ENSURING EVERY CHILD IN SANTA FE HAS ACCESS TO SUFFICIENT AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD
REPORT TO THE MAYOR

ENSURING EVERY CHILD IN SANTA FE HAS ACCESS TO SUFFICIENT AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD

The Task Force to Recommend How to Prevent Childhood Hunger
Convened by Sherry Hooper, Executive Director, The Food Depot

Scott Bunton
Gerry Fairbrother, PhD
Carolyn Kastner
David Sundberg

Special Thanks for Research and Resource Contributions

Elizabeth Allen
Amelia Linett
Pam Roy
Dr. Bret Smoker
Carrie Thielen
Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................................. 3

SECTION I: How Many Children In Santa Fe Experience Hunger During Any Twelve-Month Period? ................................................................................................................................. 4

SECTION II: Why Do A Significant Number Of Children In Santa Fe Experience Hunger? ................................................................................................................................................. 5

SECTION III: Why Do A Significant Proportion Of Families In Santa Fe Lack Sufficient Resources To Meet Their Essential Needs, Including Food? ........................................ 6

SECTION IV: Why Haven’t The Array Of Federal And State Anti-Hunger Programs Eliminated Childhood Hunger In Santa Fe? ............................................................................... 10

SECTION V: This Task Force Recommends To The City Of Santa Fe And Santa Fe County A Work-Based Approach To Eliminate Childhood Hunger By Eliminating Family Income And Resource Insufficiency ........................................ 14

SECTION VI: What Can Be Done To Reduce Childhood Hunger As Much As Possible Until The Recommended Plan To Eliminate Income Insufficiency Is Implemented? ........................................................................................................ 20

Appendix A. Definitions ............................................................................................................................................. 28

Appendix B. Measurable Benefits We Studied In The U.S. And Around The World ......................................................................................................................................................... 30

   New Directions in US Public Policy ................................................................................................. 30

   Learning from Other Nations ........................................................................................................... 32

   Three Cash Transfer Models .......................................................................................................... 34

   A Local Program of Cash Support for Families ............................................................................. 34

   A Federal Universal Child Tax Credit .............................................................................................. 35

   A Measured and Standard Living Wage ........................................................................................... 36

Appendix C. Santa Fe Basic Needs Budget ............................................................................................... 38

Appendix D. Report Task Force Members ............................................................................................ 39
“There’s an enormous issue in New Mexico around poverty as a root cause for a lot of social issues.” Mayor Alan Webber, October 22, 2021

INTRODUCTION

Throughout its existence, The Food Depot, northern New Mexico’s food bank, has sought to partner and collaborate with government agencies and other nonprofit organizations working to feed hungry people in its area, and particularly to reduce Santa Fe’s alarmingly high rate of childhood food insecurity and hunger. Yet it was abundantly clear in 2020, before the arrival of COVID-19, that current efforts and approaches by all levels of government and community organizations were unable to eliminate hunger in our area. Executive Director Sherry Hooper welcomed Mayor Alan Webber’s 2020 request for a plan to eliminate childhood hunger in Santa Fe, encouraged that elected officials at the highest level of the city government were expressing a desire to resolve this tragic problem. Hooper responded by assembling a volunteer group of food and anti-hunger policy advocates and experts, The Task Force to Recommend How to Prevent Childhood Hunger, to examine the dimensions of the problem and determine how to eliminate it and prevent its recurrence.

For more than a year we have focused our research and discussions on successful models that have achieved rates of child hunger significantly lower than Santa Fe’s. The findings and recommendations of our report reflect the elements of successful efforts in other nations as well as those undertaken by some state and local governments in the United States.

Although the request was to address childhood hunger in the city of Santa Fe, the city limits are completely porous: many Santa Fe County residents obtain some or all their food in the city, and, when they face a shortage of food, often seek help from sources in the city. So, the report examines the problem as it is faced by both the city and the county, and we address its recommendations to both jurisdictions. When the report uses the term “Santa Fe,” it refers to both the city and the county unless it specifies otherwise.

This report describes the extent of childhood hunger in Santa Fe, establishes the contributing factors that produce that hunger, and proposes a way to eliminate those factors in order to ensure that all children in Santa Fe have access to sufficient nutritious food to maintain their health and their normal growth and development. We believe many Santa Fe citizens do not know the extent of hunger among our children and that upon learning, they will devote the attention, political will, and financial investment necessary to end that hunger. Accordingly, our report not only contains a set of ambitious proposals that will be sufficient if implemented effectively to end childhood hunger in Santa Fe, but also includes proposed intermediate actions, pending implementation of the primary recommendations, which can be taken to realize reductions in childhood hunger. These important intermediate actions include both new efforts and ways to increase the reach
and effectiveness of existing programs that ameliorate hunger among Santa Fe’s children but lack the ability to end it.

Our recommendations are intended and designed to eliminate childhood hunger in our community. We recognize that raising children is difficult and requires sufficient resources. We believe this Plan will increase equity by ensuring the availability of the essential ingredients for healthy childhoods, notably including sufficient nutritious food. If fully implemented, it will improve social justice within our community.

SECTION I: HOW MANY CHILDREN IN SANTA FE EXPERIENCE HUNGER DURING ANY TWELVE-MONTH PERIOD?

The rates of childhood food insecurity in our area are painfully high (defining food insecurity as limited or uncertain access to adequate food). These high rates exist despite the relative wealth of Santa Fe, and even though several layers of government and non-profit organizations in the area are making extensive efforts to ensure that children will not be hungry. The natural and frequent end-product of food insecurity is the physically harmful, psychologically challenging, and persistently stressful state of hunger.

Food insecurity in New Mexico is consistently higher than in most other states. The food insecurity rate for Santa Fe County overall is 10.6 percent, or 15,980 persons. Of that number, the New Mexico Human Services Department reports that 4,670 or 17 percent of Santa Fe’s children under age 18 repeatedly experience food insecurity. But the problem of childhood hunger in Santa Fe is not limited to a static and identified group of almost 5,000 specific children. Hunger generally occurs episodically as a family’s fortunes and circumstances wax and wane. Ergo, eliminating childhood hunger will involve preventing well more than 5,000 children from going hungry who otherwise would experience hunger during any period of weeks, months, or years.

In some areas, even when children have access to several types of food, it may not meet basic nutritional standards. Fresh produce often is not accessible within a mile of where significant populations of children live in Santa Fe. According to Santa Fe public health records, 33.7 percent of Santa Fe citizens lack easy access to healthy

---

and nutritious food, particularly fresh fruits and vegetables and protein sources. The percentage is even higher for Santa Fe County at 56 percent. The problem is intensified by public transportation that does not offer direct routes between neighborhoods and grocery stores.

SECTION II: WHY DO A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN SANTA FE EXPERIENCE HUNGER?

Childhood hunger is not a discrete, free-standing social problem. Nor does it suddenly and mysteriously materialize out of nowhere. Not surprisingly, then, it cannot be solved by focusing sufficient resources and attention specifically and solely to:

- determine who is hungry and when they are hungry; and
- either purchase and provide enough food to satisfy the nutritional needs of those who are hungry when they are hungry, or provide sufficient financial assistance so those who are hungry can obtain enough food to meet their nutritional needs.

Such an approach cannot succeed because food insecurity and hunger are symptoms of a larger problem, which is income and resource insufficiency – poverty. If a family lacks the income and financial resources to meet all its basic living requirements, it is very likely to suffer from having insufficient food, especially nutritious foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables. The other side of the same coin is that the problem of a family's food insecurity and hunger will not be reliably resolved unless it has the income and financial resources to meet all its basic living requirements, including food. It is impossible to separate food insecurity and hunger from income and resource insufficiency, or to succeed in preventing the problem of hunger for a family without resolving the broader, underlying problem of poverty.

Because childhood food insecurity is a byproduct of family income and resource insufficiency, the high rate of childhood food insecurity in Santa Fe is not surprising in light of the fact that 18.3 percent of Santa Fe County’s children – almost 6,000 children – live below the “poverty level” as defined by the federal government, which is such a low income level that families that fall below it essentially live in a state of serious deprivation. New Mexico has the highest poverty rate for children of all the 50 states and ranks near the bottom on every international indicator of child well-being among wealthy nations.

---

Many Santa Feans are hungry at any given time or suffer from malnutrition because they temporarily or chronically lack the financial resources to meet their basic human needs that include housing, utilities, health care, transportation, and nutritious food. Further, many also lack access to sources of affordable, nutritious food. This is despite the fact that, in the U.S., and specifically in Santa Fe, there is no shortage of food; the issue lies in the lack of access due in large part to poverty.

Mayor Webber addressed this issue directly in October 2021 when he said:

“We need to think more and more inclusively about the root causes of some of our social problems, and then solutions that address those root causes. ... There’s an enormous issue in New Mexico around poverty as a root cause for a lot of social issues.”

Mayor Webber’s succinct, incisive comment absolutely applies to the problem of childhood hunger, as well as to what is necessary to solve it. It is imperative that those who sincerely want to eliminate childhood hunger recognize and accept the reality that, first, in the great majority of cases food insecurity and hunger are symptoms of poverty, and, second, that any efforts to prevent hunger that fail to remove the underlying cause — poverty — and only immediately relieve hunger will fail to end it.

SECTION III: WHY DO A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF FAMILIES IN SANTA FE LACK SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO MEET THEIR ESSENTIAL NEEDS, INCLUDING FOOD?

The data previously presented confirm that a considerable proportion of Santa Fe families lacks the income and financial resources to meet all their essential needs. Why is this the case? The short answer is that too many Santa Fe residents have insufficient income to meet their basic human needs and those of their children. A key contributor to this problem is the fact that the wage paid to too many workers in Santa Fe is not a “living wage” that will meet the basic needs of a family with children.

