STATE OF NEW MEXICO OFFICE OF BROADBAND ACCESS AND EXPANSION

# THREE-YEAR STATEWIDE BROADBAND PLAN

## 2026-2028

**Michelle Lujan Grisham,** Governor
**Howie Morales,** Lieutenant Governor

**January 1, 2026**

CONNECT new mexico
Office of Broadband Access & Expansion

# Table of Contents

1.0

# Letter from the Director

In June of 2025, I was appointed by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham to serve as the Director of the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE). I was deeply honored and humbled to accept this role and vow to carry forward the mandate of this office to connect all residents to affordable, high-speed broadband.

In June of 2025, I was appointed by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham to serve as the Director of the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE). I was deeply honored and humbled to accept this role and will carry forward this office's mandate to deliver universal access to affordable, high-speed broadband across New Mexico.

The Governor and the Legislature passed the law establishing OBAE in 2021 with the mission to lead New Mexico's broadband expansion through statewide planning and data-driven decision-making; to reinforce collaboration with New Mexico's Tribes, counties, and local communities; to ensure universal access to affordable, high-quality connectivity; and to support meaningful use of the internet for all families, business and community institutions. The office must also provide an annual comprehensive, detailed, and action-oriented strategic plan, which is in your hands now.

Four years in, OBAE is making great strides towards achieving its goal of universal broadband availability. In fact, one hundred percent of unserved or underserved residential and business locations in the state now have an enforceable commitment or provisional award to obtain a broadband connection. This is an outstanding achievement considering that just two years ago, only 84 percent of homes and businesses in the state had access to reliable broadband. This progress is due to several federal and state funding programs, which OBAE leads and coordinates with the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, the U.S. Treasury, the Federal Communications Commission, and other state agencies.

**Jeff Lopez**
DIRECTOR
New Mexico Office of Broadband Access & Expansion

The OBAE team has made significant progress in advancing several initiatives, including:

# Letter from the Director

- **Finalized the State Broadband Map;**
- **Expanded the Statewide Education Network (SEN) to connect 25 percent of all public schools in New Mexico and 30 percent of all students;**
- **Funded 12 projects with $23.35 million in grants from the Student Connect Program to provide service to 4,159 student households;**
- **Executed enforceable commitments amounting to $169 million in grants funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Pilot Program and Connect NM Fund, with several projects completed or near completion;**
- **Designated $432 million in provisional awards for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD); and**
- **$54 million awarded to Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes (NPTs).**

I appreciate the tremendous effort invested by the Department of Information Technology (DoIT), Cabinet Secretary Manny Barreras, and the former OBAE Directors to carefully plan for these milestones.

OBAE's primary responsibility has evolved with its programs. We initially focused on meticulous planning and multistakeholder coordination to understand the broadband gaps and launch grant programs. Now, our focus has shifted to implementation and program compliance. However, the core program goals remain unchanged: Universal Availability, Widespread Adoption, Next-Gen Advancement, and Program Stewardship.

## Strategic Priorities

OBAE has developed six strategic priorities that will guide our focus for the next three years:

A) **Statewide Connectivity**

B) **Affordability**

C) **Strategic Infrastructure**

D) **Data, Policy, and Permitting**

E) **Digital Opportunity**

F) **Network Operations**

These priorities will guide OBAE's vision of a fully connected New Mexico where universal access to affordable, high-quality, and future-ready broadband is available in every community, honoring the diversity and rich heritage of the state; strengthening opportunity; propelling future technologies; and elevating the quality of life for every resident.

I am proud to report that we have accomplished much over the past three years, and OBAE is fully prepared to meet the challenges of the next three years and beyond.

Sincerely,

**Jeff Lopez**

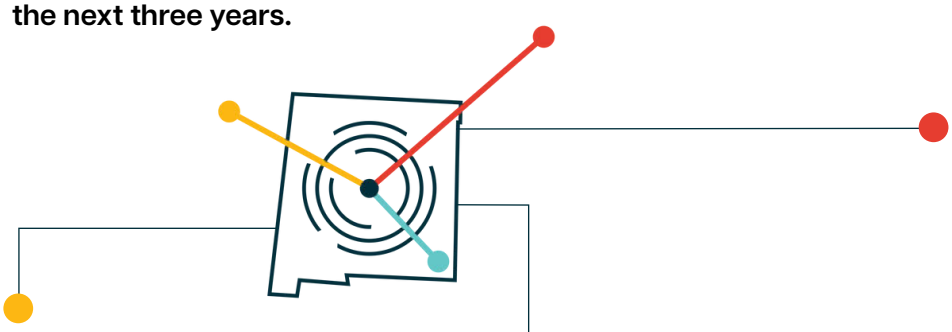
Director, Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE)

2.0

# Executive Summary

## 2.1 Snapshot: Mission, Vision, Values, Goals, and Priorities

**OBAE's Three-Year Statewide Broadband Plan ("Broadband Plan") and daily operations center on following the statutory mission to achieve the agency's vision, while aligning with our core values. This Broadband Plan maintains the same four major program goals defined in prior plans. The state has made tremendous progress towards accomplishing these goals. This broadband plan defines six new Strategic Priorities reflecting what is necessary to continue making progress over the next three years.**



### MISSION

To lead New Mexico's broadband expansion through statewide planning and data-driven decision-making; to reinforce collaborative partnerships with New Mexico's Tribes, counties, and local communities; to ensure universal access to affordable, high-quality connectivity; and to support meaningful use of the internet for all families, businesses, and community institutions.

### VISION

A fully connected New Mexico where every community has universal access to affordable, high-quality, future-ready broadband, while honoring the state's diversity and rich heritage, strengthening opportunity, propelling future technologies, and elevating quality of life for every resident.

### VALUES

**INNOVATION:** Embracing inspired and imaginative ideas at the speed of technological change.

**COLLABORATION:** Working alongside communities and industry partners providing essential services.

**RESPECT:** Honoring New Mexico's rich history and diverse cultural heritage alongside the future advancement of industry.

**EVIDENCE:** Connecting New Mexico with reliable data and analysis to guide our decisions.

**RESULTS:** Focusing on improving outcomes and iterating on past accomplishments.

### PROGRAM GOALS

1. Universal Availability
2. Widespread Adoption
3. Next-Gen Advancement
4. Program Stewardship

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

A. Statewide Connectivity
B. Affordability
C. Strategic Infrastructure
D. Data, Policy, and Permitting
E. Digital Opportunity
F. Network Operations

## 2.2 Program Goals

### UNIVERSAL AVAILABILITY

1. New Mexico residents and businesses should have access to terrestrial-based high-speed broadband networks that reliably deliver at least 100/20 Mbps (download/upload) by 2029, the current federal definition of "served" and the definition adopted in OBAE-administered grant programs.
2. All terrestrial networks funded by the State's grant programs should offer at least 100/100 Mbps unless the applicant can demonstrate extraordinary circumstances limiting this speed. In such cases, the networks must offer 100/20 Mbps and be scalable to at least 100/100 Mbps.

### WIDESPREAD ADOPTION

1. All New Mexico residents should have an opportunity to adopt the internet. This can occur at home, in an office, in a community institution, or through a mobile device.
2. All New Mexico residents should be offered the support to overcome adoption challenges, including programs to enable affordability, obtain devices, receive digital literacy training, or have high-quality internet access at a nearby community institution.

### NEXT GEN ADVANCEMENT

Last-mile broadband networks are critical but not alone in importance. New Mexico's ambition of being the most connected state necessitates several other pieces, including:

1. A Statewide Education Network (SEN) that connects public schools and libraries together through scalable, reliable, affordable, and secure internet.
2. All communities should reside in proximity to open-access middle-mile networks that offer reasonably priced, high-speed lit services.
3. Universal mobile 5G coverage that spans across all rural communities and highly trafficked roadways.
4. Network architectures that offer resiliency, redundancy, and security

### PROGRAM STEWARDSHIP

The end results of universal broadband availability, widespread adoption, and meaningful usage will constitute a generational achievement involving heavy public investment and time.

1. OBAE leadership and staff are committed to the utmost transparency and accountability of its programs.
2. OBAE will actively monitor its awardees and hold them accountable for all programmatic and compliance requirements.
3. OBAE will continue collaborating with other agencies and Tribal Governments to ensure all broadband programs are efficiently and effectively planned and deployed.

## 2.3 Strategic Priorities

**The following strategic priorities constitute the top-level themes that OBAE will focus on over the next three years to align with its vision, mission, and program goals.**

### STATEWIDE CONNECTIVITY

Oversee the efficient and effective implementation of all publicly funded broadband projects and their compliance with all programmatic and policy requirements (e.g., scope, project timelines, federal/state rules, etc.)

### AFFORDABILITY

Advocate for and monitor industry practices that reflect reasonable pricing for all New Mexico residents and special discounted rates for low-income customers, while supporting government programs that offer price subsidies for the most financially challenged families.

### STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Champion the development and expansion of next-generation, resilient, high-speed networks that serve the comprehensive needs of all New Mexico stakeholders - students, community institutions, enterprises, Tribal communities, public safety professionals, mobile broadband users, data centers, and service providers for their backhaul needs.

### DATA, POLICY, & PERMITTING

Develop and support universal broadband access, including the data collection, permitting practices, and policies to incentivize private investment while safeguarding the public interest.

### DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY

Foster opportunities to engage in meaningful internet usage that enables socioeconomic progress but also encourages practices that promote online safety and security.

### NETWORK OPERATIONS

Operate the Statewide Education Network (SEN) at the highest performance standards reflective of commercial best practices and innovation while expanding its presence to libraries and rural health clinics eligible for federal Universal Service Fund support.

## 2.4 Past Achievements

**The Broadband Plan builds off the achievements seen over the last five years.**

### 2021

— OBAE and Connect NM Council established by statute

### 2022

— Governor appointed first OBAE Director

— Connect New Mexico Pilot Program launched ($117 million)

— OBAE hosted first NM Tribal Broadband Convening

— First use of map challenges started to determine eligibility status for point-locations

— BEAD NOFO released

### 2023

— Connect New Mexico Fund ($70 million) NOFO released

— First Three-Year Statewide Broadband Plan published

— First iteration of point-based New Mexico Broadband Map released

— First annual Broadband Day held

— BEAD Five-Year Action Plan published

— GWEP grant program launches (36 GWEP awards totaling $3.5 million issued through 2023-25)

### 2024

— Statewide Education Network launches

— BEAD Initial Proposal Volumes 1 & 2 published

— Student Connect grant program launches (13 grants awarded totaling $24.8 million issued through 2024-25)

— BEAD Challenge Process results approved by NTIA

### 2025

— $675 million BEAD Final Proposal submitted to NTIA

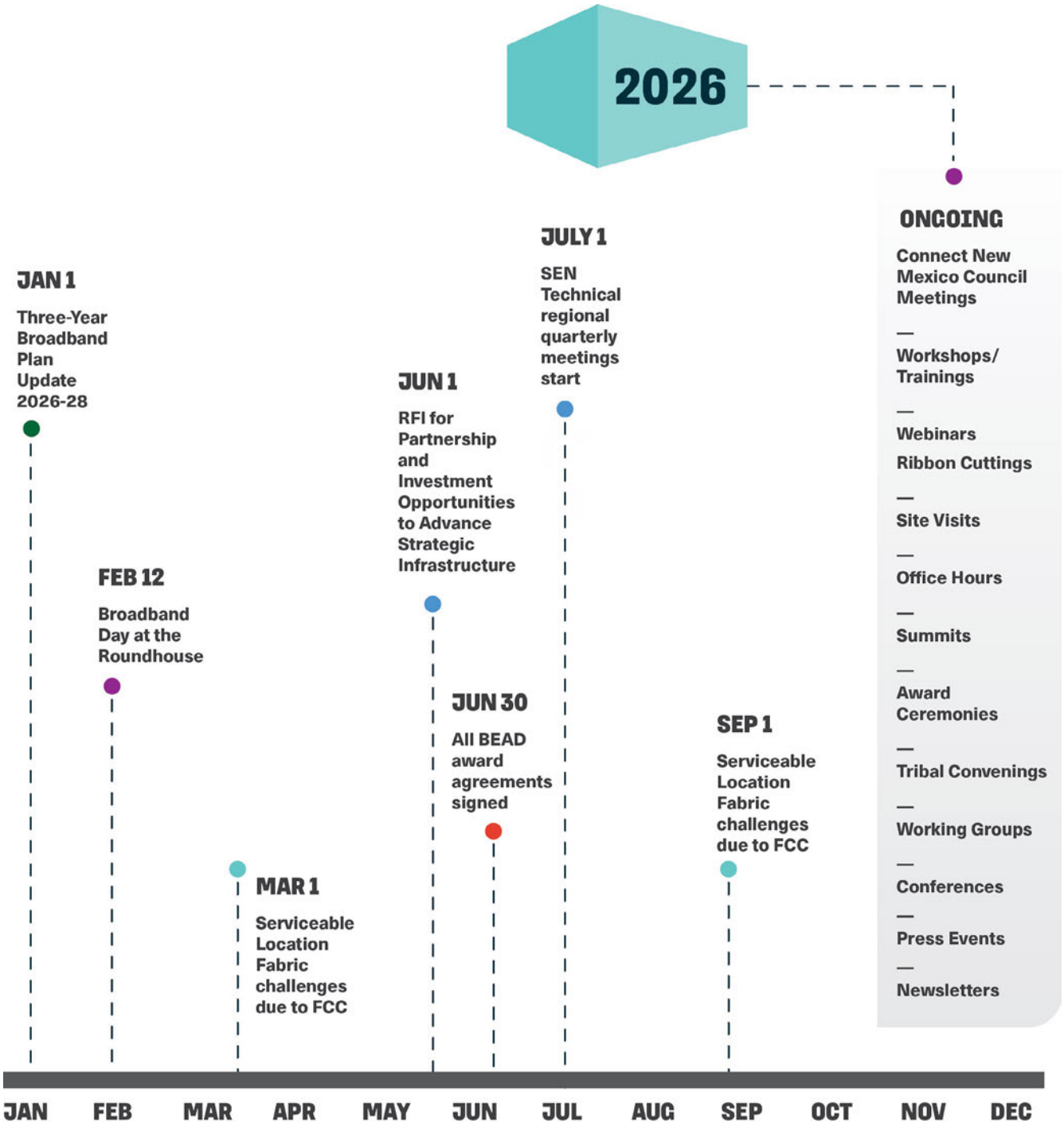
— Community Connect Grant program launched (public Wi-Fi)

— First set of Connect NM Pilot Program projects completed

— First set of Connect NM Fund projects completed

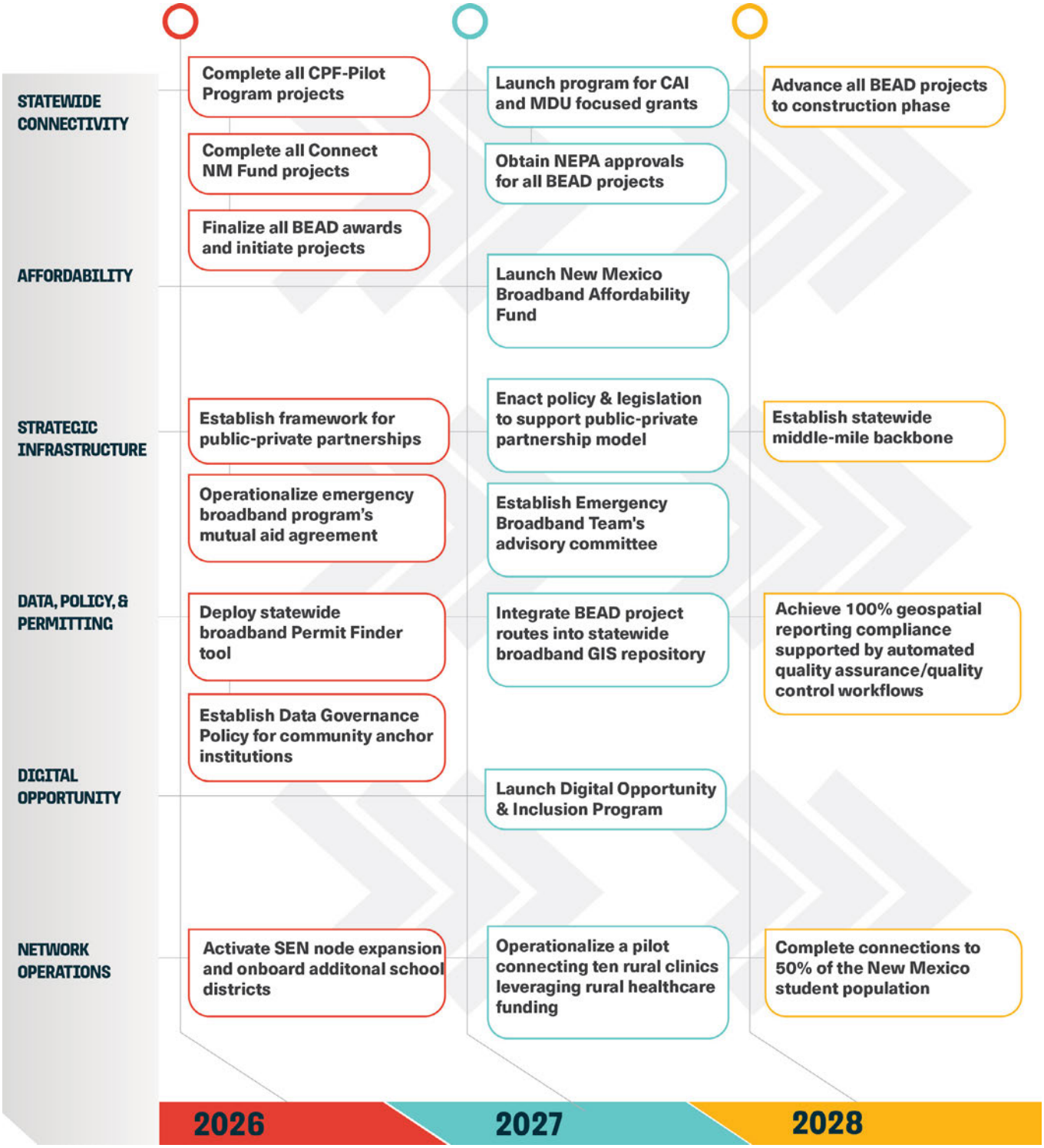
## 2.5 Upcoming Action Items in 2026

**Key dates for several programmatic activities over the coming year follow below.**



## 2.6 Key Performance Targets in Three-Year Broadband Plan

**The defined strategic priorities position OBAE to achieve the following milestones over the next three years.**



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# OBAE Background

## 3.1 Key Responsibilities

**In 2021, the New Mexico Broadband Access and Expansion Act (NMSA 1978, § 63-9J-3) created OBAE and set in law various powers and duties of the office. In addition to submitting an annual report (the New Mexico Statewide Broadband Plan) to the legislature to articulate the approach and progress toward universal broadband access, OBAE's mandate includes the following.**

### OBAE Mandate

- Establish standards for quality of service for homes, businesses, and public institutions;
- Create and maintain an official, publicly accessible online New Mexico broadband access map showing broadband availability and quality of service for homes, businesses, and public institutions on a county-by-county basis;
- Create and maintain a repository for broadband data and information in New Mexico on a county-by-county basis, including:
  - *The number of homes and businesses that do not have access to broadband service;*
  - *The number of homes and businesses that have broadband service that falls below the quality-of-service standards established by the broadband office; and*
  - *The locations of broadband infrastructure currently owned or projected for construction by the State or local governments on a county-by-county basis;*
  - *Provide broadband-related technical and planning assistance to local governments, public education institutions, and state agencies;*
- Identify and communicate relevant federal broadband funding opportunities for local and Tribal governments, public education institutions, and state agencies; and
- Support regional broadband planning and engagement.

## 3.2 Agency Organization

OBAE continues to grow rapidly as more grants are awarded and broadband construction and deployment get underway. In 2024, there were 25 staff members at the state's broadband office. Today, there are 35 full-time employees working to fulfill the agency's mission. Several staff additions and promotions have strengthened an already robust team that supervises and coordinates a variety of programs and projects designed to expand broadband connectivity and meaningful adoption across the state. The personnel changes also complete OBAE's leadership team, which will supervise, guide, and advise staff on its efforts to provide universal connectivity in unserved and underserved locations.

