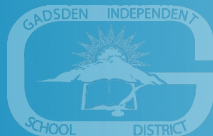


Doña Ana County/Borderplex Joint Regional Workforce Talent Development Strategic Plan

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



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.

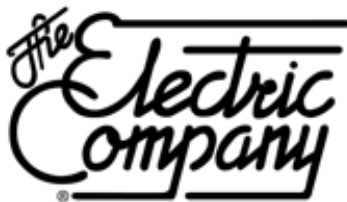
For more than a year, a broader group of committed leaders with the resources, programs, and people engaged across the workforce development continuum has been working together to understand the barriers to success while building pathways to opportunity in eight industries identified by multiple economic 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:



W.K.
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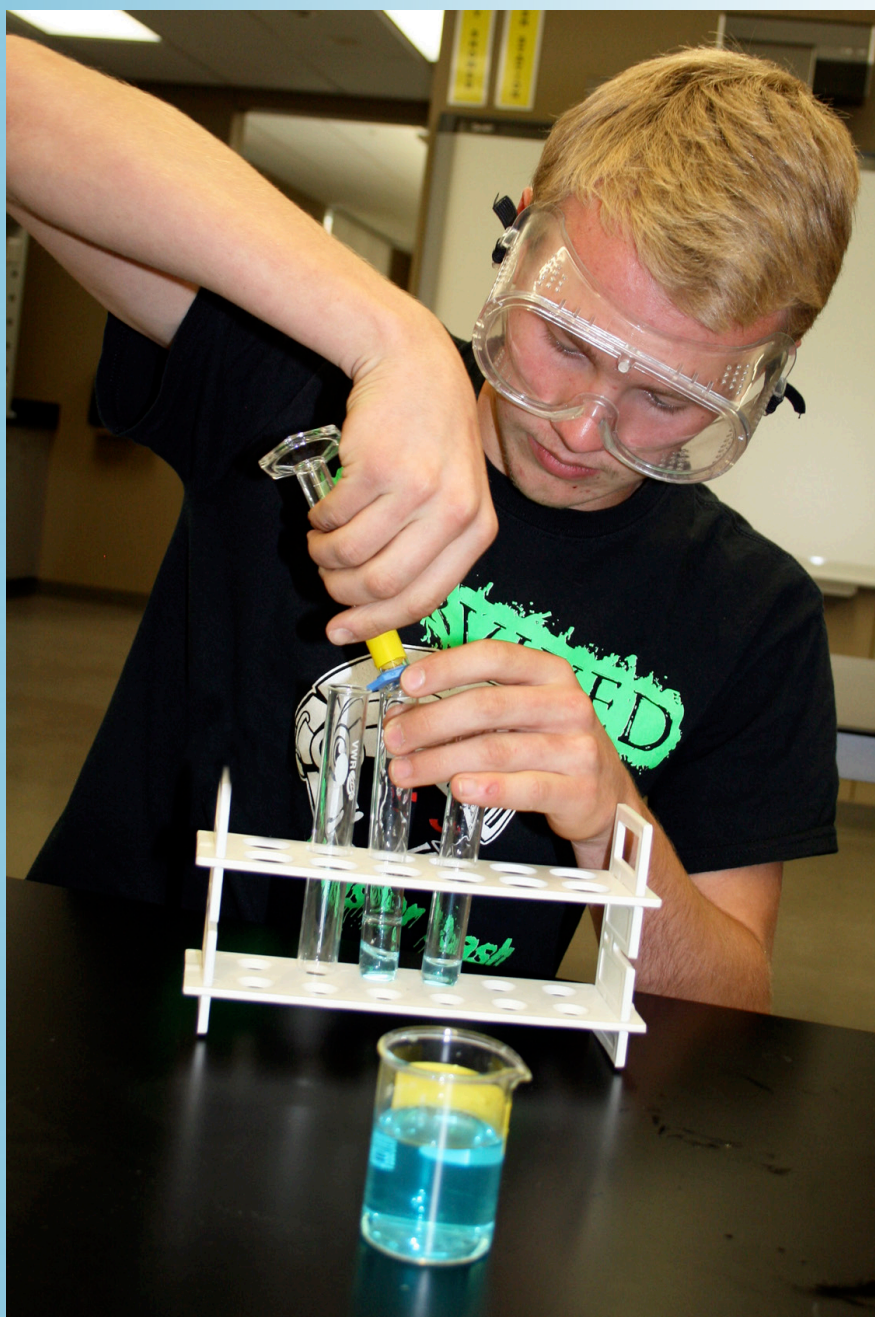
El Paso Electric





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Background

Doña Ana County, New Mexico is the second most populated county in the state, with more than 200,000 residents, and benefits greatly from its proximity to El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. The unique Borderplex region is a growing ecosystem of industry and opportunity benefiting from two states' and two countries' economies. Recognizing the potential advantages of the region, a host of entities have sought to harness the assets that already exist here and spark economic development that could transform the prosperity of the region and improve the lives of those who live here, these plans range from those developed by the Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance, the Borderplex Alliance, the New Mexico Economic Development Department, the New Mexico Jobs Council, and Viva Doña Ana's Border Area Economic Development Strategy.

However, across these plans, a single factor has been called out as vital to the success or failure of every plan: the presence of a skilled and ready workforce. This region rich with opportunities suffers from high poverty and unemployment rates, low educational attainment levels, a shortage of technically skilled workers, and a prevailing narrative that conveys a sense of hopelessness about the prospect of change and the future of the region for the next generation. There is also a mismatch between workforce development efforts and the current and future needs of employers.

