

# NEW MEXICO FOOD CHARTER

## 2023 to 2027

*A practice-based approach to addressing food security in an ever-changing climate by investing in local production and consumption of food, with an emphasis on equitable and sustainable practices.*



[www.nmfoodpolicy.org/new-mexico-food-charter](http://www.nmfoodpolicy.org/new-mexico-food-charter)

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The New Mexico Food Charter is a project of the New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council, which is a program of Farm to Table NM.

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Please visit [www.nmfoodpolicy.org/new-mexico-food-charter/](http://www.nmfoodpolicy.org/new-mexico-food-charter/) to download the New Mexico Food Charter and for updates. If you would like to contact us, please email us at [nmfoodcharter@farmtotablenm.org](mailto:nmfoodcharter@farmtotablenm.org).

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Page iii: Food & Farms Day 2019 group photo outside the Roundhouse, Santa Fe NM; photo: Gabriella Marks

Page iv: Farm of Song hoop houses, Photo: Maya Martinez

Page 1: Top row

Left: Eugene Pickett and Louis Gilbert at Food & Farms Day 2024, photo: Seth Roffman

Center: Food & Farms Day participants in the House Chambers 2024, photo: 4 Birds Photography

Right: La Familia Growers Market - Procopio Sandoval roasting chiles, photo: Jaelyn de Maria

Page 1: Bottom row

Left: Food & Farms Day - Seeding the Future Award for Best Farm To School Practices to Zuni Public School District, with the NM Secretary of Education and Kendal Chavez, photo: Seth Roffman

Center: Food & Farms Day - Travis McKenzie, photo; Seth Roffman

Right: 2022 Living Land Award for Outstanding Leadership in Land Stewardship - Ralph Vigil Photo from Molino de la Isla Organics

Page 6: Bidii Baby Foods - Drying corn, photo: Zach and Mary Ben

Page 7: Hoop house at Chicoyole Farm, photo courtesy of Donne Gonzales, 2024 Food & Farms Day Growing the Future Award for New or Young Farmers and Ranchers

Page 16: Food & Farms Day 2024 - New Mexico Grown salad provided for each Legislator, photo: 4 Birds Photography

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## What is the NM Food & Agriculture Policy Council?

Initiated in 2003 through grassroots activism, the New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council, herein referred to as the Policy Council, is comprised of groups and individuals working on issues that influence or are impacted by food and agriculture systems. The Policy Council works with individuals, governments, organizations and communities impacted by public policy and related programs. The Policy Council educates local, state and federal decision-makers and advocates for policies and programs at the local, state and national levels that improve our food systems. The Policy Council is the oldest continually operating food policy council in the country.

## Who Makes Up the Policy Council?

Policy Council members include, but are not limited to:

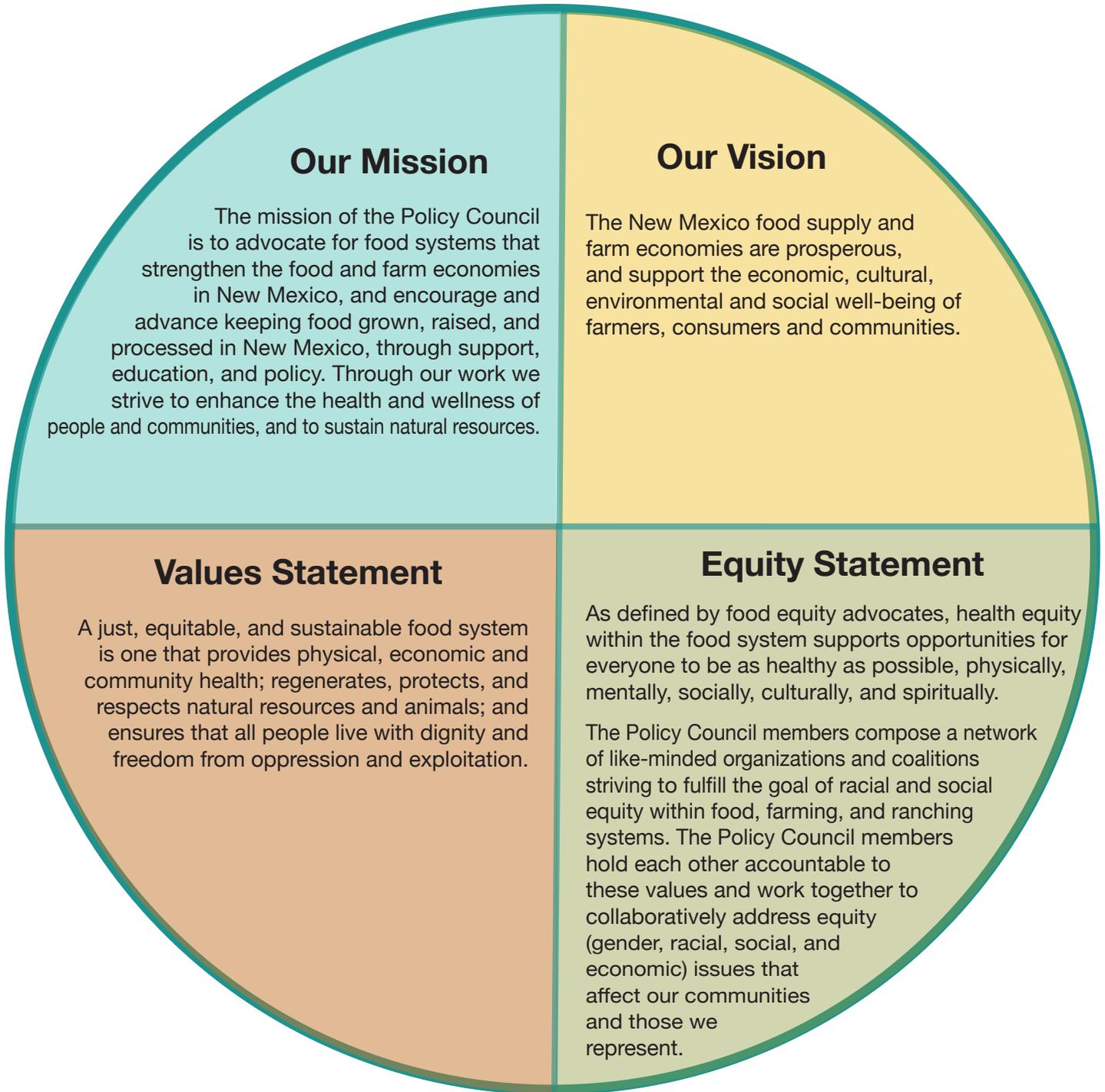
- food producers
- state and regional associations
- land and water organizations
- agriculture commodity organizations
- small scale food industries and distributors
- food hubs
- local farmers' markets
- grocers
- cooperatives
- restaurants
- schools
- childcare centers
- educational institutions
- senior centers
- food and agricultural program administrators and participants
- food consumers

The Policy Council is supported by the staff and consultants of Farm to Table NM who do advocacy, and provide administrative, grant writing, financial, communications and event support.



