

Connect New Mexico Council



Regular Meeting

March 16, 2022

Connect New Mexico Council

Agenda

1. **Welcome & Call to Order**
2. **Approve Agenda & Minutes**
3. **Chair Remarks & Council Member Updates**
4. **Office of Broadband Access & Expansion Update**
5. **Overview of State & Federal Funding**
6. **Connect New Mexico Pilot Program**
7. **Working Group Reports**
 - a. Connect New Mexico Grant Program
 - b. Regional planning & community engagement
 - c. Mapping, data & evaluation
 - d. Digital Equity & inclusion
8. **Next Steps**
 - a. Council meeting schedule
 - b. OMA resolution
9. **Public comment**
10. **Adjourn**





Council Member Updates



Office of Broadband Update

Office of Broadband Structure

- Personnel
 - Leadership and policy
 - Director
 - Assistant director
 - Legal and reporting compliance
 - Broadband grant administration
 - GIS and mapping
 - Digital equity and inclusion
 - Community engagement
- Professional Services
 - Technology integration
 - Middle mile and backhaul
 - Mapping and field validation
 - Technical assistance and outreach
- Planning and Capacity Building Grants





State & Federal Funding

State & Federal Broadband Funding

DoIT (in thousands)

Fiscal Year Appropriation	Source	Appropriation Amount	Allocated Amount	Remaining	Purpose
FY20 SB280 (Laws 2019, Ch. 277, Sec.32, 2)	General Fund	\$259.7	\$259.7	\$0	For the north central New Mexico economic development district in Rio Arriba and Santa Fe counties
FY20 SB280 (Laws 2019, Chapter 277, Sec.32, 4)	General Fund (Capital Outlay)	\$10,000.0	\$10,000.0	\$1,906	For broadband expansion, including assessments and contracts, in rural areas statewide for use through FY23
FY20 SB280 (Laws 2019, Chapter 277, Sec.32, 4)	General Fund	\$1,000.0	\$1,000.0	\$0	To the library broadband infrastructure fund, for library broadband expansion and improvement statewide, including assessments and contracts, contingent upon the execution of a memorandum of understanding for use of the funds with the cultural affairs department
FY21 HB349 (Laws 2020, Ch. 81, Sec. 31, 2)	Severance Tax Bond	\$3,000.0	\$3,000.0	\$0	Navajo Nation
FY21 HB349 (Laws 2020, Ch. 81, Sec. 31, 3)	Severance Tax Bond	\$372.9	\$372.9	\$373	Broadband infrastructure - Northern NM
FY22 HB285 (Laws 2021, Ch. 138, Sec. 26, 1)	Severance Tax Bonds	\$7,048.0	\$7,048.0	\$7,048	For broadband infrastructure, of which \$500 thousand is available until DoIT submits expenditure plan to LFC
FY23 HB2 (Laws 2022)	General Fund	\$1,000.0	\$1,000.0	\$1,000	For development of a digital equity plan to reduce barriers to broadband and leverage federal funding
		\$22,680.6	\$22,680.6	\$10,327	

Connect New Mexico Fund (in thousands)

Fiscal Year Appropriation	Source	Appropriation Amount	Allocated to DoIT	Remaining	Purpose
FY22 SB377 (Laws of 2021, Ch. 140, Sec. 17, B1)	General Fund	\$70,000.0	\$7,000.0	\$7,000	To the Connect New Mexico Fund, of which \$7 million is allocated to DoIT, not to be expended until DoIT submits expenditure plan to the LFC. The appropriation includes \$500 thousand to create a broadband division or office at the department of information technology.
FY22 SB377 (Laws of 2021, Ch. 140, Sec. 17, B2)	General Fund	\$5,000.0	\$500.0	\$500	To the Connect New Mexico Fund, of which \$500 thousand is allocated to DoIT, not to be expended until DoIT submits expenditure plan to the LFC. The Department of Information Technology shall coordinate with the Department of Finance and Administration in developing criteria for distributing the funds.
FY22 SB377 (Laws of 2021, Ch. 140, Sec. 17, B3)	Public Education Reform Fund	\$25,000.0	\$2,500.0	\$2,500	To the Connect New Mexico Fund, of which \$2.5 million is allocated to DoIT, not to be expended until DoIT submits expenditure plan to the LFC.
		\$100,000.0	\$10,000.0	\$10,000	

