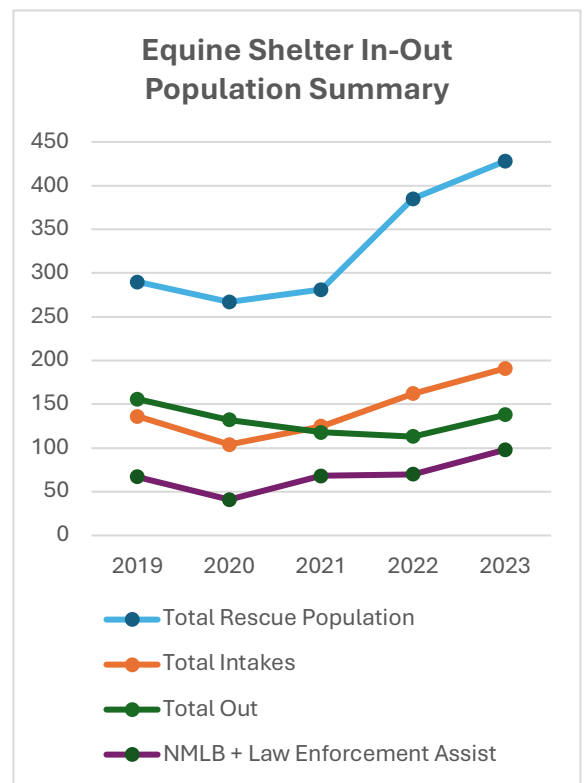


Proposed Equine Welfare Trust Fund

ABOUT NEW MEXICO EQUINE SHELTERS:

- Currently, 12 non-profit equine shelters are registered in New Mexico to receive equines seized by law enforcement or government entities as a result of abuse or neglect.
- These 12 non-profit shelters also take in equines that are surrendered, abandoned and stray horses, as well as free-roaming horses captured for relocation.
- In 2023, licensed equine shelters took in 191 equines, of which 98 were from the NM Livestock Board. Since 2019, equines from NMLB and other law enforcement made up roughly half of the shelters' annual intakes.
- Non-profit equine shelters do not benefit from government support in the same way tax-supported dog-and-cat shelters do. Instead, they rely on private grant funding and charitable donations, with minimal help from the State (Equine Shelter Rescue Fund).
- New Mexico's equine shelters frequently operate at capacity and are increasingly unable to accommodate the sheer number of horses in New Mexico needing safe placement, care and/or permanent sanctuary.



THE PROBLEM:

- Due to lack of resources and capacity, some horses that could do well in equine shelters are instead sent to auction. These horses face significant risk of being bought by kill buyers and ending up in the slaughter pipeline.
- Some horses need extensive veterinary and farrier care, and expert support and training, for more than two years before being adoptable—AND some horses require lifetime care in sanctuary.
- Expert care for abandoned, neglected, or cruelly treated horses is critical, not only for suffering horses, but also for the health, safety, and well-being of our communities.
But state-registered, non-profit equine shelters currently do not receive adequate funding to support the services they provide New Mexico communities.

THE SOLUTION: The solution is the establishment of an Equine Welfare Trust Fund seeded with an initial corpus of \$20 million to generate sustainable funding.

MORE ABOUT THE PROPOSED EQUINE WELFARE TRUST FUND:

Using a small amount of the state's current revenue surplus to establish the Equine Welfare Trust Fund is a responsible way to grow that money for current and future funding needs.

- The *Equine Welfare Trust Fund Act* would create a non-reverting investment fund, managed by the State Investment Council (SIC) or the State Treasurer, called the **Equine Welfare Trust Fund**. The Equine Welfare Trust Fund investment earnings would flow to an existing expendable fund called the **Equine Shelter Rescue Fund**, administered by the New Mexico Livestock Board (NMLB).
- The expendable Equine Shelter Rescue Fund was established in 2013 and has historically relied on occasional one-time legislative appropriations and minimal annual tax refund donations. Its purpose is to make distributions to equine shelters in exchange for the services the shelters provide in feeding and caring for equines.
- Establishment of the Equine Welfare Trust Fund would create a more predictable funding source for the already existing expendable fund, the Equine Shelter Rescue Fund (ESRF). This in turn would allow for greater long-term planning and capacity building by licensed equine shelters.
- Starting with a \$20 million initial investment, and taking a 4% annual distribution, the Equine Welfare Trust Fund could generate approximately \$800K a year (exact numbers would be best further advised by the Legislative Council Services in working with their economists and experts).

This would allow NM's equine shelters to expand their collective capacity and coordination through:

- Increased equine training opportunities and staff resources to enable quicker adoption of equines, making room to take in more equines per year.
- Resources for shelters to maintain their maximum herd size by paying for quality feed, veterinary, and farrier care for all equines, including the increased costs associated with those who come from abuse and neglect situations, and other equines with special needs.
- Assistance to shelters which are able to acquire more land to increase their total population capacity, and improve their facilities and infrastructure.
- Encouragement for more equine shelters to become licensed, increasing total network capacity. Once licensed, such shelters would be held to a high standard of care through NMLB oversight.
- Providing permanent free-roaming sanctuary for more of NM's unadoptable wild and free-roaming horses who currently have no other placement options because they cannot be handled by people.