# New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council

## Guiding Statements



# What is the New Mexico Food Charter and How Can We Use It?

## Overview

Systemic change happens when our mission, vision and values are rooted in equity, social justice, human dignity, collaboration and care for the environment. To that end, these overarching principles guide our decisions and actions:

- We believe that access to food and clean water is a basic human right.
- We are committed to supporting a whole-systems approach to food and agriculture, which leads to greater health, resiliency, and self-determination. We do this by:
  - Creating access to regionally grown, healthy and culturally relevant food which is paramount to the health, economic well-being, and sustainability of communities in New Mexico, making sure that those who are most vulnerable receive the food and nutrition that they need.
  - Encouraging agricultural practices that are sustainable and which support the long-term health of the land and waters, and the health and biodiversity of plants and animals in the ecosystem.
  - Supporting the ecosystem of food producers, workers, processors, distributors and consumers, state, local and Tribal agencies, and communities to work together to achieve common goals and find common solutions through coalition building, education, advocacy and policy solutions.
  - Protecting our shared interests from exploitation.

### The Policy Council's Strategic Plan

In January of 2022, the Policy Council officially launched its strategic planning process, starting with racial equity training. The training was followed by several in-person and virtual meetings, guided by skilled facilitators, who optimized engagement, and helped identify and prioritize areas of importance to the Policy Council. The result was a 5-year strategic plan (2022-2027) approved by the Policy Council's members in December of 2022.

Figure 1 is a summary of the strategic plan, which consists of three major goals and nine strategies to achieve those goals. Strategy 1 is to *“Establish criteria and a prioritization tool/approach to identify policy areas and develop a New Mexico Food Charter to monitor progress.”*



Figure 1

# Theory of Change

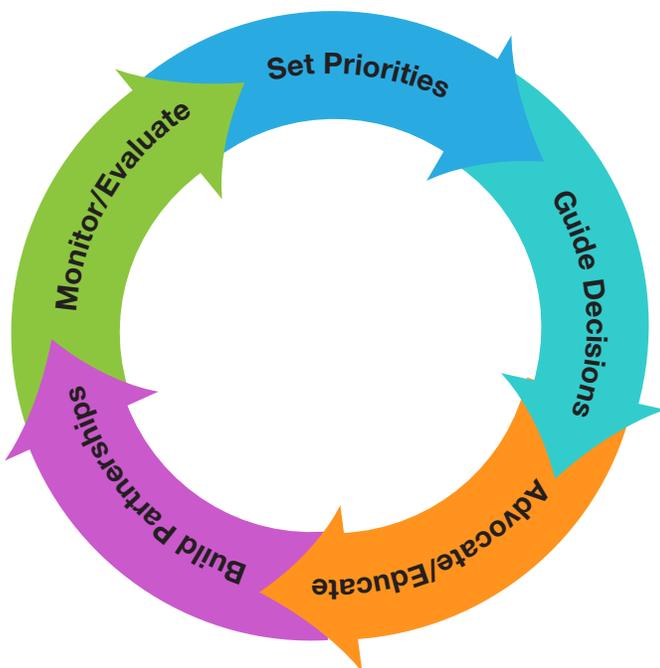
The Centre for Theory of Change defines a Theory of Change as a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context.<sup>1</sup> The Policy Council used a Tree Analysis Approach<sup>2</sup> to identify the main issue (highlighted below) which drives our policy work. Root causes leading to this issue were explored along with the effects of the root causes on New Mexico's current food and agriculture systems. The Theory of Change process included Input from over 50 of the Policy Council members and supporters, and resulted in the identification of the major factors that are influencing New Mexico's food and agriculture systems today and into the future. The Theory of Change process also identified the desired changes or impacts to be achieved through the Policy Council's policy work and the measurable indicators of that change.

## Theory of Change Main Issue Statement

State and federal policies need to address food security in an ever-changing environment by investing in local production and consumption of food, with an emphasis on equitable and sustainable practices.

Completing the Theory of Change process provided the foundation for the Policy Council's Food Charter. The following sections of this Food Charter describe in detail the areas that the Policy Council hopes to influence, through its policy work, the specific changes it seeks and how the change will be monitored and measured over the next five years.

## How Can We Use the New Mexico Food Charter?



*The New Mexico Food Charter is designed to:*

**Set Priorities** to improve food security and access to nutritious food; (promote practices to mitigate the impacts of climate change and improve the food infrastructure through government support.

**Guide Decision-Making** within the Policy Council, helping members align their actions with the shared values, priorities and goals outlined in the charter.

**Advocate and Educate** policymakers, community members, and others about the importance of food-related issues, the Policy Council's policy priorities, and expected outcomes.

**Build Partnerships** with governments, organizations and others that share similar values and goals and strengthen our collective impact.

**Monitor and Evaluate Progress** to hold government agencies, policymakers and others accountable for the intended and unintended impacts of policy decisions and programs.

1 Retrieved December 28, 2023 from: [www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/](http://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/)

2 For an example of a Problem Tree Analysis template and instructions, see: [Problem Tree Analysis Template by Mural](#)

# Key Factors That Influence New Mexico's Food and Agriculture Systems and Strategies to Address Them

## Understanding Food Systems in the Context of Climate Change

Policy decisions influence our food systems, which affect the health of people, soil, plants, animals, the environment and local economies. Food system disruptions during increasingly frequent and severe extreme events because of climate change will disproportionately affect food accessibility, nutrition, and health of some groups, including women, children, older adults, and low-wealth communities. Policymakers, governments, consumers, food producers, health advocates and others must work together across sectors to create practices and policies that make our food systems healthy, sustainable, equitable and economically sound in an ever-changing climate.

Figure 2, from the 2023 Fifth National Climate Assessment on Agriculture, Food Systems and Rural Communities<sup>1</sup> shows some of the many ways that food system failures can occur due to climate change, ultimately making food less accessible, available, or usable. In some cases, food may still be available, yet inaccessible or unusable.