ARPA

FY22 HB2 (2nd Special Session, Laws of 2022, Ch. 4, Sec. 4, A Capital Project Funds)	Federal Funds	\$123,066.8	\$123,066.8	\$123,066.8	To the Department of Information Technology to plan, design, construct, renovate and equip broadband, including alternative and satellite broadband, statewide
	Total:	\$245,747.4	\$155,747.4	\$143,393.3	



Connect New Mexico Pilot Program

Topics of Discussion

- Funding Authorization and Source
- Grant Programs Roadmap
- NOFO Overview
- Proposed Timeline
- Application
- Review Process and Scoring Rubric Framework
- Collaboration Opportunities Between Working Group and Broadband Office
- Questions/Discussion

Authorization Legislation and Federal Program

➤ **House Bill 2**

- Appropriated \$123MM from ARPA Capital Projects Fund for broadband infrastructure
- Funds are assigned to the Department of Information Technology (“DoIT”)

➤ **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Capital Projects Fund**

- Contribution comes from the American Rescue Plan Act – Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (“CPF”).
- Program is managed by the U.S. Department of Treasury.
- Funds are awarded to states – which become the “Recipient”. Awardees become the “Subrecipient”.
- Office has submitted a Grant Application to Treasury to receive New Mexico’s allocation.
- Office also is filing a Program Plan which involves the details for the particular type of capital projects that will be funded. This Program Plan constitutes New Mexico’s formal request for funding.

Funding Programs

➤ **Series of Funding Programs**

- Connect New Mexico Pilot Program: Constitutes the first fund managed by the Office to foster broadband infrastructure deployment.
- Connect New Mexico Fund: The Office is also collaborating with the Connect New Mexico Council to help administer this \$70 million fund (created by the Connect New Mexico Act).
- BEAD Fund: The Office will also develop the program design for the funds from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”) – also known as the Bi-Partisan Infrastructure Act. IIJA created the Broadband Access, Equity, and Deployment Program (BEAD), which allocates \$42.5 billion to unserved and underserved communities to deploy last-mile networks. The Office will coordinate with National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to secure New Mexico’s allocation.

➤ **Objectives with Pilot Program**

- Take advantage of available federal funding opportunity to launch program.
- Fast-track funding of strongest proposals that are “application ready”.
- Apply lessons learned and best practices to future programs.

NOFO Overview

- The program design reflects guidelines from existing or planned federal programs and best practices.

Total Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$100+ million
Maximize Project Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$10 million
Matching Share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25%
Eligible Locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unserved: A household location that lacks access to a wireline-based broadband connection with a data rate of at least 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload Underserved: A household location that has access to a wireline-based broadband connection of at least 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload but no greater than 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload
Eligible Service Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include those areas in which 80% of the household locations in the applicant’s proposed funded service area are either unserved or underserved.
Eligible Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A last-mile network that provides symmetrical 100/100 Mbps in the eligible service area through a terrestrial-based network. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Note: Last-mile networks not meeting this symmetrical speed standard may be funded when impracticable to deploy due to geography, topography, or excessive cost barriers. The network must reliably offer at least 100/20Mbps and be eventually scalable to a minimum of 100 Mbps symmetrical.</i> Network facilities that enable last-mile network(s) in the eligible service area, including middle-mile networks, colocation facilities, data centers, in-building networks, and community Wi-Fi deployments
Eligible Entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local and tribal governments or any agency, subdivision, instrumentality, or political subdivision thereof; non-profit entities; for-profit corporations; limited liability corporations; cooperative or mutual organizations Collaborations among two or more of the eligible entities are eligible. One partner must be identified as the lead Applicant.
Eligible Expenditures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expenditures for application preparation, network planning, infrastructure deployment, network equipment, long-term leases, personnel, environmental expenses

Timeline and Wave Process

- The Connect New Mexico Pilot Program involves three funding waves with distinct funding windows.

Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Projects can be submitted at any time during the funding window and will be reviewed on a rolling basis. The strongest applications may be announced and awarded before all projects are reviewed and decisions made for any particular wave.• Review of application, eligibility, and mapping expected to take 6 - 10 weeks.• A subsequent wave may be canceled if highly qualified projects deplete the total funding pool. Inversely, any unallocated funds may be issued in a subsequent broadband funding grant program.• The Office encourages applicants from the eligible service areas to submit their high-quality proposal as early as possible, given the urgency to bridge the digital divide.

Process	Wave One	Wave Two	Wave Three
Application Deadline*	TBD	TBD	TBD

**Illustrative*

Review Process and Scoring Rubric

- The scoring parameters aim to ensure awarded projects that: 1) serve the comprehensive community with community-supported projects; 2) deliver a wide range of reasonably priced broadband services and programs to foster adoption; 3) reflect organizations prepared to execute; 4) showcase a high confidence level of long-term sustainability (scalability, financial viability).

Process

- Confirm service eligibility through mapping review and inviting feedback from service providers.
- Assign team of independent reviewers to review applications.
- Perform due diligence of any areas of concern raised by reviewers; obtain information to clarify responses.
- Recommend strongest proposals for funding.

Categories	Key Components
Project Impact	Number of unserved and underserved household units facilitated
	Degree of unserved household units relative to underserved household units
	Magnitude of speed increase (new service vs. existing service speeds)
	Degree of non-household units connected (businesses, institutions, and farms)
	Collaboration with local and regional programs to foster social and economic development
Community Engagement	Level of existing economic distress (e.g., unemployment rates, poverty level)
	Degree of community support from residents, businesses, institutions and other local interests (e.g., customized support letters filed)
	Local community partnerships (degree of role and specificity)
Economic Efficiency	Community financial and in-kind contribution
	Percentage of matching contribution
	Cost-effectiveness of budget (e.g., total project costs relative to units facilitated)
Organization Qualifications	Leverage of existing assets
	Organizational experience and capability
Project Readiness	Applicant business structure (e.g., ARPA asks Recipients to encourage networks owned or operated by, or affiliated with, local governments, non-profits, and cooperatives)
	Detail of network design and technology architecture
	Project schedule detail
	Detail of budget (quantities and costs identified)
Project Sustainability	Risks identification and mitigation strategies
	Network capacity and scalability
Adoption Assistance Programs	Financial viability of business plan
	Affordability assistance programs
Marketing and Services Strategy	Digital inclusion programs (e.g., devices, digital literacy)
	Diverse set of last-mile service packages
	Pricing competitiveness relative to urban metro rates
	Customer acquisition strategy
	Open access policies

Application Status

- The application is being developed as a separate document.
- The template will be: a) user friendly; b) pertinent to collect information necessary to fairly and comprehensively evaluate a proposal.

Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applicant Profile• Executive Summary• Targeted Communities and Level of Need• Community Partners and Support• Service Offerings and Pricing• Adoption and Affordability Enablement Programs• Technology and Network Design• Route Maps• Organization Capability• Project Plan• Match Contribution and Source• Project Budget• Financial Forecasts• Audited Financials• Key Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Collaboration and Coordination (Grants Program Working Group and Office)

- The Office looks forward to collaborating with the Grants Program Working Group.
- Welcome feedback on other ways to foster coordination.