Members of the Workforce Talent Collaborative were recruited to help analyze and address this pressing community challenge. Members who came to the table from the beginning included:

Debbi Moore	President, Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce
Dr. Fred Owensby	Executive Director, Workforce Development and Training Division, Doña Ana Community College
Dr. Patricia Sullivan	Director of Community Outreach, New Mexico State University College of Engineering
Tracey O'Neil	Program Manager, New Mexico State University College of Engineering
Lydia Nesbitt-Arronte	Vice President of Education & Workforce Development, Borderplex Alliance
Davin Lopez	President & CEO, Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance
Les Baldock	Vice President - Operations, Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance
Steve Duran	Administrator Southwestern Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Board
David Greenburg	Assistant Director, Ngage New Mexico

Lane Widner	Career and Technical Education Coordinator, Las Cruces Public Schools
Willie Silva	Vice President of Community Outreach, El Paso Electric
Miguel Martinez	Regional Manager, Help NM
Richard Wagner	Las Cruces Site Manager, New Mexico Department of Workforce Connections
Patti Lucero	TRAX International
Tracey Bryan	President/CEO, The Bridge of Southern New Mexico

The Workforce Talent Collaborative set its sights on the eight industries with the greatest potential to succeed, based upon the assets already in place and the higher-skilled, higher paying incomes associated with them: Aerospace, Defense, Digital Media, Energy, Healthcare, Manufacturing, Transportation and Logistics, and Value-Added Agriculture.

Coinciding with this work, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation had provided a grant to Innovate+Educate, a New Mexico non-profit seeking to create multiple pathways to training and employment based on competencies and skills, to seed five Communities of Progress in the state. Doña Ana County was one of those five, and Innovate+Educate partnered with the Collaborative to expand the conversation about workforce development to include those who could shed light on barriers to employment faced by some of the county's residents. Those who comprised the Community of Progress work included:

Melanie Goodman	US Senator Tom Udall Representative
Claudia Marez	Doña Ana County Health Department
Sherri Rials	Southern New Mexico Society of Human Resource Managers
Dawn Hommer	Community Action Agency
Victoria Quevedo	Empowerment Congress
Mary Ann Galindo	Empowerment Congress
Sharon Thomas	Former City Councilor, City of Las Cruces
Michelle Pickett	Children, Youth, and Families Department
Jeanine Cadwallader	Tresco
Sara Melton	CAFé

Today, the group is united as the Workforce Talent Collaborative and also includes:

Dr. Griselda Martinez	Deputy Director, Office of Economic Development, City of Las Cruces
Dr. Susan Brown	STEM Outreach Director, New Mexico State University College of Education
Dr. Gilbert Moreno	President, Prestige Consulting
Travis Dempsey	Superintendent, Gadsden Independent School District

Joe Butler	Division Dean of Science, Engineer, and Math, Doña Ana Community College
Jackie Kiefer	Director of Gadsden & Sunland Park Campuses, Doña Ana Community College
Mary Ulrich	Director, Customized Training and Community Education, Doña Ana Community College
Lori Martinez	Interim Director, Ngage
Robbie Levy	Retired former manager of Las Cruces Housing Authority
Yvette Bayless	One Stop Operator Coordinator/Regional Manager, New Mexico Workforce Connection
Deb McCormack	Adult Basic Education, Doña Ana Community College
Liz Bentancourt	Community Outreach & Education Division, Doña Ana County

One of the most significant contributions Innovate+Educate brought to the work was a chart (below) showing the Borderplex region's top 10 growth industries: Healthcare and Social Assistance; Education Services; Retail Trade; Accommodation & Food Services; Admin. and Support & Waste Management and Remediation Services; Construction; Wholesale Trade; Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services; Arts, Entertainment and Recreation; and Other Services. The X-axis identifies the percentage of projected growth through 2026, and the Y-axis indicates wages. The majority of those industries are for lower-skilled, lower-paying workers, and with no intentional effort toward intervention in combining workforce and economic development, could ultimately drive down the already low median income of the region and leave many residents in working poverty. One sector, Education Services, while serving the community, is a public-sector "industry" dependent upon a thriving private sector to fuel its growth.

Top 10 Industry Growth Sectors Borderplex Region (DAC, EPC, Sierra, Luna, Otero)

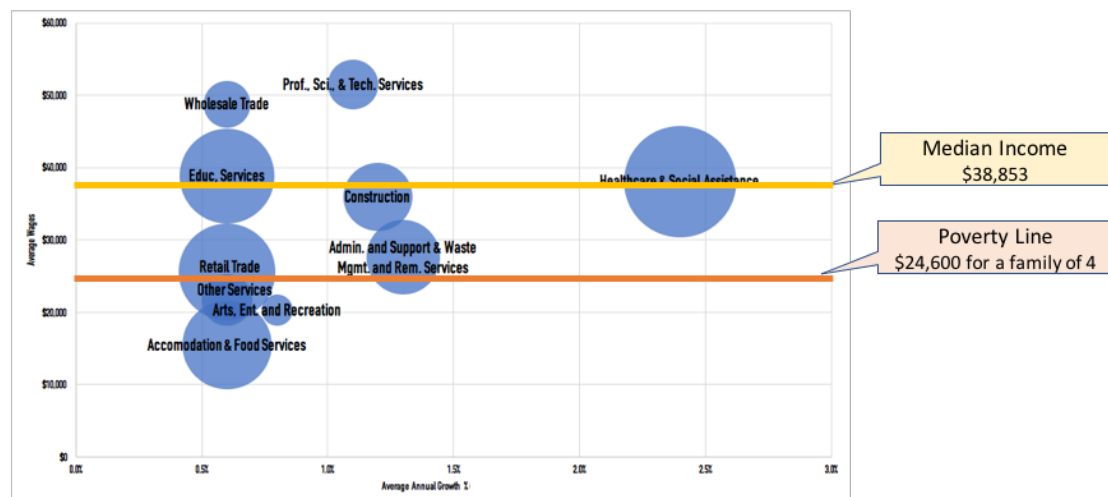


Figure 1

What quickly became clear 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 its citizens. 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.

According to the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce's report [Good Jobs that Pay without a BA](#), there are 30 million jobs that offer median annual earnings of \$55,000 and do not require a bachelor's degree. In New Mexico, 54% of all jobs are these jobs, and they are on the rise in both skilled services and blue-collar jobs and primarily go to associate degreed workers. More detailed data is available in the research section of this report.