Although Santa Fe has a proud identity as a diverse and compassionate community, and once was a national leader in establishing a “living wage” that improved the standard of living and reduced hunger in the city, during the past decade Santa Fe has not kept pace with our aspirations to be a just and equitable community.

To assess the adequacy of Santa Fe wages, we drew upon the research of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Living Wage Calculator, which is supported by an annual survey in every county in the U.S. MIT calculates geographically-specific costs a family must pay to

---

7 The Santa Fe New Mexican, “The Mayoral Q&A,” October 22, 2021. Edited answers from each of the three candidates for mayor of Santa Fe to questions posed to them by contributing writer Emma Meyers.
meet the basic needs of food, child care, health insurance and health care, housing, utilities, transportation, and personal necessities such as clothing. A “living wage” is then calculated based on the actual market cost of living for families of various sizes. We discuss and address the needs of a family of three in this report because that is the average family size in Santa Fe. The MIT model computes the 2021 “living wage” needed by families of three in Santa Fe according to the number of children, the number of adults, and the number of working adults in a family. We have averaged the “living wage” computed for the three different compositions of families of three to arrive at a “living wage” for a representative Santa Fe family of three: $57,583 a year.9

Living Wage Calculation for Santa Fe County, New Mexico

The living wage shown is the hourly rate that an individual in a household must earn to support his or herself and their family. The assumption is the sole provider is working full-time (2,080 hours per year). The tool provides information for the average family in Santa Fe, which is three persons as calculated in the columns: One adult with 2 children, 2 Adults (one working) with 1 child, or 2 Adults (both working) with 1 child. In the case of households with two working adults, all values are per working adult, single or in a family unless otherwise noted.

The state minimum wage is the same for all individuals, regardless of how many dependents they may have. Data are updated annually, in the first quarter of the new year. State minimum wages are determined based on the posted value of the minimum wage as of January one of the coming year (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2019). The poverty rate reflects a person’s gross annual income. We have converted it to an hourly wage for the sake of comparison. For further detail, please reference the technical documentation at https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/35049.


---


9 The MIT living wage calculator estimates the pay rate a single parent with two children living in Santa Fe needs to receive in order to have a “living wage” is $36.90 per hour, based on costs surveyed in 2021. Using the same costs, a family of three with two working adults requires $16.63 per hour per adult, while a family of three (two adults and one child) with only one working adult requires $29.46 per hour. The Child Hunger Relief Task Force uses in this report an average of these wage amounts for the three different types of three-person families -- $27.66 -- and recommends this amount as the basis for an increased minimum wage. MIT Living Wage Calculator, accessed January 9, 2022. https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/35049
The stark reality of the income necessary to meet just the essential expenses of a family of three in Santa Fe is demonstrated by the budget available in Appendix C. It is designed to demonstrate the hard choices families must make when allocating a limited income to essential expenses in Santa Fe, such as food, housing, medical insurance, and child care.

It is useful to compare the amount of the MIT “living wage” to other computations of income adequacy and inadequacy in order to grasp its implications. The federally-defined “poverty level” – $21,960 a year for a family of three in 2021-2022 – is approximately 38 percent of the market-based MIT “living wage.” Income at the federal “poverty level” has been shown by other researchers, not just those at MIT, to be insufficient to pay all a family’s essential expenses, especially in a community like Santa Fe that lacks enough low- and modest-income housing and where housing costs therefore are notably higher than in many other locations (46 percent of Santa Fe renters and 26 percent of homeowners pay 30 percent or more of their incomes for housing) and where other essential expenditures such as those for food are higher than the national average. The federal “poverty level” would be better termed the “abject poverty level,” and, as noted previously, it should be understood that a family or individual with income at or below the federal poverty level is living in a state of serious deprivation, frequently or chronically lacking access to goods and services – notably food – that most residents of Santa Fe would characterize as essential or crucial for living in our city in 2022.

Two primary obstacles prevent families from having sufficient income and resources to pay all essential expenses:

- First, many breadwinners currently have dependable, full-time, private sector or regular government employment but their low wages provide insufficient income to enable them to pay their families’ essential expenses in Santa Fe.
- Second, there are families in which no adult currently is working full time. In some of those, various disabilities or barriers prevent the adult(s) from obtaining or holding full-time employment. In others, the breadwinners have been laid off from full-time employment, are unable to find new jobs, and have exhausted any unemployment insurance benefits for which they qualify.

Despite the minimum wage of $15.00 per hour recently adopted for City of Santa Fe employees, workers in the private sector are still governed by the ordinance that requires only $12.95 per hour – increased to that level on March 1, 2022 – which cannot be called a “living wage,” particularly when applied to breadwinners for families with children. The

---


11 The U.S. Census Bureau reported the median sales price of new houses sold in the U.S. in November 2021 was $416,900. The median price for a single-family home sold in Santa Fe in the fourth quarter of 2021 was $535,000. The price is even higher across Santa Fe County, including in the city. That number hit a record $607,500, 13 percent higher than a year ago, according to data from the Santa Fe Association of Realtors. County areas surrounding the city saw a 23 percent home price hike to $746,000.

$12.95 minimum wage, received 40 hours a week for 50 weeks a year, yields an annual before-tax income of $25,900, which is not only grossly insufficient to cover the costs of basic human needs for all members of a three-person family in Santa Fe per the MIT “living wage,” but also exceeds the very low federal poverty level of $21,960 for a family of three by only 18 percent. Even if there are two adults in a family of three and both work at Santa Fe’s minimum wage 40 hours a week for 50 weeks a year, their total pre-tax income will be $51,800, only 90 percent of the MIT “living wage.” Two other statistics are pertinent reference points: While the median individual income in Santa Fe is $57,972, 42 percent or 64,000 of the county’s residents earn less than $50,000 a year.

Santa Fe wages now lag behind those paid in a number of other cities and states, both nationally and internationally. In addition, the social programs made available to residents by the federal or state government are much less extensive and provide fewer essential services to families free of charge or subsidized than those provided by many other wealthy nations. U.S. families therefore must purchase services with their own resources that already are insufficient.

The contrast is conspicuous in comparison to almost all other wealthy nations, including every other member of the G-7 (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom), as well as most other nations of the European Union, Australia, and New Zealand. The support these nations provide to families commonly includes paid healthcare, child care, maternal and paternal leave for the parents of newborn or newly adopted children, parental leave when children are sick, and various cash benefits for children and their parents.

The nations achieving the lowest child poverty rates provide a range of universal benefits to families with children. Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom all provide non-means-tested cash grants to all families with children regardless of family income and the employment status of family adults. These nations also offer universal health care programs and high-quality childcare and early childhood education that are heavily subsidized and thus low-cost. The result is that families with children in these countries fare better than comparable families in the U.S. because they are required to spend less out-of-pocket than their U.S. counterparts to pay for critical supports for child

---

development. These programs recognize that child rearing is difficult and expensive, and that societal support of all children yields a valuable public benefit.\(^\text{17}\)

Even within the U.S., the adequacy of New Mexico’s wages, educational opportunities, and availability of food for children ranked at the bottom among the 50 states in 2020 – fiftieth regarding childhood hunger, and forty-eighth when considering several categories that together provide a composite picture of child well-being.\(^\text{18}\) Santa Fe’s working families, compared to those in numerous other jurisdictions both in the U.S. and abroad, are caught in an economic vise. They are paid less to begin with, and, because they also receive fewer publicly-financed family services and the costs of some essentials for living are higher than in other places, they must expend a greater proportion of their lower incomes to meet their essential needs. One entirely predictable result is that many of them experience occasional, frequent, or in some cases constant food insecurity or hunger.

In addition to these fundamental problems, as is true in almost all cities and towns around the world, Santa Fe has families in which, because of various disabilities, no adult is able to hold ongoing employment and thus be a regular, dependable breadwinner for the family – and therefore the level of the city’s minimum wage is irrelevant to these families. Wage levels are also immediately immaterial to the adult(s) in many Santa Fe families who are unable to find work. While these families may receive various federal and state benefits, the total amount of the benefits received is rarely sufficient to pay the costs of all their essential needs. The predictable result is that these families experience occasional or constant food insecurity or hunger.

SECTION IV: WHY HAVEN’T THE ARRAY OF FEDERAL AND STATE ANTI-HUNGER PROGRAMS ELIMINATED CHILDHOOD HUNGER IN SANTA FE?

The U.S. government has been operating programs to combat hunger for nearly 90 years – with the first such effort established during the Depression. In the 85 years since, and mostly since President Lyndon B. Johnson initiated his War on Poverty in the 1960s, the federal government has established the National School Lunch Program, the Special Milk Program, the Food Stamp Program (later transformed into the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP), Double Up Food Bucks (DUFB), the School Breakfast Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, the Summer Food Service Program, The Emergency Food Assistance Program


(TEFAP), and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children—widely known as WIC. All these programs except the Depression-era Food Distribution Program remain in operation and have recipients throughout New Mexico. Currently, counting all programs established by the federal government on either a permanent or a temporary basis, 15 nutrition assistance programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service provide assistance to New Mexicans. Every year their benefits reach more than one in four New Mexicans during at least some portion of the year. State and local governments operate some of their own limited food assistance efforts and provide administrative support and supplemental funding for some of the federal programs.

