

Connect New Mexico Council



Regular Meeting

January 14, 2022

Connect New Mexico Council

Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
- Council role and responsibilities
- Overview: New Mexico Office of Broadband
- Overview: State broadband grant programs
- Next steps and discussion
- Public comment
- Adjourn



Connect New Mexico Council

Membership

- **Connect New Mexico Council membership includes:**
 - Jeremy Lovato, Department of Transportation Designee
 - Juan Torres, Department of Economic Development Designee
 - Eli Guinnee, Department of Cultural Affairs Designee
 - Raja Sambandam, Department of Information Technology
 - Joseph Navarreté, New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority Designee
 - Bogi Malecki, Department of Higher Education Designee
 - Martica Casias, Public Schools Facilities Authority
 - Luis Reyes, Speaker of the House Appointee
 - Launa B. Waller, Minority House Floor Leader Appointee
 - Katherine Crociata, Senate President Pro Tempore Appointee
 - Steve L. Grey, Senate Minority Floor Leader Appointee
 - Jim R. Ruybal, Governor Appointee
 - Christopher Becenti, Navajo Nation
 - Godfrey Enjady, Apache Government
 - Kimball Sekaquaptewa, Pueblo Government

Connect New Mexico Council

Role & Responsibilities

- “The council will consult local and tribal governments, public educational institutions and state agencies to develop a digital equity analysis and plan to address:
 - The challenges to digital inclusion that are posed by the lack of affordable quality service, broadband-enabled devices or the knowledge of how to use the devices effectively in different age, cultural or geographic populations across the state
 - The federal and private sector programs that could be applied to by state agencies or local or tribal governments to address the challenges to digital inclusion
 - Existing state programs or state programs that could be established that address or could leverage federal and private sector programs to address the challenges to digital inclusion.”

Office of Broadband

- Office of Broadband Access and Expansion, DOIT
 - Leadership
 - Grants Management
 - Community Engagement
 - Technical & Grants Assistance
- Mapping and Data
- Connect New Mexico Broadband Grant Program
- Digital Equity and Inclusion
- Community & Regional Planning & Capacity Building
- Connect New Mexico Council

Office of Broadband

Approach

- Fixes and solutions
- Best practices and innovative approaches
- Public and private roles
 - Forging strong collaborative relationships with state and federal agencies, local governments, schools, and tribes
 - Convening the Connect New Mexico Council and working closely with the legislature to ensure strong public participation
 - Launching a new state broadband infrastructure grant program and refining equally important programming
 - Mapping and data collection
 - Regional planning and community engagement
 - Digital equity and inclusion
- Direction and detail



Office of Broadband

Budget & Structure

- Personnel
 - Leadership and policy
 - Director
 - Assistant Director
 - Broadband grant administration
 - GIS and mapping
 - Digital equity and inclusion
 - Outreach and technical assistance
- Professional Services
 - Technology integration
 - Middle mile and backhaul
 - Mapping and field validation
 - External communication and outreach
- Planning and Capacity Building Grants



Office of Broadband

Role and Responsibilities

- 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
 - 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
- Support regional broadband planning and engagement

Office of Broadband

Annual Report and Plan

- The plan will provide an assessment of broadband service across the state compared to the standards established by the various federal broadband regulatory and assistance programs. In particular, the plan will provide for the development and expansion of broadband infrastructure and services throughout the state to meet the needs:
 - For the delivery of internet-based educational, medical and emergency services
 - For local and tribal communities to foster and recruit internet-reliant business and industry and to promote economic development and job creation
 - To support internet-reliant state, local and tribal government agency functions and facilitate the delivery of governmental services in a manner that is competitive with similar government agencies in neighboring states.

