

The New Mexico Association of County Agricultural Agents Foundation Story

The story of the New Mexico Association of County Agricultural Agents Foundation begins with an extraordinary moment of teamwork and foresight. In 2001, New Mexico Extension Agents had spent more than three years preparing to host the National Association of County Agricultural Agents Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference in Albuquerque. The event brought together over 1,700 participants from across the nation and several foreign countries, and thanks to an “all hands on deck” effort—supported by CES administration, 4-H Agents, FCS Agents, and countless volunteers—it became a resounding success. When the dust settled, the meeting generated a financial surplus. Rather than dispersing the funds, NMACAA members recognized an opportunity to create something lasting. They established a stand-alone 501(c)(3) nonprofit—the NMACAA Foundation—to steward the profits and reinvest them in the professional growth of New Mexico’s County Agents.

From the beginning, the Foundation was built on principles of stability and long-term impact. The founding guidelines required that the original investment never be spent down, ensuring that only interest earnings would be used to support scholarships and professional development. Managed in a money market account, the fund’s annual capacity fluctuates with the market, but its mission has remained constant: to strengthen agents, their families, and the Association. The board—composed of eight agents – current and retired agents, past NMACAA presidents, and the immediate past president—has overseen more than \$100,000 in support distributed to members over the years. This includes complete financial support for New Mexico’s Distinguished Service Award and Achievement Award recipients to attend the NACAA national meeting, funding for agents pursuing professional improvement opportunities, and annual scholarships for the children of agents attending college or trade school.

Today, the NMACAA Foundation stands as a testament to the vision of the agents who created it. What began as leftover working capital from a single national meeting has grown into a perpetual source of opportunity—one that continues to shape careers, expand access to professional development, and support the next generation of New Mexico agricultural families. The Foundation’s legacy is not just financial; it is a living reminder of what collaboration, foresight, and commitment to service can build.