



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
OFFICE OF BROADBAND ACCESS AND EXPANSION

Office of Broadband Access and Expansion
Department of Information Technology
State of New Mexico



CONNECT new mexico
Office of Broadband Access & Expansion

Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor
Jeff Lopez, Broadband Director

New Mexico Office of Broadband Access and Expansion
State Tribal Collaboration Act Compilation Report
FY 2025

Executive Summary

The New Mexico Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE or “the Office”) is responsible for coordinating broadband deployment efforts in New Mexico. Established in 2021, the Office works collaboratively with the New Mexico Nations, Pueblos and Tribes (NPT). OBAE and the Connect New Mexico Council host Tribal leadership and Tribal representation on committees and working groups to provide a forum for discussion, planning, and collaboration. As OBAE allocates state and federal funds through extensive application review, rebuttal and finalization procedures, OBAE maintains a standing policy of Tribal consultation and has ensured that Tribes are aware, supported and a part of the processes. Furthermore, OBAE requires Tribal consent before awarding State or federal funds on Tribal lands. The Office’s commitment to Tribes is reflected in activities of the Connect New Mexico Council (CNMC), the operations of the Tribal Broadband Working Group (TWG), the Broadband Equity, Access & Deployment (BEAD) process, and the Tribal Digital Equity Capacity Grant program. Technical assistance is provided by OBAE’s Project Managers, Program Coordinators and a Tribal Coordinator – a position designed to help fulfill OBAE’s goal of having a Native American/ Tribal Programs Division. In FY26, OBAE intends to continue strengthening Tribal relationships and ensuring Nations, Pueblos and Tribes in New Mexico have full access to broadband technical and funding support that aligns with each community’s vision.

OBAE’s top accomplishments for FY25:

1. Led and co-hosted a hands-on grant writing workshop with the University of New Mexico, the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration and the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department. **This capacity building collaboration equipped Tribal broadband leaders with the necessary information, time and tools to apply for state and federal digital equity grants.**
2. During FY25, **eleven (11) Tribes were awarded more than \$35 million by state and federal governments to build broadband infrastructure.**
3. **Eleven (11) Nations, Pueblos and Tribes (NPTs) successfully completed the prequalification phase for the \$675 million Broadband Equity, Access & Deployment (BEAD) program.** OBAE ensured continued communication and engagement, with Tribal leadership and their broadband teams, through high-touch outreach - including personalized emails, follow-up calls, text messages, and a dedicated presentation during an All Pueblo Council of Governors meeting. In addition, OBAE staff hand-delivered letters to reinforce awareness, access, and opportunity for participation.

The Office proposes the following three goals for FY26:

1. Plan and co-host a **New Mexico Tribal Broadband Convening** with the Department of Information Technology and the Indian Affairs Department for stakeholders to meet and receive updates regarding pertinent technical, legislative, and funding of broadband projects.
2. Continue to **engage the Urban Native Population.**
3. Continue **collaboration with other state agencies** – in particular Indian Affairs, Finance & Administration, Workforce Solutions, and the Office of Community Health Workers.

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I. AGENCY OVERVIEW/BACKGROUND

Agency Overview

The New Mexico Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE or The Office) is at the forefront of coordinating broadband deployment efforts in New Mexico (NM). Established in 2021 by the Broadband Access and Expansion Act (Senate Bill 93) and the Connect New Mexico Act (House Bill 10), the Office works closely with various stakeholders to ensure efficient and effective broadband expansion. OBAE is administratively attached to the Department of Information and Technology (DoIT) but serves as an independent entity. OBAE is charged with establishing standards for the quality of broadband service, maintaining the online NM Broadband Map, as well as creating and maintaining a repository for broadband data/information. The Office is required to provide technical and planning assistance with a focus on regional planning, form an advisory committee inclusive of state/local/tribal entities and the public, identify and develop federal and other funding sources, and support regional broadband planning and engagement.