### Senior Leadership Appointments

In June 2025, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham appointed Jeff Lopez as OBAE Director. Lopez brings extensive federal policy and infrastructure expertise to his leadership role. He served as senior policy advisor to U.S. Senator Ben Ray Luján. Lopez also managed the senator's role as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Communications, Media, and Broadband and worked directly on legislation that created the federal BEAD program through which New Mexico is receiving $675 million to connect unserved and underserved households across the state.

At the same time, the Governor appointed Deputy Director Aquiles "Alex" Trujillo. Trujillo has more than 20 years of broadband and telecommunications leadership experience, including previous experience with OBAE during 2022, when he directed the statewide Technical Assistance Program and authored key components of New Mexico's middle mile strategy.

## 3.3 Legislative Requirement to Develop Broadband Plan

The 2026 Broadband Plan addresses the statutory obligation and provides a comprehensive overview of the State's broadband strategy. This plan also provides an update on the progress of broadband development in the state and complies with OBAE's statutory obligation under the Broadband Access and Expansion Act. The specific requirements are listed in the table below, along with how this document fulfills them.

The statute requires OBAE to provide an annual update to the Governor and Legislature on the Broadband Plan. The statute directs OBAE to develop an assessment of broadband services across New Mexico.

# Overview of the Broadband Access & Expansion Act

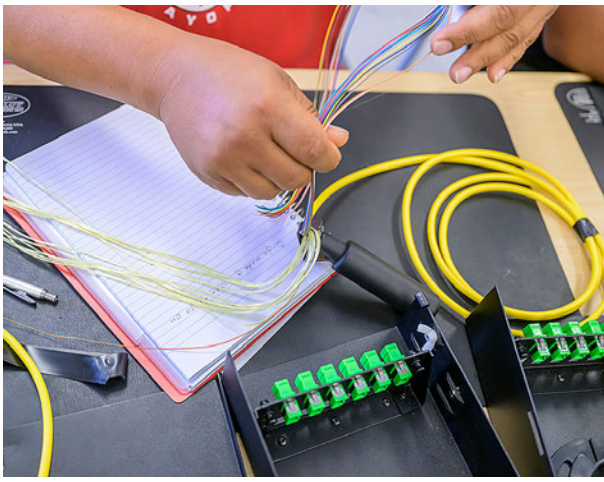
**General Directive**

- On or before January 1, 2022, the broadband office shall develop and provide to the governor and the legislature a three-year statewide broadband plan.
- On or before January 1, 2023, and on or before January 1 of each year thereafter, the broadband office shall update and revise the statewide broadband plan developed pursuant to this section for the ensuing three years and report the updated and revised statewide broadband plan to the governor and the legislature.

| | SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS | OBAE APPROACH TO MEETING REQUIREMENT |
|---|---|---|
| **Specific Output** | • The broadband office shall provide an assessment of broadband service across the state compared to the standards established by the various federal broadband regulatory and assistance programs. | • Plan discusses the state of broadband availability—based on an estimate of unserved and underserved premises determined by broadband mapping data. |
| **Process Requirements** | • In the development of the statewide broadband plan, the broadband office shall request advice and provide opportunities for meaningful input from each local and Tribal government within New Mexico, and all state agencies and public educational institutions shall cooperate with and provide relevant broadband-related information collected or developed by the agencies as requested by the broadband office. | • OBAE supported several stakeholder meetings in 2025. |
| **Implementation** | • The broadband office shall implement the statewide broadband plan. | • Report lists key program initiatives, strategies, and action items for the underlying strategic goals. |

## Previous Plans

OBAE delivered a comprehensive, detailed Broadband Plan on January 1, 2023. The 2023 Broadband Plan defined key strategic goals to measure progress over the next three years and beyond. Second, it provided an update regarding broadband availability and adoption. Third, it summarized the progress toward advancing OBAE's strategic goals. Fourth, the plan discussed the major strategic priorities to achieve those goals. Fifth, it defined specific initiatives and action items for each priority, recognizing that many would require several years to implement. Finally, it highlighted the critical success factors that must be in place to implement these initiatives and effectively reach the goals. This generally remains the structure of the current plan.



## 2025 Plan

Last year's Broadband Plan constituted the third and last iteration of that first series. It provided an updated assessment of broadband availability and broadband adoption. It provided detailed evidence regarding progress in deploying high-speed broadband networks across unserved and underserved communities over the last three years. It summarized a myriad of achievements across OBAE's 20+ programs and initiatives. It distilled the key action items for each initiative for 2025, including the launch of the single-largest broadband infrastructure program - BEAD. It highlighted critical legislative priorities that will be instrumental in OBAE achieving its mission.

## This Year's Plan

This year's Broadband Plan constitutes the start of the second series of the three-year plan, which includes a new set of strategic priorities and initiatives following a review of the tremendous progress and remaining gaps toward our mission.

## Document Flow

# 4.0 Program Goals

## Universal Availability

### Universal Availability of Terrestrial-Based, High-Speed, Scalable Broadband Networks

New Mexico residents and businesses should have access to terrestrial-based high-speed broadband networks that reliably deliver at least 100/20 (download/upload) megabits per second (Mbps). OBAE's current grant-funded broadband networks are scheduled to be deployed by 2029. This speed constitutes the current federal definition of "served" and the definition adopted in OBAE-administered grant programs.

Moreover, all terrestrial networks funded by the State's grant programs should offer at least 100/100 Mbps, unless the applicant can demonstrate extraordinary circumstances that limit this speed. In such cases, the networks must offer 100/20 Mbps and be scalable to at least 100/100 Mbps. To meet the 100/100 Mbps standard, New Mexico has prioritized fiber-based networks—given their distinct advantages, including sustainability, future ready, future proof, and relatively lower operating and upgrade cost.

OBAE has supported fixed wireless technologies when deploying fiber is impractical due to geography, topography, or excessive cost barriers. In such cases, OBAE generally requires fiber deployment to the tower to enable high-capacity, scalable backhaul. Moreover, that middle-mile fiber connection can spur the deployment of future fiber-based last-mile networks if these initial barriers can be overcome. For those highly remote communities where terrestrial networks cannot be deployed due to extraordinarily high costs or technical barriers, the State may consider initiatives to foster the adoption of existing non-terrestrial solutions, such as low-earth orbiting (LEO) satellite-based broadband.

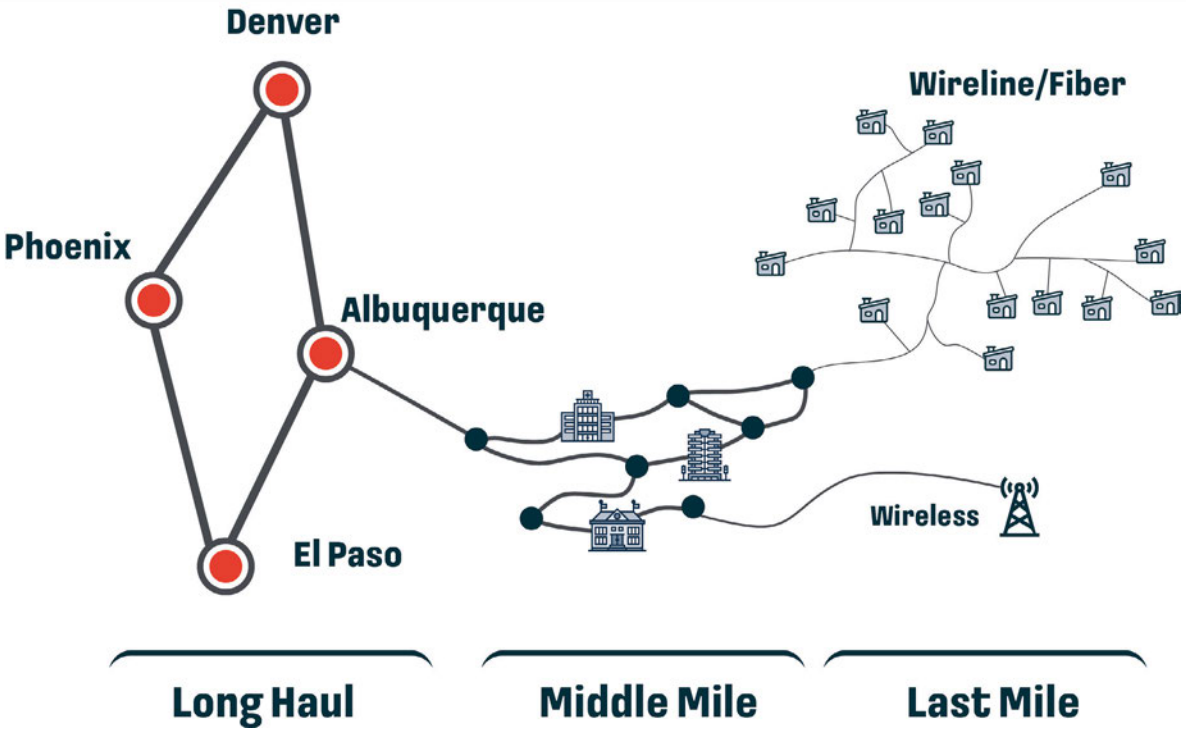
## Widespread Adoption

### Widespread Adoption and Meaningful Usage of the Internet

All New Mexico residents should have an opportunity to adopt the internet. This can occur at home, in an office, in a community institution, on sovereign lands, or through a mobile device. The State should offer or coordinate with non-governmental organizations to overcome adoption challenges to using the internet at residences or businesses, including programs to improve affordability, obtain devices, receive digital literacy training, and foster awareness of available connectivity.

Secondly, all households in New Mexico that subscribe to internet service should have access to training and resources to meaningfully use the internet's myriad valuable digital applications to advance social and economic standing, including health, education, workforce, civic and social services.

> **"There's a universal understanding that broadband is an essential service; it's a utility. It means access to healthcare, education, workforce development, and to work itself. Without access to broadband, individuals can be separated from society without the ability to participate in every way that they need to."**
>
> — Jeff Lopez, OBAE DIRECTOR




## Next-Gen Advancement

### Advancement of Next-Generation Statewide Networks

Last-mile broadband networks are critical to connecting households and small businesses and rely entirely on middle mile and long-haul fiber networks. New Mexico's goal of statewide connectivity requires State, Tribal, and local coordination with internet providers to maintain statewide fiber networks.

All New Mexico communities should have access to middle-mile networks that offer reasonably priced, high-speed lit services and dark fiber to facilitate backhaul and support links for government, large enterprises, data centers, and educational institutions. Network designs and architectures must provide resiliency, redundancy, and security. The State and industry should coordinate to establish universal, mobile 5G coverage across all rural communities and high-traffic roadways. The result will involve an interconnected network system that provides widespread connectivity, safety and security, resiliency, and customer choice through public-private collaboration.

## Program Stewardship

### Effective and Efficient Program Management and Oversight

The end results of universal broadband availability, widespread adoption, and meaningful usage, along with statewide next-generation networks, will constitute a generational achievement involving heavy public investment and time. The public expects accountability from the government agencies that issue the funds and the grant recipients. Thus, the Broadband Plan recognizes the immense value of program stewardship. OBAE leadership and staff are committed to the utmost transparency and accountability of its programs. OBAE will actively monitor its awardees and hold them accountable for all programmatic and compliance requirements. OBAE will continue collaborating with other agencies and Tribal governments to ensure all broadband programs are efficiently and effectively planned and deployed.

5.0

# Strategic Priorities (2026-28)

Strategic Priorities represent the pillars that will help guide OBAE over the next three years as it focuses on its vision and achieving its mission and defined goals.

## 5.1 Overview

### A Statewide Connectivity

Oversee the efficient and effective implementation of all publicly funded broadband projects and their compliance with all programmatic and policy requirements (e.g., scope, project timelines, federal/state rules, etc.)

### B Affordability

Advocate for and monitor industry practices that reflect reasonable pricing for all New Mexico residents and discounted rates for low-income customers, while supporting government programs that offer price subsidies for the most financially challenged families.

### C Strategic Infrastructure

Champion the development and expansion of next-generation, resilient, high-speed networks that serve the comprehensive needs of all New Mexico stakeholders - students, community institutions, enterprises, Tribal communities, public safety professionals, mobile broadband users, data centers, and service providers for their backhaul needs.

### D Data, Policy, and Permitting

Develop and support universal broadband access, including data collection, permitting practices, and policies to incentivize private investment while safeguarding the public interest.

### E Digital Opportunity

Foster opportunities to engage in meaningful internet usage that enables socioeconomic progress but also encourages practices that promote online safety and security.

### F Network Operations

Operate the Statewide Education Network (SEN) at the highest-performance standards reflective of commercial best practices and innovation while expanding its presence to libraries and rural health clinics eligible for federal Universal Service Fund (USF) support.

## 5.2 Tribal Collaboration and Tribal Consent

OBAE is responsible for coordinating broadband deployment efforts in New Mexico, including with New Mexico NPTs which is reflected in each of the Strategic Priorities. This includes obligations under the State-Tribal Collaboration Act (NMSA 1978, Section 11-18). OBAE and the Connect New Mexico Council (CNMC) host Tribal leadership and Tribal representation on committees and working groups to provide a forum for discussion, planning, and collaboration. As OBAE allocates State and federal funds through extensive application review, rebuttal, and finalization procedures, OBAE maintains a standing policy of Tribal consultation and has ensured that Tribes are aware, supported, and a part of the processes.

Furthermore, OBAE requires Tribal consent before awarding State or federal funds on Tribal lands. The Office's commitment to Tribes is reflected in activities of the CNMC, the operations of the Tribal Broadband Working Group, the BEAD process, and the Tribal Digital Equity Capacity Grant program. Technical assistance is provided by OBAE's Project Managers, Program Coordinators, and a Tribal Coordinator to help fulfill OBAE's goals.

Throughout the next three years, OBAE will continue strengthening relationships with New Mexico's NPTs and ensure they have full access to broadband technical and funding support that aligns with each community's vision. OBAE's commitment to Tribes is integral to each of our six Strategic Objectives and weaves through 14 of 20 Initiatives for 2026-2028.

For further details regarding OBAE collaboration with NPTs please refer to the specific initiatives in Section 6 and the "NM OBAE State Tribal Collaboration Act Compilation Report for FY 2025."[1]

### 2025 Achievements

- ✓ **Ensured continued communication and engagement with Tribal leadership and broadband teams through consistent outreach, including personalized emails, follow-up calls, text messages, and a dedicated presentation during an All Pueblo Council of Governors meeting. In addition, OBAE staff hand-delivered letters to reinforce awareness, access, and opportunity for participation.**
- ✓ **Led and co-hosted a hands-on grant writing workshop with the University of New Mexico, the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration, and the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (IAD).**
- ✓ **Eleven NPTs were awarded more than $35 million by state and federal governments to build broadband infrastructure.**
- ✓ **Eleven NPTs successfully completed the prequalification phase for the $675 million BEAD program.**
- ✓ **Planned and co-hosted a New Mexico Tribal Broadband Convening with the DoIT and the IAD for stakeholders to meet and receive updates regarding pertinent technical, legislative, and funding of broadband projects.**
- ✓ **Preliminarily awarded over $120 million of BEAD funds in three separate awards to NPTs.**

1 *NM Office of Broadband Access and Expansion. "OBAE State Tribal Collaboration Act Compilation Report FY 2025," Published August 1, 2025. Accessible at https://www.iad.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Office-of-Broadband-Access-and-Expansion-OBAE.pdf*

## 5.2 Tribal Collaboration and Tribal Consent

OBAE's Tribal collaboration as applied to the Broadband Plan's applicable initiatives.

### Key Action Items

**A1. Excellence in Grants Administration:** Coordinate and consult with Tribal governments and organizations that are subgrant recipients, ensuring compliance and reporting accommodates NPTs.

**A2. Non-Deployment Connectivity Programs:** Continue collaboration with Tribal partners to identify local priorities and culturally appropriate approaches. Work with NPTs to conduct an inventory of community anchor institutions (CAIs) and multi-dwelling units on Tribal land.

**A3. Project Management, Technical Assistance, and Permitting Guidance:** Project managers and program leads will coordinate with the Tribal liaison to ensure technical assistance and permitting guidance are tailored to each individual subgrant recipient and sovereign Tribal government.

**A4. Workforce Development:** Develop a "train the trainer" program for New Mexico NPTs to support self-sustaining workforce development programs within and between sovereign Tribes.

**B1. New Mexico Broadband Affordability Program:** Provide a higher subsidy for locations on Tribal lands, acknowledging the increased costs of providing service in these areas.

**B3. Coordinated Outreach and Enrollment Campaign:** Continue outreach and enrollment through the government-to-government relationship between OBAE and Tribes.

**C1. Partnership Framework for Strategic Infrastructure Development:** Develop a tailored approach to public-private partnerships, accommodating the unique legal framework required by Tribal Sovereignty in support of self-determination of communication and data sharing.

**C2. Statewide Open Access Middle-Mile Backbone:** Utilize the institutions and partnerships developed under Initiative C1 to fill the middle-mile gaps on Tribal land.

**C3. Emergency Broadband Operations Team:** Include the CNMC Tribal Working Group and other Tribal telecommunications partners in state emergency response organizations.

**D1. Broadband Location Data for Households, Businesses, and Communities:** Develop tailored data gathering for broadband serviceable locations on Tribal land.

**E1. Foundations for Digital Opportunity:** Develop a program to build support and long-term sustainability for digital inclusion and digital opportunity initiatives.

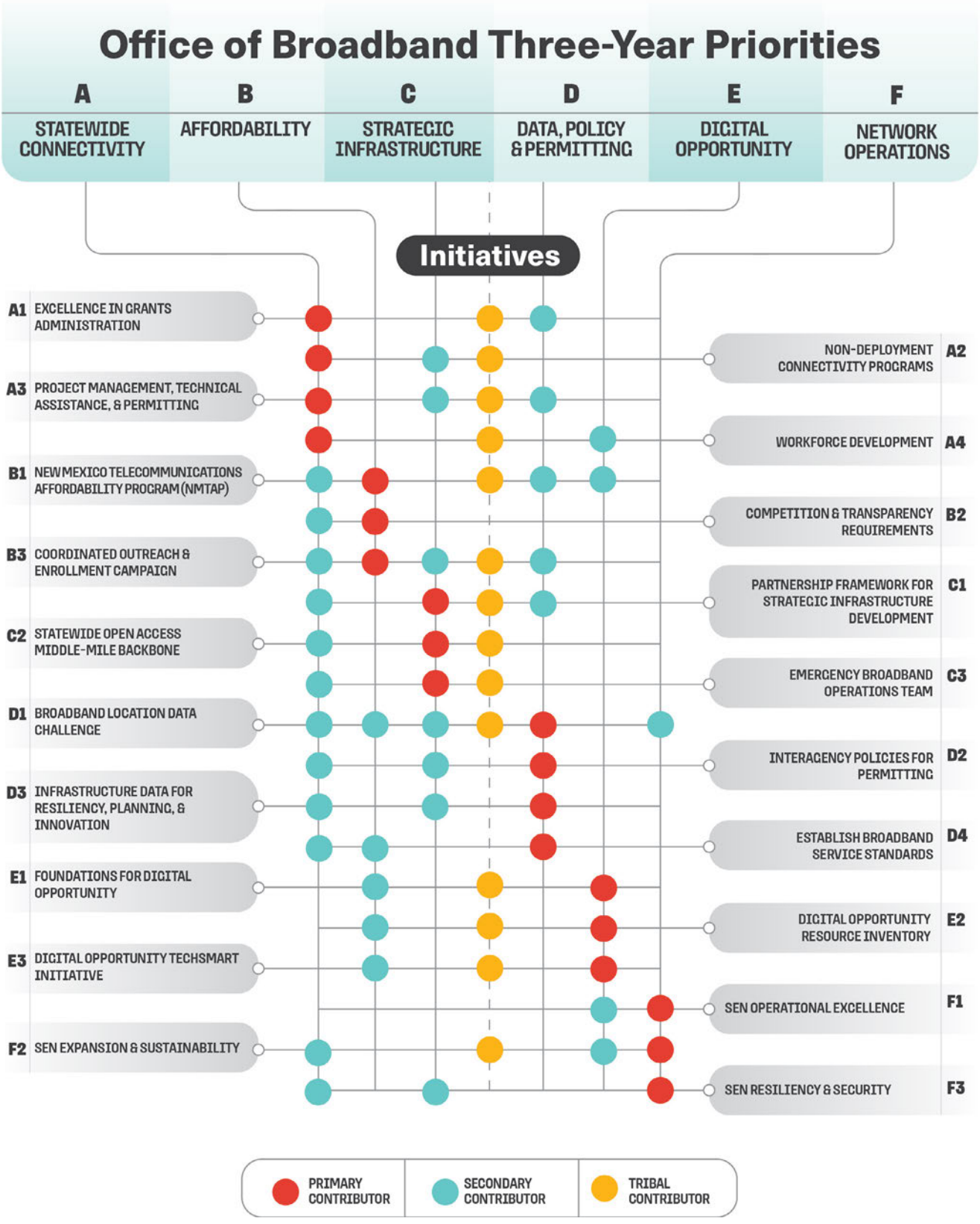
**E2. Digital Opportunity Resource Inventory:** Develop and promote an online inventory of digital opportunity resources to support and improve digital opportunity programs in New Mexico.

