

**New
Mexico
Narrative
Project**



Contents



Preface	4
Methodology	5
Mapping the New Mexico Mindset	
a. Emotions & Feelings	
b. Personal Values	
c. Pain Points	
d. Aspirations	6
The New Mexico Narrative	
a. The Heroes and Villains	
b. Four Value Pillars	
c. Master Message	19
Using the New Mexico Narrative: 7 Rules	34
Fleshing out the Economic Narrative	36
The Narrative in Action: Applying the Rules to Specific Issues	
a. Climate and Energy	
b. Democracy	
c. Immigration and Crime	41
Portraits of New Mexicans	50
Tear Sheets	
a. The Narrative	
b. 7 Rules	
c. Mindset Map	
d. Value Pillars	
e. Language Do's and Don'ts	57

© 2024 All rights reserved. This material may be used only for charitable or educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Use for commercial or political purposes is strictly prohibited. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form, by any means (electronic, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without the prior written permission of the publisher. For permission information and authorization to photocopy items for permitted use, please contact Oriana Sandoval at the Center for Civic Policy <oriana@civicpolicy.com>

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](#) outlines the dominant emotions and feelings, aspirations, pain points, and personal values of New Mexicans today. By understanding how average 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 2024: With COVID in the rearview mirror, concerns both familiar and new are on the forefront of voters' minds. Cost of living increases, especially on housing and rent, and lagging wages, mean New Mexicans are struggling to make ends meet. They've seen a sharp rise in homelessness since the pandemic, feel unsafe, and believe that crime has skyrocketed. While New Mexican values are durable, the challenges they face and pain points they experience are somehow even more pressing than ever.

The next section, [The New Mexico Narrative](#) presents the progressive values that best align with New Mexicans' values, and best support a progressive policy agenda: family and community, fairness and equality, opportunity, and respect for communities. This section has examples of language that bring these values to life, and show how opponents of a progressive policy agenda "violate" these values. This guide also lays out a [Master Message](#) – a progressive vision of how values can guide government, leadership, the economy, and the rules of society in general. [The messaging and language that resonates has been refreshed in these sections with our latest research.](#)

The Narrative is as much a method as it is a message framework. The [7 Rules](#) 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 strongly with New Mexicans and remains deeply rooted in their values and the progressive vision. [Fleshing out the Economic Narrative](#) and [Narrative in Action](#) walk through four examples, with three new examples from our latest research: Economy, Climate and Energy, Democracy, and Immigration and Crime. 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 – it builds upon research initiated in 2016, with a major update in 2020 and now another round of information in 2024 culled from a large issue and messaging poll and in-depth online interviews with New Mexicans from all backgrounds, 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.

Methodology



With each iteration of research, the research team and Center for Civic Policy steering committee collaboratively shaped the materials we would be testing. In these talks, the research 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.

Throughout our many phases of research we interviewed voters, who -- by their nature -- are already somewhat civically engaged. Voters have the ability to come together through public participation to improve the lives of everyone in New Mexico by advocating for changes in their communities and in the state. The policies and messages we suggest are nonpartisan in nature, and this handbook is aimed at helping to find common ground across the ideological spectrum represented by this broad coalition of voters. These voters come from all walks of life but share the deeply held New Mexican values discussed in this handbook.

In 2024 our research was conducted with voters across a broad swath of New Mexico – but with significant oversamples of Latinx, Black/African Americans, Native Americans, and AAPI voters. All research was also offered in Spanish.

In 2020 and 2024, we also added oversamples and a focus to a diverse range of rural voters – primarily because of a deeper focus on economic and climate and energy industry issues that can be particularly contentious in those areas.

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 over time, but we've made a few updates in 2024. With the COVID-19 pandemic in the rearview mirror, pain points and aspirations have shifted, but overall, many of the values and perspectives have not fundamentally changed 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 educators and 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 	Personal Values 
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anxious• Uncertain• Ignored• Frustrated• Pessimistic• Fearful• Exploited• Unstable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family• Culture• Community• Resilience• Responsibility• Respect• Faith/Spirituality• Fairness
Pain Points 	Aspirations 
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Mexico is doing worse than most other states• Too many low-wage, no-benefit jobs that offer little ability to advance – leading to the next generation leaving the state• It's too often about "who you know"• Anger towards big corporations and wealthy and self-serving politicians• Poor education system and lack of job training, leaving the next generation unprepared• Healthcare expenses• Politicians dividing New Mexicans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial security and stability• New, bold energy solutions• Freedom to live life the way you want• Safe, strong, and healthy communities for your family, with good schools• Opportunities so their kids can succeed, especially <i>in</i> 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, with rising costs especially for housing and rent, making New Mexicans feel unstable. This is felt evenly more strongly by our communities of color. And it's little wonder, considering:

- 7 in 10 New Mexicans think the economy is getting weaker or at best staying the same
- Almost no one feels like they're getting ahead financially, 49% are struggling to keep up or falling backwards
- Nearly 50% of voters say the cost of housing, or the cost of healthcare is a daily concern in their life
- 4 in 10 voters say rising crime rates affect their community and make them feel unsafe



*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, DEM, NORTH, RURAL

Rural New Mexicans fear their local economies have nowhere to go but even further down. Rural New Mexicans are also worried about losing oil and gas jobs while the state invests more heavily in clean energy. While they think clean energy should be a priority for the future, the actual transition is worrisome.

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

Crime concerns were significantly more prevalent in this round of research, with voters offering up a number of reasons. From the availability of hard drugs, to increased cost of living leading to a boom in the homelessness population, to the "soft on crime" perspective, many voters think crime is a top concern that needs to be addressed by the state.



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 feel that nothing is being done about crime - and they’re concerned not just for their safety, but for the well-being of those in their community and those who may need services. 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.
- As we’ve seen in earlier research, both Latinxs and Anglos often report feeling disadvantaged because of their identity. Some Latinxs 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 Anglos feeling ignored by government and employers alike and feeling that *not* being Latinx puts them at a disadvantage in this state.
 - We also saw this year that Black and Native American voters in particular feel they have to fight racial discrimination in New Mexico culturally and institutionally.
- There’s even some sensitivity that New Mexico as a whole is a “second-class” state often forgotten by people around the country.
- Qualitatively, Latinx voters feel the president and the federal government aren’t making the necessary investments in the state.



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. Many voters feel their paychecks haven’t kept up with rising inflation making it difficult to make ends meet, let alone save.

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. And they’re frustrated that when New Mexico does bring in industries from out-of-state, the jobs they bring are highly skilled and often require a college degree.

Pessimistic

In the 2020 update, we 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. In 2024, we continue to see that pessimism is more prevalent than optimism. New Mexicans are doubtful their leaders will invest and enact positive changes in the state in ways to improve voters’ lives.

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.

Exploited

In 2024 we’ve added “Exploited” to the roster of emotions. Voters feel taken advantage of by big corporations as well as extreme, divisive politicians. Big corporations come to New Mexico, but do not pay their workers a living wage, and don’t contribute to the community. Politicians also put their own interests ahead of what is best for New Mexico – they vote against policies that would help hardworking families.

Unstable

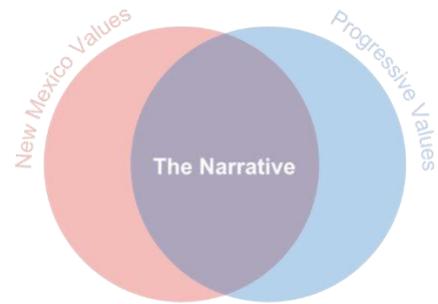
Our team also added unstable to the mindset map as rising costs and interest rates have made it impossible to buy a home, pay rent, or save in general. A majority think New Mexico is headed in the wrong track and believe the economy is getting weaker. New Mexicans are fearful of the overdependence on a few industries in the state and worry what happens if oil dries up. There is too much being held together by too little for voters to feel comfortable. Their trust in politicians and the legislature overall in New Mexico is weak.





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 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.

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
- 4) Showing up for their community sets New Mexico apart
- 5) Ensuring everyone has a seat at the table



Respecting communities resonates broadly with voters, however some caution that respecting backgrounds and traditions cannot also mean being resistant to change. Adapting to current realities is important to voters.

1

Respecting the diversity of backgrounds, traditions, and values - and instilling that respect in the next generation - will help our state thrive.

2

Community means supporting one another to ensure everyone succeeds. New Mexicans show up for their neighbors, support small businesses, and know our diversity, tradition and values set New Mexico apart.

3

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" (Anglo, 35-49, Ind/Dem Lean, 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. New Mexicans show up for their neighbors, support small businesses and want to ensure everyone is heard. 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.

As an example: Even with crime concerns sky high, voters think it's more important for New Mexico to address the root behavior of crime rather than cracking down on illegal immigration and passing harsher sentences. This involves improving access to mental healthcare, providing more social services, and emphasizing rehabilitation over incarceration in New Mexico. New Mexicans want a responsible approach to problems, not extremes.