There is so much to be gained from holistically and strategically boosting the economy by targeting talent development strategies aligned to these eight industries. Just a sampling of return on investment in just one of the targets, healthcare, would include:

- NM Medical Academy and AMA Paper, "Physicians Boost the Economy"
 - Every physician generated or attracted in a community supports 9.4 other healthcare jobs
 - \$1,313,276 in sales revenue per New Mexico physician
 - \$764,087 in wages and benefits per New Mexico physician
 - \$45,654 in local and state tax revenue per New Mexico physician
- Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine Report
 - 70% of medical students remain in the communities where they complete a residency
 - o Every 1 generates 9 new jobs
 - o Generates \$200,00 in annual economic benefits to the community while in their program and \$1.9 million for every year they remain after training

Focusing Our Work

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. However, the "lack of a skilled and ready workforce" is consistently identified as the number-one barrier to economic development and diversification of the economy of Doña Ana County and the Borderplex region, but this has neither been clearly defined nor measured.

The key to moving us out of this conundrum is connecting assets that lead to action:

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.

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 with the following mission and vision:

Mission Statement

Build the skilled and ready workforce needed to achieve identified economic development goals by harnessing the assets already in place, identifying gaps, and forging or strengthening relationships between entities.

Vision Statement

Successfully cultivating a comprehensive, highly-skilled workforce that can drive and grow target industries in Doña Ana County and the region.

Co-chaired by the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce and The Bridge of Southern New Mexico, the Workforce Talent Collaborative looked across several economic development plans for this region to identify consistencies in targeted industries. 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

Understanding that developing a comprehensive approach to workforce development entails mobilizing all members of community toward the goal of workforce talent development, the following graphic (Figure 1) outlines our comprehensive approach to workforce talent development built upon the assets that are here, mobilizes all players in the workforce talent continuum toward a common goal, and leads to long-term cultural change in the community.

Therefore, as we move forward in laying out the strategies and tactics for building highly-skilled workforce talent in a way that drives economic development, we begin with a foundational understanding that developing a comprehensive workforce entails mobilizing all members of community toward the goal of workforce talent development. This, in turn, will have far broader impact in changing the dominant, primarily negative narrative of this region and foster a cultural shift toward completion, economic stability, and high expectations.

Figure 2 outlines this comprehensive approach to workforce talent development and the flow of strategies and tactics that begin with Policy at the base and work their way up the graphic vertically. Subheads outline each section, but by no means are intended to be pursued sequentially. In fact, success is predicated on simultaneous implementation of major elements of the plan. (A more detailed discussion of how these elements work together can be found starting on page 23.)

A Comprehensive Approach to Workforce Talent Development

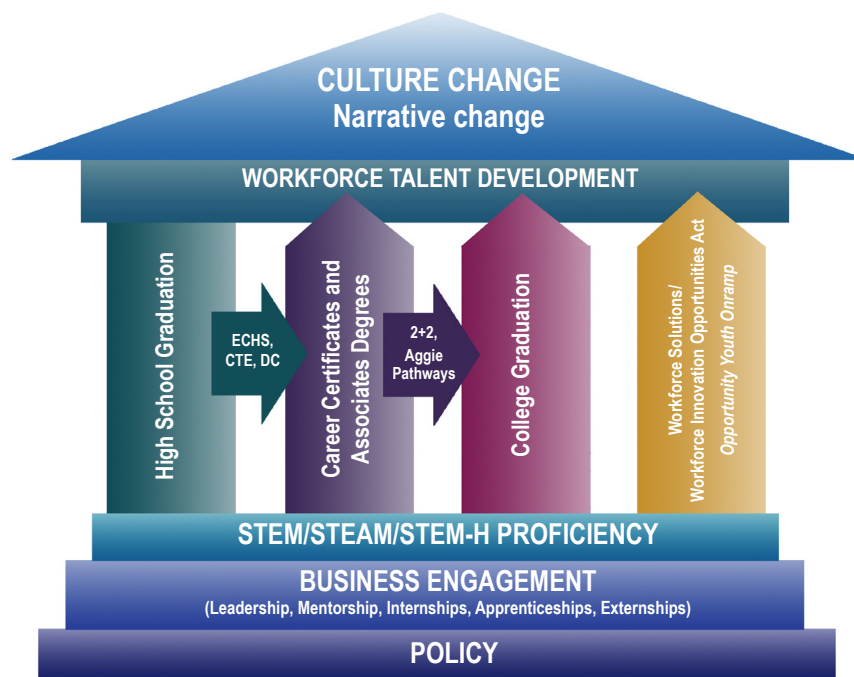


Figure 2

A comprehensive approach to workforce 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 **STEAM/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, ASSOCIATES DEGREES, BACHELORS 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.

The following strategies will guide successful implementation of this model:

- Champion a positive asset-based narrative that inspires and mobilizes all audiences in the continuum
- Leverage new and existing platforms to build awareness of all aspects of the workforce talent continuum
- Implement solutions that improve or promote stronger coordination of existing assets
- Ensure the leadership, voice, and participation of industry in all efforts
- Promote a culture of excellence and entrepreneurship
- Prioritize educational approaches that increase STEM-H/STEAM proficiency
- Implement or expand data-driven best practices that can be measured in both outputs and outcomes
- Respect and promote the value of the multicultural identity of our region
- Pursue two-generation solutions whenever possible to help youth and parents simultaneously
- Conduct constant evaluation and communication to provide course corrections when necessary and prioritize support for actions that are working well

We will achieve success in this work when the talent of Doña Ana County demonstrates a set of foundational characteristics:

- Able to deal with ambiguity/problem-solving
- Critical thinkers
- Proficient oral and written communicators in multiple languages, including application to professional fields
- Strong work ethic
- Accountable
- Value-driven
- Persistent and resilient

And when our talent is successful, our community will experience a transformation, as well. This region will be defined by the following characteristics:

- A transformed regional economy fueled by a highly-skilled workforce that supports the needs of a diverse set of industries
- Business' choice destination for high quality, easily mobilized talent
- Appreciative and supportive of the value of a high-quality workforce
- Opportunities for advanced education, employment, entrepreneurship, and economic development
- High quality PK-16 educational systems
- Decreased need for public assistance
- Elimination of "brain drain," due to the new and growing opportunities for a high quality of life in our region

Challenges To A Comprehensive Approach to Workforce Development

Doña Ana County and the Borderplex Region are not unique in the challenges they face to building a skilled and ready workforce. The shortage of technical-skilled and middle-skilled workers for available jobs, underemployment of university graduates with degrees mismatched to labor market needs, and the lack of employability skills in young workers captures headlines across the country.

