

**New
Mexico
Narrative
Project**



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Preface

The New Mexico Narrative Project set out to find ways for progressives to connect more deeply with New Mexicans and communicate their vision and agenda in more authentic language that resonates, excites, and persuades.

Our efforts began where this handbook does, and where our team always recommends progressives start: where New Mexicans live. **Mapping the New Mexico Mindset** (page 5) outlines the dominant emotions and feelings, aspirations, pain points, and personal values of New Mexicans today. By understanding how everyday New Mexicans feel and think, we can better understand what policies can help them, identify tripwires and blind spots, and craft messaging that pulls the right levers and presses the right buttons.

***What's changed in 2020:** Not surprisingly, New Mexicans are more pessimistic now than ever. But personal values and aspirations are durable almost by definition, while COVID-19 and the resulting economic downturn exacerbated all the pain points and brought the divisions in “the land of contrasts” into even starker relief.*

The next section, **The New Mexico Narrative** (page 17) presents the progressive values that best align with New Mexicans' values, and best support a progressive agenda: family and community, fairness, opportunity, and respect. This section has examples of language that bring these values to life, and show how opponents of a progressive agenda “violate” these values. This guide also lays out a **Master Message** (page 26) – a progressive vision of how values can guide government, leadership, the economy, and the rules of society in general.

***What's changed in 2020:** Two big things. First, we updated the “respect” value pillar – putting greater emphasis on the idea that respecting cultures starts by respecting people, and also being more explicit about the need for more representative leadership. Also, with increasing anger towards greedy corporations that treat workers poorly and harm communities, we've updated the villain to be “greedy corporations and the well-connected.”*

***What's new in 2020:** We've added a section: **Fleshing out the Economic Narrative**. In response to the steering committee's recognition of the need to develop a more cohesive progressive vision when it came to jobs, workers, and businesses in the state.*

The Narrative is as much a method as it is a message framework. The **7 Rules** (page 27) provides a way to apply the lessons of the Narrative to other issues, including ones other than those that our research and analysis covered. These rules ensure messaging resonates deeply with New Mexicans and remains deeply rooted in their values and the progressive vision. **Fleshing out the Economic Narrative** (page 29) and **Narrative in Action** (page 34) walk through four examples: Economy, Government, Education, and Poverty. Keep in mind, the Narrative is not an issue-specific messaging brief, but rather a document that gives you the tools and guidelines to apply to your own issues.

This book contains a lot of information – culled from over 15,000 pages of qualitative interviews over both phases, three large-scale quantitative efforts, and the collective effort and institutional knowledge of a large and diverse steering committee (See **Methodology** for more details). The **Tear Sheets** at the end are intended to make it easier to process and use in everyday efforts and our team encourages you to tear them out for handy reference.

A note from the contributors to this handbook: *We are very thankful to everyone that has dedicated their time and efforts into making the New Mexico Narrative Project a reality, but this effort could not have been accomplished without the leadership, guidance, and dedication of the Center for Civic Policy and America Votes New Mexico.*

Methodology



The original Narrative Project grew out of qualitative and quantitative research conducted in 2016. This “Version 2.0” has been updated after a round of research in 2020.

With each iteration of research, the research team and CCP steering committee collaboratively (via Zoom call, naturally) shaped the materials we would be testing. In these talks, our team and CCP’s steering committee, along with representatives from their partners, reached consensus on all the survey instrument’s strategic elements—from the language used to the nuances of those objectives tested – to ensure that the findings were useful to and actionable for as broad a group as possible.

“Listen first” is a key imperative of The Narrative Project. In 2016 and then again in 2020, our team kicked off with a deep-dive qualitative effort that listened as voters talked about their lives – in an online setting that encourages candor, in the privacy of their own homes and on their own time, and through provocative, open-ended questioning. Over the course of two weeks, they talk (or type) about how they feel when they wake up in the morning, their day, their family, their goals, the barriers to those goals, their past and future, and the past and future of the state. In this most recent round, we also heard about how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected them, how they felt about changes in New Mexico, the U.S., and the world, and their hopes and fears for the future.

In both 2016 and 2020, we followed with quantitative research to drill-down into the qualitative findings. This research was conducted with voters across a broad swath of New Mexico – but with significant oversamples of Hispanics, Native Americans, and voters “in the middle” (not hard partisans). Our quantitative research was also offered in Spanish.

In 2020, we also added an oversample and focus to a diverse range of rural voters – primarily because of a deeper focus on economic and industry issues that can be particularly contentious in those areas. And, in response to previous research findings, we added an additional screen on Native Americans to make sure those identifying as Native American also culturally-identified with or were enrolled members of a tribe, and/or grew up on a reservation. We observed measurable attitudinal differences between those who fit at least one of these criteria and those who did not.

The people of New Mexico have a unique set of experiences that shape how they view and live their lives. While not every aspect of this mindset is unique to New Mexico, the dimensions of each one and the combination set New Mexicans apart. This handbook was created to map out the mindset of New Mexicans and guide progressive messaging. In this latest version, we’ve updated the handbook to reflect not just some of the changes in New Mexicans’ thinking, but also the new challenges that have developed since then – and some updates to the core narrative itself.

Mapping the Mindset



To start, our team has divided the New Mexico mindset into four key parts (see below). This mindset map has remained largely steady since the 2016 handbook, but we've made a few updates in 2020 to reflect the new world. The COVID-19 pandemic certainly dominates people's attention right now and has amplified many of the pain points, and shifted the mood on some fronts. But it has not fundamentally altered the underlying mindset that we mapped out in 2016.

The elements of the mindset map don't, and shouldn't, always translate directly into messaging. Instead, their primary function is to help advocates better understand how to meet New Mexicans where they live. This, in turn, should help shape policy portfolios that address their needs, and communicate in ways that make people feel well-represented by their leaders. When we don't do this, voters feel like leaders and organizations care more about their own priorities than the priorities – and the problems – of those they claim to serve.



Emotions in Play

- Anxious
- Uncertain
- Ignored
- Frustrated
- Pessimistic
- Fearful



Personal Values

- Family
- Culture
- Community
- Resilience
- Responsibility
- Respect
- Faith/Spirituality



Pain Points

- New Mexico is doing worse than most other states
- Too many low-wage, no benefit jobs that offer little ability to advance
- It's too often about "who you know"
- Anger towards big corporations and wealthy
- Poor education system
- Healthcare expenses
- Not enough assistance during the pandemic



Aspirations

- Financial security and stability
- New, bold solutions
- Freedom to live life the way you want
- Safe, strong, and healthy community for your family
- Confidence that their kids can succeed, especially in New Mexico
- Representation/ having their voices heard and a seat at the table



Emotions and Feelings

When someone is panicking, a hyper-rational argument won't land. If someone is brimming with confidence, a naysayer's gloomy predictions will likely go ignored. In the same way, when progressives misread or fail to acknowledge the emotional makeup of the electorate, our messaging has little chance of connecting. In that spirit, New Mexicans today feel:

Anxious and Uncertain

Anxiety dominates the mindset for most New Mexicans. Financial strain remains the greatest cause of that anxiety, and COVID-19 only exacerbates the pain because even New Mexicans who are staying afloat so far during the pandemic recognize that the bottom could fall out at any moment with so many environmental factors out of their control. And it's little wonder, considering:

Economy is sinking, like a ship with a hole in it....I cannot get a new job in a resort as of today, if I could, I have no one to watch my child.

NATIVE AMERICAN, 18-34, NORTH,
RURAL

- 1-in-3 New Mexican respondents report they don't have the ability to pay their bills and expenses each month
- A little under half of respondents worry that they, or someone they love will get COVID-19
- 1-in-3 respondents fear they will not be able to cover healthcare expenses
- 1-in-4 realize the bottom could fall out at any minute, and fear they may lose their job

With a lack of clarity on how long COVID-19 will rear its ugly head and other stressors, even those who currently feel relatively stable acknowledge the precariousness of their personal situations, considering how fast the world can change, and how little warning they may get.

Women in particular fear for their ability to handle both work and childcare, and rural New Mexicans fear their local economies have nowhere to go but down even further.

With massive layoffs in the hospitality and tourism sector, and struggling small businesses closing their doors, even respondents in traditionally steady sectors fear for massive layoffs.

Healthcare costs in particular are a significant source of stress for many, as medical necessities loom top of mind, and cannot be ignored depending on the severity.

Though not as widespread as financial anxiety, safety concerns are also significant and surface across the state – especially in Albuquerque and Hispanic communities. High levels of poverty, homelessness, and substance abuse all contribute to this.

Ignored

New Mexicans across the state feel ignored on a number of fronts. The most common is not particularly unique to the state: the sense that those in the middle are left out and left behind, earning “too much” to qualify for help, but not enough to afford the things they need.

Anger towards the wealthy and big corporations is very strong, possibly more so than seen previously. In addition to the tax loopholes, incentives, and other handouts enjoyed by the wealthy and big corporations, there’s awareness of how many have benefited from the pandemic hurting so many other people and small businesses.

There is also some resentment towards those with lower incomes, with voters simultaneously recognizing the huge challenges of poverty while also offering Reagan-era rhetoric around “lazy” people collecting endless welfare checks instead of getting a job.

New Mexicans also feel ignored in other ways:

- New Mexicans as a whole feel that the government isn’t doing enough to help them get by during COVID – especially those who are still working but seeing supplemental benefits go to those who are unemployed.
- Smaller towns and rural areas feel neglected in reaping any benefit of economic development, left to languish because of their small size and/or distance from Albuquerque.
- Access to quality health care is difficult as ever for rural or low-income areas and communities of color.
- Indigenous communities in particular are not given a seat at the table or treated equitably.
- Both Hispanics and whites often report feeling disadvantaged because of their identity. Some Hispanics feel prejudged or held back by stereotypes, while others feel “not diverse by New Mexico standards.” And we’ve historically seen a notable segment of whites feeling ignored by government and employers alike and feeling that *not* being Hispanic puts them at a disadvantage in this state.
- There’s even some sensitivity that New Mexico as a whole is a “second-class” state often forgotten by people around the country.

Frustrated

New Mexicans face mounting frustration about being “stuck” in a place of constant instability with their finances, while there’s stagnation on their wages and an inability to advance.

What’s uniquely New Mexican here is their perception of the state’s economy as chronically underdeveloped. They’re frustrated that New Mexico can’t support the types of jobs their children need, and are mystified by the inability of the government to bring in new industries – in particular, not capitalizing on the vast potential for renewable energy in the state.

Optimistic Pessimistic

In the 2020 update, we have replaced what was originally “Optimistic” with “Pessimistic”. In 2016, we saw that despite the frustrations and anxieties they faced, New Mexicans remained optimistic. At a high level, the main source of this optimism was the recognition that they made it work so far, through hard work and the support of their families and communities.

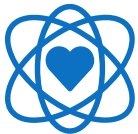
2020 however, has broken even the most resilient of optimists. New Mexico’s problems were already huge and systemic, and they have only gotten bigger with no solutions in sight.



There is one encouraging exception on this front, however. We did notice a distinct strain of optimism about the new, more “progressive” government and the direction things *were* headed before the pandemic. But this hope is, not surprisingly, pretty drowned out by the doom of COVID-19 and economic issues.