**E3. Digital Opportunity TechSmart Initiative:** Develop and grow Digital Opportunity TechSmart Initiative to expand cooperative digital opportunity and digital navigator programs.

**F2. SEN Expansion and Sustainability**

Expand SEN to cover additional locations and institutions beyond K-12 schools and maximize support from the federal USF for schools through the E-Rate program.

## 5.3 Priorities and Initiatives



## A. Strategic Priority

# Statewide Connectivity


Over the next three years, OBAE will shift its primary focus from planning and awarding funds to the execution and stewardship of historic broadband investments across New Mexico. To date, OBAE has awarded more than $192 million to 23 separate entities for more than 50 individual broadband deployment projects, with nearly 30 percent being awarded to Tribes. With the forthcoming approval of OBAE's final proposal for the BEAD Program, an additional $432 million will be awarded to 17 entities for 32 individual projects.[2]

With the combined $624 million in awards in place, OBAE's work will increasingly center on ensuring that funded projects move efficiently from award to permitting and construction and into long-term operation, while maximizing public value, accountability, and community benefit. The initiatives outlined below reflect this transition and establish a framework for managing unprecedented levels of infrastructure investment and taking the next steps to ensure these programs achieve the goal of creating universal connectivity to broadband in New Mexico.

## Initiatives

| A1 | A2 | A3 | A4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Excellence in Grants Administration** | **Non-Deployment Connectivity Programs** | **Project Management, Technical Assistance, and Permitting Guidance** | **Workforce Development** |

2 *NM Office of Broadband Access and Expansion. "BEAD Final Proposal", published September 4, 2025. Accessible at https://connect.nm.gov/bead.html*

# A1. Excellence in Grants Administration


### OVERVIEW

OBAE's programs are supported by the U.S. Treasury's Capital Projects Fund (CPF), the state Connect New Mexico Fund (CNMF), and the federal BEAD program, each with distinct timelines, compliance frameworks, and reporting expectations. OBAE employs efficient, consistent, and standardized grants administration to enable subgrantees to move quickly to construction while ensuring compliance with federal and state oversight requirements. This initiative supports OBAE's grants management functions across programs to ensure predictable, timely, and compliant execution.

## 2025 Achievements

- ✓ Completed BEAD subgrantee selection and awarded 32 projects totaling $432 million, pending National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) approval of the Final Proposal.
- ✓ Awarded six CNMF projects for more than $19 million, eight Grant Writing, Engineering, and Planning projects for $800 thousand, 12 Student Connect projects for more than $23 million with one project pending for $1.5 million, two Connectivity to Declared Disaster Areas projects for more than $1.2 million, and launched a new Community Connect program.
- ✓ OBAE fully staffed its Administrative Services Division and established a permitting coordinator. National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) expertise is being brought in under contract to support BEAD deployment.
- ✓ Built working relationships with permitting entities, including the State Land Office, Department of Cultural Affairs, Department of Transportation (NMDOT), IAD, and others.

# A1. Excellence in Grants Administration

## Key Action Items

- Coordinate and consult with Tribal governments and organizations that are subgrant recipients, ensuring compliance and reporting accommodates NPTs.
- Establish a regular cadence meeting with the Public Regulation Commission (PRC) to share information and data relevant to the PRC's Broadband Program and OBAE's grant programs.
- Implement standardized reporting templates and guidance for all grant-funded projects.
- Develop a reimbursement and drawdown procedure for BEAD projects and train relevant staff. Standardize with existing procedures to the greatest extent possible. Track processing times for continuous improvement.
- Finalize contracts and support all BEAD subgrantees through contract execution, permitting, and environmental/historic reviews. Goal of shovels in the ground for 75 percent of projects by the end of calendar year 2027.
- Develop a standardized grantee/subgrantee onboarding curriculum (webinars, checklists, templates).
- Refine ARPA close out procedures and develop and document close out procedures for state-funded and BEAD-funded projects.
- Establish standardized file management standards and begin migration to consistent folder structures.
- Enhance geospatial data infrastructure to track all funded broadband projects, monitor deployment progress, and publish accurate, accessible maps and dashboards for the public. These tools will also streamline reporting and compliance for federal and state programs, reducing administrative burden while increasing accountability and trust.
- Establish monthly internal performance reviews for grants administration processes.

# A1. Excellence in Grants Administration

## Key Performance Targets

- Maintain 100 percent of active projects on schedule, as measured by quarterly progress reporting.
- Every funded broadband project is on track or under a corrective action plan, with no significant audit findings, risk of default or funding clawback (i.e., return of distributed grant funds).
- Develop and operationalize reporting and compliance procedures for BEAD-funded projects.
- Achieve an average reimbursement processing time of five to seven business days. Maintain this performance as BEAD projects become active and begin requesting payments.
- Establish a consistent, agency-wide digital file structure and grant document management structure by 2027.

# A2. Non-Deployment Connectivity Programs


**OVERVIEW**

With enforceable deployment commitments either in place or soon to be executed for all identified unserved and underserved locations, New Mexico should turn its focus to broader, community-scale connectivity needs and non-deployment projects to foster the widespread adoption and meaningful use of the internet. This initiative will support programs that enhance connectivity for CAIs, multi-dwelling units (MDUs), public-facing facilities, Tribal networks, and other locally significant infrastructure that contributes to a fully connected community, as well as programs relating to internet safety, children's excessive screentime, and restricting personal cell phone and internet usage in schools.

This effort will also provide a framework to address any unserved of underserved locations that may emerge outside the existing commitment landscape. These may include, for example, sites revealed through ongoing validation, or locations affected by project changes or defaults – while keeping the program's primary emphasis on strengthening community-wide connectivity and digital resilience.

## 2025 Achievements

- ✓ Determined that a substantial number of CAIs and all MDUs previously identified as unserved remained unserved by existing OBAE funding programs.
- ✓ Maintained active coordination with Tribal partners through the CNMC, Tribal Working Group, All Pueblo Council of Governors, Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council, Navajo Nation broadband planning, a Tribal Broadband Convening, and individual consultations.
- ✓ Launched Community Connect programs to support community Wi-Fi at anchor institutions.
- ✓ Developed internal concepts for potential BEAD non-deployment projects, pending NTIA guidance on allowable uses of surplus BEAD funds.

# A2. Non-Deployment Connectivity Programs

## Key Action Items

- Continue collaboration with Tribal partners to identify local priorities and culturally appropriate approaches. Work with Tribes to conduct an inventory of CAIs and MDUs on Tribal land.
- Initiate and complete a statewide gap analysis through a Request for Information (RFI) to determine areas of focus, including CAIs, MDUs, and other community broadband needs.
- Initiate an RFI related to screentime and online safety in schools.
- Develop policy options to address locations served by LEO satellites in a manner that aligns with statutory requirements and state connectivity priorities.
- Prepare program designs for potential BEAD non-deployment initiatives pending NTIA guidance.
- Coordinate with State agencies and the Legislature on future state funding needs.

## Key Performance Targets

- Complete a statewide deployment gap analysis or request for information.
- Develop a funding strategy for non-deployment projects within three months of receiving NTIA guidance on non-deployment funding.
- Launch at least one targeted CAI or MDU funding initiative by 2027. By 2028, fund projects to reduce the number of unserved CAIs by 100 percent.
- Maintain formal engagement with all of New Mexico's NPTs throughout planning and implementation.

# A3. Project Management, Technical Assistance, and Permitting


**OVERVIEW**

The Project Management Bureau champions the oversight, technical assistance and compliance verification of broadband projects awarded via grant programs administered by OBAE. The Bureau is tasked with guiding awardees from the award announcement and legal agreement execution through the project design, implementation, and close-out phases. Main responsibilities include progress monitoring, site visits, and desk audits for performance validation, adherence to budgets, disbursements of grant funds, compliance with state and federal regulations, and technical assistance.

## 2025 Achievements

- ✓ Hired a full-time Permitting Coordinator
- ✓ Established standard operating procedures for reimbursement review and approval, site visits, and technical assistance.
- ✓ Engaged with a software provider to develop an integrated project management tool for end-to-end project management.
- ✓ Designated four Connect New Mexico Pilot Program projects as “Substantially Complete” and initiated close out proceedings.
- ✓ Established working relationships with New Mexico State Land Office, State Historical Preservation Office, NMDOT, and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and held consultation sessions and Section 106 Initiation reviews for five projects working through permitting activities.

# A3. Project Management, Technical Assistance, and Permitting

## Key Action Items

### Project Management

- Project managers and program leads will coordinate with the Tribal liaison to ensure technical assistance and permitting guidance is tailored to each individual subgrant recipient and sovereign Tribal government.
- Develop and sustain credible, trusted relationships with awardees and personnel.
- Provide assistance on legal agreements, including scope, budget, and schedules.
- Perform project monitoring and oversight activities, including recurring progress meetings, site visits, and budget and schedule reviews.

### Technical Assistance

- Provide assistance for permitting and liaising with other agencies.
- Issue guidance on state procurement rules and regulations as related to broadband.
- Publish a guidebook on requests for reimbursement, scope changes, and close out.

### Compliance Tracking

- Ensure strict compliance with state and federal reporting requirements.
- Assist awardees with cultural and historic preservation reviews.
- Work with awardees to create NEPA sub-projects that would drive the design and construction schedules for awardees and streamline NEPA approvals.

### Permitting Guidance

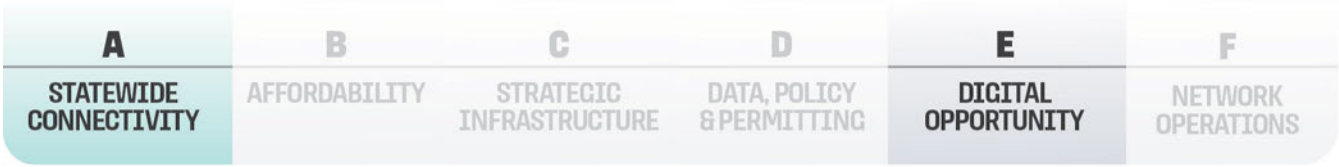
- Identify and track individual project-specific federal and State permitting requirements to monitor progress and assist in resolving issues and delays.
- Finalize the Section 106 consultation and reviews for ARPA, CNMF, Student Connect and Community Wi-Fi projects in-flight.
- Formalize the interagency workflows and hold consultation reviews and Section 106 initiation (as applicable) for BEAD projects across the relevant impacted Federal and State permitting agencies, including the Historic Preservation Division and State Historical Preservation Office.
- Assist in defining the requirements for OBAE supporting Permit Finder tool – a broadband permit tracking dashboard for OBAE staff, permitting agencies, and BEAD sub-awardees to track current construction plans, permit requirements, and status.
- Leverage permitting applications to assist in a situational assessment of permit requirements for BEAD awardees to identify an approach for in-scope permitting agencies.

# A3. Project Management, Technical Assistance, and Permitting

## Key Performance Targets

- Connect New Mexico Pilot Program (Capital Project Fund): 20 awarded projects moved to Substantially Complete designation by December 31, 2026. Close out projects as they attain Substantially Complete status.
- CNMF: 22 awarded projects moved to Substantially Complete designation by June 30, 2026, or by payment funding extension. Close out projects as they attain Substantially Complete status.
- Student Connect: 12 awarded projects moved to Substantally Complete designation by June 30, 2026, or by payment funding extension. Close out projects as they attain Substantially Complete status.
- Community Connect Wi-Fi: All To-be-Awarded Projects moved to Substantially Complete designation by June 30, 2026, or by funding extension date. Close out project(s) as they attain Substantially Complete status.
- BEAD: Finalize standard operating procedures based on lessons learned from project management under previous grant programs.

# A4. Workforce Development




## OVERVIEW

New Mexico's broadband expansion depends on a skilled workforce capable of deploying, maintaining, and upgrading advanced telecommunications infrastructure across diverse technologies. In April 2024, OBAE partnered with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS) to publish a report on "Building A Strong Broadband Workforce In New Mexico." The report highlighted how the broadband sector will require skilled personnel in occupations in the administrative, computer, construction, electrical, engineering, financial, machinery, and telecommunications fields.

In 2025, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) awarded $1.99 million to OBAE through Congressionally Directed Spending. OBAE and the DWS will bring industry-recognized, hands-on telecommunications training directly to rural and Tribal communities. Monthly training cohorts with 12-16 participants who will obtain certifications in installation, fiber optics, copper systems, and/or broadband technician roles. OBAE will coordinate with Internet Service Providers (ISPs), electric co-ops, and NPTs to deliver training aligned to employer needs and the technical requirements of federally and state-funded broadband projects. This initiative strengthens New Mexico's long-term broadband resiliency by building a pipeline of local talent who can support deployment, network operations, and maintenance.

## 2025 Achievements

- Conducted statewide outreach to ISPs, co-ops, and NPTs to identify priority job roles and certification needs.
- Evaluated multiple telecommunications training providers and selected BICSI, a company that offers industry-recognized, multi-technology certifications suitable for BEAD-era neutral-technology requirements.
- Partnered with DWS to design a training delivery model that brings hands-on instruction to communities across New Mexico.
- Secured $1.99 million DOL grant (award start: July 1, 2025; end date: June 30, 2028).
- Pivoted from a fiber-only training model (fiber trailer concept) to a multi-technology curriculum responsive to BEAD's updated eligibility framework.
- Initiated the development of a statewide pricing agreement with BICSI to expand options for advanced professional certification pathways.

# A4. Workforce Development

## Key Action Items

- Develop a “train the trainer” program for New Mexico NPTs to support self-sustaining workforce development programs within and between sovereign Tribes.
- Finalize and execute the Intergovernmental Agreement with DWS to mobilize funding, scheduling, and joint program administration. Coordinate with ISPs, co-ops, and NPTs to determine local training needs and schedule monthly classes beginning spring 2026.
- Launch basic installation courses, followed by fiber, copper, and advanced technician certifications, adding additional modules as needed.
- Co-lead statewide outreach and recruitment with DWS, prioritizing rural and Tribal communities and unemployed/underemployed workers.
- Evaluate expansion into additional training areas (e.g., outside plant, network operations, cybersecurity, customer service/IT support, data center operations).
- Explore partnerships with Higher Education Centers, county workforce boards, and local community centers to broaden geographic reach.
- Develop a “train the trainer” pathway to support long-term, locally governed workforce capacity.
- Establish systems for participant tracking, certification outcomes, and DOL reporting compliance.

# A4. Workforce Development

PHOTO BY ROBERTO ROSALES

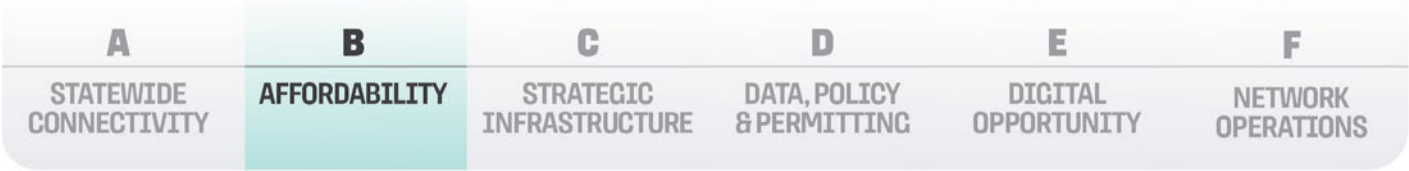
**Students at Santa Fe Community College taking a week long Fiber Optic Technician Bootcamp, a free program offered through a grant from the Department of Workforce Solutions. "This type of hands-on training is an excellent example of what we can accomplish when we bring workforce agencies, higher education, and employers together in New Mexico," says SFCC Director of Workforce Development Monique Anair, Ed.D. The program gives students the opportunity to earn up to three certifications from the Fiber Optic Association.**

## Key Performance Targets

- Training Frequency: Deliver one training cohort per month from spring 2026 through June 2028 (minimum 14 classes).
- Enrollment: Enroll at least 250 participants over the grant period.
- Certification Completion: Ensure at least 200 participants successfully earn one or more industry-recognized certifications.
- Geographic Reach: Deliver at least 50 percent of trainings in rural or Tribal communities.
- Employer Alignment: Engage at least 20 ISPs, co-ops, or Tribal employers in determining training needs and recruitment.
- Program Accessibility: Partner with at least ten local facilities (e.g., Higher Education Centers, workforce centers, community centers) to host classes.

## B. Strategic Priority:

# Affordability




Affordability is a core priority to reduce financial barriers and expand broadband adoption across New Mexico. Federal support is available through the Lifeline program funded through the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) USF. In addition, many broadband infrastructure deployment programs reduce cost barriers to providing broadband access in rural areas. However, affordability remains a significant barrier to household participation on the internet. According to the NTIA, 15.4 percent of households do not use the internet at home due to the cost of subscribing to broadband services.[3] Through targeted initiatives and expansion of existing programs, OBAE aims to reduce cost barriers, increase consumer choice, and connect residents to critical resources. Together, these strategies advance broadband affordability, strengthen digital inclusion, and support long-term educational, economic, and community outcomes statewide.

## Initiatives

| B1 | B2 | B3 |
|---|---|---|
| New Mexico Broadband Affordability Program | Competition and Transparency Requirements | Coordinated Outreach & Enrollment Campaign |

3 *NTIA Data Explorer: Internet Use Survey (Non-Use of the Internet at Home, updated November 2023).*

# B1. New Mexico Telecommunications Affordability Program (NMTAP)

| A | B | C | D | E | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STATEWIDE CONNECTIVITY | AFFORDABILITY | STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE | DATA, POLICY & PERMITTING | DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY | NETWORK OPERATIONS |

## OVERVIEW

The New Mexico Telecommunications Affordability Program (NMTAP) is a proposed subsidy program to replace the expired federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which ended in 2024. It would provide monthly reimbursement to households at or below a certain threshold of the federal poverty level, with extra support for seniors and rural households, as well as focused outreach to Tribal communities. Enrollment would be streamlined through existing support programs like SNAP and Medicaid, aiming to reach over 50,000 households each year. The program also aligns with the Martinez Yazzie ruling, ensuring internet access for at-risk students through initiatives such as Student Connect, BEAD affordability, and Community Connect.

## 2025 Achievements

- ✓ BEAD application process included additional points for low-cost service options and foundations laid in 2025 for formal development of NMTAP in 2026.
- ✓ State increased enrollment in the federal Lifeline Program under the FCC's USF.
- ✓ OBAE provided over 4,000 student households with affordable broadband for a minimum of three years through the Student Connect Program.
- ✓ Coordinated with the PRC on the potential for modernizing the Low-Income Telecommunications Assistance Program for broadband affordability.

# B1. New Mexico Telecommunications Affordability Program (NMTAP)

## Key Action Items

- Tribal household priority: Explore a higher subsidy for locations on Tribal lands acknowledging the increased cost to provide service within these areas. Broadband affordability is a critical priority for all Tribal households on and off Tribal land. Addressing this need ensures equitable access to education, telehealth, and economic opportunities, while providing the opportunity to digitally preserve and sustain the cultural practices of each Nation.
- Direct subsidies: Offer a monthly subsidy or reimbursement to eligible households, including senior citizens who receive Social Security or state assistance, to help cover the cost of their broadband service. This would help to ensure essential connectivity for communication, education, telehealth, and other vital services.
- Simplified enrollment: Offer a simplified enrollment process for broadband support through a single statewide portal for all relevant state programs to assist in reducing administrative burdens as well as reducing confusion for applicants. This would ensure that eligible residents can quickly and efficiently access the affordable connectivity they need for work, education, and healthcare.
- Student Connect enrollment expansion: Expand access to colleges, technical programs, and skilled trade schools. Continued investment strengthens the state's workforce, supports key local industries, and ensures every student can pursue a goal-aligned opportunity. By valuing both higher education and the trades, this effort contributes to a more resilient and inclusive state economy.