However, thanks to the partnerships represented in the Workforce Talent Collaborative, our region does have the resources and programs in place to address and overcome these barriers. The challenge will be to prioritize and target these interventions to begin to close long-standing gaps in growing workforce proficiency and unleash the economic potential of the residents of our region.

A more detailed summary of barriers follows, but the most pressing to resolve include:

- Building broad awareness of educational and workforce training opportunities
- Absence of business voice in shaping workforce education and training programs and curriculum
- Failure to better leverage federal and state workforce training investments
- Misalignment between educational partners
- Poor or no career counseling for youth
- Absence of a common vision for success

AWARENESS BARRIERS

Huge awareness barriers exist across the region, preventing working age adults from taking advantage of the educational programs available to them, as well as hindering youth from understanding the career opportunities within their reach. Youth are almost wholly unaware of the high-paying jobs and careers that can be obtained with career certifications and associate degrees, and so are their parents. Educational entities need greater engagement with target industries to better understand the needs of business, address curricular changes, and identify work-based learning opportunities to immediately begin to remedy the gap between educational and workforce preparedness. Businesses in target industries have the opportunity to solve their own problems with the lack of employability skills in potential workers but need a more systemic approach to creating meaningful work-based learning opportunities to close those gaps. The business community is also largely unaware of the benefits of skill-based hiring to bring in qualified talent through non-traditional pathways to employment, as well as the benefits offered by hiring Opportunity Youth and those receiving training and placement support from federal and state-funded workforce programs. Across the region, there is an overarching lack of communication between all members of this continuum, which hinders not just collaboration but access and advancement for potential workers.

EDUCATION AND SKILL-BUILDING BARRIERS

Traditionally, households have been the customer for, and children the consumer of, academic programs. Today, households have been joined by companies as customers, as young people represent their current and prospective employees.

K-12 and higher education institutions have come a long way in leveraging their collective assets and fixing broken pipelines between entities, but there are still complexities and disconnects between institutions that hinder, or completely prevent, a smooth and easy path to credentials and degrees for future and current potential workers. These include:

- Low proficiency rates in reading, math, science, and English language arts across the K-12 system
- The need to have dual language proficiency in both basic and professional English and Spanish to better promote the value of our bi-lingual community to current and prospective employers
- Failure to connect the host of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math assets across the county to build a STEM ecosystem that increases STEM proficiency of all residents
 - Limited access to coding and other computer language skill development programs that can be used to spark transformation across industries
- Underutilization of Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways for high school students
- Gaps in workforce development training and workforce opportunities
- Misalignment, under-performance, and declining funding of public and higher education assets:
 - Seamless paths from high school to two-year and four-year degrees, through Early College High Schools, Career and Technical Education Pathways, and Aggie Pathways (between New Mexico State University and Doña Ana Community College) are the beginning of breaking through these barriers and showing us the path forward
 - Failure to systematically award associate degrees for university students who have completed required coursework but do not persist to a four-year degree
 - Low completion rates across the academic spectrum, but especially in higher education, that limit workforce potential of young people.
 - Challenges to funding in public and higher education, specifically failure to adequately fund dual credit courses for high school students at the higher education level
 - Insufficient career and academic counseling throughout the continuum and limited exposure to career exploration for youth
 - Unrealized opportunities to partner with federal and state resources to devise targeted programs to skill-up workers for target industries
- Insufficient parent-engagement efforts to place parents and educators on the same team for student success, as well as two-generation interventions to help skill-up parents while young children experience high-quality early learning

GEOGRAPHIC BARRIERS

Doña Ana County is comprised of three distinct geographies: the primarily rural northern and southern parts of the county and the more urbanized central part of the county comprised primarily by the City of Las Cruces. The county is home to 37 colonias, primarily in these heavily rural areas, and fully 85% of the county's businesses are located in the Las Cruces city limits. To successfully engage rural residents, the plan must identify the best way to connect resources for those communities, due to the host of interconnected issues that occur in the colonias and the rural parts of the community, including the lack of:

- Transportation
- Childcare
- Knowledge and skill-building resources

Transportation issues have a great potential to be resolved, if the governing body of the South Central Regional Transit can be more deeply engaged in addressing these challenges.

- Overall need to build a culture of public transit
- Affects jobs at the Border Industrial Park (transp. costs vs. wages)
- Current efforts to use van pools and car pools to help with shift work
- Companies get tax write-offs for employees who car pool or use public transit
- Can we train up a set of transit *promotoras*?
- Job seekers/employee transportation barriers include:
 - 1 car per family
 - Coordinating work/school schedules
 - Gas money
 - Unemployment policies that create barriers/challenges for those they serve
 - Unreliable transportation
 - Strong family units mean whole families attend doctor's appointments, etc.
 - CAA could connect with SCRT on their new concept around community garages

LIMITATIONS OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

The largest portion of employers in the region are small businesses that do not have full-service Human Resource Departments to carry out functions that would help close gaps for their employees, such as tuition-assistance for education to increase their skills, encouraging parental engagement in children's education, and integration of mentorship, internship, apprenticeship, and externship offerings into regular operations. Additionally, there are limited employment opportunities for higher-skilled, more highly educated employees, perpetuating underemployment and the mismatch between four-year graduates and job openings.

