



Workforce Training and Development

Preparing New Mexicans for the high-paying jobs of the future

As governor, my top priority will be jobs – keeping the jobs we have, growing new, better paying jobs and remaining competitive in our changing, global economy. We are hard-working, talented people and our state’s quality of life makes New Mexico an ideal place to run a business, build a life and raise a family. But since the Great Recession, our economy has stalled. Our recovery has been slow, partly because of the unique challenges that come from years of underinvestment. High poverty rates, high unemployment figures, limited job creation, poor education and training rates, and brain drain all undermine efforts to create new jobs and a modern workforce. A research report produced by the nonpartisan public policy organization New Mexico First, “Economic Security and Vitality for New Mexico,” found that some employers hesitate to relocate to New Mexico because they worry about finding qualified employees; some local businesses struggle to find the ideal employee; and many educated New Mexicans leave the state for work elsewhere.

New Mexico’s unemployment rate used to be below the national average, and we can get there again. We have the talent and drive to meet the demands of today’s modern economy. But we need a new approach. As governor, I will work with industry, educators, and community leaders to:

1. Create a system that is responsive to employers current and future economic needs;
2. Make life-long learning a reality;
3. Make our community colleges an essential driver of workforce and economic development;
4. Grow and expand apprenticeship programs;
5. Remove barriers to employment and training; and
6. Stop New Mexico’s brain drain.

By working together to implement this plan, we can develop the kind of strong, skilled workforce that is the foundation of any healthy economy. As governor, I will work to ensure that every New Mexican who wants a job can find one, and every business that needs an employee can find the right person.

BACKGROUND

Since the economic upheaval of the 2008 economic crisis, New Mexico has lagged behind the country in job growth. Today, the national unemployment rate hovers around 4 percent. New Mexico's unemployment rate is stuck at or above 6.6 percent, well below those of our neighboring states. Labor force and employment growth have also been slow in comparison to regional and national statistics. In fact, a 2017 study by Pew Charitable Trusts, found that New Mexico remains the worst in the nation in recovering to pre-recession job levels.

Last Fall, I released my four-step plan, "[Build New Mexico](#)," on how we can lay the foundation for a strong, 21st century economy. I also offered [ten specific job-creation proposals](#) to get our economy moving again. At the center of these proposals - and all of our economic planning - is a strong workforce. In today's economy, people need more skills and higher levels of education to compete. A skilled and ready-to-work workforce will be the driver of state's economic development, and we must prepare accordingly.

Whether it is technical training, college or beyond, New Mexicans need to be ready for the jobs of today and tomorrow. Over 80% of New Mexico's projected job growth will require education beyond high school. Of these new jobs, 43% in New Mexico will require a bachelor's degree or higher and 48% will require more than a high-school diploma, but less than a four-year degree. These high and middle-skilled jobs are the fastest growing segment of new jobs in our state and can provide good wages to tens of thousands of New Mexicans. Not everyone needs to go to college but skills training beyond high school is essential.

For New Mexico to grow its economy, we need to address the educational and training deficits in New Mexico's workforce. New Mexico's labor force has significantly lower levels of educational attainment than those in most other states. Of the 1.3 million adults ages 18 to 64 in New Mexico, 69 percent (or almost 890,000) are without a college degree and 15 percent (more than 190,000) have no high school diploma or equivalent. New Mexico also doesn't fare well compared to other states in the Mountain West region. For adults aged 25 to 54 - New Mexico ranks 45th nationally for the percentage with no high school diploma or equivalent, and 41st for the percentage with no associates degree or higher.

Even when New Mexico's students start college - the completion rates are too low. New Mexico's higher education institutes graduate an average of 18.3 per 100 students - this puts NM at 45th in completion rates. In addition, only 14.4% of students graduate in 4 years and only 41.7% of students graduate in six years. Some colleges, such as NMHU and WNMU graduate less than 20% of their students within six years. Hispanic, American Indian and African-American students in New Mexico have even lower graduation rates than the state's already low rates nationally.

This will become increasingly problematic in the coming years because New Mexico's workforce does not have the education or skills needed to meet the demands of a changing workforce.