## Key Performance Targets

- Maintain 100 percent of active projects on schedule, as measured by quarterly progress reporting.
- Eligibility Verification: Leverage existing systems including the National Verifier and SNAP/Medicaid/Lifeline/ Supplemental Security Income/ Women, Infants, and Children / federal housing assistance to auto-qualify households.
- Program Establishment: Work with other state agencies to establish a Broadband Affordability Program.
- Budget: Establish a permanent source of funds to create certainty in providing service to low-income households.

# B2. Competition and Transparency Requirements

| A | B | C | D | E | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STATEWIDE CONNECTIVITY | AFFORDABILITY | STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE | DATA, POLICY & PERMITTING | DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY | NETWORK OPERATIONS |

**OVERVIEW**

This initiative seeks to lower broadband costs by boosting competition for broadband service and protecting consumers from hidden fees. All BEAD-funded networks must offer a permanent low-cost plan for eligible households. A state-run Pricing Transparency Portal will let residents compare speeds and full costs by address. This initiative also creates a process to develop a Broadband Bill of Rights through a public process to protect broadband consumers.

## 2025 Achievements

- ✓ Finalized BEAD rules and application process.
- ✓ Moved the $675 million federal BEAD program from initial planning to the provisional award stage.

## Key Action Items

- Pricing transparency portal: Create a comprehensive, publicly accessible, pricing transparency portal for broadband services to empower all consumers. A portal would compile and verify information reported to the FCC for the federally mandated Broadband Consumer Labels and allow individuals and businesses to easily compare the true costs, terms, and speeds of available plans, fostering a more competitive market and ensuring fair pricing practices across all providers.
- Consumer Protection Standards: Issue an RFI soliciting public feedback to define a broadband “bill of rights” in New Mexico.

## Key Performance Targets

➤ Annual Report: Publish an annual report on pricing and competition, in cooperation with partners including the CNMC .

# B3. Coordinated Outreach and Enrollment Campaign

| A | B | C | D | E | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STATEWIDE CONNECTIVITY | AFFORDABILITY | STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE | DATA, POLICY & PERMITTING | DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY | NETWORK OPERATIONS |

## OVERVIEW

NTIA continues to require BEAD sub-awardees to provide a low-cost service option to eligible subscribers. Sub-awardees must offer the low-cost plan throughout the 10-year federal interest period.[4] In addition to the expanded availability of low-cost service options under BEAD, OBAE and the CNMC will work to encourage all providers to provide low-cost options while strengthening outreach, launching an affordability campaign, and developing systems to promote and increase enrollment in federal and state broadband programs.

## 2025 Achievements

- ✓ BEAD application process included additional points for low-cost service options
- ✓ Increased enrollment in the federal Lifeline Program under the FCC's USF.
- ✓ Provided over 4,000 student households with affordable broadband for a minimum of three years through the Student Connect Program.

4 *NTIA, Restructuring Policy Notice, Broadband Equity, Acvvcess, and Deployment Program (June 6, 2025), https://www.ntia.gov/sites/default/files/2025-06/bead-restructuring-policy-notice.pdf*

# B3. Coordinated Outreach and Enrollment Campaign

## Key Action Items

- Partner with ISPs to establish a directory of low-cost service options.
- Develop outreach materials and tools to promote affordability and access to low-cost service options.
- Coordinate activities, events, and opportunities to promote affordability and showcase low-cost service options.
- Collaborate with agencies, NPTs, counties, municipalities, ISPs, and community organizations to gather and share information and encourage participation in affordability initiatives and low-cost service options.
- Develop and offer a simplified enrollment process which may include a single statewide portal for all relevant state programs to assist in reducing administrative burdens as well as reducing confusion for applicants.

## Key Performance Targets

- Launch of Affordability Portal: Launch a portal by the end of 2027.
- Directory of Low-Cost Service Options: Collaborate with New Mexico ISPs and interagency to publish the first directory by the end of 2027.
- Widespread Availability of Affordable and Low-Cost Service Options: Over 80 percent of NM ISPs offer a low-cost option for low-income households.
- Affordability Outreach Materials and Tools: Collaborate with New Mexico ISPs and interagency to have materials and tools on affordability by the end of 2027.
- Coordination of Affordability Activities and Events: Ensure most events bring attention to affordability programs and opportunities.
- Simplifying the Enrollment Process: Development of best practice guide to promote low-cost option and enroll qualified entities.
- Interagency Collaboration to Improve Constituent Awareness: Partner with other state agencies and IAD to begin awareness of enrollment in affordable and low-cost service options within 12 months after the materials and portal are created, allowing outreach in rural and Tribal areas.

## C. Strategic Priority:

# Strategic Infrastructure

| A | B | C | D | E | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STATEWIDE CONNECTIVITY | AFFORDABILITY | **STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE** | DATA, POLICY & PERMITTING | DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY | NETWORK OPERATIONS |

The Strategic Infrastructure initiative supports broadband networks across the state to enable next-generation technologies and reinforce existing networks. Middle mile and long-haul fiber infrastructure support the last-mile networks connecting homes, businesses, and community institutions to resilient, high-speed, and affordable broadband. The initiative serves the families and residents of New Mexico to provide transit-path resiliency in the event of disasters that require mutual aid and assistance. Today and in the future, New Mexico must also be ready to support our state priorities for space and defense, quantum technologies, artificial intelligence, and scientific research. These ventures require larger-scale, higher-capacity transport methods with resiliency to supply confidence and assurance of quality of service.

Fiber infrastructure is critical to the future of New Mexico. State agencies are acting in partnership with local communities and industry to support innovation and research in next-generation technologies. In December 2025, the New Mexico Economic Development Department's Technology and Innovation Office published "The New Mexico Science & Technology Roadmap," to identify the specific technology sectors where New Mexico holds the strongest competitive advantages and outlines how to capitalize on them.[5] The roadmap lays out the State's focus on quantum systems, advanced energy, space & defense, biosciences, and water technology. Each of these sectors relies heavily on the fiber infrastructure and New Mexico must be ready to support these industries.

# Initiatives

| C1 | C2 | C3 |
|---|---|---|
| **New Mexico Partnership Framework for Strategic Infrastructure Development** | **Statewide Open Access Middle-Mile Backbone** | **Emergency Broadband Operations Team** |

5 *NM Economic Development Department. "The New Mexico Science & Technology Roadmap". Published December 4, 2025. https://edd.newmexico.gov/pubs/new-mexicos-st-roadmap-full-document/*

# C1. Partnership Framework for Strategic Infrastructure Development


## OVERVIEW

OBAE will work in conjunction with the Governor's office, key legislators, the Economic Development Department, DoIT, and select organizations focused on science and technology to develop fiber infrastructure. Much like the Interstate Highway System, the state's broadband infrastructure is foremost in establishing commerce, connectivity, and spurring economic expansion. Attracting investment in a public-private partnership model, a key driver of the private sector network established through New Mexico Businesses United for Infrastructure and Local Development (NM BUILD), for both commercial and community development, is a consequential factor in the success of realizing "strategic infrastructure." The plan focuses on policies, rulemaking, legislation, and establishing key relationships to navigate interdependencies, solution sets, and deployments to enhance the state's competitiveness.

## 2025 Achievements

**This is a new initiative based on the direction of creating stronger participation from the Office of Broadband in statewide public-private partnerships**

- ✓ Held discovery and review sessions on NM BUILD to understand OBAE's role in the development of the effort, potentially using middle-mile needs as an initial use case.

# C1. Partnership Framework for Strategic Infrastructure Development

## Key Action Items

- Develop a tailored approach to public-private partnerships accommodating the unique legal framework involved in projects that involve sovereign NPTs in support of self-determination of communication and data sharing.
- Collaborate with NM BUILD to advance public-private partnerships that incorporate broadband ventures for strategic infrastructure, including through active participation in NM BUILD government advisory forums.
- Establish trusted, credible relationships across State agencies, commercial entities, national labs, universities, and specialized companies in science and technology. Develop interagency relationships with key scientific, space, quantum and AI ventures to understand key parameters (i.e., bandwidth, latency, quality of service, interconnections, cybersecurity).
- Leverage NM BUILD's programs and private sector network as key resources to identifying solutions and deploying large capacity or community-based capacity to scale with increasing demands for bandwidth and reduced latency.
- Coordinate rulemaking in other State agencies where rules impact broadband deployment to support strategic infrastructure across the energy, water, and transportation sectors.
- Develop policy to facilitate infrastructure investment in the state, including by removing barriers to public-private partnerships.
- Publish an RFI to solicit public feedback on policies and requirements to facilitate science, technology, labs, and space industry working jointly with the Economic Development Department.
- Evaluate the Procurement Code and work with the General Services Department and other key partners, as needed, to expedite and accommodate larger broadband infrastructure acquisitions while ensuring appropriate protection and utilization of public funds.
- Expand the availability of services and equipment on statewide price agreements.
- Leverage BEAD Non-Deployment Funds to support specific projects and programs that align with state priorities and federal requirements.
- Accentuate the requirements for LEO satellites, 5G wireless, and beyond to fill infrastructure gaps, including the backhaul high-end transport requirements that are part of the middle-mile transits.

# C1. Partnership Framework for Strategic Infrastructure Development

## Key Performance Targets

- Hold interagency meetings, including with the Economic Development Department for knowledge sharing by March 31, 2026. Establish these sessions on a regular cadence.
- Promote and integrate into the NM BUILD programs to assist in facilitating discussions that have a broadband component by April 30, 2026.
- Draft and release RFI before June 1, 2026.
- Collaborate with State agencies to define policy by November 1, 2026.
- Review and produce conclusions and policy statements by December 31, 2026.
- Prepare and hold sessions throughout 2026 with science and technology vendors that require middle mile and high-end support.
- Prepare and present, in coordination with the Office of the Governor and sponsoring Legislators, legislative proposals to advance public private partnerships and other legislation for January 2027.
- Work opportunities as they arise via NM BUILD or through the relationships that have been built with Economic Development Department, and academic, commercial, science and technology entities.

# C2. Statewide Open Access Middle-Mile Backbone


## OVERVIEW

The State's middle-mile strategy involves a three-phased approach:

- Leverage interstate highway corridors (I-25, I-40, I-10) to establish open-access, dark fiber networks with frequent interconnection points;
- Form regional rings off those corridors and then laterals into communities with an open-point of interconnection to enable the deployment of advanced broadband networks and future upgrades;
- Establish Albuquerque as a major regional carrier hotel that lowers Internet Protocal transit costs, keeps intrastate traffic local and improves network performance and resiliency for all New Mexico ISPs. Establish a statewide, diverse and redundant middle-mile backbone with at least two physically diverse routes to every county seat and Tribal community by 2028.

## 2025 Achievements

- ✓ Continued to expand and enhance the bandwidth scalability of the Rio Grande Optical Network (RGON) with DoIT and key partners.
- ✓ Based on requirements and learnings, defined statewide objectives of the middle-mile backbone.
- ✓ Partnered with the New Mexico Department of Transportation and New Mexico Gas to establish a dig-once project combining funding and permitting to improve gas and broadband access in orthern New Mexico.

# C2. Statewide Open Access Middle-Mile Backbone

## Key Action Items

- Utilize the institutions and partnerships developed under Initiative C1 (Partnership Framework for Strategic Infrastructure Development) to fill the middle-mile gaps on Tribal land.
- Publish an RFI to obtain public input on establishing public-private partnerships.
- Develop a list of government-based anchor clients willing to sign contracts for fund contributions in exchange for dark fiber, thereby strengthening the business case for privately-led, middle-mile deployments.
- Develop interagency relationships with key scientific, space, quantum and AI ventures to understand key parameters (i.e., bandwidth, latency, quality of service, interconnections, cybersecurity).
- Establish memorandums of understandings and Intergovernmental Agreements between agencies to facilitate design, development and operations for the middle-mile backbone
- Align requirements to support the Governor's office technology infrastructure direction and New Mexico's S&T Roadmap for Science and Technology.

## Key Performance Targets

- Establish a statewide diverse and redundant middle-mile backbone with at least two physically diverse routes to every county seat and Tribal community by the end of calendar year 2028

# C3. Emergency Broadband Operations Team


## OVERVIEW

Over the past five years, New Mexico has experienced record-breaking fires and resulting floods. In response, industry and community partners created the Emergency Broadband Operations Team (EBOT) to respond to disasters and coordinate restoration of communications and broadband infrastructure following disasters. Much like the New Mexico Water/Wastewater Response Network, the EBOT coordinates a mutual-aid collaboration among internet providers, emergency services, and community organizations.

This initiative sets out to formalize the EBOT and integrate it within the State's broader emergency response teams, resulting in a more flexible network of organizations to respond promptly and efficiently to disasters or major disruptions. The New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management supports the State Emergency Response Commission and the regional Local Emergency Planning Committees. OBAE will support broadband providers in joining the State Emergency Response and Local Emergency Planning Committees. Additionally, OBAE will facilitate the organization and enlist members through a formal Mutual Aid Agreement both regionally and statewide for the EBOT. The agreement would include definitions of resources (i.e., personnel, equipment, use of telecommunication lines, LEO stations) that could be called into service. The relevant recent use case in broadband is the successful EBOT effort and Advisory Circle in effect in 2024 due to the fires in the Ruidoso area. Compensation or funding capabilities would also be outlined, either from private insurance or public disaster relief monies.

## 2025 Achievements

- ✓ Awarded two grants totaling $1.25 million for the Connect New Mexico Pilot Program – Wave 4 (Connectivity to Declared Disaster Areas).

# C3. Emergency Broadband Operations Team

## Key Action Items

- Include the Connect New Mexico Council Tribal Working Group and other Tribal telecommunications partners in state emergency response organizations.
- Activate an RFI and gap analysis to define the areas of focus for the mutual assistance framework. The RFI would canvas ISPs, county officials, community officials, Tribal leadership and State and county emergency services agencies.
- Develop a best practice document that reflects the successful EBOT, which expedited the restoration of communications services in the Ruidoso/Mescalero area during and after the devastating South Fork and Salt Fires in June 2024.
- Define the parameters of assistance and aid in a formal Mutual Aid and Assistance agreement or MOU.
- Establish an advisory team to provide subject-matter expertise on the design and implementation of this initiative.
- Perform twice a year evaluation and call-to-action to validate the participants' engagement and commitment.
- Establish an early-warning notification process that would preliminarily summon and prepare participants for the potential of an event.

## Key Performance Targets

- Release RFI and analyze results with conclusions and statements of direction by the end of FY 2026.
- Develop and operationalize Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement by the end of calendar year 2026.
- Solicit and sign up members (by region or statewide) by the end of FY 2027.
- Establish Advisory Committee by end of FY 2027.
- Develop and operationalize members reporting requirements.
- Respond and deploy as required.
- Review responses to an event and perform adjustments and continuous improvement.

## D. Strategic Priority:

# Data, Policy, and Permitting


Data, Policy, and Permitting supports other strategic priorities to realize universal connectivity in New Mexico. This priority aims to establish systems, processes, and policies that define broadband for New Mexico and establish efficiencies that reduce the effort, complexity, and time to deploy broadband infrastructure.

OBAE's statutory mission requires the agency to coordinate state agencies to compile and publish data on broadband serviceable locations and community anchor institutions, including households, businesses, schools, libraries, and rural health care clinics. This initiative will support establishing broadband related data standards and metrics. OBAE will maintain an enterprise database and geographic information system of data, analytic, and mapping tools to support all strategic priorities. Lastly, the Office will establish data governance policies that ensure standards of excellence for broadband information in New Mexico including the use and sharing of tribal data according to protocols that respect and honor the ongoing consultations with those individual NPTs.

Refer to our mapping portal for existing resources and ongoing updates at **maps.connect.nm.gov**.

# Initiatives

| D1 | D2 | D3 | D4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Broadband Location Data Challenge** | **Interagency Policies for Permitting** | **Infrastructure Data for Resiliency, Planning, and Innovation** | **Establish Broadband Service Standards** |

# D1. Broadband Location Data Challenge


## OVERVIEW

The assembly, analysis, and monitoring of point location data will continue and expand. This initiative will improve definitions of broadband and broadband serviceable locations (BSLs) and track broadband availability, accessibility, and adoption for New Mexico residents. This will focus on integrating data across state grant funding programs to centralize monitoring of broadband investment, monitor deployment progress, and streamline reporting and compliance for federal and state programs, thus reducing administrative burdens while increasing accountability and trust.

## 2025 Achievements

- ✓ Created public information resources for grant program related locations and updates (Grants for NM Broadband) and time to deployment (When is it coming to my location?).
- ✓ Published mapping resources to track implementations and report progress. (Availability & Adoption, by County, New Mexico #1 in internet speed performance improvement).
- ✓ Conducted analyses supporting program planning, such as density of unserved students based on self-reported service quality by public school enrollees, and cross-coordination with NTIA on which BSLs are located on tribal lands.
- ✓ Audited statewide database of community anchor institutions that is indexed against federal data when applicable and ensured these facilities are included in deployment efforts.
- ✓ Developed internal analyses and mapping tools for the BEAD grant program to define Project Area Units based on existing administrative boundaries, network infrastructure, and geography; and for application assessment and audits of location status across multiple grant programs.
- ✓ Created a secure mapping portal with tools for BEAD applicants to select BSLs of interest, validate data against submission requirements for proposals, and summarize land management jurisdictions (permitting complexity) crossed by planned networks.

# D1. Broadband Location Data Challenge

## Key Action Items

- Develop tailored data gathering for broadband serviceable locations on Tribal land. Coordinate with NPTs as requested to ensure OBAE is using current information on lands that have reservation status and inholdings within trust boundaries so that our programs are implemented according to applicable tribal policies, and collaboration with the IAD to publish these updates on their website as a local resource when federal map updates are lagging.
- Continue ongoing data management that incorporates the evolving definition of high-speed internet and creates New Mexico's own database of serviceable locations to relieve our dependence on proprietary data that cannot be used in local collaborative efforts such as economic development and public safety.
- Define focus areas where user speed test does not match claimed service available.
- Conduct map challenges to the FCC, of both locations and service claims, as new information warrants.
- Work with the CNMC and other OBAE programs to improve tracking of internet subscriptions and adoption through data-collection and data-sharing agreements with local internet providers, local governments, and community advocates, which in turn feeds assessments related to network viability and sustainability.
- Build and deploy a standardized end-user survey that can be deployed by local advocates in communities to validate the impact of broadband investments on individuals and businesses.

## Key Performance Targets

- Minimum of bi-monthly consultations with the CNMC Working group on Data, Maps, and Permitting.
- Quarterly assessment of location and service data to meet FCC challenge deadlines.
- Publish a web map of tribal lands for IAD's public website.
- Deploy community-based end-user survey to counties and municipalities for their field data collection efforts, piloted by Doña Ana County.
- Establish data maintenance plan and governance policy for CAIs as a statewide reference resource.
- Publish a public dashboard of broadband grant project implementation status, with quarterly updates.
- Establish a data maintenance and data governance policy recommendation for New Mexico NPTs in collaboration with IAD for centralizing Tribal Reservation & Trust Boundaries mapping as a statewide reference resource.

# D2. Interagency Policies for Permitting

| A | B | C | D | E | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STATEWIDE CONNECTIVITY | AFFORDABILITY | STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE | DATA, POLICY & PERMITTING | DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY | NETWORK OPERATIONS |

**OVERVIEW**

The policy initiative will focus on establishing greater coordination across agencies that control the right-of-way paths for broadband infrastructure. Efforts will involve OBAE taking a lead role to create MOUs and influence rulemaking for the involved agencies. Similarly, interagency policies regarding standards and processes for foundational data development and usage across agencies will be included. Central to these efforts will be facilitation with Tribal entities, as applicable, with respect of Sovereign rights.

## 2025 Achievements

- ✓ Conducted discovery for the right-of-way requirements of the New Mexico State Land Office, NMDOT, the BLM, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). OBAE acted as lead agency in this role, coordinating the agency members and the projects to bring clarity and a work approach to enable more efficient right-of-way permitting. This initial work was to discover the various situations and rules used by the land jurisdiction agencies.
- ✓ Established the major workflows and areas where interagency coordination is critical to the implementation of broadband infrastructure.
- ✓ Coordinated with the PRC regarding the PRC's awards under the Broadband Program and Provisional Awards under the BEAD program.

