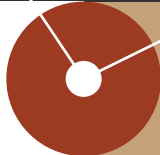
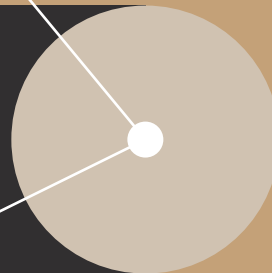
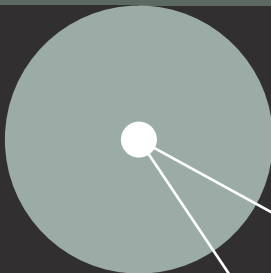


State Tribal Collaboration Act Report



FY2026



Executive Summary

The New Mexico Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE or “the Office”) leads statewide efforts to ensure every community has access to reliable, affordable, high-speed internet. Through strategic planning, targeted investment, data-driven mapping, and close collaboration with local, tribal, and industry partners, OBAE works to expand infrastructure, close service gaps, and advance long-term digital opportunity. Its core responsibilities include coordinating broadband deployment, managing state and federal funding programs, and shaping policy that supports sustainable connectivity across New Mexico.

OBAE’s partnership with Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes (NPTs) includes dedicated funding opportunities, technical and planning assistance, and collaborative grant programs. OBAE’s work with the NPTs is grounded in the State-Tribal Collaboration Act (NMSA 1978, Section 11-18) and is woven into all its strategic priorities as outlined in the “2026-2028 Three Year Statewide Broadband Plan.” As OBAE administers state and federal broadband programs, it maintains a standing policy of Tribal consultation and requires Tribal consent before awarding funds for projects on Tribal lands. OBAE’s commitment to NPTs is demonstrated through its work to ensure Tribal participation and leadership across grant programs and working groups, especially through the Connect New Mexico Council (CNMC) and its Tribal Working Group, creating dedicated spaces for consultation, planning, and partnership while ensuring NPTs have a strong voice in statewide broadband decisions.

Over the past year, OBAE strengthened government-to-government relationships through consistent communication with Tribal leadership and broadband/IT teams, providing personalized outreach, and participating in key meetings such as the All Pueblo Council of Governors, the 19 Pueblos District Quarterly Meeting, and the Navajo Northern Agency Council.

OBAE’S TOP ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR FY26:

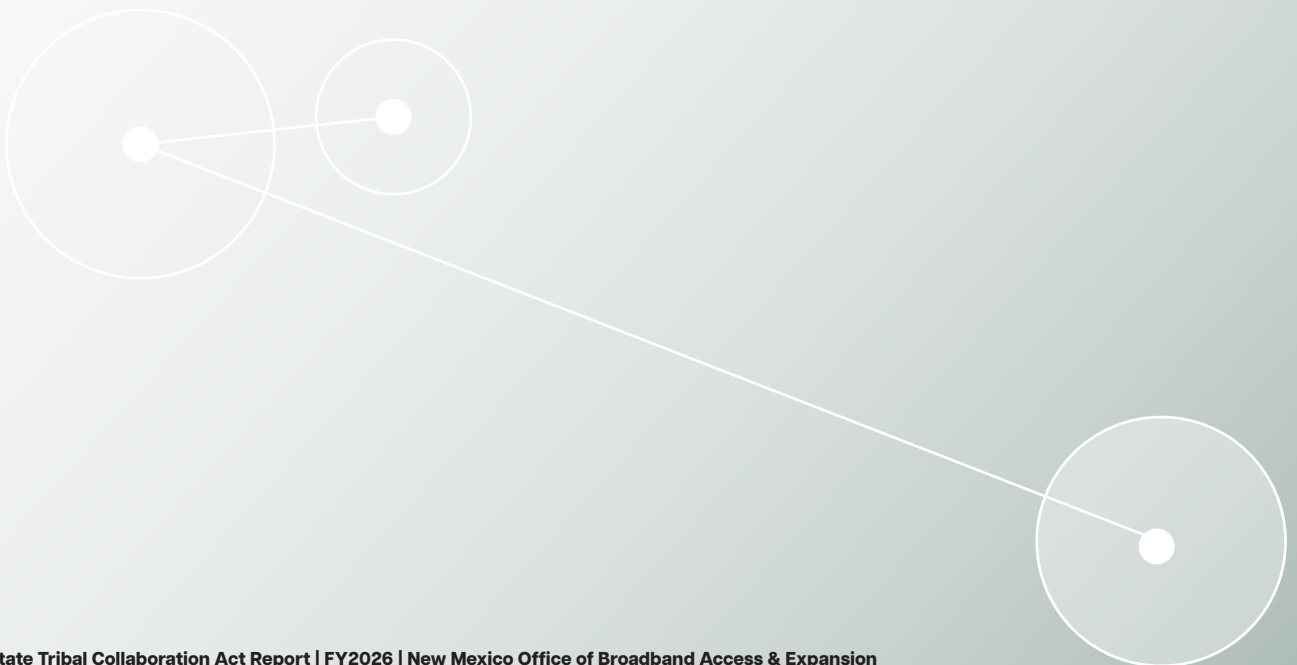
1. Led and co-hosted the New Mexico Tribal Broadband Convening with DoIT and IAD in August 2025, creating a forum for Tribal stakeholders to hear funding updates, and advise OBAE on ways to enhance Tribal engagement.
2. Championed the Low-Income Telecommunications Assistance Program (enacted into law in 2026) and hosted an informational workshop designed to guide NPT ISPs through the process of becoming an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) to enable them to receive the subsidies offered through the program.
3. Developed OBAE’s Three-Year Broadband Plan with NPT engagement included in every Strategic Priority.
4. OBAE and the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions offered the first six classes of a workforce development program offering internationally recognized, hands-on fiber-optic certification training in rural and Tribal regions where broadband infrastructure is being deployed.