Faith & 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.

Fairness

Voters blame corporations and politicians for being unfair. They're seen as prioritizing wealthy, well-connected New Mexicans instead of everyday, hardworking New Mexicans. A crucial part of the narrative is creating more fairness in all aspects of life and providing the tools for everyone to start on a level playing field. New Mexicans expect the government, the economy and other voters to play by the rules and live in a state where everyone has equal access to opportunities.

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. 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 this challenge is the fact that elected leaders who typically support a progressive agenda are often seen as particularly divorced from this value because their policy solutions enable this kind of behavior.

Through the unprecedented last four years, New Mexicans have proven to be somewhat kinder to themselves and their fellow citizens, given the consistently poor economy and growing inequality despite people working 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, and 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.

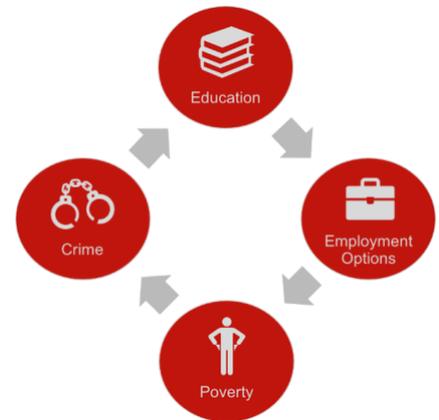




Pain Points

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 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. In recent years, rising costs have hurt voters across the spectrum, rendering them unable to keep up or make ends meet. There is a sense that New Mexico is enduring high inflation along with the rest of the country, but without the good jobs other states have to get back on track.

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
- Lack of job training or career guidance

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. Rural Latinx voters in particular are worried about investing in clean energy and taking the few oil and gas jobs there are that keep communities afloat.

Opportunity and watchout:

- ✓ For voters 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. To them this means getting rid of self-serving politicians who vote against New Mexicans best interests.

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."
- ✓ We also need to call out elected leaders who say one thing but do another - like those who say they care about worker and family values, but vote against them and oppose policies like paid sick days or family leave.

Watchout for progressives:

- ✓ While there has been a track record of progressive leaders in New Mexico it's imperative to link corruption specifically 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, average 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 are 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.



Precarious, unstable, and immobile. Wages are not keeping up with the ballooning costs of living, and the fragility of the economy means that I and most people in my community are stuck where they are with very little hope of moving up. This has been true for a long time but the problem is definitely getting worse.

AFRICAN AMERICAN, 18-34, INDEPENDENT, ABQ, URBAN



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

“*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.*

ANGLO, 50-64, DEM, ABQ, URBAN

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

The pandemic brought this reality into stark relief, as people recognized that those at the top are doing fine or often even thrived during unprecedented economic times. Corporations also made record profits during the pandemic, with CEOs benefitting from hardship, while hardworking New Mexicans suffer.

Opportunities for progressives

- ✓ Hold up the economic fallout from 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.

Increasing anger towards corporate greed

In our 2020 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. These sentiments still hold true in 2024.

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 on the Right’s 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.
- ✓ Foreign investors are persona non grata across the board. These investors exploit New Mexico for resources and cheap labor and give nothing back.



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 Mexican voters 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 for 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.

New Mexicans want the education system to set the next generation up for success, where they can get jobs that pay a living wage and particularly where a college degree is not required. This means not only improving the quality of education, but also offering comprehensive job training and more career guidance at schools so companies want to hire from New Mexico.

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.

In our qualitative research, voters were optimistic about the higher education opportunities currently being afforded to students with the lottery scholarships ultimately reducing the cost of college in the state. **A positive sign that progress is breaking through.**

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.

Politicians are dividing New Mexicans

Politicians are increasingly being seen as all talk and no action, and pit wealthy New Mexicans against everyone else. Voters are eager for elected leaders to prove they're on their side: crackdown on the developers, foreign investors and government corruption that are driving up housing costs. While they want leaders who are focusing on creating more housing that is affordable and getting costs under control – they also want politicians and corporations to be held accountable for their actions, like everyday New Mexicans who play by the rules.

Politicians need to work for the communities they were elected to serve, not use divisive rhetoric to further isolate and scare New Mexicans. Voters are concerned about the division that's been sewn in their communities, and feel politicians aren't stepping up to the plate to fix it. At their worst, some see extreme politicians spreading disinformation to manipulate and deceive voters. These politicians are extremely concerning to New Mexicans who hold fairness and respect as core values.

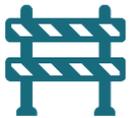




Aspirations

Financial security and stability

With a plurality of New Mexicans feeling like they are struggling in their personal financial situations, the goal for many is simply a sense of stability and consistency 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 post-pandemic rising costs, and the job insecurity they feel. New Mexicans see their state as structurally poor and believe this, more than anything, is a barrier to security and stability.

With "family" such a critical priority and value, a place their own family can thrive is very top-of-mind for New Mexico voters, 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.



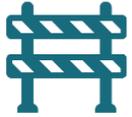
What stands in their way: Poor schools, lack of jobs, and crime all impact the strength of communities. Along with education and the economy, public safety is considered one of the state government's greatest responsibilities to its people, and also one of its biggest failings. Many reported not feeling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

There remains a belief among some that this is due largely to a lack of resources dedicated to public safety, but there is fairly broad acknowledgement of how connected poverty, social safety nets, and crime are. Even with the desire to feel safe in their communities and stop crime, New Mexicans still want to prioritize addressing the root of crime and emphasizing rehabilitation over incarceration - not just throwing everyone in jail.



Opportunities so 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 children start on a level playing field with the tools they need so they all have a chance to succeed. In New Mexico the strong 'family' value adds an additional dimension of wanting their kids to be close, and have opportunities to grow IN New Mexico through education, jobs and hard work.



What stands in their way: New Mexico's stagnant economy, the lack of *good* jobs, struggling school system, and perceived rising 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.

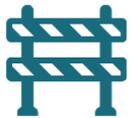
Having their voices heard and a seat at the table

New Mexicans – particularly Latinxs 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: 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. In their eyes, "good jobs" are only accessible to those with fancy degrees or opportunities they were not afforded and already feel behind. 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.

***Note:** In 2024 we focused mostly on refining and updating the villain section in our narrative. Our hero of hardworking New Mexicans and hardworking families continues to be powerful in our messaging and resonates with voters across the political spectrum. We have updated our villain section to separate political villains from investment villains and undercover who is hurting New Mexicans the most.*



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 to those who might politicize it. 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:

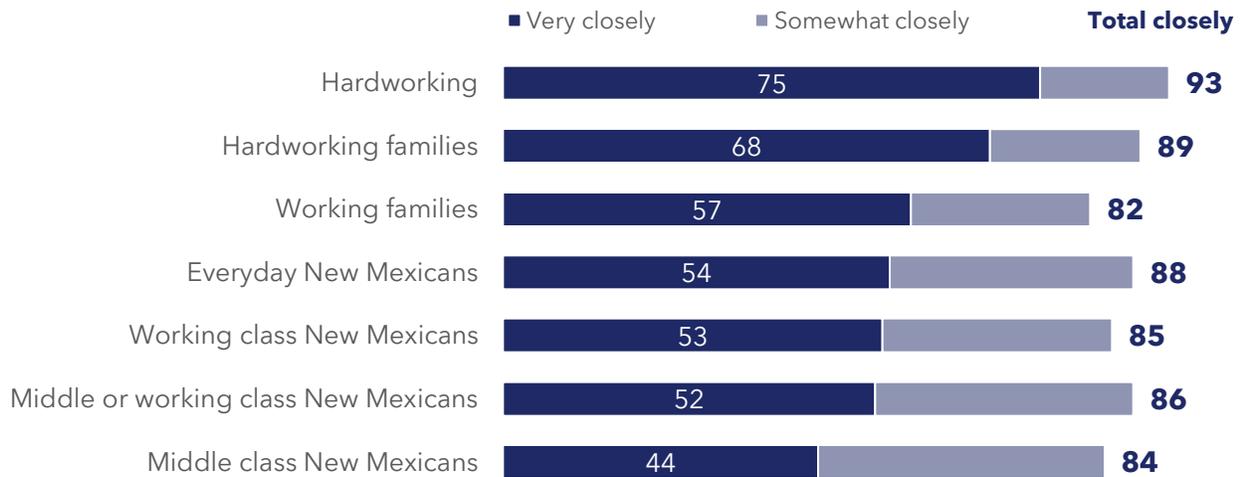
Hardworking New Mexicans

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 for those on the left, too often the perception is that those on the left *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 Democrats 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