Given this constellation of government food assistance programs and the amount of food and financial ability to purchase food they regularly supply to New Mexicans – with a total value exceeding one billion dollars a year\(^\text{19}\) – it is not illogical to ask why so many of our children are still hungry. The answer is simple: it is not the goal of any of these separate nutrition assistance programs – not even the biggest and most expensive, SNAP – to eliminate hunger. Their disparate eligibility criteria leave numerous populations unprotected. They suffer from the “stove-pipe” effect – each program is designed, then receives and expends funds, to address a particular population and particular situations of hunger and malnutrition. Some of them deliver only certain types of food products – often surplus products the government purchases to support farmers and agri-business.

Hungry children often receive some food at some times from some programs and none from others. There is no program or agency that has the mission, responsibility, or capacity to ensure that all nutritional needs of every child are met – and certainly not the mission, responsibility, or capacity to ensure that every family in the U. S. has the financial resources to meet all its essential needs including obtaining sufficient food for its members.

Even families and their children who are eligible for various forms of nutrition assistance often do not receive it.

- In low-income families, it is difficult and time-consuming for the adults who are struggling with the numerous challenges of poverty, low-wage employment, and parenting to submit properly-completed, timely, valid applications documenting their eligibility, and to take the other steps necessary to avail themselves of the program benefits – and to do so for multiple programs.
- The adults in some families are unaware their families or family members are eligible for assistance from the programs, and do not know how to submit applications to participate.
- The agencies that administer the programs typically have an insufficient number of outreach and intake staff to identify possibly eligible families and individuals, encourage them to apply for benefits, and assist them to submit valid, acceptable,

and timely applications, and the staff members the agencies do have frequently are insufficiently trained in how to perform these crucial tasks.

- Other barriers, such as undiagnosed and/or untreated mental health issues, homelessness (lack of a permanent address), English improficiency, and the taboos and shame associated with poverty, sometimes make it difficult or impossible for individuals and families to access food and nutrition assistance programs.

Even when the adults in poor families have managed to apply and qualify for all nutrition assistance programs for which the family is eligible, the total amount of food directly provided to them, or that they are provided the means to obtain, generally is insufficient to meet all nutritional needs, and the limited assistance offered by some programs is typically exhausted before the end of an assistance installment period. For example: A 2020 survey of families by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (the agency that administers SNAP) revealed the average household receiving SNAP benefits immediately redeemed 16.5 percent of its benefit at the beginning of the benefit month, and had exhausted 89.1 percent by day 21; these families are left without enough resources to cover the entire period of the benefit.\(^\text{20}\) In New Mexico the circumstances are more dire; 79 percent of SNAP benefits are exhausted in two weeks.\(^\text{21}\)

\textbf{But the principal reason families face food insecurity is a very simple one:} impoverished families do not have sufficient income to meet all their essential expenses.

This is true even after taking into account all the various forms of assistance these families might receive including food and nutrition assistance. It is true even when considering income from all sources available to the families such as (1) work, (2) additional assistance provided by extended family members and friends, (3) government assistance programs for which they have established eligibility, (4) various charitable sources, and (5) savings. Such families have no choice but to engage in triage – applying whatever fungible income or resources that are available to them to their most pressing needs of the moment in lieu of other needs. From time to time this may well be something other than obtaining food – e.g., paying for urgent health care, or paying a utility bill in the winter so the heat is not cut off (refer to Appendix C to evaluate the difficulty of allocating limited resources). The decision may be to skip some meals altogether, or to forgo eating a sufficient amount, or to eat cheap, unhealthy, and unsustaining foods, in order to come up with enough money to


https://www.nmvoices.org/archives/15258
meet another need that is at that time more pressing. The result is hunger and malnutrition.

These considerations highlight an important characteristic of the existing federal, state, and local programs addressing hunger. All of them accept as a given the concept of family financial income and resource insufficiency and are only attempting to reduce, mitigate, and ameliorate the food shortages that result. None of these programs is designed or resourced to help the families attain the goal of financial resource sufficiency and thus make it possible for those families themselves to obtain the food and nutrition their members need. It therefore should surprise no one that all the government anti-hunger programs together have not prevented the existence of hunger.

An array of nonprofit organizations across our state seeks to meet the need for food that remains unfilled by government anti-hunger programs. The state’s five nonprofit food banks together have service areas that cover all 33 counties. They provide food in quantity to a network of approximately 500 local nonprofits across the state – 81 of which are in The Food Depot’s service area – often known collectively as “food pantries,” that provides food directly to needy residents. Many of these – which include faith-based organizations, service clubs, civic groups, and other types of organizations – obtain much of or all their food from the food bank that services the area in which they are located. Some also purchase food with donations they receive from members or supporters. Shelters for homeless or abused families or children in a number of the state’s towns and cities also receive food provided by the state’s five food banks. Several of the food banks operate their own direct food distribution programs. The City and County of Santa Fe are in the service area of The Food Depot located in Santa Fe, which serves a nine-county area of north central and northeast New Mexico.

These nonprofit food assistance organizations were established to meet temporary and emergency needs; they lack the aggregate financial resources and a sufficiently extensive food delivery structure, particularly outside cities and larger towns, to fully meet the total current need for food of families that do not have the resources to obtain it on their own. They do not have the reach or the resources to eliminate hunger for any sizable segment of the population by meeting all otherwise-unmet need for food, and it is inconceivable they could develop or sustain such capacity. Only governments have the size, reach, and resources to take on the task of eliminating hunger for major segments of the population. At the current time, there is no indication the State of New Mexico has the political will to undertake this mission, and the federal government appears to be riven by political divisions and conflict that will prevent it from doing so. If Santa Fe is going to resolve the problem of hunger among its children, it cannot look to those levels of government; it must confront and overcome this vexing challenge itself.
SECTION V: THIS TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS TO THE CITY OF SANTA FE AND SANTA FE COUNTY A WORK-BASED APPROACH TO ELIMINATE CHILDHOOD HUNGER BY ELIMINATING FAMILY INCOME AND RESOURCE INSUFFICIENCY

After a year of research and discussion we have concluded that preventing the presence of hungry children in an area like ours can only be reliably accomplished if two conditions are satisfied:

- Every family responsible for the care of one or more children has sufficient financial resources on a regular basis to meet all the family members’ essential needs including sufficient food that satisfies all nutritional requirements; and
- Mechanisms are in place to provide the food a family needs, or the means to purchase it, during a temporary disruption of the family’s financial ability to meet all its essential needs or other family or community crises.

Solving the problem of childhood hunger in Santa Fe is not more complicated than that conceptually.

We evaluated the successful support programs and experiments for families in other nations and at state and local levels in the U. S. and examined the record of U.S. anti-hunger programs. We found that only **relieving** a family’s immediate hunger without **resolving its root cause**, persistent resource insufficiency (poverty), will leave the family to experience more episodes of food insecurity and hunger. Consequently, we rejected the facile “solution” to hunger of providing assistance just sufficient for every family member to have “three square meals” every day as unworkable and destined to fail. As the Mayor has said, we must seek “solutions that address root causes.”

Trying to identify in real time which families are short of food and provide either food or financial resources to them to remedy that immediate problem is logistically effectively impossible and would be a financially overwhelming proposition for either the City of Santa Fe or Santa Fe County. Neither is it realistic to try to eliminate the problem by establishing feeding programs or expanding existing programs so that they provide meals to every child who needs a particular meal – in congregate meals facilities, on a carry-out basis, or by home delivery. Preparing and providing or delivering a nutritious meal to every child at risk for hunger in Santa Fe three times a day 365 days a year – whether in their homes, in congregate meals settings, or on a carry-out basis – would be prohibitively expensive (we estimate it would cost at least $20,045,508 a year, not counting any delivery costs).

---

22 Based on a reimbursement rate of $3.92 for each After School Meal provided in Santa Fe County as of 1-10-22 multiplied by 1,095 meals per year for 4,670 Santa Fe County residents under age 18 who experience food insecurity. NMHSID 2021, U.S. & New Mexico Data Book Maps, Section 2. Accessed on November 4, 2021. http://nmhsd-
The ability of such approaches would be subject to the impacts and effects of other manifestations of income and resource insufficiency on the children’s families, which almost certainly would mean that some of the children for whom this assistance was intended would still experience hunger and nutritional deficit at least occasionally. One key impediment for some families who often are short of food is that they lack the means or time to transport themselves to food sources. Various complications including distance from urban areas will prevent delivery of food directly to some families.

When U.S. and foreign governments recognize the cause-and-effect relationship of poverty to hunger, and the futility of trying to directly feed every child three times a day, 365 days a year, and they choose instead to try to solve hunger’s cause – family income and resource insufficiency – they take either or both of two general approaches:

- Some governments provide cash grants to families with children and free or subsidized services such as health and child care.
- For those adults able to work, some governments increase the financial rewards for work, help those without remunerative work find jobs, and directly employ those unable to obtain employment.

There are scores of examples of each approach at the state and local level in the U.S. and in other countries around the world. Citations for information our research found about some such successful programs are included in Appendix B.

Based on its examination of these efforts, we recommend that the City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County each adopt a work-based and work-focused “living income” Plan implemented through a series of programs and actions intended and designed to eliminate income insufficiency among its residents. Eliminating chronic-and-chronically-recurring hunger among Santa Fe’s children will be a key byproduct.

Such a Plan will have the following four key components:

1. The City and County will establish a legally-mandated minimum wage applicable to regular employment in both the public and private sectors that, when added to currently-existing federal and state refundable tax credits and government assistance benefits for which all families of the same size and approximate income are eligible, equals MIT’s “living wage” for an average Santa Fe family of three. In 2021, MIT’s “living wage” for an average family of three in Santa Fe is $27.66 per hour.