As a result of strong Tribal participation and partnership, OBAE has awarded over \$64 million to NPTs with state and federal funding to build broadband infrastructure, with nearly \$150 million in additional funds to be awarded to NPTs in FY27 as a part of the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program.

OBAE remains committed to strengthening government-to-government relationships and advancing broadband solutions that honor Tribal sovereignty and ensure Tribal communities remain central to New Mexico’s digital future. In FY27, OBAE intends to continue strengthening Tribal relationships and ensuring NPTs in New Mexico have full access to broadband technical and funding support that aligns with each community’s vision.

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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. Established in 2021, OBAE is an independent agency administratively attached to the Department of Information Technology (DoIT). The legislature charged OBAE with establishing standards for the quality of broadband service, maintaining the online New Mexico Broadband Map, as well as creating and maintaining a repository for broadband data and 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, and Tribal entities and the public, identify and develop federal and other funding sources, and support regional broadband planning and engagement.

OBAE collaborates with the Connect New Mexico Council (CNMC) and oversees the Connect New Mexico Fund (CNMF), which received appropriations totaling \$100 million. OBAE also administers the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Capital Projects Fund (CPF) totaling \$117 million and the federal Broadband Equity, Access & Deployment (BEAD) Program which allocated \$675 million to connect unserved and underserved households and small businesses across New Mexico.

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.

MISSION:

To lead New Mexico's broadband expansion through statewide planning and data-driven decision-making; to reinforce collaborative partnerships with New Mexico's Tribes, counties, and local communities; to ensure universal access to affordable, high-quality connectivity; and to support meaningful use of the internet for all families, businesses, and community institutions.

VISION:

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

VALUES:

INNOVATION – Embracing inspired and imaginative ideas at the speed of technological change.

COLLABORATION – Working alongside communities and industry partners providing essential services.

RESPECT – Honoring New Mexico's rich history and diverse cultural heritage alongside the future advancement of industry.

EVIDENCE – Connecting New Mexico with reliable data and analysis to guide our decisions.

RESULTS – Focusing on improving outcomes and iterating on past accomplishments.

Agency Contacts

AGENCY CONTACTS

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Valerie (Victory) Quintana

TRIBAL BROADBAND COORDINATOR & TRIBAL LIAISON

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Agency STCA Policy, Training, & Efforts to Implement

As an administratively attached agency, OBAE follows the policies set by the Department of Information Technology (DoIT), since it is administratively attached to the Office. DoIT established the's Tribal Collaboration and Communication[WD1.1] Policy was created in 2012 and revised it 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's 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: OBAE will comply with Section 11-18 NMSA 1978 State-Tribal Collaboration Act.