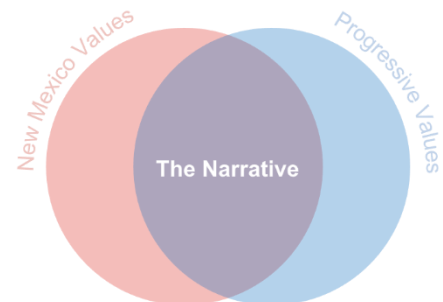
Fearful

New Mexicans are a resilient people, but resilience is not a long-term solution. Without the tools, information, or jobs necessary to plan for long term goals, New Mexicans are fearful of what the future holds. That apprehension is caused by a combination of anxiety, uncertainty, and neglect.



Personal Values

Before laying out the value pillars of the progressive narrative, we must understand the personal values New Mexicans bring to the table. Eventually, we look for where these values overlap with progressive values, which can help advance policy goals, and which progressives can “own” in a competitive environment. But, as with emotions, if progressives can’t demonstrate they understand the values below, or worse, seem to disrespect them, we will have lost before we have begun.



Family

Family is central to identity, more than anything else, and not limited to just a few people, but stretching out into the community with long arms, encompassing at least tens, but often hundreds.

WHITE, 65+, SOUTH

Family dominates life in New Mexico for people across demographics – and can extend deep into the community. Neighbors, as well as like-minded communities are there for each other. Family isn't just a support system in New Mexico, but also a big part of New Mexicans' social circle.

This prioritization of family dominates New Mexicans' mindsets when it comes to many key issues. The issues that are often most important in their minds, such as safe communities, good schools, and good jobs, are about ensuring they can build a successful life for their family. Keeping family tightly knit – both emotionally and geographically – across generations is a key goal.

Culture and Communities

Heritage is a point of pride for the state – from the influence (and prevalence) of diverse cultures, to the traditions they carry on, to even the literal celebrations that result. To many, this heritage is not only a part of their daily lives, but also a part of their identity as individuals and as New Mexicans. It's also something not just to celebrate, but to protect. Indeed, many see New Mexico's diversity as a model for the country – one of the few things New Mexicans see their state as doing better than others.

Three interrelated dimensions of this value emerged in our initial work:

- 1) Respect for cultures and heritages
- 2) The benefits that come when different cultures blend and interact
- 3) The stabilizing force of traditions passed down through generations

But in our latest efforts, a fourth dimension emerged very strongly: the recognition that New Mexico needed to do a better job to give communities a voice.



Our state's traditions are part of New Mexico's identity and daily life. Protecting our diversity and instilling its importance in our next generation is essential to ensuring our state thrives.



While many states see diversity as a problem to be addressed, New Mexico provides an example of how to embrace the opportunities that come when you respect others' traditions, heritage and culture.



Government needs to better reflect New Mexico's basic value of respect for all different people and communities by ensuring they have a 'seat at the table' in state government.

Resilience

At the individual level, resilience is typically defined as the ability to recover from difficult life events, but in New Mexico, this value is understood communally. New Mexicans are resilient, and proud of it. The combination of desert/rural survival skills, the western mentality, and even the necessity of navigating a structurally poor economy means, as one woman put it, “Achieving success in NM may take more gumption than in other places” (White, 35-49, North). The tough times have only made them stronger.

Responsibility

Though sometimes perceived by insiders and advocates as being all about “personal responsibility,” New Mexicans take a far more expansive view of responsibility as a value. With a family that extends beyond blood relatives, it’s not just about themselves and their immediate family for New Mexicans. They feel a responsibility to contribute to and care about their community, society, and those in need. This is often intensified because they recognize there are more barriers to success because of the weaker economy in New Mexico, compared to other states. This explains how a strong desire to address poverty fortunately *tends to dwarf* suspicions that people in poverty do not take enough responsibility, as much as our opposition would love to co-opt the value.

Responsibility as a value extends beyond New Mexicans themselves – beyond the sense that people should be contributing their fair share and improving the community, there’s also a sense that companies have a responsibility to New Mexico to be treating their workers well.

Faith and Spirituality

Faith and spirituality in New Mexico are other aspects of community and culture. Many talk about religion influencing their own beliefs and traditions – from Native American spiritual practices to the dominance of the Catholic Church in many New Mexican towns.

For many, religion was a huge part of growing up and continues to bond them with their communities. For others, it is a big part of their daily life, their decision-making, and their moral compass. Still others speak more about how their spirituality – not necessarily linked to just one or any formal religion or practice – influences their life and shapes their values.

Personal values... (felt to be in too short supply statewide)

Respect & Kindness

The golden rule – treat others how you want to be treated – is prominent here, as it is elsewhere. In our initial Narrative efforts in 2016, there was a level of politeness and kindness that’s seen by people as particularly New Mexican. Whether it’s helping those around them, respecting people’s opinions and decisions, or being a good role model to your own and others’ children.

We saw a lot less of that in our 2020 research, replaced instead by the sense that respect as a basic value has been lost. Political polarization is at the root of much of this, but the pandemic also laid bare both the best, and worst, of humanity for people to see.

Hard Work

Hard work – the idea that you can succeed if you’re given the right opportunities and work hard once you have them – is an ideal espoused across the demographic and ideological spectrums. Nearly all New Mexicans we spoke to closely identify with being hardworking.

Many, however, felt this hugely important personal value is in short supply across New Mexico, with its “Land of Mañana” sentiment. Some blame New Mexico’s slow economic growth in part on this perceived lack of work ethic, that people who stay here lack ambition or are “stuck”, relying on a “handout” culture that is rampant in the state. Compounding the challenge is the fact that progressives are often seen as particularly divorced from this value because their policy solutions enable this kind of behavior.

In this unprecedented year though, New Mexicans are somewhat kinder to themselves and their fellow citizens, given the consistently poor economy and growing inequality despite people working longer and more hours than ever. The economic repercussions of the pandemic put the fact that “it doesn’t matter how hard you work if the system is rigged” in plain view: the rich, the powerful, the well-connected got off scot-free, while everyday people bore the brunt of their cost-cutting or were put in harm’s way by their continued operations.



Pain Points

Much more than in other places, New Mexicans are acutely aware of the interrelation of the state’s biggest problems: education, poverty, crime, and (lack of) jobs. As a result, New Mexicans view leaders that are not focused on these issues as out of touch with the reality everyday New Mexicans face. On the flip side, voters can be particularly animated by political leaders with solutions-oriented policy priorities and commitments to bold, long-term plans.

But it’s important to note, they are skeptical of leaders who they view as just throwing money and old, failed ideas at the problems. They know these issues must be tackled at the root to empower families to break cycles of poverty.



New Mexico’s economy is chronically poor

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, New Mexicans believed the state’s economy to be poor and lagging because of structural issues more than the recession or slow recovery. Over the last few months, a majority of voters’ financial situation have “remained the same” but this flatline is evidence not of a stable economy, but a consistently bad one. There is a sense that New Mexico remains separate when the national economy swings up (and voters in the past have been acutely envious of growth in Texas and California), but still bears the brunt impact of its downturns.

The majority of New Mexicans feel like they’re treading water, and nearly a third feel they’re falling backwards without the ability to get ahead. The economic blowback of the pandemic has been worse among certain groups: women more than men, Native Americans and Hispanic women. The lack of industries and state of the economy leave New Mexicans feeling that their prospects are slim, with low-wage jobs that offer

little opportunity to advance. And this lack of jobs isn't hurting just New Mexicans, it's driving their younger, educated, adult children from the state, because there's just such little opportunity.

The interrelated factors blamed with remarkable consistency are:

- Economic dependency on the government and military
- Limited private industries beyond oil and gas
- Low-wage jobs

Opportunities for progressives:

- ❖ The issue here is not just jobs, but jobs that offer livable wages, health care and other benefits, and – to a lesser extent at this point – opportunities to advance. New Mexicans want to know that they, and their children, will be able to get ahead, not just get by. We need to offer New Mexicans a new vision on what participating in our economy can and should look like for workers.
- ❖ New Mexicans are very attuned to the state's industry mix, and see new industries as critical to fundamental change. Some are mystified that more effort has not been made to bring more of the clean energy industry to the state, but others more directly blame the stronghold of the oil and gas lobby on New Mexico politics.

Opportunity and watchout:

- ❖ For residents in the South and rural areas, it's not just that New Mexico as a whole is chronically poor but that investments and new opportunities brokered by government and politicians are almost always centered in the North, leaving the South and rural areas hung out to dry.

The cost of health care

As it does for people nationwide, the cost of good health care keeps voters up at night. Many are already rationing medication or skipping needed appointments, but far more than that live in fear of a having medical issue they can't afford.

It's all about who you know, not how hard you work

Our team heard this phrase over and over from New Mexicans. It was typically applied to government corruption (both state and local), but also often applied in their own workplace or communities.

To New Mexicans, this sentiment is the antithesis of fairness. The corruption isn't just frustrating or shameful, the middle sees it as standing in the way of their success. Nepotism and favoritism keep them from getting better jobs and prevent leaders from making the choices necessary to strengthen New Mexico.

New Mexicans don't want smaller government, they want less corrupt government that works for the people.

Opportunities for progressives:

- ❖ New Mexicans feel that it's impossible to get a good job – in the private sector or government – unless you know somebody. Progressives need to stand for opportunities that don't require "knowing a guy."

Watchout for progressives:

- ❖ It is critical to strongly link corruption to "well-off, out-of-touch leaders" and the "well-connected interests they serve."

Those at the “top” and the “bottom” get benefits, while everyday New Mexicans get overlooked...

Like many across the nation, everyday New Mexicans resent feeling like the rich get loopholes and other advantages while the poor get handouts. Stuck in the middle, they feel too well-off to receive any benefits from the government, too poor for the benefits of wealth, and left footing the bill for the whole system.

Their resentment towards the “top” – particularly when framed more as the “well-off and well-connected” than just the wealthy or business in general – does exceed the resentment they feel towards those they feel collect “undeserved” benefits. Indeed – as the economy gets even more challenging for everyone but the wealthy – we are seeing more people express their own need for help to afford health care, or even buy food or pay the bills, rather than (just) questioning whether others need what little help they do get. Still, we need to tread carefully to ensure progressives do not continue to be seen as enabling a “taker” mentality and not recognizing the value of hard work.

There is definitely a dependence on government assistance AND big corps getting away with murder! We all pay the price for that they don't pay enough no benefits and there goes a reliance on the government assistance again. It's a terrible loop that's almost impossible to escape trust me!

HISPANIC, 50-64, NORTH

...but there is also an increasing recognition that income inequality is spiraling out of control

As this one resident from Albuquerque says, New Mexico is a “Land of Contrasts”. So while there is a real sense of a “top, middle, and bottom”, people also often acknowledge the more realistic divide between the “haves” and “have nots.”

The pandemic has brought this reality into stark relief, as people recognize that those at the top are doing fine or often even thriving in the new economic reality.