DEVELOPING A WORKFORCE FOR NEW MEXICO'S FUTURE

1. Create a system that is responsive to employers current and future economic needs

As governor, I will establish a skills training system that solicits input and support from every part of our economy by:

- Creating a Commerce Cabinet. Comprised of business leaders and cabinet members including the secretaries of the Departments of Economic Development, Transportation, Workforce Solutions, Licensing and Regulation, Energy and Environment, Taxation and Revenue, and Department of Finance, this group will provide advice and counsel on proposals to enhance the state's business climate; gather information the Cabinet considers necessary to promote its goals; collaborate to facilitate and expedite critical economic development projects in the state; and provide other assistance that may be required to further the goals of the state and enhance its business climate.
- Instituting partnerships that provide real-time feedback on employer needs. Growing sectors in need of talent need responsive support from our government. By working together, we can develop:
 - A demand-driven, workforce and economic development initiative that is collaborative, flexible and business-led.
 - Develop Real Jobs Partnerships that convene industry employers, key stakeholders and groups in partnerships that build alliances to address business workforce demands:
 - Placing new employees into immediate job openings;
 - Up-skilling current employees to advance skills and/or remain competitive;
 - Creating pipelines of talent for the future.
- Growing New Mexico's economic sector strategy. As I explain in my plan "[Build New Mexico.](#)" we must diversify our economy to grow new industries and create new jobs. A sector strategy that focuses on key industries and economies where New Mexico can lead by using the our state's unique assets to attract new investment and support existing businesses. Initially, we will focus these efforts on eight areas:

- Cybersecurity
- Intelligent manufacturing
- Sustainable and green industries
- Bioscience and health
- Tourism and outdoor industries
- Digital media and film
- Sustainable agriculture and value-added agriculture and
- Aerospace

2. *Create a System of Lifelong Learning*

In these ever changing times, education , learning and skill development must be ongoing throughout people’s lives and careers so they can achieve economic success. To create a system of lifelong learning, we must embrace both formal and informal environments as well as self-directed learning. As Governor, I will:

- Align our P-20 and adult education systems with employer needs. By bringing together business, educational institutions, government and individuals we can develop curriculum that will help prepare New Mexicans for current and future jobs.
- Improve the quality and efficiency of the adult learning system, including continuing education programs. As more adults seek postsecondary education and increased skills we need to work with community colleges and universities to serve as hubs for innovation to improve opportunities for all adults.
 - Align Adult Basic Education and postsecondary policies.
 - Promote dual enrollment strategies that allow students taking basic skills classes like English as a Second Language to also be earning credit in other, connected education and training programs such as high school equivalency classes.
 - Build Career Pathways so that students taking adult basic education programs can apply what they learn to their profession.
 - Establish clear agreements between post-secondary institutions so students and schools understand exactly what training and course credits can be transferred from one program to another.
 - Standardize the entry and exit requirements across programs and ensure that assessments can easily be transferred between institutions.
 - Update the basic skills curricula to ensure participants are learning things that will help them navigate in the modern economy.

- Support student success by increasing student access to childcare, transportation and other services. We can do this by partnering with wrap-around service providers such as [La Plaza Encuentro](#)'s Home Health Aid certification program which provides childcare for student-parents while they are in class training to be home healthcare workers.
- Link learning with opportunities for employment.
 - Partner with employers to ensure that there are employment opportunities available to students
 - Provide academic and career counseling to guide learners along the pathway to their goals
 - Ensure that programs lead to industry-recognized credentials
- Improve Adult Basic Education program flexibility and access.
 - Offer programs during non-traditional and traditional hours
 - Utilize open entry/open exit programming to allow learners to enter and exit programs easily
 - Allow students to enroll in distance learning programs
 - Address participants' barriers to participation through intensive wrap-around services including access to childcare and transportation services
- Ensure that successful transitions and employment are the goals of Adult Basic Education:
 - Establish shared and linked data procedures across adult basic education and postsecondary education programs
 - Utilize measures that focus on transitions to postsecondary education, employment, wage increases and improvements in basic skills
 - Track participants through adult basic education, postsecondary education and training and into employment
- Create Technology Literacy Collaborative and Community Technology Centers (CTC). These centers, located throughout the state can provide people with free access to computers to search the Internet, send and download files, and take technology classes. CTC's provide disadvantaged residents of economically distressed urban and rural communities with access to information technology and the training to use it.

3. *Make Community Colleges a Driver of Workforce and Economic Development.*

New Mexico's community college and adult education systems are uncoordinated and funding levels vary dramatically, with no statewide organization or association, and with no centralized pathway for developing, promoting, or guiding students through

career pathways. We need to develop stronger, centralized programs and resources that allow community colleges to match industry needs and provide real pathways.