LIMITATIONS OF PROSPECTIVE JOB APPLICANTS

Doña Ana County has a higher unemployment rate than the state and nation at 7.1%, as of April 2017. Las Cruces' unemployment rate is lower, at 5.3%, which indicates the largest percentage of the unemployed are in the region's more rural areas. In addition to the geographic barriers to rural populations discussed above, potential workers in the region face barriers to employment including misalignment of skills for available jobs, immigration status, lack of English and/or Spanish proficiency, lack of technical skills and knowledge, and poor literacy and numeracy, as well as the interconnected challenges to employment faced by those with low incomes.

LACK OF A UNIFIED DEFINITION OF SUCCESS AND METRICS BASED ON OUTCOMES, NOT OUTPUTS

This region has long been aware of the challenges related to the workforce, but what has not existed is a clear set of metrics, along with the right partners to gather and analyze data to guide workforce development efforts. Available data may address outputs, such as numbers of individuals served, but real change will take place when outcomes are measured and tracked.



Keys to Success

The Collaborative established a set of goals to shape its approach:

Short-Term Goals (By July 2017):

- We will build an innovative, connected approach to regional workforce development by “connecting the dots” of all programs and resources available and necessary for transforming our economy with a ready workforce.

Middle-Term Goals (July 2017-July 2018):

- We will gain broad stakeholder approval, engagement, and resource commitments for the Joint Regional Workforce Development Plan underscoring the relevance and value of a ready workforce.
- We will cultivate and establish Science, Technology, Engineering, Math and Health (STEM-H) proficiency throughout the workforce development continuum.
- We will integrate representatives from targeted industries into the JRWFD Plan’s identified Career and Technical Education pathways starting in middle school, including focus on in-class participation, on-worksite experiences, project-based learning, work-based learning, and entrepreneurship.

Long-Term Goals (July 2018-July 2025):

- We will cultivate a community culture that places high value on life-long learning, high expectations, and academic completion.
- We will leverage the collective public and private-sector assets of the region to cultivate a STEM Ecosystem that fuels an increase in educational outcomes and demonstrable proficiencies that result in a high-quality existing and quickly mobilized workforce by 2025.
- We will maintain the value of our bicultural identity and position it as a unique strength that can be found in this region’s workforce.

The Collaborative also set some overarching considerations to guide us to enduring, effective solutions:

- Be agile, flexible, able to respond rapidly to industry changes
- Think innovatively about workforce needs for the long term
- Do not ground it in borders or buildings – think of solutions without borders
- Leverage the growing trend of those who earn their incomes virtually (solo workers)
- Integrate the new STEM Dept. of Defense virtual training space and Las Cruces Public Schools Challenger Center into our planning

- Meaningful integration of project-based learning
- Both Borderplex and Chamber members should commit to student hires and adopting classes
 - o Class-based projects could transcend borders – getting students to think regionally

To be successful, the Collaborative also customized approaches to education and talent-building by considering the unique needs of the target audiences in the current and future talent pool. For the purpose of maximizing federal and state investments to support this work, target audiences include those identified in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act, as well as audiences that need tailored approaches:

- In-school youth 18 years old and under in whom we can change culture by instilling a culture of learning (“life-long learners”) and a culture of completion
- Opportunity Youth, or those 16-24 years of age who are neither employed nor in school
- Those with 2-4 years of some higher education technical and academic experience
- Adult workers 25 years and older who need to be retooled or upskilled
- Dislocated workers who are unemployed/underemployed
- Colonia and rural residents who face a complex, interconnected set of barriers to employment

Finally, the Collaborative recognized that equipping a high-quality, 21st Century workforce for success across industries required baseline competencies that currently contribute to the misalignment between job openings and qualified workers:

- STEM/STEAM/STEM-H proficiency
- Entrepreneurship and innovation
- Employability or “soft” skills, including:
 - o Using good customer service skills
 - o High expectations
 - o Setting and reaching goals
 - o Communication
 - o Conflict resolution
 - o Interviewing skills
 - o Resume development
 - o Job search skills
 - o Etiquette for meals/meetings
 - o Professional appearance
 - o Ethics
 - o Problem solving
 - o Decision making

- o Time management
- o Collaboration and teamwork
- o Initiative
- o Leadership
- o Project management

As this plan took shape, the Collaborative realized it aligned precisely with a set of recommendations for building a better New Mexico for children and families, as advanced by the Annie E. Casey KidsCount Data Book:

- Enact narrow, targeted economic development initiatives that require accountability for tax breaks to corporations linked to the creation of quality jobs
- Expand access to high school equivalency, adult basic education, job training, and career pathways programs.
- Develop a state youth employment strategy using a career pathways approach that includes business, nonprofits, government, school districts, and colleges to help identify and provide support for disconnected youth, link funding and accountability and meaningful outcomes and create initiatives. Such a model should focus on low- and moderate-skill workers to boost their employability and opportunities for knowledge acquisition through higher education.
- Increase capacity for school counseling.
- Provide relevant learning opportunities through service learning and dual credit parity to better prepare students for career or college.
- Ensure support for community schools, which provide students with services shown to increase academic performance, including health centers, before and after-school programming, service learning, and classes for parents.



A Connected, Comprehensive Approach to Talent Development that Drives Economic Development

It is important to note that this plan targets eight specific industries that are intended to become the economic and workforce drivers of the region, but by no means does this plan intend for them to be the only industries that grow and get planted in Doña Ana County and the region. For example, the healthcare pathway is very focused on the patient-care workforce in its continuum, but there are many other jobs in healthcare vital to making that industry thrive, including administrative, healthcare equipment manufacturers and providers, customer service professionals, and many more. Further, driving the workforce talent continuum into these industries will have immense ripple effects on other industries throughout the community, such as retail, restaurant, banking, hotel and tourism, not to mention the growth of the tax base to better fund our public-sector assets.