Opportunities for progressives

- ❖ Hold up the pandemic as *one* of many ways this huge divide exists between “the haves and have nots,” but we also need to link it to longer enduring areas of inequality: issue areas like health care broadly, schools, and job access.
- ❖ Rural voters feel this divide more strongly than their partisanship might suggest. It is felt particularly acutely in these areas when it comes to health care and access to specialists, timely treatment, or even the basics.

New Mexico is a land of contrasts.
*Unfortunately, one of those contrasts is a nature of **have and have not**. We have some of the highest per capita rates of PhDs in the US. We have national labs that are doing incredible work. Yet at the same time we have **companies that pay poverty level wages that don't enable people to go to school or to move out of poor conditions they might live in...** Within the academic community the income levels are much higher. In the rural communities the salaries are lower the health care is nowhere near as robust. This kind of thing exists all over New Mexico.*

WHITE, 50-64, ABQ

Increasing anger towards corporate greed

In this latest round of research, we saw significantly more anger towards corporations for being the *real* recipients of “government handouts” in the form of massive tax breaks, bail outs and loopholes – all while paying workers wages no one can afford to live on and failing to provide healthcare benefits.

Opportunities for progressives

- ❖ We can direct the anger and economic frustration upward by naming and shaming New Mexico’s biggest villains: the big, greedy (from out-of-state) corporations who don’t treat their workers — or the communities they operate in — fairly.
- ❖ There’s arguably never been a better time to push back against messaging on handouts by directing anger and economic anxiety upward toward corporations and their political enablers, rather than outward.
- ❖ The phenomena to name and shame: CEO pay compared to average workers, tax codes which benefit greedy corporations and put small businesses at a disadvantage, and greedy corporations that don’t offer healthcare benefits and then don’t pay their fair share in taxes.

Watchout for progressives

- ❖ While we are recommending we go on offense here, we don’t want to seem anti-business (or, worse, anti-job) overall. It’s critical that we differentiate between greedy corporations – and especially large and/or out-of-state companies – and the responsible ones.
- ❖ Small businesses are as much (or more so) the hero as workers to New Mexicans and we should be drawing a wedge between them and large corporations, not progressives and all businesses.

New Mexico’s education system isn’t preparing children for the future

New Mexico’s education system is a key issue to many in the state. New Mexicans place great value in education – it’s clearly the dividing line in opportunity, and something they prioritize. But it’s also clear to them just how far behind their schools are.

They know New Mexico’s schools are ranked among the worst in the nation, are consistently underfunded, and are not paying teachers enough. As a result, good teachers are leaving and students are losing their chance to succeed. In turn, that hurts the whole economy.

Post-secondary education – its cost and availability to all students – is also a distinct pain point for New Mexicans. This includes not only making higher education more affordable, but increasing access to vocational programs, technical degrees, and apprenticeships.

Watchout for progressives

- ❖ New Mexicans already know their schools are bad and neglected. But highlighting the institution while asking them to give it more money isn’t the answer; it’s more like a bad investment pitch. We don’t need to re-educate voters about education funding and failures or try to shift the blame on politicians and big corps, there’s enough rancor there without our reminder. Focus on benefits they – their communities, their children, and the economy – could reap.

Failures of government (especially but not exclusively on COVID)

The fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic can't be understated in its role in expanding our collective imagination on the role of a government by and for the people it serves. From citations of the need for universal healthcare insurance to calls for a stronger social safety net, even some of the more anti-government New Mexicans felt that they could have and should have done more for everyday people during the pandemic (and perhaps in general).

At the same time, the government's response – mostly but not entirely at the federal level as of Summer 2020 – also convinced many that government does not care about the people and cannot “do big things.”

The next several months will likely be critical in determining which of these competing phenomena win out.



WATCHOUT FOR PROGRESSIVES

While most (not all) of the major pain points for New Mexicans above offer opportunities for progressives – there is one big watchout. The **most salient** pain point for voters is the sense that too many politicians just want to throw money at problems. There is a desperation for new solutions and exhaustion with what they perceive as an endless barrage of asks for more money without any potential to actually make progress with that money.



Aspirations

Financial security and stability.

With a plurality of New Mexicans feeling like they are treading water in their personal financial situations, the goal for many is simply a sense of stability in their own life. And this means more than just the ability to pay their bills each month – they want to feel comfortable enough in their economic situation to know they can handle an unexpected emergency or expense, and plan for their futures rather than just get by.

What stands in their way: There are many obstacles standing in the way of financial security – from low-paying jobs, to lack of opportunity to advance, to the struggles of trying to get by in a perpetually weak and rigged economy designed to enrich corporations and the already wealthy. Economic instability is only exacerbated by COVID-19 and the additional job insecurity and financial instability it brings, too. New Mexicans see their state as structurally poor and believe this, more than anything, is a barrier to security and stability.

A strong, healthy, and safe community for their family.

With “family” such a critical priority and value, a place their own family can thrive is very top-of-mind for New Mexicans, and it’s feeling increasingly difficult to find or access. The roots New Mexicans have in their communities are an incredibly important part of their lives – but those roots are feeling increasingly precarious.

What stands in their way: Poor schools, lack of jobs, and crime all impact the strength of communities. Along with education and the economy, public safety is considered one of the state government’s greatest responsibilities to its people, and also one of its biggest failings. Many reported not feeling safe, or even having personally experienced crime. They see homelessness, drunk driving, gangs, and thefts on the rise, especially in Albuquerque.

There remains a belief among some this is due largely to a lack of resources dedicated to public safety, but in 2020 we’re seeing New Mexicans increasingly recognize how connected poverty, social safety nets, and crime are.

Confidence that their kids can succeed IN New Mexico.

The desire for strong, prosperous communities is ultimately anchored in their hopes for their children. Keeping communities strong means creating a safe place where their children can live when they are grown. Everyone wants to see the next generation succeed and be better off than they were, but in New Mexico the strong ‘family’ value adds an additional dimension of wanting their kids to be close.

What stands in their way: New Mexico’s stagnant economy, the lack of *good* jobs, struggling school system, and rises in crime are hurting families and children’s futures. New Mexicans want the best for their children, and lament, but also understand, that their state’s lack of opportunity is driving the best and brightest away.

Having their voices heard and a seat at the table.

New Mexicans – particularly Hispanics and Native Americans – feel key issues are ignored and believe that a government that looks more like the state could bring focus to the right issues.

While a new wave of elected officials has ushered in optimism about the future of politics and government in the state, there's still work to be done on making government look more like the people it represents, and addressing the needs of the communities who feel most left out.

The freedom to live life the way they want.

The ultimate goal tied to the financial prospects of many New Mexicans isn't wealth or a prestigious job – it's the freedom to live life the way they want. In quantitative efforts, the team found an extremely high correlation between financial stability and security, and "freedom to live life the way you want."

What stands in their way: For now, the pandemic and the resulting economic shutdown – though there's a split with some New Mexicans concerned more about the virus' public health impact and those on the other side concerned more about the economic impacts.

But further back and longer term: The financial hardships they face in their day to day lives inhibit New Mexicans from this freedom. Top anxieties include unexpected expenses, the cost of health care, the potential to lose their job, and access to the education and training they need. Additionally, overwhelming majorities of New Mexicans believe they have no access to a job that offers livable wages and/or healthcare benefits. Almost no one feels they have access to a job that lets them balance work and family responsibilities.

The New Mexico Narrative



The New Mexico Narrative is rooted in the deeply-held values of New Mexicans and progressives. The strong emotional resonance of those values helps bind together different elements of the progressive agenda, intensify public support, motivate activists, and persuade others.

By reframing policy conversations using values as our guide, we can offer a vision that speaks to the hopes of the people. It encourages people to recognize common ground where it may not have seemed to exist before. And where policy disagreements remain, citizens will still understand the core, consistent ideals shaping the progressive position.

The Hero: Families

Any good Narrative has a hero, and the hero in New Mexico is the family – the family who is working hard, doing good in their community, and yearning to create a successful life for themselves and their children. It's the family who's not well-off or well-connected, who's been ignored by the political system and the economy, and who's seen real struggle and is fighting through it. It's the family who wants New Mexico to get stronger so their children will feel like they can stay and succeed here.

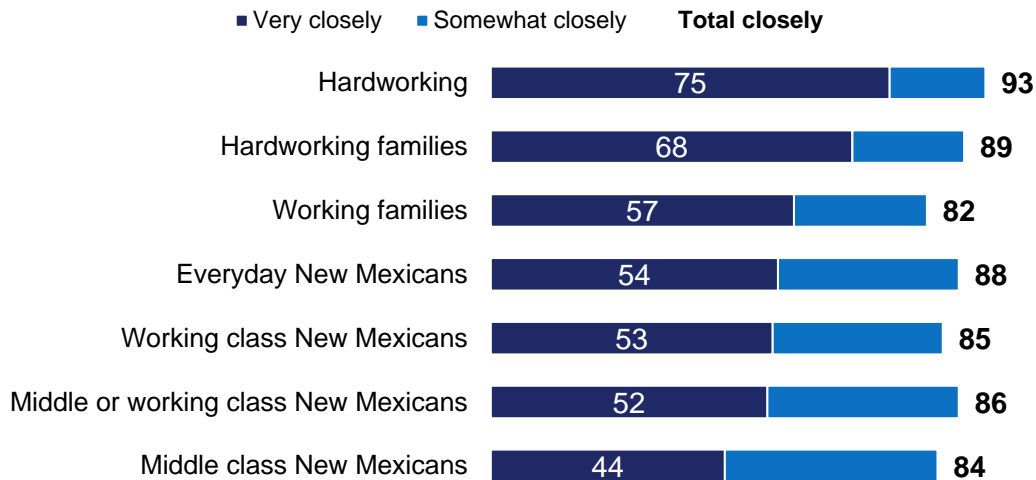
There are a few ways to be more descriptive of the hero, but perhaps most important to note is that the hero is hardworking. We want to resist any urge to cede this term. Raising a family, getting by on minimum wage, caring for an aging parent, affording health care – all of these things are hard, and that's why a whopping 93% of New Mexicans say “hardworking” describes them personally.

Strong terms:



- *Hardworking New Mexicans*
- *Hardworking families (more inclusive than 'working families')*
- *Everyday New Mexicans*
- *Middle- or working-class New Mexicans*

How well does this describe people like you?



Importantly, though this may seem like strong terrain, too often the perception is that progressives *only* focus on those at the bottom to the exclusion of those in the middle. There is a critical need to show how the progressive agenda helps everyone working to get ahead – including those in the middle. This by no means implies we shouldn't also address the needs of those who have fallen down; rather we should be framing policies in a way that are less about giving something to people, and more about creating opportunities and removing barriers so that everyone struggling can benefit.

**Many people perceive
progressives only
look out for...**

People who are down:

- Unemployed
- Families facing hardship and tragedy
- People making very low wages

**But far more
struggling people
see themselves
through a different
or wider lens as...**

People who want to lift themselves up:

- People without opportunities to create a successful life for their family
- Families struggling to keep up
- Families worried about potential hardship and tragedy around the bend
- Small business owners or aspiring business owners

The Villain: Big, greedy corporations and the well-connected

The villains are groups who not only get all the breaks by rigging the system, but also by hurting everyday New Mexicans in the process.

