



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 1, 2020

509,866 Meals Delivered
\$750,000 Worth of Food Purchased
710,896 Pounds of Food Boxed
2,040 Volunteers

The State Aging and Long-Term Services Department wraps up the food boxing and distribution operation that provided more than half a million meals to homebound, low-income seniors and adults with disabilities across the state of New Mexico

NEW MEXICO- As soon as COVID cases were confirmed in New Mexico, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham directed her departments to rally resources in order to bolster support for our state's most vulnerable. The Aging and Long-Term Services Department [ALTSD] created an entire food boxing and distribution operation, from the ground up, in order to address food insecurities for the vulnerable population of homebound, low-income seniors and adults with disabilities. For months, the Department coordinated bulk food buys from Roadrunner Food Bank, Shamrock Distributors, Ben E. Keith Distributors, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Collectively, more than 700,000 pounds of food, in the form of pallets were unpacked, placed in a socially distanced assembly line, and then repacked into meal boxes with 14 days' worth of food items. From staples like pancake mix and oatmeal to beef stew and canned vegetables, all of the non-perishables were then distributed to hub sites across the state. Home delivery was provided by staff and volunteers from ALTSD's Aging Network.

"It has been so inspiring to see our community come together in creative ways to rally around those most vulnerable," said ALTSD Cabinet Secretary Katrina Hotrum-Lopez. "So many partner organizations joined us in this massive effort, from other state departments to faith-based organizations and volunteers. Thank you New Mexico!"

ALTSD Planning and Policy Director, Dolores Gonzales, led the project on behalf of the Department, "I am so very thankful to our partners and volunteers. Without their help, it would have been near to impossible to get this operation up and running. St. Pius Catholic High School graciously lent us their gymnasium for nearly 14 weeks at no cost. Bernalillo County provided forklifts and operators every time a shipment of food came in. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints generously gave us a humanitarian grant, provided two additional semi-trucks of food - grown from farmers and ranchers in Utah - wrote letters to our seniors, and provided 20-40 volunteers daily to help pack the boxes."

Kathryn Kretz, a caregiver for her aging parents in San Miguel County, is grateful, especially with the discontinuation of congregate meals at senior centers, "My parents are very elderly and it is very important for people out in the rural areas of northern New Mexico to have this provided to them, because it's a long way into town and a lot of them can't drive anymore. San Miguel County, and other counties in northern New Mexico, are very poor. Especially with this pandemic, it's provided a real service to all of these folks around here to have food brought and delivered by friendly people and people that are actually caring about them."

Secretary Hotrum-Lopez reiterated her thankfulness of the Governor's strong leadership, the ALTSD staff, volunteers, and to the many partners who stepped up from the private, public, and non-profit sectors to help with the effort across New Mexico, including:

- Department of Senior Affairs, City of Albuquerque
- Children Youth & Families Department
- Human Services Department
- Albuquerque Police Department
- Bernalillo County Department of Behavioral Health Services
- Smalley And Company
- Robert F. Kennedy Charter School and their Administration
- St. Pius Catholic High School
- The Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints
- Duke City Gladiators Indoor Football Team
- Department of Transportation
- New Mexico Baptist Relief
- The Taxation and Revenue Department's Motor Vehicle Division
- Department of Health
- Regulations and Licensing Department
- General Services Department
- Developmental Disabilities Council

Funding for the project was provided by the Federal CARES Act.

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