

## Resource for Seniors

May 4, 2020



As the coronavirus spreads in the U.S. and across the globe, it's becoming more apparent that older adults are bearing the brunt. The [Centers for Disease Control](#) reports that older adults and people with underlying health conditions are twice as likely as younger, healthier adults to develop serious outcomes from COVID-19. The greatest risk of infection is among those who are in close contact with

other people who have COVID-19. This includes family members and health care workers who care for infected people.

What can you do to protect yourself? It starts with staying home and avoiding contact with others who may have COVID-19. More advice for seniors from the Centers for Disease Control is available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Vietnamese](#), and other [languages](#).

### Stay Connected



The good intention to shield the over-70s from the effects of COVID-19 through social isolation brings its own risks of physical and mental health challenges. Social disconnection puts older adults at greater risk of feelings of aloneness and isolation, depression and anxiety that can also cause physical health problems. Seniors need to have people they can count on if a need arises.

In New Mexico, intergenerational family ties are honored and strong. "The relationship between grandparents and grandkids are important for mental and emotional health, as well as physical health," said [Alison Bryant](#), senior vice president of research for AARP. Grandchildren keep grandparents active and alert and both grandparents and grandchildren who felt emotionally close to each other had fewer [symptoms of depression](#).

### Connecting Across Generational Lines

[Read one family's story](#) about connecting across generational lines.

### How you can help

- **Volunteer to help seniors.** Help New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Dept. provide food and services to NM seniors. Email [ALTSD-Volunteers@state.nm.us](mailto:ALTSD-Volunteers@state.nm.us) with the subject Line: READY TO HELP. In the email, identify the city/town you reside in and your phone number. The agency will then respond with more information.
- **Call local volunteer groups.** Call your local United Way, 211 and/or 311 to ask what you can do to help. In Albuquerque, [OneABQVolunteers](#) lists "social distancing friendly volunteer opportunities."
- **Check on family and friends.** Help a family member, neighbor or acquaintance especially those who do not have family nearby. Run errands, make phone calls or Facetime, to check in, provide reassurance – keep relationships strong.

### Finding Food



For many seniors, mealtime at the local community center not only provided a nutritious meal, it was also an opportunity to socialize with friends and neighbors. Although the socializing has been curtailed, the need to provide nutritious food is critical for many seniors and New Mexicans with disabilities. Here are some resources.

**Senior Food Hotline.** The New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department (ALTSD) is running a hotline for seniors and disabled adults who need help accessing groceries. Leave a message with your name, phone number and city of residence and a department employee will call you back within two hours. You can call the hotline at

800-432-2080. Or use the live chat function on their [homepage](#) that allows you to get your questions answered quickly.

**Home Delivery.** Income requirements and restrictions for home-delivered meals have been waived for seniors. Seniors in Bernalillo County that would like to request a home delivered meal should call the Metro Area Agency on Aging at 1-505-768-2084. Seniors outside of Bernalillo County call Non-Metro Area Agency on Aging at 1-866-699-4627. Seniors living on a Tribe or Pueblo who would like to request a home delivered meal should call 1-800-432-2080 and for the Navajo Nation please call 928-871-6868

**Food Distribution Sites.** Many senior centers that offered meals are transitioning into food distribution centers where individuals can pick up to-go lunches and food. In some cases, those with physical, emotional or other limitations can request meal deliveries to their front door. Seniors, family members or friends/neighbors need to take the initiative and call their [local meal sites](#) to request these meals for our elders.

If you are responsible for a senior center and/or food distribution site and need help finding food supplies, Michael Venticinque, the Value Chain Coordinator for the [NM Farmers Marketing Association](#) is working overtime to find food producers and suppliers for senior centers, schools, food pantries and other food access sites. Contact Michael for more information: [vcc@farmersmarketsnm.org](mailto:vcc@farmersmarketsnm.org)

**Grocery Stores.** Many grocery stores are offering special shopping hours for older customers and high-risk groups. ALTSD has a list with [current information](#).

## Other Resources for Seniors



The **NM Aging and Long-Term Services Dept.** is coordinating statewide efforts to make sure that seniors and adults with disabilities have the resources they need to stay out of harm's way and healthy. [Chat with a resource specialist](#) who can answer your questions and direct you to resources.

**Area Agencies on Aging.** New Mexico's four Area Agencies on Aging, or AAA's, administer, plan and support community-based services for individuals 60 and older, or age 55 and older in tribal programs. Most of the services coordinated through the AAA's are provided at the local level. Specific services offered by each AAA vary throughout the state. Still, each AAA offers a wide array of programs to help older New Mexicans and their families get the help and information they need. [Contact your local AAA.](#)

**AARP Tele-Town Halls.** AARP is hosting a regular series of Coronavirus Information Tele-Town Halls on a range of topics, including caring for parents, kids and grandkids, supporting loved ones in care facilities, navigating telehealth, and coping and maintaining your well-being. Join in each Thursday at 11:00 for the latest information on the coronavirus by calling toll-free 855-274-9507. [View upcoming tele-town halls and replay past townhalls from this page.](#)

**Help with Benefits.** If you need to access benefits including Medicaid, Medicare or Disability Waiver Services, call the Aging and Disability Resource Center at **1-800-432-2080**

**Communication with Facility Residents.** If you are worried about a loved one in a facility or worried about communicating with him or her, call the Long-Term Care Ombudsman at **1-866-451-2901.**

**Behavioral Health Concerns.** If someone you know is experiencing an emotional, mental health or substance abuse crisis, call the NM Crisis and Access Line at **1-855-662-7474**