Which of the following would concern you more?



In 2016, we named the villain as the “well-off and well-connected” – encompassing a range of powerful interests like big corporations, the rich, corrupt politicians, and special interests. But – in one of the more major updates in 2020 – we now want to more explicitly name and shame “big, greedy corporations.”

We’re also seeing that highlighting the villain is particularly important for young people (i.e. under 40) – and for them, the “well-connected” descriptor is still quite evocative (along with greedy corporations, etc.). For older voters, the villain is not as important as the hero or aspirational vision but still a key piece of the story.

Notice we aren’t explicitly naming the wealthy in our *main, topline* description of the villain. We’ve previously seen that most people don’t believe there are very many “wealthy” people in New Mexico – especially not of the scale the phrase typically implies. And the anger does seem more concentrated towards greedy corporations. But when fleshing out the story, there are pain points to tap when it comes to the super-rich:

- 1) Super-rich politicians.
- 2) The super-rich not paying their fair share of taxes in this state.

An important caveat: New Mexicans are of two minds regarding businesses – they want to hold corporations accountable to pay their fair share and act responsibly, but also recognize New Mexico’s overwhelming need for businesses to come here, grow, and create jobs. **They are not anti-business, but many perceive progressives as such (or at least in favor of an agenda that is bad for business), so take care not to paint with too broad a brush.**

Get on the offensive against the well-connected and big corporations and getting them to pay their fair share, or fighting corporate giveaways and loopholes.

1) Be specific about the type of corporation that's the problem:



- Greedy corporations not paying workers livable wages
- CEOs making 300 times what the average worker makes
- Greedy corporations not paying their fair share in taxes
- The super-rich not paying their fair share of taxes in this state



The real problem keeping middle- and working-class families down is greedy, out-of-state corporations that don't pay their fair share in taxes or pay workers livable wages or offer basic benefits.

2) Connect to political corruption...

3) ...and show how the villain harms the heroes:



Well-connected corporations and their high-priced lobbyists get huge giveaways and corporate handouts that everyday New Mexicans pay for.



Laws and tax codes favor greedy and irresponsible corporations instead of responsible businesses.



The opposition would rather protect the big oil and gas interests that fund their campaigns than allow the clean energy industry to thrive here.

4) Double down on political corruption with young people



We need to get rid of the old boys' network (and/or well-connected insiders) so decisions are made in the best interest of New Mexico, not based on who you know.

5) Contrast with businesses we want to encourage – responsible businesses, small businesses, companies that treat their workers right.



We need to level the playing field for small businesses, companies that strengthen communities, and companies that pay livable wages against greedy out-of-state corporations that exploit laws and loopholes.

6) Go on offense on “corporate handouts”



Government giving corporate handouts to big, out-of-state corporations

% concerned a great deal about...

	Government handing out welfare to big, out-of-state corporations	Government handing out welfare to big corporations	People getting government handouts and services that your hard work pays for
Total	65	62	43
Hispanic	65	65	43
Native American	56	63	41
North	62	62	42
South	75	63	49
ABQ	60	63	40
Base	67	71	21
Middle	64	60	42

Pillar #1: Family and Community

Family remains at the heart of New Mexican life and values, and thus, the New Mexico Narrative, which is why it's also a perfect "hero". Family is uniquely important and top of mind in New Mexico, and the support system it provides is a key building block in a child's success. In addition, many of progressives' top agenda items can be centered around empowering families.

Aspirations to tap into...

- An overwhelming desire to create a successful life for their family or at least have the next generation not be worse off
- Their desire to have their children stay close to home once they are grown

...and pain points:

- Communities are increasingly overrun with crime, poverty and homelessness
- Schools are bad and getting worse
- Their kids will have to move to other states if they want to get good jobs

Framing progressives:



We believe raising the next generation of New Mexicans to be successful requires strong families and strong communities.



Government should serve hardworking families, and should invest in our state and communities so our children want to and can live here when they are grown.

Drawing the contrast:

The sense that progressives will strengthen families and communities proves one of our biggest perceived advantages. We can and should go on strong offense with how conservative policies weaken them:



The opposition's policies weaken families and communities because they put political ideology ahead of what's best for New Mexico.

Remember the rules (see next section): Be forward-looking and solution-oriented

- ✱ Don't: Lead with the negative by talking about how many kids in New Mexico don't have strong families or safe communities. The team found messages that opened with what we need to or can do is more engaging as opposed to leading with what we are doing wrong.

Pillar #2: Fairness / Equality

New Mexicans see unfairness across all aspects of society – especially in government and the workplace, but also in education, the economy, elections, and the justice system.

They see unfairness in nepotism and corruption in government and board rooms, and in a government that doesn't represent all communities in New Mexico. They see it in schools that fail to give kids the opportunities they need to create a level playing field, in an economy that serves the well-off while everyday New Mexicans lose their homes, and in a criminal justice system that condemns addicts and their families to a vicious cycle of incarceration and recidivism. **They don't expect anything to be perfectly fair, but that we could and should be doing a lot better.** Creating a New Mexico that is *more* fair is the first step to success.

Aspirations to tap into...

- A government that serves them
- A level playing field for New Mexico's children
- An economy that rewards hard work, not just connections – and where all people have the opportunity to succeed
- A society where all people and businesses do their part and pay their fair share

...and pain points:

- Government is run by and serves only the well-connected elites
- Big corporations and their special interests taking advantage of New Mexicans and not treating workers fairly
- Getting the job you want, or a promotion at the one you have, is all about who you know
- They are working harder and harder just to get by, and yet barely treading water

Framing progressives:



Our challenge is addressing barriers that keep too many New Mexicans from succeeding. We want a more equal society and a fairer economy where everyone has the chance to achieve the American Dream.



Government should represent everyday New Mexicans who work hard but still struggle – not just those with insider ties. Success should be about how hard you work, not who you know.



Individuals, businesses, and government all have a responsibility to do their part and pay their fair share.

Drawing the contrast:

Frame corruption around the opposition's biggest vulnerabilities:



The opposition is run by wealthy elites that only serve corporate special interests and the well-connected – not everyday New Mexicans.

Remember the rules (see next section): Use their language

When New Mexicans talk about the need for fairness, they consistently say we need “**more** fairness in society/the economy/the government,” as opposed to “a **fair** society.” A completely and definitively “fair” descriptor sounds impossible and naïve.

- ✓ Do: Say we need “more fairness”
- ✓ Do: Say we need “government that serves everyone.”
- ✓ Do: suggest positive solutions: investment in job training, incentives for small businesses.
- ✓ Do: link fairness and equality to opportunity (i.e. “a level playing field”)

- ✗ Don’t: Use more absolutist phrases like “a fair economy”

Pillar #3: Opportunity

Opportunity is the keystone of the American and New Mexican Dream: the belief that with the right opportunities and hard work, you can succeed. Creating opportunity – through good schools and secondary education options, but also safe communities, small businesses, and jobs that let you balance work and family – is the key to economic success for New Mexicans, and to building a state where New Mexican children can live when they're grown.

Aspirations to tap into...

- Freedom to live the life you want – and the financial security and stability you need to do that
- Bold new solutions that address poverty at the root
- Access to good paying jobs for a variety of education levels, experience levels, and skill sets
- A government that creates opportunities, not barriers, for people who want to work hard

...and pain points:

- Working hard is no longer enough – only those with connections get the opportunities they need to succeed
- Metropolitan areas often receive more resources, attention, and therefore, economic benefit than rural communities
- Politicians who stand in the way of opportunity for everyday New Mexicans

Framing progressives:



We believe everyone – not just those with connections – should have opportunities to better themselves.



Government should create opportunities for people who want to work hard.

Drawing the contrast:

Show how our opponents put ideology ahead of what's best for New Mexicans – i.e. that they stand in the way of the opportunity we could create with clean energy, good schools, more small businesses, etc.



The opposition puts political ideology ahead of New Mexico's economy. They'd rather protect the big oil and gas interests that fund their campaigns than allow the clean energy industry to thrive here; and they've sold out our schools and small businesses for corporate tax cuts and giveaways.



New Mexico needs to create jobs that we'd want our kids to get: jobs with good pay and opportunities to advance. That's what the wind and solar and technology and entertainment industries can bring to New Mexico – and what the big oil and private prison industries never have

Remember the rules (see next section): Use their language and know our own vulnerabilities

- ✓ Stronger: Create opportunity for people to **better themselves**...
 - The bolded phrase is critical to show progressives connect opportunity with individual agency and hard work
- ✓ Stronger: ...instead of putting barriers in the way.
- ✗ Weaker: ...and remove obstacles from people's paths.

Pillar #4: Respect for Communities

Since the last Narrative, the “Respect” value was noticed and co-opted, wielding it as a shield against criticism for prejudicial views or outright tokenism. Particularly in the context of the pandemic, New Mexicans are rightfully critical of hollow rhetoric, with the understanding that real respect means empowering people, families, and communities to live their lives with agency and dignity. Tailoring our policy solutions and community services to the unique cultural needs based on a group’s history is the real way to show respect.

While the opposition has tried to co-op respect of *cultures*, ours is about a more substantive respect for *people and communities*. Respect in New Mexico stretches from how people treat each other, to how community needs are developed, to how poverty is thought about and how culture and tradition are treated. “Respect” in New Mexico is about everyday kindness but also, active respect should allow people to live a dignified life. Its prioritization is a reaction to the sense that respect is deteriorating in so many aspects of American life.

Respect is what creates and maintains strong communities, helps confront problems and gets us through crises when they do happen.

Aspirations to tap into...

- The golden rule: All New Mexicans should be respectful and be respected
- New Mexico’s mix of cultures, heritage, and traditions must be preserved and respected, and they will keep us strong in return
- Government that represents and reflects the diversity of New Mexico
- All communities having ‘a seat at the table’ when it comes to decision-making for the state

...and pain points:

- Concerns about lack of respect in public life today
- Politicians throwing one-size-fits-all solutions at different communities
- Government and, for many, law enforcement not respecting people’s basic humanity

Framing progressives:



Our laws and our government should reflect New Mexico’s basic value of respect for all people.



Respecting our diversity, our traditions and each other – and instilling those values in the next generation – is critical to ensuring our state thrives.



As New Mexicans we value kindness and respect, and we must make it a priority to enact policies that help New Mexicans rise out of poverty.

Drawing the contrast:

From how we treat people to how we take care of New Mexico’s resources, conservative policies can be framed as not respecting New Mexico or New Mexicans.



Respecting our diversity means not just enjoying the food and culture of other people, but addressing the unique needs of communities and ensuring everyone has a seat at the table.



The opposition’s policies don’t respect the basic dignity of people, or what is special about New Mexico, our land, and our values.

The Progressive Narrative: The Master Message

The following messaging represents the distillation of the four value pillars into a progressive vision of government, leadership, the economy, and society. As appropriate, advocates can confidently use the following – or pieces of it – to frame their agenda, motivate, and persuade.

Raising the next generation of New Mexicans to be successful requires strong families and healthy communities. To do that:

All children should start on a level playing field where they all have a chance to succeed.

We need more fairness in society, the economy and in government.