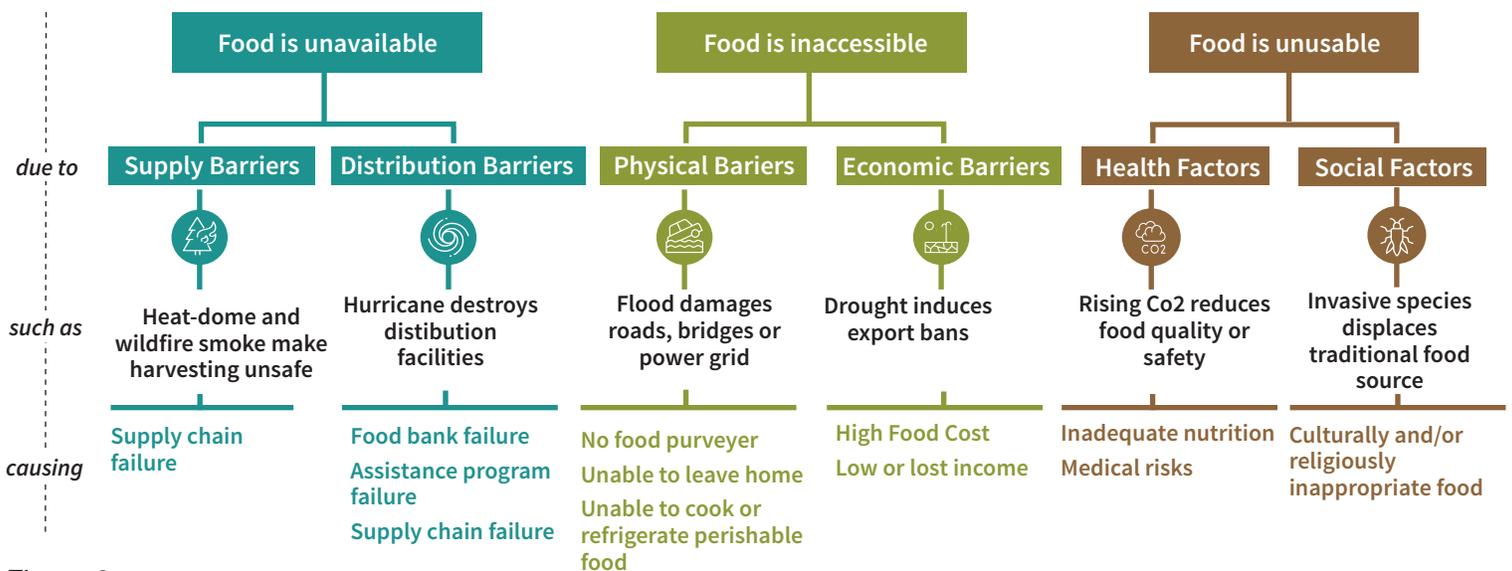


Figure 2

1 Bolster, C.H., R. Mitchell, A. Kitts, A. Campbell, M. Cosh, T.L. Farrigan, A.J. Franzluebbbers, D.L. Hoover, V.L. Jin, D.E. Peck, M.R. Schmer, and M.D. Smith, 2023: Ch. 11. Agriculture, food systems, and rural communities. In: Fifth National Climate Assessment. Crimmins, A.R., C.W. Avery, D.R. Easterling, K.E. Kunkel, B.C. Stewart, and T.K. Maycock, Eds. U.S. Global Change Research Program, Washington, DC, USA. [www.nca2023.globalchange.gov/chapter/11](http://www.nca2023.globalchange.gov/chapter/11)



## **Policy Priorities**

The Policy Council's Theory of Change identified many of the root causes that significantly influence New Mexico's food and agriculture systems and culture.

Feedback from over 50 individuals led to the identification of three priority areas to address in the Policy Council's work. These areas are:

- Nutrition and Food Security
- Environment, Conservation and Climate
- Government Support and Infrastructure.

The Food Charter focuses on these three factors and how to address them. Growers' challenges and workforce issues were also identified as important and are incorporated into the main three factors.

## **Nutrition and Food Security**

The Policy Council recognizes the pivotal role that well-designed policies and programs play in safeguarding and enhancing the nutritional status and food security of various populations throughout New Mexico. These initiatives serve as the foundation for creating an environment where individuals have access to safe, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food, fostering overall health and well-being.

Here are some public policy and program initiatives that may help to promote nutrition and food security in New Mexico:

- Food and Nutrition Education and Awareness
- Access to Culturally Appropriate and Nutrient Rich Food
- Healthy Food Financing and Infrastructure Investment
- Promoting Equity and Inclusivity

The Food Charter focuses on policies and programs which are designed to address fair, inclusive and sustainable labor and production practices and which strengthen nutrition and food security. Policy strategies revolve around the role of policy makers in creating a comprehensive, equitable, and resilient framework that promotes the well-being of individuals and communities and access to culturally appropriate and nutrient rich foods.

Addressing fair, inclusive and sustainable labor and production practices as well as nutrition and food security through thoughtful policies, education and programs can contribute significantly to the overall health and prosperity of New Mexicans.



## **Environment, Conservation and Climate**

Agriculture is significant to New Mexico's economy, food security and our way of life. New Mexico's crop and livestock sales were \$3.71 billion in 2022, up 17% from 2021. Of this, "farm to market" sales contributed 10.8%, up by 2.3% in 2021.

Air, water, soil, climate, pollinators and many other environmental factors greatly impact food production, food nutrition and the economic well-being of food producers. Without healthy and productive land, food producers' livelihoods are at stake, especially in New Mexico where 71% of growers farm on 49 acres or less of cropland (NASS, 2017). One of the factors threatening land production and food nutrition is climate change. Conservation and restorative practices are crucial to growing food in an environment where access to clean water is threatened and the impacts of the climate crisis are increasing.

When discussing the importance of environment, conservation, and climate in public policy and programs, the Policy Council identified the following strategies to help achieve the desired changes and impacts:

- Land Use Policies and Protections: Preserve Agricultural Land: Policies and programs that prevent the loss or reduction of
  - Sustainable Agriculture
  - Biodiversity Conservation
  - Climate Resilience
  - Local and Sustainable Sourcing
  - Water Quality, Access and Efficiency
  - Research and Innovation
  - Long-Term Planning to address the challenges of food security, environmental sustainability, and climate resilience.

The Food Charter underscores the importance of conservation, environment, and climate in public policy to create a framework that not only ensures food security but also promotes the well-being of ecosystems, communities, and the planet as a whole.

## **Government Support and Infrastructure**

Government plays a pivotal and multifaceted role in shaping a food system that is sustainable, equitable, and capable of meeting the nutritional needs of the population while minimizing adverse social and environmental impacts. Public policies and programs determine the amount of



resources available, who may benefit from those resources, and which aspects of the food system are deemed worthy of investment.

**The Food Charter stresses the need for a supportive policy framework at both the state and federal levels to promote sustainable and resilient food systems by:**

1. advocating for policies that prioritize local and regional food production, processing, distribution, and consumption to enhance food security
2. reducing environmental impact
3. supporting State and Federal programs that fit the needs of and are accessible to New Mexico farmers, ranchers and food system workers

**The Policy Council identified some of the critical roles of government in supporting food and agriculture systems:**

- **Regulation and Standards**, such as food safety, nutritional standards, regulations that support workers and regulations to ensure safe air, water and soil.
- **Financial Support and Incentives such as New Mexico Grown and Double Up Food Bucks**, where governments provide financial incentives for local food initiatives, farmers' markets, and community-supported agriculture can enhance regional food resilience and reduce dependence on long-distance food transportation.
- **Infrastructure Development** that expands and supports the aggregation, processing and distribution for New Mexico grown, raised and/or value-added products. Specifically, investment in distribution and transportation systems, including facilities, equipment, software, refrigeration, and vehicles.
- **Education and Research Initiative** Government can allocate resources for research on sustainable agriculture, food security, and innovative technologies that can enhance the productivity and resilience of the food system. Government can also provide and support the education and training of producers, the agriculture workforce and food industry workers.
- **Emergency Preparedness and Resilience** This includes emergency preparedness plans to address disruptions in the food supply chain caused by natural disasters, pandemics, or other crises; social safety nets to support vulnerable populations; and, especially, during times of food insecurity, ensuring access to nutritious food even in challenging circumstances; and the role of government in ensuring that the food system is resilient especially in the face of crises.

