



### **Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham awards \$10 million in Food Security Grant funding to 40 organizations**

SANTA FE – Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham announced on Oct. 7 the recipients of \$10 million in funding through the Food Security Grant to invest in infrastructure improvements for New Mexico’s food system, part of a larger \$24 million investment to address hunger secured by the governor during the 2022 legislative session.

Joined by leaders of The Food Depot, which serves nine counties in northern New Mexico, the governor announced that funding has been awarded to 40 projects in 26 counties that will benefit an estimated 477,000 New Mexicans – around a quarter of the state’s population.

“In the last three years, New Mexico has had the biggest improvement in food insecurity rates of any state – but we know there is more to be done,” Lujan Grisham said. “This historic funding will revolutionize how we address food insecurity and improve the state’s food distribution system as a whole, getting more fresh foods to children, families, students and seniors all across New Mexico. I will keep fighting food insecurity until hunger is no longer a reality for any New Mexican.”

The Food Depot was awarded \$1.4 million to stand up the Food Mobile Dos, a mobile grocery store that will serve 43 rural, frontier, and Tribal sites in seven northern New Mexico counties.

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12,600 individuals will be provided up to 262,500 additional meals monthly as a result of this single investment.

“I have worked in hunger-relief since 1990 but have not seen us move the needle on hunger. Gov. Lujan Grisham’s commitment to addressing hunger and poverty in New Mexico gives me hope,” Sherry Hooper, executive director of The Food Depot, said. “With her commitment and the support of the Legislature, we are well-positioned to lift people out of poverty and create sustainable solutions to hunger.”

“Food insecurity in a state the geographic size of New Mexico is not easy to address. These initiatives have certainly made a positive impact in assisting us in our fight against hunger,” Lorenzo Alba Jr., Executive Director at Casa de Peregrinos in Doña Ana County, said. “The focus areas that the initiative has identified will definitely help us develop a sustainable food system beneficial to all New Mexicans, and we are grateful to Gov. Lujan Grisham for her leadership in meaningfully addressing this issue.”

Projects considered for the \$10 million in Food Security Grant funding included food refrigeration and cold storage, vehicles, kitchen equipment for preparing and serving meals, and facility renovations. Additional priorities included mobile distribution models for communities without access to grocery stores or food retailers and start-up/seed funding for innovative projects that increase local food access for low-income New Mexicans. Of the \$10 million, 50% was awarded to the state’s food banks and food pantries, with the remaining funds awarded to non-profit farmer cooperatives, food hubs, schools and senior centers. Projects awarded include:

\$1.8 million for a new food distribution center in Grants. The project will partner with the NMSU Grants Container Farm and NMSU Cooperative Extension to expand opportunities for educational programming and fresh, hydroponically grown produce.

\$1.4 million to The Food Depot in Santa Fe for a mobile food pantry that offers produce and meat, as well as shelf stable foods and prepared meals, and will serve 43 new sites in seven northern New Mexico counties.

Almost \$418,000 to Bernalillo Public Schools for a youth-led food truck program that will

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distribute hot meals on school campuses and to surrounding communities.

\$176,700 to the Pueblo of Pojoaque to purchase cold storage, vehicles and greenhouse equipment for the Pueblo's Agriculture/Bison program, which provides fresh and locally grown crops and bison to tribal members in an effort to reduce obesity and diabetes

\$101,500 to the Anthony Youth Farm to upgrade the irrigation system of the youth training farm's irrigation system, tractor equipment and cold storage warehouse, resulting in a 25% increase in school meals and agriculture boxes for distribution.

The Food Security Grant is one element of a \$24 million funding package secured by Lujan Grisham in the 2022 legislative session, the largest investment in food and hunger in recent state history. Addressing food insecurity has been a top priority of the Lujan Grisham administration, and that work has yielded real results including:

When comparing 2019-2021 data to 2016-2018, New Mexico had the highest drop in the nation in overall food insecurity rates (-5.3%).

Since 2019, more than 1.7 billion meals have been provided to food insecure New Mexicans – this translates to more than 2 billion pounds of food.

Since 2017, the rate of food insecure New Mexico children has decreased more than 15% from just over 118,000 to just over 99,000 children.

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