Therefore, as we move forward in laying out the strategies and tactics for building highly-skilled workforce talent in a way that drives economic development, we begin with a foundational understanding that developing a comprehensive workforce entails mobilizing all members of community toward the goal of workforce talent development. This, in turn, will have far broader impact in changing the dominant, primarily negative narrative of this region and foster a cultural shift toward completion, economic stability, and high expectations.

Figure 1 outlines this comprehensive approach to workforce talent development and the flow of strategies and tactics that begin with Policy at the base and work their way up the graphic vertically. Subheads outline each section, but by no means are intended to be pursued sequentially. In fact, success is predicated on simultaneous implementation of major elements of the plan.

Building the regional Workforce Talent Pipeline needed for success requires a combination of new and existing tools and relationships, as well as targeting our collective community assets to support the holistic talent development for our targeted industries.

Aligned with the Workforce Talent Development Framework above, talent development pathways for each of the eight industries (Healthcare, Aerospace, Defense, Transportation & Logistics, Energy, Value-Added Agriculture, Manufacturing, and Digital Media) have been developed (Figures 3-10). Aerospace and Defense are represented in a single pathway, due to the overlapping nature of those industries. Transportation and Logistics is represented in two pathways: Asset Based and Non-Asset Based.

Each pathway horizontally outlines the existing education 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). However, the pathways also illustrate the connection between required educational attainment and career progression by viewing the pathway vertically (from top to bottom). Pathways provide a graphic illustration of the role that must be played by all members of the workforce continuum to be successful, as well as convey the educational attainment needed by future workers to achieve their personal career goals.

