

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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# **National *KIDS COUNT* Data Book Shows Improvement in New Mexico Child Poverty**

**NM Better than National Average in High Housing Cost Burden and Kids without Health Insurance**

ALBUQUERQUE, NM— New Mexico has made improvements in lowering child poverty over the past decade, according to the national *2024 KIDS COUNT® Data Book*, a 50-state annual report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The *Data Book*, which analyzes how children and families are faring, was released today by the Baltimore, MD-based foundation. This year, the *Data Book* also includes information on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and chronic absences.

“Although there’s still work to do, New Mexico’s official child poverty rate continues to improve but change takes time,” said Gabrielle Uballez, Executive Director of New Mexico Voices for Children. “And this measure of poverty only considers income. When we look instead at the supplemental poverty measure, which measures the impact of some of our best poverty-fighting policies, we see that New Mexico’s investments in families through refundable tax credits and income support programs have a real impact on lowering poverty rates and supporting family well-being.”

The national *Data Book* tracks a total of 16 indicators of child well-being, including issues such as child poverty, high school graduation rates, and teen birth rates, that are grouped under four domains – economic well-being, education, health, and family and community. The Casey Foundation ranks the 50 states in each of the four domains and in overall child well-being. Although New Mexico only ranks 50th in one of the four domains (education), the state was ranked 50th in overall child well-being – the same that it was ranked last year. The rankings only account for child outcomes, with no measure of progress made or state inputs that affect those outcomes.

“New Mexico’s ranking in the education domain is heavily impacted by national standardized test scores, including fourth grade reading proficiency,” said Emily Wildau, KIDS COUNT Coordinator at New Mexico Voices for Children. “Reading proficiency is critical for students to succeed academically and as adults. These scores do not reflect the ability of our children, but rather an education system that is not designed with our multicultural, multilingual students in mind.” New Mexico K-12 students of color and those who are Native American, from low-income families, and who have disabilities tend to not fare as well as their white, more affluent peers, largely as a result of generations of underfunding the education system and a lack of culturally responsive instruction and support.

Institutionalized and systemic racism exacerbate inequities in child well-being, which are demonstrated in many of the KIDS COUNT indicators. Bottom-ranked states in the *Data Book* tend to have higher

populations of children of color, highlighting that programs and systems are not designed to support them.

“New Mexico’s ranking is not a reflection of who we are but serves as a motivation to continue improving the systems in New Mexico that make it possible for kids and families to thrive,” Uballez said.

#### **RELEASE INFORMATION**

The 2024 *KIDS COUNT*® Data Book is available at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org). Additional information is available at [www.aecf.org/databook](http://www.aecf.org/databook). Journalists interested in creating maps, graphs, and rankings for stories about the Data Book can use the KIDS COUNT Data Center at <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>.

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#### **About New Mexico Voices for Children**

New Mexico Voices for Children works to improve the status, well-being, and racial and ethnic equity of New Mexico’s children, families, and communities in the areas of health, education, and economic security by promoting public policies through credible research and effective advocacy. NM Voices manages the state’s KIDS COUNT program. For more information, visit [www.nmvoices.org](http://www.nmvoices.org).

#### **About the Annie E. Casey Foundation**

The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation’s young children, youth and young adults by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org). KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.