# D2. Interagency Policies for Permitting

## Key Action Items

- Establish MOUs for interagency coordination, as applicable with state agencies (e.g. NMDOT, NM Historic Preservation Division, State Land Office, and federal agencies (BLM, BIA, National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Forest Service, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), that would outline workflow, timing expectations, “Fast-lane” prioritization for broadband infrastructure efforts.
- Support rulemaking via formal requests with NMDOT for a fee structure for telecommunication permits funded by grants (federal, State, or local) to reduce or eliminate state fund transfers between agencies.
- Advance "Dig Once" policy coordination and rulemaking.
- Evaluate and advance the coordination and standardization of pole attachment agreements. This would include standards for load analysis, surveys, make-ready or replacement cost-sharing, and, potentially, a fee-based rental model. Coordinate with the PRC and, potentially, the FCC.
- In collaboration with IAD and OBAE’s Tribal Liaison, meet with individual Tribal governments as needed to ensure the State has a dependable geospatial reference dataset that reflects the most recent changes.

## Key Performance Targets

- Identify and isolate rulemaking situations required for specific agencies (across all policy projects).
- Work with agencies to craft sensible codes and rules.
- Hold sessions with agencies to socialize and set OBAE’s intent for lead role in the permitting coordination process.

# D3. Infrastructure Data for Resiliency, Planning, and Innovation

| A | B | C | D | E | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STATEWIDE CONNECTIVITY | AFFORDABILITY | STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE | DATA, POLICY & PERMITTING | DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY | NETWORK OPERATIONS |

## OVERVIEW

This initiative dedicates resources to the collection and analysis of middle mile and long haul broadband infrastructure statewide. This information is needed to support investments in infrastructure, promote long term sustainability and resiliency, and support strategic planning and economic development. This includes development of GIS-based tools that support permitting, including a statewide Permit Finder that enables broadband providers to upload network designs and instantly identify permitting requirements based on jurisdictional boundaries and land ownership, and a Permit Tracker that is a central reference for OBAE and the permitting stakeholders to monitor progress.

## 2025 Achievements

- ✓ Developed internal mapping tools for photo documentation of network features.
- ✓ Assessed mobile wireless coverage and gaps along major transportation corridors.
- ✓ Conducted analysis supporting program planning such as shortest paths from known fiber to target destinations such as State Parks.
- ✓ Compiled internal mapping tools for auditing planned network designs against locations to be served, and to characterize data from external sources to ensure each feature is current according to location and basic implementation status.

# D3. Infrastructure Data for Resiliency, Planning, and Innovation

## Key Action Items

- Implement digital data standard and data submission methods for broadband infrastructure to be reported by awardees of any state-managed grant programs.
- Incorporate non-terrestrial network data (mobile wireless and LEO satellite) into service mapping to ensure all available resources are accounted for.
- Enhance the secure BEAD mapping portal to enable digital network design data to be updated by awardees, and subsequently used in the Permit Finder and Tracker; including the ability to map at a minimum the proposed network and the as-built network prior to close-out of grant contracts.
- Coordinate with permitting authorities in relevant local, state, and federal jurisdictions to ensure consistent access to standardized digital data on planned networks, via web services architecture.
- Collaborate with the Department of Finance Infrastructure Division on the conceptualization and implementation of data supply chains for statewide infrastructure data.
- Establish a gap analysis protocol, incorporating data from external sources as necessary, to evaluate network sufficiency and resiliency over time and in the face of potential emergent events such as natural disasters.

## Key Performance Targets

- Deploy statewide broadband Permit Finder tool.
- Integrate PRC grant program network design data.
- Deploy secure Permit Tracker portal, initially focused on BEAD grant requirements.
- Publish draft statewide digital data standards for broadband infrastructure mapping.
- Achieve full integration of all BEAD-funded project routes into the statewide broadband GIS repository.
- Ensure 100 percent compliance with geospatial reporting requirements for all broadband subgrantees, supported by automated Quality Assurance/ Quality Control workflows.

# D4. Establish Broadband Service Standards


## OVERVIEW

OBAE will solicit public input on establishing state broadband quality of service standards. OBAE's legislative mandate includes "establish by rule standards for quality of service for homes, businesses and public institutions" (NMSA 1978, 63-9J-3 (2021)). Historically, OBAE has adopted the federal service standards mandated by the CPF and by the NTIA BEAD program. This would open an RFI on whether the state should adopt a single standard, or have separate standards for different user segments or forms of broadband service (e.g., fixed vs. mobile).

Federal service standards vary across agencies. The core service standard for all CPF-funded broadband infrastructure projects is the reliable delivery of at least 100 Mbps for both download and upload speeds (100/100 Mbps symmetrical) to all funded locations.[6] BEAD service standards require "Reliable Broadband Service" meeting 100 Mbps download/20 Mbps upload speeds, latency under 100ms, and network scalability, with stricter 1 Gigabits per second (Gbps/1 Gbps) for CAIs.[7] The FCC updated the broadband service standards for fixed broadband in 2024 to align with BEAD. The FCC also has different service standards, including a minimum of 35 Mbps download 3 Mbps upload for mobile broadband, and a target standard of 1 Gbps download (per 1,000 students) for schools. The FCC had established a long-term goal of 1 Gbps download / 500 Mbps upload for fixed broadband.[8] However, the FCC recently proposed abolishing this long-term goal; there are opposing views among the Commissioners on its merits.[9] A final ruling has not been issued.

OBAE currently interprets its statutory mandate to establish "standards for quality of service" as limited to speeds and latency. The RFI will solicit feedback on whether the definition should be expanded.

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*6 U.S. Department of the Treasury. "Guidance For the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund for States, Territories &Freely Associated States," Accessed 12/22/2025 Note: Networks not meeting this standard may be funded when impracticable to deploy due to geography, topography, or excessive cost barriers. In such cases, the network must reliably offer at least 100/20Mbps and be scalable to 100 Mbps symmetrical.*

*7 NTIA. "BEAD Notice of Funding Opportunity," Published May 13, 2022.*

*8 Federal Communications Commission. "FCC Increases Broadband Speed Benchmark," Published March 14, 2024. FCC 24-27. GN Docket No. 22-270.*

*9 "Inquiry Concerning Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability to All Americans in a Reasonable and Timely Fashion," Published August 8, 2024, GN Docket No. 25-223,*

# D4. Establish Broadband Service Standards

## 2025 Achievements

- ✓ Managed 21 ARPA-CPF projects totaling $117 million with symmetrical speed requirements of 100 Mbps.
- ✓ Committed $58 million for 22 projects under the CNMF, adopting CPF service standards for each project.
- ✓ Made 32 provisional awards totaling $432 million for the BEAD program, adopting the required service standards of 100 Mbps download / 20 Mbps upload.

## Key Action Items

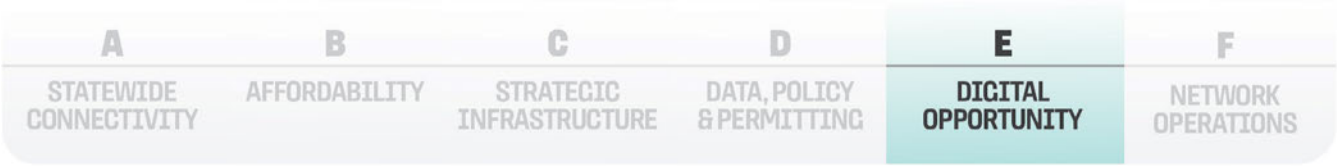
- Draft RFI to solicit public feedback on broadband quality of service standards. The RFI will seek input related to market demand (e.g., level of need by user segment), economics (e.g., capital investment implications, financial viability, required public funding), regulatory options (e.g., mandates, timeline requirements), and other relevant topics.
- Coordinate with public institutions, including DoIT, counties, municipalities, and school districts, to take solicit input on service standards for public institutions.
- Establish a regular cadence meeting with the PRC to ensure coordination with the State Rural Universal Service Fund and the PRC's Broadband Program.
- Monitor policy developments – across the federal landscape and other states – on evolving changes in service standards.
- Depending on the result of the RFI, proceed to rulemaking on a statewide broadband quality of service standard.

## Key Performance Targets

- ➤ Publish an RFI soliciting public feedback on OBAE establishing, by rule, broadband quality of service standards. This would explore establishing separate standards for households, businesses, and public institutions and standards for fixed broadband and mobile broadband.
- ➤ Hold monthly meetings with PRC and other state agencies to coordinate results of the RFI.
- ➤ Depending on results of the RFI, publish a notice of proposed rulemaking to formally establish statewide standards for quality of service for broadband.

## E. Strategic Priority:

# Digital Opportunity




Digital Opportunity primarily supports OBAE's program goal of widespread adoption. This complements OBAE capital infrastructure projects and affordability initiatives to ensure that households first have access, then can afford adoption, and finally have the digital skills and training necessary to adopt internet connectivity. This will foster opportunities to engage in meaningful internet usage that enables socioeconomic progress but also encourages practices that promote online safety and security.

OBAE made significant progress towards digital opportunity in 2025. Unfortunately, much of the progress was undercut by changes in federal policy and funding. In January 2025, OBAE launched the Promoting Internet Needs of New Mexicans (PINON) Grant to help bring more digital equity to residents and communities across the state. The program was funded by NTIA's Digital Equity program and provided resources to covered populations including aging populations, veterans, rural households, low-income families, and households primarily speaking languages other than English.[10]

New Mexico constituents and organizations had high demand for these resources, and OBAE received 39 applications requesting $14 million from across the state, nearly double the amount NTIA made available to New Mexico. Proposals supported health, education, employment, and civic participation of families. NTIA cancelled funding for the program on May 9, 2025.

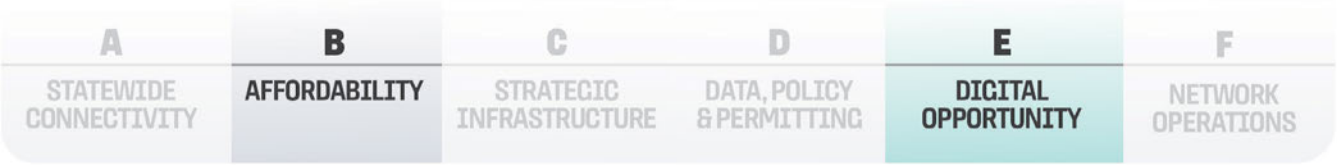
OBAE's statutory mission and strategic plan continues the Strategic Priority of Digital Opportunity to overcome barriers to broadband participation specifically, availability & affordability; online accessibility; digital literacy; online privacy & cybersecurity; and device availability.

# Initiatives

| E1 | E2 | E3 |
|---|---|---|
| **Foundations for Digital Opportunity** | **Digital Opportunity Resource Inventory** | **Digital Opportunity TechSmart Initiative** |

10 *New Mexico Office of Broadband Access and Expansion. "PINON Grant," published January 2025, updated May 9, 2025.*

# E1. Foundations for Digital Opportunity




**OVERVIEW**

Develop a program to build support and long-term sustainability for digital inclusion and digital opportunity initiatives that help New Mexico residents use the internet effectively, meaningfully, and safely, especially in rural and tribal communities.

## 2025 Achievements

- ✓ Strengthened outreach, education, and accessibility through improvements to website, newsblasts, newsletters, press releases, media, and social media.
- ✓ Continued robust stakeholder engagement through activities and events such as on-going CNMC working group meetings, including Digital Readiness and Adoption Working Group and Tribal Working Group, ground-breakings, ribbon cuttings, presentations, workshops, trainings, Cabinet in the Community, annual Broadband Summit, annual New Mexico Tribal Convening, annual Albuquerque Network Operator's Conference, and annual Broadband Day at the Roundhouse in Santa Fe.

# E1. Foundations for Digital Opportunity

## Key Action Items

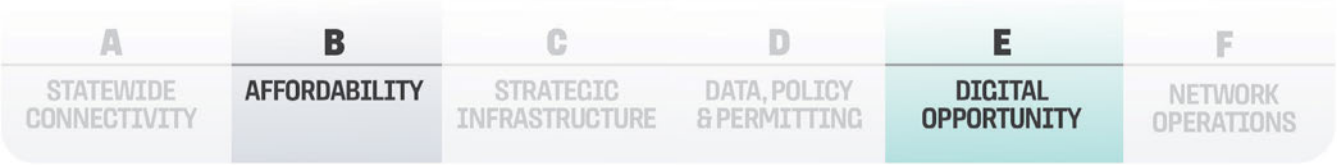
- Develop and implement short-term and long-term strategies for funding and fundraising to support digital opportunity initiatives in New Mexico.
- Coordinate with CNMC to develop and strengthen fundraising efforts to support digital opportunity initiatives in New Mexico including donations, grants, gifts, sponsorships, and other funding opportunities.
- Partner with non-profit organizations to support their digital opportunity initiatives.
- Coordinate with tribes and local governments to support local digital opportunity initiatives that will enable New Mexico residents to effectively, safely, and meaningfully access the broadband available in their communities through infrastructure projects.
- Develop and launch a grant-making pilot to support digital opportunity initiatives in New Mexico.
- Promote digital inclusion and digital opportunity initiatives in New Mexico through outreach, education, and stakeholder engagement.
- Collaborate with the CNMC in the ongoing updates to and implementation of a digital opportunity plan for New Mexico.
- Continue to strengthen outreach, education, and accessibility through on-going improvements to website, newsblasts, newsletters, press releases, media, and social media.
- Support digital opportunity initiatives through outreach, education, and stakeholder engagement activities and events including the CNMC Digital Readiness and Adoption Working Group and Tribal Working Group, ground-breakings, ribbon cuttings, presentations, workshops, trainings, Cabinet in the Community, annual Broadband Summit, annual New Mexico Tribal Convening, annual Albuquerque Network Operator's Conference, annual Broadband Day at the Roundhouse in Santa Fe, and annual Digital Readiness and Adoption Abierta Summit.
- Document, track, evaluate, and report on digital opportunity initiatives in New Mexico.
- Gather and share data regarding the success and impact of digital opportunity initiatives in the Annual Data Collection Report.

# E1. Foundations for Digital Opportunity

## Key Performance Targets

- Establish mechanism with CNMC to raise funds for digital opportunity initiatives.
- Create plan to leverage existing program and future funding to increase and ease access to digital opportunity initiatives throughout New Mexico.
- Meet standards for accessibility of public information.
- Track and increase stakeholder engagement through communications, outreach, and education.
- Report on impact of digital opportunity initiatives in Annual Data Collection Report.

# E2. Digital Opportunity Resource Inventory




**OVERVIEW**

Develop and promote an online inventory of digital opportunity resources to support and improve public access, awareness, and support for digital opportunity programs in New Mexico.

## 2025 Achievements

✓ Initial research and groundwork were laid in 2025 to develop and launch an online inventory of digital opportunity resources in 2026, including the identification of initial digital opportunity programs in New Mexico.

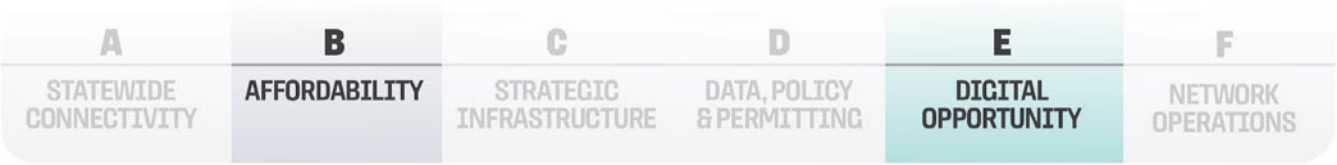
## Key Action Items

- Gather information on digital opportunity resources including initiatives launched by tribes, local governments, state agencies, and nonprofits.
- Include resources that support accessibility, as well as online safety and cybersecurity.
- Develop and promote online access to digital opportunity resources, including dedicated web pages with an inventory of resources and hotlinks.
- Develop and support short- and long-term strategies to maintain and expand the online inventory of digital opportunity resources.
- Document, track, evaluate, and report on digital opportunity resources annually.

## Key Performance Targets

- ➤ Complete initial inventory of digital opportunity resources.
- ➤ Develop web pages to provide access to digital opportunity resources online.
- ➤ Develop promotional materials and outreach tools for digital opportunity resources.
- ➤ Maintain and update digital opportunity resources annually.

# E3. Digital Opportunity TechSmart Initiative




**OVERVIEW**

Develop and grow Digital Opportunity TechSmart Initiative to cultivate interagency collaboration to identify, support, and expand cooperative digital opportunity and digital navigator programs that ensure New Mexico residents are TechSmart and have the tools and skills needed to use the internet effectively, meaningfully, and safely.

## 2025 Achievements

- ✓ Inter-Governmental Agreement underway with DWS to launch digital navigators pilot in January 2026.
- ✓ Need for device donation and distribution support emerged and initially was explored in response to fire and flood disasters in 2024-2025. A pilot project was developed and agreements are underway with NM Horizons and Adelante Diverse-IT to launch a Device Distribution and Digital Skills Training and Support pilot in January 2026.

# E3. Digital Opportunity TechSmart Initiative

## Key Action Items

- Engage with agencies and organizations to assess assets and leverage opportunities.
- Collaborate to develop, support, and pilot digital opportunity TechSmart Initiatives and digital navigator programs.
- Develop and support short-term and long-term strategies to maintain and expand Digital Opportunity TechSmart Initiatives that may address improving digital access, adoption, affordability, literacy, safety, accessibility, devices, and navigators.
- Document, track, evaluate, and report on Digital Opportunity TechSmart Initiatives progress annually.
- Explore and expand Digital Opportunity TechSmart Initiatives data collection such as pilot tracking, program reporting, participant feedback, and stakeholder surveys.

## Key Performance Targets

- Successfully collaborate to pilot Digital Opportunity TechSmart Initiative projects.
- Develop and share outreach and promotional materials to support Digital Opportunity TechSmart Initiatives.
- Develop systems and opportunities to expand interagency cooperation to support Digital Opportunity TechSmart Initiatives.
- Report annually on Digital Opportunity TechSmart Initiatives.

## F. Strategic Priority:

# Network Operations

| A | B | C | D | E | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STATEWIDE CONNECTIVITY | AFFORDABILITY | STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE | DATA, POLICY & PERMITTING | DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY | NETWORK OPERATIONS |

The Statewide Education Network (SEN) broadband network was developed in collaboration with local ISPs to connect hundreds of New Mexico schools and provide a more secure internet while enhancing education through shared classes, resources, and various services. Since 2014, the New Mexico Legislature has supported schools to participate in federal broadband programs, including establishing the Broadband Deployment and Connectivity Program (BDCP) to assist local schools to secure the Education Rate (E-Rate) support under the FCC. The SEN was activated in July 2024 to further support broadband access for K-12 schools and students.

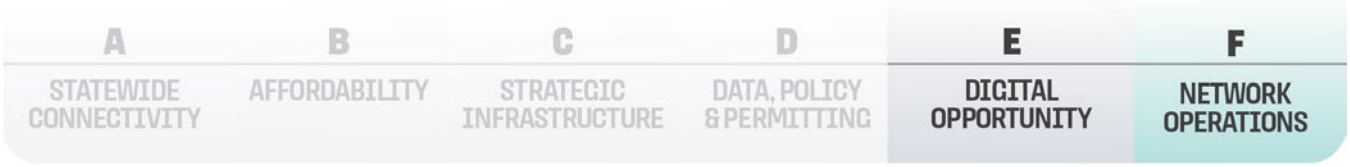
The Broadband for Education Act (SB401-2025) transferred administration of the SEN from the Public-School Facilities Authority (PSFA) to OBAE. With this authority, it is critical for OBAE to adopt and implement the best industry standards and framework for operations, resiliency, and security that will ensure the highest level of sustainability, availability, and user satisfaction. This will help schools maximize the available instruction time and implement the most effective tools that will help our students and teachers progress and thrive.

Other New Mexico organizations can adapt and use these same approaches for their own networks, particularly rural health care clinics and libraries that are similarly eligible for support through the federal Universal Service Fund. Through these networks, OBAE is elevating the quality of broadband service for everyone in the state.