Effective governance is essential for creating a food system that not only provides for the nutritional needs of the population but also fosters sustainability, equity, and resilience. Through the formulation and implementation of supportive policies, robust regulatory frameworks, and strategic investments in infrastructure and education, governments can play a transformative role in shaping a food system that benefits both present and future generations.

# 4 What Are the Changes We Seek and How Will We Know When We Achieve Them?

The three areas mentioned above have a significant impact on New Mexico’s agriculture and food systems. The Policy Council took a deep look at each of these areas and identified 18 outcomes it wants to achieve to improve New Mexico’s food and agricultural systems. Additionally, over 60 indicators were identified to measure the outcomes to assess if conditions are changing over time.

**Here is a framework for change and improvement of New Mexico’s Food System:**

**SHARED PURPOSE** A practice-based approach to address food security in an ever-changing climate, by investing in local production and consumption of food, with an emphasis on equitable and sustainable practices.

3

## THREE PRIORITIES

- Nutrition and Food Security
- Environment, Conservation and Climate
- Government Support and Infrastructure

4

## FOUR STRATEGIES

- State Legislation
- Federal Legislation
- Policy Administration (Program Implementation)
- Agency Rules and Regulations

18

**18 OUTCOMES** The Food Charter Food Charter Priorities, Outcomes/Impact, Indicators and Strategies illustrates how the Policy Council will accomplish the 18 outcomes across the three priorities using one or more of the four policy strategies

**ACCOUNTABILITY** Each year about 60 indicators will be measured and monitored to assess progress towards achieving the 18 outcomes to improve New Mexico’s food system. A summary of the results will be published in an annual Food Charter Report Card.

## Food Charter Priorities, Outcomes/Impact, Indicators and Strategies

The Food Charter Priorities, Outcomes/Impact, Indicators and Strategies is organized by the 18 outcomes associated with each of the 3 priorities, why each outcome is important, primary policy strategies related to the outcome, measurable indicators, and potential data sources for the indicators. Please note that numbers do not represent ranked order.

For a Glossary of Acronyms, please see Appendix B, page 26.

# Nutrition & Food Security

## Outcomes and Impact

### Food Access

**Outcome:** Greater and easier access to culturally appropriate and nutrient rich foods, especially by those who are food insecure

**Impact:** Better diets and health, especially for children, older adults, and other vulnerable populations

**Outcome/Impact Measures:** 1. # of food insecure individuals; 2. # of meals provided and children served through Healthy Universal School Meals; 3. Pounds of food provided; 4. Value of NM Grown food purchased; 5. NM Grown funding by program, agency and year; 6. NM Food Initiative funding by agency and/or federal, state or other funding; 7. # of school staff receiving culturally significant food training through PED; 8. # of senior centers participating in ALTSD NM Grown program for the state.

**Potential Data Sources:** DFA Food Dashboard, PED, ALTSD, ECECD

### Education and Awareness

**Outcome:** Increase education and awareness programs so more children and youth know and care about where their food comes from and understand the conditions that influence their access to food.

**Impact:** Healthier purchasing and eating. Increased appeal of nutritious foods and reduced appeal of food that is unhealthy, harms the environment and/or harms the people and animals that produce the food.

**Outcome/Impact Measures:** 1. # of Kids Kitchen programs and students served; 2. # of FFA programs and student enrollment; 3. # of 4-H programs and student enrollment

**Potential Data Sources:** PED, NM FFA Association, NMSU/County Extension (4-H)

### Less Processed Foods

**Outcome:** School and senior meal programs are less dependent on heavily preprocessed and manufactured foods

**Impact:** Less processed meals and more nutritious meals made from scratch. Increased appeal of nutritious foods and reduced appeal of foods that are high in fats, sugars and salt to populations served by school and pre-school meal programs. More nutritious meals can lead to better health.

**Outcome/Impact Measures:** 1. School Kitchen Capital Improvements funding and # of NM schools awarded funds; 2. NM Grown Fruits and Veggies in School Meals - Annual amount spent by school and types of food; 3. PED Healthy Universal School Meals staff positions dedicated to training school food service workers; 4. DOH Healthy Kids Healthy Communities (a) annual funding amount per location, and (b) school meal outcomes; 5. # of senior services directors receiving training by ALTSD

**Potential Data Sources:** DFA Food Dashboard, DOH - Health Kids Healthy Communities, PED, ALTSD

## Policy Strategies

1. Work with our congressional delegation to have input into the federal Farm Bill.
2. Support federal programs and policies that focus on equitable food and farm initiatives.
3. Support state programs such as NM Grown and the Food Initiative.

1. Work with our congressional delegation to have input into the Farm Bill.
2. Continue to advocate for NM Grown Initiatives.
3. NMSU budget for 4-H and FAA programs

1. Continue to advocate for NM Grown Initiatives and Healthy Universal School Meals.
2. Schools and Senior Centers Kitchen Capital Improvements
3. DOH Healthy Kids Healthy Communities budget

# Nutrition & Food Security

## Outcomes and Impact

### Increase participation

**Outcome:** Increase the number of eligible individuals and families who enroll in food programs with a nutrition focus such as DUFB, SNAP, WIC Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and CACFAP.

**Impact:** Increased availability, affordability and appeal of nutritious foods to all populations.

**Outcome/Impact Measures:** 1. Annual # of participants in DUFB; 2. Sales of producers who participate in DUFB; 3. Amount of annual federal funding for DUFB; 4. Amount of annual state funding for DUFB; 5. Annual # of individuals who participate in SNAP and monthly/annual amount; 6. Annual # of individuals enrolled in WIC and annual funding amount 7. Annual # of children and centers served by CACFAP and annual funding amount; 8. Annual # served by FDPIR and annual funding amount; 9. Annual # served by CSFP and annual funding amount

**Potential Data Sources:** DFA Food Dashboard, PED, ALTSD, NM Farmers Marketing Association (NMFMA), DOH, ECECD, USDA Food and Nutrition Service, HSD/FANS

## Policy Strategies

1. NM Grown Initiative
2. Federal Farm Bill
  - a. DUFB
  - b. SNAP
  - c. FDPIR
3. WIC
4. CSFP
5. CACFP
6. Fresh RX
7. WIC/Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs

4

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### Nutrition Standards

**Outcome:** State and federally funded food programs have nutrition standards that support the wellness, health, and development of children and older adults through the provision of nutritious foods.

**Impact:** Nutrient rich food will have positive impacts on development and health.

**Outcome/Impact Measures:** 1. 2025 U.S. Dietary Guidelines; 2. School Nutrition Standards – Child Nutrition Reauthorization; 3. Older Americans Act (for seniors) NSIP (Nutrition Services Incentive Program)

**Potential Data Sources:** USDA/FANS, Child Nutrition Reauthorization, Older Americans Act

Changes to previous versions of the:

1. U.S. Dietary Guidelines
2. Nutrition Standards – Child Nutrition Reauthorization
3. Monitor Older Americans Act for seniors NSIP

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# Environment, Conservation & Climate

### Agricultural Land

**Outcome:** Reduce the loss of agricultural land.

**Impact:** Maintaining or increasing the amount of agricultural land in NM increases the opportunity of local food production.