New Mexico needs more opportunities for people to work hard and better themselves.

The economy needs to reward people based on what they do, not who they know.

Government should serve New Mexican families – not the well-off and well-connected.

We must listen to the unique needs of people of different races, communities and cultures and ensure they all have a seat at the table in state government.

And together we can address poverty and crime at the root by building these healthy communities

Using the New Mexico Narrative: 7 Rules



The seven rules below help put the Narrative into practice. This method also can and should be used for any communication challenge. It's meant to guide advocates as they collect the necessary insights and information to address their particular challenge and frame strategies.

1. Meet New Mexicans where they are

Understanding people's deeply-held values, attitudes, aspirations, and pain points is the first step to building a strong emotional bond and resonant Narrative. We're not looking to convince New Mexicans that progressives are right, but rather that we "get it" with messaging that pulls the right emotional levers and pushes the right buttons. See the **Mindset (pp.5)** section for more.

2. Connect on shared, deeply-held values

For progressive issue messaging to be effective, we must prove we share New Mexican values. Shared values go a long way toward both persuading and activating audiences, especially on issues where they may have less personal stake, interest, or understanding. Check out **Personal Values (pp.8)** and the Narrative's **Value Pillars (pp.21)** for more.

3. Know and address your own vulnerabilities

Each of the **Narrative in Action** write-ups (**pp.34**) have more specific information on progressives' vulnerabilities on topics, but the three most dominant are:

- The fact that state government has been controlled by one party for so long means they are often associated with the corruption and cronyism people see now.
- Progressives have big deficits on economic attributes in New Mexico, where people are angry about a perceived handout culture they feel encourages dependence, while government and the economy seem to ignore or even punish those at or just below "the middle."
- There's a perception that Progressives fight for "others" (i.e. anyone who isn't *me*)

4. Define the opposition

Again, each of the **Narrative in Action** write-ups (**pp.34**) have more specific information on the opposition's vulnerabilities on topics, but the two most dominant are:

- They put their political ideology ahead of what's best for New Mexico.
- They're defined by well-off, out-of-touch leaders and the well-connected special interests they serve.
- They care about lining their own pockets more than they care about people

Reframing these weaknesses as the source of corruption in New Mexico can alleviate our vulnerability on perceived cronyism, while highlighting theirs and starting to debunk their perceived economic strengths.

However, it's important to remember that this rule is not enough on its own, and we need to offer a positive and proactive alternative as a foil when we define the opposition. And on that note...

5. Be forward-looking and solution-oriented, don't offer criticisms without alternatives

Despite the disappointment and doubts people have about New Mexico, our team often found painting a negative picture of the state undermined our case for investments or action. That doesn't mean our team recommends sounding Pollyanna-ish, but progressives must show they have solutions, not just complaints. This rule has only gotten more critical with one party controlling the state government because criticisms or complaints about the way things are can easily backfire for the group that's in charge.

We found this was particularly true when it comes to education, and the economy and poverty (**pp. 29-33 and 36-41**).

6. Use their (clear, simple) language

Advocates tend to develop their own internal code, short-handing concepts and ideas that don't always translate well or transmit the right signals. Understanding how New Mexicans talk about their values – and what they hear when progressives talk about theirs – is a core goal of the Narrative.

See the **Do's and Don'ts Tear Sheet (very last page)** for more but the most important examples:

- Use "leveling the playing field" or "*more* fairness" instead of an over-idealistic, blanket "fair"
- Signal we believe in rewarding hard work and "opportunities for people *to better themselves*"
- Talk about poverty as a temporary state rather than a fixed class – families "struggling financially" rather than "low income families"

7. Use it widely

By design, the Narrative has very broad-based appeal. It speaks to those in the "middle" of the spectrum, but great care is taken to ensure it also appeals to, and never alienates, those in our base. There are certainly times, places, and issues where customizing for a particular audience can help, but using one Narrative consistently across audiences will help amplify it and make it feel more authentic to the public.

Fleshing Out the Economic Narrative



This year, the steering committee identified an urgent need to dive deeply into an economic narrative – specifically, a more progressive vision when it came to jobs, workers, and businesses in the state. Given the need for more of a positive, aspirational vision in the face of economic downturn and the impending political realities in the state, this guidance proved incredibly valuable.

The opposition's brand continues to be closely associated with creating jobs, growing the economy, and helping people gain “financial freedom.” On more holistic, human-focused economic attributes – building jobs with good pay and benefits, building prosperous families and communities – progressives are seen as just slightly more trustworthy.

It's no new finding that New Mexicans are anxious and frustrated with the economy. For years, stagnant wages and limited opportunities left them feeling stuck. Many live paycheck-to-paycheck, are unprepared to deal with a sudden emergency, and are burdened by healthcare bills. There are too few industries in New Mexico and the limited jobs those industries provide offer low wages and no benefits, with little to no opportunity for advancement. The COVID-19 pandemic has only intensified these sentiments. For many, the economic fallout has taken more of a toll than the public health fallout.

New Mexicans value hard work and personal responsibility as the keys to success, but they also acknowledge systemic barriers that get in the way. Connect on:

- The shared aspiration of building a successful life for one's family, and recognition that it takes a strong community
- Their belief that New Mexicans need more opportunities for people who want to work hard and better themselves
- Their sense of fairness, and an economy that rewards how hard you work, not “who you know”
- Their belief that individuals, businesses, and the government all need to do their part and pay their fair share

The Narrative on jobs

A significant portion of the New Mexico narrative focuses on jobs, including:

- New Mexico needs more opportunities for people to work hard and better themselves.
- The economy needs to reward people based on what they do, not who they know.
- Together we need to address poverty and crime at the root by building these healthy and prosperous communities: with strong schools, and jobs that let people get ahead.

With the majority of people feeling like they couldn't find a job with good pay or good benefits, and two-thirds saying they couldn't get a job with *both*, it's not surprising that *good* jobs need to be central to the narrative.

% who say they DON'T have access to jobs...

	Total	<\$50k	White	Hispanic	Native American
With opportunity to advance	64	74	64	65	73
That offer good work-life balance	60	61	53	65	53
That pay well	56	65	55	59	56
That offer good benefits, like health care	54	61	52	54	40
That offer good pay AND benefits	71	80	69	74	67

We need to broaden the debate on jobs so it's not *just* about quantity but also quality in terms of livable wages and health care. Some ways to do this include:



New Mexico needs to create jobs that we'd want our kids to get: jobs with good pay and opportunities to advance.



New Mexico needs more opportunities for hardworking people to get ahead in jobs that pay well, provide benefits and let people balance work and family responsibilities.



We need jobs that support stronger families with workplace policies like sick leave and maternity and paternity leave

Job training should also be an important priority and part of the agenda as voters respond positively to leaders who will:



Invest in education and training programs for those losing jobs because of coronavirus or when coal plants and oil wells close



Increase vocational programs, technical degrees, and apprenticeships (i.e. higher education not exclusively focused on four-year college/university)

Remember Rule #3: Know and Address Your Own Vulnerabilities

As noted in pain points, a perceived “handout culture” angers many New Mexicans, and leaves us vulnerable to messaging from the opposition that rubs this nerve. While the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the perception of many on the role of a social and economic safety net, the concern of enabling a “taker” mentality still looms troublingly large.

By bringing jobs and businesses more front-and-center to the narrative, we can counter the notion that progressives aren’t “good for the economy”, but we also want to correct the flawed mental template that exists of some “low-income workers.”

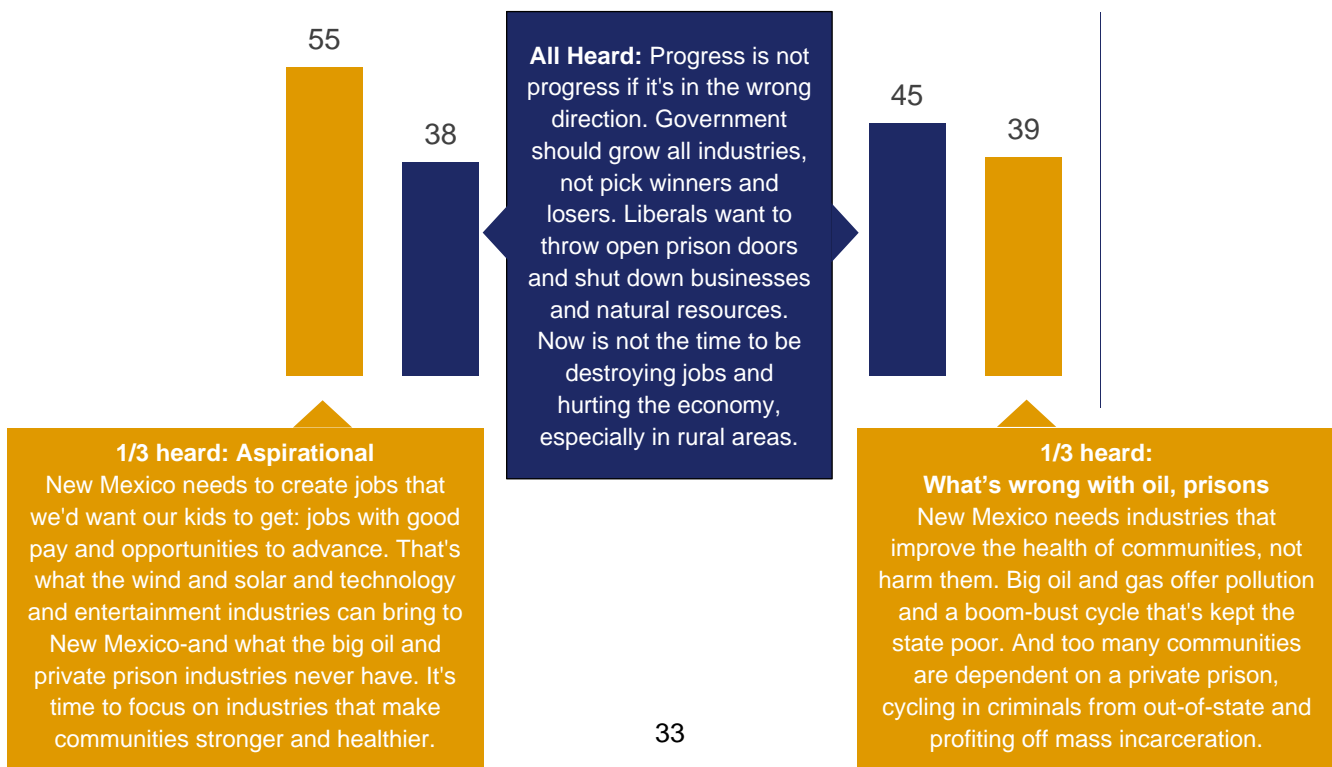
Remind the public that these are “people who work hard but still struggle.” Have faith that nearly everybody in New Mexico considers themselves “hardworking” and highlight how often and seriously the current system fails people “people who work hard.”

The opposition may currently “own” personal responsibility, but progressives are the ones supporting policies that help people help themselves and help families thrive. And the public is undecided about which side they associate with bringing positive change—a call to action for the party currently in control.