NOFO | Draft Executive Summary

Opportunity Name	Connect New Mexico Pilot Program		
Administering Agency	Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (Office) Department of Information Technology (DoIT)		
Total Fund Amount	<\$123,000,000>		
Maximum Project Award	<\$10,000,000>		
Matching Share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum match requirement of 25% 		
Source of Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021, Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund • Authorized by New Mexico House Bill 2 		
Funding Instrument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant 		
Program Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster the deployment of broadband access across unserved and underserved areas in New Mexico through sustainable, scalable networks that provide reasonably priced solutions to all members of a community. 		
Eligible Service Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include those areas in which 80% of the household locations in the applicant's proposed funded service area are either unserved or underserved. 		
Eligible Project Types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A last-mile network that provides symmetrical 100/100 Mbps in the eligible service area through a terrestrial-based network. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Note: Last-mile networks not meeting this symmetrical speed standard may be funded when impracticable to deploy due to geography, topography, or excessive cost barriers. The network must reliably offer at least 100/20Mbps and be scalable to a minimum of 100 Mbps symmetrical. • Network facilities that enable last-mile network(s) in the eligible service area, including middle-mile networks, colocation facilities, data centers, in-building networks, and community Wi-Fi deployments 		
Eligible Entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and tribal governments or any agency, subdivision, instrumentality, or political subdivision thereof; non-profit entities; for-profit corporations; limited liability corporations; cooperative or mutual organizations • Collaborations among two or more of the eligible entities are eligible. One partner must be identified as the lead Applicant. 		
Eligible Expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenditures for application preparation, network planning, infrastructure deployment, network equipment, long-term leases, personnel, environmental expenses 		
Scoring Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key areas include project impact, community engagement, economic efficiency, organization qualifications, project readiness, project sustainability, adoption assistance programs, and marketing and services strategy. 		
Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects will be accepted through three waves defined below. • Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Strongest proposals may be announced before the set of all awards within a particular wave. • Wave 3 occurs only if funds still remain after Wave 2. 		
Key Deadlines	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
	TBD	TBD	TBD
Grant	https://www.doit.state.nm.us/broadband		
Questions	Please submit questions to: broadband@state.nm.us		

Questions and Discussion



Working Group Reports

- Connect New Mexico Grant Program
- Regional planning & community engagement
- Mapping, data & evaluation
- Digital Equity & inclusion



Next Steps

- Council meeting schedule
- OMA resolution

Council Schedule

- **Third Wednesdays at 2pm**
- **April 20, 2022**
- May 18, 2022
- June 15, 2022
- July 20, 2022
- August 17, 2022
- September 21, 2022
- October 19, 2022
- November 16, 2022
- December 14, 2022*





Public Comment



Adjournment

Connect New Mexico Council

Membership

- **Connect New Mexico Council membership includes:**
 - Jeremy Lovato, Department of Transportation Designee
 - Alex Greenberg, 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
 - Vacant, Navajo Nation
 - Godfrey Enjady, Apache Government
 - Kimball Sekaquaptewa, Pueblo Government

Connect New Mexico Council

Duties

- Coordinate programs and projects per statewide broadband plan
- Evaluate and prioritize grant proposals and make grant awards from the Connect New Mexico Fund
- Adopt rules establishing a competitive grant program
 - Application procedure
 - Required project qualifications
- Consult local and tribal governments, public educational institutions and state agencies to develop a digital equity analysis and plan to address:
 - 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
 - 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 Approach

- 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

State Broadband Grant Programs

Characteristics and Best Practices

- Project area eligibility
- Performance and scalability
- Adoption and affordability
- Nonstate matching funds
- Community support
- Cross-sector collaboration
- Emphasis on open access and shared use
- Engagement process to challenge mapping accuracy or project eligibility



Connect New Mexico Act

Broadband Grant Program Framework

- Establishes applicant eligibility to include:
 - local governments
 - state agencies
 - public educational institutions
 - tribal governments
 - entities created by a joint powers agreement pursuant to the Joint Powers Agreements Act



Connect New Mexico Act

Broadband Grant Program Framework

- Establishes funding considerations, including extent to which the project:
 - **connects unserved and underserved** populations of New Mexico, with priority given to projects that will connect unserved populations;
 - **meets or exceeds the baseline standards** established by the federal communications commission;
 - **leverages existing infrastructure**;
 - complements or coordinates with the **statewide broadband plan**;
 - **leverages regional collaboration**;
 - **fosters digital inclusion**;
 - **stimulates in-state economic development**, including the creation of jobs and apprenticeships; and
 - **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

Workgroups

- Drawing membership from the council and external stakeholder input
- Meeting in between regular council meetings
- Focused on complementary aspects of broadband and digital equity:
 - Connect New Mexico Grant Program
 - Digital equity and inclusion
 - Regional planning and community engagement
 - Mapping, data, and evaluation



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.

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

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

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 word "EUNDO" is visible on a banner below the eagle. The number "12" and a star are also present at the bottom left of the seal.

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

- **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.