

Doña Ana County/Borderplex Joint Regional Workforce Talent Development Strategic Plan

Transforming the Economy with an
Innovative, Connected Approach
to Talent Development

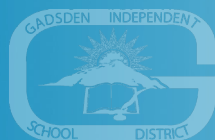


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Executive Summary

The Workforce Talent Collaborative is an unprecedented community collaboration working alongside The Bridge of Southern New Mexico in addressing the single greatest asset needed for success in economic development: a skilled and ready workforce.

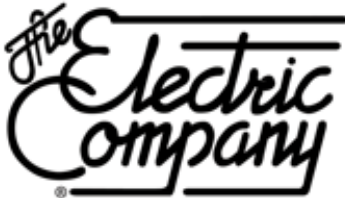
For more than a year, a broader group of committed leaders with the resources, programs, and people engaged across the workforce development continuum has been working together to understand the barriers to success while building pathways to opportunity in eight industries identified by multiple economic development efforts that can ignite economic transformation in Doña Ana County and the region.



Development of this groundbreaking plan would not be possible without the support of the funding partners who have invested in this community's work:



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Executive Summary

Unleashing the economic potential of our region lies in equipping those who work here with the education, knowledge, and skills they need to be successful in high-skilled, high-paying jobs in industries that are vital to our region's economy.

The Bridge of Southern New Mexico, a business-led, education-focused collaborative, convened a set of cross-sector partners who have the resources, the programs, the knowledge, and the people to begin a conversation about workforce development. The Bridge built upon the successful community collaboration approach to pursue its goal of building a strong, competitive 21st Century workforce.

The Workforce Talent Collaborative, a broader group of committed leaders with the resources, programs, and people engaged across the workforce development continuum, was formed as a mission-aligned initiative. The group set its sights on the eight industries with the greatest potential to succeed, based upon the assets already in place and the employment opportunities each one provides:

- Healthcare
- Digital media
- Advanced manufacturing
- Transportation and logistics
- Energy
- Aerospace
- Defense
- Value-added agriculture

The Collaborative began its work by identifying the key connection points needed to advance a truly comprehensive vision for accomplishing its goals (found in the Overview that follows). The details of this plan are guided in response to these key connections.

Foundationally, we must understand:

Education is key to building talent.

Talent is the key to economic development.

Economic development is the key to job growth.

Job growth fuels **regional prosperity** and a vibrant, thriving community for all.

A comprehensive approach to workforce talent development entails mobilizing all members of community toward that goal. The following graphic (Figure 1) outlines our comprehensive approach to workforce talent development building upon the assets that are here, leading to long-term cultural change in the community. In fact, success is predicated on simultaneous implementation of major elements of the plan, which align with the individual assets outlined in Figure 1.

A Comprehensive Approach to Workforce Talent Development

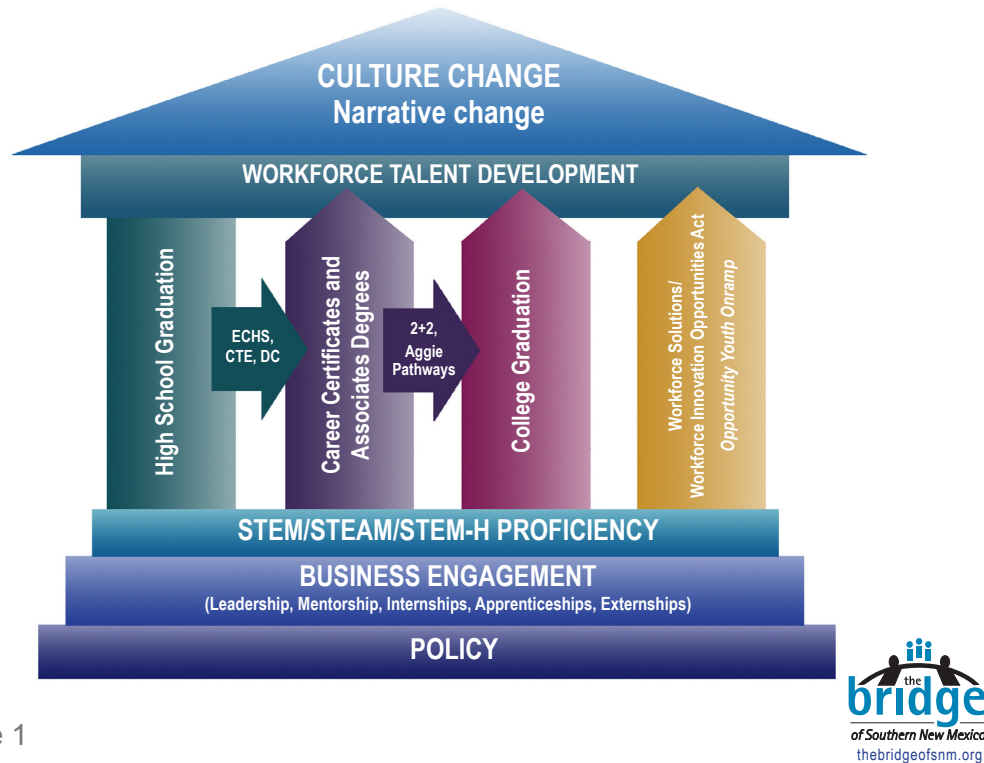


Figure 1

A comprehensive approach to workforce talent development requires good **POLICY** to support sustainability for the long term. The **BUSINESS** community must take a leadership role throughout the continuum in order to close the soft skills gaps by engaging in five “ships” of engagement: leadership, mentorship, internship, apprenticeship, and externship. Our workforce must be **STEM/STEM-H** proficient in order to be successful in a 21st Century workforce.