The Narrative on industries

Other than clean energy, progressives tend to talk more about the industries they oppose than the industries they support. That’s a real problem. **If we only talk about what we oppose, we lose – and communities lose too because we won’t be able to make progress.**

Which of the following do you agree with more?



While progressives are somewhat more associated with supporting the clean energy industry, we want to broaden and deepen progressives' desired portfolio. Jobs linking environmental protection and economic success are strongly desired in New Mexico:



- *Jobs in the clean energy industry like wind and solar*
- *Jobs that help preserve New Mexico's environment and protect natural resources*
- *Jobs in industries like green construction, energy efficiency and sustainable design*

But we should also be focused on other industries that are viewed as offering at least the potential for good jobs, benefits, and growth:



- *Attracting more technology businesses to New Mexico*
- *Increasing jobs in the healthcare industry with training and other investments*
- *Attracting more TV and film industry business to New Mexico*

The Narrative on businesses

As with industries, we need to show what we are for and not just what we are against. But – as noted earlier – when it comes to big, greedy corporations, we have a real opportunity to draw a clear contrast with and define the opposition. See the Villains section on page 19 for more details on the mindset, but messaging-wise:

We are for:	We are against:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible businesses that treat their workers right Businesses that pay livable wages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEOs making 300 times what the average worker makes Greedy corporations not paying workers livable wages or offering basic benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small businesses that contribute to the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government giving handouts to big, out-of-state corporations Big corporations not paying their fair share in taxes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leveling the playing field for small businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laws and tax codes favoring greedy and irresponsible corporations instead of responsible businesses

Talking Wages

By now, you may have noticed we talk a lot about “livable” wages. Other constructs work too, but livable is the strongest descriptor overall, with “the middle” (nonpartisans) and Hispanics.

Showing % concerned “A great deal by...”

	Total	Base	Middle	Hispanic
Greedy corporations not paying workers livable wages	65	90	63	72
Greedy corporations not paying workers fair wages	62	86	55	64
Greedy corporations not paying workers decent wages	59	87	54	59
Greedy corporations that won't raise people's pay above the legal minimum	59	84	53	62

The Narrative in Action: Applying the Rules to Specific Issues



Talking About Government

#1: Meet New Mexicans Where They Are

New Mexicans see the state government's responsibilities primarily as education, public safety, and the economy; they tend to see a more prominent role for government in shaping the economy than residents elsewhere (partially due to its outsize role as an employer).

Although recent state and local elections, the Governor's response to the pandemic, and expanded childcare have been points of optimism, broadly, people tend to see government as failing at all levels. They feel politicians tend to be wealthy, out-of-touch leaders who are in the pockets of big corporations and special interests. To them, the government practically invented the concept of "it's not what you know, it's who you know." This pain point has been especially salient during the pandemic as many New Mexicans feel left out of the government response. Only hard partisans tend to draw strict differentiations between state and federal government.

We need to offer a progressive vision of government that invests in the future while living up to New Mexican values.

The people don't want less government or a smaller government, they want one that serves everyday New Mexicans.

#2: Connect on Shared, Deeply-held Values



Government needs to serve families and help build strong communities and schools for the next generation.



Government should create opportunities so people can better themselves with hard work. That means good schools, safe communities, and jobs that let you balance work and family.



Government needs to serve working families, not just the well-connected, by creating opportunities building strong communities with good schools, and growing jobs that let people get ahead.



Government should be focused on solving poverty and crime at the root by building prosperous communities with strong schools, and growing jobs that let people get ahead.

#3: Know and Address Your Own Vulnerabilities

The public is aware that one party retains control over the state's politics – and with this power comes ownership of the policy wins as well as government shortcomings. Some respondents associate the party with the general corruption and cronyism people see, while others view this cronyism as more a politician problem than a party problem. Offering a vision of government that explicitly fights the notion of “it's who you know” should be our central focus – as well as elevating leaders who are in touch with everyday people, look like everyday people, & can demonstrate an ethos of service and understanding.

#4: Define the Opposition

The overarching framework for the opposition's agenda is that it weakens families, communities, and stands as a roadblock to economic diversity.

We want to show that the opposition puts political ideology ahead of New Mexico's economy. A similar frame can be used in their vision of government, which doesn't serve hardworking New Mexicans, but rather:



They put their political ideology ahead of what's best for New Mexico.



They stand in the way of opportunity by protecting big oil and gas rather than letting the clean energy industry thrive here.



They only serve those who “cut the line” by paying lobbyists and special interests



They are dominated by wealthy, out-of-touch politicians

#5: Be Forward-looking

For all three of the major areas they hold government responsible for – education, public safety, the economy – the current view is that they are all unacceptable, and have been further strained by the pandemic. We don't need to convince them of that or intensify that reality. But we do need to show we have ideas that 1) are not just more of the same or 2) are not just about more spending and 3) are big, bold, and new.

#6: Use Their (Clear, Simple) Language



Government needs to invest in our state and our communities so our children want to and can live here when they are grown.



Government should work for and reflect hardworking, everyday New Mexicans – not just the well-off and well-connected.



We need more fairness in the economy, society, and government to create a more level playing field for everyday families and small businesses.

#7: Use it Widely

Talking About Education

Note: For the economy and government sections, our team has extensive messaging research to reference. For this section, the team dug deeply into the underlying mindsets, aspirations, and pain points but has a more limited set of tested talking points. The team offers these insights to help guide and inform your own work, not supersede it.

#1: Meet New Mexicans Where They Are

Education is a singularly important priority for New Mexicans. It is the key to opportunity and the lack of it leads to increases in poverty and crime. They know New Mexico ranks quite low compared to other states, strongly believe classrooms are underfunded and feel good teachers go elsewhere because of low salaries. A bad education system fails our kids, hurts their future, and New Mexico's economy more broadly.

In addition to the quality of K-12 schools, educational opportunities afterwards are seen as another great dividing line between those who have a fair shot and those that don't. New Mexicans want to see more of the popular scholarship program, but importantly they also want to see more options beyond a traditional 4-year degree. We need to recognize the many paths to success beyond four-year university programs, like vocational programs, technical degrees, and apprenticeships.

#2: Connect on Shared, Deeply-held Values

Lean into both fairness and opportunity...:



*We must make education a priority so that **every New Mexican child has the opportunity to succeed.***

...and anchor education messages around benefits to the entire community:



*We can't be short-sighted when it comes to our kids. Investments in education are investments in **prosperous communities** and future economic success.*

#3: Know and Address Your Own Vulnerabilities

New Mexicans at first blush know that schools are underfunded and want to see funding increased. A majority of residents, however, are at least as bothered by their sense that progressives' only solution seems to be to pour more money into a broken education system as they are by their sense that the opposition just wants to cut spending. We need bold new solutions for education that are tailored to the unique needs of communities.

#4: Define the Opposition

The powerful pain point on the opposition and education isn't the fact that they won't put more money into the system. We need to connect their lack of support for schools back to motives and values.



They put their ideology ahead of what's best for New Mexico and its future, and stand in the way of opportunity.

#5: Be Forward-looking and Solution-oriented

New Mexicans know their schools are failing and weaker than other states. We don't need to keep reminding them and actually found it can be harmful to lead with negative statistics or other condemnations of the schools. Remember, we are essentially making an investment pitch – don't tell them it's a terrible system, tell them it can be improved.

The more progressives frame our education message as forward-looking and based on solutions, the stronger the message resonates.

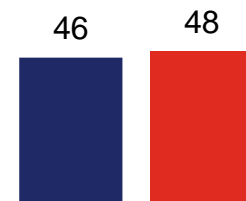
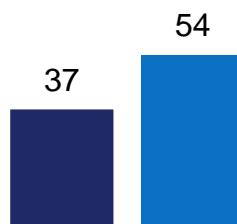
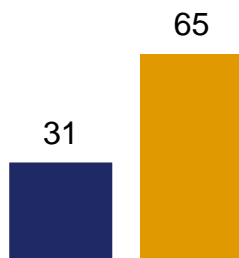
Who do you agree with more?

All heard: Elected official X says New Mexico schools get plenty of money, but too much money gets wasted on bureaucracy

1/3 heard: Elected official Y says we need to make smart investments in our kids – and that means increasing resources to public schools while ensuring those dollars go to classrooms

1/3 heard: Elected official Y says New Mexico schools are **among the worst in the nation and need more resources** so our children can compete

1/3 heard: Elected official Y says **we are shortchanging our kids and have not yet fully reversed the huge cuts** made to our schools during the economic crisis and recession



#6: Use Their (Clear, Simple) Language

We also have an exploitable weakness around people's sense that money goes to the "bureaucracy" and not classrooms – so ensure you aren't just talking about money for "schools broadly" or "the education system," and instead be specific about classrooms and teachers.



We need to make smart investments in the future of our communities – and that means increasing resources to our children's classrooms and teachers.



Education is a tool that helps individuals and communities succeed. We need to invest in vocational training, apprenticeship programs, and higher education to ensure every New Mexican has a chance to succeed.

#7: Use it Widely

Talking About Poverty

#1: Meet New Mexicans Where They Are

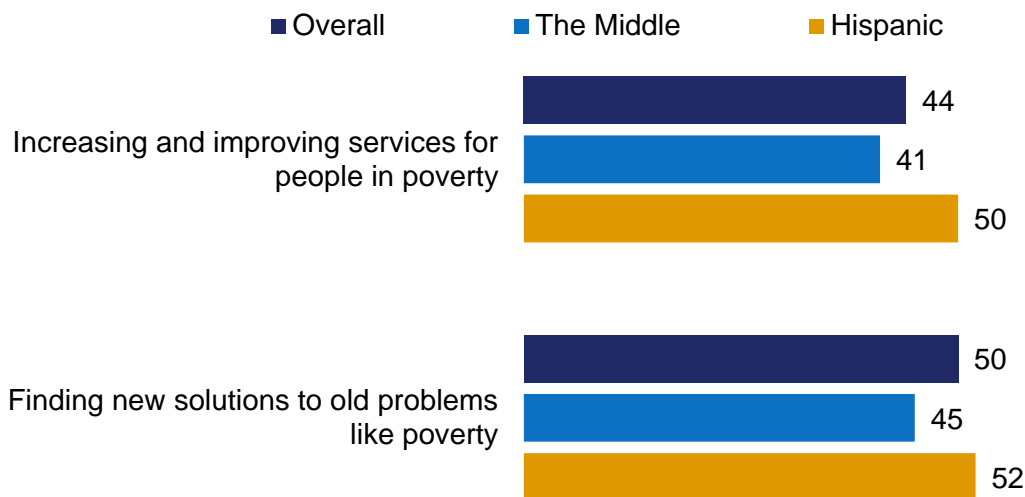
Poverty has long been a top-of-mind challenge in New Mexico, and is firmly seen as worse here than in other states. In the COVID-era and resulting economic challenges, even more so.

On poverty issues, “meeting New Mexicans where they are” can be challenging because many New Mexicans have some significant internal tensions on this issue:

- ❖ They want the government to help people living in poverty, but they are so mired in their own financial anxiety and stress, that they resent the government not helping them too/first.
- ❖ They have great sympathy, and often empathy, for those living in poverty – especially children, and those battling addiction—but they are also angry about their sense that too many people are simply “lazy” and living off the government.

