



Photo courtesy of the Institute of American Indian Arts

# 2023 AGENCY REPORT

# STATE TRIBAL COLLABORATION ACT ANNUAL REPORT

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NEW MEXICO  
HIGHER EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT



*Fostering Success from Cradle to Career*



## Executive Summary

The New Mexico Higher Education Department's (NMHED) mission is to provide financial, academic, policy oversight and support to New Mexico's public higher education institutions, Tribal Colleges, and our formal community partners. The purpose of NMHED is to promote efficiency, accountability, and, most importantly, student success. The agency also provides programmatic support and technical assistance to post-secondary institutions and adult education programs aimed at serving Native American students. NMHED seeks to broaden, deepen, and strengthen pathways of opportunities for Native American students through partnerships with higher education institutions in New Mexico. Increased collaboration between Tribes and the agency enhances access to higher education and adult education programs, leading to positive changes in Tribal communities and the lives of their citizens.

In New Mexico there are 28 Minority-Student Serving Institutions (MSIs) including four Tribal colleges and universities (TCUs). TCUs in New Mexico include Diné College, Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA), Navajo Technical University (NTU), and Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI). The purpose of TCUs is to serve and prepare Native American students through the incorporation of language, culture, and traditions within higher education curricula. In 2022, the total number of Native American students served in higher education, adult education, and dual credit programs were 13,433. This included:

- **1,721 Native American students enrolled at Tribal Colleges**
- **7,983 Native American students enrolled at public colleges and universities**
- **1,188 Native American students enrolled at private post-secondary institutions and vocational programs**
- **1,158 Native American students enrolled in adult education programs**
- **1,383 Native American students enrolled in the Dual Credit Program**





# Agency Mission, Purpose, and Overview

## Mission Statement

To provide financial, academic, and policy oversight, and support New Mexico's public higher education institutions and community partners for the purpose of promoting efficiency, accountability, and student success.

## Purpose

The New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) fosters and guides a system of higher education that best meets the needs of New Mexicans. This is accomplished by providing financing to, oversight of, and support for all of New Mexico's public universities, colleges, and state-sponsored adult education programs in addition to regulating the state's private, for-profit higher education institutions, and by offering academic and economic programs, such as the Dual Credit Program, in which both public and Tribal colleges and universities may participate.

## Agency Overview

In 2005, NMHED was established as a cabinet agency in the executive branch as a single, unified department to administer laws and exercise functions formerly administered and exercised by the New Mexico Commission on Higher Education. The agency includes the following public-facing divisions: Academic Affairs and Policy, Adult Education, Capital Projects, Financial Aid, Gaining Early Awareness for Readiness and Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), Indian Education, Private Post-Secondary Schools, and Planning and Research. In coordination with our divisions, the agency works in tandem with our public higher education institutions and community partners to prioritize accessibility and ensure college and career readiness are at the forefront of our services.





Photo courtesy of Northern New Mexico College

# Indian Education Division

### Mission Statement

The Indian Education Division is responsible for building, ensuring, and maintaining effective two-way communication between the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) and Tribal communities across New Mexico.

### Purpose

Reinstated by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and NMHED in 2020, the Indian Education Division (IED) builds and maintains effective communication and collaboration among the agency, Tribal colleges, Tribal education departments, Tribal leaders, and Tribal communities throughout New Mexico. IED is committed to working with Tribes, Nations, and Pueblos in the state for the best interests of Native American students in our higher education and adult education systems. The division works to promote and share constituent service support and agency resources available to Native American students. IED is also responsible for upholding the provisions of the State Tribal Collaboration Act (STCA) and the agency's STCA policy. Additionally, the division communicates, collaborates, and consults with Tribes, Nations, and Pueblos to understand the higher education needs and challenges, and works to address them promptly and accordingly.

### DIVISION GOALS

- Support Native American students, Tribal education departments, and Tribal communities
- Strengthen, maintain, and improve the relationships between the agency and Tribes, Nations, and Pueblos in New Mexico
- Communicate with Tribal communities regularly and seek consultation with Tribal leaders when appropriate
- Develop new and improve current agency support services for Native American students through effective partnerships with institutions, legislators and Tribes
- Explore partnerships with Tribes, Nations, Pueblos, and other agencies or organizations to address topics of mutual concern and support innovative ideas.



## Partnerships with Tribes

Partnerships with Tribes are a foundational aspect of IED. With the knowledge, support, and input from the Tribes, the division has been able to promote efforts that have passed in legislation. For example, Tribal involvement and support was an integral part of House Bill 280 – Tribal Education Technical Assistance Centers.

As IED works toward establishing the Tribal Education Technical Assistance Centers (TACs), Tribes are a key contributor to the Request for Proposals (RFP) and the scope of work. NMHED presented at the Spring 2023 Government to Government Education Summit regarding Tribal Education TACs. During this time, Tribal leadership and educational representatives provided feedback and asked questions to help develop the scope of work for the RFP. Follow-up visits with Tribal leadership were requested and IED is accommodating those requests.

The agency and partnership with the Tribes have also supported virtual and in-person college fairs for Native American students and families. Tribal partnership was also integral in passing the New Mexico Opportunity Scholarship Act during the 2022 legislature. State and Tribal partnerships are essential to accomplishing powerful policy and program goals.

Looking ahead, future collaboration will include maintaining ongoing relationships with Tribes and NMHED. This will continue to be accomplished through respectful collaboration that honors the sovereignty and knowledges of Tribes across New Mexico. IED and the agency will continue to demonstrate their commitment and respect for Tribes through site visits, meetings, consultations, and attending education-related events in communities throughout New Mexico. Through these efforts, IED in partnership with agency divisions can develop and provide opportunities that are key to improving Indian education.

## Agency Division Collaboration

Since its re-establishment in January 2020, IED works collaboratively with the agency's public facing divisions to develop and discuss ever-evolving ways to serve Tribal communities. In the spirit of coordination and collaboration, all ideas and plans are not exclusive to the agency. Feedback, ideas, and suggestions from Tribal leaders and communities are essential in this continuous work. The agency understands the importance of working with Tribal communities – whether it's regular meetings and communication with Tribal education directors, Tribal college presidents, or weekly meetings with the agency's division directors, the conversations surrounding the education of Native American students are continuous. With ongoing collaborative efforts, IED and fellow NMHED divisions look forward to reciprocal relationship building with Tribes through virtual or in-person means.



# Communication, Collaboration, and Consultation with Tribes, Pueblos, and Nations

## State and Tribal Support on Key Legislation

During the 2023 legislative session, the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) worked on three priorities in coordination with New Mexico's Tribal leaders and Tribal college presidents. These discussions culminated in three key priorities that were all accomplished during the legislative session:

- Secure recurring funding for the state's tuition-free college scholarship program, the New Mexico Opportunity Scholarship (\$146 million)
- Establish two Tribal Education Technical Assistance Centers (\$2.25 million)
- Increase funding for the Tribal College Dual Credit Program (\$464,000)

NMHED strives to support effective policies that support Native American students in New Mexico. Accomplishing these priorities exemplify the power of collaboration and mutual support between state agencies and Tribal communities. The agency is honored to continue the strong collaboration and communication with Tribes to move effective student-centered policies and goals forward.

*Through the passage and signing of House Bill 2 this past legislative session, approximately **\$29 million** will be invested in programs and capital projects supporting Native American students and faculty at colleges and universities across New Mexico. That is over a **\$13 million increase** from Fiscal Year 2022. The agency recognizes that this is due to the partnership and support of Tribal leaders, Tribal education departments, and Tribal communities to secure investments for Native American students and families to prosper. Funding higher education programs, initiatives, and support systems will ensure we are filling the needs of our economy and workforce in New Mexico through a cradle-to-career lens.*

### Priority 1

#### **The New Mexico Opportunity Scholarship received a \$146 million recurring appropriation in House Bill 2.**

The Opportunity Scholarship enables New Mexicans to pursue a college degree or career training certificate, even if they are starting college for the first time later in life or going back after many years. Students may enroll part time or full time and must maintain a 2.5 GPA while in college.

#### **Highlights**

- The language in the state's budget bill, House Bill 2, ensures that the Opportunity Scholarship and the appropriated amount of **\$146 million** will be in place for future college students.
- A total of **2,520 Native American students** received the Opportunity Scholarship in Fall 2022. NMHED is actively working to increase the number of Native American students enrolled in public and Tribal colleges in New Mexico with a targeted community-based communications effort funded by the Kellogg Foundation.



**\$146  
million for  
tuition-free  
college**

**\$2.25 million  
for Tribal  
Technical  
Assistance  
Centers**

## Priority 2

**House Bill 280 – Tribal Education Technical Assistance Centers Act sponsored by Representative Derrick Lente and Senator Benny Shendo Jr. passed both House and Senate Chambers unanimously and was signed by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham.**

The Tribal Education Technical Assistance Centers are a multi-agency effort with the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department, Public Education Department, Higher Education Department, and Indian Affairs Department (IAD). Two technical assistance centers will be established in separate geographic regions in New Mexico and will focus on supporting Tribal entities, such as Tribal Education Departments and leaders, in addition to providing assistance to Bureau of Indian Education schools, school districts, and Tribal colleges.

Activities will include:

- Promoting Indigenous values, languages, and culture;
- Capacity building for programs and capital projects;
- Developing education policies; and
- Developing culturally relevant curricula and materials.

### **Highlights**

- NMHED will receive a **\$2.25 million** transfer from IAD to establish two Tribal Education Technical Assistance Centers in New Mexico.
- NMHED is deployed the request for proposals (RFP) and is seeking Tribal input and feedback from the department's state partners throughout the process. Proposals considered by NMHED must prioritize applications from Tribal colleges from New Mexico, Native American programs at New Mexico's public higher education institutions, and Tribally-controlled institutions and entities with demonstrated experience and knowledge of working with Native American students and federally recognized Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos located wholly or partially in New Mexico.

## Priority 3

**The Tribal College Dual Credit Program received an increase to create equity with non-Tribal colleges and universities in addition to serving a greater number of high school students.**

The Tribal College Dual Credit Program allows high school students to gain credits for both high school and college courses toward graduation at Tribal colleges in New Mexico. Participating Tribal colleges include Diné College, the Institute for American Indian Arts (IAIA), and Navajo Technical University (NTU). Education schools, school districts, and Tribal colleges.

### **Highlights**

- To build equity among all public colleges and universities in New Mexico, House Bill 2 appropriated **\$464,000** to the Tribal College Dual Credit program, an increase of \$200,000 over last year's budget.
- A total of 2,000 Native American students participated in the state's Dual Credit Program, including 1,004 at Tribal colleges and universities. More than half of all Native American students participating in the Dual Credit Program are doing so at Tribal colleges and universities in New Mexico.

**\$464,000  
for  
Tribal College  
Dual Credit**

# 2023 Higher Education Highlights

## Native American Graduate Credentials

The total number of Native American students that graduated from New Mexico colleges and universities increased from last academic year by 13.5%. For Academic Year 2021-2022, a total of 1,934 students graduated with the following credentials:

- 1,423 certificates and associate degrees
- 363 bachelor's degrees
- 122 master's degrees
- 

## Opportunity Scholarship

The Opportunity Scholarship enables New Mexicans to pursue a college degree or career training certificate, even if they are starting college for the first time later in life or going back after many years. Students may enroll part time or full time and must maintain a 2.5 GPA while in college. During Academic Year 2021-2022 a total of 1,206 Native American students received the Opportunity Scholarship. Opportunity Scholarship awards increased in Academic Year 2022-2023 totaling 2,520 Native American students receiving the scholarship.

## Current and Planned Programs & Services for Native American Students

### Academic Affairs

#### Completions

The total number of Native American students that graduated from New Mexico colleges and universities increased from last academic year by 13.5%. For Academic Year 2021-2022, a total of 1,934 students graduated with the following credentials.

Total Credentials Awarded to Native American Students for Academic Year 2021-2022						
Certificates <1 year	Certificates 1-2 years	Associate Degree	Certificates 2-4 years	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Professional Degree
245	545	621	12	363	122	---
Total Credentials						1,934

### Dual Credit Enrollment



New Mexico is one of fourteen states that funds dual credit course work.

Students can earn credit at both their high school and a local college or university through the state's Dual Credit Program. The program allows high school students to enroll in college-level academic or career-technical courses offered by a public or Tribal higher education institution. Currently, 27 public colleges and universities across New Mexico participate in the dual credit program, three of which are Tribal colleges: Diné College, Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA), and Navajo Technical University (NTU).

- Fall 2022 Native American student enrollment statewide: 1,383
- Fall 2022 Native American student enrollment at Tribal colleges: 405
  - o Institute of American Indian Arts: 156
  - o Navajo Technical University: 249

Within the Dual Credit Program, higher education institutions waive tuition and local school districts purchase textbooks and instructional materials that would otherwise be purchased by students. Public colleges and universities receive a portion of funding for providing dual credit courses through the higher education funding formula, also known as Instructional and General (I&G) funding. Tribal colleges receive compensation for dual credit courses through the Tribal College Dual Credit Program appropriation, which receives annual funding from the State of New Mexico. These funds are administered by the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED). For Fiscal Year 24, the fund received an appropriation of \$463,900, a \$200,000 increase from the previous year.

## Financial Aid

### Purpose

The Financial Aid Division is dedicated to helping students access the fiscal resources needed to attend college in New Mexico. The division oversees nearly \$350 million dollars in state financial aid each year for students in New Mexico through a wide variety of programs to meet the needs of our state's student population.

### Goals

The Financial Aid Division aims to:

- Inform students in New Mexico that college is attainable and affordable;
- Provide students and their families with the consumer information needed to make informed decisions about financing an education;
- Make information about our financial aid programs accessible to all who qualify;
- Collaborate with New Mexico's public colleges and universities, ensuring regulatory compliance, and good stewardship of State and Federal funds; and
- Facilitate the student financial aid application process and keep it as simple as possible.

## 2023 Financial Aid Legislative Outcomes

In the 2023 legislative session, Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and her administration prioritized the Opportunity Scholarship Act to ensure tuition-free college continues to be available to eligible New Mexico residents pursuing high-demand, high-need career training certificates, associate degrees, and bachelor's degrees at New Mexico's public or Tribal colleges and universities.

The Opportunity Scholarship will continue to support part-time and full-time students through a recurring investment of \$146 million made in FY23.

The Lottery Scholarship is another path to tuition-free college for recent high school graduates and honorably discharged veterans. The program will be sustained for the next two years with an infusion of \$194 million. In 2023, over \$353 million in state scholarships and grants was available to New Mexicans for the upcoming school year, with millions more in federal financial aid available. State financial aid programs during the Academic Year 2022-2023 provided \$8 million to Native American students.

## NEW MEXICO OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP



Eligible students can receive this scholarship whether they are a returning adult learner, a working parent, a recent high-school graduate, or someone who started college but did not finish. Offering support for part-time students is a key component to the flexibility and accessibility of the scholarship.

To date, over **46,000 Opportunity Scholarships** have been administered to students across the state. Of those students, **4,185 students identified as Native American.**

## Financial Aid Data

The New Mexico Opportunity and Lottery scholarships have provided support for Native American students enrolled in New Mexico's public and Tribal colleges and universities. For Spring 2022, 572 students were awarded the Opportunity Scholarship totaling to \$640,249; and 375 Students were awarded the Lottery Scholarship totaling to \$879,808.

## Tribal College Support

In the 2022-2023, Tribal college students continue to be eligible for the New Mexico Legislative Lottery Scholarship. Qualifying students at Tribal colleges receive the same tuition support as students at New Mexico's public four-year colleges and universities. The agency estimates this will benefit over 1,400 students per year enrolled at New Mexico Tribal colleges.

Each year, approximately \$8 million in state financial aid was distributed to over 4,500 students attending Tribal colleges. This aid includes need-based grants such as the College Affordability Grant and the State Student Incentive Grant; merit-based grants such as Teacher Preparation; Grow Your Own Teachers and State Work Study funds. Additionally, approximately over \$4 million is distributed annually to Native American students in New Mexico through federal Pell Grants.

### Contact Information



The financial aid division is here to assist students, parents and families with their questions related to state financial aid programs. There is a financial aid hotline where our experts can be reached: 1-800-297-9777 or via email at [Fin.Aid@hed.nm.gov](mailto:Fin.Aid@hed.nm.gov).



## Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) New Mexico is a seven-year initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The program aims to increase access to resources for college and career readiness for students. GEAR UP New Mexico (GUNM), a division of the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) and serves eight school districts in our state.

In School Year 2022-2023, GUNM served 6,960 students in 7th grade through the first year at a college or university. The GUNM college and career readiness program currently serves sixteen middle and high schools historically underrepresented in higher education. Four of the eight districts have a sizable Native American population, including:

- Bernalillo High School
- Capital High School (Santa Fe)
- Española High School
- Taos High School

Currently, GUNM does not collect specific Tribal affiliation information. However, of the total student population GUNM served in School Year 2022-2023, **860 (8.1%) self-identify as Native American.**

GUNM provides a range of services to students and their families, including rigorous coursework, dual credit, tutoring, credit recovery, supplemental math instruction, mentoring by college students, college visits, student leadership opportunities, college entrance test prep, and financial aid advising and counseling, including submission of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). These services are implemented based on local needs in the four school districts GUNM serves with a large enrollment of Native American students.

Tribal college visits and other post-secondary institutions visited this year include San Juan College, Dine College, Institute of American Indian Arts, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, and Navajo Technical University. On these visits, students toured the campus, learned about programs that these schools specialize in, and were exposed to education opportunities both within and outside their own communities.

### Inaugural Pathways to Success Conference

In May 2023, more than 120 school staff, Indigenous students, and their families participated in the Inaugural Pathways to Success Conference, organized by GUNM and NMHED. The conference marks the first time the GEAR UP program has hosted a conference focused on Native American students and families, which featured more than 25 organizations, including Tewa Women United and the American Indian Chamber of Commerce. The event also featured a college and career fair where students and parents got to explore education and career options available in New Mexico.

Several workshops presented the students with tools and resources to be ready for their next steps after high school, from scholarship information to hearing about how Indigenous artists started out in their careers. Thanks to the Opportunity and Lottery Scholarships, any New Mexico resident can pursue college degrees and career training tuition-free.

The conference also featured a track for parents and professionals, featuring a Native American youth panel and presentations designed to help adults better support students in reaching their goals. The program looks forward to continuing the tradition of the Pathways to Success Native American College Readiness Conference and bringing additional college and career readiness opportunities to students and families.



*"The conference was very interesting and I'm grateful for it," said "It opened a lot of new views, like how college is not as unattainable as I thought before, or how the debt that our parents went through is not going to be stapled to us in the same way. We have a lot of scholarship programs open to us so we don't have to drown in debt for the rest of our lives."*

*Geronimo Martinez,  
Española Valley High School Student*

## Adult Education

The Adult Education Division provides funding and oversight for 26 adult education and 18 literacy programs across the state. Each program offers free educational and career development services for eligible New Mexico adults. The division works collaboratively with the Indian Education Division (IED) to increase awareness of the division's work, existing service sites, and partnering with Tribal communities in meaningful and impactful ways. In 2023, the Adult Education Division presented at the Semi-Annual Government-to-Government Indian Education Summit breakout session for Tribal leaders and Tribal education directors. The division provided information about their work and the different adult education diploma pathways.



Photo courtesy of Northern New Mexico College

Adult education programs are vital to our state because they meet learners where they are. Programs provide support to strengthen core academic skills, earn a high school equivalency (HSE) credential or adult diploma, improve English language proficiency and civics knowledge, and promote workplace readiness and soft skills. To be eligible for adult education services, participants must:

### Adult Education

- Be at least 16 years of age;
- Not be enrolled or required to be enrolled in high school; and
- Fall below post-secondary skill levels on an approved assessment.

Preparation for HSE assessments is one of the most requested services that adult education programs offer. New Mexico has three pathways to high school equivalency credentials. The GED® and HiSET® are both nationally recognized, multi-part standardized tests that cover mathematical reasoning, language arts, social studies, and science subject areas. The third and newest pathway authorized in New Mexico is the National External Diploma Program, or NEDP®. This rigorous adult diploma program is a flexible alternative to testing that allows clients to work at their own pace to demonstrate mastery of academic and workforce preparation competencies.

In the 2022-2023 program year, the Adult Education Division served a total of **11,426 students**; of these, **1,048, or 9.2%, were Native American**. Two of these programs serve an entirely Native American population: Diné College located on the Navajo Nation and Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) in Albuquerque. In addition, the adult education programs at San Juan College, University of New Mexico-Gallup, and New Mexico State University-Grants serve high percentages of learners from Tribal communities.

Adult education programs guide students into higher education, career training, and the workforce. Native American adults who participated in adult education in the 2022-2023 program year made strides in their academic goals, with 338 Native American participants making a measurable skill gain. A total of 129 earned their HSE (though not all students are seeking a HSE when they participate in an adult education program). While the total number of Native American adult education students declined slightly in this program year, these students' learning outcomes were higher on average than that of their non-Native peers.

In addition to the nine adult education programs offered across the state, the NEDP can be accessed online via a "hub" that prioritizes serving Native American students and parents of young children.



Arioll Joe, a member of the Navajo Nation, earned his high school equivalency diploma at Diné College in Shiprock. Having spent more than a decade out of school, Arioll felt hesitant to begin his studies again. He credits the staff at the Diné College Adult Education for giving him the initial support he needed to persist. After completing his high school equivalency, Arioll went on to earn a welding degree and secure a family-sustaining job with a major company.

*"I would like to thank the Shiprock Diné College Adult Education staff members, family, and peers for their encouragement and inspiration for my success in the program," he said.*

## Capital Outlay

The Capital Projects Division is responsible for the stewardship and oversight of capital outlay funding to public and Tribal higher education institutions in New Mexico. This is accomplished by developing an annual capital outlay funding recommendation for consideration by the Executive and Legislature.

This process includes the approval of capital outlay projects during monthly capital outlay committee hearings, and the management of capital appropriations to community colleges and Tribal colleges and universities using the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration’s (DFA) grant management process.

The department prioritizes projects that address critical health, safety, code compliance, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and asset protection. During General Obligation (GO) Bond funding cycles, the department also considers large-scale projects which renovate existing facilities or replaces existing facilities with new, modern, and energy efficient alternatives within Instruction and General (I&G) funds eligible facilities.

Over the past two years, the department has also considered funding requests which support supplemental funding and demolition. Supplemental requests must support increases in construction and labor costs associated with previously funded projects which were recommended by the department. Requests for demolition funding are prioritized based on the ability to utilize the funding within the fiscal year in which it is secured.

### Tribal College Capital Outlay

Tribal colleges and universities play a critical role in educating the surrounding communities and ensuring culturally relevant education practices are at the forefront of their teachings. Ensuring that Tribal colleges have state-of-the-art facilities for students and their programs improves learning outcomes and student engagement. Capital projects within higher education institutions support infrastructure and new construction, which in turn benefits students and staff, the local economy, the workforce, and the communities served in New Mexico. The total capital outlay funding TCUs received for Fiscal Year 2024 is \$4,991,302. A breakdown of funding amounts and awards is broken down in the following table:



Photo courtesy of Diné College

FY24 Capital Outlay Funding for Tribal Colleges	
Diné College Math & Science Building Construction	\$1,000,000
Diné College Math & Science Building Furnishing & Equipment	\$193,000
Diné College Shiprock Agricultural Multipurpose Center Water	\$800,000
Diné College Student Services Center Design	\$50,000
Institute for American Indian Arts Key Card Access Control	\$523,302
Navajo Technical University Accessibility Improvements	\$1,700,000
Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute Campus Access Safety Improvements	\$500,000
Diné College Math & Science Building Furniture	\$75,000
Navajo Technical University Crownpoint Software & Hardware	\$75,000
Navajo Technical University Crownpoint IT Equipment	\$75,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,991,302</b>

## Private Postsecondary Schools Division

The Private Post-Secondary School Division (PPSD) provides oversight and regulation of private colleges, universities, and career institutions in New Mexico, as required by the Post-Secondary Educational Institution Act and the Interstate Distance Education Act. The division also provides prospective and current students consumer protection when a private postsecondary institution ceases its operations or fails to meet standards of quality set by the New Mexico Higher Education Department.



Photo courtesy of Burrell College

## For-Profit Private Schools Defined

A for-profit private post-secondary school is a college, university or career school that is owned and operated by a private company or business. These schools are funded primarily by tuition and fees, and they typically do not receive state or federal funding. These schools often have smaller class sizes and more individualized attention than larger public universities. They also offer a wider variety of programs and career options and can be a good option for students who are looking to get a degree quickly.

## State and Private Schools' Relationship

New Mexico has a complex relationship with private post-secondary schools. On the one hand, the state government has taken steps to regulate these schools and protect students from predatory practices. For example, the state has a Private Post-Secondary Schools Division that is responsible for ensuring that these schools are state authorized or exempted and that they meet certain academic standards. The state also has a law that caps the amount of interest that can be charged on student loans from private schools. On the other hand, the state government has also taken steps to encourage students to attend private post-secondary schools. For example, the state offers a tax credit to businesses that provide tuition assistance to their employees. The state also offers a scholarship program for students who attend private schools in rural areas.

## Enrollment numbers

The Native American student population enrolled in private post-secondary schools during Academic Year 2021-2022 in New Mexico was 1,188. This includes enrollments in private state authorized distance education institutions and private state authorized post-secondary educational institutions with physical presence in New Mexico. Enrollment percentages for programs are:

- 89.7% in certificate or associate degree programs
- 6.5% in bachelor's degree programs
- 2.6% in master's degree programs
- 1.2% in doctorate degree programs

## State Tribal Collaboration Act Training and Certification

The New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) has been working to meet 100% staff completion of the “Building Cultural Equity” training offered through the State Personnel Office in conjunction with the Indian Affairs Department. Given that there are limited course offerings and available spots for this required course, it has been a challenge to meet this goal, but the agency continues to make the training a priority for all staff members.

### Point of contact

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