



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
OFFICE OF BROADBAND ACCESS & EXPANSION

**Connect New Mexico Council
Meeting Minutes**

Meeting called to order at 2:04 PM

Council Members Present: Ovidiu Viorica, Eli Guinnee, Jim R. Ruybal, Katherine Crociata, Godfrey Enjady, Jeremy Lovato, Launa B. Waller, Louis Reyes, Alex Greenberg, Joseph Navarette, Kimball Sekaquaptewa, Steve L. Grey, Bogi Malecki and Raja Sambandam

Approval of the Agenda

Motion to approve by Luis Reyes

Second by Jeremy Lovato

Approval of the Minutes

Motion to approve by Jim Ruybal

Second by Katherine Crociata

Chair Remarks & Council Member Updates

Chairwoman Kimball Sekaquaptewa thanked the council members and volunteers participating in the working group meetings. Chairwoman noted a report will be forthcoming in the future regarding the outcome of each meeting(s).

Overview of State & Federal Funding

DoIT General Counsel, Todd Baran, provided a high-level overview of the state and federal broadband funding matrix. The matrix identifies each appropriation, source, and appropriation amount. The matrix will help track each pot of funding and related expenditures. The matrix will also capture projects from start to finish along with running totals. The matrix spreadsheet will be distributed to each council member for comment.

Mr. Baran noted measures and oversight processes will be established so the intended purpose is accomplished and allow for adjustments if the intended goal is not met.

Office of Broadband Access & Expansion Update

OBAE Advisor, Matt Schmit, discussed the Structure of the Office of Broadband which will include personnel, professional services, and planning & capacity building grants. The Office of Broadband would like to empower communities, provide outreach and community engagement, and utilize existing models and approaches to move forward in building the office.

Mr. Schmit identified multiple State and Federal funding sources for Broadband investments. CARES Act which provided immediate access for schools, Consolidated Appropriations invested in the tribal connectivity program, and the 2021 Session appropriation of \$100 million in general fund dollars to the Connect NM Fund. ARPA and capital projects fund have devoted \$133 Million to NM in formula driven

funding. Mr. Schmit also noted \$123 Million of the ARPA Capital Projects funding will allow for a pilot program for Broadband Grant Making. In addition, there will also be \$65 Billion through NTIA; \$43 billion to the BEAD Program, of that \$650 - \$700 million will likely flow to New Mexico.

Mr. Schmit noted the ARPA money does not require a spend plan, there is a formal process for receiving U.S. Treasury approval. The Connect NM funding (SB 377) does require a spend plan for DoIT to deploy the funding.

Connect New Mexico Pilot Program

Sandeep Taxali, DoIT also discussed the abovementioned State & Federal funding sources and the Notice of Funding Opportunity, proposed timeline, application, review process and scoring rubric and the collaboration opportunities between the Working Groups and Broadband Office.

House Bill 2 appropriates \$123 Million to DoIT, through the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) and Capital Projects Fund; States are the recipients, awardees are the subrecipient.

The NM Pilot Program is precursor to the Connect NM Fund, followed by use of the IJA and then next year use of the larger BEAD funding. The Pilot Program will assist in the use of available federal funding, fast-track funding for strong proposals, and will apply the lessons learned and best practices to future programs.

Notice of Funding Opportunity and eligibility requirements:

1. The FCC, which is currently undergoing map clean up, will be used to determine the unserved or underserved. NOTE: George Clarke, DoIT Geospatial Director, has developed additional mapping sources that have been added to help determine the unserved or underserved.
2. The program will most likely launch in April and include three funding waves with distinct funding windows. If there are strong applicants these will be eligible to move forward more quickly.
3. Review Process and Scoring Rubric will ensure project impact and magnitude of the speed increase are considered. There are several categories and key components which will assist in the recommendation of strong proposals for funding

The application process is being developed as a separate document and will include a user-friendly template and will collect information necessary to fairly and comprehensively evaluate a proposal.

Working Group Reports-

Matt Schmit noted the working groups are meeting regularly, three of the four groups have met but are currently seeking volunteers for the Digital Equity and Inclusion working group.

Public comment

1. Barbara Webber, Executive Director of Health Action NM in the Southern part of the State and is advocating for Broadband for unserved & underserved for use in Telemedicine and Mental Health Services.
2. Roy Soto, Consultant, volunteer for the Digital Equity and Inclusion Working Group.
3. Zoom Chat question regarding the posting of the Notice of Funding Opportunity; NOFO will not be posted as of yet, it is still in draft format and awaiting council/working group feedback.
4. Council Member Ovidiu Viorica asked what the target date for releasing the NOFO could be? Matt noted it may go live in April.

Motion to adjourn meeting at 5:30PM by Eli Guinnee
Second by Steve Grey