

Foundations in New Mexico Support Bipartisan Call for Home Visiting

As the New Mexico Legislature convenes at the Roundhouse for its 30-day session, the debates will be heated and contentious. However, amidst the arguments, agreement has emerged. Democrats and Republicans, legislators and Governor Susana Martinez all agree on one thing: children, families and taxpayers need and deserve high-quality home visiting services. Foundations, philanthropists and businesses from across New Mexico stand in strong support of investing early in the lives of New Mexico's children.

New Mexico cannot wait to ensure a better future for its children and ultimately a more robust economy for all its citizens. Research on child and brain development is clear: the earlier we invest, the greater our returns will be. That is the reason our foundations invest private dollars in early childhood and specifically in quality home visiting programs.

Foundations in New Mexico have partnered with the State of New Mexico for generations. Often, philanthropy can support innovation and research that government cannot. However, because limited philanthropic resources are not enough to fully meet the needs of the communities we serve, it is essential for New Mexico's foundations to partner with the state.

Like legislators concerned about tax dollars, foundations prioritize investments in successful programs. Based upon the evidence from New Mexico and nationally, we know accountable home visiting programs are effective. Home visiting programs are voluntary and provide families with the tools they need to raise healthy, emotionally secure children.

In 2013, Governor Martinez and a bipartisan group of legislators passed the Home Visiting Accountability Act. Under this law, home visiting programs receiving state funding meet specific outcomes and provide proof of effectiveness. According to recent research conducted in New Mexico, home visiting programs have positive benefits including greater access to treatment for postpartum depression for new moms, increased vaccination rates for kids, and fewer emergency room visits. A small investment on the front end will reduce costly services for children and families in the long run.

In a continued show of bipartisan support for home visiting, both the Governor and the legislature have proposed increasing support for the programs. Governor Martinez has proposed increased funding for public awareness of the state's early childhood programs, including home visiting. The Legislative Finance Committee is calling for an increase in the number of available slots in the state's home visiting programs.

Child poverty is a real problem in New Mexico. While New Mexicans differ on how to fund education and children's programs, we universally agree on their importance. Our foundations applaud both the Governor and the Legislature for recognizing the proven value of home visiting to our state's families. We support New Mexico's leaders' complementary proposals to increase awareness of and access to accountable home visiting programs.

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