22
23 Twenty-three local governments, including the District of Columbia, Flagstaff, New York City, and Seattle and many in California have established minimum wages in the $15-16 per hour range. Some localities in California and Oregon have set the bar at $16-17 per hour. Portland, Maine’s minimum wage is $18 per hour, the highest in the country. During 2021, 24 state legislatures were expected to consider legislation raising the statewide minimum wage, following the lead of local governments. NMHSD 2021,

24 The MIT living wage calculator estimates the pay rate a single parent with two children living in Santa Fe needs to receive in order to have a “living wage” is $36.90/hour, based on costs surveyed in 2021. Using the same costs, a family of three with two working adults requires $16.63/hour per adult, while a family of three
After subtracting from that "living wage" the average value of tax credits and direct assistance available to all Santa Fe families of that size in that approximate income bracket, the minimum wage would need to be increased to the $22.00-to-$25.00 per hour range in order to provide income from the combination of wages plus government benefits approximately equal to the MIT “living wage” that consists of wages alone.\textsuperscript{25} This report defines that combined amount of wages plus government benefits as a “living income,” and it uses the term “living income minimum wage” to refer to the minimum wage component of that combined amount. Unless Santa Fe’s minimum wage is increased to this level, income insufficiency will remain for all Santa Fe three-person families with one or even two breadwinners working full time at the minimum wage – and thus the probability of food insecurity and hunger for a large proportion of those families will persist.

We recognize that immediately leaping from the current minimum wage of $12.95 (increased to that amount from $12.32 on March 1, 2022) to the $22.00-to-$25.00 range would be very difficult. We therefore suggest that the City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County \textit{incrementally increase the legally-mandated minimum wage to the recommended level, and move immediately to increase it to $17.00 per hour}. A minimum wage at that level will meet the MIT measure of a “living wage” at least for a single adult without children, and a family of two adults and one child in which both adults are working full time at the minimum wage (see MIT calculations on page 7), and it will offer important help to other families with children.

The City of Santa Fe recently took the commendable step of raising the minimum wage for city employees to $15.00 per hour, which covers about half the distance between the current Santa Fe minimum wage and the first incremental increase to $17.00 we recommend. But this increased minimum wage applies only to City employees and not to any other workers in the city. It also fails to meet the needs of single parents with two or more children who must earn over twice that amount ($36.90 per hour) according to MIT’s calculations to have a “living income,”\textsuperscript{26} or families of three or more persons with only one breadwinner earning the minimum wage.

When the City and County governing bodies consider this recommendation, they should carefully examine the situation of tipped workers and others who, under various circumstances, may legally receive aggregate compensation at a lower rate

---

\textsuperscript{25} The Task Force chose a family of three in its various configurations as the model for our calculations because that is the average Santa Fe family size. Santa Fe’s People: Our Residents and Visitors. Accessed November 4, 2021. https://dashboards.mysidewalk.com/santa-fe-people-2020/welcome

\textsuperscript{26} The MIT living wage calculator estimates the pay rate a single parent with two children living in Santa Fe needs to receive in order to have a “living wage” is $36.90 per hour, based on costs surveyed in 2021. MIT Living Wage Calculator, accessed January 9, 2022. https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/35049
than the mandated minimum. The new minimum wage should be made applicable to as many of those workers as possible.

Irrespective of the precise dollar amounts at which the City and County set their new **minimum wage** levels, whether on an incremental or permanent basis, those levels should be adjusted annually in accord with a market basket index attuned as closely as possible to Santa Fe costs to prevent erosion of their values.

2. The City and County will provide on a biweekly basis a cash “family income adjustment grant” to every family with one or more employed breadwinners and more than three members -- $450.00 for the fourth person in the family, $240.00 for the fifth person, and $200.00 for the sixth person\(^{27}\) -- in order to raise the family’s income to the appropriate family-size-conditioned “living income” level based on MIT’s formula.

3. For any family with children in which all adult members have been found by the Social Security Administration to be unable to work full time because of physical or mental disability, the City and County will provide on a biweekly basis a family supplemental grant to close any gap between the family's income – including income from any employment and all refundable tax credits and government transfer payments for which the family is eligible, both those established to reduce hunger and those with broader purposes such as Social Security, Social Security Disability Insurance, Supplemental Security Income, Worker’s Compensation, or Unemployment Insurance – and the “living income” amount for the family’s size.

4. The City and the County will establish and operate a public works/community service jobs program for one breadwinner in any family that includes at least one able-to-work adult but that has no adult member who has been able to secure full-time market employment (after expiration of any unemployment insurance benefits for which eligible). For 40 hours per week, the jobs program will offer a wage 10 percent less than the Santa Fe “living income minimum wage” that all market jobs will be required to provide. The employing jurisdiction can assign the jobs program participants to perform any work the jurisdiction needs performed for which the employee’s educational and technical skills levels and physical condition are adequate, including clerical tasks, parks maintenance, and removal of weeds and trash from medians, rights-of-way, and other public lands. In exchange for this compensated public employment, each participant will be required to provide 30 hours a week of assigned and supervised public works/community service work and spend 10 hours a week in supervised/assisted market employment search activities and/or educational opportunities designed to increase the individual’s employability.

---

\(^{27}\) Based on the incremental difference in the MIT “living wage” for the average family with the number of members indicated compared to the “living wage” for the average family with one fewer member. MIT Living Wage Calculator, accessed January 14, 2022. [https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/35049](https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/35049)
This work-based “living income” plan will move Santa Fe and its families away from the current fragmented assistance programs that are attempting to address childhood hunger—doing so by addressing and removing the usual cause of hunger rather than attempting to individually identify, chase, and extinguish each manifestation of hunger in the community—on the grounds that it is a fool’s errand to try to eradicate a problem without removing the source of the problem.

A fully-implemented, competently-administered Plan with these four components will, on a regular basis, reduce the number of families in Santa Fe unable to afford life's necessities, notably including food, to a fraction of its current level. Hunger, then, will be limited to unexpected family or personal situations or community disasters.

It will be important for the City and County to assign personnel to work with all participating adults to ensure that they are assisted in obtaining all available forms of federal and state government assistance, including tax credits and direct benefits. This not only is important for the prospective beneficiaries; it also will be crucial to reduce the need for the grants to be provided under item number 3 above, and the amounts of the grants that are paid. The effort must be scaled so that every Plan participant family receives all the help it needs to ensure that all family members who are eligible for any tax credits or transfer payments apply for and receive the payments to which they are entitled.

Not only is there no “cheap and easy” alternative that promises success in eliminating childhood hunger; our task force believes there is no less expensive alternative that can succeed in attaining that objective.

After the recommended “living income” Plan has been implemented, there will always be cases where unusual circumstances affecting some families and their members, as well as widespread disruptions attributable to natural or manmade disasters or crises, interrupt the flow of income to some families or otherwise make it temporarily impossible for them to obtain all the food they need. Addressing such temporary emergency needs is the raison d’etre of food banks and food pantries, and a key element in the services offered by shelters. The City and County therefore should work closely with these institutions and ensure they have the resources and capacities to provide emergency interventive food assistance to any family that experiences a dislocation making it impossible to properly feed all its members. In turn, those emergency interventive food sector organizations must ensure that families seeking their assistance are connected to state and local government agencies or contractors that have the responsibility and ability to help them gain access to the aspect of the “living income” Plan described above that is appropriate for their circumstances, and to all other government assistance, transfer payments, and tax credits for which their members are eligible.

It is important to confirm that the proposed “living income” Plan is in no way an attempt to impose a strict financial equalitarian system in Santa Fe. It does not propose to change the circumstances of residents whose income and resources exceed the “living income” level. Instead, it rewards work by ensuring that work produces a “living income,” and it
ensures a comparable standard of living to families in which the adult(s) are unable to work because of disabilities or are unable to obtain regular full-time work.

If Santa Fe’s city and county governments are serious about effectively eliminating child hunger, they must understand this goal can only be attained with a major – and costly – effort, one that is carefully planned, expertly executed, and adequately funded. Despite the good intentions of the individuals and organizations involved in the myriad existing anti-hunger programs and efforts, both governmental and nonprofit, and expenditure of multi-millions of dollars annually, this objective has never been achieved in Santa Fe or anywhere else in the U.S. Arguably the biggest reason is that most jurisdictions are unwilling even to make an attempt because of the expense and effort required. But it is important to keep in mind that the keystone and largest component of the approach recommended in this report is the “living income minimum wage,” the financial costs of which will be shared between public and private employers rather than being paid entirely with tax dollars.

Many employers and some economists have resisted raising wages, saying that increasing the minimum wage would hurt businesses and cost some employees their jobs. Economics professor and New York Times columnist Paul Krugman, winner of the 2008 Nobel prize in economics, has long argued that, instead, raising wages is good for business. More recently, in 2021 Professor David Card of the University of California, Berkeley, was awarded the Nobel prize for his “empirical contributions to labour economics,” notably including his studies that challenged conventional wisdom by showing, among other things, that increasing the minimum wage does not necessarily lead to fewer jobs.28 His research directly challenges the claims of business owners and others that they cannot afford to pay employees a higher minimum wage because it will make their businesses uncompetitive, or who argue that the local economy will suffer because overall business activity will recede as many employees will be terminated and unable to find other employment.29 A number of Santa Fe employers have raised their wages during the past 18 months, which suggests that increasing wages both may be necessary to retain employees in some lines of work and will not harm or reduce business activity.