- Align New Mexico's "I-BEST" (Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training) program to workforce needs. This program focuses on building career pathways for students through a consortium of eight community colleges, but it has not been used to target developing workforce needs. By aligning the coursework in I-BEST with the needs of our ever changing economy, we can better prepare its participants for the jobs available now and tomorrow.
- Build partnerships between industry and community colleges. Partnerships between community colleges and industry agents provide opportunities to fill gaps in the state's workforce, recruit and retain students, and increase the value added by a community college education. As governor, I will create an avenue to facilitate relationships between colleges and local industry and direct the Higher Education Department, Department of Workforce Solutions, and Economic Development to work together to provide a model for the implementation of workforce-focused programs and industry partnerships at community colleges. Rather than independently seeking to provide skills in an area that may or may not match the current job market, partnerships allow the development of programs to build specific skills that closely match the needs of employers. Many successful statewide programs focus on recipients of social service programs like the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), who are low-income, working-poor parents. When TANF recipients participate in these programs, their education counts towards federal Work Participation Rate requirements.
- Prioritize college completion. New Mexico's college completion rates are among the worst in the country. Time and money are two of the biggest reasons our students do not finish their degrees. Since the Great Recession, New Mexico has cut its higher education budget by more than 30 percent - these cuts are passed on to students in the form of higher tuitions. And nearly 40 percent of New Mexico's new college and university students need remedial math or English classes before they can begin work toward their degree. As governor, I will work with the Public Education and Higher Education departments to reduce the burdens that make a post-secondary degree unattainable to so many New Mexicans.

4. *Grow and Expand Apprenticeship Programs*

Some 48 percent of New Mexico's jobs require more than a high-school diploma, but less than a four-year degree. These high and middle-skilled jobs are also the fastest

growing segment of new jobs in our state. While some of these jobs require an associate's degree, others require vocational training or certification.

Apprenticeship programs are an excellent avenue to meeting those requirements. Countries around the world have recognized the importance of strong apprenticeship programs. On average, employers get \$1.47 back for every \$1 invested in apprenticeship. As governor, I will:

- Direct state funds to establish new and grow existing apprenticeship programs.
- Convene partnerships to develop high-quality, effective programs that address the workforce needs of the state. Apprenticeships can take one to five years to complete, depending on the job. The Labor community and private sector have both been leaders in creating apprenticeship opportunities in everything from carpentry to IT. We need to work with these leaders to align these apprenticeship programs with the changing needs of our workforce.
- Direct our secondary education community to cooperate with proven apprenticeship programs in order to prepare our students for apprenticeship opportunities, including successful programs in fields like construction craft vocations.

5. Remove Barriers to Employment and Training

There are a number of barriers for both low-wage/low skilled workers and the long-term unemployed that must be addressed to fix New Mexico's workforce system. New Mexico's employment services are confusing. Workers and jobseekers have difficulty finding childcare, and there are only a few, mostly inadequate training programs for the long-term unemployed. We must be innovative in our approaches to these barriers in order to:

- Streamline our existing infrastructure and delivery system. Using the Working Families Success Network as a model, we will work to integrate, bundle and sequence complementary services and support in three key areas: financial coaching and education, employment, and improved access to public benefits. To ensure alignment and consistency between community colleges and community-based partners, we will measure outcomes, including job placement and retention, family income, and completion rates for college degrees and training programs.
- Improve access to childcare. We will do this by linking childcare agencies to workforce development activities that will lead to employment. While childcare is an allowable service under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

it is underutilized because of a disconnected and confusing system. To support low-income parents, we must help provide access to quality child care services by coordinating the intersection of these systems.

- Implement programs to address long-term unemployment. People who have been out of work more than 6 months, face particular hardships in finding and re-entering the workforce, therefore we must be specific in our approach. One model that is proving success is the Platform to Employment program, which provides a selected group of long-term unemployed with an intensive five-week, job-readiness class, and then offers to cover up to two months of their salary for any employer willing to give them a trial. P2E was first launched with private funding in Connecticut in 2011 and has been piloted in 10 cities since then also using private funding. P2E has an 80 percent placement rate.
- Implement work share programs. These programs benefit not only the employer and the employee but also the entire state. Work share gives businesses the option of reducing the hours and wages of their employees rather than laying them off. Workers are then eligible for partial unemployment benefits to help make up for the lost wages. Twenty-eight (28) states have passed laws to take advantage of available federal funds. New Mexico is 1 of 22 states that has not passed such laws. According to the National Employment Law Project, “New Mexico would have saved up to 1,319 jobs if a work sharing program had been in place in 2009.”
- Make the system more accountable and fair. Not every job is a good job. We will reimburse workforce contracts on the basis of job quality rather than job placements, using on concrete measures like full-time work, wage growth and job continuity. We need to use our state Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Plan (WIOA) to give incentives to employers that adopt fair workplace practices. We know that the cycle of low-wage and low-quality jobs leads to turnover and hurts employees and employers. Adopting fair workplace practices increases productivity, decreases absenteeism, reduces turnover, and is good for the bottom line.