**Outcome/Impact Measures:** 1. # of farms; 2. Acres of farmland

**Potential Data Sources:** USDA/NASS

1. Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund (Legacy Fund)
2. Federal Farm Bill

6

# Environment, Conservation & Climate

## Outcomes and Impact

### Increase the Number of Farms

**Outcome:** Increase the number of family and individual farms to honor generational farmers. Maintain traditional agricultural practices.

**Impact:** NM's small, individual, and family farms are vital to the state's economy. They support local food production, and encourage competitiveness. Small farms serve to protect and enhance cultural farming practices, natural resources and the environment.

**Outcome/Impact Measures:** 1. # of farms by legal status (individual or family)

**Potential Data Sources:** USDA/NASS

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### Restorative & Regenerative Practices

**Outcome:** Increase the number of growers that use state and federal funding sources for "restorative and regenerative practices."

**Impact:** Mitigate climate change, improve soil health, restore biodiversity, enhance ecosystems, and contribute to human health

**Outcome/Impact Measures:** 1. Climate resistant incentives and funding that are included in state and federal policy and programs; 2. Number and demographics of growers who are awarded funds to use for restorative and regenerative practices

**Potential Data Sources:** NMERD, NMDA, Water Conservation Districts, Conservation Preservation Program (CPP)

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### Crop Resiliency

**Outcome:** More resilient crops are grown that need less water, are non-GMO, and are climate adaptive.

**Impact:** Mitigate climate change, improve soil health, restore biodiversity, enhance ecosystems, and contribute to human health

**Outcome/Impact Measures:** 1. Annual outcomes, amount and recipients of conservation programs such as EQIP, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and state programs.

**Potential Data Sources:** USDA NRCS, CRP and Farm Service Agency (FSA)

## Policy Strategies

1. NM Food Initiative and related programs
2. Federal Farm Bill

1. Federal Farm Bill
  2. NM Food Initiative and related programs
  3. Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund
  4. Revise the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Conservation Practice Standards to include climate resilience.
- 

1. Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund
2. Federal Farm Bill
3. NM Food Initiative and related programs

7

8

9

# Environment, Conservation & Climate

## Outcomes and Impact

## Policy Strategies

### Water for Growers

**Outcome:** Better water quality and quantity for growers

**Impact:** Enough quality water for growers leads to better growth, quality and nutrition of the crop and higher crop yield.

**Outcome/Impact Measures:** 1. Legislation or regulations that prohibit “produced water” from fracking, oil and gas extraction, and brackish water for food production; 2. Changes to the NMED State Ground and Surface Water Protection (20.6.8 NMAC); 3. Legislation improving NM’s Acequia and Community Ditch systems.

**Potential Data Sources:** NM Environment Dept.

1. Changes in the State Ground and Surface Water Protection regulations
2. Changes in rules or regulations pertaining to produced water
3. Adequate funding for Acequia & Community Ditch Fund

### Water for Food Production

**Outcome:** Secure and prioritize water for food production for NM.

**Impact:** Greater food quality and production

**Outcome/Impact Measures:** 1. The Policy Council adopts Water Policy Statement

**Potential Data Sources:** The Policy Council Governance Committee

1. The Policy Council’s Water Policy Statement

### Pollinators

**Outcome:** Increase the number of pollinators in New Mexico.

**Impact:** Higher crop yields

**Outcome/Impact Measures:** 1. # of officially recorded pollinators in NM; 2. Passage of HM33 (2024) to establish a Pollinator Protection Plan Workgroup; 3. Passage of a NM Pollinator statute

**Potential Data Sources:** nmlegis.gov

1. Pollinator Protection Plan Work Group (HM33)
2. Passage of a NM Pollinator statute

### Seed Integrity

**Outcome:** Less GMO seed contamination and more seed preservation

**Impact:** Preservation and ownership of cultural seeds and practices; improved soil and animal health, plant nutrition and yield

**Outcome/Impact Measures:** 1. Initiate Seed Sovereignty legislation OR amend the NM Seed Bill.

**Potential Data Sources:** nmlegis.gov

1. Seed Sovereignty legislation OR Amend NM Seed Bill

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# Environment, Conservation & Climate

## Outcomes and Impact

## Policy Strategies

### Impact from Climate Change

**Outcome:** Government support for disaster relief and mitigation of climate impact for growers whose crops are most impacted by climate change

1. Federal Farm Bill

**Impact:** Protect grower operations from the impact of natural disasters and climate change. Offer price support for crop losses and to rebuild operations.

**Outcome/Impact Measures:** 1. Amount, location and # of Federal Crop Insurance; 2. Amount, location and # of recipients of Disaster Assistance Program; 3. Amount, location and # of recipients of USDA Conservation Program; 4. Amount, recipients, location and type of research by County Extension Service.

**Potential Data Sources:** FSA, FEMA

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## Government Support & Infrastructure

### Aggregation and Distribution

**Outcome:** Expanded and supported infrastructure for aggregation, processing and distribution for NM grown, raised and/or processed products.

1. Federal Farm Bill
2. NM Food Initiative and related programs

**Impact:** Investments across the food value chain that can bring more sustainable, healthy, and affordable food to New Mexicans

**Outcome/Impact Measures:** 1. Capital funding for NM Food Initiative by State FY; 2. Local Farm Participation in NM Food Initiative by program and county; 3. Amount of produce distribution by program and county; 4. # and location of growers in the Approved Supplier Program; 5. # of ranchers, location and amount of meat processed through USDA approved meat inspection facilities in NM

**Potential Data Sources:** DFA Food Dashboard, NMDA, Approved Suppliers Program

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### Federal Support Programs

**Outcome:** Federal programs are accessed by NM farmers, ranchers and food system workers

1. Federal Farm Bill

**Impact:** Investments in New Mexico that can bring more sustainable, healthy, and affordable food to New Mexicans

**Outcome/Impact Measures:** 1. Number, amount, and location recipients of federal grants awarded to New Mexico

**Potential Data Sources:** USA spending website

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# Government Support & Infrastructure

## Outcomes and Impact

### Resources Available

**Outcome:** More state, federal, and tribal resources are available to New Mexico growers who experience disparities/discrimination, or groups who have been historically discriminated against (socially disadvantaged growers).

**Impact:** Improved equity, justice, well-being, and dignity for farm and ranch owners, workers and business owners resulting in an increase in the viability of farm and ranch enterprises owned and controlled by minority and previously excluded populations

**Outcome/Impact Measures:** 1. # and amount of USDA Socially Disadvantaged Groups grant awarded to NM; 2. Upon passage of legislation for a Public Bank of New Mexico, track number and demographics of farmers and ranchers whose operations benefit from the public bank.