# Initiatives

| F1 | F2 | F3 |
|---|---|---|
| **SEN Operational Excellence** | **SEN Expansion & Sustainability** | **SEN Resiliency and Security** |

# F1. SEN Operational Excellence




**OVERVIEW**

The SEN went live on July 1, 2024, joining a large group of similar networks in other states. The network makes available high speed broadband capacity (100 Gbps) between all major regions in the state for all our public schools. The SEN has helped approximately 120 districts and charter schools upgrade their networks and leverage E-rate funding.

The SEN makes more secure access to the internet available to participating schools through multiple connections located in diverse geographic location across the state. The network fosters security using built-in cybersecurity tools such as Distributed Denial of Service protection and the Security Information and Event Management suite which helps protect and reduce the cybersecurity risk for the SEN infrastructure, SEN operations, and for network participants.

Going forward, this initiative will support the operation, growth, and continuous change and improvement for the SEN. From current operation, OBAE seeks to improve upon the organizational structure of personnel, tools, and processes as the SEN template is applied to other broadband networks of various sizes and complexities in New Mexico.

## 2025 Achievements

- ✓ Achieved 100 percent uptime for the SEN school participants.
- ✓ Delivered and supported eight last-mile circuits between 1Gbps and 20Gbps.
- ✓ Three school districts are pursuing advanced connections to the SEN, demonstrating interest in a higher level of technical readiness.
- ✓ Las Vegas City Public Schools' SEN connection increased broadband speed, increased security, and delivered cost savings of state and local funds.
- ✓ New Mexico ranked second in the nation in leveraging available E-Rate Category Two funding, resulting in better and more secure networks in schools.

# F1. SEN Operational Excellence

## Key Action Items

- Develop a team with the necessary specialized knowledge and expertise to continue supporting and growing the SEN. These skills would be developed through mentorship and support of additional training opportunities to ensure continuity, consistency, availability of trained personnel.
- Complete statewide Request For Proposal (RFP) for all eligible entities focusing on K-12 schools, and providing connectivity for libraries and institutions of higher education.
- Standardize contracts and publish guidance on participating in the SEN.
- Standardize purchasing approvals and documentation process.
- Proactive purchase and storage of required equipment to avoid cost increases as well as purchasing and delivery delays.
- Develop individual project plans for customers including timelines, milestones, and deliverables; regular technical and coordination meetings; and extensive network and solutions design sprints.
- Provide technical assistance to schools to plan, design, and implement adequate networks to support educational instruction.

## Key Performance Targets

- Speed: 100 percent of SEN participants receive a minimum 1Gbps symmetrical SEN port connection, in accordance with the FCC recommendations for CAIs for broadband speed.
- Deployment Timeline: Deploy full network operations center (NOC) and security operations center (SOC) within 18 months of OBAE issuing a notice to proceed.
- Penetration: Connect 50 percent of all public schools and 50 percent of all students in New Mexico to the SEN.
- E-Rate Funding: Leverage at least 60 percent of available E-rate Category Two to maximize federal funding for school network needs.
- Monthly & Quarterly Reports: 100 percent delivered on time.

** Note: OBAE aims to achieve these performance metrics approximately twelve months from the actual start of development of the Network Operations Center and Security Operations Center.*

# F2. SEN Expansion and Sustainability

| A | B | C | D | E | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| STATEWIDE CONNECTIVITY | AFFORDABILITY | STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE | DATA, POLICY & PERMITTING | DIGITAL OPPORTUNITY | NETWORK OPERATIONS |

**OVERVIEW**

Under this initiative, the SEN will expand to cover additional locations and institutions beyond K – 12 schools. OBAE operates the SEN to maximize support from the federal USF for schools through the E-Rate program. OBAE also maintains the BDCP to directly assist schools beyond the SEN. OBAE will continue to grow the overall number of schools and districts connected to the SEN and connect students to school resources and safer/filtered internet through the SEN.

In addition to providing broadband support for schools, the federal USF also offers support to libraries and rural health care clinics. This enables opening the SEN to these USF-eligible institutions. By also serving these types of community anchor institutions, this initiative will continue to demonstrate the SEN's value regarding service, reliability, cost reduction, and decreasing administrative burden for institutions.

## 2025 Achievements

- ✓ The legislature established the Education Technology Infrastructure Fund to better leverage federal funding and improve program sustainability and transitioned SEN and BDCP management to OBAE.
- ✓ Ordered 13 new circuits for new school districts and charter schools.
- ✓ Completed five regional, in-person E-rate trainings and numerous training webinars.
- ✓ Successfully completed over 40 projects and delivered approximately $1.1 million in state match reimbursed to schools.
- ✓ New Mexico ranked second in the nation in leveraging available E-Rate funding, resulting in better and more secure networks in schools.

# F2. SEN Expansion and Sustainability

## Key Action Items

- Develop and retain an effective team with the knowledge and expertise to support the volume and quality of work.
- Continue to provide consultants to support eligible institutions with E-rate processes and maximize federal funding applications success rate and funding leveraged.
- Develop internal processes and tools to support data collection which will be utilized to support data-driven decisions related to project budgeting, planning, development, implementation, and operation. Provide internal or external expert technical resources for project development, deployment, operations, and continuous improvement.

## Key Performance Targets

- Nodes: Add three nodes to the SEN.
- New School District Connections: Complete connection to 26 new school districts and/or charter schools in 2026.
- Student Population Penetration: Complete connection to 50 percent of the New Mexico student population by 2028.
- E-Rate Funding: Leverage a majority of FCC E-rate Category Two funding available for network equipment connecting New Mexico schools.
- Library Connections: Connect ten libraries to the SEN.
- Rural Clinics: Complete pilot connecting ten rural clinics to leverage rural healthcare funding.

# F3. SEN Resilience and Security


## OVERVIEW

New Mexico schools, like many public institutions across the country, are targets for cyberattacks and are vulnerable to other disruptions from accidents and natural disaster. In January 2022, New Mexico's largest school district was targeted by a ransomware attack, closing schools for two days[11]. The New Mexico Office of Cybersecurity (OCS) has primary responsibility for protecting state and local networks from attack. The SEN is part of the critical infrastructure connecting these institutions, and OBAE will continue to work with OCS to ensure networks are resilient and protected from attacks and disruptions. To provide this capability, OBAE will invest resources for back-up equipment, explore resilient pathways, and enter into contracts to restore access in the event of disruption.

## 2025 Achievements

- ✓ Deployed built-in cybersecurity tools such as Distributed Denial of Service protection on the SEN.
- ✓ Deployed the Security Information and Event Management suite, helping to protect and reduce the cybersecurity risk for the SEN infrastructure, SEN operations, and network participants.
- ✓ Collaborated with partner agencies (OCS, Public Education Department, and the Department of Higher Education), insurance providers, and schools to deploy a cybersecurity pilot helping schools develop and adopt an Incident Response Plan.
- ✓ Added resiliency and expansion equipment to three SEN nodes.
- ✓ Helped 16 school districts and charters complete Incident Response Plans.

11 *Albuquerque Public Schools. "APS Resolves Ransomware Attack," published January 19, 2022.*

# F3. SEN Resilience and Security

## Key Action Items

- Finalize partnership agreement with New Mexico State University (NMSU) – Physical Science Laboratory for full Network Operations Center (NOC) Services and Security Operation Center (SOC) Services.
- Build out NOC / SOC program with a full suite of network monitoring, network alarms, ticket automation and AI–enhanced tools to improve efficiencies and response time. Add redundant equipment and maintain spares inventories and installation contracts.
- Perform exchanges and leverage fiber-optic infrastructure and services to protect all SEN circuits and sites. Add secondary, geographically diverse circuits to increase network resiliency.
- Collaborate with NMSU to build out a NOC/SOC technician program and curriculum for students to participate in. Practical on-the-job training to give students real work technical experience.
- Build out a ticketing communication system to end user Points-of-Contact for the SEN participant schools.
- Have capacity and resources that can support response to emergencies, disasters and last-resort responses.
- Work with OCS on cybersecurity services and policies to reduce risk and cost to schools.

## Key Performance Targets

- Comply with Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, and Children's Internet Protection Act.
- Quarterly Vulnerability Scan Completion: 100 percent scheduled scans completed.
- Patch Verification Rate: 100 percent for critical patches.
- Security Reports and Recommendations: Delivered quarterly.
- Conduct annual penetration testing.

** Note: OBAE aims to achieve these performance metrics approximately twelve months from the actual start of development of the Network Operations Center and Security Operations Center.*

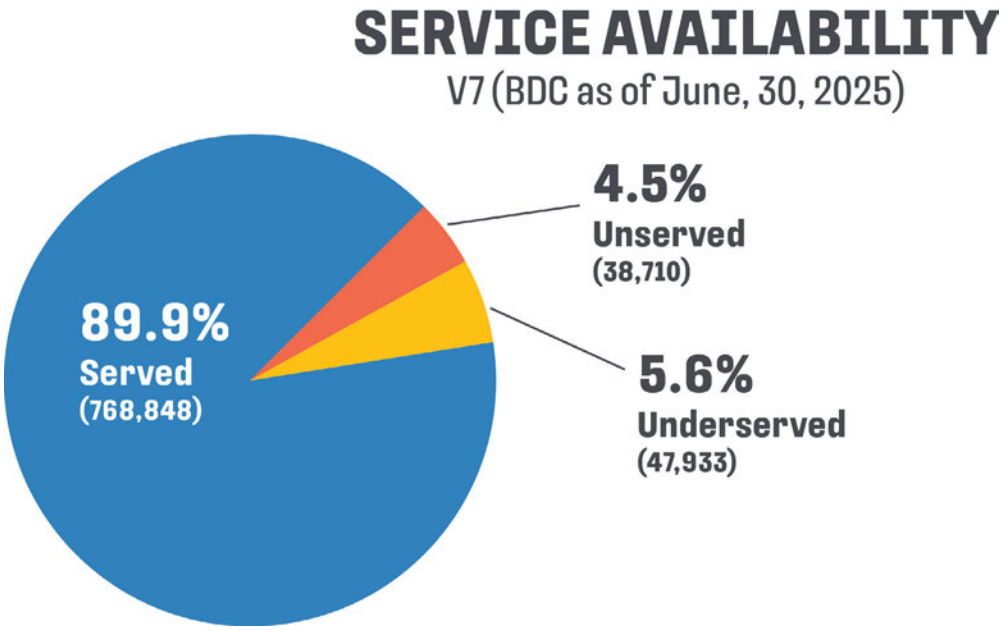
6.0

# State of Broadband Availability

## 6.1 Broadband Availability: Served vs. Unserved/Underserved Locations

New Mexico has 855,491[12] BSLs. These are homes and small businesses in urban and rural areas across the state. The federal Broadband Data Act of 2021 established federal funding to map these locations and mandated reporting from ISPs to contribute to a database in coordination with state broadband offices. OBAE has a responsibility to support the accuracy of these maps by verifying locations and challenging claims from internet providers in New Mexico.

- Served: Approximately 89.9 percent of BSLs are considered "served," meaning these locations have access to speeds at or above 100/20 Mbps.[13]
- Underserved: An additional 5.6 percent are "underserved," meaning they have at least 25/3 Mbps but lack access to wireline or licensed fixed wireless networks offering at least 100/20 Mbps.
- Unserved: Approximately 4.5 percent of BSLs are "unserved," meaning they lack access to wireline or licensed fixed wireless networks offering 25/3 Mbps service.




12 US Federal Communications Commission. (2025). Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric. 90 FR 11221. Shared via secure link e-mailed to OBAE, containing multiple files named like FCC_06302025_rel_7, date modified 6/21/2025.

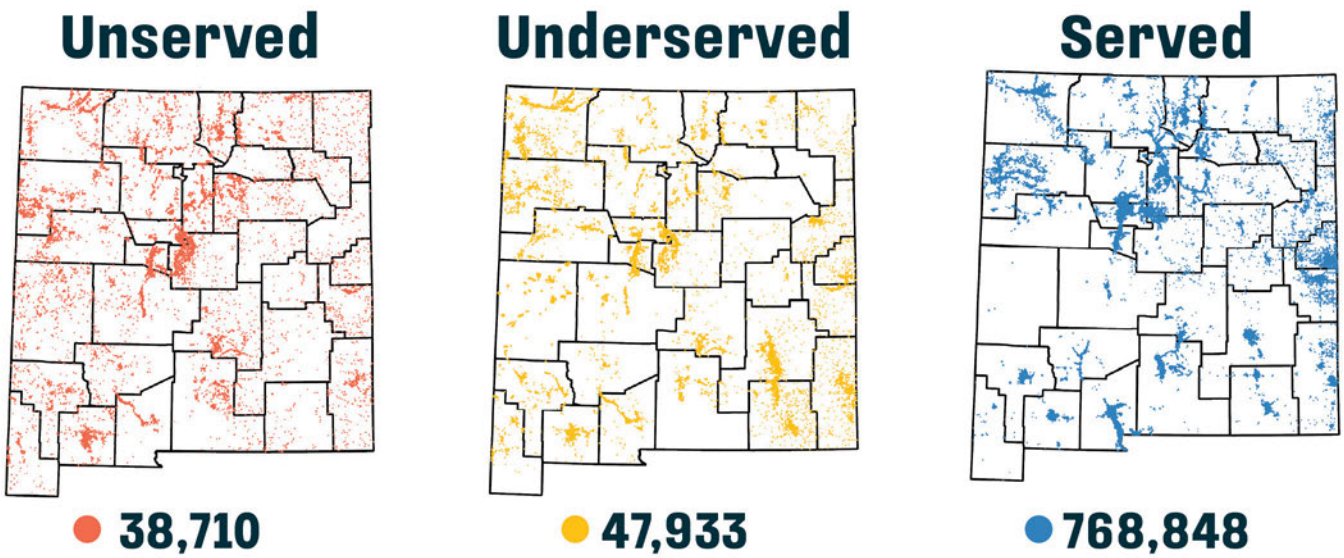
13 US Federal Communications Commission. "FCC National Broadband Map." Fixed Broadband Summary by Geography Type Census Place: New Mexico, Availability Data as of June 30, 2025, last updated 12/9/2025, Accessed on December 16, 2025.

These data reflect the maximum available service reported by broadband service providers to the FCC and do not reflect when households subscribe to internet service. Additionally, these numbers are locations represented by a single structure. When that structure contains MDUs, such as in an apartment or office building, it is still only counted here as one location. If MDUs are accounted for, the numbers of individual units are as follows:

- Served: 1,006,415 units
- Underserved: 61,569 units
- Unserved: 45,524 units

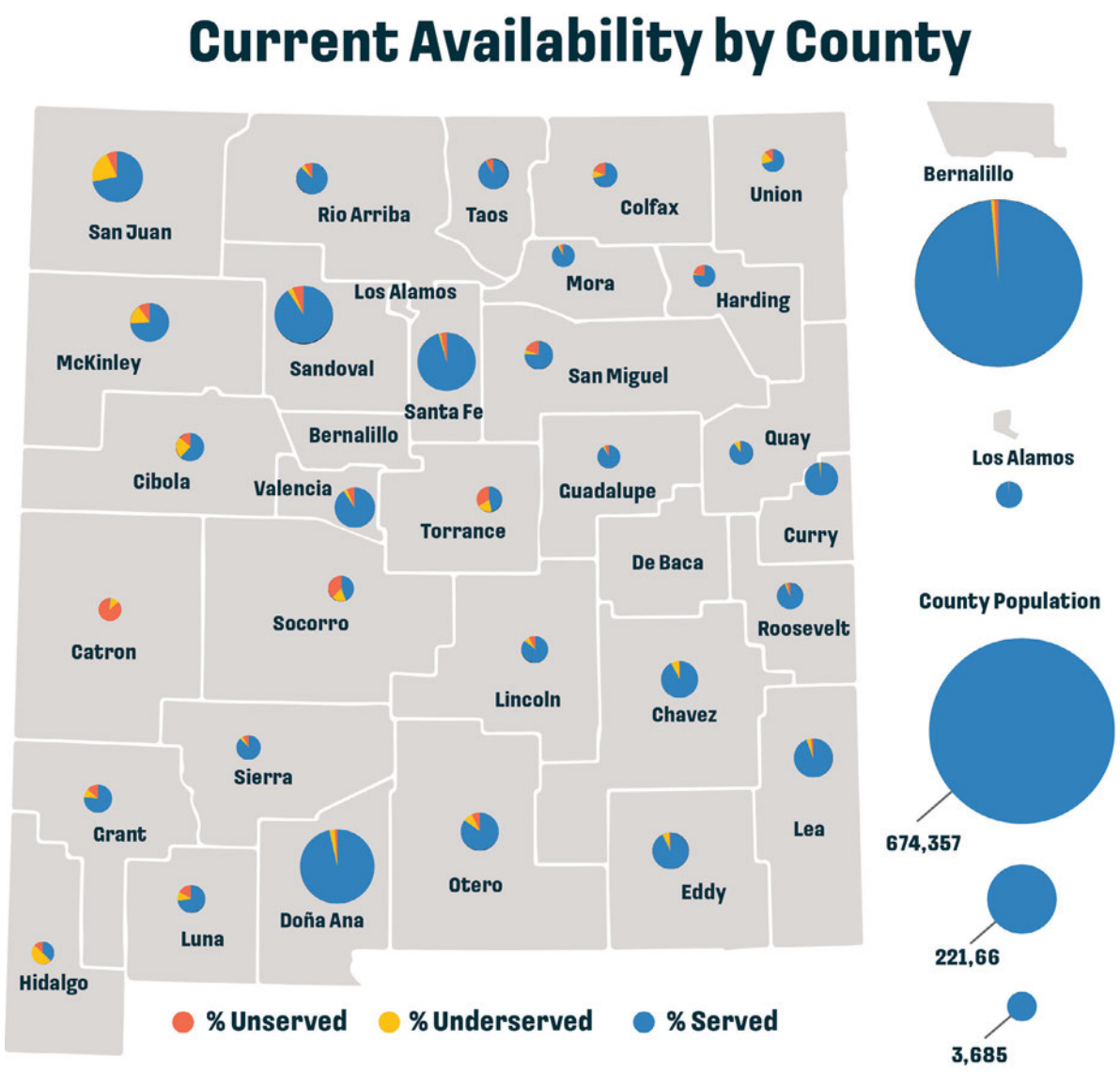
### Availability by Unserved, Underserved,and Served

The maps below show the general distribution, as of June 2025, of the state's unserved, underserved, and served locations.



## Availability by County

The pie slices in the map below are the percentage of service available in each county as of December 2024.[14] The size of the whole pie indicates the population size.




14 *US Federal Communications Commission. "FCC National Broadband Map," Fixed Broadband Summary by Geography Type Census Place: New Mexico, Availability Data as of December 31, 2024, last updated 05/27/2025, Accessed on June 5, 2025*

## Best Available Technology by County

A single BSL can have many technologies available to deliver internet. Most early internet was delivered using Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) technologies over existing copper telephone lines. However, now locations increasingly have access to other technologies capable of delivering high-speed internet including fiber, cable, licensed fixed wireless (LFW), licensed-by-rule fixed wireless (LBR), unlicensed fixed wireless (ULFW), and LEO satellite.

The map below shows the relative percentage of best-available technologies reported to the FCC as of December 2024 within each county.

