



News Release

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New Mexico unveils ambitious workforce development strategy

ALBUQUERQUE – The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions released its 2024-2027 combined state plan Wednesday, marking a year of collaboration and development with statewide stakeholders.

The 2024-2027 New Mexico Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) combined state plan outlines the department’s vision, goals, and strategies emphasizing the immediate needs of New Mexico communities while aligning with the state’s forward-looking economic development plans.

We heard the voices and businesses and communities across the state and worked to balance the state’s forward-looking economic development goals with the pressing needs of New Mexicans to take care of each other and the state we love,” said **NMDWS Cabinet Secretary Sarita Nair**. “We also saw the need to recognize the rapidly changing nature of work – both with advancements in technology and emerging new industries. We’re preparing our workforce for a future we cannot fully envision yet.”

The WIOA 2024-2027 Combined State Plan and Executive Summary are available on the NMDWS website at <https://www.dws.state.nm.us/WIOA/WIOA-Plans-and-Reports>.

The comprehensive planning process engaged statewide stakeholders including the following WIOA Core and Combined Partners: New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS), Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB), Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board (SAWDB), Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico, Eastern Area Workforce Development Board (EAWDB), Adult Education Division of the New Mexico Higher Education Department (HED), The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation of the Public Education Department (PED), New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department (ALTS), Income Support Division of the New Mexico Health Care Authority (HCA), and Commission for the Blind.

“Much time and effort went into researching and developing this comprehensive plan,” said **NMDVR Director Casey Stone-Romero**. “This collaboration between so many agencies—all with a goal of employing New Mexicans—is the guiding document for the next three years, both in preparing our state’s workforce for meaningful employment and assisting employers in recruiting workers who have the skills they need.”

“Adult education programs are important in workforce development in New Mexico by allowing adults to chart their own paths to family-sustaining careers at any age,” said **HED Cabinet Secretary Stephanie M. Rodriguez**. “This state plan prioritizes access to high-quality education and pathways to industry-recognized credentials, centering the needs of individuals and their families as well as those of employers.”

“Aligning with the WIOA state plan, our efforts in Northern New Mexico are dedicated to integrating comprehensive workforce strategies that empower our communities, foster economic vitality, and ensure sustainable progress for all stakeholders involved, said **NALWDB Executive Director Lisa Ortiz**.”

“The development of the NM WIOA State Plan was a collaborative effort among local, state, and private partners to align one vision. As a local board, we were pleased to have a seat at the table to ensure the vision reflected in the state plan is aligned with the mission and goals of the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board and partners,” said **SAWDB WIOA Administrator Glory Juarez**. “One major goal is to increase year-over-year labor force participation rates and economic prosperity for disengaged and difficult to reach New Mexicans. It is essential that we focus on the demographics within our border region and the plan provides strategies to focus on expanding opportunities for English language learners along with addressing other needs of our region. We thank Secretary Nair and DWS staff for their ‘One State, One Team’ approach in developing the plan.”

“The comprehensive New Mexico State Workforce Plan provides a refreshing approach to workforce development and articulates a vision, goal, and strategies that we believe is most appropriate for the state to further improvements and address the needs of business, employers, and workforce participants, said **WCCNM Workforce Administrator and Director Artur Martinez**. “With the understanding that “continuing to align to the state’s forward-looking economic development goals, this Plan emphasizes the immediate needs of New Mexico communities to build and improve infrastructure ...” With this clear vision it provides a roadmap that the local workforce boards may embrace and further this effort in coordination with partners in economic development, education and industry leaders. Great job and a huge effort by the participating partners must be recognized with gratitude for their collaboration.”

“The Eastern Area Workforce Development Board is excited to support the WIOA state plan’s vision to work collaboratively across partner programs to increase the skills of the workforce and improve access to high wage, high growth job opportunities that enhance the competitiveness of New Mexico businesses and support thriving communities,” said **EAWDB Executive Director Beth Elias**.

"Programs for senior employment play a crucial role in meeting the workforce needs and enhancing community well-being in our state," said **ALTSD Cabinet Secretary Jen Paul Schroer**. "This state plan endorses initiatives for older adults to stay engaged and active within their communities."

"Our work on the WIOA State Plan shows how collaboration across different agencies can lead to better planning and innovative solutions," said **HCA Deputy Secretary Kyra Ochoa**. "By bringing together diverse perspectives, we've built strong partnerships that will help us support New Mexico's workforce more effectively."

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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 and assisting New Mexicans seeking employment opportunities by bridging the link between employer needs and the skilled workforce. 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.