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DoIT & Tribal Partnerships: Strengthening Connectivity Across New Mexico

A phone call that goes through. An alert that arrives on time. New Mexico's Tribal communities know these small acts of reliable connection can mean the difference between an emergency reaching help in time or not. That reality drives one of the most exciting and meaningful areas of the New Mexico Department of Information Technology's (DoIT) mission: a growing partnership with the state's Nations, Pueblos and Tribes that pairs modern technology with longstanding relationships to improve communication, safety and digital resilience for Tribal communities statewide.

DoIT's collaboration with Tribal governments is grounded in the State Tribal Collaboration Act (STCA), adopted in 2019, which guides how we communicate and consult with Tribal partners. It remains a trusted framework ensuring that conversations happen early, openly, and respectfully — always honoring Tribal sovereignty and the unique needs of each community. This foundation helped make Fiscal Year 2026 one of the strongest years yet for Tribal-state technology collaboration.

A Statewide Network Reimagined: Introducing NMWINS

New Mexico has relied on the Digital Trunked Radio System (NM DTRS) to support public safety communications across the state for decades. As its reach expanded, touching more communities and playing a critical role during emergencies, it became clear that the name no longer reflected its importance. When commercial networks failed during crises like the Ruidoso wildfires, this system remained an operational lifeline for first responders and public safety agencies across New Mexico. The system had grown into something larger: a statewide communications backbone, not just a radio platform.

To reflect this evolution, DoIT has renamed the system the **New Mexico Wireless Interoperability Network, or NMWINS** — a name that communicates its purpose more clearly: a unified, wireless, interoperable network supporting every corner of the state. One network one mission, statewide.

NMWINS signals New Mexico's commitment to modern, mission-critical communications. It aligns with national terminology used by federal partners, strengthens our position for long-term investment, and ensures the public understands that this network is essential statewide infrastructure.

Growing Tribal Participation Across New Mexico

One of the most meaningful successes of the past year has been the continued growth in Tribal participation in NMWINS. Thanks to full subsidization through FY2027, Tribal governments can adopt and use the system at no cost, eliminating financial barriers and making it easier for communities to access reliable public safety communication.



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Tribal use of NMWINS continues to expand, with several Pueblos already actively connected to the network — including Sandia, Isleta, Santa Ana, Jemez, Cochiti, and Zia Pueblo. Their engagement demonstrates a clear eagerness to adopt technology that strengthens emergency response and day-to-day operations.

DoIT is also in active discussions with other Tribal Nations, including Navajo Nation, Taos Pueblo, Laguna Pueblo, and Zuni Pueblo, whose leaders are exploring how NMWINS can improve coverage, resilience, and safety for their communities. These conversations reflect a shared vision for a more interconnected statewide system and a desire to plan for long-term technology integration.

A Backbone That Serves Every New Mexican

NMWINS continues to grow rapidly. Today, the system supports more than 95 agencies and over 23,000 individual users. With more than 1,400 distinct talk groups and 101 active sites — plus 51 more currently under development — the network is on track to achieve approximately 92% statewide mobile coverage once the final locations are added.

This expansion strengthens coordinated emergency response, daily operational communication, and the ability for Tribal, local, state, and federal teams to work together more effectively during critical incidents.

What this means is that during an emergency or crisis, multiple agencies can respond together and communicate seamlessly on a single, unified statewide network. By operating on one system instead of many disparate channels, responders can coordinate faster, share critical information in real time, reduce delays, and get the right support exactly where it's needed.

Strengthening Digital Safety Through Cybersecurity Support

While communication infrastructure is essential, equally critical is protecting communities from digital threats. DoIT's Office of Cybersecurity (OCS) plays a vital role in this space, providing services to 20 Tribal governments and multiple Native-serving K-12 schools across the state. These efforts include monitoring external digital exposure, conducting vulnerability and risk assessments, offering phishing education, and performing penetration testing — all aimed at supporting secure and resilient digital environments.

OCS continues to grow these partnerships, ensuring Tribal communities receive support that meets their evolving needs and aligns with statewide cybersecurity priorities.

Broadband, Emergency Planning, and Shared Information

The Office of Broadband and Expansion is administratively attached to DoIT and supports Tribal communities through statewide broadband coordination, participation in emergency communications planning, and proactive information-sharing. By providing maps, system plans, and expansion details,



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Tribal governments can make informed decisions about participation, coverage needs, and future technology integration.

Although DoIT does not receive Tribal-specific funding, the full subsidization of NMWINS participation through FY2027 ensures that Tribal access remains fully supported.

Highlights From FY2026

Over the past year, DoIT saw continued growth in Tribal participation in NMWINS, expanded cybersecurity support to Tribal governments, and deeper collaboration with several communities including Taos Pueblo, Laguna Pueblo, Navajo Nation, and Zuni Pueblo. These ongoing partnerships show a strong desire across Tribal and state leadership to build a unified, resilient, forward-looking technology environment.

Looking Ahead

Our focus moving forward includes expanding NMWINS coverage, growing cybersecurity services as resources permit, improving internal awareness of STCA responsibilities, and building durable relationships with Tribal leadership that keep communication open and collaboration strong.