The reality is that, according to the Santa Fe Dashboard and U.S. Census data, Santa Fe is one of the relatively wealthiest communities, based on median income and housing prices, not only in New Mexico but also in the U.S. Arguments that our area cannot afford a Plan such as the one we recommend are without foundation. The operative question is not whether Santa Fe’s people, and their city and county governments, are able to afford this Plan, but whether they have the will to establish and operate such a Plan. Entire nations in Europe with less population than New Mexico operate social welfare programs that have
achieved great success in eliminating income and resource insufficiency and, in so doing, eliminating hunger. None of the features of this recommended approach is novel or radical. Every component has been used before in some location, either in the U.S. or another nation with an advanced society and economy. Every component has previously realized success in one or more of the locations where it has been employed. [Details of successful policies and programs are provided in Appendix B.]

Despite the fact that most local and state jurisdictions and even the federal government in the U.S. have been far less ambitious and successful in their efforts to institute such programs, there have been some notable successes in our country. [Appendix B offers details about the formation and success of programs to eliminate poverty and hunger in Denver, Colorado, and the state of Oregon, including establishment of dedicated taxes to pay the costs.]

Any idea that eliminating income/resource insufficiency in Santa Fe, and thereby eliminating childhood hunger, can be accomplished by a directive from Santa Fe’s elected leadership to the city’s staff, or to the city’s nonprofit emergency food assistance organizations, is foreordained to fail. Eliminating childhood hunger by implementing the Plan proposed in this report will require courage and determination on the part of elected officials and the social welfare advocacy community, as well as a concerted effort by both to market its benefits to the local business community and the public. It will require a substantial investment by the people of Santa Fe city and county. We strongly believe the investment will result in this area becoming an even more desirable, just, and accommodating place to live for all citizens.

SECTION VI: WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REDUCE CHILDHOOD HUNGER AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE UNTIL THE RECOMMENDED PLAN TO ELIMINATE INCOME INSUFFICIENCY IS IMPLEMENTED?

We believe both logic and evidence from around the world confirm beyond doubt that Santa Fe will be able to eliminate hunger among children only if it ensures that all families with children have a “living income.” We have recommended a work-based Plan to accomplish this.

This report also makes the case that any approach to eliminating childhood hunger faces too many inescapable impediments to succeed if it is focused exclusively and simply on providing food. Rather, to realize success in eliminating hunger, providing food needs to be part of a constellation of approaches aimed at reducing poverty.

We suggest some significant steps that should be taken to achieve some reduction in the incidence, frequency, and severity of hunger among Santa Fe’s children until the recommended “living income” Plan is accessible to every family – or if the political will
does not exist within Santa Fe’s city and county governments to eliminate the cause of childhood hunger.

Caution to Reader: None of the suggestions in this section, separately or together, will completely end childhood hunger in Santa Fe, the goal enunciated by the Mayor. Rather, recommendations in this section can help to substantially reduce food insecurity among children. This reduction will occur both through alterations to and additional funding for existing programs and activities that will increase and enhance current hunger mitigation efforts and the number of children they help, and through establishment of two new programs we recommend to support child care for working parents and enhance early childhood nutrition.

Provide child care for working families

We recommend establishing a child care program for working families fully funded by the City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County, or subsidized so its costs will be affordable for Santa Fe residents. The cost of child care ($6,431 annually for one child in Santa Fe County) is a major expense for parents working for low wages.\(^\text{30}\) Also it can be an impediment to workforce participation for such parents when they consider whether the additional income from a second parent working will offset child care expenses after application of the available tax credit (the current tax credit does not pay the cost of one month of child care in Santa Fe). A program that provides free or low-cost, safe, dependable, state-regulated and -inspected child care will support full-time working parents earning less than a “living wage.”\(^\text{31}\) The magnitude of the expense of this requirement will diminish as the state expands its early childhood education programs and if/as federal support for child care and early childhood education is expanded as proposed by the Biden Administration. An additional and relevant benefit of providing such a program would be the opportunity to provide additional nutritious meals to children.

Support home visits to improve healthy starts for all new families

We recommend a public private partnership to expand the reach of established non-profits already making home visits to support a healthy start for all new families. The City and County should fund contracts with existing qualified nonprofit organizations offering free home visitations to the parents of every baby born in Santa Fe by nutrition and health


\(^{31}\) The U.S. is a conspicuous outlier when compared to the wealthy nations of the European Union that provide universally subsidized or free childcare, including Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. OECD countries spend on average just over 0.7% of GDP on early childhood education and care. The public expenditure on early childhood education and care is higher than 1.0% of GDP in France and the Nordic countries – with total spending reaching as high as 1.6% in Sweden and 1.8% in Iceland – it is less than 0.5% of GDP in the U.S. By contrast, the U.S. spends about $200 a year for most families, in the form of a once-a-year tax credit for parents who pay for care. See: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Public Spending on Childcare and Early Education*, 2020. Accessed January 10, 2022. https://www.oecd.org/els/soc/PF3_1_Public_spending_on_childcare_and_early_education.pdf
practitioners who provide infant and child nutrition and wellness information, coaching, encouragement, and assistance to the parents, especially first-time parents.

**Provide nutrition education to all school children and make it available to adults**

Both the City and County should ensure that carefully-planned and designed, age-appropriate nutrition education is integrated in the curriculum for preschool through 12th grade, and is made available free of charge to adults in all appropriate available venues. Enabling families financially to obtain sufficient food for themselves to avoid hunger will not ensure proper nutrition for family members unless those choosing the food understand which foods offer good nutritional value and which are detrimental to health and development.

**Expand the supply of affordable housing**

As noted previously in this report, Santa Fe’s housing supply, particularly its supply of livable homes that are financially accessible to families that fall within the lower third of Santa Fe’s income spectrum, is considerably below the level of current need. For this and other reasons, including a recent historically-high influx of affluent individuals and families wanting to live in this area, both home prices and rental rates are significantly above the national average. The predictable result is that many lower-income families, if they are able to find housing in this area at all, have to expend an excessively high proportion of their available income and resources to obtain acceptable housing, leaving an insufficient amount to meet other essential needs including nutritious food. City and county governments are aware of this problem, and both have taken steps to increase the supply of affordable housing, but those steps have fallen demonstrably short of meeting the need. It should be noted that the City of Santa Fe’s Affordable Housing Trust Fund is inadequately funded. The City should direct more resources to the Trust Fund and, at a minimum, should not permit its corpus to fall below $3 million. The City needs to establish a dedicated source of revenue for the Trust Fund that will be reliably sufficient to maintain its corpus rather than continuing to rely on funding from the discretionary budget. City and county governments should assign a higher priority, both regarding new policy approaches and budgetary commitment, to rectify the current affordable housing shortage.

**Improve food access in areas of significant population**

We recommend City and County support for improved access to nutritious food, particularly fresh fruits and vegetables. These currently are not conveniently available to one third of Santa Fe residents; this is especially a problem on the city’s “south side” where the average per capita income is one of the lowest in the city. The families living in neighborhoods lacking access to nutritious food generally face two barriers to obtaining

---

them elsewhere: (1) long travel time and distance to grocery stores with nutritious foods, and (2) a lack of convenient public transportation routes.

The risk is high that families in neighborhoods lacking sources of nutritious foods — even families with sufficient means to afford good food — will face hunger or malnutrition. This is especially true if the only sources of food in a neighborhood are fast-food outlets or quick-stop markets. The problem is compounded if the adults in a family do not own or have easy access to personal vehicles, do not have easy access to convenient and affordable public transportation, or have work schedules and family obligations that leave insufficient time to travel to sources of affordable, nutritious food.

City and county governments need to place greater emphasis on ameliorating these food deserts. There are multiple means available to do this that include public-private partnerships, tax benefits to private businesses, and direct subsidies. Denver solved a problem of this nature by contributing $917,000 to open a grocery store in a neighborhood that lacked convenient access to nutritious food.33 It is funded by the Denver Housing Authority and operated by a nonprofit organization. It offers food prices lower than competitors such as Walmart, and it operates a food pantry with free snacks — a choice of fruit, protein, or grain — for children to pick up on Saturdays and Sundays when they are not in school, a service funded by the Healthy Food for Denver Kids initiative that Denver voters created through a 2018 ballot measure.34 (See Appendix B for a more complete picture of Denver’s effort.)

The Food Depot is exploring the possibility of establishing a source of nutritious food in Santa Fe’s “south side” area and is examining the relative appeal of various models including a public-private partnership. But one such effort will be far from sufficient to resolve the problem of food deserts in Santa Fe city and county.

**Take concrete steps to capture for distribution by emergency food intervention organizations food now left unharvested in fields and discarded by food producers, retailers, and restaurants**

Across the United States, billions of pounds of safe, edible food go to waste each year.

- Uneaten food is discarded by restaurants and retail stores discard food when it has not been purchased within established timeframes.
- Some crops are left unharvested in fields because it will cost farmers more to harvest them and prepare and transport them to markets than the price for which they can be sold.

---

• Farmers and food manufacturers and processors experience production problems or produce overruns exceeding the amounts their customers are prepared to purchase.
• Some food items fail to meet retailers’ standards for color and appearance.

Much of this wasted food can be safely distributed by food banks and pantries and used by shelters – if they can obtain it at the low purchase prices they can afford or if it is donated and delivered to them at no cost. Santa Fe City and County governments can act to increase the amounts of such food that the emergency food intervention organizations are able to access and pass on to hungry people. These governments can encourage and financially support crop gleaning efforts at nearby farms; make available government vehicles to pick up food that otherwise would be wasted and transport it to food banks, food pantries, and shelters; urge local food retailers and food preparation firms (e.g., bakeries) to establish ongoing, routine procedures for providing surplus food to emergency food intervention organizations; and provide financial support to those organizations to enable them to purchase, transport, and process increased amounts of food from these sources so they can make it available to hungry Santa Fe residents.

