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NEWS RELEASE

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New Mexico provides $5 million to foodbanks statewide

SANTA FE – The New Mexico Human Services Department was appropriated $5 million from House Bill 1, during the second special session of the New Mexico Legislature last month to support and supplement emergency feeding operations at food banks across the state. The funds are being distributed equitably this week to the five major food banks that support all 33 counties and tribal communities through an existing hunger relief network:

- Roadrunner Food Bank in Albuquerque
- The Food Depot in Santa Fe
- The Community Pantry in Gallup
- Food Bank of Eastern New Mexico in Clovis
- ECHO Inc. in Farmington

The Human Services Department administers the USDA TEFAP program that distributes food to low income New Mexicans Statewide in all counties, and will use poverty data by county to divide the $5 million between the food banks and the counties they serve. The funds will be used to purchase food to supplement the USDA TEFAP program and other donated food that is distributed through a network of 600 food pantries in New Mexico.

“Many New Mexicans continue to struggle with food insecurity during these difficult times. Thanks to the New Mexico Legislature’s allocation these funds will help families keep food on the table,” said Angela Medrano, deputy secretary for the Human Services Department.

Road Runner Food Bank estimates the $5 million will provide approximately 4.3 million pounds of food or 3.6 million meals for the state of New Mexico. One of the benefits of partnering with food banks includes their purchasing power through their network of partners at highly discounted rates.

Recent research released by the food banks’ national organization Feeding America shows that hunger during the pandemic is expected to increase. In their latest brief, *The Impact of the Coronavirus on Food Insecurity in 2020*, (released October 2020) it revised their initial projections of how food insecurity may increase in 2020, using updated assumptions about projected unemployment and poverty rates. New Mexico ranks seventh among the states with the 10 highest rates of projected food in security and third highest for projected child food insecurity for 2020. According to the study in 2018, pre-pandemic 315,990 people in New Mexico, including 114,180 children, did not have adequate access to nutritious food to live a healthy life. The updated projections in the study predict this number is likely to grow 76,430, including 33,310 children with approximately 392,420 or 18.7 percent of New Mexicans (1 in 5) may experience food insecurity in 2020, including 147,490 children (1 in 3).

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