EFFORT: OBAE supports the requirements set forth in the State Tribal Collaboration Act (STCA) and maintains a standing policy of Tribal consultation and requires Tribal consent before awarding funds for projects on Tribal lands.

5.2: OBAE 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, broadband funding, infrastructure and deployment.

EFFORT: The Office engages with the Tribal Community through grant funding and monitoring, project management, technical assistance, government-to-government relationship building and information sharing, workforce training and development, including participation with and the facilitation of the Connect New Mexico Council (CNMC) meetings.

5.3: The Indian Affairs Department (IAD) and DoIT will provide "Cultural Competency Training" and other topic specific training, technical assistance and support to

OBAE joined the Department of Information Technology in hosting the 2025 Tribal Convening at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque. Pictured from left to right: IAD Cabinet Secretary Josett Monette, OBAE Director Jeff Lopez, DoIT Cabinet Secretary Manny Barreras and OBAE Tribal Liaison Victory Quintana.

Qualified Employees so that Qualified Employees may effectively interface with Native Nations.

EFFORT: All OBAE employees who have professional involvement with Tribal entities ("Qualified Employees") are required to attend the STCA Cultural Competency training. A list is maintained and kept current by OBAE's Human Resources, and the list is checked annually with the State Personnel Office to ensure staff completion lists are up to date. Each year, usually in May, the Office's Tribal Liaison, on behalf of the Director, sends an email to OBAE's leadership reminding them of the required training for those with professional engagement with the Tribes. IAD has the training registration link available on their website and is shared with those employees where a copy of the STCA is available for download.

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Agency STCA Policy, Training, & Efforts to Implement

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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 NPTs, as well as participate in events hosted by NPTs. In addition, OBAE's appointed Tribal Liaison, Victory Quintana, participates 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 Broadband Director Jeff Lopez.

5.5: The Tribal Liaison will: (a) serve as [OBAE's] primary contact person with the IAD and Native Nations; (b) maintain and manage communications between [OBAE], 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: OBAE appointed Victory Quintana as its Tribal Liaison, and she completed the state-sponsored Cultural Equity training. Victory has coordinated meetings with NPTs to help resolve issues with various state departments as related to their work with



MATI GM Godfrey Enjady gives a tour to FCC Commissioner Olivia Trusty and OBAE Director Jeff Lopez of the new Data Center in Mescalero.

OBAE, invited IAD to specific meetings and/or events when appropriate to improve communication about broadband projects and services with the IAD and NPTs, and oversees work performed by Qualified Employees with respect to their business relationships with NPTs.

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

EFFORT: OBAE submits their annual reports to IAD on a timely basis.

Programs, Services, & Funding

OBAE is committed to providing dependable, affordable and equitable internet access to all sovereign Nations, Pueblos, and Tribes (NPTs) across New Mexico, 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:

A. 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 CNMC 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.

- i. 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 FY26, 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-ups are open to anyone and is available by reaching out to the Tribal Broadband Coordinator. You can learn more on OBAE’s website, Tribal Working Group.

B. OBAE’s Broadband Bulletin Newsletter includes a section dedicated to Tribal Broadband, providing additional information for NM’s Nations, Pueblos and Tribes, as well as stakeholders and interested parties. In FY26, there were 12 newsletters published and distributed widely. Sign-up for the email distribution list is open to anyone and is available on OBAE’s website, Broadband Bulletin.

C. Hosted an informational workshop designed to guide NPTs through the process of becoming an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC). Once designated as an ETC by the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission, an internet service provider becomes eligible to receive a subsidy for offering lower-cost internet services to households on federally recognized tribal lands and to low-income households statewide. This opportunity is the direct result of the Low-Income Telecommunications Assistance Program, a 2026 enacted broadband affordability law championed by OBAE. The law, along with ETC designation, has the potential to strengthen tribal internet service providers’ long-term sustainability planning by enabling access to state and/or federal funds and more predictable revenue streams.

