



## News Release

For Immediate Release

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### **NMDWS releases part one of New Mexico's Broadband Workforce Sector Strategy**

*New Mexico is investing nearly \$2 billion to provide statewide universal broadband access*

ALBUQUERQUE - The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS) has released Part One of New Mexico's Broadband Sector Strategy. Prepared in partnership with the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) and industry stakeholders, the report is the first step in bring together industry, educators, and communities to ensure we have a strong workforce to build universal broadband access with the support of the New Mexico legislature, federal government, private industry, and other sources. The report details occupations and careers necessary to develop and sustain universal broadband access, including wages, current and projected employment, and any related Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

Across the state, 16%, or 143,000 New Mexico's residents and business locations were unserved or underserved in their internet service in 2023. The estimated budget for state broadband infrastructure projects is close to \$2 billion, this includes \$1.3-1.5 billion over the next nine years, with an additional \$728 million for non-state entities.

"Universal broadband access in New Mexico is a top priority for Governor Lujan Grisham and her administration," said **Cabinet Secretary Sarita Nair**. "We chose to start a renewed sector planning effort with the broadband industry because of the strong leadership within the business community, the supportive partnership of the OBAE, and the sheer urgency that comes from the impending investment of billions of dollars to make equitable access to broadband a reality for all New Mexicans."

"Broadband is a growing career field that will need a trained and skilled workforce for years to come. Because internet connectivity is needed for every aspect of modern life, jobs will be available in every community from rural to urban to support the new infrastructure," said **Acting Broadband Director Drew Lovelace**. "The investments that government and

industry make into New Mexico's broadband workforce will be the foundation for New Mexico's economy of tomorrow. It is exciting to see the cooperation developed between OBAE, DWS, and industry. We cannot wait to see the results in the coming years."

"I commend and congratulate Secretary Nair and her team for this thoughtful and practicable Broadband Sector Strategy Report," said **Infrastructure and Broadband Consultant Scott Lopez, Founder of Vida Mejor Capital**. "Broadband stakeholders and decision makers will now be able to reference this aggregated and actionable information for resource planning and forecasting as it relates to construction and administrative workforce. Skilled and available New Mexico workers are critical to successfully building and operating the new broadband and high-speed networks."

Developing a sector strategy for the broadband industry is a priority under the state's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) statewide plan for 2024-2027. The next step in the sector strategy process is to gather input from education and training providers as well as the providers of services under Titles I, II, and IV of WIOA. From that input, DWS will generate a gap analysis that identifies where the state should build additional capacity to train the workforce in necessary skills.

*Building a Strong Broadband Workforce in New Mexico – Part 1: The Jobs* is available on the DWS website <https://www.dws.state.nm.us/WIOA>.

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*The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) oversees the New Mexico public workforce system. The department is committed to supporting the business community through special recruitment, analyzing hard to fill jobs, layoffs, job fairs, and skills assessments for hiring; and assisting New Mexicans seeking employment opportunities with job search, job referrals and placement, and customized skill development such as interviewing skills and resume writing. The department administers programs to include business services; workforce training; Unemployment Insurance; labor law enforcement; veterans' services; and labor market information.*

*The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions is 85% Federally funded with (\$106,960,200), and 15% (\$18,543,600) financed by non-federal sources in state fiscal year 2024.*