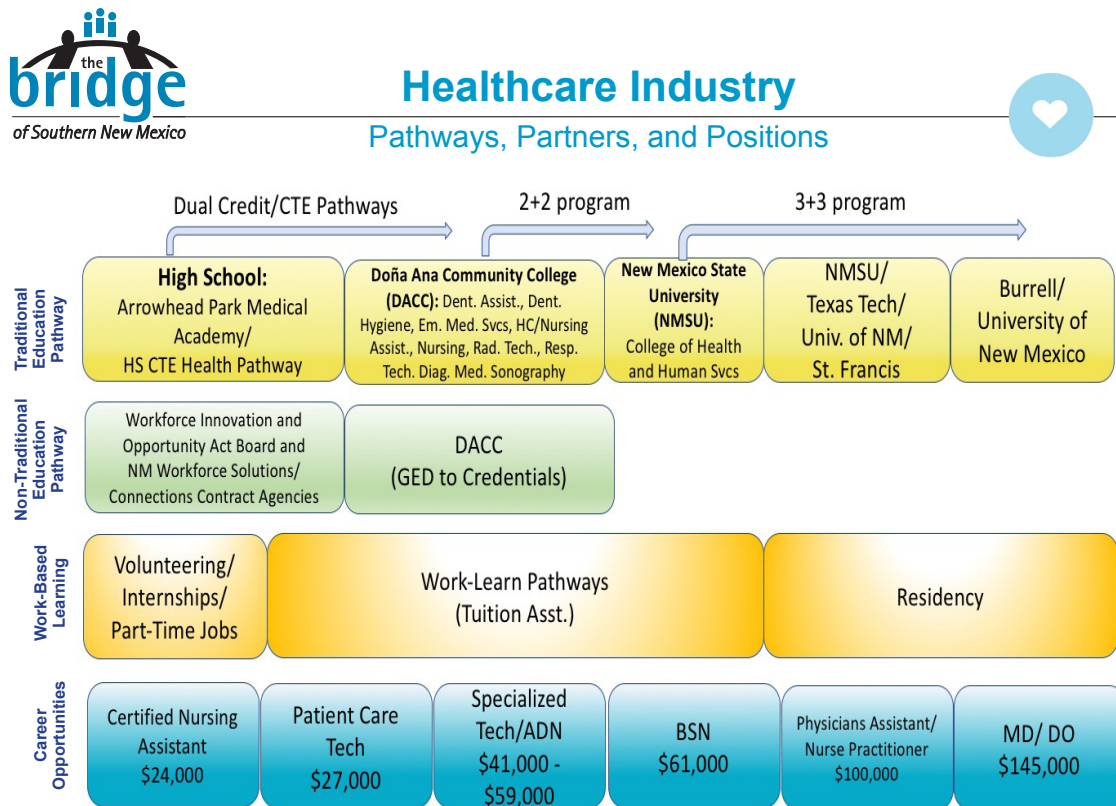


Figure 3

Aerospace, Space, and Defense Industries

Pathways, Partners, and Positions

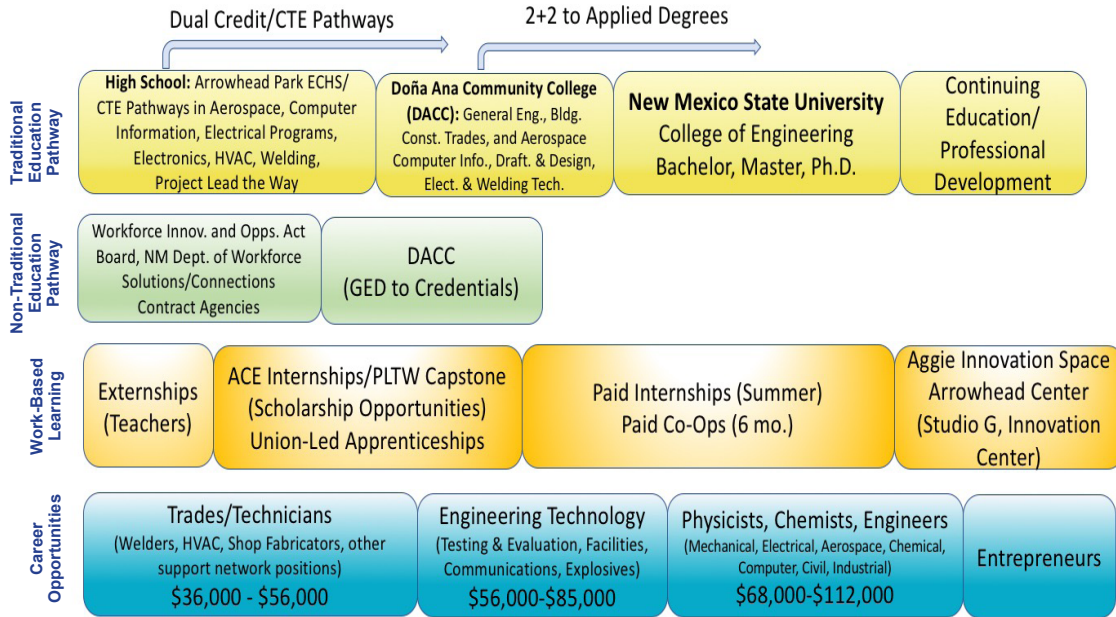


Figure 4

Asset-Based Transportation & Logistics Industries

Pathways, Partners, and Positions

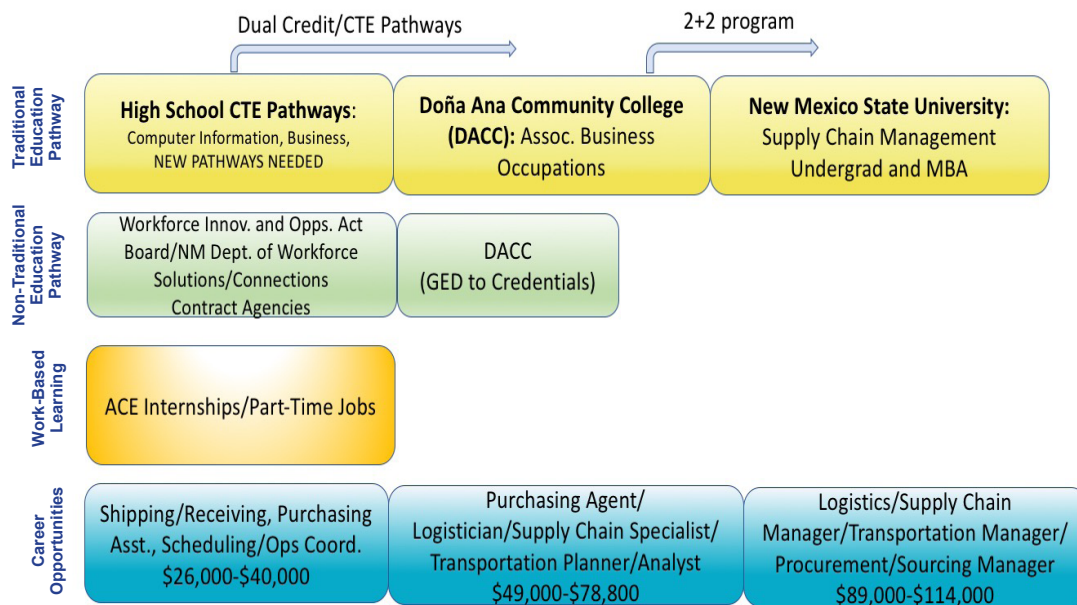


Figure 5