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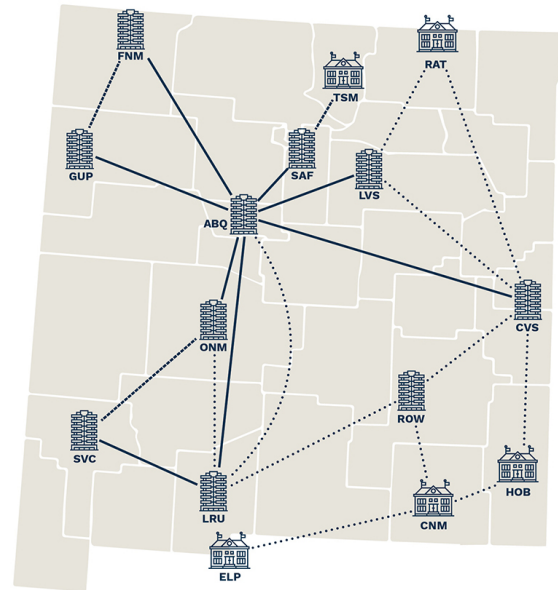
Programs, Services, & Funding

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D. 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. During New Mexico’s 2026 Legislative Session, OBAE supported the signed into law Senate Bill 401. This expands OBAE’s statutory responsibilities to explicitly include Tribal schools and libraries in statewide broadband planning, funding, and technical assistance. The legislation strengthens OBAE’s existing Tribal engagement practices by ensuring that Tribal education institutions are fully eligible for broadband programs, mapping support, digital equity initiatives, and E-Rate planning assistance. SB401 reinforces government-to-government collaboration and affirms New Mexico’s commitment to supporting connectivity for Tribal learners and community members. More information about the SEN can be found on OBAE’s website.

E. The Connect New Mexico Pilot Program (“Pilot Program”), funded by the American Rescue Plan Act’s (ARPA) Capital Projects Fund (CPF), fosters 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.

- i. 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.**



Statewide Education Network



- The Pueblo of Jemez is now in its third and final phase of construction and began providing service to community members in September. .
 - The Pueblo of Nambe began its initial construction in February.
 - The Pueblos of Santo Domingo and Santa Ana began construction in June.
 - The Pueblo of Laguna is finalizing procurement of materials to begin construction in the Summer of 2026.
- Another ARPA project, by ISP provider Oso Internet serving Ramah Navajo community of Pine Meadows, is now complete and providing service to its customers.

OBAE’s Project Management Team and ARPA Project Coordinator provide technical assistance to the awarded Tribes, while OBAE’s Tribal Coordinator and (contracted) Tribal Engagement Specialist bridge communication and provide support, as needed.

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Programs, Services, & Funding

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F. 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 sought 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 (GWEP), and the Student Connect Grant Assistance Program.

- i. Connect New Mexico Program recipients include five Tribal entities out of the total nine grantees (some grantees were awarded 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, Laguna Pueblo, Tesuque Pueblo Administration, and the business arm of the San Ildefonso Pueblo, totaling more than \$15 million awarded to NPTs. More information can be found on OBAE's Connect New Mexico webpage.
- ii. OBAE announced five Tribal awardees in FY26 to receive a total of \$500,000 as part of GWEP. NPTs can use GWEP funding for broadband grant writing, engineering, and strategic planning and to support applying for other funding sources for broadband-related projects such as the Broadband Equity, Access & Deployment (BEAD) program and the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP). NPTs are also encouraged to use GWEP funding for

administrative expenses and support associated with becoming Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (ETC). NPTs must be an ETC to participate in New Mexico's Low-Income Telecommunications Assistance Program (LITAP) and Universal Service Fund (USF) programs. To date, OBAE has awarded \$1.8 million in GWEP grants to fourteen (14) distinct NPTs.

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.

- iii. The Student Connect Grant Assistance Program offered 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 issue (e.g. no 5G availability) for students (and qualifying teachers/staff) of participating districts. The program has provided more than \$23 million to New Mexico for eligible projects. Ohkay Owingeh was one the awardees, receiving more than \$2.4 million. As of the end of FY26, TruNet has 30 student households receiving broadband service. They have put together a marketing plan to attract more households, including presentations scheduled at the Ohkay Owingeh schools to promote the free service once school starts in the fall (FY27).

Awarded Internet Service Providers will offer free internet at speeds of 100/20mbps for three years to 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.

