



Office of the Governor

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New Mexico hospitality jobs, number of food establishments exceed pre-pandemic levels

SANTA FE – Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Friday announced that New Mexico leisure and hospitality jobs now exceed pre-pandemic levels, with the Department of Workforce Solutions estimating that 100.6% of jobs in leisure and hospitality have returned. New Mexico is outpacing the national average in leisure and hospitality job growth by adding 10,200 jobs in the last year, a 10.9% increase.

In addition, the number of New Mexico food establishments now exceeds pre-pandemic levels, reflecting the success of the Lujan Grisham administration's support and the resiliency of this important industry. Restaurant permitting data compiled from the state Environment Department, the City of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County shows approximately 9,700 food establishments were permitted at the end of June 2022, around 350 more than prior to the pandemic, based on annual permitting data.

New Mexico's year-over-year hospitality job growth is further highlighted by an [analysis](#) from the National Restaurant Association which found that New Mexico saw a 2.7% increase in employment in food service establishments in June 2022 compared to June 2019.

“There’s no doubt the tourism and hospitality industry has shown incredible strength and resiliency in the last few years, which were especially difficult for this sector. I am incredibly encouraged by this recent data, which shows that the work we’ve done together to support business owners and create a thriving economy is yielding results,” said **Gov. Lujan Grisham**. “New Mexico small business owners are the backbone of our local economies, anchoring communities and providing jobs, and my administration will continue to support their growth and success.”

The state is seeing the results of the support the Lujan Grisham administration invested in the recovery of the industry, including \$100 million in funds for business support with priority given to leisure and hospitality, \$51 million in tax relief through a restaurant industry-specific deduction, and liquor license reform that made it more affordable and less burdensome for restaurants to obtain liquor licenses and sell alcohol through carry-out or delivery.

Due to the Lujan Grisham administration's strategic tourism and hospitality investments, as of June 2022 New Mexico has also surpassed several key pre-pandemic metrics and is outpacing

the U.S. average, including average daily hotel rates surpassing pre-pandemic levels; visitor spending is up 5% in May 2022 compared to May 2019, while the national average saw 0% change in the same time period; and gross receipts taxes for accommodations and food services are both surpassing pre-pandemic levels.

“The fact that we were able to put New Mexico tourism back on a path for economic growth speaks to the data-driven decision making, strategic investments, and collaborative framework that guides our work across the industry and at the Tourism Department,” Tourism Department **Secretary Jen Paul Schroer** said.

“We cannot realize economic prosperity here in New Mexico without a healthy tourism industry,” La Fonda on the Plaza Board Chair **Jennifer Kimball** said. “With the good news that leisure and hospitality employment has now reached pre-pandemic levels, the future looks bright for our tourism industry in New Mexico.”

Overall, New Mexico unemployment has reached its lowest rate since 2008, with the largest month-over-month decrease in unemployment in the country, and is now nearly a full percentage point lower than it was prior to the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. In addition to significant job gains in leisure and hospitality, the construction, trade, and manufacturing sectors also reported notable increases.

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