

New Mexico receives innovative data, technology improvement grant

Written by gallupsun
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Project will streamline enrollment in WIC and SNAP programs, help reduce childhood hunger

SANTA FE – New Mexico along with five other states was selected by No Kid Hungry and the American Public Human Services Association to receive an innovative technology project grant that will help reduce childhood hunger. The project leverages data and improves technology to enhance the interfaces and webservices for the New Mexico Humans Services Department's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) formerly known as food stamps and the Department of Health's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

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Ultimately the project will make it possible to bidirectionally exchange participant data to help streamline and maximize program enrollment.

"No child in New Mexico should go hungry but, the pandemic has created hardships for many New Mexico families," Deputy Secretary Angela Medrano said. "This grant will assist us by enabling two computer systems from separate departments to talk to each other and help us identify individuals in need."

New Mexico Humans Services Department's eligibility system will connect with Department of Health's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children's system. To execute the project, new business rules will be enforced in HSD's system to create a more accurate universe of potentially WIC-eligible participants. Links between heads of households and families will also be added to both departments systems to enable future synchronicity and reevaluation of potential eligibility as circumstances change.

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Enrollment data will be shared and updated between systems to provide visibility and accountability of the referral lifecycle. Notably, these changes will allow the two departments to increase WIC enrollment and participation, improve clinic and participant experiences through more outcome-focused interactions, and reduce administrative burdens on staff.

Once the project is completed, the Human Services Department will be able to provide more accurate and specific referral data that allows the Department of Health to conduct more proactive and effective outreach. This will drive increased WIC enrollment and consequently help New Mexico improve food security, positively improve children's weight, and provide additional support to diverse communities facing disproportionate levels of poverty.

The grant period is for 18 months, and all the grantees will leverage data and technology improvements to address systemic barriers and promote equitable access to services. The goal for all grantees is to reduce cross departmental silos, facilitate community organization engagement, and enhance client outreach and experience.

The other grantees selected include:

- Hawaii Department of Human Services
- Kansas Department for Children and Families & Kansas Department of Health and Environment

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- Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services, North Carolina
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
- New Jersey Department of Human Services

The Human Services Department provides services and benefits to 1,022,395 New Mexicans through several programs including: the Medicaid Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Child Support Program, and several Behavioral Health Services.