**Potential Data Sources:** USDA, nmlegis.gov

## Policy Strategies

1. Federal Farm Bill
2. Public Bank of New Mexico legislation

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### Responding to Emergency

**Outcome:** Build strong and resilient food systems that respond to food shortages, especially in emergency situations.

**Impact:** Reductions in food insecurity, malnutrition and related health conditions and developmental impacts

**Outcome/Impact Measures:** 1. Amount of TEFAP Food per County; 2. Amount of Non-TEFAP food distributed per county; 3. Amount of Federal TEFAP Total Food Costs by state; 4. Hunger supply and demand by priority population, 5. Food Bank Assistance funding – state funding amount awarded per SFY; 6. Federal funding amounts per NM food bank.; 7. Federal funding amounts per NM food bank.

**Potential Data Sources:** HSD/FANS, NM Assoc of Food Banks, USDA/FANS, DFA Food Dashboard, food banks

1. Federal Farm Bill
2. NM Food Initiative and related programs

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# 5 Policy Strategies for 2024 and Beyond

In the previous section, *Key Factors That Influence New Mexico's Food and Agriculture Systems and Strategies to Address Them*, a variety of policy strategies are listed that may be used to achieve the changes sought by the Policy Council. In reality, policies are more often than not a combination of multiple strategies.

Moreover, the NM Food Initiative includes a diverse range of policy strategies, which includes but is not limited to healthy soil, infrastructure development, access to nutrition-rich food, education and awareness, sustainable agriculture through restorative and conservation practices, financial support and incentives, and local and sustainable sourcing.

As of January 2024, the Policy Council identified specific policy strategies which may help to

bring about desired changes in New Mexico's food and agriculture systems. Policy strategies may change overtime as the policy process evolves and as policy impacts and consequences are better understood. In any case, the Policy Council will use a standard process to screen each policy strategy to ensure it aligns with the Policy Council's mission, vision, values and equity statement and that it supports at least one indicator of change, and advances equity.

**The Policy Council has identified four policy strategies that will help to bring positive changes in New Mexico's food and agriculture systems - state legislation, federal legislation, policy administration, and rules and regulations.**



## STATE LEGISLATION



### NM Food Initiative

\$58 million for 15 program initiatives was funded for state fiscal year 2024. As of January 2024, the Governor's FY25 budget recommendations included more than \$118 million to continue to build a robust food system that grows, transports, and serves food to the people living in New Mexico who need it most.

The Food Policy Council supported the proposed FY25 Food Initiative programs and funding. The Food Policy Council was particularly supportive of programs that would provide nutritious meals for all K-12 and pre-school students, address senior hunger, increase emergency food assistance, and support food, farm and agriculture entrepreneurship.

## School Meals

 **Healthy Universal School Meals** eliminates school meal costs and ensures higher quality, healthy meals for all New Mexico students. SFY25 recommended funding for state fiscal year (SFY) 2025: \$43.5 million in recurring and \$19.9 million in supplemental funding for the Public Education Department.

 **SNAP System Enhancement for Summer EBT** allows for the implementation of the Summer EBT program for more than 252,000 students statewide. SFY25 recommended funding: \$310,000 for the Health Care Authority.

## Senior Hunger

 **State SNAP Supplement for Seniors and Disabled Individuals** raises the monthly SNAP supplemental benefit for older adults and people with disabilities from \$25 to \$125 monthly, reaching 28,529 households. SFY25 recommended funding: \$20.8million for the Health Care Authority.

 **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Healthy Incentive Pilot** provides a \$75 monthly supplement for more than 6,112 children living with grandparents or kin. Supplemental funds are designated for healthy food purchases that meet nutritional quality metrics. SFY recommended funding: \$8.9 million for the Health Care Authority.

 **Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program** expands farmer's market nutrition incentives for more than 14,000 seniors. SFY25 recommended funding: \$980,000 for the Department of Health.

 System Enhancements for the **SNAP Restaurant Meals Program** establishes a program that allows older adults, people with disabilities, and people experiencing homelessness to purchase prepared meals at participating restaurants with SNAP benefits. SFY25 recommended funding: \$700,000 for the Health Care Authority.

## Emergency Food Assistance and Innovation

 **Community Food Assistance** funds food banks to provide an additional 50,410,448 meals to people living in New Mexico. SFY25 recommended funding: \$5 million for the Health Care Authority.

 **College Basic Needs** provides grab and go healthy meals, low cost or free access to campus dining plans, and innovations to food distribution systems to support food insecure students statewide. SFY recommended funding: \$1 million for the Higher Education Department.

 **SNAP Eligibility Expansion** expands SNAP

eligibility to people living in New Mexico at 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, reaching an additional 67,697 households. SFY25 recommended funding: \$722,600 for the Health Care Authority.

 **State Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program (FVRx)** is a produce prescription program that provides free fruits and vegetables to children who qualify as food insecure, nutritionally at-risk, or at risk for chronic conditions. SFY25 recommended funding: \$500,000 for the Department of Health.

## Food, Farm, and Agriculture Entrepreneurship

 **State Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program** complements the USDA Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program to assist the state's agriculture industry with infrastructure needs. State funding will expand and enhance available federal funding in two areas: 1) processing, aggregation, and distribution, 2) water efficiency, climate resilience, and greenhouse gas emission reduction. Recommended funding \$4.6 million for the NM Department of Agriculture.

 **Healthy Food Financing Initiative** prioritizes

the development of food retail in rural and underserved communities and provides alternate market channels for value-added and sustainably grown farm and ranch products. SFY25 recommended funding: \$1 million for the Economic Development Department.

 **New Mexico Grown** builds the market for farmers, ranchers, and food businesses to grow, manufacture, and sell food to schools, senior centers, and preschools. SFY25 recommended funding: \$1 million for the Aging and Long-Term Services Department.

## Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund

In 2023, the **Conservation Legacy Permanent Fund** was established, which feeds into the **Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund** as the state's first long-term funding source for statewide conservation projects. For SFY25 proponents want the fund increased by \$250 million to bring the total investment to \$350

million. Part of this package includes \$2.8 million to the New Mexico Department of Agriculture for projects that include the **Healthy Soil Act** and the **Soil and Water Conservation District Act**; and \$1.2 million to the Environment Department for projects to improve surface water quality and river habitats statewide.

## Water Policy

Adoption of **Water Policy Statement** by the Policy Council, which believes tall water use in New Mexico now and in the future must prioritize to provide adequate clean water for local food production. Consequently, the Policy Council adopted a water statement (see Appendix 1)

**Regulation of produced water** is needed to protect water resources and to ensure produced

water is not used in food production. The New Mexico Environment Department petitioned the Water Quality Control Commission in December to adopt a rule for produced water reuse.

The **Acequia and Community Ditch Fund** will provide grants to acequias and community ditch associations to invest in New Mexico's water infrastructure and help to bring more local food to New Mexicans.

## Protecting Pollinators

**Pollinator Protection Plan Work Group Memorial**, passed in 2024, will form a work group to create a plan to protect and increase pollinators in New Mexico. Recommendations

from the work group will set the foundation for a New Mexico Polinator Protection Plan, which does not currently exist in New Mexico. Local Food Procurement/Decrease Food Waste

## Local Food Procurement/Decrease Food Waste

Incentives for childcare centers, schools and senior centers to purchase **NM Grown Food** for children, youth and elder meal programs provides nutritious meals to these populations and is good for the local economy.

