



PRESS RELEASE

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NEW MEXICO
CHILD FIRST
NETWORK



New Mexico Child First Network & Western Heights Home Visiting receive grant from No Kid Hungry to decrease food insecurity in young children

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ALBUQUERQUE, NM -- No Kid Hungry, a campaign from the national nonprofit Share Our Strength, will invest [\\$3 million in grants to organizations](#) focused on early childhood to help decrease food insecurity among children under the age of six.

At one point during the past year, [40 percent of parents of kids under six reported job or income loss related to the coronavirus pandemic. More than one in five parents reported food insecurity in their household](#). New Mexico has been particularly hard-hit by the pandemic, with [1 in 3 New Mexico children being at-risk of hunger](#). Early childhood is the most intensive period of brain and body development, and hunger and hardship at this age can have long-term implications for children.

The No Kid Hungry grants will serve more than 120 early child care centers, healthcare providers and community organizations. These organizations work with an estimated 170,000 children under the age of five in 34 states, including New Mexico Child First Network and Western Heights Home Visiting in Bernalillo County, New Mexico with this \$24,500 grant award.

“Food insecurity in the early years can have an immediate and lasting impact on overall health, learning, school readiness, and behavior,” says Caron Gremont, Director of Early Childhood for the No Kid Hungry campaign. “These flexible, year-long grants will help organizations provide healthy food to young kids and their families at this critical time.”

New Mexico Child First Network and Western Heights Home Visiting Program have partnered together to specifically target families with substance-exposed newborns as part of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) to provide meals, food, food delivery, home visiting services, and additional supports with this grant.

“New Mexico’s children are in crisis. Food security is critical. We are making every effort to ensure that NM’s most vulnerable children and their caregivers are supported,” said New Mexico Child First Network founder, Maralyn Beck.

The No Kid Hungry grant will work to improve the health, well-being, and safety of substance-exposed newborns in New Mexico by through food delivery and home visiting services that promote healthy parenting, family relationships, and improved outcomes for newborns with substance exposure from birth through early childhood.

“Western Heights Learning Center and Home Visiting Program is honored to partner with New Mexico Child First Network to provide support and meals to one of the most vulnerable populations in New Mexico,” said Chrissy Jeter, executive director of Western Heights. “The success of our state begins with the well-being of our children now. Healthy meals and community support are a foundation for our future.”

New Mexico has the highest population percentage in the U.S. that is covered by Medicaid with more than 40% of them being children. For the third year in a row, the Annie E Casey Foundation has ranked New Mexico 50th out 50 state for child wellbeing.

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About No Kid Hungry

No child should go hungry in America. But in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, 1 in 6 kids could face hunger this year. No Kid Hungry is working to end childhood hunger by helping launch and improve programs that give all kids the healthy food they need to thrive. This is a problem we know how to solve. No Kid Hungry is a campaign of Share Our Strength, an organization committed to ending hunger and poverty.

About New Mexico Child First Network

New Mexico Child First Network is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of children impacted by the New Mexico Child Welfare system, and empowering those families who serve them through training, policy reform, and direct mentorship and support.

About Western Heights Home Visiting and Learning Center

Western Heights is a 5-star childcare center, nationally accredited by NECPA. Western Heights uses learning through play to encourage cognitive, physical, spiritual, social, emotional, creative and language development in our classrooms. Their services include Home Visiting and are licensed with CYFD and ECECD.