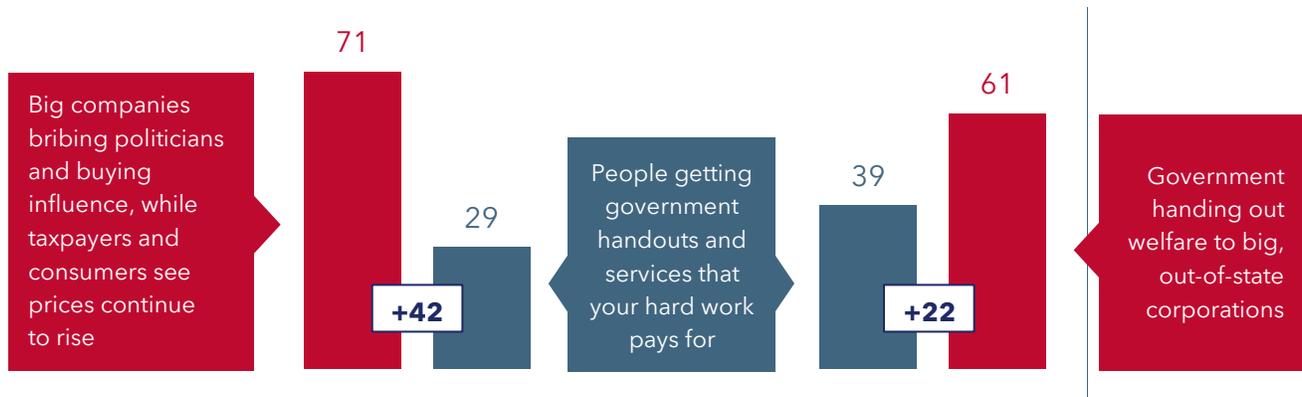




THE VILLAIN: Big, greedy corporations, the well-connected, and self-serving politicians

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.

In 2024, % concerned about...



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. And in 2020, we revealed we could more explicitly name and shame “big, greedy corporations.” Now, in 2024, we still focus on corporations and the well-connected, but add foreign investors to the list, and call out self-serving and divisive politicians as villains who hurt New Mexicans.

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.

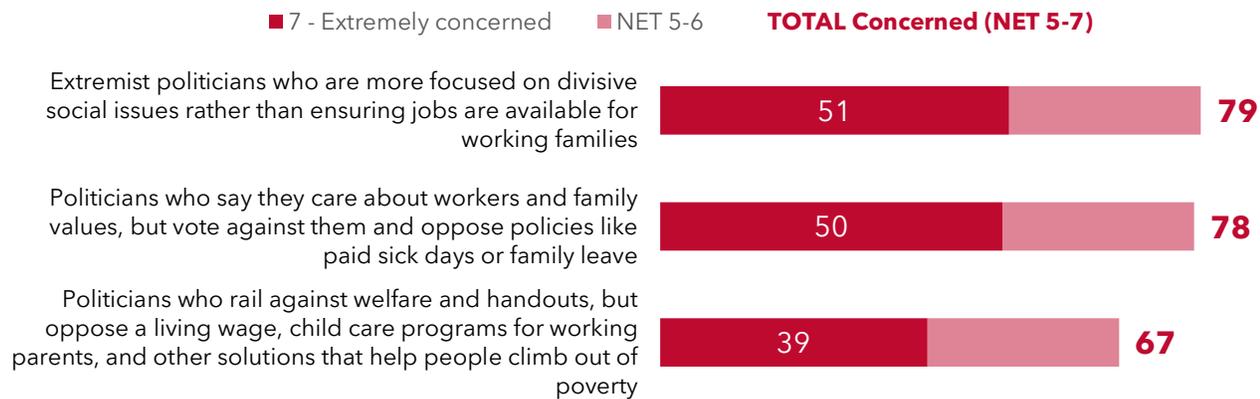
Notice we aren’t explicitly naming the wealthy in our *main, topline* description of the villain. We’ve previously seen that most people don’t believe there are very many “wealthy” people in New Mexico – especially not of the scale the phrase typically implies. And the anger does seem more concentrated 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. One of Republicans’ biggest vulnerabilities is that they are dominated by wealthy, out-of-touch leaders.
- 2) The super-rich not paying their fair share of taxes in this state.

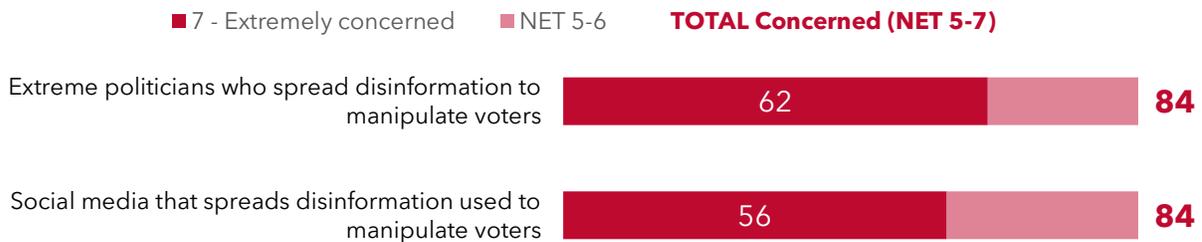
An important caveat:

- 1) 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 the left 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.** Voters are against corporations who don’t do right by New Mexicans by refusing to pay a living wage, not contributing to the community, and dividing us socially.
- 2) While more than 2 in 3 believe foreign investors have a negative impact on the state, New Mexicans are also calling for more investors and job creators to come to the state, in hopes of stimulating the economy. This dichotomy demonstrates their desire for more “good” jobs and a more thriving economy, while being wary of people coming in to just better themselves and the well-connected.

One of the most salient ways for us to show the “villainy” of extreme politicians is through the lens of the New Mexican value of family. Politicians who focus on divisive issues over working families resonate as a villain with voters across the spectrum.



In the age of disinformation, social media is often blamed for spreading lies and fake news. While this is true and voters do chalk up some of the blame to social media, slightly more actually see the role extreme politicians play in spreading disinformation as extremely concerning. Voters are sick of being lied to or taken advantage of and want their politicians to embody the values of fairness, respect and responsibility.



We need to go on the offensive against the well-connected and big corporations and getting them to pay their fair share, or fighting corporate giveaways and loopholes. Attack politicians that are blatantly putting their interest ahead of what is best for New Mexico whether that is voting against commonsense policies, wasteful spending or divisive tactics.

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
- Government who works for giant corporations and C.E.O.s instead of small businesses and average workers
- Extreme politicians who spread disinformation to manipulate voters

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

2) Connect to political corruption...

Politicians are out for their own personal gain and are failing to lead New Mexico to a better future. They are to blame for poor education, lack of good jobs, and high crime rates.

Politicians focused on the wrong thing, like divisive social issues and their own financial gain rather than ensuring jobs are available for working families is one of the most harmful things in New Mexico.

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

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

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

Government that says they care about protecting New Mexico's public lands and natural resources, but opposes policies that would help improve access to clean water, wildlife and public lands

Politicians who just want to keep throwing money at problems - asking for more and more from hardworking taxpayers instead of coming up with actual solutions

Government handing out welfare to big, out-of-state corporations who do not contribute to our communities

4) Double down on political corruption with young people and Voters of Color

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.

We need to get rid of government that enables big corporations to take advantage of workers to avoid paying a fair wage, providing benefits and paying their fair share of taxes.

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 and foreign investors that exploit laws and loopholes.

6) Go on offense on "corporate handouts"

In 2020, New Mexicans were more concerned about government giving corporate handouts to big, out-of-state corporations. While that still rings true, in 2024, the attention has turned to big companies bribing politicians and buying influence, as taxpayers see prices continue to rise while their paychecks remain stagnant.





PILLAR #1: FAMILY & 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 in New Mexico once they are grown
- Desire to keep family close to home

...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, good schools, and safe communities. We need to invest in our state so New Mexico is a place where our children have the opportunities to work and raise the next generation.

We believe we need to do more to ensure, all New Mexicans, including the next generation, have the tools they need to succeed.

Government should serve hardworking families.

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

Government should invest in our state and communities so New Mexico is a place where our children have opportunities to work and raise the next generation.



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

Politicians focused on the wrong thing (divisive social issues) rather than ensuring jobs are available for working families, is one of the most harmful things in 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 boardrooms, 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, and in an economy that serves the well-off while everyday New Mexicans lose their

homes. **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
- Desire for a more fair economy where everyone has the chance to achieve the American Dream
- 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:

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

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

Government should represent everyday New Mexicans, by ensuring the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share. Everyone should have the opportunity to be successful in New Mexico.

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, out of touch elites that only serve corporate special interests and the well-connected – not everyday New Mexicans. This enables big corporations to take advantage of workers to avoid paying a fair wage, providing benefits and paying their fair share of taxes.

Economic success needs to benefit the community, not just individuals who are well-connected.

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, and their communities.