In more encouraging news though, people recognize that it’s going to take big, bold, long-term action. Indeed, they prefer that to band aids at this point. They strongly feel we cannot keep throwing resources at the problem without new solutions:

% More likely to support a leader if they said this was one of their top priorities



- ✓ Talk more about: Tackling poverty at the source
- ✓ And more about: Bold NEW solutions to old problems
- ✗ Talk less about: Expanding services to people living in poverty

#2: Connect on Shared, Deeply-held Values

Respect is the dominant value in play here, but we should also lean into responsibility and community:



As New Mexicans we value respect and the dignity of all people – and must make it a priority to enact policies that help New Mexicans rise out of poverty.



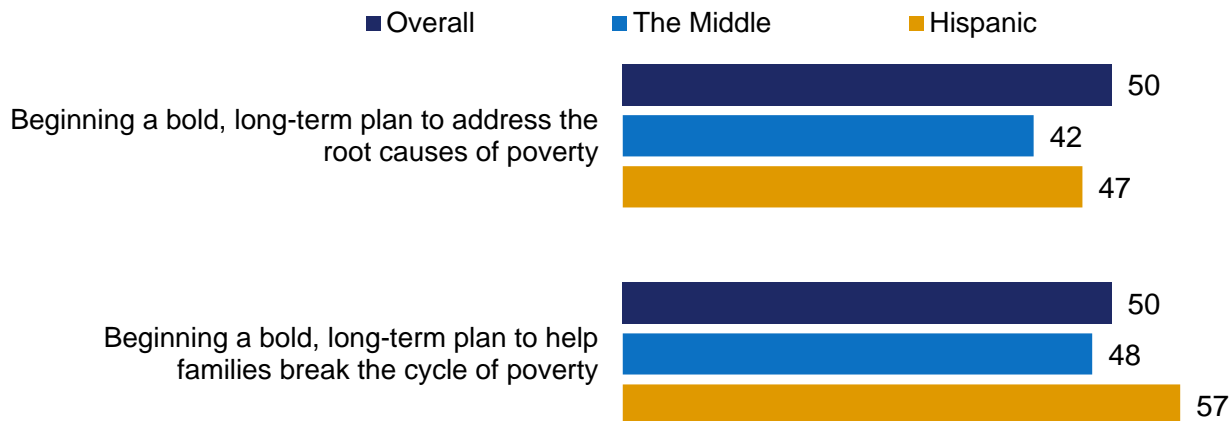
New Mexico will succeed when people, businesses and the government recognize that we all have a shared responsibility, one that is about more than just taking care of yourself – but also doing right by your larger community.

#3: Know and Address Your Own Vulnerabilities

Progressives are vulnerable to attacks that we throw money at problems – without solutions in mind – and in doing so, pursue policies that encourage a “handout” mentality. This is perhaps nowhere more acute than with poverty. From the Left though and among people of color, we also want to avoid appearing to have a “savior” complex. The inoculation on both is similar: show that we are focused on giving struggling families agency.

- ✓ Talk more about helping families break the cycle of poverty: Bold NEW solutions to old problems.

% More likely to support a leader if they said this was one of their top priorities



It's also critical that we keep the goal front-and-center – this is about reducing poverty, not just expanding services.

#4: Define the Opposition

As elsewhere, we want to show the opposition's political ideology trumping what's best for New Mexico because they are:

- Dominated by wealthy and out of touch leaders
- In the pocket of big corporations and special interests

Emphasize the growing inequality:



Too many New Mexicans today live in poverty, and the gap between them and the wealthiest only continues to grow.

And link it back to the policies they stand in the way of: increased minimum wage, job training, addiction services, and other efforts that help people help themselves.

#5: Be Forward-looking and Solution-oriented

See #3

#6: Use Their (Clear, Simple) Language



New Mexicans value kindness and respect and our policies toward those in need should reflect that.



Our state would be stronger if our government reflected New Mexico's basic value of respect for all people.

Note on terms: to emphasize the transient state of poverty rather than playing into the perception that low income families are “not me” – use “families struggling financially” rather than anything about incomes or poverty.

% More likely to support a leader if they said this was one of their top priorities

	Total	Base	The Middle	Hispanic	White	Native Am*
Doing more to help families struggling financially	52	78	48	56	51	48
Doing more to help families living in poverty	46	78	44	52	44	49
Doing more to help families earning low incomes	45	75	36	47	42	44
Doing more to help people earning low incomes	45	73	38	49	46	41

Portraits of New Mexicans



Our team listened to nearly 50 New Mexicans across the state tell us about their lives. The team asked about everything: their hopes and dreams, their values, their fears, and their day-to-day work and home lives.

A series of in-depth journal entries – completed over the two weeks – gave our team insights into respondents' lives in an extremely personal setting (much like a personal diary). The questions were detailed and multi-layered, and queried them to reflect on their lives in a way they might not have the time or space to do normally. Our team also asked about their views on government, the economy and the future of New Mexico.

The portraits that follow provide a glimpse into the world of everyday New Mexicans.

Woman, Hispanic, 18-34, Republican, South

On changing view of the role of government:

My political views have changed a little over the past few months... I feel like I still am conservative however I tend to see both party views and have become a little more concerned in the way that some movements have been handled. I don't agree with how the black lives matter movement has been dealt with by members in the Republican party from those in power. I also don't agree however with how members of the Democratic party have dealt with the current Pandemic and our economy...

My perspectives on the role that government should play has definitely changed... I feel like universal health insurance should be provided for all because we have so many who during this pandemic were afraid or unable to get the treatment they needed in fear of being in debt for medical bills they would have amassed. Our country is in a state of financial crisis with so many filling for unemployment and our economy is in dire need. Our government has tried to help however a bigger plan needs to be created for the months to come until COVID-19 can be controlled.

On her ideal community:

A community with people who all acknowledge the different kinds of cultures and families. A community that is accepting of everyone and every type of family... My ideal community would invest in community services and local government. The changes that would need to be made would be for more people to actually participate in city hall and the county commissioner meetings to know what's going on.

On jobs:

I would bring more government jobs but also many other skilled worker jobs to New Mexico. We need jobs with good pay and even better benefits. We need higher salaries for teachers and more recruitment for incoming teaching positions considering we are one of the lowest scoring educationally in the US. New Mexico really doesn't have much to offer for families entertainment-wise and we are more of a retirement state this prevents people from wanting to move here. Though my community is nice it's more a retirement community and unaffordable to those who don't have government jobs. By creating more government jobs with higher salaries and better benefits more families could move into the state and be able to afford to live in these areas. New Mexico fails to offer good education and entertainment for its citizens. [Those are] two big things that we need to include in our economic vision for the future.

On the economy:

I believe that New Mexico government should reflect Mexico's basic value respect for all people. If we want to say that we are an equal opportunity state we should be able to offer all New Mexicans the same opportunities while still trying to build our lower class to get them to a more of a middle class. By doing this we help strengthen our economy. Both Republicans and Democrats have failed to do this because they are constantly fighting each other and are failing to see the greater point in this situation. If they wouldn't be so focused on fighting each other they could do a better job on strengthening our economy and helping out its people.

Man, Hispanic, 35-49, Democrat, ABQ

On his ideal community:

I would like a community where the citizens care about their community and help out each other regardless if they know each other. It would have low crime and plenty of things and centers for kids to play and learn in. It would invest in affordable housing and offer programs that offer tools and opportunities to assist the homeless and those that are undocumented. There would be meetings weekly where the people could voice their opinions in a non-judgement environment. It would offer drug abuse help free of charge to heal the addicted. I know this sounds like an imaginary pretend world but it sounds nice and if communities around the country could follow this example things would be much better nationally.

Politicians would put forth incentive to lift the poor out of poverty and offer community programs that address all issues society faces. It would be clean and not riddled with trash—the people would show pride in where they live and would ensure trash was picked up and the streets were clean. My current neighborhood would need a whole makeover and it would take cooperation from the local police, city officials and the citizens that live in it.

On personal finances:

My financial situation has always been paycheck to paycheck except now I don't have a paycheck to look forward to so I was actually getting on the right track with savings and reaching goals until the virus happened and made it all unsure and stressful so I try not to think too much about it because it just makes a bad situation worse.

On representative government:

It's time for inclusiveness and a fair equitable system one which helps its poor instead of trapping them in poverty, keep values before capital and always keep the people in mind—think from their perspectives and not the political ones! I feel that if a person who has been in poverty would be more likely to address it. The haves and the have nots are what keeps this system oppressive and discriminatory.

On “Respect”:

I think it takes more than the basic value of respect. Respect is nice, but respect is displayed by words and conduct—which we haven't viewed, heard, or received from either side of the fence. We need results not respect...if you build a house on quicksand you better be ready to shovel because respect isn't going to keep it from sinking! That's what's happening to the people because of the current events. WE'RE SINKING. personally I will take the shovel instead of the respect, thank you.

Female, White, 50-64, Democrat, North

On the cycle of poverty:

Poverty - New Mexico is a poverty ridden state and the high number of people living in poverty has far-reaching effects for inequities in health, education, jobs, and the future well-being of the residents. This does not directly affect me, but it does affect the overall health of our state. I believe it also affects the health/mental health of children living in poverty as there are often concomitant problems such as alcohol and drug abuse and domestic violence that, in some instances, stem from poverty.

Education - NM consistently ranks 49th or 50th in education across the U.S. This is abhorrent and will likely only increase the poverty level of students as they become adults and find that they are not prepared for college and so do not finish, or simply lack the ability to be competitive in the job market. I can speak to this firsthand - as a former College & Career Counselor for a 100% free and reduced lunch district, my students were ill-prepared for college and not even slightly competitive for scholarships due to low test scores and grades. Because their families were already living in poverty, many opted not to continue their studies. Lack of education and poverty are linked, and the cycles of both will be perpetuated if nothing is done to improve the education system.

Crime - Crime in Albuquerque, in particular, is extremely high. According to City Data, the level of crime in ABQ had an index of 710 in 2018, compared to a national average of 274. I believe that this level of crime is also linked to poverty and lack of education. With few options to earn a reasonable income, crime is an appealing option for many.

On her ideal community:

I would love to live in a community that is comprised of multiple ethnicities and ages, families, singles, and couples, both gay and straight; a community that strives to make the world a better place by supporting efforts to help those less fortunate and focuses on protecting the environment. I want to be able to walk to small businesses and support my local business owners in reaching their dreams of making a difference with their shops and restaurants. I want to know and see my neighbors sitting on their front porches when I walk in the evening, stopping to chat and engage with each other. I think I have lived there before (Madison, WI, where I grew up and attended college & grad school). From there, I moved to Santa Fe, which was lovely and liberal, had an environmental focus and was fairly diverse. Santa Fe has changed over the years, and is now out of reach for many. From there, I moved to suburban NYC, which was nothing like my ideal neighborhood and so, back to Wisconsin to raise my kids, and finally, back to New Mexico. Where I live now is not far from my ideal, except that my neighborhood tends toward older, whiter and more affluent folks. It is starting to change and I am thrilled about that, welcoming new, younger, Hispanic families into the fold. We have at least 3 female couples in this fairly small neighborhood, two of whom have become good friends of ours. We are close to a lot of businesses, but it's best to drive to them due to the semi-rural nature of our development and a busy nearby highway. We don't have as many local businesses as I would like - there are some, and the locals love and support them

Female, Native American, 18-34, Democrat, North, Rural

On her economic situation:

Stressed. Worried. Problematic. The national economy is too unstable, there is a lot of uncertainty due to the virus as well. Yes, I would have used these words at the beginning of the year, I've been wondering if there would be a new bubble burst. Before the end of 2018, I was feeling hopeful.