Office of Broadband

Next Steps

- Next steps for the Office of Broadband include:
 - Complete Capital Projects Fund application (\$133M)
 - Initiate formal stakeholder outreach and engagement
 - Finalize organizational structure
 - Refine broadband access mapping
 - Launch Connect New Mexico Broadband Grant Program
 - Design programming for *local planning and capacity building, regional engagement and planning, and digital equity and inclusion*
 - Prepare for federal funding and support
 - Engage Connect New Mexico Council!

Office of Broadband

Digital Equity and Inclusion

- Programming, capacity, and related initiatives that combine to offer a holistic approach to eliminating the digital divide:
 - Building digital literacy skills
 - Raising awareness of broadband service and public broadband/Wi-Fi options
 - Driving enrollment in broadband adoption assistance programming
 - Equitably distributing computer equipment to qualifying households in need
- In addition, specific programming might focus on work to:
 - Develop a digital literacy resource to leverage the state's facilities, content, and instructors to support the public in identifying educational opportunities within their communities
 - Conduct a pilot focused on local and/or tribal government data collection to support telecommunication customer locales, enhance emergency service deployment, and provide education opportunities
 - Align broadband mapping, capital investment, and adoption assistance programming to optimize collective impact by addressing aspects of the digital divide holistically

Office of Broadband

Mapping

- Critical component of the New Mexico Broadband Program. This work will entail such next steps as:
 - Acquire customer and service area data twice yearly from each of the broadband telecommunication providers in New Mexico; these data are used to produce static maps of areas being served by broadband and technology type
 - Collect community anchor institution data, including potential and existing broadband sites within New Mexico, to support Community Anchor Site Assessment (CASA) a collection of public facilities within New Mexico
 - Maintain and enhance the public [Interactive New Mexico Broadband Map](#)

Office of Broadband

Planning and Capacity Building

- Community and regional focus to:
 - Assist recipient organizations to identify and engage stakeholders and assets
 - Educate community leaders
 - Assess current broadband infrastructure and market
 - Estimate current and future demand for broadband (needs assessment)
 - Prepare a high-level design and cost estimate for broadband deployment
 - Evaluate funding options and strategic approaches to acquire needed funding
 - Adopt a Broadband Strategic Plan and align with federal requirements per IJA/BIL

The seal of the State of New Mexico is partially visible on the left side of the slide. It features an eagle with its wings spread, perched on a cactus. The text "STATE OF NEW MEXICO" is written around the perimeter of the seal, and the year "1821" is visible at the bottom left. The seal is rendered in a light, semi-transparent style.

Office of Broadband

Interagency Collaboration

- **Statewide Institutional and Middle-Mile Broadband**

- In addition to direct investment in last-mile network expansion that ensures *universal access* to every home, business, and community anchor institution in New Mexico, the office supports creation of a middle-mile network connecting school districts, public colleges and universities, and libraries.
- The approach will strive to meet the unique needs of New Mexico state agencies, local governments, and tribes, as well as broadband providers and unserved communities, by applying best practices from other states and leveraging significant federal funding through NTIA's Enabling Middle Mile Infrastructure Program.

- **State Rural Universal Service Fund**

- The Rural Telecommunications Act of New Mexico (RTA) authorizes the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission to administer the State Rural Universal Service Fund (SRUSF), established to promote rural universal telecommunications connectivity. Given the emergence of “broadband” as a technology of choice for at-home connectivity, combined with pandemic-induced demand for universal broadband access, the Commission received over \$37 million in “Broadband Program” project requests in 2021 – nearly three times the Commission’s current annual funding limit for such projects, which must balance with other SRUSF obligations and programs.

