

# Child Welfare Matters

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Presented to the  
**Legislative Health and Human Services  
Committee**

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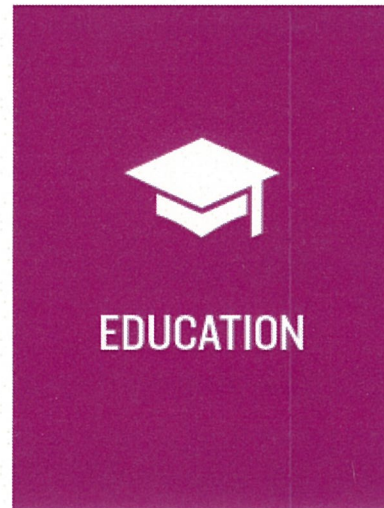


# What we will cover today

- Child well-being data
- Why the numbers matter
- How we got here
- What we can do about it



# What is KIDS COUNT?



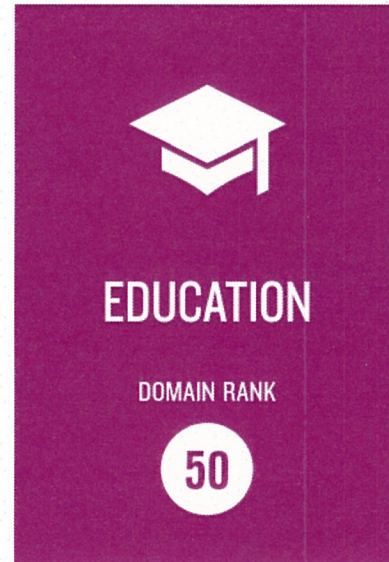
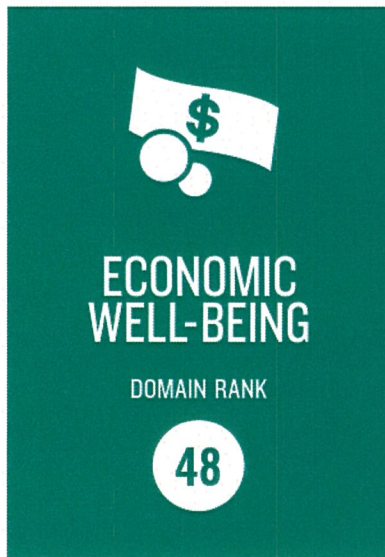
- Initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, NMVC is NM KC anchor
- Based on government-collected data
- Calls attention to child well-being issues
- Data in regular publications and on Data Center
  - [datacenter.kidscount.org](http://datacenter.kidscount.org)

[www.nmvoices.org](http://www.nmvoices.org)



# We are ranked 49<sup>th</sup> in child well-being

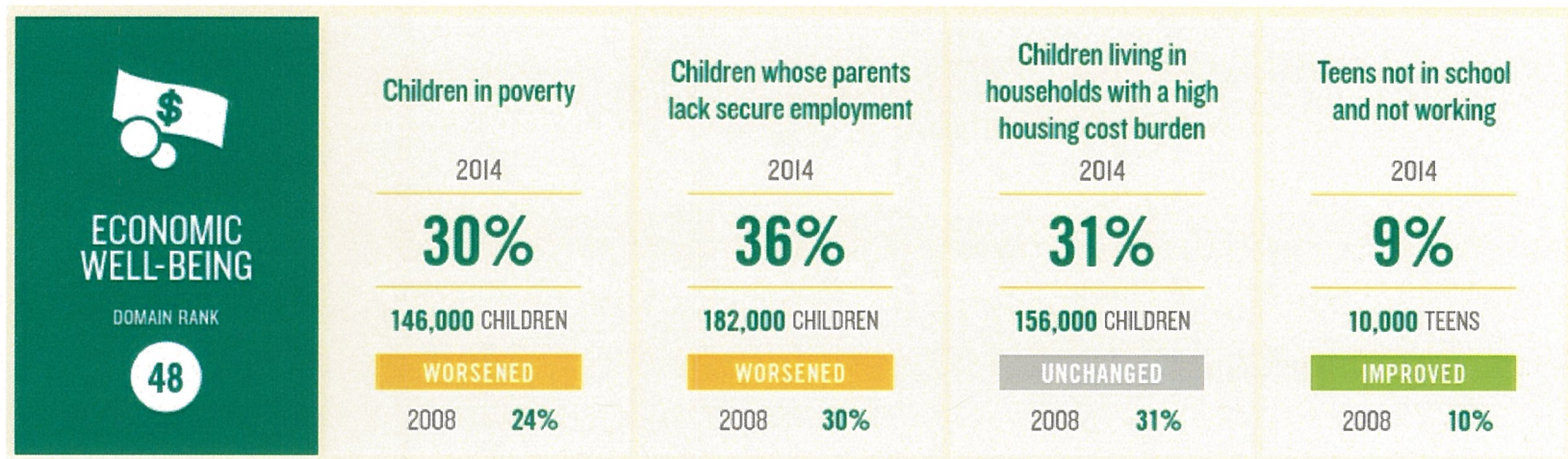
And some indicators are particularly alarming.





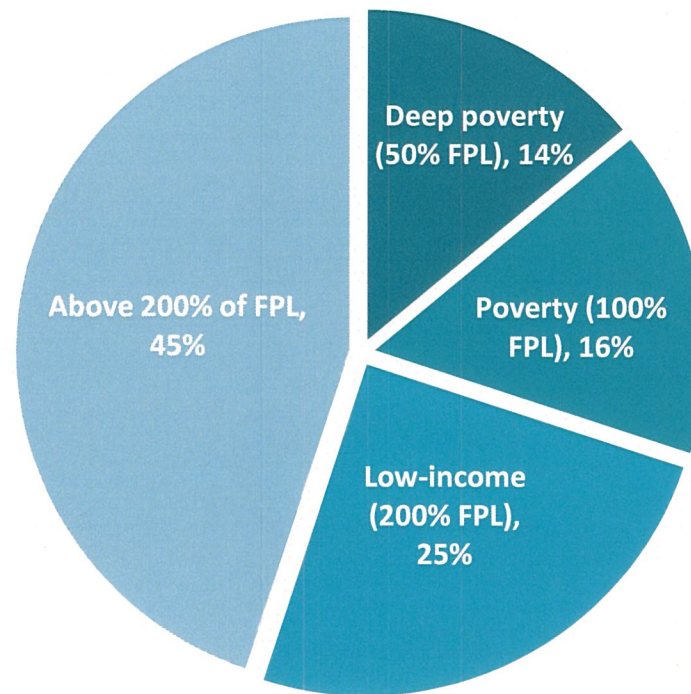
# Economic well-being of kids in NM

There are some short-term improvements, but long-term trends are negative.



# Most NM kids are in low-income households or living in poverty

Percent of NM kids by income group\*, 2014



\* The federal poverty level in 2014 was \$23,850 for a family of four.

Source: US Census, American Community Survey data, 2014

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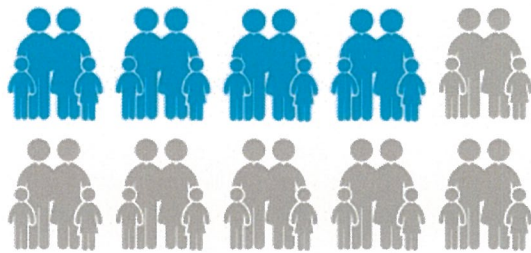
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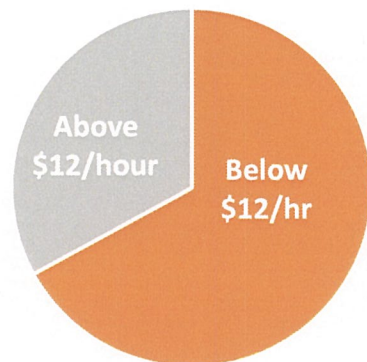
# Working families in NM face major challenges

2<sup>nd</sup> worst rate of working families that are low-income



**42%** of our working families are low-income

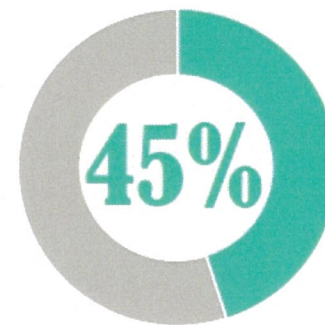
67% of jobs in NM pay low wages



NM has highest rate of poverty in the US among:

- the employed
- people who work full-time
- people with a bachelor's degree or higher

Highest long-term unemployment rate in the US



**45%** of our unemployed have been looking for work for more than **6 months**

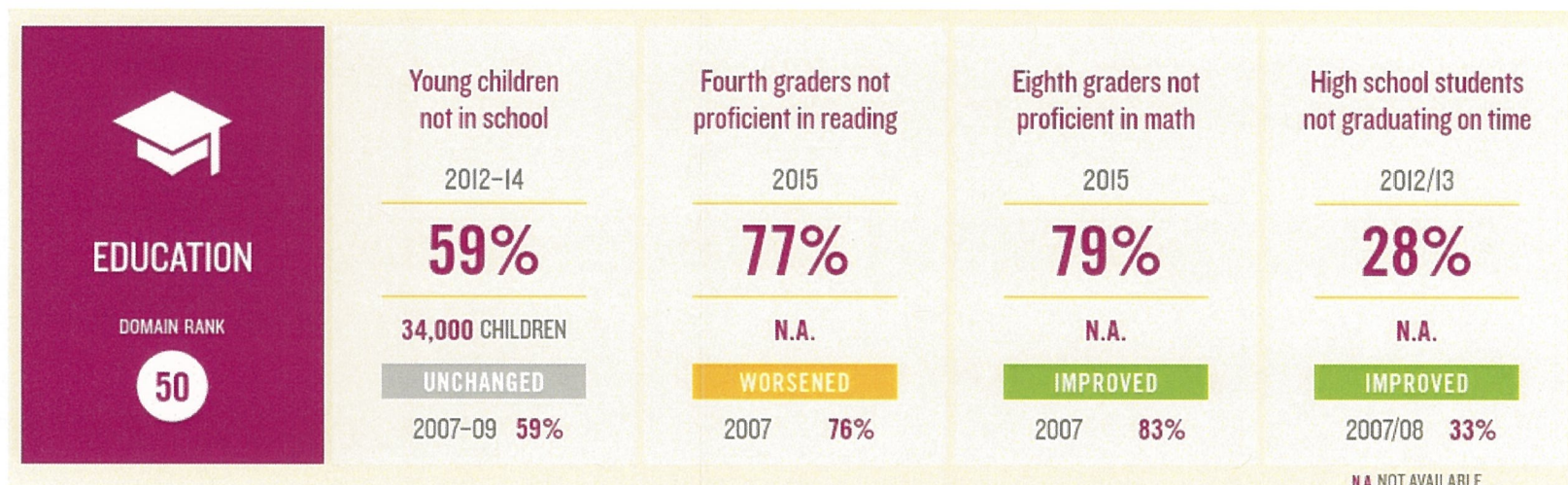
Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey data, 2013 and 2015; BLS data from 2014 and 2015

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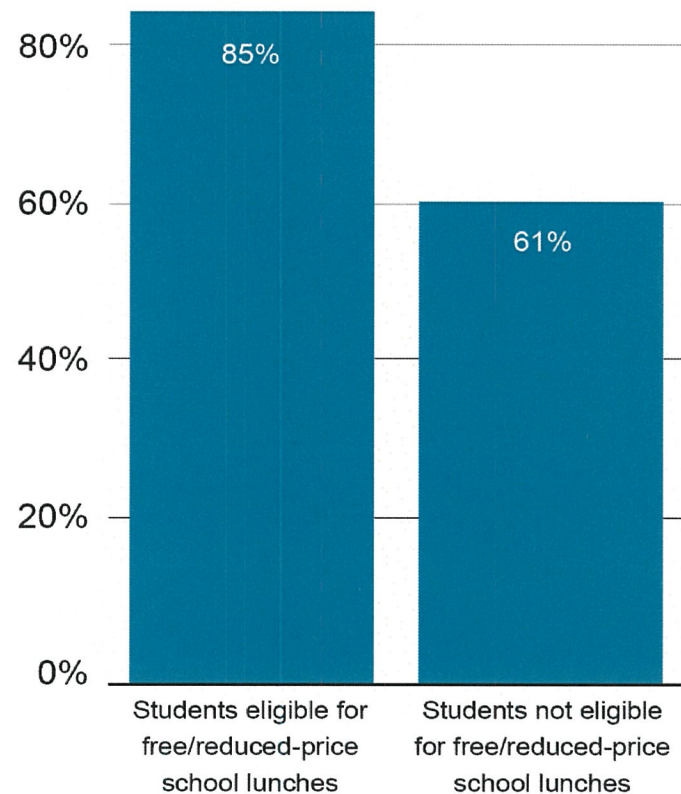
# Educational well-being of kids in NM

Short-term trends are mixed, but long-term trends are positive.



# Income levels impact education

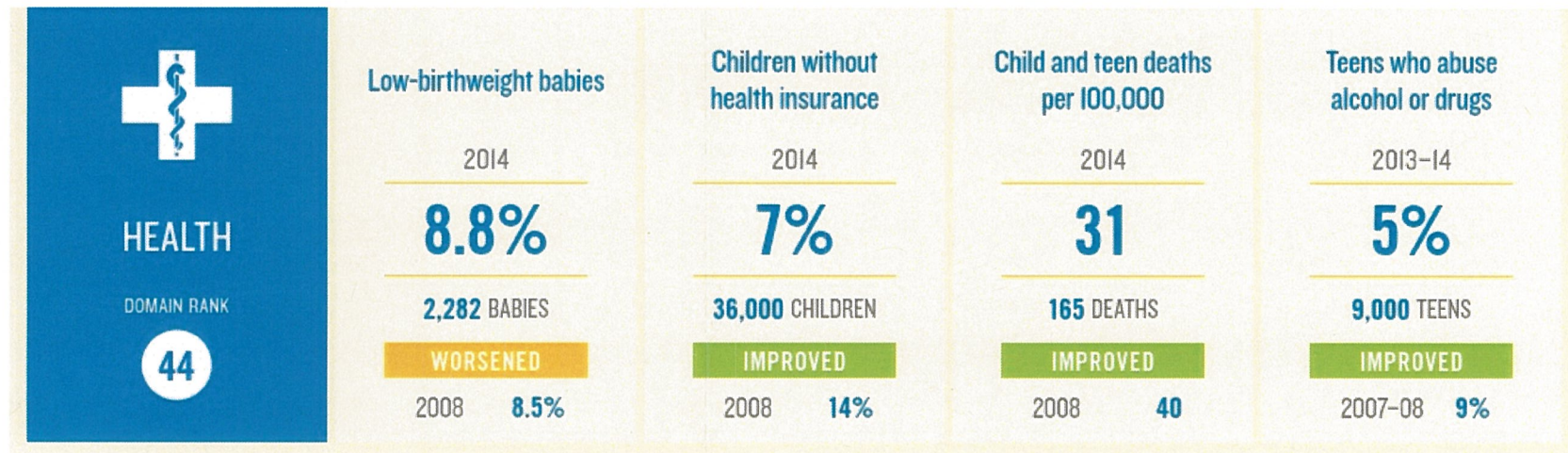
## Fourth Graders Who Scored Below Proficient in Reading by Family Income



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2013

# Health of kids in NM

There are significant improvements in both the short- and long-term.



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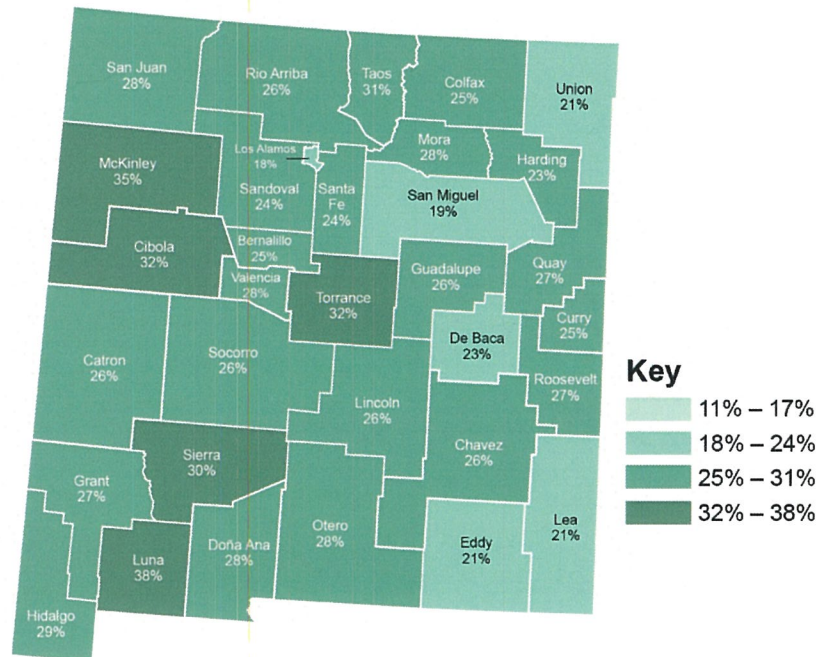
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# Too many New Mexico kids don't have enough to eat

27% of New Mexico's children are food insecure, 2<sup>nd</sup> highest rate in US

Percentage of children who are food insecure (2013)



Source: *Map the Meal Gap*, Feeding America, 2015 [www.nmvoices.org](http://www.nmvoices.org)

# SNAP benefits are not adequate to address food insecurity



80% of SNAP benefits are used up within the first half of the month

Exhaustion of SNAP benefits at the end of the month decreases test scores



Very low-income New Mexicans not receiving SNAP spend **\$215 million** a year on groceries



Low-income\* New Mexicans miss, on average, **3 meals per week**

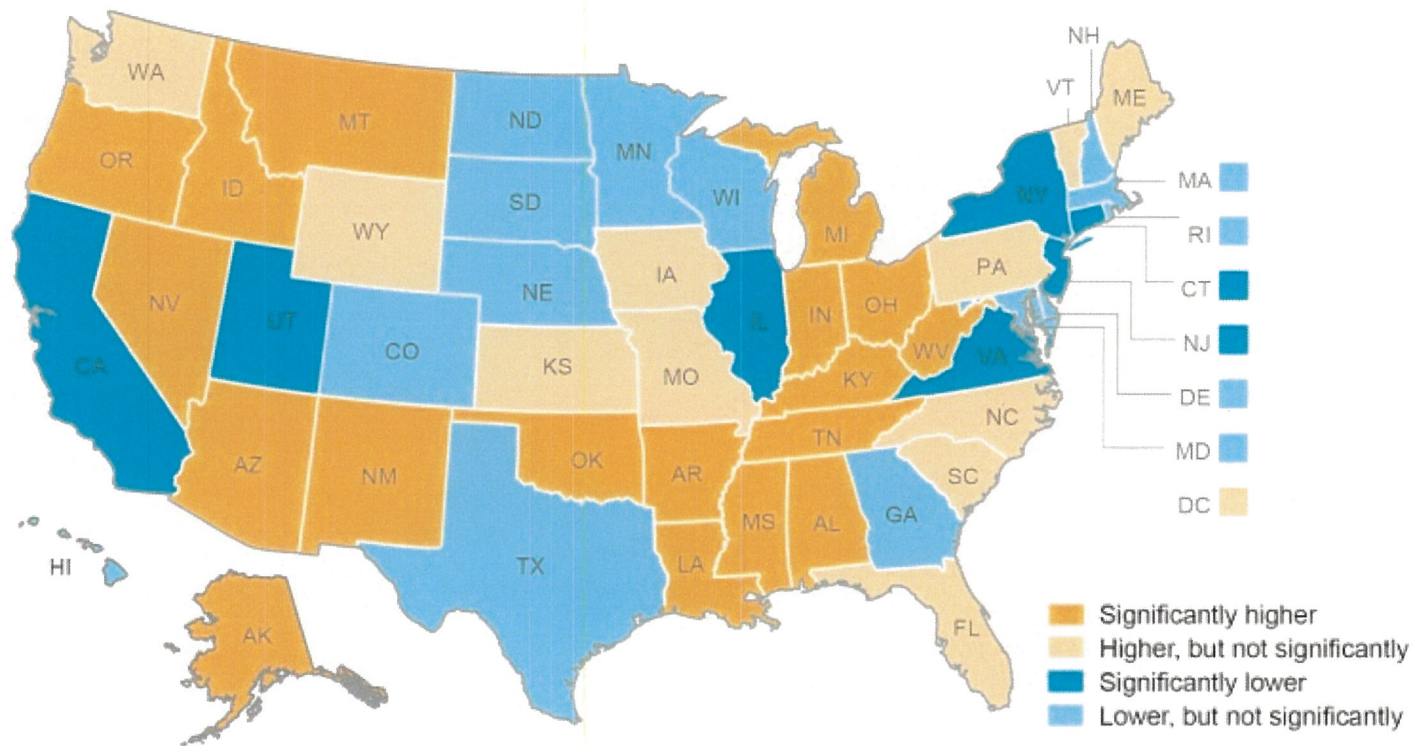


\*\$31,244 for a family of 3 (185% of FPL)



# Most NM children experience trauma

Percentage of Children Who Have Experienced at Least Two Traumas,  
Compared to the National Average



Source: *Health Affairs*, as reported in *The Atlantic*, Dec. 11, 2013

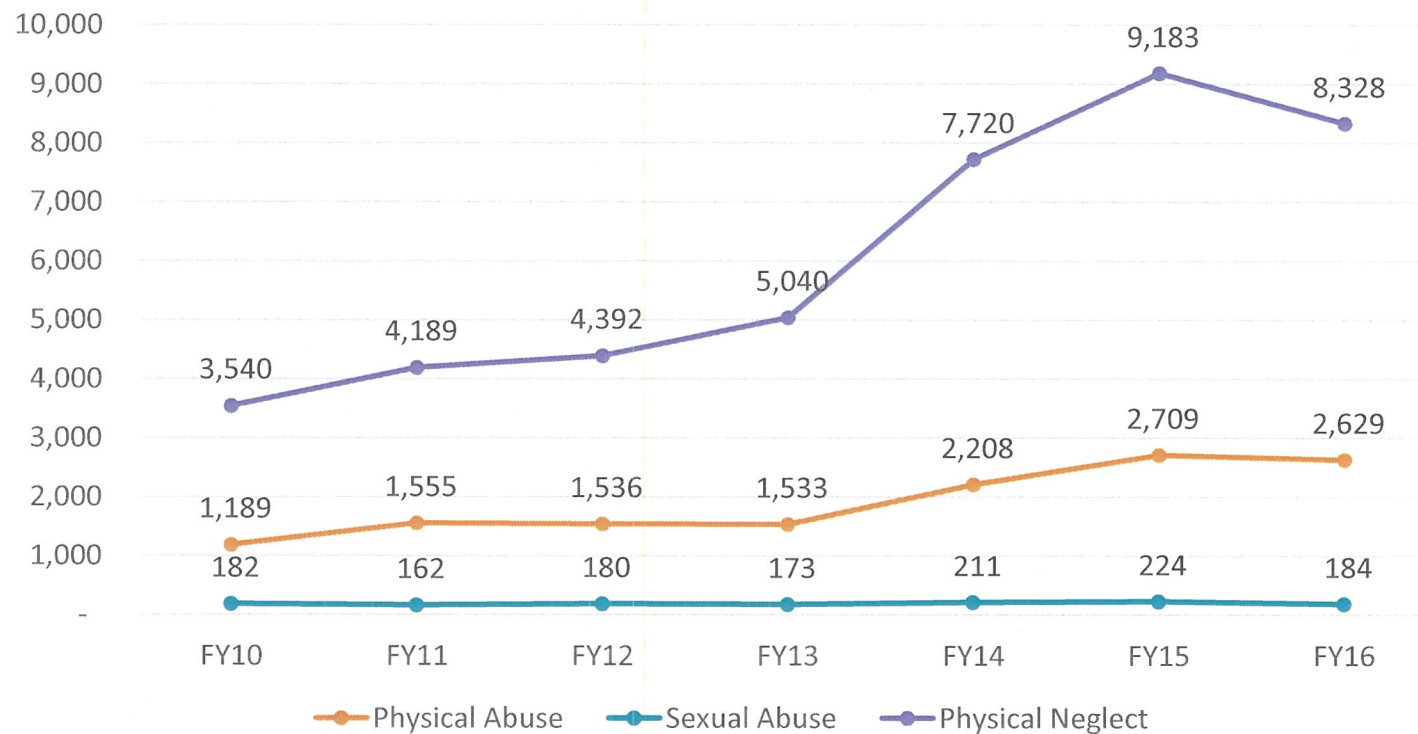
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# Too many NM kids experience abuse

Substantiated Cases of Maltreatment in NM Over Time



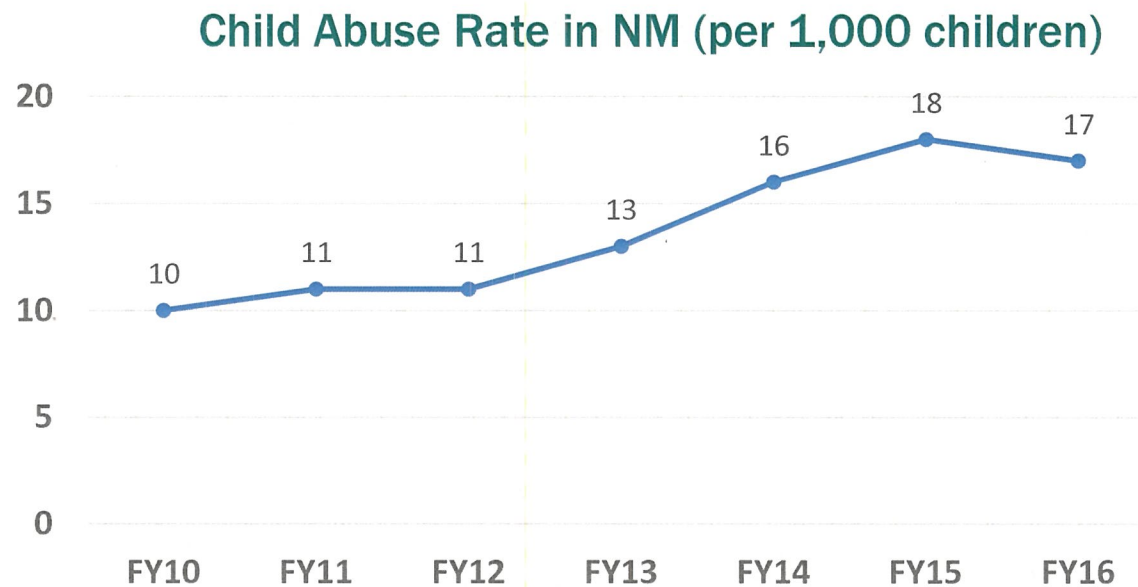
Source: NM CYFD, Protective Services, 360 Yearly Report, FY16

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NEW MEXICO  
**VOICES**  
FOR CHILDREN



# Abuse has increased over time



- Caseworker turnover rates of 30%
- 12% of victims subject to additional abuse within 6 months

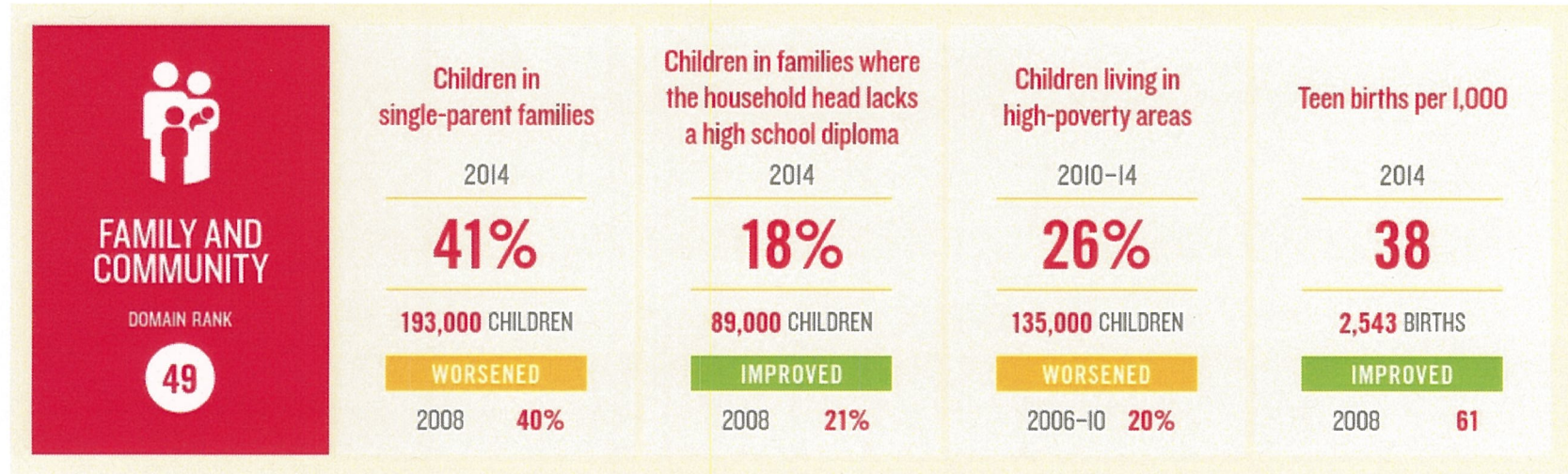
Source: NM CYFD, Protective Services, 360 Yearly Report, FY16, and FY16 Q4  
Performance Measures Report

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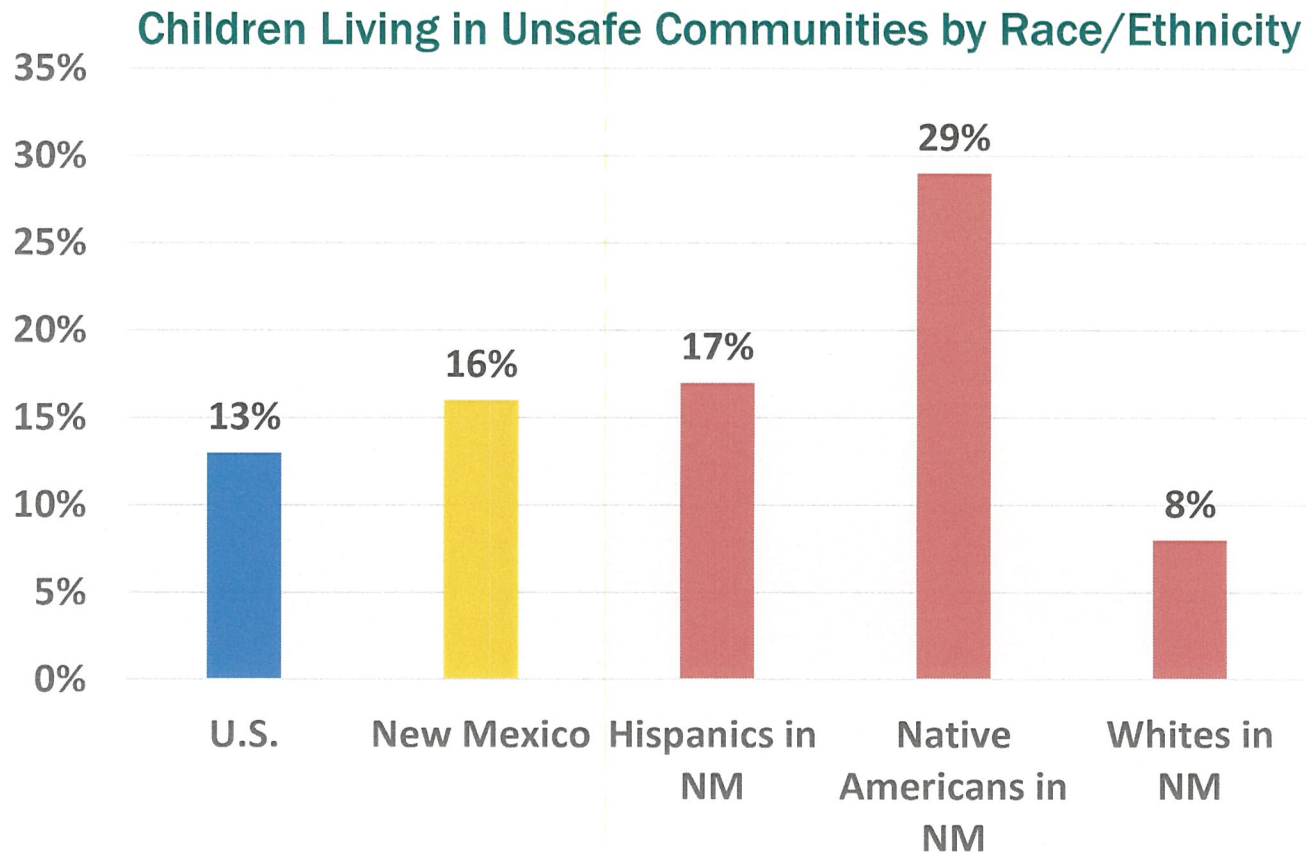
# Family and community well-being for kids in NM

Short-term trends are positive, but long-term trends are mixed.





# Too many NM kids live in unsafe places



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, National Survey of Children's Health, 2012  
[www.nmvoices.org](http://www.nmvoices.org)

# Disparities exist in every indicator

Indicator	Hispanic	Native American	White, non-Hispanic
Children in Poverty	34%	44%	15%
Young Children Not in School	64%	53%	56%
4th Graders Not Reading Proficient	83%	90%	61%
8th Graders Not Math Proficient	84%	88%	65%
Children Experienced Two or More ACEs	29%	31%	22%
Child Maltreatment (per 1,000 kids)	15	12	14



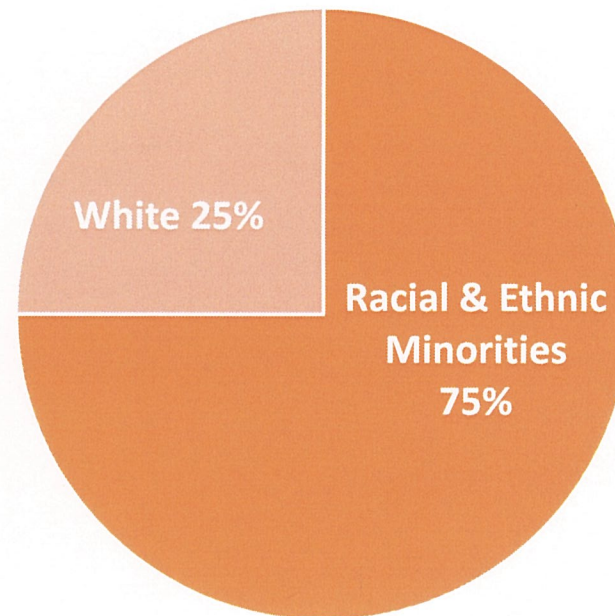
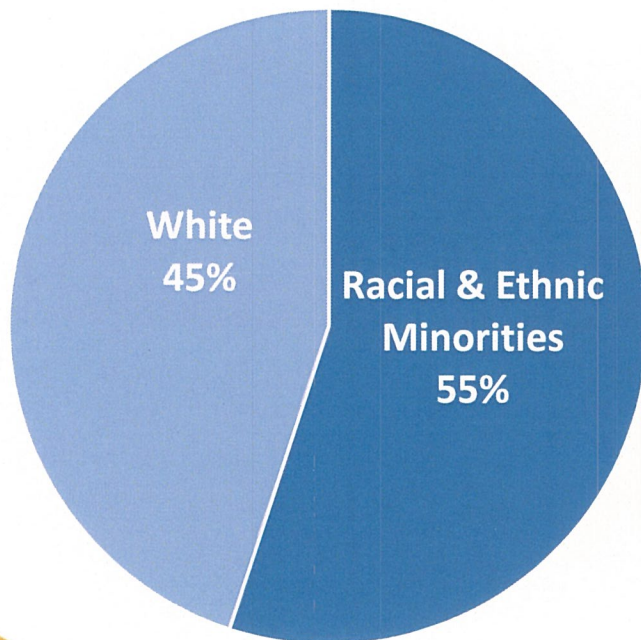


# NM is ahead of the demographic trend

## Child Population by Race and Ethnicity

United States, 2030

New Mexico, 2014





# Nobody likes to hear the bad news, but there's good news too

Research shows that policy matters, and that positive and comprehensive support systems lead to:

- Better health outcomes
- Lower rates of food insecurity
- Lower rates of child maltreatment
- Better test scores
- Higher graduation rates
- Cost savings in remedial education



# Progress IS possible

## And we're making some important gains

- 74,000 more NMs have health insurance this year as compared to last
- Since 2010, nearly 5,000 more NM kids gained access to pre-K
- 2,000 more NM families receive home visiting
- Big improvements in teen drug use and birth rates



# How we got here

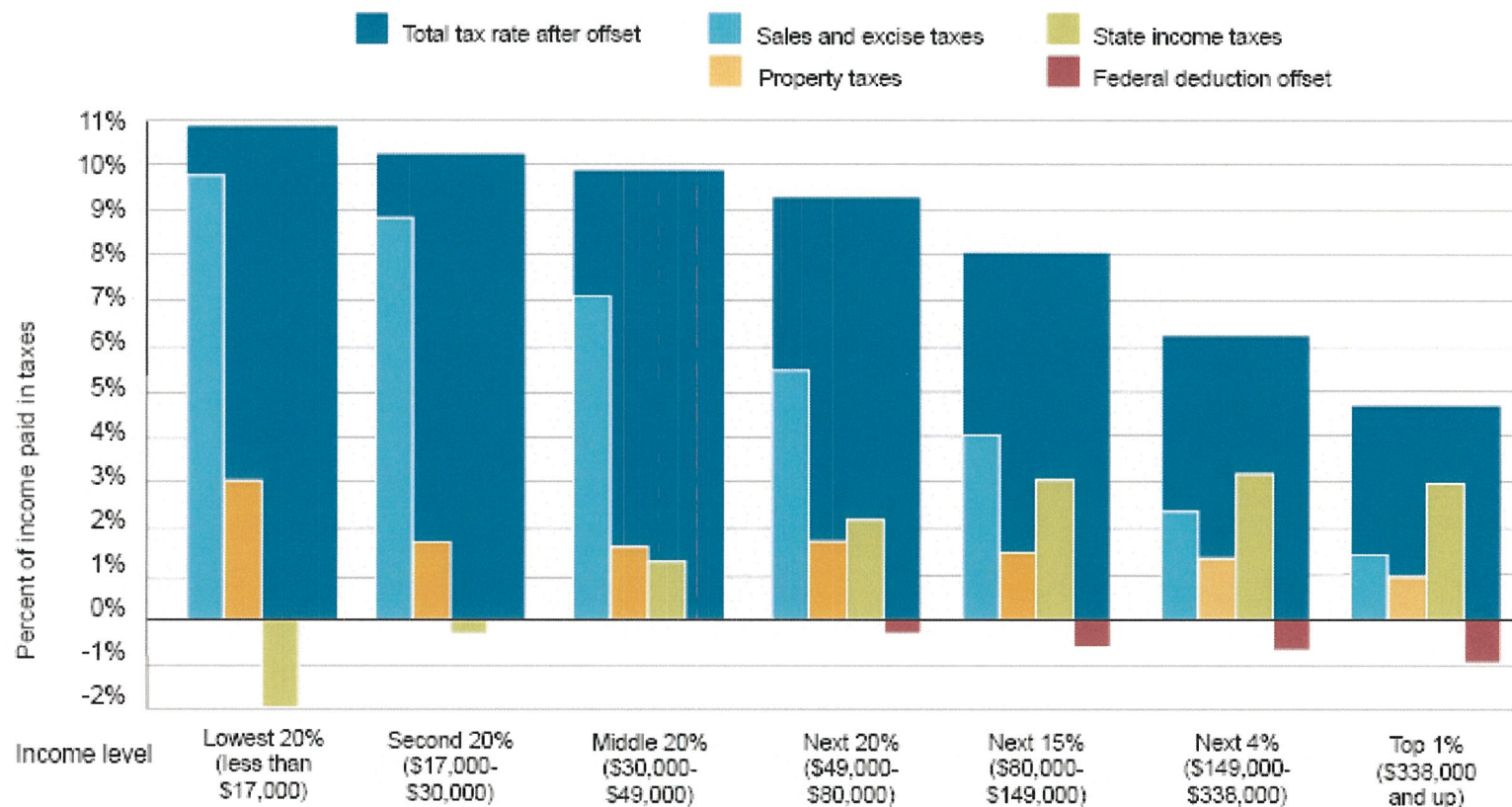
- 10.7% cut in per-pupil K-12 spending from 2008-2014
- 30% cut in per-pupil higher education spending, leading to steep tuition increases
- Cuts to special education funding, resulting in an even greater loss of federal dollars for special education
- Fewer children have access to preschool programs now than in 2010
- Enrollment in child care assistance has dropped by 30% since 2010
- Cut U.I. benefits, including the increment for children of unemployed workers
- \$400 M in planned cuts to the Medicaid program in this fiscal year
- Tax cuts have made our tax system even more regressive and we have less revenue available for essential services





# Our tax system asks the most of those who can afford it least

NM Families with the lowest incomes pay the highest rates in state and local taxes



Source: *Who Pays?*, Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, 2015

# Make children a priority in *all* policy

- Adopt the ***Campaign for a Better New Mexico*** or develop your own Children's Agenda
- Legislature could appoint and empower a Children's Council similar to the Jobs Council
- The Executive should kickstart the Children's Cabinet
- Fully fund ECE, K-12, higher education, and Medicaid



# Improve our tax system

*Child poverty is a longstanding pervasive issue and we need a set of targeted initiatives to end child poverty*

- NM's tax system is grossly unfair to working families
- 75% of families pay more than **double** what the richest families pay in state and local taxes as a share of their incomes
- Our tax policy has been driven by a false promise to create jobs, but has made it harder for kids and families to succeed





# The Earned Income Tax Credit and NM's Working Families Tax Credit

- EITC injects \$500 million into NM economy
- NM's Working Families Tax Credit returns \$50 million to working families
- 97% goes to working families with kids
- Without these 2 credits, 40,000 *more* NM families would be in poverty
- If tax reform is debated, lawmakers should consider increasing the WFTC to at least 15% of the federal EITC

*"The best anti-poverty, the best pro-family,  
the best job creation measure to come out of Congress."*

- Ronald Reagan on the EITC



# Raise new revenue to avoid more harmful budget cuts

- Freeze the big corporate tax cut
- Enact combined reporting of all corporate taxes
- Repeal the Capital Gains tax break
- Enact a new PIT increase or surtax on high incomes
- Enact a new health care provider assessment fee
- Raise tobacco and alcohol taxes
- Repeal ineffective or wasteful tax breaks
- Tax internet sales



# Big impact/no cost initiatives

## *No cost to the general fund*

- Increase the Minimum Wage
- Make college affordable
- Expand paid sick leave & family medical leave
- End predatory lending practices like payday, car title, rent-to-own and tax refund lending by capping interest rates at 36%
- Invest a fraction of the Land Grant Permanent Fund in early care and education





# Early care and education

- Current funding is serving only a fraction of our eligible children
- Eligibility for Child Care Assistance is below 2001 levels (child care costs more than tuition at UNM)
- Enrollment in Child Care Assistance is 30% **lower** than it was in 2010...500 more families have **lost** child care since the Governor announced in April that she was **expanding** eligibility.
- NM needs a strong commitment to ECE and a stable and robust source of funding



# Fully fund early childhood care and learning programs

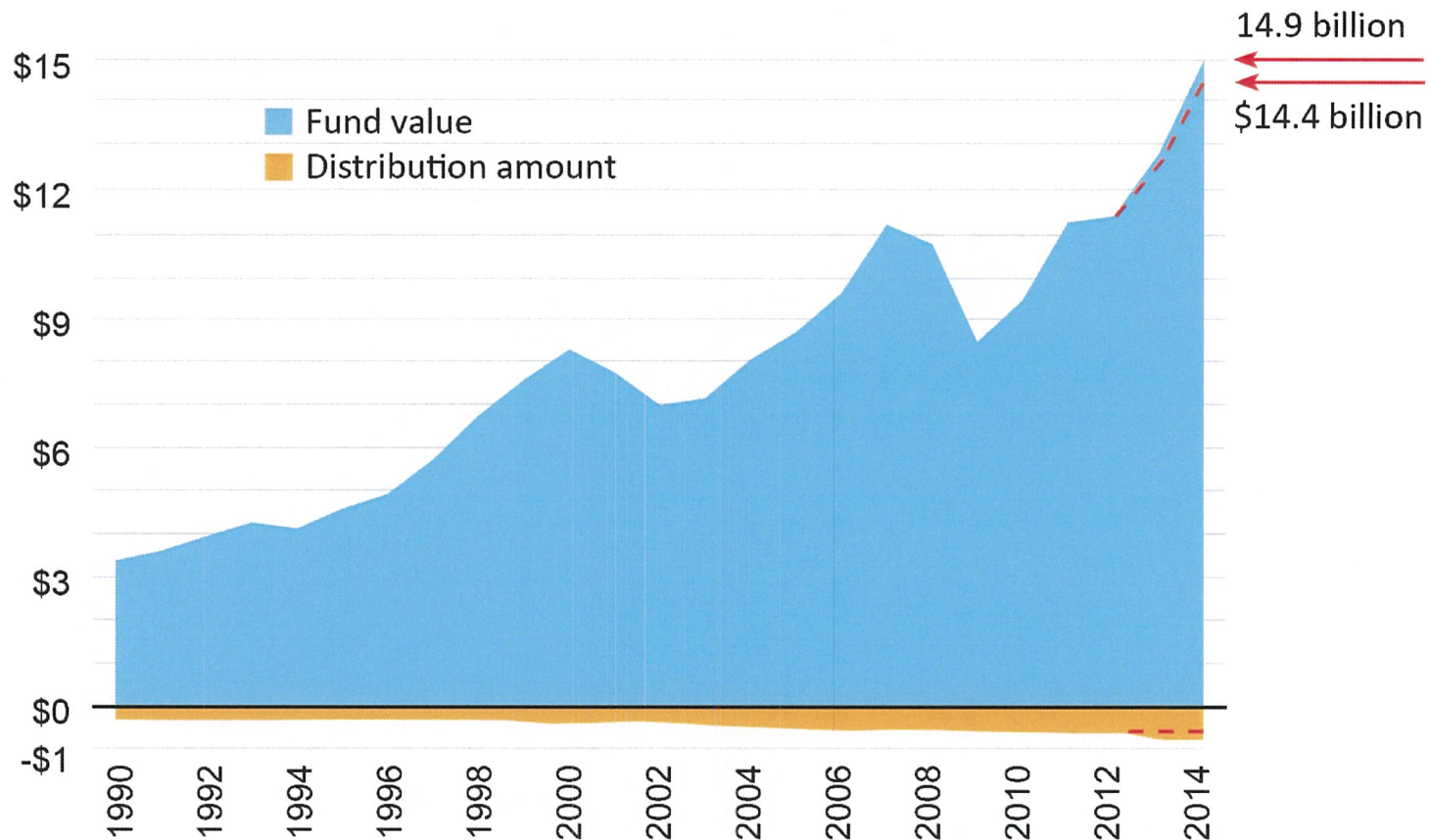
Invest 1.5% of \$15 billion LGPF

- Would fund home visiting, child care assistance, NM pre-K, and workforce development
- A dedicated, adequate, stable funding source
- Does not raise taxes
- LGPF will continue to grow
- ECE provides better ROI than the stock market



# Our Permanent Fund is robust

Value of the LGPF with and without 1.5% Investment in Early Childhood Services



Sources: State Land Office and Investment Council reports and audits, NM Voices estimates



# Fully fund early childhood care and education programs

## Draw down federal Medicaid funds for home visiting

- Medicaid funds evidence-based model
- Home visiting improves parent involvement in education, and decreases child abuse
- A NM investment of just \$500,000 is matched with \$1.2 million in federal funds
- Legislative appropriation has been vetoed by the governor several times



# Fully fund child abuse prevention

- Prioritize early childhood care and education
- Add ACEs screening to EPSDT
- Reduce child protective services vacancy rate
- Ensure adequate compensation and ongoing, extensive training for caseworkers
- Restore and increase behavioral health services for families




# Medicaid and SNAP

- Maximize enrollment in all federally funded health and nutrition programs
- Simplify enrollment and recertification
- Implement express lane eligibility
- Expand outreach efforts especially to women of child-bearing age to assure healthy births







**We're all in this  
together.**