We must also mobilize the four levers of change for young workers to successfully enter the workforce: **HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION** is a must, but then they must cross at least one more finish line in post-secondary, including **CAREER CERTIFICATIONS, ASSOCIATE’S DEGREES, BACHELOR’S DEGREES AND ABOVE**. For those who have not successfully completed their education, we must mobilize our **STATE AND FEDERAL WORKFORCE DOLLARS** to help Opportunity Youth and low-skilled, low-paid workers to get the certification and college credentials needed to secure higher-skilled, higher wage jobs in the respective pathways.

Once all of these assets are moving in a united direction, we will have a comprehensive approach to **WORKFORCE TALENT DEVELOPMENT** that changes the narrative about what it means to grow up in Doña Ana County and the Borderplex Region. It will also **CHANGE CULTURE**, as our community becomes a culture of completion, high expectations, and life-long learning, and it will change the **NARRATIVE** about what it means to grow up in Doña Ana County.

Aligned with the Workforce Talent Development Framework above, talent development pathways were created for each of the eight industries. Two of the industries were combined, Aerospace and Defense, and can be understood in the workforce pathway in Figure 2.

Each pathway horizontally outlines the existing educational assets (Row 1), the role of federal and state resources in equipping talent outside of traditional educational structures (Row 2), work-based learning to equip prospective talent with the knowledge and skills (especially technical and employability skills) to be successful (Row 3), and then the career continuum for each industry with specific roles and salary ranges (Row 4).

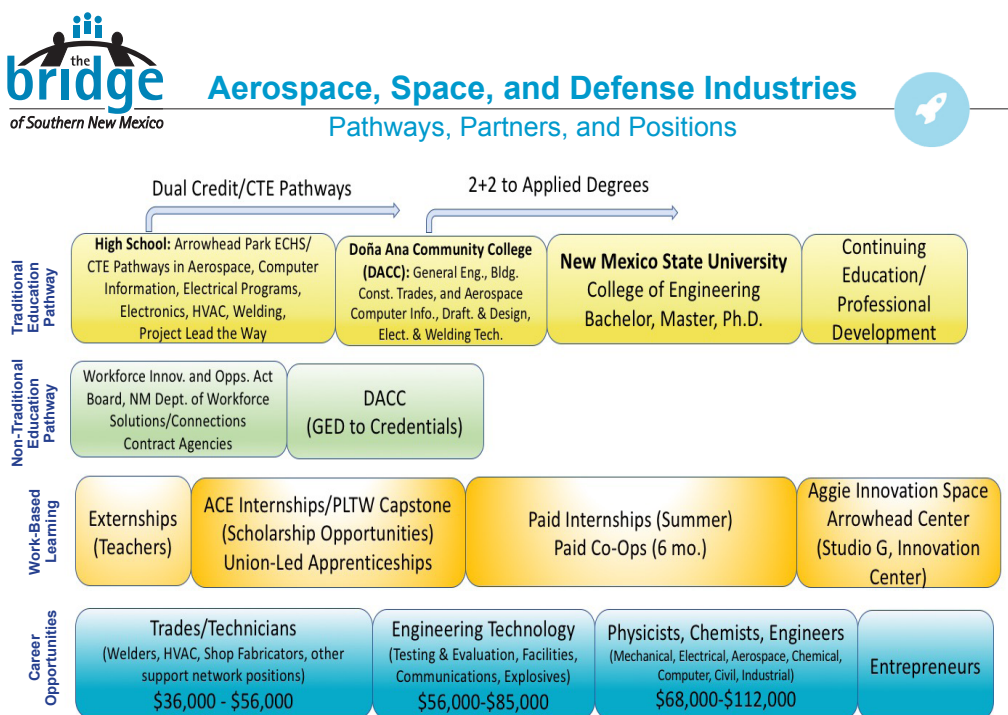


Figure 2

Strong, connected education pathways will build talent. Highly-skilled talent will fill jobs that build businesses. Higher paying jobs will drive the economic potential of individuals and industries. And economic development will foster regional prosperity to fuel greater opportunity and investment that supports and sustains generational change.

What also became clear about our work was that the charge for the Workforce Talent Collaborative was not just about building workforce talent, it was about transforming the future of the region by boosting the earning potential of those who live here. The Collaborative seeks to create the alignment needed to equip those who are here now with the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in higher-paying careers and career ladders, not just jobs, to drive the holistic development of the region. A skilled and ready workforce in these eight industries will ripple across the county in an economic cascade of increased incomes and buying power, along with improving every social determinant of health that has held back our citizens for far too long due to the pervasiveness of poverty.



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