**Make use of city and county buildings with appropriate food service facilities – especially but not only school buildings – as congregate feeding locations for children to provide meals on weekends and holidays and during vacation periods when other school activities are halted**

Breakfasts, lunches, and snacks made available at schools and day-care/child-care facilities are a vital nutritional foundation for many children whose families are food insecure or are experiencing hunger. That foundation is absent on weekends and holidays and during vacation periods. The need for children to receive nutritious meals on those days is just as great as on school days.

The City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County should engage Santa Fe Public Schools and other public school districts and private schools in their jurisdictions in collaborative efforts to ensure that all federally-funded child nutrition programs are operated in all eligible schools and day care/child care facilities; that these programs operate and provide food to children during periods when the participating schools and other facilities otherwise are closed to the children (e.g., weekends, holidays, summer vacations) even if the costs of these extra days must be paid by the City and the County; and that the programs’ benefits are available free of charge to all children.

The investments that city and county taxpayers have made in public school infrastructure – and particularly the schools’ cafeterias and other food-providing facilities – as well as in other facilities such as community and senior centers are among the greatest investments local governments make. And yet those facilities typically sit unused and idle on weekends and holidays and during vacation periods – when the return on investment for those facilities is absolutely zero.
Santa Fe should follow the lead of other states and localities in the U.S. that make food available at schools and in other locally-owned facilities on days when schools are not in session. These public facilities typically are located relatively close to children's homes. The food provided to the children who take advantage could make a very significant difference in their nutritional status, particularly during the summer vacation months. Studies of such programs show improved learning, health, and mental health among the children who participate.

Santa Fe City and County, Santa Fe Public Schools, and other public-school systems and private schools should be mindful that the cost of these facilities has already been paid – it is, in accounting terminology, a "sunk cost." The benefits of providing food to children in these facilities can be realized on weekends and holidays and during vacation periods by paying just the requisite wage and benefit costs for food preparation and distribution personnel, the marginal costs for utilities, the cost of the food provided, and security and administrative overhead for the additional days.

**Establish a strong and extensive program of outreach and intake/application assistance to increase participation in hunger relief programs and in broader tax credit and benefit programs**

A disturbingly high proportion of theoretically-eligible families and individuals fails to apply, or unsuccessfully applies, to participate in a wide array of assistance programs available from the federal and state governments. This failure exacts a high cost on the poor individuals or families who therefore do not realize the benefits of the help available to them, and on the communities in which the social costs that result from their poverty are not ameliorated. And it deprives local economies of the pronounced boost available when the assistance program benefits are infused into and circulate within those economies.

In every conceivable way it is to the benefit of Santa Fe City and County governments to make a major investment in increasing as much as possible the proportion of eligible Santa Fe residents who participate in and realize the benefits of all available tax credits and assistance programs. This should be appealing to taxpayers in both jurisdictions who already have paid to support the assistance programs whose benefits are being realized in other jurisdictions but are being left on the table untapped in Santa Fe, and to local businesses where a high proportion of assistance program benefits likely would be spent. The greatest probability of successfully increasing participation in these programs will be realized if the City and County governments establish and operate robust outreach and application assistance programs to identify families and individuals who may be eligible for various assistance programs and tax credits, persuade them to apply, and assist them in properly completing and submitting applications that will be accepted by the programs.

Effective programs of this nature will set up situations in which outreach and application assistance staff go where the potential applicants can be found, and energetically seek them out. Such programs will not isolate outreach staff in government offices where they wait for residents not participating in one or more assistance programs to take the initiative and make the effort to find their way to those offices to obtain help.
City and County governments can extend outreach and intake/application assistance through the existing SF CONNECT program, adopted by Santa Fe County in 2017 and the City of Santa Fe in 2019. Its goals are to improve community health, increase quality of care, and reduce health care costs. The program is a network of over 100 navigators (staff at clinics, community service organizations, and city and county programs who link individuals to the services and resources they need). Currently, CONNECT partners with nonprofit organizations such as food banks and food pantries. The Food Depot receives hundreds of referrals a year from CONNECT navigators at other agencies; it then is able to provide information to the individuals and families who have been referred about food distributions and other sources of food, and to assist them in applying for benefits such as SNAP and WIC. CONNECT navigators at The Food Depot refer individuals and families to a broad range of additional services such as utility and rent assistance, parenting and early childhood programs, emergency shelter, job search and coaching assistance, and mental health and health care services.

The City and County should fund additional navigators in the CONNECT program and assign personnel to expand the navigators’ knowledge and ability to assist all their clients to obtain access to –

- Available federal and state housing assistance
- Health insurance that has affordable premiums – from that program for which the family is eligible that will provide the most generous benefits for the least out-of-pocket cost to the family, whether that is Medicaid, veterans’ medical programs, health insurance exchanges under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), employer-provided insurance, or other sources
- All other available forms of federal and state government assistance to families including tax credits and direct benefits
- Assistance in obtaining affordable transportation to/from work that does not require a longer commute than a total of one hour a day – via existing public transportation where that is available and accessible
- Appropriate physical therapy and remedial health care for work-limiting physical and health conditions not covered by whatever health insurance the family has

**Helping adult family members improve their abilities to obtain and hold gainful employment**

The City and the County should fund programs – cooperating where appropriate with Santa Fe Public Schools, Santa Fe Community College, and, where they are willing to participate, private schools and other organizations and institutions – to assist adults, especially those with children, to improve their abilities to obtain and hold gainful employment and advance in a career pathway, by offering to them:

- English-as-a-second-language instruction for those lacking or having limited English skills
- Remedial mathematics instruction to those lacking or having limited math skills
- Financial literacy instruction
• Technical training to remedy insufficient employment skills and skills that are mismatched with the needs of the local marketplace
• Behavioral and mental health assessments, counseling, and treatment
• Effective drug- and alcohol-abuse recovery counseling, mentoring, medical care, and withdrawal assistance

**Advocate for Improving Existing Anti-Hunger Programs, and Take Advantage of New Federal Rules and Funding**

Among the most rapid actions the City and County governments can take in an effort to alleviate hunger among its children is to invest resources, and direct their staffs to engage, in carefully-planned and -executed advocacy with state and federal elected and appointed officials to urge those officials to address effectively the social and economic problems that result in families struggling to survive at income levels below those of a “living income” – which derivatively results in food insecurity and hunger.

Looking more directly at government policies and programs focused specifically on food sufficiency and hunger relief, City and County governments not only can help to prevent hunger, but also can secure an infusion of new capital into the Santa Fe economy if they successfully urge state and federal elected representatives to increase program benefit levels, increase the income and resource ceilings for eligibility in order to increase the number of persons and families who receive benefits, relax assets tests, and rescind or relax work requirements in the federal SNAP and WIC programs.

Proposals to amend child nutrition programs to authorize providing universal free school breakfasts, lunches, and after-school meals for all children are being considered in the current Congress. Serving all children, rather than only those who meet income or other criteria would have some immediate advantages, both in program administration and in the lives of children who are recipients of the program. First, this change would bring an end to the costly and frustrating exercise of administering means tests for children’s families. Second, this change would reduce ostracism of children whose incomes currently permit them to eat free while children from families with higher incomes must pay something to eat. Third, it would reduce nonparticipation by those whose families lack the money to pay even the low co-payments required and, in some cases, by those who do not want to be seen as participants in a “welfare” program. The City of Santa Fe City and Santa Fe County should urge their Congressional delegation members to do everything within their power to obtain enactment of these proposals.

Hiring a professional grant writer to apply for available public and private grants to increase funding for these programs can yield a very significant return on investment, and result in extending the programs’ benefits to more Santa Fe residents.
APPENDIX A.
DEFINITIONS

• **Nutrition Security** - a situation that exists when people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.\(^{35}\)

• **Food Insecurity** - a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food.\(^{36}\)

• **Food Security** - a situation that exists when people have access, at all times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members. At a minimum, this includes: 1) readily available, nutritionally adequate, and safe foods and 2) assured ability to acquire personally acceptable foods in a socially acceptable way.\(^{37}\)

• **Living Income/Wage** - a minimum income standard that, if met, draws a very fine line between the financial independence of the working poor and the need to seek out public assistance or suffer consistent and severe inability to afford and obtain necessities of life including habitable housing and sufficient nutritious food. In a 1912 speech, Theodore Roosevelt offered a definition for “living wage” not from a market perspective but from the worker’s perspective: a wage that allows a worker to “secure the elements of a normal standard of living,” including education, recreation, child care, a cushion for periods of sickness, and savings for old age. This report relies on the definitions and calculations used in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Living Wage Calculator, [https://livingwage.mit.edu](https://livingwage.mit.edu). The MIT living wage model is a market-based concept that draws upon geographically-specific expenditure data related to the localized costs of a family’s likely minimum needs for food, childcare, health insurance, housing, transportation, and other basic necessities (e.g., clothing and personal care items). It does not include the costs of many goods and services that many Americans would consider necessities of life. For example, it does not consider prepared meals or those eaten in restaurants to be necessary. Nothing is included for entertainment or vacations. It also does not provide for savings and investment (including preparations for retirement) or purchase of capital assets such as homes.

---


- **Hunger** - an individual-level physiological condition in which a person has the uneasy or painful sensation caused by lack of food; it is often experienced by those who live in a state of food insecurity. The state of not having enough food to eat, especially when this causes illness or death.

- **Poverty** – the state of having insufficient income and resources to be able to obtain the necessities of life. More specifically, the term may refer to the condition of a person or family having income below a federally-determined poverty threshold. The U.S. government defines the poverty threshold for an individual as having income less than $36 per day, and for a family of four as having income less than $72 per day.