State Broadband Grant Programs

Characteristics and Best Practices

- **Project area eligibility.** To ensure that all households, businesses, and community anchors have access to bandwidth necessary for common uses of tomorrow – and today, both unserved and underserved areas are eligible for grant funding.
- **Performance and scalability.** If done right, investment in broadband infrastructure can provide both a high quality of service and an attractive return on investment for decades to come; both state best practice and recent federal guidance requires that new publicly supported broadband deployment be capable of providing at least 100/100 Mbps service.
- **Adoption and affordability.** To optimize the impact of any broadband infrastructure investment, close attention should be paid to ensure that the resulting service is affordable to all households within the project's footprint.
- **Nonstate matching funds.** Despite unprecedented levels of public funding, most state broadband grant programs will need to leverage significant matching funds to make universal broadband access a reality; such nonstate matching funds can come from certain federal sources, as well as local public or private broadband provider contributions.

State Broadband Grant Programs

Characteristics and Best Practices

- **Community support.** More than ever, communities compete on the basis of broadband connectivity – and a community’s broadband vision, explicit governing support, and, ideally, local match funding each should contribute to an ideal broadband build; with new federal infrastructure investment through ARPA and IIJA flowing directly to local governments, communities have more leverage than ever in guiding their respective broadband futures.
- **Cross-sector collaboration.** Various public-private partnership models include strong private sector participation, ranging from network ownership to network operation, as well as an active public sector role – ideally, both state and local government.
- **Emphasis on open access and shared use.** An efficient and effective state grant program will prioritize projects that seek to leverage existing broadband assets and make available to others certain resulting broadband infrastructure, be it access to middle-mile fiber, towers, or even last-mile fiber.
- **Engagement process to challenge mapping accuracy or project eligibility.** No broadband access map is perfectly accurate and any efficient state grant program will target resources to those areas in need; successful state broadband grant programs include a fair and transparent process for stakeholder review of broadband map accuracy and potential challenge of grant-funded project eligibility.

State Broadband Grant Programs

Definitions and Standards

- In accordance with current state statute and/or FCC benchmarks, the office currently recognizes the following definitions for standard broadband speed classifications:
 - Unserved areas: those areas lacking wireline broadband access of at least 25/3 Mbps
 - Underserved areas: those areas with wireline broadband access between 25/3 Mbps and 100/20 Mbps
 - Served areas*: those areas with wireline broadband access of at least 100/20 Mbps

*Certain federal broadband infrastructure funding, such as that made available directly to states via Treasury's Capital Projects Fund, requires all resulting projects be capable of providing service of at least 100/100 Mbps – indication that federal standards for what constitutes “broadband” may be changing again soon.

Connect New Mexico Act

Broadband Grant Program Framework

- Establishes applicant eligibility to include local governments, state agencies, public educational institutions, tribal governments, and entities created by a joint powers agreement pursuant to the Joint Powers Agreements Act
- Establishes funding considerations, including:
 - The extent to which the project connects unserved and underserved populations of New Mexico, with priority given to projects that will connect unserved populations;
 - The extent to which the project meets or exceeds the baseline standards established by the federal communications commission;
 - The extent to which the project leverages existing infrastructure;
 - The extent to which the project complements or coordinates with the statewide broadband plan;
 - The extent to which the project leverages regional collaboration;
 - The degree to which the project fosters digital inclusion;
 - The extent to which the project stimulates in-state economic development, including the creation of jobs and apprenticeships; and
 - The extent to which the project leverages in-kind or financial support from various nonstate (local or federal) sources.

Connect New Mexico Act

Broadband Grant Program Reporting

- Progress achieved toward digital equity and digital inclusion as identified in the digital equity analysis and plan
- Progress achieved on implementation of the statewide broadband plan
- Identified obstacles to an integrated system of permits, licenses and rules for broadband infrastructure across the state, including an expedited review process for rights of way use applications
- Recommended statutory, regulatory or policy changes and budget recommendations for the development and expansion of broadband infrastructure and digital equity and digital inclusion; and information on the broadband grant program, including:
 - List of grant recipients
 - Amount and date of each grant
 - Description of each project funded
 - Description of how each project contributes to the statewide broadband plan and demonstrates increased access and quality of service for the unserved and underserved populations of New Mexico.



Discussion



Public Comment



Adjournment