its mission."

### **The FY21, New Mexico First Executive Committee, includes,**

1. Richard Luarkie, Emerging Equities Solutions Group, Pueblo of Laguna, Chair
2. Marcus Mims, Clifton Larson Allen, LLP, Albuquerque, Treasurer and Chair-elect
3. Kathy Keith, Los Alamos National Laboratory, Los Alamos, Secretary
4. Michael Barndollar, Barndollar Associates, Albuquerque, Member at Large, Chair, Resource Development Committee
5. Cynthia Nava, Retired NM Representative, Farmington, Member at Large.

###

*New Mexico First builds consensus on critical issues facing our state and communities and leads positive policy change through deliberative town halls, forums, and nonpartisan work on education, the economy, healthcare, natural resources, and good governance.*