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

The government should work for hardworking, everyday New Mexicans, by ensuring the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share.

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.



New Mexicans deserve a government that helps create real opportunities for all New Mexicans, not just the wealthy and well-connected.

New Mexicans deserve a government that helps create real opportunities for all New Mexicans, not just the wealthy and well-connected. The government should support hardworking New Mexicans and their families.

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
 - Follow up “opportunities to better themselves” with examples or couple with other parts of the narrative where we lift up communities and economies as a whole to avoid sounding too “bootstrap-y”
- ✓ **Stronger:** ...instead of putting barriers in the way.
- × **Weaker:** ...and remove obstacles from people’s paths.





PILLAR #4: RESPECT FOR 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.

As with the rest of the narrative, we want to keep this forward-looking and aspirational: talk about what we want, not just what we don't. Respect for communities and traditions doesn't mean a resistance to change or a fear of deviating from tradition - it means accepting new realities to find present day solutions.

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
- Wanting the next generation to succeed means instilling values of diversity in our background and traditions
- New Mexico is different than other states because New Mexicans show up for each other

...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:

Truly respecting people and communities means listening to the needs of New Mexicans of different races and backgrounds and ensuring that they have a 'seat at the table' in state government.

Government needs to better reflect New Mexico's basic value of respect for all people and communities.

New Mexicans show up for their neighbors, support small business, and know our diversity, tradition and values set New Mexicans apart.

Respecting our diversity, our traditions and each other - and instilling those values in the next generation - is critical to ensuring our state thrives. (This message resonates particularly for Latinxs in rural areas)



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.

To raise the next generation of New Mexicans to be successful requires strong families, good schools and healthy, safe communities. To do that:

- Children start on a level playing field with the tools they need so 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 and their communities.
- The economy needs to reward people based on what they do, not who they know.
- Government should work for everyday New Mexicans, by ensuring the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share and should help create real opportunities for New Mexican families - not the wealthy and well-connected.
- Our diversity, tradition and values set us apart. That's why New Mexicans show up for their neighborhoods, support small businesses, 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 and safe 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.6)** 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.10)** and the Narrative's **Value Pillars (pp.25)** for more.

3. Know and Address Your Own Vulnerabilities

Each of the **Narrative in Action** write-ups (**pp.41**) have more specific information on progressives' vulnerabilities on various topics, but the most dominant are:

- Concerns about any type of change in the energy economy. Oil and gas have long been a dependable source of jobs and revenue for the state, and many are concerned clean energy investments will come at a great expense to hardworking New Mexicans.
- New Mexicans value fairness so any changes to redistricting or the citizen legislature that seems to favor one group over another is seen as unfair and goes against their values.
- Republicans and those on the right think immigrants bring increased crime to the community, and the majority of voters feel crime is on the rise and they are increasingly feeling unsafe.

4. Define the Opposition

Again, each of the **Narrative in Action** write-ups (**pp.41**) have more specific information on conservatives' vulnerabilities on topics, but the most dominant are:

- Big corporations and the wealthy take advantage of working people by not contributing to society either socially or financially.
- They put their political ideology and extremism 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 supportive elected leaders controlling the state government because criticisms or complaints about the way things are can easily backfire for the group that's in charge.

On another note - while respect for communities and tradition are still important in New Mexico this doesn't mean New Mexicans are resistant to change. It means accepting new realities to find a present-day solution that is grounded in our shared values.

We found this was particularly true when it comes to climate and energy, democracy and immigration and crime (pp. 41-49).

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"
- Use "creating real opportunities" for New Mexicans not just "serving New Mexican families" - signal we believe in rewarding hard work and "opportunities for people to *better themselves, and their communities*"
- Talk about giving children the "tools they need" not just "setting them up for success"

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 voters.



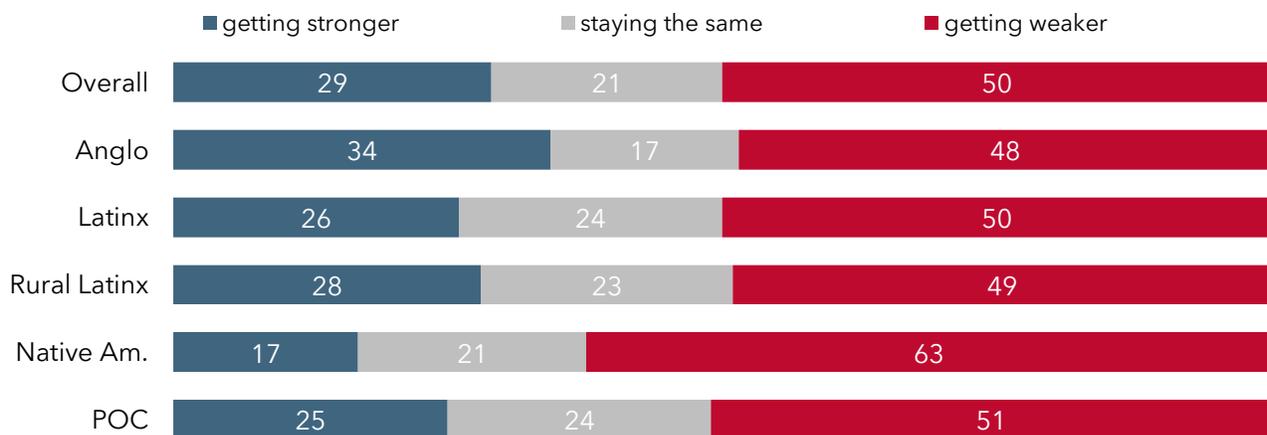
Fleshing Out the Economic Narrative

In the past four years inflation and cost of living have been top of mind for Americans across the country. New Mexicans are no exceptions. New Mexicans have been anxious and frustrated with the economy for years, as stagnant wages and limited opportunities left them feeling stuck. New Mexicans are struggling to save, upset their paychecks haven't kept up with inflation, and angry the state has not incentivized better jobs to come to New Mexico. 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 Republican 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 - Democrats are seen as just slightly more trustworthy.

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, and their communities
- 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 sense that New Mexico needs to incentive new diverse industries to come to the state and provide good jobs and opportunities
- The desire for New Mexico to provide comprehensive job training, and more career guidance to prepare for highly skilled rolls

In general, would you say New Mexico's economy is...





The Narrative on Jobs

A significant portion of the New Mexico narrative focuses on aspirations and pain New Mexico needs more opportunities for people to work hard and better themselves, and their communities.

- New Mexico needs more opportunities for people to work hard and better themselves, and their communities.
- The economy needs to reward people based on what they do, not who they know.
- Everyone should have the opportunity to be successful in New Mexico.

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	Anglo	Latinx	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 and improving education quality should also be an important priority and part of the agenda as voters respond positively to leaders who will:

Invest in higher quality education, comprehensive job training programs, and more career guidance for New Mexicans so they will be well prepared for the workforce.

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.

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 New Mexicans 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.” Compared to past years, New Mexicans are more receptive to this messaging, as there is strong sense that the economy has largely been in decline since the pandemic, with more visual reminders of inequality.

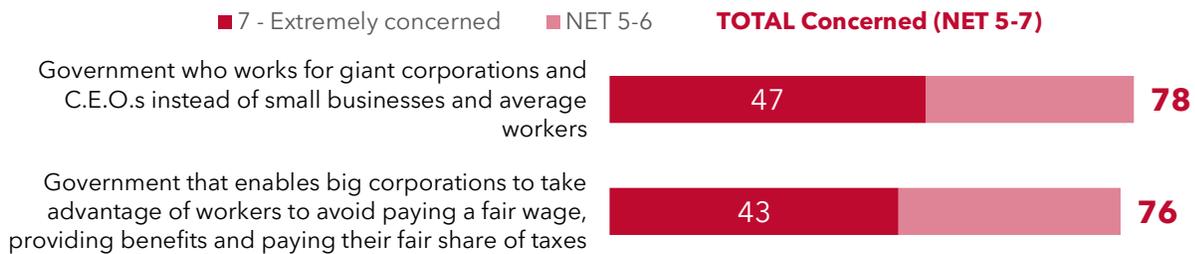




The Narrative on Corporations

While we should advocate for New Mexico bringing more good jobs to the state, including ones that don't require a college degree, we also need to call out private companies that are preventing this from happening. While getting government handouts is concerning to Republicans, the vast majority of almost all other demographics blame big companies and corporations for rigging the system and preying on consumers. Big companies are using their power to skirt regulations, gouge prices and hurt taxpayers.

How concerned are you about this in New Mexico?



New Mexicans see big corporations as eating at the fabric of our society by not paying their fair share, disconnecting from the community, and hoarding their money. Voters feel these huge corporations come into their communities but don't contribute monetarily or in any meaningful way socially.

The real villain in the economy is:

- Big corporations that pay poverty-level wages and provide no benefits but spend billions on elections and lobbying to avoid having to pay their fair share of taxes or do right by workers.