On culture and tradition:

It's a good place to raise children with traditions. Especially if you're Native American, there are numerous tribes in NM. And for the children to grow up with those traditions, they have to grow up here. They're Indigenous, this is where they belong. So there really is no choice for them. To ask this question is to not understand the roots of the people here.

On the state of the Indigenous community:

In our state, I've been glad that some things related to the historical colonization of Indigenous peoples has come to light. As it has been said, history is written by the victors. However, the Indigenous people haven't been conquered, we're still here. When you read about the atrocities committed by the colonizers, you realize how inhuman others viewed you and your people. That carries on to today, as I mentioned, there are still problems with reservation border towns. We're still seen as different and we're still looked down upon by certain people. I think we need a more balanced history in schools.

On government:

People are inherently different. When you try to shove them into one box and make them all the same, it's not going to succeed. The federal policy of Assimilation for Native Americans did not work. They've survived and continue to carry on their traditions. When you push for conformity, you don't understand people. Republicans, as far as I can tell, want everyone to be like them and they want laws to ensure that will happen. Democrats seem to be able to embrace diversity. A government that can accept the diversity of the state and accepts that all human beings are equal and deserving of the same level of respect, no matter their situation.

On her ideal community:

I would like to live in a community that recognizes the systemic differences. That I don't have to be afraid to go out by myself for fear that I could become another missing person. That my brothers aren't inherently seen as threats. Where I don't have to feel constantly on edge about existing as a brown person in a conservative town. This town is built on money from reservation supporters and yet they're often treated terribly. My ideal community invests in their people, through better education all throughout the system, from early childhood to post high school training programs and college/university programs. By providing assistance to everyone in need, maybe even universal income. Housing is especially important, no one should die due to exposure. And mental health support available widely. A person needs a lot of support to move from surviving to thriving. A community that lifts people up rather than divides and is dependent on people "pulling themselves up by their bootstraps." Because the idea of pulling yourself up is dependent on so many things that are systemically in favor of those with privileges.

Male, White, 35-49, Unaffiliated, North, Rural

On his economic situation:

Currently, I am a bit nervous, worried, and frustrated with my current financial situation. I am facing a 40% reduction in hours/salary without eligibility for any unemployment assistance, so the past 3 months have been very stretched. These are much different words than I would have used years ago when I felt less concerned about finances, as well as 6 months ago when I felt like I was finally on my way to quickly pay off debt and establish some financial security.

On problems New Mexico faces:

1. Rebuilding the economy following the COVID-19 outbreak and diversifying the economy from a complete reliance on oil & gas. New Mexico's economy has become too dependent on selling our natural resources to oil & gas interests and need to look to bring other profitable businesses to the state.
2. Climate change and addressing New Mexico's continued water issues. As an avid skier/angler/boater/gardener, New Mexico's water scarcity continues to be a growing issue. Climate change, over-expansion, and outdated water rights deals with both Colorado and Texas all are contributing factors.
3. Unifying the divisive feelings felt among many different groups throughout NM. Like much of the nation, New Mexico seems torn and divided more than ever. Bringing the population together to work for any common goal will be a huge challenge moving forward.

On politicians:

Not necessarily an organized corruption, but politicians do seem to look after their own interests and the interests of those close to them when given the opportunity to do so. I don't think there is one party that holds a patent on that, it takes a pretty unique individual to be willing to put their own interests aside in the sake of fairness and impartiality. I think the bigger problem is that political appointments have been made to be made more about power than public service. The candidate selection process also seems to reward the type of individual who is willing to put their moral compass aside to further their own career, so it is no surprise that behavior continues once those individuals wield some individual power.

On his ideal community:

I very much desire to live in a community that lifts one another up and supports each other, rather than one that tears things down. Santa Fe currently is very divided. People need to invest in one another, rather than a political party, race, religion, or other identifying factor. We need a leader that looks to compromise and bring people together, rather than one that divides

Female, White, 65+, Unaffiliated, South, Rural

On her economic situation:

Insufficient, poor, regulated. I'm on Social security and don't get enough on my check to even be considered in the low income bracket, especially after all insurance premiums come out of it. Yes mine has been the same for the last few years.

On problems New Mexico faces:

1. Rebuilding our economy because a lot of our small businesses are closing because of the governor.
2. Education being harmed because of the guidelines the governor has input.
3. More racial tension because of all the protests and riots. All of the above will impact my family in one way or the other because some are in the work force, has children in school and are biracial families.

On industries:

Oil and gas. Mining. Military Tourists All of these provide jobs for the people of New Mexico and some for persons in my family. We also have a lot that comes from out of state to work in some of these fields. All the extra traffic from the big trucks are causing lots of damage to our highways especially in the southern part of the state. The crime rate has also risen. Agriculture has dropped off and I would love to see more of it come back. A lot of people have made their land into R.V places to accommodate the influx of oil workers or sold the land. As far as Private prisons and Clean energy I can't really have an opinion because I don't really know much about them.

On her ideal community:

I would love to live in a smaller town but within 30 minutes of a larger one that had a variety of stores. It would have to be family friendly that also teach their children to have more respect toward others. Where I live now used to be a pleasant place to live but now not so much. The town would need to invest in good schools and a good healthcare system.

Tear Sheets



The Progressive Narrative: The Master Message

Raising the next generation of successful New Mexicans requires strong families and healthy communities. To do that:

All children should start on a level playing field where they all have a chance to succeed.

We need more fairness in society, the economy and in government.

New Mexico needs more opportunities for people to work hard and better themselves.

The economy needs to reward people based on what they do, not who they know.

Government should serve New Mexican families – not the well-off and well-connected.

We must listen to the unique needs of people of different races, communities and cultures and ensure they all have a seat at the table in state government.

And together we can address poverty and crime at the root by building these healthy communities

7 Rules For Using the Narrative

- 1. Meet New Mexicans where they are**
- 2. Connect on shared, deeply-held values**
- 3. Know and address your own vulnerabilities**
- 4. Define the opposition**
- 5. Be forward-looking and solution-oriented**
- 6. Use their (clear, simple) language**
- 7. Use it widely**

Mindset Map

Emotions In Play



- **Anxious:** Finances are the greatest cause for anxiety, a constant stressor for those struggling to keep up.
- **Uncertain:** There's a fear that the bottom could drop out at any moment, even for families that are currently on solid financial footing
- **Ignored:** New Mexicans across the state feel there's nothing for those in the middle, there's a disadvantage for non-Hispanics, and that rural areas are neglected.
- **Frustrated:** Mounting over their inability to find stability and get "unstuck" financially
- **Pessimistic:** 2020 has taken a toll on even the most resilient people, and New Mexicans are tired
- **Fearful:** People do not have the information, resources or stability they need to plan their lives and futures

Personal Values



- **Family:** Dominates life in New Mexico – and can extend deep into the community (meaning not just immediate family)
- **Culture:** Heritage and traditions are a point of pride, and many see New Mexico's diversity as a model for the country
- **Resilience:** Structural problems in the state mean New Mexicans are tough – because they have to be
- **Responsibility:** Not just to you and your family, but also contributing to and caring about your community
- **Respect:** Not just for cultures, but for people themselves and the uniqueness of communities
- **Faith/Spirituality:** Held over from growing up in New Mexico, seen as another aspect of community and culture

Pain Points



- New Mexico's economy is doing worse than most other states
- Too many low-wage, no benefit jobs that offer little ability to advance
- It's too often about "who you know"
- Poor education system – both for kids and high school graduates
- Healthcare expenses and caregiving needs
- Anger towards big corporations and the wealthy
- Not enough assistance during the pandemic

Aspirations



- Financial security and stability
- New, bold solutions to old problems
- Financial flexibility and the freedom to live life the way you want
- Safe, strong, and healthy community for your family
- Confidence that their kids can succeed, especially *in* New Mexico
- Representation/ having a voice in politics and seat at the table

The Value Pillars



Family

We believe raising the next generation of New Mexicans to be successful requires strong families.

Government should serve hardworking families, and invest in our state and communities so our children want to and can live here when they are grown.

The opposition's policies weaken families and communities because they put political ideology ahead of what's best for New Mexico.



Fairness / Equality

We believe we need *more* fairness in society, the economy, and in government. Individuals, businesses, and government all have a responsibility to do their part and pay their fair share.

Government should represent hardworking, everyday New Mexicans – not just those with insider ties or big corporations. Success should be about how hard you work, not who you know.

The opposition serves the wealthy elites and corporate special interests – not everyday New Mexicans.



Opportunity

We believe everyone – not just those with connections – should have opportunities to have financial freedom and security.

Government should create opportunities for *people who want to work hard*.

The opposition puts political ideology ahead of New Mexico's economy. They'd rather protect the big oil and gas interests that fund their campaigns than allow the clean energy industry to thrive; and they've sold out our schools and small businesses for corporate tax cuts and giveaways.



Respect for Communities

Respecting our diversity, our traditions, and each other – and instilling those values in the next generation – is critical to ensuring our state thrives.

Government should reflect New Mexico's basic value of respect for all people and the diversity of the state.

The opposition's policies respect culture and contributions, not the people attached to them. They don't respect the basic dignity of people, or what is special about New Mexico, our land, and our values.

Language Do's and Don'ts

	More of this...	...Less of that
Opportunity	We need to create more opportunity for... ...people to better themselves ...hardworking people to get ahead ...people to gain financial freedom	We need to remove obstacles from people's paths
	Too often, hard work and determination isn't enough to succeed in New Mexico.	Too often, New Mexicans have more obstacles than advantages.
Fairness	"More fairness" and "fairer" (e.g. a fairer economy; more fairness in government)	A fair society/economy/government
Respect	Listening to the needs of New Mexicans of different races and backgrounds and ensuring they have a 'seat at the table' in state government	Everyone needs to respect the law and the law needs to respect everyone Respecting traditions, heritage, and culture (without talking about the people behind them)
Education	More money to classrooms, teachers, and vocational programs	More money to the educational system
Jobs	Jobs with livable wages Jobs that let you advance Jobs that let you balance work and family	Good jobs
Poverty	Beginning a bold, long-term plan to help families break the cycle of poverty	Expand services to people living in poverty
Class	"Hardworking families, or families struggling financially	Middle class (<i>by itself</i>) Low-income workers (<i>actually associated with welfare</i>)
Less traditionally political language	...regardless of class or background	...regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation
	Big corporations and the well-connected	Big corporations and the wealthy

(Note: most of these are not terribly bad words and phrases to use, but the alternative is strongly preferred)