6. *Stop New Mexico's Brain Drain.*

New Mexicans are fleeing the state. Over the last 8 years, New Mexico's population growth has stalled along with its economy. People are leaving the state and that means big trouble for many of the families left behind. Coupled with a low birth rate, New Mexico has seen nearly the lowest growth in the USA every year between 2011 and 2016. Most alarming, the highest rates of people leaving New Mexico are among prime working age adults (30-59) and children under the age of 18. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of working age adults have moved to Colorado and Arizona.

Seeing families and children leaving our state is heartbreaking and this exodus is devastating to our economy.

I have personally witnessed this phenomenon, as my adult daughter could not find a good engineering job in New Mexico, and had to move away for years. This outflow must change. If New Mexico is going to build a prosperous and sustainable economy, we need to retain our productive workers and the children who will be the future drivers of our economy. We need to make sure New Mexico has the high-wage jobs in industries such as cybersecurity, technology, film, and bioscience that will help us attract and retain citizens.

I believe in an “all of the above” approach to growing, retaining, and attracting talent and jobs to our state. My [ideas](#) to improve our schools, better train our workforce, and build our economy are all central to my strategy to create an environment that enables New Mexicans and New Mexico businesses to thrive. My policy proposals will go a long way in helping us strengthen New Mexico’s quality of living so that our children can pursue their future in our state.

- Retooling public and career education for 21st-century work.
- Improving outcomes at our institutions of higher education.
- Creating better jobs and grow our existing businesses, especially our small businesses.
- Improving our technology and access to that technology,
- Growing social opportunities for young people and families, and
- Improving public transportation.

Such proposals will help us keep our children here and attract newcomers to our state. I also will take a targeted approach to stopping the brain drain. Right now, we are not doing enough. In addition to selling New Mexico’s amazing quality of life and relatively low cost of living, I will work with the legislature to take aggressive steps to retain and attract recent graduates. I will:

- Offer programs to reduce debt for young New Mexicans. Loan forgiveness programs designed to help cover a significant portion of federal student loan repayments can be a powerful incentive to young people facing significant student loan debt. Other programs that help young people starting out have also proven effective in attracting young adults to new areas. These programs should also align to meet other goals. For example, I will:
 - Offer a refundable tax credit for recent graduates with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) degrees. My sectoral strategy targets several

economic sectors that rely on knowledge workers. We will need more STEM workers to expand these industries.

- Help lower-income graduates cover up to 24 months of loan repayments when they choose to stay in New Mexico.
 - Give graduates an annual tax credit during their first five years of employment in the state when they have degrees relevant to high-value industries in New Mexico, the way Oklahoma does for its Aerospace engineers:
 - Create a college loan reimbursement program to keep students here after graduation, like a proposal in Rhode Island, which would reimburse student loan payments for 4 years for about 100 graduates pursuing careers or starting businesses in technology, engineering, design or other key sectors.
 - Provide job connections to young professionals and incentivizes businesses to help recently hired graduates pay off their loans;
 - Retain students graduating from public and private colleges and universities in New Mexico by helping them save money toward a down payment on their first homes through a savings matching program;
 - Attract young professionals by offering student loan reimbursements in exchange for their relocation to areas that need industry growth; and
 - Require companies doing business with the state to hire a proportion of local qualified New Mexicans, similar to a plan being implemented in New York City.
- Work with our communities to make New Mexico cool again. To attract young skilled people to our state, we need to show them all that New Mexico has to offer: history, culture, and beautiful state and national parks, as well as high-paying jobs, a low cost of living, and an economy that is looking to the future. To do this, I will:
 - **Bring young people to the table.** The millennial generation believe in civic involvement and I will help to create a space for this engagement by using internships to connect with young adults, and celebrating young entrepreneurs and civic contributions.
 - **Start a cool cities initiative.** Working with New Mexico Mainstreet Programs we will create a cool cities designation and start a grant program to help cities and towns reimagine themselves. In Michigan, \$1.9 million in catalyst grants helped leverage \$350 million from other sources that went into improving 19 Michigan neighborhoods, making them more attractive places to live and work.