The Narrative on Businesses

As with much of the narrative, 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 20 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 Oil and gas companies that <u>exploit their workers</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small businesses that contribute to the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government working for giant corporations and C.E.O.s instead of small businesses and average workers 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 Government who works for giant corporations and C.E.O.s instead of small businesses and average worker Politicians who say they care about increasing the supply of housing but don't crack down on private equity firms and government corruption that's driving up housing costs

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 Latinx voters.

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

	Total	Base	Middle	Latinx
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 Climate and Energy

#1: Meet New Mexicans Where They Are

With hotter summers, colder winters, longer droughts and more flooding, New Mexicans understand climate change is transforming our environment and daily lives.

While oil and gas has been a dependable industry in New Mexico for many years, reliably providing jobs and revenue, there has been a decline in recent years and many voters see the negative health effects on the people who live near wells and the environmental effects on the land.

Most New Mexicans understand investments in wind and solar would lead to more jobs, more revenue for the state and would leave the next generation of New Mexicans better off. However, some believe the oil and gas industry is too powerful and is blocking the expansion of wind the solar energy development.

Most are unfamiliar with hydrogen power, and some were initially excited about the opportunities it could bring. But more believe New Mexico lacks the infrastructure to implement and fund hydrogen energy and are skeptical about long-term damage.

#2: Connect on Shared, Deeply-held Values

New Mexico has what it needs to make clean energy work: empty space, sunshine, wind, and people who need good jobs.

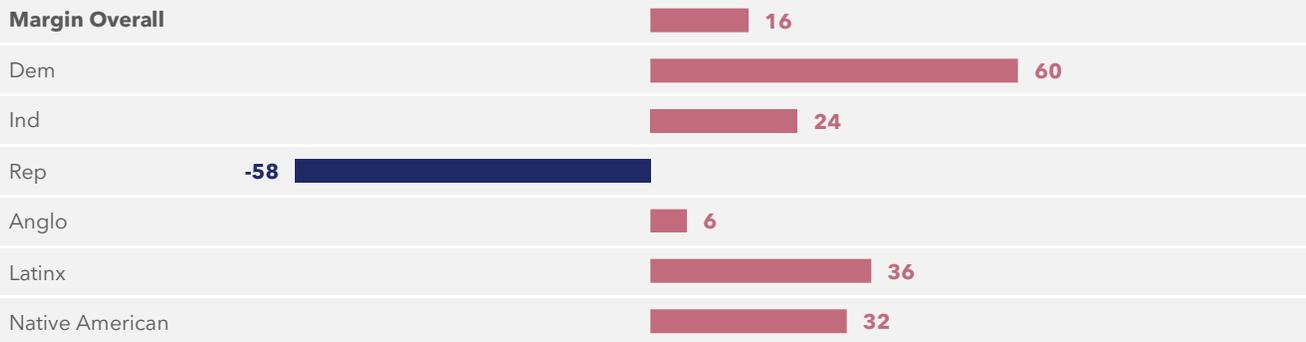
Expanding wind, and solar projects can create jobs and opportunities, protect the air our children breathe and the water in our communities, and keep electricity costs more stable over time.

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

Which of the following do you agree with more?

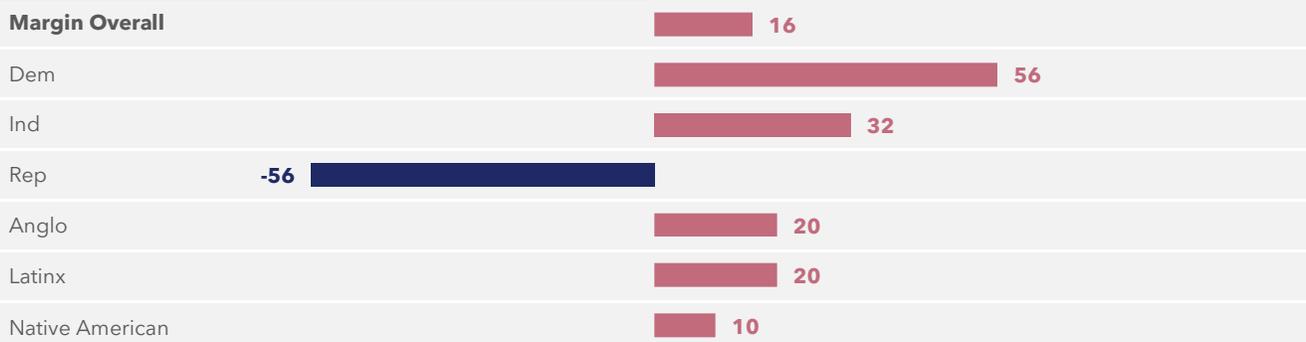
Progress is not progress if it's in the wrong direction. Government should grow all industries, not pick winners and losers. Liberals want to throw open prison doors and shut down robust oil and gas businesses. Now is not the time to be destroying jobs and hurting the economy, especially in rural areas.

MAKE CLEAN ENERGY WORK: New Mexico has what it needs to make clean energy work: empty space, sunshine, wind, and people who need good jobs. Expanding wind, solar, and hydrogen power projects can create jobs and opportunities, protect the air our children breathe and the water in our communities, and keep electricity costs more stable over time.



Progress is not progress if it's in the wrong direction. Government should grow all industries, not pick winners and losers. Liberals want to throw open prison doors and shut down robust oil and gas businesses. Now is not the time to be destroying jobs and hurting the economy, especially in rural areas.

CLEAN JOBS FOR NEXT GEN: New Mexico needs to create jobs that we'd want our kids to get: jobs with good pay and opportunities to advance that help create clean communities. That's what the wind and solar industries can bring to New Mexico - and what investing in hydrogen power and cutting edge clean energy will do and what the coal industry never did.



#3: Know and Address Your Own Vulnerabilities

There are concerns however about any type of change in the energy economy. The idea of oil and gas jobs leaving the state frightens voters, especially rural Latinx voters. Many voters are concerned about the personal cost and costs to New Mexico for investing heavily in clean energy.

- Steer clear of messaging that focuses too much on transitioning away from oil and gas, in uncertain economic times voters don't want to lose any form of stability. With so little familiarity with hydrogen power, New Mexicans are vulnerable to messaging around hydrogen as 'clean'- it's particularly easy for hydrogen to get looped in with solar and wind as "clean" without protest from most.

#4: Define the Opposition

Leaning into New Mexico's unique preparedness for a new clean energy source is compelling for People of Color and younger voters, but older voters and Independents can benefit from hearing about the broken promises of the oil and gas industries.

The wind and solar industries can bring good jobs with good pay and opportunities to advance to New Mexico - and what investing in cutting edge clean energy will do and what the coal industry never did.

#5: Be Forward-looking

Incentivizing clean energy industries to come to New Mexico is popular with Democrats, but it's a tougher sell with other demographics. Latinxs in rural areas are particularly concerned about protecting their jobs and uprooting their lives.

The idea of federal funds going towards clean power helps alleviate voters' fears that the financial burden will solely be on the New Mexico State government.

- The federal Inflation Reduction Act will bring \$15 billion of investment in large-scale clean power generation and storage to New Mexico by 2030.

#6: Use Their (Clear, Simple) Language

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

New Mexico actively promotes key industries such as renewable energy, aerospace, film and digital media, bioscience, and advanced manufacturing with business-friendly regulations and entrepreneurial support so everyone can succeed here.

#7: Use it Widely





Talking About Democracy

#1: Meet New Mexicans Where They Are

New Mexicans have faith in their election system overall, and generally think their vote is counted fairly. However, there is significant and troubling skepticism with Independents and Republicans, rural Latinxs, and Native Americans.

New Mexicans cite civic duty and wanting to make a difference as the strongest motivators to vote, and most are reticent to admit missing elections, with the exception of unique logistical challenges. Some younger voters admit to skipping elections when they disapprove of the candidates – a worrying insight ahead of this year’s general election.

In a hypothetical ask, losing faith in the system might be a reason to miss future elections for Republicans, Native American and Latinx voters in particular. Democrats say they’d only miss an election if they didn’t have enough information.

#2: Connect on Shared, Deeply-held Values

New Mexicans understand the responsibility and privilege of voting with strong support for civic participation.

Lean into our values of fairness...

We need to take the responsibility of voting seriously, ensure that our elections are free and fair, and safeguard our voting system.

The integrity and fairness of our election system is important to all of us.

As New Mexicans, our right to vote is a privilege and a responsibility.

Lean into our values of respect for communities...

Voting is the most powerful tool we have to ensure our government represents “we the people.”



