

State of New Mexico

CHILDREN, YOUTH and FAMILIES DEPARTMENT

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April 20, 2020

Dear Young Person,

I hope this letter finds you well as can be. COVID-19 has brought lots of intense times and uncertainty, and we recognize the additional stress navigating life in a pandemic can bring.

Since late January, CYFD has been working to update emergency and continuity of operations plans. We have been working closely with the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH), the Governor's office and many more to keep New Mexicans as safe as possible.

As a result of increased federal funding, CYFD is able to provide more money to Independent Living Youth (ILY) to cover costs associated with the things you may need the most. We are announcing ILY will receive 175 additional dollars for April 2020.

We hope during this time you are getting the support you need from CYFD. Because of the high need in this time, we have asked some additional staff to support the needs of older youth and make sure you get regular contact. Hopefully some of the changes made during this time of crisis will help to improve the supports provided to older youth long into the future. Reach out to your CYFD support staff person should you need any additional supports. If you are not able to reach a support staff person you can call or text Molly Clement, Youth Services Bureau Chief at 575-708-9388. We know it can be challenging to maintain phone and internet access in this time. If you are experiencing issues staying connected, reach out in any way you can.

As the virus continues to spread and we are losing more New Mexicans, staying home is incredibly important. Even though the order allows essential outings, the Governor has asked to even minimize those trips-- for example sending just one person to the store if possible and limiting trips overall. If you need to get outside, please try to do so in areas where limited amounts of people will be. For everyone, the basics of washing hands often with soap and warm water and cleaning common surfaces are still best practices to prevent the spread of this virus. Here is a video showing the importance of social distancing: <https://youtu.be/bAfgGGqN3hQ>.

Overall updates on the COVID-19 outbreak in New Mexico are available on the DOH COVID-19 page, <http://cv.nmhealth.org> and the state is manning a 24/7, toll-free hotline at 1-855-600-3453.

We have also added a CYFD & COVID page to our website. There you can find a variety of

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resources that may be relevant to you. On the website you can find a mini zine related to protecting elders [here](#).

If you or anyone in your circle of friends is struggling with stress, anxiety, or mental health issues in these times, you can call the The New Mexico Crisis Access Line (NMCAL). NMCAL free, open 24/7, and you do not have to be in crisis to access their services. You can talk to a trained professional right away and/or be referred to mental health providers that can help you via virtual scheduled visits. You can call 1-855-NMCRISIS (662-7474) for support. They have also just released a brand new NMConnect App for [iOS](#) and [Android](#), which can be accessed in the App Store or Google Play Store.

We are here for the children and youth of our state. Many of our workers are helping New Mexicans in ways we have never seen before, and that assistance extends to all youth connected to CYFD. Please let your worker know how else we can help during this extended crisis.

In health,

Secretary Brian Blalock