- **Food Desert** - an area where people have limited access to a variety of healthy and affordable food. Census tracts qualify as food deserts if they meet low-income and low-access thresholds:
  - low-income: a poverty rate of 20 percent or greater, or a median family income at or below 80 percent of the statewide or metropolitan area median family income;
  - low-access: at least 500 persons and/or at least 33 percent of the population lives more than one mile from a supermarket or large grocery store (10 miles, in the case of rural census tracts) and thus lacks dependable, continual access to healthy and nutritious food, particularly fresh fruits and vegetables and protein sources.

- **Food Access** – the ability of people to obtain healthy food, affected by several factors:
  - distance to a supermarket or large grocery store offering healthy foods;
  - individual-level resources such as family income and vehicle availability; and
  - the availability of public transportation.

- **Health** - a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

---


APPENDIX B.
MEASURABLE BENEFITS WE STUDIED IN THE U.S. AND AROUND THE WORLD

New Directions in US Public Policy

In October 2017 Denver Mayor Michael Hancock adopted The Denver Food Vision. Published as a community action plan and vision, it was developed in partnership with more than 1,000 businesses and individuals, and guided by the Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council, in conjunction with members of City Council, several city departments and agencies, and hunger relief organizations. In 2018 a citizen-initiated city ordinance was passed to support the plan and a tax to support “Denver Food Services for Youth Tax.” And another established the Denver Food Commission to determine distribution of funds for the “Healthy Food for Denver’s Kids Initiative” among other responsibilities their collaborative community-wide effort is worthy of study, even though the scope of the plan is far different than ours.

The report specifically addresses the food insecurity needs of 20 percent of Denver’s children in their community with priorities that include:

• Promote opportunities to share food through residential sales of fresh produce, cottage foods, and donating excess food to local food pantries and hunger relief organizations
• Ensure that healthy food is affordable for everyone
• Strengthen collaborations to prevent hunger
• Invest in hunger relief efforts and infrastructure required to expand fresh and healthy foods at food pantries while reducing regulatory limits for hunger relief providers
• Set measurable goals for increasing SNAP enrollment for eligible populations until reaching 100% by 2030

Specific strategies include:

• Engage diverse community organizations, institutions, neighborhoods, and residents to develop neighborhood food plans toward an equitable complete food environment
• Develop maps and other tools that highlight neighborhood assets, gaps, and opportunities for creating complete food environments in Denver’s low- and moderate-income neighborhoods (prioritize neighborhoods that are currently food deserts)
• Identify public investment opportunities
• Consider new public funding opportunities

https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/771/documents/CH/Final_FoodVision_120717.pdf
• Cultivate new private funding

Their method is an incremental action planning on a three to five-year calendar guided by the following factors:
• Impactful: How strongly will the effort impact the winnable goals and priorities?
• Reach: How many people will the effort impact?
• Aligned: Does this align with the Vision, address key priorities, and help further the Winnable Goals? Does this effort support or detract from progress on other vision pillars?
• Scalable: Can this be piloted on a small scale with limited risk and implemented on a broad scale if the pilot is successful?
• Tested: Has this been implemented successfully elsewhere or is there strong evidence it will succeed here?
• Realistic: Is the effort possible with the current resources and partnerships? Is there an identified partner with the expertise and capacity to implement?
• Financially Feasible: Is there an identified source of funding that covers the full cost of implementation?
• Equitable: How well does effort address community-defined needs in underserved and/or low-income neighborhoods?

A similar effort is taking place at the state level by the Oregon Hunger Task Force, created by the state legislature in 1989, was recently re-energized by a 2019 initiative that set a goal to hold the state government accountable to develop a plan for an Oregon that is hunger free and thriving. Guided by three goals, they are working toward “public policy solutions, long term recommendations, and ways to measure progress.
1. Oregonians have equitable access to the resources and opportunity we need to afford life’s essentials.
2. Nutritious food is accessible to everyone and nutrition support programs are adequate, effective and equitable when we need them.
3. People most impacted by hunger are leaders in designing and enacting solutions.

Like the efforts that supported the Denver Food Vision, the Oregon planning process has been a broad effort. After a state-wide survey, the task force announced: “The responses made it clear that to care deeply about hunger requires us to care deeply about poverty, identity, agriculture, education, immigration, economics, race, geography, economics, public health, justice, and community.” The policy recommendations that followed are bold.
• Renew and raise Oregon’s Earned income tax credit
• Enact a paid family leave insurance program
• Boldly address Oregon’s affordable housing crisis

• Boost access to employment-related day care
• Strengthen services for families

A selection of their long-term recommendations suggests goals that address the underlying causes of food insecurity:
• Ensure year-round access to free and nutritious food for children
• Support accessibility of living wage jobs for all Oregonians
• Strengthen policies and programs that help families afford basics like housing, child care, and transportation
• Ensure state policies and practices address disparities caused by discrimination in education, healthcare, housing, employment and wages, and criminal justice
• Support a healthcare system that provides excellent, affordable care to all Oregonians
• Expand universal school meals and breakfast after the bell
• Use state resources to broaden eligibility to improve benefit level for SNAP

The Denver and Oregon efforts are still in process but both show a strong public will to go beyond feeding hungry people and suggest models for addressing the injustice of poverty that results in hunger.

**Learning from Other Nations**

The U.S. is a founding member of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), an international organization that operates globally to establish evidence-based international standards and find solutions to a range of social, economic and environmental challenges. Yet OECD reports that among the richest nations in the world, the US ranks among the lowest when social benefits are measured as a percentage of GDP.\(^{45}\) The US does not follow the best practices identified among the nations achieving the lowest child poverty rates that provide a range of universal benefits to families with children.

• Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the UK all provide cash grants to families with children. A notable feature of these universal child benefit plans is that they are accessible to all; families with children receive them regardless of income and the employment status of parents. These nations also offer universal health-care programs and heavily subsidized, low-cost, high-quality childcare and early childhood education. The outcome is that families with children in these countries fare better than comparable families in the United States because they require less money to buy critical

https://data.oecd.org/socialexp/family-benefits-public-spending.htm?campaign_id=116&emc=edit_pk_20210921&instance_id=40935&nl=paul-krugman&regi_id=26338842&segment_id=69496&te=1&user_id=84deb33488c569a50abb24f3d0d6e0e8
supports for child development. These programs recognize that child rearing is difficult and that supporting all children is a public benefit. Unlike the means-tested and work-based social safety net that defines the failing US programs, these programs ensure a stable base-level source of cash income for all children.

- Among the member nations of OECD, the United States child poverty rate places it at the bottom of the richest nations. Even more distressing, New Mexico ranks among the bottom three states on most indicators of child wellbeing and quality of life for children.

- Ending child hunger is possible and certainly within the reach of one of the wealthiest nations on Earth. A significant study published in 2019 by the National Institutes of Health (a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the nation’s medical research agency) proposed a conversion of the US Child Tax Credit and child tax exemption into a universal, monthly child allowance. This infusion of cash into families on a monthly basis, it was thought, would be as an effective method to reduce child poverty and income instability, and eliminate extreme poverty among families with children in the United States.

- Using 2015 Current Population Survey data, their analysis estimates that a child allowance would reduce child poverty by about 40 percent, deep child poverty by nearly half, and would effectively eliminate extreme child poverty. Their research found aid to the poorest US families, delivered in the form of in-kind benefits, such as food or food stamps, rather than cash, did not solve the dilemma facing America’s extreme poor—the absence of accessible cash income.

---


Three Cash Transfer Models

There is hope in three social experiments at the federal and local level that are similar to the cash transfer programs of OECD members and recommended in the NIH study. These programs offer adequate food support and ongoing monthly cash support to families with children, the method found to be most effective in raising the poorest families out of poverty.\(^5\)

A Local Program of Cash Support for Families

Santa Fe City Council adopted a new guaranteed income pilot program on June 30, 2021. It will provide 100 student-parents enrolled at the Santa Fe Community College with $400 a month for a year.\(^5\) Funding of $500,000 from Mayors for a Guaranteed Income (a coalition of 50 cities, including Atlanta, Baltimore, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Seattle and growing) will fund Santa Fe’s first year, to begin in the 2021 fall semester. Stockton, California was the first city to provide a guaranteed income to their citizens. They have analyzed the benefits of the program, known as the Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEEDS). The Preliminary Analysis: SEED’s First Year showed that: Guaranteed income reduced income volatility; unconditional cash enabled recipients to find full-time employment; recipients of guaranteed income were healthier, showing less depression and anxiety and enhanced wellbeing; the guaranteed income alleviated financial scarcity creating new opportunities for self-determination, choice, goal-setting, and risk-taking.\(^5\) After one year, Residents of Stockton, Calif., who received $500 a month from a first-of-its-kind guaranteed-income program were more likely to find full-time jobs, be happy and stay healthy. In October 2021, the Chicago City Council adopted a budget that includes a guaranteed income program that will cost about $31 million and be funded by the federal pandemic relief aid, though the proposal for the project predates the pandemic. The one-year pilot will distribute $500 monthly cash payments to 5,000 low-income Chicagoans. However, unlike the Stockton’s experiment that began with an open invitation

Accessed August 11, 2021 A Universal Child Allowance: A Plan to Reduce Poverty and Income Instability Among Children in the United States


to all residents, the 5,000 Chicago recipients must be adults and make less than $35,000 a year, but they will be chosen randomly for the program. Santa Fe’s grants are available to a targeted group of parents who are enrolled students and means tested at a specified income level. Applicants for the funding must earn less than 200% of the federal poverty level.\textsuperscript{53}