#3: Know and Address Your Own Vulnerabilities

On the Citizen Legislature

We have marginal agreement that the citizen legislature is outdated, but we will need to do more to convince a majority of people. Democrats are firmly in our camp, but Republicans, rural Latinx voters and Native Americans believe New Mexico's citizen legislature is "of the people and for the people." With responsibility and fairness as key New Mexican values, the citizen legislature is widely appealing and mirrors the desire for "everyday" New Mexicans to be represented.

More persuasion and messaging research will need to be done to shift support with Republicans, Native Americans and rural Latinxs.

On Redistricting

With fairness as a paramount value for New Mexicans, prioritizing protections for one racial or ethnic group sounds wrong. More than 6-in-10 think remaining "neutral" is imperative to protecting the integrity of our elections and electoral process, and only Democrats and Native American voters explicitly favor new maps taking race into account.

#4: Define the Opposition

We need to connect keeping our elections free and fair and upholding the integrity of the system back to ensuring all New Mexicans have a voice. To ensure the government represents "we the people" we must fund the Voting Rights act fully to implement reforms voters already agreed to and prioritize protections around Native Americans and People of Color, who are often overlooked in our electoral map process.



We need to make voting more accessible so every eligible New Mexican can make their voice heard.

#5: Be Forward-looking and Solution-oriented

Frame reforms to the electoral process as upholding our values of fairness and respect for communities.

For the Voting Rights Act, remind voters the bill protects tribal lands and gives more power to native leaders.

For the citizen legislature, remind voters it is not truly representative and favors those who are independently wealthy or able to work on their own terms, such as business owners, lawyers, and even retirees.

More education is needed on all democratic reforms.



#6: Use Their (Clear, Simple) Language

Lean into New Mexicans eagerness to engage in their civic duty and make their voice heard. Sentiments they themselves claim to motivate them to vote in almost every election. Emphasize the importance of upholding integrity in the system and compel them to vote so the government is representative of who they are and what they want.



Voting allows us to directly participate in shaping the policies and leaders that directly impact our neighborhoods, schools and local communities.

#7: Use it Widely





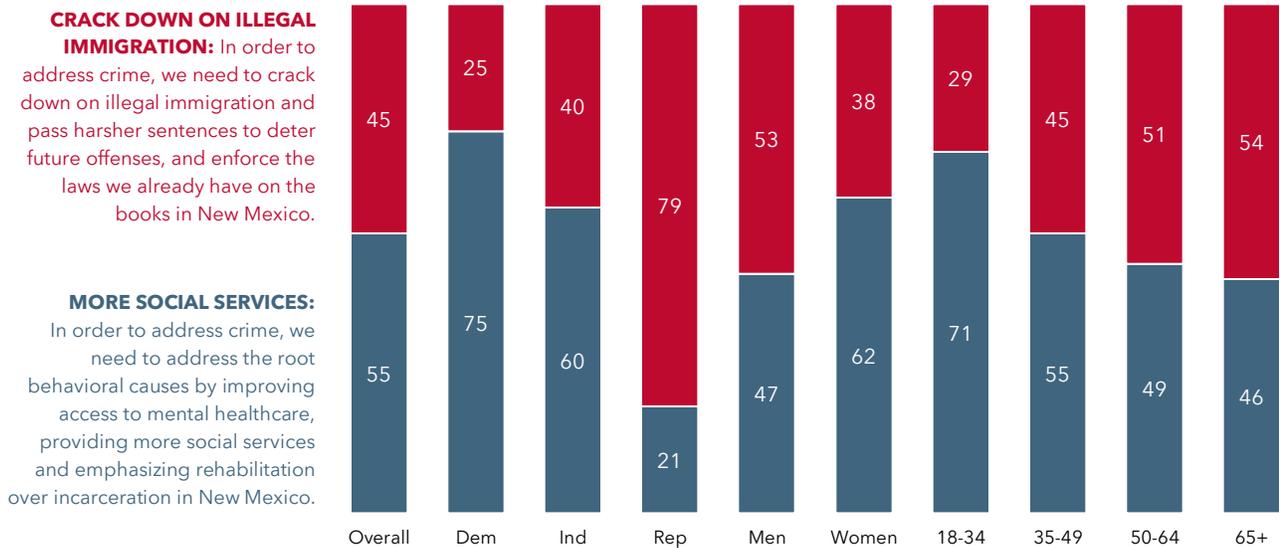
Talking About Immigration and Crime

#1: Meet New Mexicans Where They Are

More than half of New Mexicans think immigration should be decreased. Democrats and Latinxs are the only groups for whom at least a plurality would keep immigration at its current levels. Yet, New Mexicans broadly agree immigrants strengthen our communities with their work and contributions, and this sentiment is stronger than either argument that they strain our resources or bring increased crime.

While crime is a top concern in New Mexico, for the most part, they don't see changes to immigration as a "solution" to crime (though some on the ideological right, men and older voters do, to some extent). Rather, most New Mexicans believe in order to address crime, we need to focus on rehabilitation and social services.

Which concerns you more?



#2: Connect on Shared, Deeply-held Values

Tapping into the values of community and opportunity help connect with voters on the issue of immigration – more so than just trying to pivot the conversation to the contributions they make to our workforce. We win over voters by leaning into opportunity and shared prosperity.

Immigrants in New Mexico strengthen our communities with their work and contributions

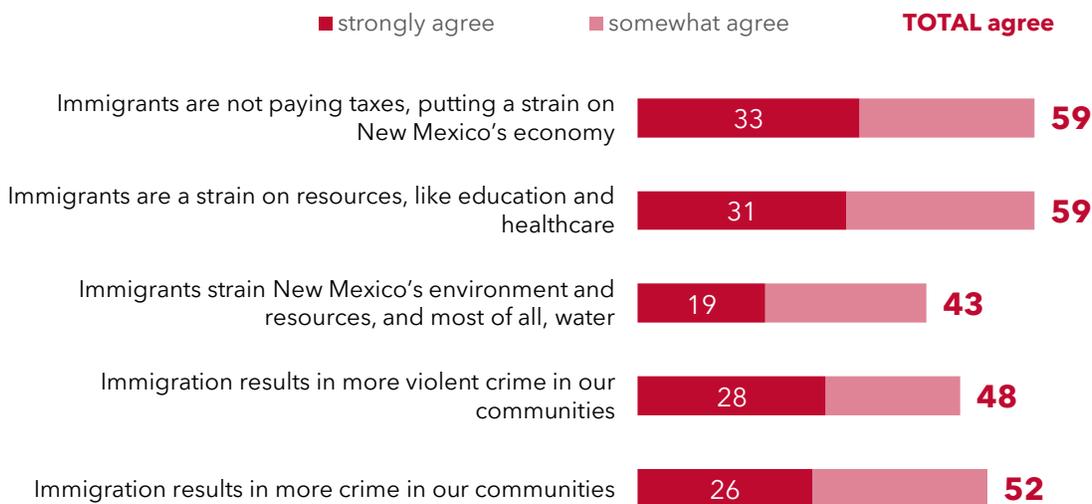
Immigrants living in New Mexico are part of our families, communities, working lives and places of worship.

Like so many in New Mexico, immigrants join the long tradition of coming here from around the world in search of opportunities and shared prosperity.

#3: Know and Address Your Own Vulnerabilities

An argument that immigrants bring increased crime to our communities is convincing to Republicans and to some extent Independents. Nearly 6 in 10 Republicans strongly agree immigrants bring more violent crime to communities. And more than half of Independents strongly or somewhat agree immigrants bring more crime in general.

6 in 10 Independents and 8 in 10 Republicans are concerned about economic, education and healthcare strain due to increased immigration.



#4: Define the Opposition

With our base voters, like Democrats and women, we can lean into soothing concerns on crime however this message should be targeted not for widespread use.

The likelihood of an immigrant being incarcerated is 60% lower than of people born in the United States.

Immigrants want the opportunity to live in safe communities, contribute to our society and provide a better life for their families - just like the rest of us.

#5: Be Forward-looking and Solution-oriented

Despite voters voicing the need for stricter laws on crime, when forced to pick between rehabilitation or cracking down on crime and illegal immigration, the majority picked the former, emphasizing New Mexico’s values of community, fairness and resilience.

Lead with our values and do not hyperfocus on one aspect of crime or immigration.

- We can’t solely blame mental illness or illegal immigration as the source of crime – emphasize the need for rehabilitation but also holding serious criminals accountable for their actions.