As part of our mission, OBAE collaborates with the Connect New Mexico Council and oversees the Connect New Mexico Fund, which received significant appropriations totaling \$100 million (Senate Bill 377). OBAE also administers the federal Broadband Equity, Access & Deployment Program (BEAD) which allocated \$675 million to connect unserved and underserved households and small businesses.

Through these legislative mandates and strategic partnerships, OBAE is dedicated to driving equitable broadband solutions, bridging the digital divide, and enhancing connectivity for all New Mexicans. OBAE is committed to working towards a more connected and equitable future for our state.

OBAE's multifaceted role includes spearheading grant funding programs; providing technical assistance across the broadband ecosystem; convening stakeholders; coordinating with other federal, state and local agencies to solve challenges; engage in analytics and research to identify gaps and opportunities; and run the Statewide Education Network.

Jeff Lopez is the Director for New Mexico's Office of Broadband Access and Expansion. He guides the OBAE team in orchestrating statewide initiatives to proactively secure and allocate more than \$800 million in federal and state broadband funding. Additionally, he champions efforts to bolster New Mexico's connectivity on a statewide scale. Jeff brings more than 13 years of federal experience in support of New Mexicans. Prior to this appointment, he served as senior policy advisor to U.S. Senator Ben Ray Luján. Lopez managed the Senator's role as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Communications, Media, and Broadband and worked directly on legislation that created the federal BEAD program.

Lopez also coordinated the Senator's bipartisan work to create the Universal Service Fund (USF) Working Group which is considering potential changes to the Fund managed by the Federal Communications Commission.

Aquiles "Alex" Trujillo serves as OBAE's Deputy Director. Trujillo brings 25 years of broadband and telecommunications leadership, including previous experience with OBAE in 2022, where he directed the statewide Technical Assistance Program and authored key components of New Mexico's Middle Mile Strategy.

Agency Mission Statement

Mission: Passionate leadership to drive bold, equitable, equitable and inclusive broadband solutions.

Vision: Achieve enterprising, affordable broadband solutions for New Mexicans that honor the state's rich heritage and elevate quality of life for all.

Values: Seven values defining OBAE's people, processes, planning, and programs

- Courageous
- Honest
- Curious
- Innovative
- Respectful
- Collaborative
- Analytically rigorous

II. AGENCY EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT POLICY

OBAE follows the policies set by the Department of Information and Technology, since it is administratively attached to the Office. DoIT's **Tribal Collaboration and Communication Policy** was created in 2012 and revised in May 2019. The purpose of the policy is to foster, facilitate, and strengthen positive government-to-government relations between the Department and New Mexico Nations, Pueblos and Tribes. The following are the Department's six policies and a description of OBAE's efforts for the past year.

5.1: DoIT will comply with Section 11-18 NMSA 1978 State-Tribal Collaboration Act.

EFFORT: The Department and OBAE support the requirements set forth in the State Tribal Collaboration Act (STCA).

5.2: DoIT will make reasonable efforts to collaborate with Native Nations to develop and implement any and all DoIT policies, agreements, and programs that relate to Native Nations' needs for, and utilization of, information technologies.

EFFORT: The Department engages the Tribal Community in three main areas: DoIT Public Safety Communications, the NM Geospatial Advisory Committee (NM GAC), and the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE), including the Connect New Mexico Council (CNMC).

5.3: The Indian Affairs Department (IAD) and DoIT will provide "Cultural Competency Training" and other topic specific training, technical assistance and support to Qualified Employees so that Qualified Employees may effectively interface with Native Nations.