Similar to the Santa Fe project, The Magnolia Mother’s Trust was founded in Jackson Mississippi. In 2019 they began providing $1,000 a month for 12 months to Black mothers living in extreme poverty. This groundbreaking program was founded on the simple principle that families need more cash because minimum wage jobs simply do not provide enough income to support a family, and the system for obtaining supplementary benefits is stressful, dehumanizing, and time-consuming. Today 110 families receive the stipend and are free to use this money in whatever way they see fit to best meet their financial needs with the trust that families know best what they need. The first review of the program reported that participants increased their ability to meet their bills by more than 50% and their ability to acquire enough food by 15%.\textsuperscript{54}

\textbf{A Federal Universal Child Tax Credit}

At the federal level, the Child Tax Credit in the American Rescue Plan became effective July 15, 2021. Though it provided the largest child tax credit ever and historic relief to all working families, it will not be continued in 2022. The American Rescue Plan increased the annual child tax credit from $2,000 per child to $3,000 per child for children over the age of six and from $2,000 to $3,600 for children under the age of six, and raised the age limit from 16 to 17. Without application, all working families received the full credit if they make up to $150,000 for a couple or $112,500 for a family with a single parent. Automatic monthly payments were sent to all working families, who filed tax returns for 2019 or 2020, or if they signed up to receive a stimulus check from the Internal Revenue Service. For the first time, people received the Child Tax Credit in monthly payments. Parents who received their tax refunds by direct deposit received automatic payments to their bank account on the 15th of every month until the end of 2021 (checks will be sent on the same schedule to those who do not have direct deposit). The tax credit expansion was envisioned by Democrats as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to address American poverty. For millions of families. The program helped pay for everyday items and essentials — food and gas, rides to the emergency room and child care, school clothes and holiday gifts. Funding for the program was discontinued and will be remembered as a one-time experiment.

\textsuperscript{53} The cities and the projects are described on the website: Mayors for Guaranteed Income, accessed on August 10, 2021. \url{https://www.mayorsforagi.org}
A Measured and Standard Living Wage

The third experiment is the adoption of a “living wage,” a growing movement among local governments as well as in the private sector. It is founded on the idea that in an equitable society no one working full-time should be dependent on government support for basic needs. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) created a rational measure of a living wage by calculating a wage matched to the actual costs (for every county in the US) of a list of necessities that vary widely across the US. It is a market-based approach that draws upon geographically specific expenditure data related to a family's likely minimum food, childcare, health care and insurance, housing, transportation, and other basic necessities (e.g., clothing, personal care items, etc.). The MIT definition of a living wage draws on those cost elements and the rough effects of income and payroll taxes to determine the minimum employment earnings necessary to meet a family's basic needs while also maintaining self-sufficiency. Their calculations draw a very fine line between the financial independence of the working poor and the need to seek out public assistance or suffer consistent and severe housing and food insecurity.

A national movement toward increasing the minimum wage, the lowest hourly amount that an employee may be paid for their labor, has been a response to the labor shortage during the pandemic. Currently 29 states including New Mexico have set the minimum wage above the federal level of $7.25/hour. During 2021, 24 state legislatures set goals to raise the minimum wage, following the lead of local governments.

The minimum wage in the City of Santa Fe is $12.32/hour, yet that is not a living wage according to MIT calculations. Based on a survey of costs in our county in 2021 that income is not enough to support a single individual without children, which would require $15.51/hour.55 The Santa Fe City Council is considering an ordinance to raise city salaries to a minimum of $15/hour. This action is in line with many municipalities and private employers who have acted independently to raise their minimum wage to $15/hour. Some of the largest companies in America have already made the move to a starting wage of $15.00/hour including Amazon, Best Buy, CVS, Chipotle, Southwest Airline, Target, Walmart, and Wells Fargo. By the end of 2021, forty businesses in Santa Fe were paying $15/hour or more: Bank of America ($21), Presbyterian Healthcare Services ($19), Meow Wolf ($17), Cornerstones, The Santa Fe Animal Shelter, First Judicial District Attorney’s office, Target, Ecco Espresso & Gelato, Open Kitchen, What the Truck Catering Company and Food Truck ($20), Dr. Field Goods, Ahh Dental ($20), Whole Foods, Best Buy, Violet Crown, Thornburg Investment Management, Kouri + Corrao Gallery, Ten Thousand Waves (except servers at Izanami), Santa Fe Recovery Center, The Housing Trust, New Mexico

Inter-Faith Housing, Santa Fe Storage and Moving, Liu Liu Liu, Descartes Labs, The Alley, The Food Depot, Santa Fe Tails, Seret & Sons, Bishop’s Lodge, The Finishing Touch, Team Builders Behavioral Health, Chiropractor Windy Carter, La Montañita Coop, Indigo Baby, Santa María El Mirador, We Do Windows Santa Fe, Journey Montessori School, AXCES Research Group, La Fonda (kitchen staff, front desk, reservations, and retail sales start at $15.50).

Yet the necessary wages for a family of three (the average family size in Santa Fe), far exceeds those amounts, unless both parents are working to cover the minimal costs of food, housing, medical insurance and care, child care, transportation, and other essentials. The MIT calculator is very specific about the number of working adults and children in a household: Their estimate of a living wage for a single parent with two children is $36.90/hour; using the same costs, a family of three with two working adults requires $16.63/hour per adult; while a family of three with one child and only one working adult requires $29.46.

These numbers may seem high and often employers and economists have resisted raising wages, arguing that increasing the minimum wage would hurt business and cost employees their jobs. However, Professor David Card of the University of California, Berkeley, who recently received the 2021 Nobel Prize in economics, for his empirical research that proves them wrong by studying the data to compare the effect of wage increase on workers. He found that “...raising the minimum wage didn’t necessarily cause businesses to lay off workers and hurt employment.”

---

APPENDIX C.
SANTA FE BASIC NEEDS BUDGET
Based on MIT Living Wage Calculator
Demonstrating the Hard Decisions When Wages
Do Not Match Necessary Expenditures

APPENDIX D.
REPORT TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Scott Bunton

In 2015, Scott Bunton completed a career in public policy at the state and federal levels, during which he held the following positions:

- Staff director of the human resources committee of the Texas House of Representatives
- Staff director of the human services committee of the National Governors’ Association
- Domestic policy director and subsequently policy staff director for the U.S. Senate’s Democratic leadership
- Chief of staff for Senator Tim Wirth (D-CO)
- Government policy adviser for the MCI Telecommunications Corporation
- Policy director and national security adviser for Senator John Kerry (D-MA)
- U.S. Deputy Under Secretary of Commerce for nonproliferation strategic trade controls
- Executive director of a Congressional advisory commission on China
- Executive vice president of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a nationally-recognized human services policy development and advocacy organization

Scott and his wife Linda moved to Santa Fe in 2015, where he is a member of The Food Depot’s board of directors and chairs its public policy committee; a member of the board of directors of the Santa Fe Council on International Relations; an appointee to the City’s Water Conservation Committee; vice president and treasurer of the Estancia Primera homeowners association; vice president of the Los Altos homeowners association; and a member of the board of directors of the Rosario Hill Compound association.

Carolyn Kastner

Carolyn Kastner is curator emerita of the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum. Since earning her Ph.D. in American Art History at Stanford University, her research, publications, teaching and curatorial projects have been focused on the diversity of American modernism. Upon retirement, she returned to her first career in public policy when she joined The Food Depot Advocacy Committee. Between 1978-1993 Carolyn worked to improve state and federal laws protecting children, first as a program director at the National Conference of State Legislatures and later with several national non-profit organizations.
David Sundberg

David Sundberg worked as a chef in the hospitality industry for over two decades. Throughout his career he has engaged with organizations that champion food access, local food, and community health. He moved to Santa Fe in 2009 and has since shifted his career to work more intensively within the regional food system. He is the co-chair of the Santa Fe Food Policy Council and participates with The Food Depot’s Advocacy Committee. David envisions a thriving, healthy, and active community where no one worries about the source of their or their child’s next meal.

Gerry Fairbrother, Ph.D.

Gerry Fairbrother, Ph.D. is a retired health services professor, now living in Santa Fe. Dr. Fairbrother’s research during her career emphasized access to and quality of health care, especially for vulnerable populations. She has led numerous research projects, including projects on participation and effects of Medicaid, use of technology and registries, and physician payment. She is widely published in scholarly journals. In retirement, she is active in social action groups, like RESULTS, the Policy Committee for Health Action New Mexico, and the Advocacy Committee of The Food Depot. She also stays current with anti-poverty legislation and policies and writes about these for newspapers.

Dr. Fairbrother holds a Ph.D. from The Johns Hopkins University and is a Fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine and of the Ambulatory Pediatric Association, and a member of the National Association of Social Insurance. She has served on IOM Committees and on the CMS Technical Expert Panel on National Impact Assessment of CMS Quality Measures. She is an Associate Editor for Policy and Health Services Research for Academic Pediatrics, a leading pediatric journal.

Sherry F. Hooper

Sherry Hooper took over as executive director for The Food Depot, Northern New Mexico’s food bank in September 2001. Prior to taking this position, she spent more than nine years as Community Relations Director for Harvesters, Kansas City’s food bank. She serves as President for the Board of Directors of the New Mexico Association of Food Banks, and is a member of the Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, and the Emergency Food and Shelter Board for Santa Fe County. Ms. Hooper co-founded the Santa Fe City and County Advisory Council on Food Policy and served on the Council as a City of Santa Fe appointee for four years. She returned to the Food Policy Council in May 2018 as a City of Santa Fe appointee. She formerly served as chairperson of the Northern New Mexico Chapter of Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster.