



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
Aging & Long-Term Services
Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham
Katrina Hotrum-Lopez, Cabinet Secretary

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New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department celebrates Senior Nutrition Month

March 2023 marks the 51st anniversary of the Senior Nutrition Program

SANTA FE New Mexico's Aging and Long-Term Services Department (ALTSD), the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and Senior Services Providers across the state are dedicated to addressing the importance of senior nutrition.

March 2023 marks the 51st anniversary of the Administration for Community Living's Senior Nutrition Program. The Senior Nutrition program has been helping seniors reach healthy lifestyles since 1972. Funded by the Older Americans Act and largely state general funds (?), senior nutrition programs have been providing nutritious meals and other services to seniors (60 and older) for over five decades. These programs provide social connections and promote a healthy lifestyle for seniors.

Millions of seniors across America do not have the nutrition they need. According to Feeding America, in 2020, 5.2 million seniors in the U.S. were food insecure. One in 5 adults age 65 or older faced hunger in 2020. New Mexico's older adult population's health and nutrition continues to be a n overarching goal for ALTSD, the aging network and Senior Service programs. New Mexico aging network provides warm meals, community events, and health and wellness activities, for access to a sponsored site, older adults can call Metro AAA, Non-Metro AAA, or the ALTSD Aging and Disability Resource Center (1-800-432-2080). Bringing the community together through meals and events are some of the benefits at local senior centers.

"Access to nutritious meals is very important for our older adults, especially those combating chronic health diseases," said ALTSD's Aging Network Director, **Denise King**. "Many seniors rely on the meal they receive at senior centers to help fill in the gap brought on by food deserts and food insecurities. The rise in food costs has made it even more difficult for older adults on fixed incomes to afford their necessities. Now more than ever the senior nutrition programs are essential for the well-being of our older adults and their families."

In collaboration with the Governor's office, the Children's Cabinet, and other state agencies, ALTSD's nutritional efforts focus on high quality food initiatives, prioritizing locally sourced produce. ALTSD and their state and local partners remind everyone that continuing with smart, healthy habits and nutrition, year-round, plays a vital role in keeping New Mexico at its best.

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About NM Grown: NM Grown: The NM Grown for Senior Meals was established to integrate local produce into senior meal programs and link farmers to senior centers. NM Grown vision: We envision a strong collaboration among state agencies and local providers to integrate fresh NM Grown foods into all state

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nutrition programs using a standard system that seamlessly supports local purchasing for schools, senior centers, and early childhood education sites.

The State of New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department [ALTSD] serves more than 200,000 seniors, adults with disabilities, and caregivers across the state with support, services, and resources. ALTSD and that aging network provided more than 3.5 million meals to seniors and adults with disabilities. With a dedicated staff and the help of 2,185 senior volunteers, the department strives to help thousands of New Mexicans achieve healthy aging, attain lifelong independence, and maintain their dignity.

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