EFFORT: All DoIT employees with professional involvement with Tribal entities ("Qualified Employees") are required to attend the *Building Cultural Equity with Native Nations* (BCENN) Training. A list is maintained and kept current by the Department's Tribal Liaison and Human Resources staff. Each year, usually in July, the Department Tribal Liaison, on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary, sends an email to all employees requesting an update from staff about their professional involvement with Tribal entities. Those with professional engagement with the Tribes are asked to contact the Department's Tribal Liaison to arrange for required enrollment in the "State Tribal Collaboration Act Cultural Competency" training offered by the State Personnel Office (SPO). The Department's Human Services training representative may then coordinate with SPO to reserve seats in an upcoming class, and tracks enrollment and confirms completion by collecting certificates. When there are no scheduled offerings, staff add the course to their "Planned

Learning” schedule in the SHARE Employee Learning Management system. OBAE employees who completed the training are: Mark Jacobs, Richard Govea, Katherine Irvin, Eric Rodgers, Andy Exell, Andrew Wilder, Michael Curtis, Neala Kruger, Eric Moores, and (Valerie) Victory Quintana.

5.4: Qualified Employees will participate in ongoing professional development and in-service Tribal protocol training for building and improving their knowledge awareness and cultural competence skills.

EFFORT: Qualified Employees are encouraged to participate in professional development opportunities and collaborative meetings alongside NM Tribes, as well as participate in events hosted by NM Tribes. In addition, OBAE has appointed their own Tribal Liaison to the Indian Affairs Department (IAD), (Valerie) Victory Quintana. Both Liaisons and OBAE’s contracted Tribal Engagement Specialist and Broadband Consultant participated in periodic meetings requested by the Indian Affairs Department, the monthly Tribal Leadership meetings, and the annual Governor’s State Tribal Leadership Summit in support of DoIT’s Cabinet Secretary and (then) Acting Director, Manny Barreras.

5.5: The Tribal Liaison will: (a) serve as DoIT’s primary contact person with the IAD and Native Nations; (b) maintain and manage communications between DoIT, the IAD and Native Nations; (c) work with the IAD and Native Nations to improve state-tribal interactions; (d) work to resolve issues that may arise between the State of New Mexico, the IAD and Native Nations in order to improve DoIT’s delivery of services to the IAD and Native Nations; and (e) oversee and manage the work performed by Qualified Employee(s) with respect to their business relationship(s) with the Native Nations.

EFFORT: The Department designated Natalie Runyan as its Tribal Liaison and OBAE appointed their own Tribal Liaison, (Valerie) Victory Quintana. Both Liaisons completed the state-sponsored Cultural Equity training and have been keeping up with the responsibilities of the Liaison role.

5.6: No later than June 30 of each year, the Tribal Liaison will submit a Report for review and approval by the DoIT Secretary. In the event the Secretary approves the Report, no later than July 31 of each year the Tribal Liaison will submit the Report to the IAD on DoIT’s behalf.

EFFORT: The Department makes every reasonable effort to comply.

III. PROGRAMS THAT COLLABORATE WITH TRIBES

OBAE is committed to providing dependable, affordable and equitable internet access to all 23 sovereign Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes (NPTs), while respecting their unique needs, sovereignty and cultural diversity. The Office works diligently to ensure its dedication to enhancing New Mexico Tribal connectivity through infrastructure development, adoption programs, and effective digital resource utilization.

Programs and funding that collaborate with Tribes are as follows:

- i. **The Connect New Mexico Council** (CNMC or “the Council”) is committed to enhancing broadband access and digital inclusion in the state. Through its working groups focusing on infrastructure, digital literacy, data analysis, policy advocacy and economic development, the Council collaborates with Tribes and other stakeholders to bridge the digital divide statewide. All appointments to the CNM Council have expired and the Council awaits new/renewed appointments, from the Indian Affairs Department. Information about the Council and its various working groups can be found on OBAE’s website, [CNM Council & Working Groups - CONNECT NEW MEXICO](#).

- ii. The Council encompasses six (6) working groups, one being the **NM Tribal Broadband Working Group (TWG)**. TWG's mission is to assist and support NM NPTs in developing and deploying broadband infrastructure through Tribal consultation and engagement that leads to expanded access to health care, education, and economic opportunities. This includes strategies for access to funding, technical assistance, project management support, workforce development and sustainability in ways that protect Tribal Sovereignty. The TWG conducted monthly meetings in FY25, averaging 20 attendees per meeting. TWG is Chaired by Godfrey Enjady (Mescalero Apache) and Co-Chaired by Stephine Poston (Sandia Pueblo). OBAE's Tribal Coordinator & Liaison, Victory Quintana, supports the TWG with agenda planning, arranging speakers and virtual meeting operations. Sign-up is open to anyone and is available on OBAE's Tribal Resources section of its website, [New Mexico Office of Broadband Access & Expansion \(govdelivery.com\)](#).
- iii. **The Tribal Broadband Resource Library** was developed in collaboration with OBAE, and the NM Pueblos of Cochiti, Laguna and Jemez. Supported by the Tribal Broadband Task Force, it demonstrates New Mexico's dedication to enhancing Tribal connectivity through infrastructure development, adoption programs, and effective digital resource utilization. OBAE is committed to providing dependable, affordable, and equitable Internet access to all 23 Sovereign Nations, Pueblos and Tribes respecting their unique needs and cultural diversity. The web page serves as a comprehensive resource center tailored for Tribal entities. It offers valuable information, including federal and state funding statistics, workforce development resources, and funding opportunities for connectivity initiatives, [Tribal Broadband Resource Library - CONNECT NEW MEXICO \(nm.gov\)](#).
- iv. **OBAE's Tribal Broadband Newsletter** serves as an additional information resource for NM's Nations, Pueblos and Tribes, as well as stakeholders. In FY25, there were 23 newsletters published and distributed widely. Sign-up for the email distribution list is open to anyone and is available on OBAE's Tribal Resources section of its website, [Tribal Broadband Resource Library - CONNECT NEW MEXICO \(nm.gov\)](#).
- v. **The Statewide Education Network (SEN)** provides improved connectivity and expert network management by being the foundation for the state-coordinated "middle mile," or "broadband highway." Its rationale is to optimize connectivity to schools, allow sharing of resources, leverage and maximize E-rate funding, reduce administrative burden and cybersecurity risks, and more. Phase I kicked off during Q1 of FY25 and included nodes in Farmington, Albuquerque, Socorro, Las Cruces, Las Vegas, Santa Fe (and Gallup, Roswell, Silver City, Clovis). More information about the SEN can be found on OBAE's website, [SEN - CONNECT NEW MEXICO \(nm.gov\)](#).
- vi. The objective of the **Connect New Mexico Pilot Program ("Pilot Program")**, funded by the American Rescue Plan Act's (ARPA) Capital Projects Fund (CPF), is to foster the deployment of broadband access across unserved and underserved areas in New Mexico through sustainable, scalable networks and financially viable business plans and serve the comprehensive community with high-quality, reasonably priced solutions; that is, ensure immediate access to at least 100/20 megabits per second (Mbps) download/upload speeds statewide, which can be scaled to 100/100 Mbps speeds in the future.

During the 2025 Legislative Session, Governor Michelle Lujan-Grisham signed House Bill 2 into law, which included an expenditure extension for long-term broadband projects. The

Connect NM Pilot Program is one of many non-reverting funds whose expenditures are now extended to the end of FY26.

The Office awarded a total of \$117 million in grant funding to twenty-one (21) broadband infrastructure projects to deploy 1,400 fiber miles and connect 26,000 premises. **Five Tribal communities: Pueblos of Jemez, Laguna, Nambe, Santa Ana and Santo Domingo, were awarded a total of \$35.7 million to complete 340 Fiber miles and connect 3,483 unserved premises by the end of 2026.** Three of those Pueblos are in final design planning, with one beginning construction soon. The Pueblo of Jemez is now in its second of three phases of construction and plans to be operational by the end of the year. One other ARPA project, by ISP provider Oso Internet **serving Ramah Navajo community of Pine Meadows, is now substantially complete and starting to provide service to customers.**

OBAE's Project Management Team and ARPA Project Coordinator provide technical assistance to those awarded Tribes, while OBAE's Tribal Coordinator and (contracted) Tribal Engagement Specialist bridge communication and provide support, as needed. Details and updates about these projects can be found on the Connect New Mexico website, [OBAE Funding - CONNECT NEW MEXICO \(nm.gov\)](https://www.obae.nm.gov/funding-connect-new-mexico).

- vii. **The Connect New Mexico Fund (CNMF)** was established in 2021 by the legislature through the Connect New Mexico Act. OBAE successfully encouraged NPTs to respond to multiple CNMF Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs), which aim to promote sustainable networks, offering reliable, affordable high-speed solutions for comprehensive community coverage and digital inclusion. The program subsidizes network deployment for underserved areas, aiming to provide broadband access to residents, businesses, and institutions. The CNMF encompasses multiple funding opportunities such as the Connect New Mexico Program, the Grant Writing, Engineering & Planning program, and the Student Connect Grant Assistance Program. You can find more information about these and other programs under the Connect New Mexico Fund on OBAE's website, [Connect NM Fund](https://www.obae.nm.gov/funding-connect-new-mexico).
- a. **Connect New Mexico Program** grant recipients include seven entities, some of which will handle multiple projects. This \$70 million state-led broadband grant program is designed to expand high-speed internet access and deploy infrastructure to unserved and underserved communities. An underserved area is one that has access to a broadband connection less than 100 download/20 Mbps upload. The tribal grantees include Isleta Pueblo, Picuris Pueblo and San Ildefonso Services, the business arm of the San Ildefonso Pueblo, awarding more than \$15 million to NPTs.
- b. OBAE announced ten (10) Tribal awardees to receive state grants as part of the **Grant Writing, Engineering & Planning (GWEP) program**, totaling \$1.3 million. The GWEP awards are used for broadband projects requesting funds for grant writing, engineering and planning. These grants can also be used to obtain other larger grants, like the federal Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program. Once NPTs were awarded, **OBAE's Tribal Coordinator, Tribal Engagement Specialist and the Project Manager overseeing GWEP coordinated a workshop that provided an overview of the award, discussed reporting expectations, and shared important timelines.** This hands-on approach was appreciated by the awardees that suggested this level of technical assistance continues.

Entities may still apply for GWEP grants, and OBAE continues to encourage NPTs to apply, as well as offer technical assistance for filling out applications and submission. More information about GWEP is available on OBAE's website, [OBAE Funding - CONNECT NEW MEXICO \(nm.gov\)](https://www.obae.nm.gov).

- c. **The Student Connect Grant Assistance Program** offers up to \$2.49 million in grant assistance per project proposal. Student Connect is designed to connect rural students, and projects must be able to demonstrate a swift solution to an urgent connectivity (no 5G availability) issue for students (and qualifying teachers/staff of participating districts). The program has provided more than \$23 million to New Mexico for eligible projects.

Internet Service Providers will offer free internet at speeds of 100/20mbps for three years to participating school districts in their designated project proposal area. Close to 4200 students, teachers, school staff are expected to enroll in the program. Awarded ISPs have reported being able to provide connectivity as soon as four months from their date of award notification, making it the fastest program to be executed for the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion. Ohkay Owingeh was awarded more than \$2 million. More information about Student Connect is available on OBAE's website, [Student Connect](https://www.obae.nm.gov).

- viii. **The Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program** is OBAE's largest funding program for broadband deployment. Of the \$42.45 billion in federal dollars to expand high-speed internet access to all 50 states, New Mexico was awarded \$675 million to fund planning, infrastructure deployment and adoption of broadband to “unserved” parts of the state. By the end of FY25, OBAE had completed several phases of government approval, including submission and approval of the 5-Year Plan and Volumes I and II of the Initial Proposal (IPV1 and IPV2). At the end of FY25, OBAE was in the process of completing the subgrantee selection process when the federal government released the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice, which instituted broad reforms to the program and required OBAE to restart the subgrantee selection process, which will extend into FY26.

Upon the approval of the IPV2 in July 2024, OBAE was approved to begin the Subgrantee Selection Process, and the first half of FY25 was spent completing other key dependencies to enable OBAE to begin the selecting subgrantees. Throughout Q1 and Q2 of FY25, OBAE submitted to NTIA and completed curing the results of the Challenge Process, conducted a Request for Comment process and finalized the design of the Project Area Units, and completed key documents and materials for the Subgrantee Selection Process, including the NOFO, application, scoring guide, online application portal, and other materials.

As outlined in NM's IPV1, the Challenge Process provided a structured framework for stakeholders to contest broadband service classifications. It involved multiple phases over approximately 14 weeks, including publication of eligible locations, submission of challenges, rebuttals by those challenged, verification of evidence, and final determination by OBAE. Challenges were made by nonprofit organizations, local governments, tribal nations, and broadband service providers. Those Challenges covered aspects like community anchor institution eligibility, existing broadband service listings, enforceable commitments, and planned service. Included during this timeframe, “Office Hours” were made available by OBAE's BEAD Coordinator. OBAE also hired independent contractors to provide support to stakeholders who requested assistance, published BEAD Challenge FAQ's

and created a BEAD Challenge Resource Guide. This and other resources ensured transparency, fairness, and evidence-based decision making; all can be found on OBAE's website. OBAE submitted the Challenge Process Results in August of 2024 and received approval in April 2025.

The Project Area Units (i.e., maps) were a collaborative effort between DoIT and OBAE. Project Area Units (PAUs) are for the BEAD program, regions for which applicants will bid for BEAD funding. Draft PAUs were published in June and OBAE opened a public comment period in Q1 of FY25. **All Tribal lands are considered their own PAUs.** This facilitated the Tribal consent requirement for projects on Tribal Lands. For the rest of the state, OBAE used various existing administrative boundaries and telecom infrastructure data to define PAUs. Generally, one school district is one PAU. Some very small school districts were combined, while some very large school districts were further subdivided using other existing boundaries like census tracts. After adopting changes based on the Request for Comment process, the final PAUs were published in December of 2024. More information on PAUs can be found on OBAE's website.

In Q3 and Q4 of 2025, OBAE launched the subgrantee selection process. After releasing the NOFO and other application materials in late December 2024, OBAE accepted applications for the BEAD program from January 3 to March 24, 2025. **OBAE received 67 applications from 18 applicants, including three Tribal applicants.** The applications OBAE received impacted 74% of eligible locations in the state. During April and May, OBAE completed the scoring and evaluation process, which involved detailed mapping, financial, and technical analysis, and had begun the curing process with the top ranked applicants.

On June 6, 2025, NTIA released the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice. The policy notice instituted broad reforms to the program and required all states to restart the subgrantee selection process and implement a "technology neutral" approach to subgrantee selection. The final weeks of FY25 were spent analyzing policy notice and implementing the first key requirements for compliance with the Policy Notice. The Policy Notice requires states to complete the subgrantee selection process and submit their final proposals within 90 days, or by September 4, 2025. You can find all the latest updates posted on OBAE's BEAD page at, [BEAD](#).

- ix. In January 2025, OBAE launched the **Promoting Internet Needs of New Mexicans (PINON) Grant**, a subgrant program that was to be funded with New Mexico's \$8.67 million Digital Equity Capacity Grant allocation. The PINON Grant intended to offer monetary awards ranging from \$25,000 to \$500,000 to support subgrantees in enhancing their digital opportunity programs tailored for populations that are particularly vulnerable to digital exclusion. OBAE's commitment to thoughtful Tribal engagement ensured the support of broadband and digital equity needs of Nations, Pueblos and Tribes. The Office accomplished this through various means to include but not limited to listening sessions, presenting to individual Tribes, the All Indian Pueblo Council of Governors, and the Eight Northern Indian Pueblo Council Inc.

OBAE's Tribal Coordinator and Liaison and (contracted) Tribal Engagement Specialist coordinated and co-hosted hands-on grant writing workshops with the University of New Mexico, the New Mexico Department of Finance Administration and the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department in preparation for state and federal digital equity funding. This prioritization of technical assistance offered NPTs high-touch, wraparound support that

equipped Tribes to submit strong applications, execute broadband visions and sustain long-term connectivity. More than 90% of NPTs that participated in the workshops submitted applications for both federal and state digital equity grants.

