



<http://www.abqjournal.com/main/2011/09/28/news/poll-finds-support-for-child-programs.html>

Poll Finds Support For Child Programs

By Olivier Uyttebroeck /Albuquerque Journal Staff Writer on Wed, Sep 28, 2011

A recent poll found that 71 percent of New Mexicans surveyed said they would favor a constitutional amendment that would allow paying for early childhood programs with money from the state's Land Grant Permanent Fund, officials said Tuesday.

Advocates of early childhood programs said Tuesday said they plan to use the findings to urge state lawmakers to place the proposed constitutional amendment on the 2012 general election ballot.

Allen Sánchez, president and CEO of St. Joseph Community Health, said an annual distribution of 1.5 percent of the permanent fund would provide \$150 million a year for early childhood programs without a tax increase or a bond issue backed by the permanent fund.

"This is not a bond that would hock the fund, and this is not a tax that would put a burden on our people," Sánchez said after a news conference at the Christina Kent Early Childhood Center in Albuquerque.

The New Mexico Land Grant Permanent Fund, which receives royalties on state land and income from land sales, was worth \$10.7 billion as of June 30. The New Mexico Constitution now allows an annual distribution of 5.8 percent of the fund's average market value to beneficiaries, largely public schools and state universities.

The nonprofit St. Joseph Community Health commissioned the survey by Research and Polling Inc., which contacted 603 New Mexicans by phone between Aug. 24 and Sept. 5.

Of those surveyed, 78 percent said they believe education programs for children under 5 is important, and 80 percent said lawmakers should allow voters to consider a constitutional amendment that would distribute money from the permanent fund for early childhood programs.

— This article appeared on page C-2 of the Albuquerque Journal