The **Composting Initiative** develops a statewide set of composting recommendations to help reduce food waste.

## Increasing Resources to Farmers and Ranchers

Support for the **Public Banking Act** will enable NM to create a state public bank to make affordable loans available to local farmers, ranchers and food value chain businesses.

to address food access, nutrition and hunger and to mitigate the impact of climate change on food production.

Increased funding for **County and Tribal Health Councils** can enhance community-driven efforts



## Farm Bill 2024

The federal **Farm Bill** covers programs ranging from crop insurance for farmers to healthy food access for low-income families, from beginning farmer training to support for sustainable farming practices. The Farm Bill sets the stage for New Mexico's food and farm systems, and the Policy Council works to ensure that it is good for farmers, consumers, and for the natural environment. Every five years, the farm bill expires and is updated; it goes through an extensive process where it is proposed, debated, and passed by Congress and is then signed into law by the President. Each Farm Bill has a unique title, and the current Farm Bill is called the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018. It was enacted into law in December 2018 and expires in 2023.

The Policy Council's **Farm Bill** and **Child Nutrition Reauthorization**<sup>1</sup> priorities and policy strategies include:

### Ensure Equity in All Policies

- **Provide equitable access to Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)** who may have been historically discriminated against or marginalized, to all USDA programs and resources.
- **Provide a sliding scale approach to USDA programs** such as decreasing required matches depending on applicants' budgets and provide "turnkey" grants (no match required) for program requests less than \$50,000 for one-year requests.
- **Urge set-asides for specific programs** especially in Tribal and underserved communities.
- **Make funding available within the year** of an approved loan or grant contract.
- **Increase USDA staff and technical assistance** to meet the needs of all people and communities.
- **Diversify sources of funding** for programs to ensure those excluded as a result of federal and/or state restrictions and regulations have access to and are able to participate in initiatives and programs.
- **Strengthen protocols used in the determination of minority preferences.**

### End Hunger in Our Communities

- **Double the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program** and make it equitable for all states to apply based on low-income senior eligibility.
- **Increase the GusNIP "Double Up Food Bucks" Program**, which is one of the best ways to address food security and provide economic opportunities for farmers. New Mexico has one of the most effective programs in the country.
- **Double funding for the Healthy Food Financing Initiative** and prioritize underserved, rural and Tribal communities.
- **Double funding for the Community Food Project Grant Program.**

<sup>1</sup> Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR) refers to Congress's process of making changes to the permanent statutes that authorize the child nutrition programs, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, and (less often) Section 32 of the Act of August 24, 1935, which transfers funds to the child nutrition programs annually. The most recent CNR was the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-296). Some of the authorities created or extended in that law expired on September 30, 2015. However, the vast majority of program operations have continued with funding provided by appropriations acts.

## Child Nutrition Reauthorization

- **Support Healthy Universal School Meals.** We need higher reimbursement rates to cover all food, staff, and supplies while reducing administrative burdens.
- **Prioritize culturally significant foods,** for example, alternatives to grains, such as starchy vegetables, corn, potatoes and tubers.
- **Allow protein alternatives,** with increased funding.
- **Make it easier to have milk/dairy alternatives.**
- **Increase funding for equipment.**
- **Prioritize locally grown preferences.**
- **Fund nutrition and garden education** in the classroom and on the school grounds.
- **Agricultural literacy for all K-5** to be added to curriculums.
- **Promote responsible managing of program food/milk waste** via food repurposing/ recycling or composting initiatives.

## Increase Access to Farm Programs

- **Increase funding for the Local Agriculture Marketing Program** including the Farmers' Market Program.
- **Support** the Promotion Program, Local Food Promotion Program, Value Added Producer Grants and Regional Food Systems
- **Increase funding** for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers, Ranchers, and Veterans Program.
- **Increase funding** for Farming Opportunities and Technical Outreach.

## Meet the Climate Crisis Head On

- **Double funding for conservation programs** such as EQIP, Grasslands Conservation Program (CSP), and the Rural Energy Assistance Program (REAP).
- **Support** the Conservation Stewardship
- **Minimize barriers** to these programs while providing more technical assistance.

## Ensure Safety and Dignity for Food and Farm Workers

The pandemic revealed the vulnerability of the 20 million food and farm workers who are declared essential to feeding our nation. The Farm Bill must invest substantially in the people who plant, harvest, process, transport, sell, and serve our food, ensuring safety and a living wage, along with access to health

care, clean housing, and the right to organize, while providing safe working conditions. New avenues are needed to support the aspirations of farmworkers and people who wish to become farmers, and access to citizenship for workers which does not tie them to exploitative labor practices and systems.

## Protect Farmers and Consumers

The Farm Bill can and must build on our efforts to promote competition in the food and agriculture sectors. Anti-competitive practices harm small-scale farmers, workers, and consumers, and result in hollowing out rural communities and damaging our environment. The Farm Bill

should commit to an anti-competitive food and agriculture marketplace, while increasing long term investments in local and regional food processing and distribution. In this way, the Farm Bill can level the playing field for farmers and offer more and better choices to consumers.



## POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Policy implementation refers to the practice of monitoring legislation once it is enacted to ensure that it is administered as intended and is achieving expected results. To do this, the Policy Council will monitor the implementation and administration of various programs and policies associated with approved policies.

Some items that may be monitored include:

- The amount of funds distributed and where:
- Eligibility criteria for those applying for funding.
- Set-asides or priorities for New Mexican socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.
- Success and challenges to implementing approved legislation and funds.
- Data collection and reporting systems that are established and data is publicly accessible.



## AGENCY RULES AND REGULATIONS

Statutes and regulations are the ground rules created by governments and make up the bulk of the laws that govern a society. The major difference between statutes and regulations is how they are created. Statutes, also referred to as codes, are laws written and enacted by the legislative branch of government (e.g. U.S. Congress, state legislators). Regulations, also referred to as rules, are written by state or federal agencies to supplement laws that were passed by the legislature.<sup>2</sup> The Policy Council is monitoring how New Mexico state agencies are writing rules and regulations related to recent legislation. Below are a few examples of the agencies' rules and regulations that will be tracked over the next year.

- NM Public Education Department - Rules for Healthy Universal School Meals
- NM Environment Department - Rules or regulations for the use of produced water
- State Office of the Engineer - Rules for agricultural water use

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<sup>2</sup> This definition comes from Colorado State University, retrieved 01/07/2024 at: <https://libguides.colostate.edu/c.php?g=906786&p=6659470> - [Statutes also referred to as, were passed by the legislature.](#)

# 6

## Monitoring and Reporting Progress

Monitoring the impacts of policies in agriculture and food systems is crucial for assessing their effectiveness, making informed decisions for future adjustments, and understanding intended and unintended impacts.

