

## Governor responds to questions about Northwest New Mexico

Written by gallupsun  
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By Dominic Aragon

Sun Correspondent

SANTA FE - Gov. Michelle Lujan-Grisham met reporters on April 24 to update the public on how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting our state.

In her most recent briefing, the governor shared statistics on COVID-19 related cases and hospitalizations, unemployment numbers and keeping restrictions in place to protect public health.

"Please, stay home, so that we can recover in every facet. That's what's important to everybody," Lujan-Grisham said.

### **UNEMPLOYMENT**

During the month of January, approximately 9,600 New Mexicans were receiving unemployment benefits. Since March 15, nearly 80,000 New Mexicans are receiving benefits, as of the April 24 briefing. The numbers included over 120,000 active applications.

Individuals who were laid off or had hours reduced due to the pandemic, along with the self-employed, independent contractors and gig economy workers can apply for unemployment insurance benefits.

The governor's office said those eligible for the benefits will receive unemployment insurance or Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) for 39 weeks and will receive an additional \$600 a week until July 31.

Those who have exhausted their unemployment insurance are eligible for an additional 13 weeks of benefits, including the extra \$600 per week.

Workers needing to apply for unemployment benefits can apply online at [jobs.state.nm.us](https://jobs.state.nm.us) or call 1-877-664-6984.

### **NUMBERS**

Over 8,000 New Mexico businesses were approved for over \$1.4 billion in the Paycheck

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Protection Program (PPP), the governor announced.

The AllTogetherNM Fund raised about \$3.5 million for charitable efforts.

The fund donated over half a million dollars to food banks across the state, including the Community Pantry in Gallup and The Food Depot in Northern New Mexico.

If you are interested in donating to the fund, visit [alltogethernm.org](http://alltogethernm.org).

### **OUR AREA**



Lujan-Grishman said personal-protective equipment has been sent to McKinley County for frontline healthcare workers and more will be sent.

“We have taken many shipments and we should keep doing it,” she said.

“Our frontline healthcare workers are a priority...It’s really hard to take a moment, when you’re saving lives, to make sure that someone in the hospital reaches out to us to say, ‘You know, we underestimated what we need, we need more.’”

The governor thanked all frontline workers in the area for their efforts.

The governor said she was “very disappointed” in the actions Grants was preparing to take to reopen businesses across the city.

“This makes absolutely no sense, whatsoever, flies in the face of every single positive, productive, evidence-based public-health effort, and quite frankly, I happen to know that the [Cibola] county commission is incredibly upset by these decisions,” she said.

New Mexico State Police is enforcing stay-at-home orders and will cite businesses not in compliance.

“If businesses open without specific instruction or permission in order to do so, they will get a cease and desist citation, and those citations have fines that can be associated with them,” she said.

“We have provided those cease and desist orders and will do whatever it takes to keep New Mexico safe and to make sure we are doing it together in the right way, and I absolutely don’t want that to occur. So I hope the mayor heeds all of our advice and walks back those

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statements.”