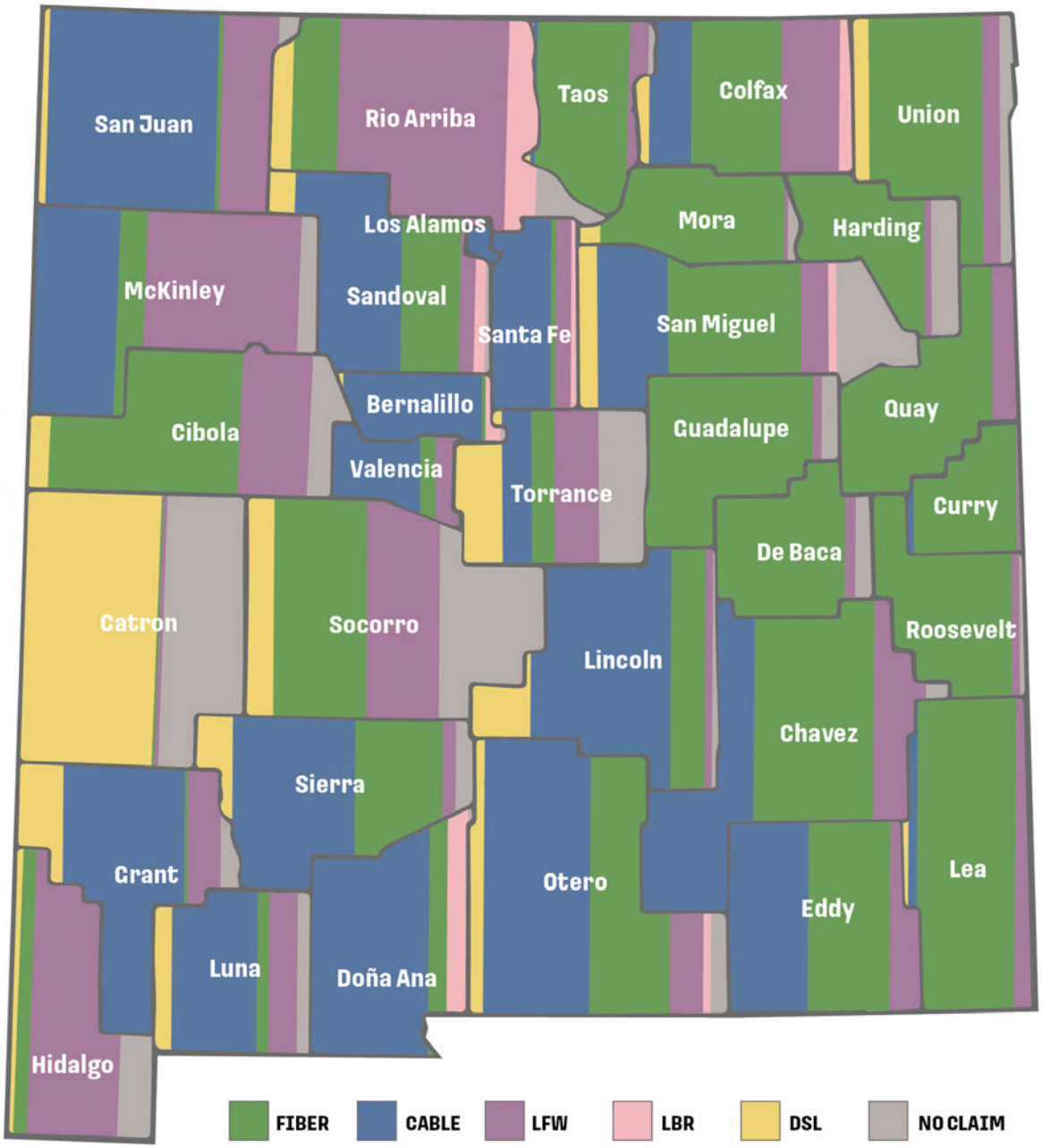
Because each BSL can have many service claims and technologies available, each BSL was characterized solely by the best-ranking technology among those claims, as described previously.

The area of color within each county is directly proportional to the percent of best-available technology claims. The best available technology for most constituents is a wireline solution (fiber, cable, or fixed-wireless) for all but one county.

### Percentages of Best Available Technology by County

| POPULATION | COUNTY | % FIBER | % CABLE | % LFW | %LBR | %DSL | %NO CLAIM |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 671,586 | Bernalillo | 80 | 9 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 225,210 | Doña Ana | 4 | 69 | 17 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| 155,956 | Santa Fe | 75 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 22 | 22 |
| 155,936 | Sandoval | 39 | 28 | 8 | 6 | 13 | 13 |
| 120,675 | San Juan | 50 | 36 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 79,141 | Valencia | 2 | 96 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 72,101 | Lea | 0 | 70 | 14 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| 67,835 | Otero | 10 | 36 | 47 | 0 | 6 | 6 |
| 68,797 | McKinley | 10 | 78 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 63,561 | Chaves | 91 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 6 | 6 |
| 60,275 | Eddy | 14 | 64 | 19 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 47,222 | Curry | 6 | 90 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 39,876 | Rio Arriba | 43 | 43 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 34,405 | Taos | 14 | 0 | 63 | 13 | 4 | 4 |
| 27,472 | Grant | 90 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| 26,780 | Cibola | 29 | 54 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| 26,668 | San Miguel | 84 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 25,316 | Luna | 89 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| 20,029 | Lincoln | 58 | 0 | 27 | 0 | 11 | 11 |
| 19,444 | Los Alamos | 11 | 17 | 25 | 11 | 16 | 16 |
| 18,787 | Roosevelt | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 34 | 34 |
| 15,963 | Socorro | 89 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 15,633 | Torrance | 93 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 12,225 | Colfax | 2 | 69 | 25 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 11,488 | Sierra | 21 | 63 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| 8,510 | Quay | 13 | 0 | 65 | 0 | 9 | 9 |
| 4,292 | Guadalupe | 44 | 20 | 30 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 4,123 | Mora | 72 | 0 | 11 | 0 | 9 | 9 |
| 3,965 | Hidalgo | 37 | 0 | 27 | 0 | 25 | 25 |
| 3,964 | Union | 30 | 54 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| 3,825 | Catron | 92 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| 1,657 | De Baca | 8 | 54 | 20 | 0 | 7 | 7 |
| 624 | Harding | 31 | 55 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 5 |

# Current Availability by County



## 6.2 Enforceable Commitments for Residential & Business Locations

Almost all unserved and underserved locations will become served in the coming years through grant-funded projects, which are facilitated by contracts that require the awardee to deploy broadband. These are referred to as enforceable commitments.

Tens of millions of dollars in federal and state grants have been awarded to New Mexico broadband service providers, who are now obligated to deploy broadband infrastructure and deliver commercial service no later than 2032.

### Current vs. Planned Availability

In the map on the following page, the current availability is based on service reported as of December 2024,[15] and the planned technology is once all state and federal enforceable commitments have been completed.[16] There are also online apps that can be used to study in more detail the location of specific grants (Grants for NM Broadband), and when they will be deployed (When is broadband coming to my location?).

Of the generally 89,600 unserved and underserved locations, approximately 60 percent are tied to state and federal award agreements with enforceable contracts, and another 40 percent are tied to provisional awards from the BEAD program.

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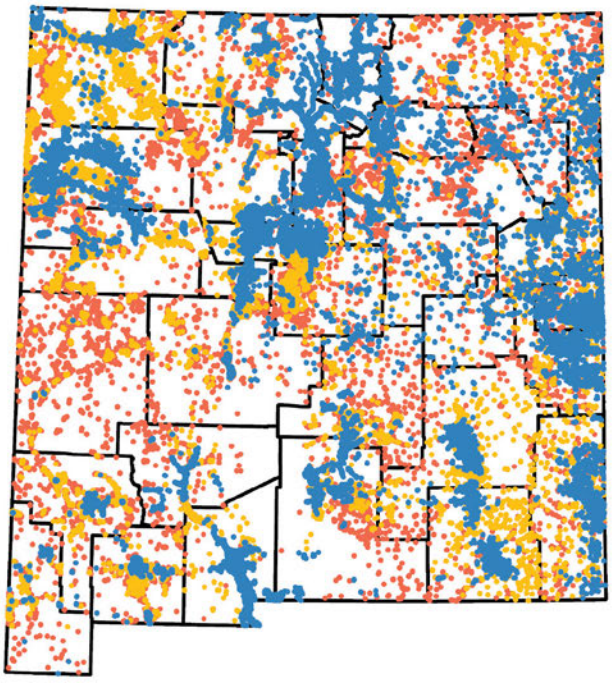
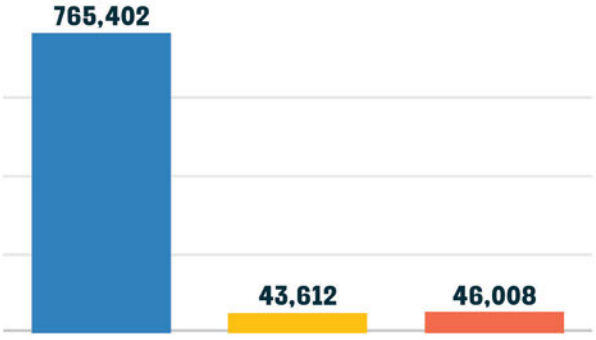
15 *US Federal Communications Commission. "FCC National Broadband Map," Fixed Broadband Summary by Geography Type Census Place: New Mexico. Availability Data as of December 31, 2024, last updated 05/27/2025. Accessed on December 9, 2025.*

16 *NM Office of Broadband Access and Expansion. "Funded Grants – Active Projects" and "BEAD Status – Locations Proposed to NTIA," State Grants 2025-12-15 and Federal Grants 2025-11-30, published in Grants for NM Broadband: Accessed on December 15, 2025*

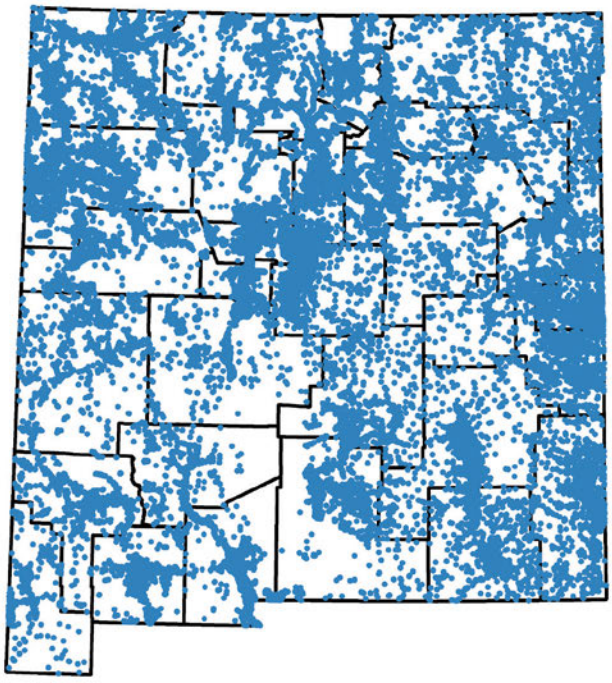
## Current Availability



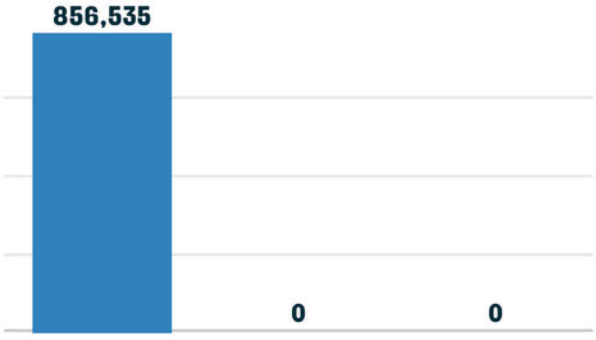
SERVED UNDERSERVED UNSERVED




## Planned Availability

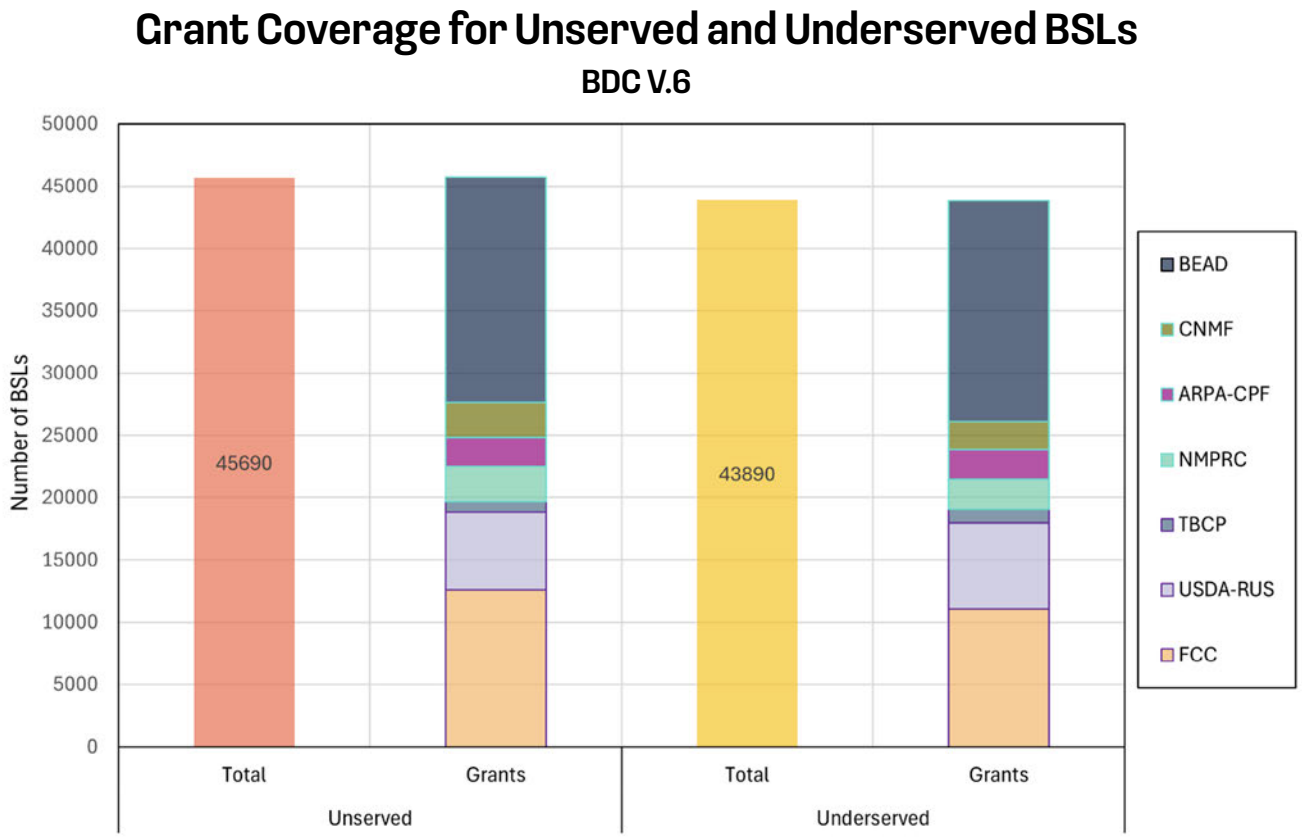


SERVED UNDERSERVED UNSERVED



## Grant Coverage for Unserved and Underserved BSLs

The distribution of the unserved and underserved BSLs, along with the relative amounts funded by state and federal grant programs, are represented in the chart below. The federally-managed grant programs include NTIA's Tribal Broadband Connectivity Programs NOFO 1 and 2, USDA's Rural Utility Service's E-Connectivity, Community Connect, and Telephone Loan Programs, and Federal Communications Commission's Enhanced Alternative Connect America Cost Model, Rural Digital Opportunity Fund, and Connect America Fund Phase II (grouped into FCC).



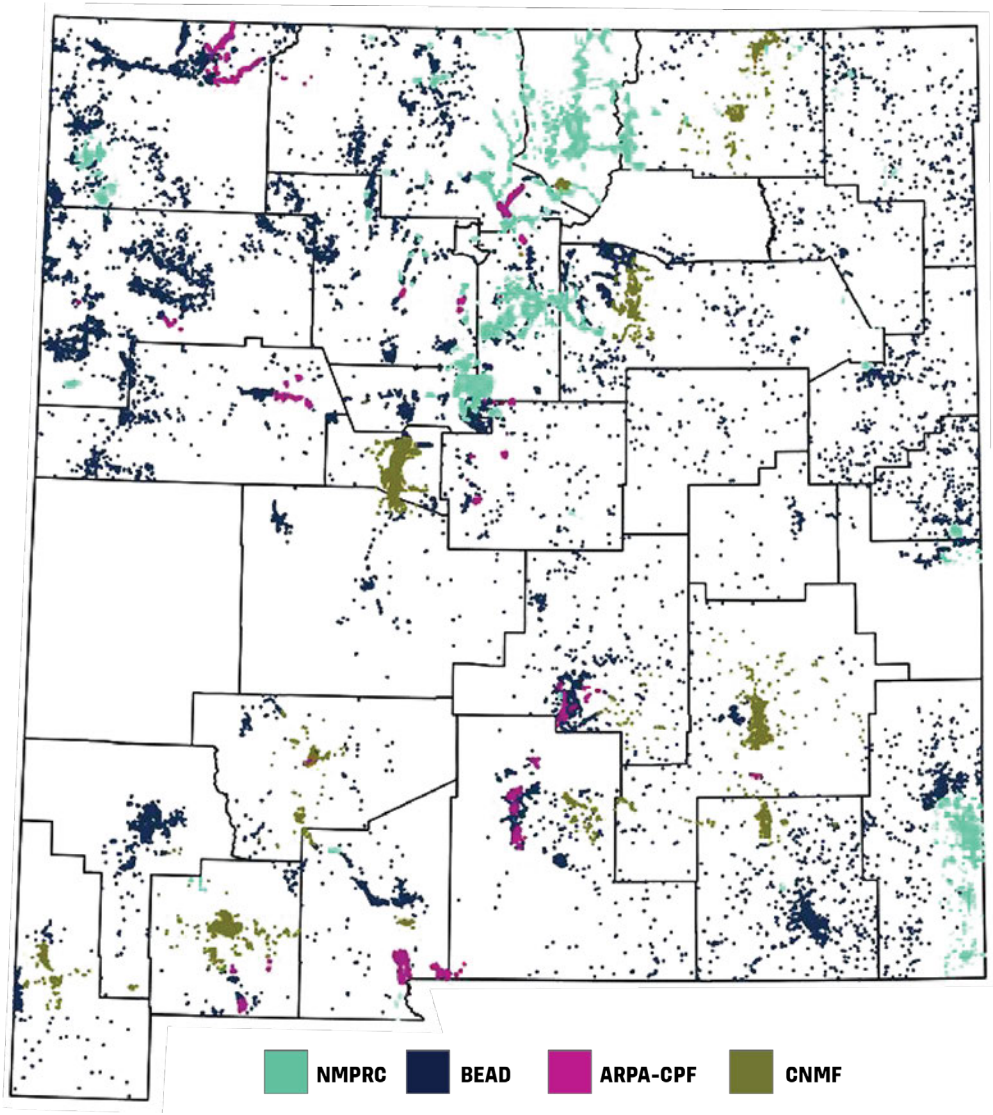

## BSLs by State-Managed Grant Program

Within the state-managed grant programs, approximately 51,000 unique BSLs are being funded for upgrades to last-mile internet service. The state managed grant programs are the PRC's Broadband Fund Program (NMPRC), NTIA's BEAD (BEAD), US Treasury's CPF (ARPA-CPF) implemented locally as the Connect NM Pilot Waves 1-3 and the Connectivity to Declared Disaster Areas Program, and the CNMF. Their distribution around the state, colored by grant program, is shown below.

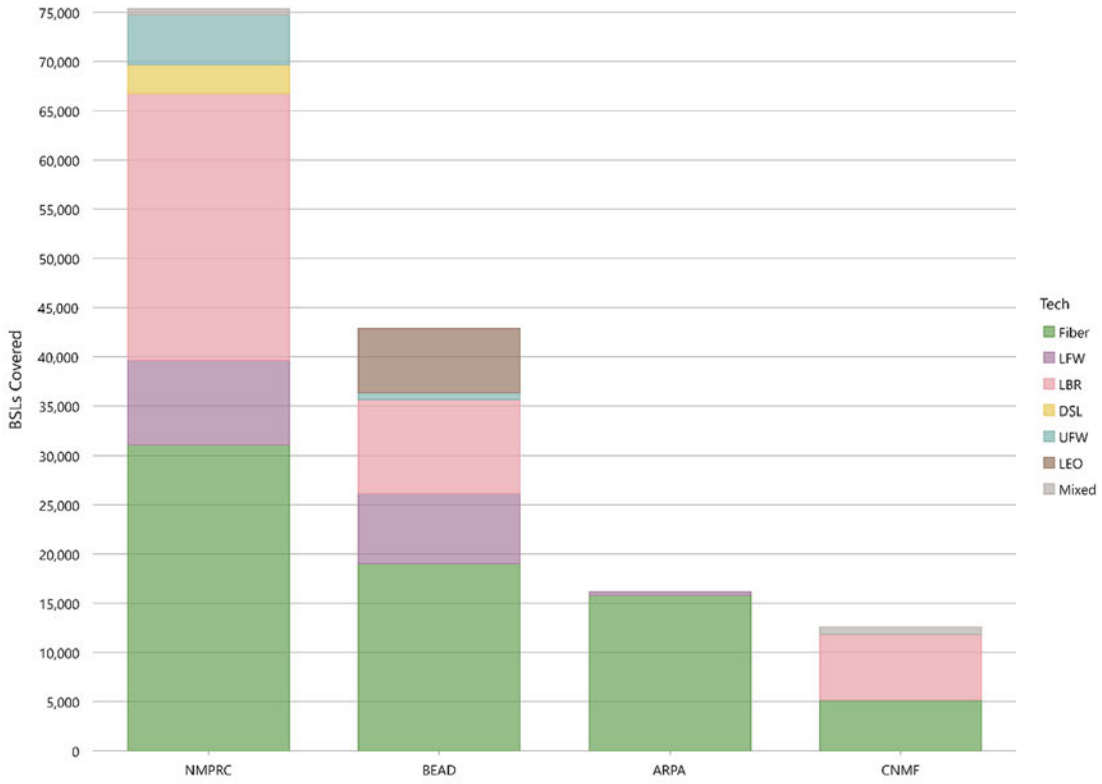
## Technologies Funded by Grant Programs

A variety of technologies are being deployed to deliver last-mile internet to New Mexico residents. This chart summarizes the technology being deployed by the current (NMPRC, ARPA-CPF, CNMF) and planned (BEAD) state-managed grant programs.