Unfortunately, OBAE received a notification from the U.S. Department of Commerce that it had terminated the Digital Equity Capacity Grant effective May 9, 2025. As such, further implementation of the PINON grant was put on hold.

OBAE received 39 applications from 39 distinct organizations totaling more than \$14 million. Of the 39 applications, 4 were from Tribal communities, while an additional 14 entities proposed serving Indian Country. More information about PINON can be found on OBAE's website, [Digital Equity - CONNECT NEW MEXICO \(nm.gov\)](https://nm.gov/digital-equity).

IV. OBAE's TOP 3 ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING FY25

1. Led and co-hosted a hands-on grant writing workshop with the University of New Mexico, the NM Department of Finance and Administration and the NM Indian Affairs Department. **This capacity building collaboration equipped Tribal broadband representatives with the necessary tools to apply for state and federal digital equity grants.**
2. During FY25, **eleven (11) Tribes were awarded more than \$35 million by state and federal governments to build broadband infrastructure.**
3. **Eleven (11) Nations, Pueblos and Tribes (NPTs) successfully completed the prequalification phase, positioning them to apply for the \$675 million Broadband Equity, Access & Deployment (BEAD) program.** OBAE ensured continued communication and engagement with Tribal leadership and their broadband teams, through high-touch outreach, including personalized emails, follow-up calls and text messages, and a dedicated presentation during an All Pueblo Council of Governors meeting. In addition, hand-delivered letters were provided to reinforce awareness, access and opportunity for participation.

V. OBAE's TOP 3 GOALS/OBJECTIVES FOR FY26

The Office proposes the top three goals/objectives for FY26:

1. Plan and host a **New Mexico Tribal Broadband Convening to provide** valuable opportunity for stakeholders to meet and receive updates on pertinent technical, legislative, and funding information on broadband.
2. Continue to **engage the Urban Native Population.**
3. Continue **collaboration with other state agencies** – in particular Indian Affairs, Finance & Administration, Workforce Solutions, and the Office of Community Health Workers.

VI. OTHER OBAE TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORTIVE ACTIVITIES

Tribal consultation, engagement, support and investment are priorities and essential to the overall success of statewide broadband initiatives. Below are other Tribal engagements and supportive activities OBAE conducted throughout the year.

- OBAE has five **Project Managers (PM)** and a PM Bureau Chief on staff. They spend time directly engaging with Tribal entities to provide a variety of resources including support for implementing

grants already awarded and planning for the future. The level of engagement varies by project type and individual need.