Here is a description of how the Policy Council plans to monitor these impacts:

### Clear and Measurable Success Indicators

In the Food Charter Priorities, Outcomes/Impact, Indicators and Strategies, the Policy Council has identified potential impact of the actions listed within each of the 3 priority areas and the policy strategies that may bring about that change. Some examples of indicators include shifts in crop yield, the amount of funds received by growers, farmers' income, the adoption of

sustainable farming practices. food security levels, beneficiaries of federal and state food nutrition programs and the number of individuals receiving nutrition education. A baseline measure will be identified for each indicator. This baseline will serve as a reference point for measuring changes over time.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The Policy Council will regularly collect data on the key indicators. It will analyze the data to identify trends, patterns, and correlations. Policy Council members and supporters, including farmers and ranchers, local communities, sector representatives, and environmental groups, are highly encouraged to participate in the monitoring process and share information. Feedback on policy impacts, challenges, and opportunities are always welcome. Feedback

can be provided by participating in a Policy Council meeting or by contacting the Policy Council governing committee members or Farm to Table staff. Moreover, the Policy Council encourages the engagement of communities and partners to identify and address data gaps. This may include the collection of primary data through surveys, interviews and capturing lived experiences of those most impacted by policies and programs.

### Economic Analysis

It is important for the Policy Council to conduct economic assessments to evaluate the financial implications of the policies it supports. New Mexico's executive branch recognized the importance of this data and has developed the New Mexico Food Initiative Dashboard, which provides much of this data and is available

publicly. The Policy Council will regularly review review data from credible sources and analyze it for changes in the amount of and access to funding and other resources, and the overall economic well-being of the agriculture and food sectors.

### Environmental Impact Assessment

The Policy Council will assess the environmental impact of food and agricultural policies, including changes in land use, water quality, biodiversity, and other relevant environmental

factors, based on the quantified measures listed in " Food Charter Priorities, Outcomes/Impact, Indicators and Strategies.".

## Social Impact Assessment

The social implications of policies on communities, especially historically disadvantaged groups, is also important to the Policy Council. As resources allow, the Policy Council will collect stories of lived experience

to monitor changes in the access to food and resources, changes in the overall food and agriculture systems and the intended and unintended impact on groups impacted by the Policy Council supported policies.

## Technology and Innovation Adoption

The adoption of new technologies and innovative practices promoted by the policies to foster conservation and restorative agriculture practices is important. The New Mexico

Agriculture Department is charged with tracking the dissemination and adoption of a variety of sustainable agricultural practices. Access to this information will be requested by the Policy Council.

## Regular Reporting and Communication

The Policy Council will develop a reporting mechanism to communicate its findings annually. The annual report will be available via the Policy Council's website, [nmfoodpolicy.org](http://nmfoodpolicy.org). Additionally, periodic updates on the Policy

Council's policy strategies and policy impacts will also be available via the Policy Council's website, the Policy Council meetings, and other partner and public meetings to keep stakeholders informed.

## Policy Adjustment and Iteration

Based on the monitoring results, the Policy Council is prepared to adjust policies and policy strategies as needed. Iterative feedback and continuous improvement are essential for

addressing emerging challenges and ensuring the policies remain effective and desired changes are achieved.

## Long-term Impact Assessment

The Policy Council is interested in assessing the long-term impacts of its policy strategies to understand their sustained effects on agriculture, food systems, and the broader economy. This may involve conducting periodic comprehensive

evaluations.



# Appendix 1



## NM Food & Agriculture Water Policy Statement

### PREAMBLE

Water is life. It is imperative to know these words are a recognition of the profound nature of water. To Indigenous Peoples, New Mexico's first water stewards, as well as many of us, water is a living entity with a female spiritual personification; a miraculous life form that all life needs to live. In knowing this truth, we flow with her to strengthen the clarity of our purpose to protect our water.

Indigenous knowledge says giving this recognition prompts the power and authority of water giving us the greatest advantage to improve our water use and its protection.

To not give this recognition to the sanctity of water invokes a resistance that compromises the beneficial conclusion we strive for. In living this truth, we have the greatest opportunity to protect water for our future grandchildren.

It is incumbent on the New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council to advocate for policies to assure that our waters are used to the optimum for our life sustenance, and to meet the needs of our citizens to provide food security through agriculture. Water is one of the greatest resources New Mexico has and it deserves our utmost commitment and vigilant advocacy.

### POLICY STATEMENT

The New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council (Policy Council) values clean water for the cultivation of nutritious, culturally significant, local foods. Thus, water in the State must be protected, conserved, and expanded where possible.

The Policy Council is committed to responsible and sustainable use of water. Our waters must be protected with a focus on ensuring a continued adequate supply for New Mexico farmers.

The Policy Council believes that planning for use of all water in New Mexico, or any contemplated strategic initiatives developed by public agencies, now and for the future, must place a priority on providing adequate clean water for local food production by New Mexico farmers, cultivators, and growers. By doing so, these producers are economically and environmentally resilient and able to continue to provide healthy foods.

In working toward these goals, the Policy Council identifies the following tasks and objectives. The Policy Council will support and participate in the following:

1. Ensuring that agricultural water users have equitable, social, political, and economic access to all processes to protect their water rights and eliminating the threat of loss of a water right through non-use.

Often, smaller agriculture water users do not have the financial means to participate and protect their water rights.

2. Supporting and promoting the prudent use of water through conservation projects, the development of new technologies for efficient water use, while recognizing and respecting Indigenous and Acequias cultural practices and traditions.
3. Expanding and funding the voluntary placement of conservation easements over farms, ensuring that those properties remain in agricultural production and have water rights in perpetuity. Expand the eligibility for the conservation easement tax credit for the protection and conservation of productive soils and farmland.
4. Providing input to discussions about alternative water use agreements between competing stakeholders as needed.
5. Participating in strategic water planning discussions that will serve all water users and uses in New Mexico.
6. Ensuring that those persons or entities that pollute our waters are responsible for returning any such polluted water to its same condition prior to the pollution and holding such persons and/or entities accountable to the full extent of applicable laws and regulations.
7. Ensuring that the State Engineer's Office and other appropriate agencies and water authorities regulating all waters within the State of New Mexico, are accountable to all water users.

# Appendix 2

## Glossary of Acronyms

### Federal Programs

CACFP: Child and Adult Food Program	FSA: Farm Service Agency
CRP: Conservation Reserve Program	NAP: Nutrition Assistance Program
CSFP: Commodity Supplement Food Program	NASS: National Agriculture Statistics Service
DUFB: Double Up Food Bucks	NRCS: Natural Resources Conservation Service
FDPIR: Food Distribution on Indian Reservations	NSIP: Nutrition Standards Incentive Program
FNS: Food and Nutrition Service	SNAP: Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program

### New Mexico State Agencies

ALTSD: Aging and Long-Term Services Department	NMEDD: New Mexico Economic Development Department
DFA: Department of Finance and Administration	NMERD: New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department
DOH: Department of Health	PED: Public Education Department
FANS Bureau: Food and Nutrition Services Bureau	WIC: Women, Infants and Children
ECECD: Early Childhood Education & Care Department	WIC FMNP: WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
HSD: Human Services Department	Senior FMNP: Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
NMDA: New Mexico Department of Agriculture	
NMED: New Mexico Environment Department	

### Organizations

FTT: Farm to Table	NMFMA: New Mexico Farmers Marketing Association
NMACD: New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts	NMFAPC: New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council

