



Office of the Governor

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Gov. Lujan Grisham priorities for 2021 session: Sustaining key investments, regaining economic momentum

SANTA FE – Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Wednesday announced her agenda for the first session of the 55th New Mexico Legislature, a series of proposals that will advance meaningful investments and new policy in public education, early childhood well-being, environmental protection, racial justice and more.

In addition to the Executive Budget Recommendation for Fiscal Year 2022, which maintains vital state investments in key programs that benefit New Mexicans, the governor’s legislative priorities position New Mexico for a swift and robust recovery from the pandemic and will provide for sustainable progress and continued forward momentum in public education, economic development and public health and safety beyond the COVID-19 crisis.

“New Mexico will recover from this challenging year,” said Gov. Lujan Grisham. “The question is what kind of future we want to make for ourselves after we put these crises behind us. We still have the power to decide what we will become. And the time to

decide is this session, this year. We can choose to return to the same-old, or we can set ourselves up to roar back to life after the pandemic, ready to break new ground and thrive. I look forward to working closely with the Legislature in the coming weeks to achieve our shared vision of a prosperous, healthy and happy New Mexico.”

The governor’s priorities for the session, scheduled to begin Tuesday, Jan. 19, include:

Helping New Mexico small businesses, supporting New Mexico consumers and boosting our state economy.

- **Pandemic relief for small businesses:**
 - Modifying the Small Business Recovery Act of 2020 to ensure the state funding is accessible to more New Mexico small businesses. The act, approved by the Legislature in the summer 2020 special session, originally allocated \$400 million in funds from the New Mexico State Severance Tax Fund to provide loans to New Mexico businesses and nonprofits that experienced financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic, though not all of those funds were expended. This would supplement the \$100 million in small business grants allocated in the second 2020 special session.
 - Providing flexibility and opportunity to restaurants and eateries by allowing alcohol delivery and reforming the state’s liquor licensure program.
- **Expand opportunity for more New Mexico business-owners and keeping local dollars local:**
 - Reforming the state procurement code to include preference for Native-owned businesses, minority-owned businesses, woman-owned businesses and promote spending within New Mexico through set-asides for the required percentage of business contracts.
- **Establish an essential new revenue source for the state and employment source for tens of thousands of New Mexicans:**
 - Legalizing adult-use recreational cannabis through legislation that protects the state’s medical cannabis program, provides for workplace safety and roadway protections and enforcement and clear labeling of products.
- **Ensure every New Mexican has the opportunity to create a fulfilling career with the required education and skills and without burdensome debt:**
 - Funding the Opportunity Scholarship at \$22 million would benefit up to 30,000 students.

- Budgeting \$4 million for a pilot project to target four-year degree-seeking students who previously received the Lottery Scholarship and lost eligibility but have one or two semesters left to complete their degree.
- **Protect New Mexico consumers:**
 - Reforming predatory lending practices by limiting annual interest rates and increasing maximum loan size.

Supporting the education, health and opportunity of New Mexico children and families.

- **Invest in generational improvements in education and well-being for New Mexico children:**
 - Providing for a 1 percent distribution of the state's multi-billion dollar Land Grant Permanent Fund for early childhood education, which requires voter approval.
- **Reduce the cost of health insurance and medical expenses for working families:**
 - Creating a Health Care Affordability Fund that will replace a recently phased-out federal fee, expanding coverage to up to 23,000 uninsured New Mexicans in its first year and driving down premiums for tens of thousands of residents who receive coverage through the state exchange.
- **Boost economically disadvantaged school districts and communities:**
 - Establishing a Family Support Index that improves the economically disadvantaged metric in the at-risk index and calculates an at-risk index for each school to provide more precise information for local funding decisions and budget oversight; sets an annual disparity calculation that ensures final State Equalization Guarantee payments are equalized with a per-pupil floor; consolidates funding, support and accountability for programs associated with addressing Yazzie-Martinez; and ensures reversions for public school support revert to the state support reserve fund rather than the general fund, which will keep funds intended for public education available for educational programs.
- **Address needs of differently abled New Mexico students:**
 - Creating an ombudsman's office dedicated to special education, which will investigate and advocate for reforms on behalf of families in the state special education system.
- **Protecting health care providers:**
 - Eliminate a provision within state law that criminalizes health care providers who perform abortion services.

Rooting out racial injustice in New Mexico.

- **Acknowledge and reduce institutional racism within government:**

- With the support of the Governor's Council for Racial Justice, enact Sen. Linda Lopez's previous legislation that addressed equity and antiracism in hiring, retention, pay equity, accountability in government and more.
- The Council for Racial Justice, which has met regularly since August, has also endorsed the proposal to pull a percentage of funding from the Land Grant Permanent Fund, among other proposals, including the establishment of a race equity director in the Governor's Office.

Promoting and maintaining the clean environment New Mexicans deserve.

- **Creating a Clean Fuel Standard:**

- Reducing emissions from the transportation sector – in 2018, 15 percent of New Mexico's greenhouse emissions were attributed to transportation, second only to the emissions from the oil and gas industry – is achievable by focusing on the fuels. A Clean Fuel Standard reduces the carbon intensity of the fuels used in transportation; carbon intensity is a measurement of a fuel's emission profile that includes its production, shipping, and use. A Clean Fuel Standard would apply to those who refine, blend, make or import fuel – not fuel retailers (i.e., gas stations). With a Clean Fuel Standard, transportation emissions will be reduced by 230,000 metric tons of CO₂ equivalents annually, as the clean fuel standard requires a reduction of 10 percent by 2030 and 20 percent by 2040.
- The governor will also support a proposal supported by the state agriculture and livestock community to create a state meat inspection program and addressing disparities within the impact aid funding mechanism.

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