- OBAE continued to invest in a **Tribal Engagement Specialist** who supports the CNMC Tribal Working Group, Tribal meetings, Tribal convenings, and program working sessions, specific to NPTs. Other assistance included directing Tribal community visits and leadership meetings, the maintenance of a comprehensive Tribal contact database and the creation and distribution of a regular Tribal Broadband newsletter, working alongside and training OBAE's **Tribal Broadband Coordinator**.
- OBAE sends out **letters to the Governors at the beginning of every year** to congratulate newly appointed/elected Governors and share how NPTs have contributed to the overall growth and success of improving access to high-speed, reliable internet. The letters highlight the progress of NPTs from the year before and what to expect in the new year. This helps orient the new leadership about what their community is doing in the world of broadband, as well as show remaining leaders what successes have come from their participation from the year(s) prior.
- The Office's Tribal Broadband Coordinator participated in the **Albuquerque Urban Native Advocacy Messaging training** held in Santa Fe during the 2025 State Legislative Session. There, she learned more about the Albuquerque Urban Indigenous Resource Center, the Native Leaders Collective's (NLC) community-driven plan, and was able to grow her network in relation to the Urban Native population and organizations who support them.
- The Indian Affairs Department hosted the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) Awareness Day. They had various speakers, presentations, a Shawl Ceremony & Family Honoring, workshops and held an Honor Walk, which OBAE's Tribal Coordinator fully participated in.
- OBAE partnered with the Santa Fe Community College to coordinate **Free Fiber Optic Technician Trainings**. Encouraging Tribes to register, they are hands-on intensive programs that gave students the opportunity to earn three certifications from the Fiber Optic Association that are recognized throughout the world and aligned to industry standards. Credentials are valid for three years, after which they can be renewed by the student. Students earned the following certifications: Certified Fiber Optic Technician, Certified Fiber Optic Specialist in Splicing, and Certified Fiber Optic Specialists in Testing and Maintenance.
- OBAE's Tribal Broadband Coordinator attended the **Tribal Broadband Bootcamp that was hosted by the Pueblo of Jemez**. With other attendees, she participated in a site visit that toured the Big Byte Data Center in Albuquerque and learned hands-on cable crimping and other operations related to fiber optic technologies, what Digital Equity means for the broadband workplace and why it's important, and experienced an informational tour of Jemez Pueblo's fiber-to-the-home construction, infrastructure, deployment and operations.
- **Department of Health's (DOH) Community Healthcare Worker/Representative (CHW/CHR) Division invited OBAE to present** to their CHRs about Digital Equity, Digital Navigators and how CHRs and CHWs can become certified as Digital Navigators.
- Department Secretary and Acting Director Manny Barreras **participated in the opening State Tribal Leaders Summit Panel** where he presented (federal) funding updates to all Tribal Leaders. He responded to questions and connected them with OBAE's Tribal Coordinator/Liaison and with contracted other team members, specifically contracted for NPT outreach and engagement.

- Hired NTIA's former Broadband Program Specialist and Tribal Connectivity Coordinator, Gabe Montoya, who now serves as OBAE's (contracted) **Broadband Consultant**. He also provides coordination support for NPT broadband deployment.
- The Tribal Working Group (TWG) was present at both **Broadband Day** and **American Indian Day** at the State Capitol during the 2025 Legislature. TWG provided information about how to connect to its meetings, the Tribal Broadband Newsletter, and (broadband) funding opportunities for Tribes.
- OBAE's Tribal Coordinator attended the **National Tribal Telecommunications Association Summit** during Q2 and Q4 of FY25. The event provided a forum for Tribally owned companies and those who work in the telecommunications industry to share knowledge and opportunities, discuss effects of regulation, and address issues affecting Tribal telecommunication companies and customers on Tribal lands. OBAE's Tribal Coordinator was asked to be on a panel of State Broadband Offices to discuss New Mexico's progress and answer questions from attendees.
- OBAE has **regular ongoing, weekly contact** with Tribal leaders, Tribal IT/broadband staff and Tribal consultants in areas of technical assistance, project management, grant writing, training and general educational sharing.
- OBAE participates in **monthly meetings with Navajo Nation** representatives. OBAE regularly presents at those monthly meetings for Broadband Initiatives and answers any questions that participants may have.
- OBAE regularly attends the **All Pueblo Council of Governors** and presented broadband updates, specifically the BEAD PAU process to the Council.
- OBAE is a member of the **NTIA Tribal Broadband Leaders Network**, sharing resources and information to NM Nations, Pueblos and Tribes.
- OBAE's Tribal Broadband Coordinator and Tribal Liaison attends **regularly scheduled meetings hosted by the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department**.

VII. KEY NAMES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Jeff Lopez, Director
Office of Broadband Access and Expansion
505-476-3622
Jeff.Lopez@connect.nm.gov

Aquiles (Alex) Trujillo, Deputy Director
Office of Broadband Access and Expansion
505-670-3904
Aquiles.Trujillo@connect.nm.gov

Valerie (Victory) Quintana, Tribal Broadband Coordinator & Tribal Liaison
Office of Broadband Access and Expansion
505-699-6050
Valerie.Quintana@connect.nm.gov

Signature: 
Jeff Lopez, Director
Office of Broadband Access & Expansion

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