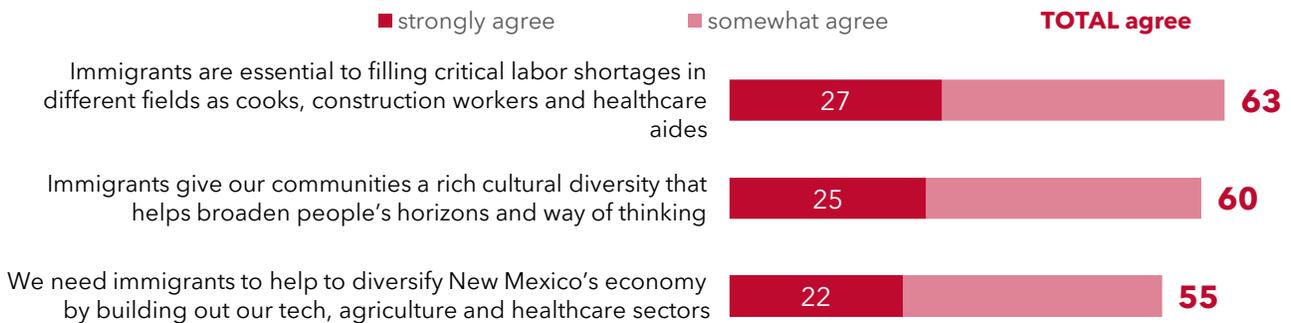
Connecting immigration to the key roles immigrants play in our society can also be helpful in putting a human face to the issue.

#6: Use Their (Clear, Simple) Language

Immigrants are essential to filling critical labor shortages in different fields as cooks, construction workers and healthcare aides.

Immigrants give our communities a rich cultural diversity that helps broaden people’s horizons and way of thinking.

We need immigrants to help to diversify New Mexico’s economy by building out our tech, agriculture and healthcare sectors.



#7: Use it Widely



Portraits of New Mexicans



Our team listened to 40 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 course of a week - 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 and the future of New Mexico.

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

Female, African American, 18-34, Independent, ABQ, Suburb

On education:

I am 29 years old, and I've lived in New Mexico since I was 12. I went to middle and high school here, and I currently have a daughter in elementary school. My daughter started kindergarten in 2020. Since then it has felt like playing catch up every year to get her where she needs to be. She also has ADHD, and it has been difficult to accommodate her needs. With inflation, and everything else going on, parents have to work more. It's hard to work with her outside of the classroom. Teachers are overworked, underpaid and stressed out. She has switched schools multiple times. I just want a quality education for my child. I want her to enjoy going to school.

I've seen an increase in programs for children during school breaks, holidays, and after school care. They're affordable, and reliable, and they've helped me so much. I don't use childcare assistance from the state any longer, but they helped me tremendously when my daughter was younger. I wouldn't have been able to afford it without assistance. I'm happy to see that APS is offering more fruits and vegetables. I believe APS is trying out new things to see what works. For example, changing the school hours, and the calendar. For some, the change was very hard, especially those with kids in different schools, but for me the new schedule has been better for my needs.

On the economy and jobs:

I would describe New Mexico's economy as interesting. A lot of people have moved here because our cost of living was/is affordable, but that has driven prices up even more... come on, it's been ridiculous. My friend can't even afford the same apartment she moved out of 1 year ago. And at the same time she makes too much money for any type of help. That's the story for so many. They make too much for the affordable housing apartments, as well as food stamps. I don't know what's going on with the job market. There's supposedly a lot of jobs, but you'll apply and hear nothing back from 95% of postings. I don't get it. It's very uncertain right now. I need the stability and everywhere else is offering the same wage of 15/16 an hr. That's not cutting it, hopefully I'll get a raise soon. I blame the government, the state, and the governor. I would say there is a lot of wealth disparity going on. People are making more money than they ever have, but still struggling. The government, state, and governor of NM all contributed to this mess.

On crime and safety:

I would say crime is somewhat of a concern. There's too much drunk driving, drug usage, and people without homes. We all want to feel safe in our homes and when we go out day to day. For the most part I do feel safe, but I definitely pay attention to my surroundings. There are a good amount of times that you'll hear gun shots coming from somewhere. It's hard to know how people will react so you have to be careful. I think childhood trauma, and neglect are very big contributors. As well as drugs and alcohol. That saying "hurt people, hurt others", rings true. It's super important that a child has a nurturing, loving parent(s) to guide them and support them as they age. Single parent households have even more to juggle and that makes the situation even more difficult. All of these can effect mental health negatively.



Male, AAPI, 50-64, Republican, North, Urban

On issues New Mexico faces:

Crime - An increase in crime in Albuquerque and Santa Fe has been the biggest issue. I do not see that improving in the near term. I see it getting worse, especially in Santa Fe. It impacts my family in several ways. I will not send my graduating high school senior to school in New Mexico because of this. I think our law-enforcement numbers need to increase dramatically. The police force needs to be funded at an adequate level to achieve the public safety required by the public.

Self-serving Politicians - In the past many New Mexican politicians at the national level have been quite sophisticated and insightful however, our state based politicians are quite territorial address serial and generally have self interest that are being pursued. They do not represent the wide spectrum of people living in the state, especially conservatives.

Immigration - This nation was built upon immigrants. My family came to this country as immigrants. I am very happy and proud of this nation has been founded by immigrants. However, many immigrants come here seeking them. The benefits without contribution. Immigration policy needs to set a higher standard than today. I think there is a strong correlation between illegal immigration and crime. There are statistics available from federal agencies like the US border patrol that collect and report numbers. A quick search can show a general increase in crime arrest from those who are caught and are illegal immigrants. While this quick search is not exhaustive and not conclusive, I believe this trend.

On the economy and jobs:

New Mexico could be a center for manufacturing for many industries. The people here are well skilled and provide a variety of talented skill labor. The economy is driven mostly by the defense industries in Los Alamos and in Albuquerque. This has increased over the past few years given the increased challenges across the world. I'm happy to see the increased interest in the filmmaking industry utilizing New Mexico's beautiful landscape. I see this attracting high-quality jobs people and industries to the area. I believe the tax and centers are the principal driver for the interest.



Male, Anglo, 50-64, Unaffiliated, North, Rural

On the environment and clean energy:

We're making steps in the right direction to slow climate change, yet we need to do more and do it faster. We have an amazing state and we need to take better care of it so our grandchildren can enjoy it. I think that in the year 2050, we'll look back on the way we live today and won't believe how we didn't take care of the environment and wasted so many precious natural resources. The Oil and gas industry is great for NM in terms of tax revenue and good-paying jobs. It isn't good for the environment at all. I hope we can continue to grow wind and solar power in NM. I'm concerned that we don't have enough of the right kind of trade people trained to: 1) complete home and business energy audits, 2) seal and insulate existing homes, 3) upgrade electrical panel, 4) design the right HVAC system for heat pumps, and more.

On education and job opportunities:

We're not competitive with any of our neighboring states. We have so much to offer, yet Texas and other neighboring states are getting all the growth. We're not really business-friendly -- our gross receipts taxes (GRT) are some of the most arcane and complicated taxes in the country. We need to strengthen the economy to make it easier for young people to stay in NM and earn a good living. I would bring more high-tech jobs to NM. Jobs that pay a good wage and that people can feel good about. We are not educating young people here to be prepared for great high-tech jobs, so high-tech companies aren't investing and moving to NM. Intel always has to "import" skilled employees -- many of whom come and aren't happy with our schools. Our schools (on average) aren't as good as we need. I'm concerned that my grandchildren who also live here will not get a great education. I think many parents and families are not doing all they can to raise children that value education, and see entrepreneurship as an opportunity. State leaders need to make NM more business-friendly and make more great public schools available for youth and families that want a great education.

On government and the justice system:

I hold our government officials to a high standard and generally, I think they've done a pretty good job over the last four years. There is so much more work to be done and making some needed changes to our government are part of that work. Our very short legislative sessions hamper what can get done. Part-time, unpaid representatives don't make sense anymore. Our criminal justice system is not very just. The poor who can't afford the best lawyers always get the worst treatment. Our prison system (as a whole) doesn't help people, it just punishes them and creates barriers to being a better person and getting a job or loan.

On inequality and crime:

There are some bad people, yet I believe that most people are doing their best. We have mostly stagnant wages, high rents, etc. If people had a better standard of living, many would not turn to crime. The richest people keep getting richer and the poor stay poor. Drugs also contribute to the crime problem and again I think that fewer people would choose to use drugs if they had a better life. We need to come together and find common ground. Pointing fingers at people with whom you haven't yet found common ground hurts NM families because it doesn't encourage people with different points of view to come together to find solutions.



Male, Native American, 50-64, Democrat, North, Urban

On issues New Mexico faces:

Crime and Immigrants - Crime in New Mexico is rising like everything else, frustration, economy. It's more reported than other years because of social media. I blame people who are not from New Mexico... Leniency of laws. They have not grown up with our taught way of culture and what it means to take a life or hurt and steal from other people. We do need control of [the immigration] matter.

Economy - Subpar. It's the 6th worst economy in the USA. Lack of jobs in New Mexico. Low paying salaries. Terrible economy. Our government is at fault. Our family has talked about moving to another state. I could probably do better in another state. High wage payers in another state for the work I do. The state's economy is largely based on natural resources extraction, we're talking oil, natural gas as well as tourism. Mexico has, however, been making efforts to diversify its economy and attract new industries, such as renewable energy, technology, and film production. The fruits of these efforts are still waiting to ripen.