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Programs, Services, & Funding



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G. The Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program is OBAE's largest funding program for broadband deployment. New Mexico was awarded \$675 million from the federal government to fund planning, infrastructure deployment and adoption of broadband to under- and unserved parts of the state. In FY26, OBAE hired a Permitting Coordinator to assist grantees in navigating multijurisdictional permitting requirements while preparing for and constructing BEAD projects.

OBAE received 67 applications from 18 applicants, including three Tribal applicants. The BEAD team completed its subgrantee selection and awarded 32 projects totaling \$432 million. The remaining funding will be used for "non-deployment" purposes. The largest award is \$111 million to the Navajo Nation to serve nearly 12,000 broadband serviceable locations with a mix of fiber to the home, fixed wireless, and Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite. \$10.7 million was awarded to the Pueblo of Acoma to serve 1,081 BSLs with fiber to the home connectivity. Pueblo of Jemez received two awards, totaling \$28 million, to serve 1,098 BSLs with a mix of fiber to the home and fixed wireless connectivity. There are additional awards to Amazon LEO and Starlink to serve Tribal BSLs with LEO satellite internet, for which they are seeking Tribal Consent to provide service.

H. OBAE launched a statewide Workforce Development Program in conjunction with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS) to create a program to train New Mexico's workforce to construct and maintain broadband networks and other advanced telecommunications infrastructure. OBAE contracted with Building Industry Consulting Service International (BICSI) to provide hands-on training across the state for internationally recognized certifications in broadband technologies. All courses are five days of hands-on training where BICSI provides lab equipment, workbooks, tools, and all teaching equipment and students receive technician training and various installation certifications. The classes and workshops are free to participants, thanks to a \$1.993 million U.S. Department of Labor grant, secured by U.S. Senators Ben Ray Lujan and Martin Heinrich in the FY24 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, and administered by OBAE.

OBAE kicked off the new workforce development program in the beginning of 2026. Classes will be held state-wide with locations focused on rural and Tribal areas where skilled workforce availability is limited. The first cohort included eight participants from San Ildefonso Pueblo. The second cohort was hosted by Jemez Pueblo & Jemez Net (JNET), with 15 students from the Pueblos of Jemez and Laguna completing the weeklong course.

Accomplishments

OBAE'S TOP ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING FISCAL YEAR 2026

1. Led and co-hosted the **New Mexico Tribal Broadband Convening** with DoIT and IAD in August 2025, creating a forum for Tribal stakeholders to hear funding updates, and advise OBAE on ways to enhance Tribal engagement.

2. Hosted an informational workshop designed to guide NPTs through the process of becoming an Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC). Once designated as an ETC by the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission, an internet service provider becomes eligible to offer low-cost internet services to households on federally recognized tribal lands and to low-income households statewide. This expanded eligibility is the direct result of a 2026 enacted broadband affordability law championed by OBAE. The law, along with ETC designation, can also **support tribal internet service providers in strengthening their long-term sustainability planning by enabling access to state and/or federal funds and more predictable revenue streams.**

3. OBAE's commitment to working with NPTs is woven throughout all the **Strategic Objectives outlined in its Three-Year Broadband Plan.** The Office's remains steadfast to strengthening government-to-government relationships and advancing broadband solutions that honor Tribal sovereignty and ensure that Tribal communities remain central to New Mexico's digital future.

4. OBAE and the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions offered the **first six classes of a comprehensive workforce development strategy supported by a \$1.9 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor.** The program recognizes the urgent statewide demand for certified fiber-optic technicians and provides internationally recognized, hands-on fiber-optic certification training in rural and Tribal regions where broadband infrastructure is being deployed. Over the past year, the training classes have been delivered across the state, with all participants successfully passing the practical examination and several completing or preparing for the written certification exam. These achievements demonstrate the potential of the training program and its alignment with the state's long-term workforce needs.



At the start of 2026, OBAE established an initiative to create a broadband workforce in collaboration with the Department of Workforce Solutions.



OBAE Director Jeff Lopez and Arizona Broadband Community Engagement Manager Kelly Krusee field questions at the NTTA Tribal Broadband Regional Summit in Santa Fe in November 2025.