### Broadband Grant Programs



## Technology Coverage by Grant [17]



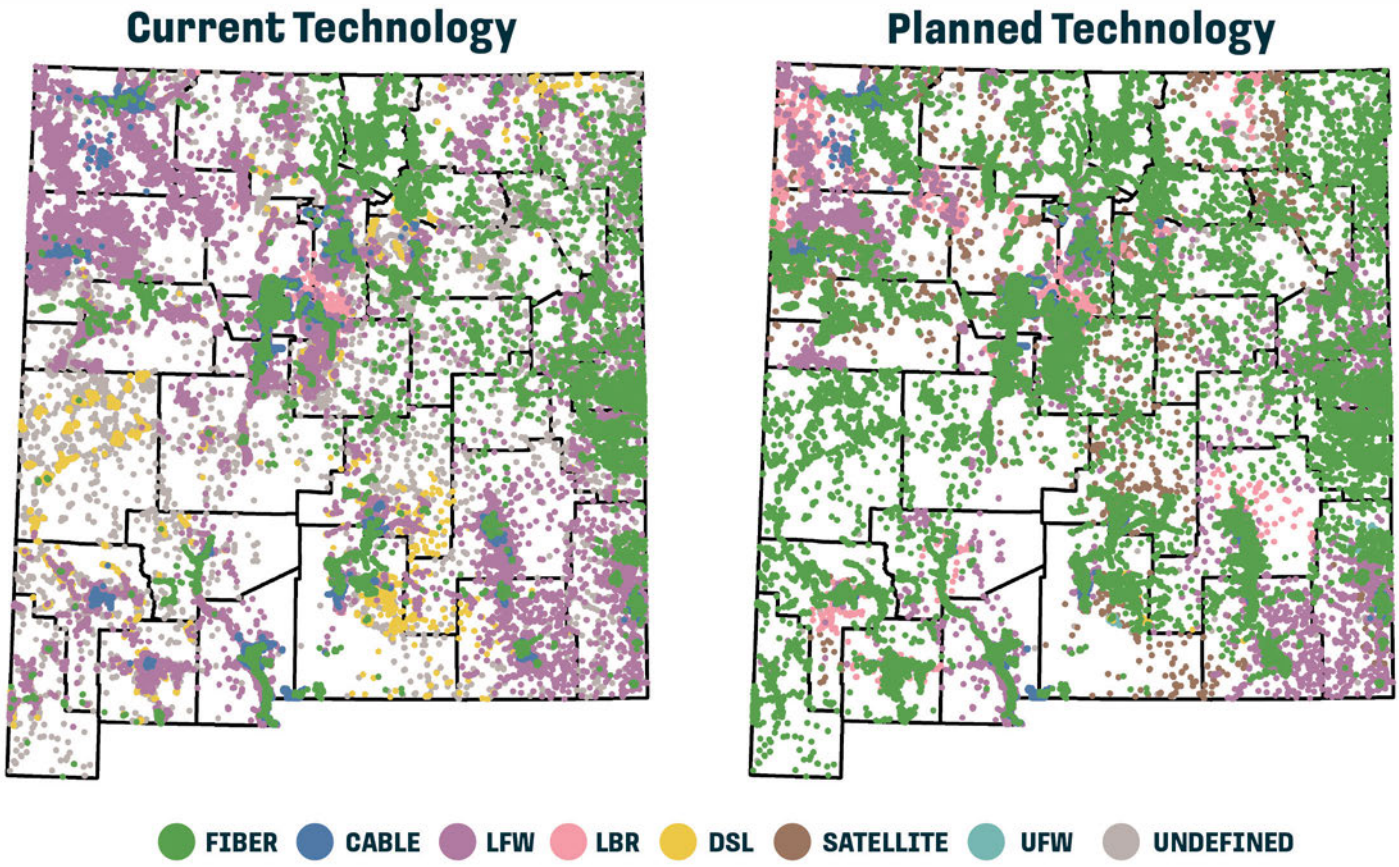

### Current Versus Planned Technology

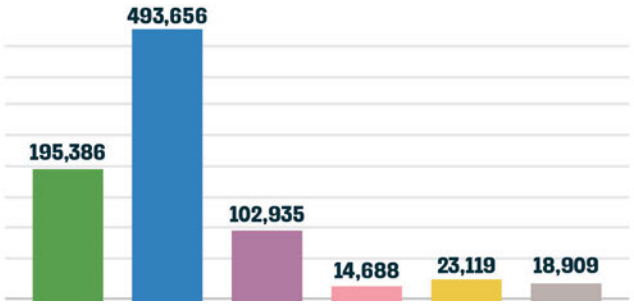
The maps and charts on the following page represent the best-available technology for each BSL, where for the sake of simplicity, the technologies are ranked in order of fiber, cable, LFW, LBR, DSL, UFW, LEO, and undefined service. For example, a single location with service available from multiple technologies will be colored and counted as fiber when fiber is available and will be counted as LEO if the only high-speed internet service available is LEO. The current technology is based on service reported as of December 2024, [18] and the planned technology is once all State and federal enforceable commitments have been completed.[19]

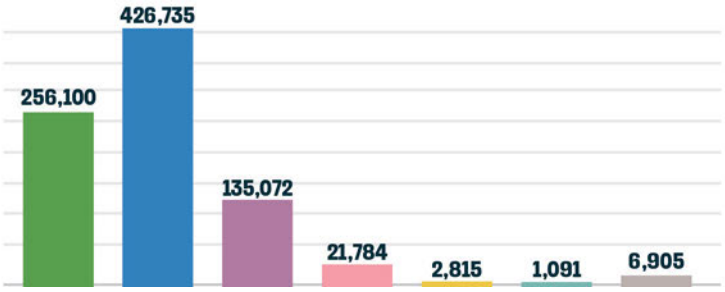
17 *NM Office of Broadband Access and Expansion. "Funded Grants – Active Projects" and "BEAD Status – Locations Proposed to NTIA," State Grants 2025-12-15 and Federal Grants 2025-11-30, published in Grants for NM Broadband: Accessed and filtered on December 15, 2025.*

18 *US Federal Communications Commission. "FCC National Broadband Map," Fixed Broadband Summary by Geography Type Census Place: New Mexico. Availability Data as of December 31, 2024, last updated 05/27/2025, accessed on December 9, 2025.*

19 *NM Office of Broadband Access and Expansion. "Funded Grants – Active Projects" and "BEAD Status – Locations Proposed to NTIA," State Grants 2025-12-15 and Federal Grants 2025-11-30, published in Accessed and filtered on December 15, 2025*




20

20 NM Office of Broadband Access and Expansion. "Funded Grants – Active Projects" and "BEAD Status – Locations Proposed to NTIA," State Grants 2025-12-15 and Federal Grants 2025-11-30, published in Grants for NM Broadband: Accessed and filtered on December 15, 2025.

## 6.3 Community Anchor Institutions

In addition to BSLs, New Mexico is invested in ensuring that our CAIs are acknowledged and included in assessing effective broadband service delivery. There are currently 4,144 locations mapped by OBAE as CAIs, with 2,623 receiving symmetrical 1 Gbps speeds, and 1,521 receiving less than that.

Analyses of and the definition of what constitutes these community-based institutions are ongoing, and they continue to be part of the conversation to deliver broadband to all New Mexico residents.

### A Note About Data Changes

The counts of BSL status continue to ebb and flow for several reasons, including improvements in reporting methods and precision, grant award defaults on previously enforceable commitments, private capital investment into the market, and adverse external events that alter status (e.g., wildfires, floods, wind). OBAE continues to collect and review data regarding the state of broadband availability across all communities and Tribal areas.

During the final months of 2025, OBAE has been reconciling the latest changes (for example, service claims by providers were updated by the FCC on December 9) with planned service delivery resulting from grant programs. Because of the timing of this report, before the BEAD grant program has been approved by NTIA, the numbers in this report will change early in 2026.

## 6.4 Next-Generation Networks

Stakeholder input and market observations continue to reveal critical gaps in middle-mile, 5G mobile broadband coverage, network resilience, and security. Input from prior RFIs and stakeholder input confirm that many unserved and underserved communities lack access to affordable and/or high capacity backhaul links for lit and/or dark fiber services. Moreover, several communities across the state depend upon a single backhaul link; in other cases, the middle-mile network does not provide open access.

Several rural communities and high traffic roadways have poor or no 5G network signal for mobile voice and data communications, which can also deliver high-speed fixed broadband. In addition, recent network outages impacting schools and entire communities substantiate the need for greater investment in network resiliency.

Finally, cybersecurity remains a priority, given the increasing sophistication of bad actors infiltrating broadband networks. While OBAE's primary mission has been to bridge the digital divide, this advancement of next-generation backhaul and mobile networks, along with network resiliency and security, complements and benefits last-mile connectivity.

7.0

# State of Broadband Adoption and Usage

While working collectively to support universal availability of internet and the infrastructure and technologies that provide access, New Mexico is also working to address barriers to both adoption and the meaningful and safe use of those services.

## 7.1 Affordability

Affordability remains a key barrier to adoption. A key indicator involved the recent demand for price subsidies. From 2020 to 2024, the federal ACP provided a $30 monthly subsidy for broadband for low-income households or a $75 monthly subsidy per Tribal household. As of February 2024, over 184,000 New Mexico households were enrolled with an enrollment rate of more than 39 percent.[21] OBAE estimated a total 450,000 New Mexico households (54 percent) was eligible for the ACP. Unfortunately, Congress did not provide additional funds to ACP[22] and its monthly subsidy for broadband services ended on June 1, 2024. OBAE is encouraging ISPs to offer low cost-service options.

## 7.2 Internet Usage

According to the U.S. Census Bureau in 2023, an estimated 87.8 percent of New Mexico residents subscribe to the internet.[23] Conversely, 12.2 percent of New Mexico residents were not using the internet. Internet usage increases in urban areas with a reported 92 percent usage rate in 2024.[24] Non-adoption is highest in Mora County, where 39 percent of households report no internet access. Socorro County is at 35 percent, and another seven counties (Rio Arriba, Harding, Cibola, DeBaca, McKinley, Catron, Guadalupe) report non-adoption rates over 20 percent. In contrast, Los Alamos County stands out, with only two percent not subscribing to wireline internet service, and other, more urban counties (Doña Ana, Sandoval, Bernalillo, Santa Fe) have less than 6 percent non-adoption.

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*21 "ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker," USAC.*

*22 Estimates are based on 2021 American Community Survey reported data on household income and participation in assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income, and public assistance income. This estimation does not consider qualification via Tribal assistance programs, and therefore may underestimate the size of eligible populations throughout the State.*

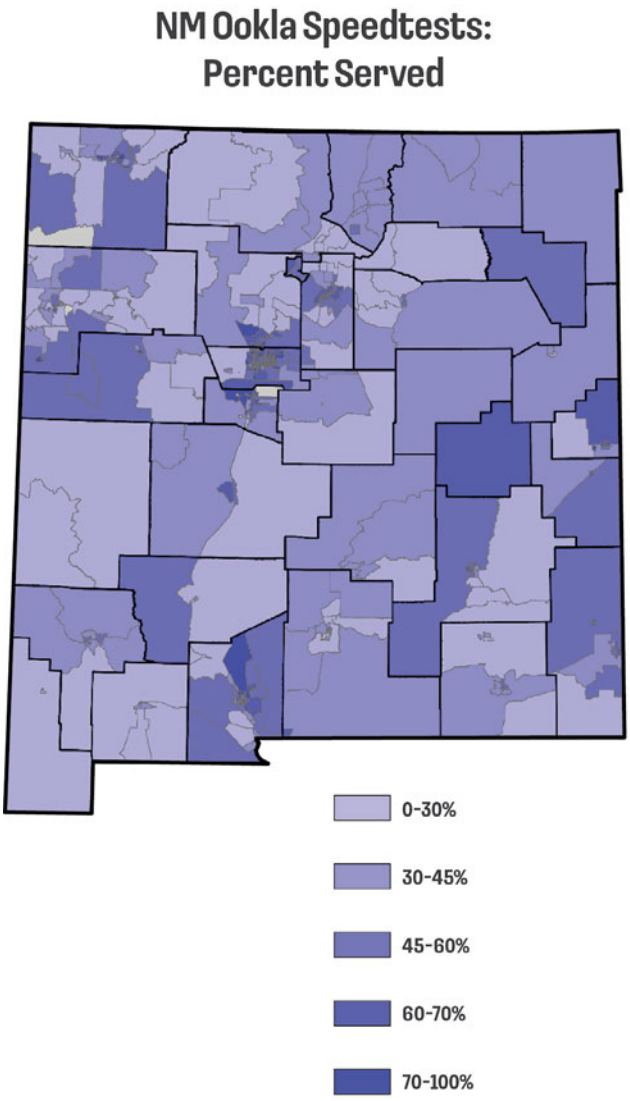
*23 U.S. Census Bureau. "Types of Computers in Household" American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B28001, 2019-2023, Accessed on September 22, 2025.*

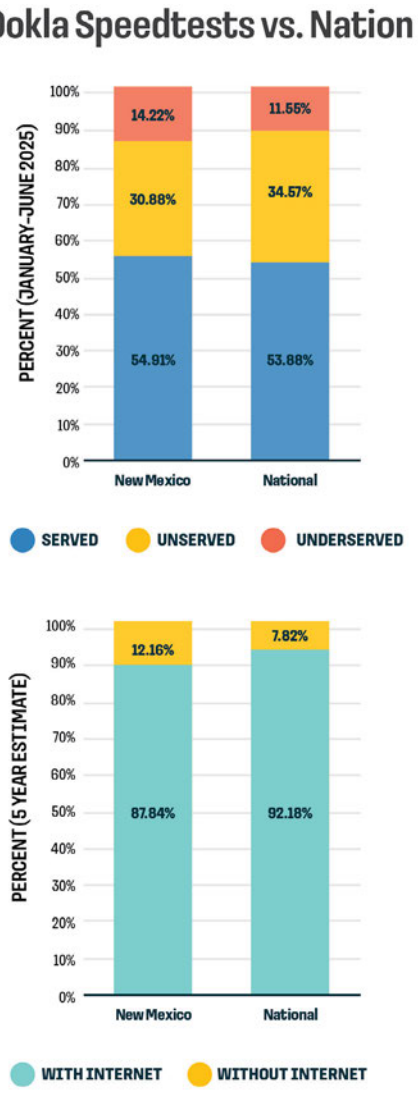
*24 U.S. Census Bureau. "Types of Computers in Household" American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables," Table B28001, 2024: Accessed on September 22, 2025.*

## 7.3 User Experience – Speeds

The 'lived experience' of internet users can be quite different from the service that is available to them. Even though 88 percent of New Mexico residents claim to have internet,[25] and 89 percent of the state is considered 'served' with high-speed internet,[26] Ookla speed tests over the past year indicate that only 55 percent of users experience broadband speeds equal to or greater than 100/20 Mbps.[27, 28] Inadequate and unreliable service remains a challenge for many, especially in households with multiple family members in need of using the internet.

### End-User Speedtests versus Internet Adoption




25 U.S. Census Bureau. "Types of Computers in Household" American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B28001, 2019-2023, Accessed on September 22, 2025

26 US Federal Communications Commission. "FCC National Broadband Map", Fixed Broadband Summary by Geography Type Census Place: New Mexico," Availability Data as of June 30, 2025, last updated 12/9/2025, accessed on December 16, 2025.

27 Esri. (2025). "Ookla Speedtest for Global Broadband Performance." Patrick Ryan; Accessed on December 4, 2025.

28 Speedtest® by Ookla® Global Fixed and Mobile Network Performance Maps. Based on analysis by Ookla of Speedtest Intelligence® data for 01/01/2025–06/30/2025. Provided by Ookla and accessed December 4, 2025. Ookla trademarks used under license and reprinted with permission.

## 7.4 Device Ownership

According to the United States Census Bureau's American Community Survey in 2023, there were 101,947 "Smartphone Only" households, 46,891 "No Computer" households, and 148,838 households with "No Large-Screen Computer" (desktop/laptop) in New Mexico. According to NTIA Internet Use Survey data from 2023, 21 percent of New Mexico residents reported using a desktop computer and 52.5 percent reported using a laptop, while 35.5 percent reported using a tablet or E-reader and 73.7 percent reported smartphone use. Tablets and smartphones are still not as capable as laptops or desktops (particularly because of their small screens and lack of functionality) and cellular service contracts are often more expensive than home internet service and may limit data.

## 7.5 Digital Skills and Literacy

For individuals to meaningfully use the internet, they must develop new skills, practice, and feel confident in their ability to perform activities using technology. Although some individuals may have internet service and a working computer, they may be limited by a lack of the digital skills and confidence needed to navigate and use the internet effectively, meaningfully, and safely. The need for digital skills training is a significant barrier to increasing meaningful and safe internet use in New Mexico. Through stakeholder engagement, regional meetings, and the New Mexico Community Survey conducted by phone in 2023, individuals living in low-income households, at or above 60 years of age, living with disabilities, or living in rural areas expressed the most urgent need for digital skills training.

## 7.6 Appendix I · Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **ACP** | Affordable Connectivity Program |
| **ARPA** | American Rescue Plan Act |
| **BDCP** | Broadband Development and Connectivity Program |
| **BEAD** | Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment |
| **BIA** | Bureau of Indian Affairs |
| **BLM** | Bureau of Land Management |
| **BSL** | Broadband Serviceable Location |
| **CAI** | Community Anchor Institutions |
| **CFR** | Code of Federal Regulations |
| **CNMC** | Connect New Mexico Council |
| **CNMF** | Connect New Mexico Fund Grant Program |
| **CPF** | Capital Projects Fund |
| **DoIT** | Department of Information Technology |
| **DOL** | Department of Labor |
| **DWS** | Department of Workforce Solutions |
| **EBOT** | Emergency Broadband Operations Team |
| **FCC** | Federal Communications Commission |
| **FY** | Fiscal Year |
| **Gbps** | Gigabit per second |
| **GIS** | Geographic Information System |
| **IP** | Internet Protocol |
| **ISP** | Internet Service Provider |
| **LBR** | Licensed-by-Rule Fixed Wireless |
| **LEO** | Low-Earth Orbit Satellite |
| **LFW** | Licensed Fixed Wireless |
| **Mbps** | Megabits per second |
| **MDU** | Multi-Dwelling Units |
| **MOU** | Memorandum of Understanding |
| **NM BUILD** | New Mexico Businesses United for Infrastructure and Local Development |
| **NMDOT** | New Mexico Department of Transportation |
| **NMTAP** | New Mexico Telecommunications Affordability Program |
| **NOFO** | Notice of Funding Opportunity |
| **NOPR** | Notice of Proposed Rulemaking |
| **NTIA** | National Telecommunications & Info. Admin. |
| **OBAE** | Office of Broadband Access and Expansion |
| **PRC** | Public Regulation Commission |
| **PSFA** | Public Schools Facilities Authority |
| **RFI** | Request for Information |
| **SEN** | Statewide Education Network |
| **UFW** | Unlicensed Fixed Wireless |
| **USF** | Universal Service Fund |