Other notes - The windy season, Lack of nightlife, Isolation, The drought, Poor education, Low literacy, High violent crime rate, Terrible dry climate, Low life expectancy. It seems that we are 10 years economy wise behind every other state.

On the environment and clean energy:

Renewable energy increases economic development. Transmission projects attract large investments from the private sector to New Mexico. The development of renewable energy creates a complementary economic opportunity to our existing oil and gas industry. Yes I do want it to grow for the sake of our state [and] investors. I know it's supposed to be clean energy, but is it really?



Female, Latina, 50-64, Democrat, South, Urban

On education:

One of the positive changes is the free education that they are offering for college students. I think that will allow students who couldn't afford to go to school to be able to get an education. I agree our children need to start on a level playing field. I think the children that are in the poorer school districts don't get the same opportunities as the ones in the higher income districts.

On energy:

I think wind and solar power should be our biggest industry we have so much of both in New Mexico. We should be capitalizing on the fact that we have sun so many days out of the year and also lots of wind. I think this is a growing industry that will positively affect New Mexico more and more. I'm not too familiar with hydrogen power and really haven't heard much about it. I had to look it up to read what it was. So I don't know what impact it has had or has on New Mexico. I have always wanted to know why we continue to drill for oil and why companies are allowed to continue fracking if it is bad for our environment. I just wonder if New Mexico is doing enough to ensure that we are producing clean energy.

On crime:

The drug epidemic is one of the biggest issues that is plaguing New Mexico. The drugs are everywhere they are affecting our youth really bad because they are growing up without their parents and having to be raised by grandparents or going into the system. Another big problem in New Mexico is the revolving door crime rates. People are repeatedly committing crimes and being let loose to go out and do it again. The bond laws need to change and the court system needs to get the funding they need to be able to prosecute all the cases that are coming in. I think a lot of the crimes that are being committed are because of the drugs and homelessness that is out of hand here in New Mexico. I'm worried that if it continues like this it won't be safe to go anywhere day or night. If I go to a certain area of town I will see shoplifting happening every single time. I'm not really sure if just one person is to blame for the problems that we are having. I think it is a collective of our government not doing what they should be doing. They should be working on mental health, drug rehabs, affordable housing. I think if the parties would come together and stop pointing fingers we would be able to get thing accomplished. These trends have directly impacted my family because I have two adult children who are addicted to drugs in and out of the judicial system. They have been drug addicts for about nine years now. I'm raising my eight year old grandson as a result of his parents addiction. They have tried several times to go to rehab but the wait is long and they wind up going back to the streets instead. I just want our government to use the money they got from the drug companies to clean up our state and help our citizens and communities so that we can feel safe again.

On the economy and job opportunities:

Poor, in trouble, struggling. I think since the pandemic our economy took a big hit and we are struggling to come back from that. The cost of living has gone up so the wage increases didn't have much effect on the economy. People are still struggling to make ends meet. Rent has increased so much over the last few years that families are struggling to pay for housing and are having to settle for smaller homes and are forced to rent in communities they normally wouldn't.



Male, Latino, 65+, Unaffiliated, South, Rural

On the economy:

NM's economy is not good, because of inflation mostly and state government not helping change state laws to encourage businesses to come to the state, reduce taxes and poor spending of tax dollars. All this has not really changed over the last couple of years. My financial situation is slowly getting worse and I say this mostly because of inflation and my income is not keeping up with inflation. I would have said the same a few months ago and the last three years. The cost of everything continues to go up; the push by the state for electric vehicles being forced on the NM citizens; the talk by the state government about doing away with gas furnaces, gas water heaters, gas stoves, etc.; school districts being forced to have five day class schedules despite meeting all state education requirements; businesses not wanting to move to NM because of state laws, the quality of education in the state, crime and the economy in general; little or no effort by NM to control illegals coming in to the state. All of the things I mentioned above make me pessimistic and worried about the future... make me feel NM is on the wrong path. The governor and in general the state legislature bare most of the fault. These trends impacts my income, spending and my comfort level for the future.

On energy:

The oil industry is one of the biggest industries in NM, it provides a vary large amount of revenue to the state which helps life in NM in a positive way. Over the last four year the production has gone down which affects our state revenue downward. Wind and solar have good affect in NM, however, the cost of wind generators are high for each unit and very costly to maintain each units; they are also unsightly. Cost vs. Savings I do not know, I have not seen numbers on this, I am not sure I want to see this grown in NM. Solar is expensive to purchase even with incentives; the amount of energy produces depends on the quality of each panel and the number of panels, I would like to see this industry grow, but at a lower cost and with better technology. Hydrogen needs better technology to make it more attractive. I am not knowledgeable enough about this industry to comment further.

On crime:

Crime is a major issue of concern throughout the state. Most crime is from those that repeatedly commit crimes; they know there are little or no consequences. I am very concerned about crime in my community and throughout the state. There is little or no effort by New Mexico to control illegals coming into the state.



Tear Sheets

The Progressive Narrative: The Master Message

To raise the next generation of successful New Mexicans requires strong families, good schools and healthy, safe communities. To do that:

- Children start on a level playing field with the tools they need so 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 and their communities.
- The economy needs to reward people based on what they do, not who they know.
- Government should work for everyday New Mexicans, by ensuring the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share and should help create real opportunities for New Mexican families - not the wealthy and well-connected.
- Our diversity, tradition and values set us apart. That's why New Mexicans show up for their neighborhoods, support small businesses, 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 and safe 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

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-Latinxs, 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
- **Exploited:** Companies come to New Mexico, but hire from out of state. Voters feel corporations are getting an easy way out while workers can't make a living wage
- **Unstable:** Post pandemic economic stress where paychecks haven't kept up with inflation and jobs with opportunities to advance are scarce

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
- **Community:** Strong families, good schools, and safe communities
- **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
- **Fairness:** Striving for more fairness in society, the economy and the government where all children start on a level playing field

Pain Points



- New Mexico is doing worse than most other states
- Too many low-wage, no-benefit jobs that offer little ability to advance - leading to the next generation leaving the state
- It's too often about "who you know"
- Anger towards big corporations and wealthy and self-serving politicians
- Poor education system and lack of job training, leaving the next generation unprepared
- Healthcare expenses
- Politicians dividing New Mexicans

Aspirations



- Financial security and stability
- New, bold energy solutions
- Freedom to live life the way you want
- Safe, strong, and healthy community for your family, with good schools
- Opportunities so their kids can succeed, especially *in* New Mexico
- Representation/having a voice in politics and seat at the table



Family & Community	Fairness & Equality	Opportunity	Respect For Communities
<p>We believe raising the next generation of New Mexicans to be successful requires strong families, good schools and safe communities.</p> <p>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]/ New Mexico is a place where our children have opportunities to work and raise the next generation.</p> <p>The opposition's policies weaken families and communities because they put political ideology ahead of what's best for New Mexico. They focus on divisive social issues, rather than ensuring jobs are available for working families.</p>	<p>We believe we need <i>more</i> 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.</p> <p>We believe all children should start on a level playing field where they all have a chance to succeed.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The opposition serves the wealthy elites and corporate special interests - not everyday New Mexicans. This enables big corporations to take advantage of workers to avoid paying a fair wage, proving benefits and paying their fair share of taxes.</p>	<p>We believe everyone - not just those with connections - should have opportunities to better themselves and their communities.</p> <p>Government should create opportunities for <i>people who want to work hard</i>.</p> <p>...The government should work for hardworking, everyday New Mexicans, by ensuring the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Respecting our diversity, our traditions, and each other - and instilling those values in the next generation - is critical to ensuring our state thrives.</p> <p>Government needs to better reflect NM's basic value of respect for all people and communities.</p> <p>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.</p>

	More of this...	...Less of that
Opportunity	We need to create more opportunity for... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people to better themselves, and their community • 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	Our diversity, tradition and values set us apart. That's why New Mexicans show up for their neighbors, support small businesses, and ensure they all have a seat at the table in state government.	Listening to the needs of New Mexicans of different races and backgrounds and ensuring they have a 'seat at the table' in state government.
Education	Ensure the next generation has the tools they need to succeed	Ensure the next generation has the chance to succeed
Jobs	Jobs with livable wages Jobs that let you advance Jobs that let you balance work and family	Good jobs
Immigration	Like so many in New Mexico, immigrants join the long tradition of coming here from around the world in search of opportunities and shared prosperity.	Immigrants are the healthcare providers who look after the sick and our seniors. They volunteer in our communities. They're small business owners, parents, scientists, construction workers, soldiers, teachers and so much more.
Communities	Strong families, good schools, and safe communities	Strong communities and good jobs with the opportunities to advance
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
	Companies that exploit their workers	Corporations that do not pay their fair share

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