OBAE'S GOALS/OBJECTIVES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027

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. Execute BEAD contracts and support NPTs awarded BEAD funding. This will include finalizing project scopes, executing subaward agreements, hosting project kickoff meetings, hosting permitting roundtables with NPTs and state and federal permitting agencies, completing environmental and historic preservation reviews and submitting to the relevant agencies, and initiating construction. OBAE will monitor NPTs' progress to ensure compliance with award requirements, provide consultation and support with permitting and environmental reviews, and reimburse eligible costs.
3. Advance Tribal Collaboration and Tribal Consent Key Action Items in OBAE's Three-Year Broadband Plan such as Excellence in Grants Administration, Workforce Development, and the NM Broadband Affordability Program.

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 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.
- OBAE's Director Jeff Lopez traveled to and/or met six of the nine **newly elected Tribal leaders of 2026**. As part of the government-to-government introduction, discussions included NPT broadband plans and state and federal funding opportunities. Deputy Director Trujillo made it a priority to meet with 14 NPTs for in-depth discussions on their broadband projects and offered technical assistance.
- Tribal Working Group (TWG) leaders were present at both **Broadband Day** and **American Indian Day** at the State Capitol during the 2026 Legislative Session. TWG provided information about how to connect to its meetings, OBAE's Broadband Newsletter, broadband funding opportunities for Tribes, and displayed a map showing which NPTs have state and federal broadband awards.
- **TWG hosted their first in-person meeting** in more than two years in April 2026. OBAE reviewed very important information regarding federal and state initiatives and funding timelines, the Broadband Affordability Bill, ETCs, and infrastructure planning and rights-of-way coordination. Virtual meetings are held on a regular basis.
- TWG and OBAE collaborated to provide technical assistance to interested NPTs providing input during the national Tribal Consultations the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) hosted in January 2026. The goal was to support Tribal Broadband leaders in developing their own formal responses to NTIA on how the funding for Round 3 of the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP) should be allocated. **NTIA received a total of 12 responses nationally, seven of those responses were from New Mexico.**
- OBAE's Tribal Coordinator attended the **National Tribal Telecommunications Association (NTTA) Regional Summit** during Q1 of FY26 and was invited to be a key speaker during their **National Summit** in Q3. 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 was presented to the **Navajo Nation Northern Agency Council** regarding Navajo Nation's BEAD award of \$111 million and provided updates, answered questions, and supported informed decision-making as the Nation advances its broadband initiatives.
- OBAE's Director Jeff Lopez addressed the **19 Pueblos District's Pueblo Administration Collaboration Summit (PACS)** in Q4 of FY26, giving an overview of OBAE's programs, achievements and various projects, including the broadband affordability law and encouraged Pueblos to take advantage of the opportunity to help their Tribal communities.

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Tribal Engagement & Supportive Activities

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- OBAE's Tribal Coordinator and Permitting Coordinator participated in the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) week-long Rights-of-Way Process & Application Training and Workshop. This helped to further educate OBAE's staff about federal requirements for Rights-of-Way, the necessary Preliminary Planning and Process, NEPA Compliance, Appraisals, Indian Allotments and more.
- OBAE's Director and Tribal Coordinator spoke at Mescalero Apache Telecom's Ribbon Cutting of the state's first tribally owned Data Center.
- OBAE invited NPTs to the annual ABQNOG (Albuquerque Network Operators Group) where they were introduced to other tribal broadband teams with similar situations, network, and discussed their broadband experiences.
- Director Lopez and members of the Office were invited to attend New Mexico's Day of Resilience. The event was hosted by the NM Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and the Information Technology Disaster Resource Center to ensure New Mexico communities and infrastructure are ready for emergency preparedness. Director Lopez was asked to present and share the efforts of OBAE around this topic, including the collaboration with Tribal lands.
- OBAE has 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.
- Project Managers, Program Coordinators, and a Tribal Liaison/Coordinator provide ongoing technical assistance to help advance Tribal broadband goals.
- OBAE's Tribal Broadband Coordinator and Tribal Liaison attends regularly scheduled meetings hosted by the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department.
- 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.

Signature: 

Jeff Lopez, Director
Office of Broadband Access & Expansion

Date: July 31, 2026

Tribal Lands in New Mexico

