

Food banks get money from New Mexico

Written by Staff Reports

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\$5 million spread through five areas

SANTA FE— The New Mexico Human Services Department can expect to receive \$5 million from House Bill 1, appropriated during the second special session of the New Mexico Legislature last month to support and supplement emergency feeding operations at food banks across the state. The funds are being distributed to the five major food banks that support all 33 counties and tribal communities through an existing hunger relief network. The food banks are:

The Community Pantry in Gallup

ECHO Inc. in Farmington

Roadrunner Food Bank in Albuquerque

The Food Depot in Santa Fe

Food Bank of Eastern New Mexico in Clovis

The Human Services Department administers the USDA'S The Emergency Food Assistance Program that distributes food to low income New Mexicans statewide in all counties, and will use poverty data by county to divide the \$5 million between the food banks and the counties

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they serve. The funds will be used to purchase food to supplement the USDA TEFAP program and other donated food that is distributed through a network of 600 food pantries in New Mexico.

“Many New Mexicans continue to struggle with food insecurity during these difficult times. Thanks to the New Mexico Legislature’s allocation these funds will help families keep food on the table,” Angela Medrano, deputy secretary for the Human Services Department said.

Roadrunner Food Bank estimates the \$5 million will provide approximately 4.3 million pounds of food or 3.6 million meals for the state of New Mexico. One of the benefits of partnering with food banks is their purchasing power through their network of partners at highly discounted rates.

Recent research released by the food bank’s national organization Feeding America shows that hunger during the pandemic is expected to increase.

In their latest brief, *The Impact of the Coronavirus on Food Insecurity in 2020*, released in October, their initial projections of how food insecurity may increase in 2020, were revised using updated assumptions about projected unemployment and poverty rates.

New Mexico ranks seventh among the states with the 10 highest rates of projected food insecurity and third highest for projected child food insecurity for 2020.

According to the study in 2018, nearly 316,000 people in New Mexico, including 114,000 children, did not have adequate access to nutritious food to live a healthy life.

The updated projections in the study predict this number is likely to increase to more than 76,000, including over 33,000 children with approximately 392,000 or 18.7 percent of New Mexicans (1 in 5) experiencing food insecurity this year, including over 147,000 children (1 in 3).