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New Mexico enrollment growth and student investment continue to outperform national averages

Substantial benefits of Opportunity Scholarship, financial assistance highlighted by national higher education analysis

SANTA FE — Statewide higher education enrollment in New Mexico continued to grow and was among the best in the United States, according to a national financial analysis of the 2022-2023 academic year, which highlighted the state's Opportunity Scholarship as driving New Mexico's higher education rebound.

The State Higher Education Executive Officers Association report also identified New Mexico as a national leader in reducing college students' out-of-pocket costs.

"Our efforts to create more opportunity in higher education are paying off," said Higher Education Secretary **Stephanie M. Rodriguez**. "This report clearly shows that we are making college and career training more accessible for more types of people. Helping more New Mexicans train for and find fulfilling careers right here in their home state will continue to be a top-line priority of this administration."

Even as college enrollment rates decline nationally and in most states, the report [shows](#), New Mexico's total enrollment increased for the second consecutive academic year, and enrollment growth in New Mexico for the 2022-2023 academic year was the fourth-highest of any state in the United States.

The Colorado-based organization's State Higher Education Finance Report identified New Mexico as having the largest year-over-year decrease of any state in out-of-pocket costs for full-time students, and as providing the second-most financial aid per full-time student, trailing only Tennessee.

In all, New Mexico's net tuition revenue as a share of total public higher education revenue was, according to the report, the lowest of any state (13.4 percent as compared to the national average of 40.2 percent), meaning college students in New Mexico contribute less to their higher education costs than students in any other state in the country.

"The Opportunity Scholarship and financial aid programs designed to reduce cost burdens for students are helping thousands more students pursue higher education here in New Mexico," said Higher Education Deputy Secretary **Patricia Trujillo, Ph.D.** "The Opportunity

Scholarship is the most inclusive free-tuition program in the United States, and we encourage all prospective and potential returning students to [learn about how](#) we can help connect New Mexicans to a degree or training program.”

New Mexico’s fall undergraduate enrollment in 2023 grew 3.9 percent over the prior academic year, with roughly 37,000 students receiving the Opportunity Scholarship; this continued a trend of growing statewide enrollment, building on top of a 3.5 percent increase in 2022 fall undergraduate enrollment.

This rebound in statewide enrollment represents a stark turnaround from the years 2012 to 2019, when enrollment decreased 18 percent overall in the state.

The [Opportunity Scholarship](#) fully covers tuition and course fees for New Mexicans pursuing high-demand career training certificates, associates degrees and bachelor’s degrees part time or full time at New Mexico’s public colleges and universities.

Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham earlier this year authorized a \$959 million Higher Education Trust Fund, which will provide ongoing state support for tuition-free education and state financial aid.

Prospective students can learn about state scholarship programs and apply to a participating college or university at [ReachHigherNM.com](#).

The full State Higher Education Executive Officers Association report is available for review [here](#). A New Mexico-specific state profile is available [here](#).

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The New Mexico Higher Education Department was established in 2005 and oversees the state’s public and tribal colleges, universities and special schools. It also oversees adult education and literacy programs statewide, manages state-funded financial aid programs and capital projects for higher education institutions, provides college readiness services via the GEAR UP program, and grants state authorization to private colleges operating within New Mexico. For more information, visit [hed.nm.gov](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) at @NMHigherEd.