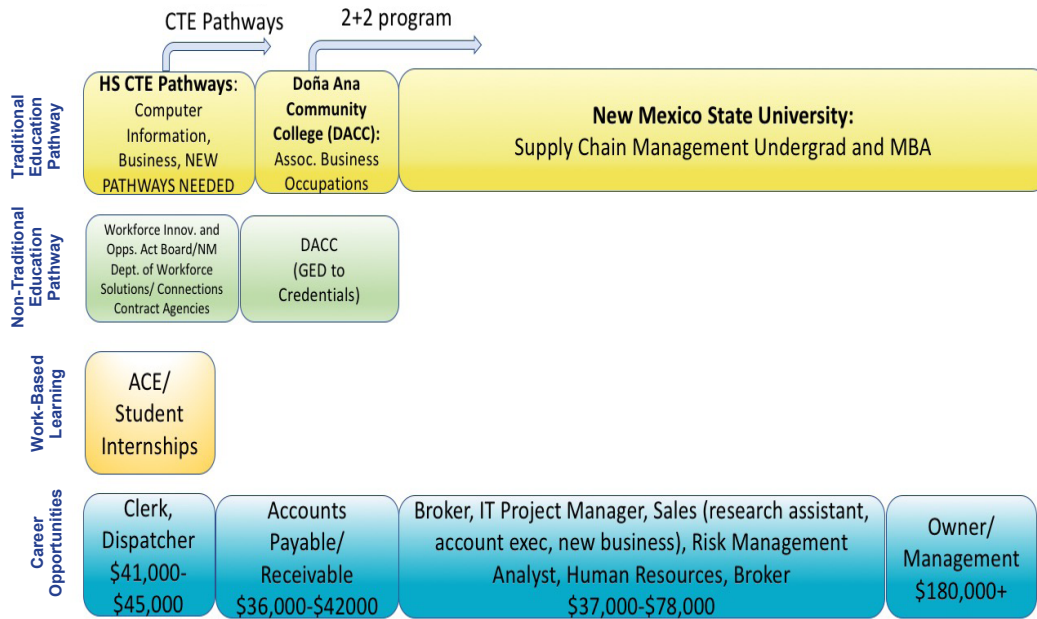


Figure 6

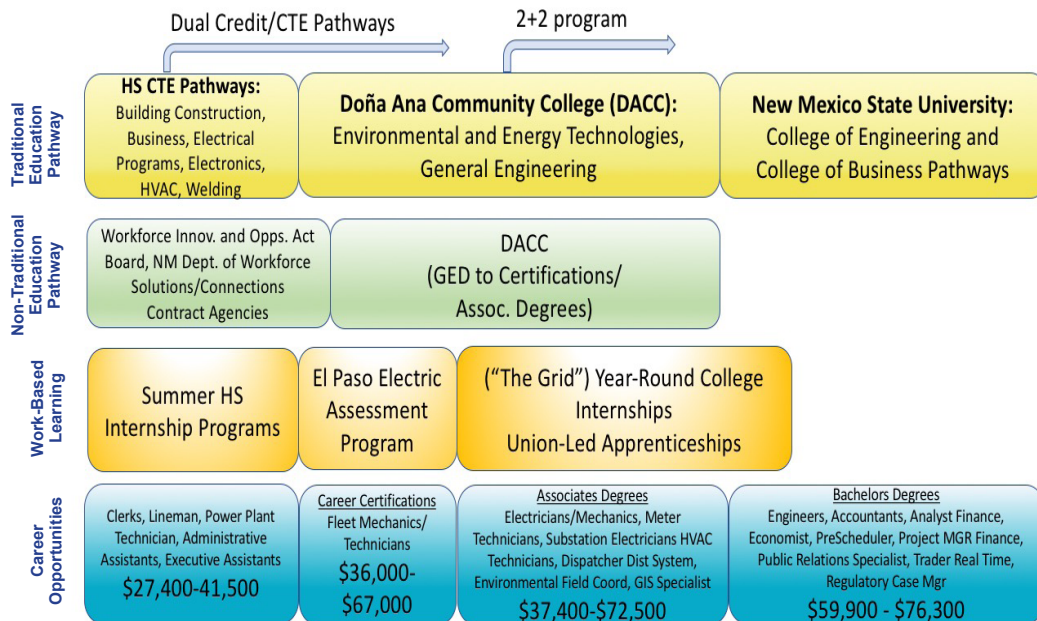


Figure 7

Manufacturing Industry

Pathways, Partners, and Positions

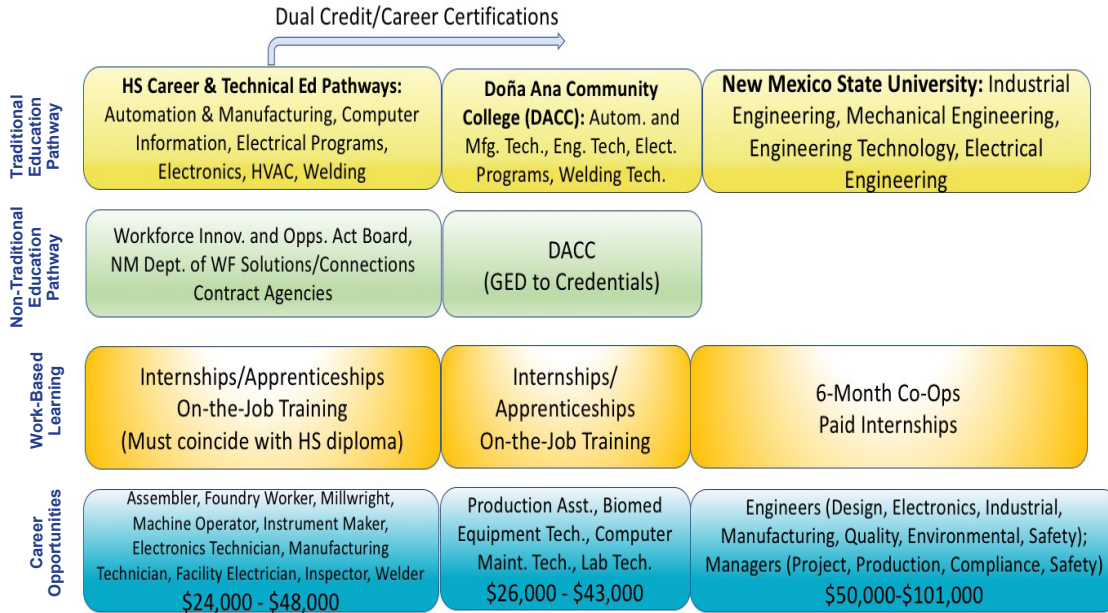


Figure 8

Digital Media Industry

Pathways, Partners, and Positions

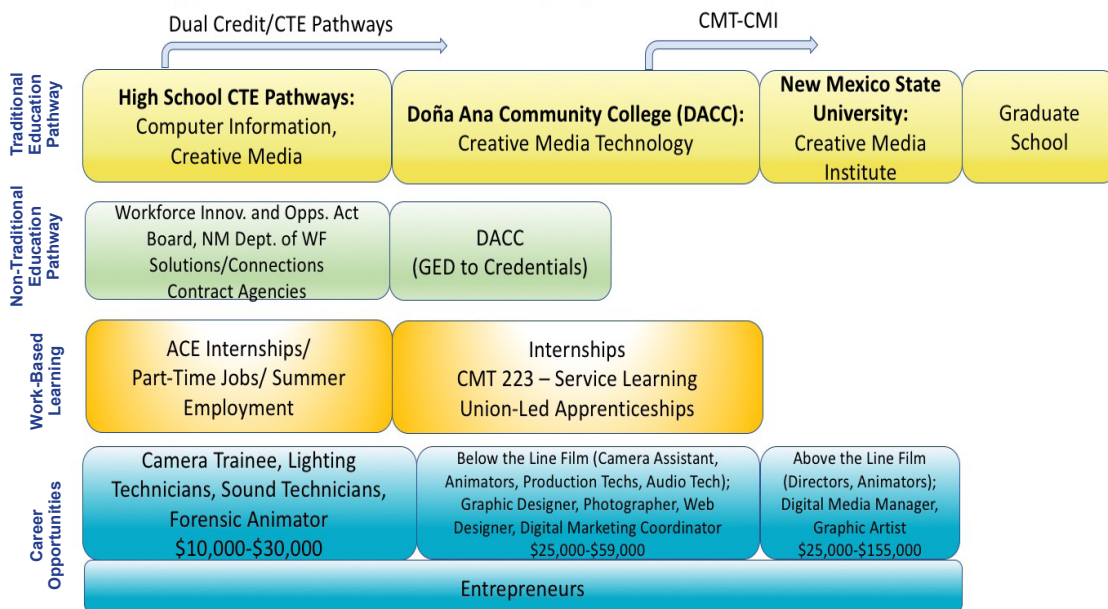


Figure 9

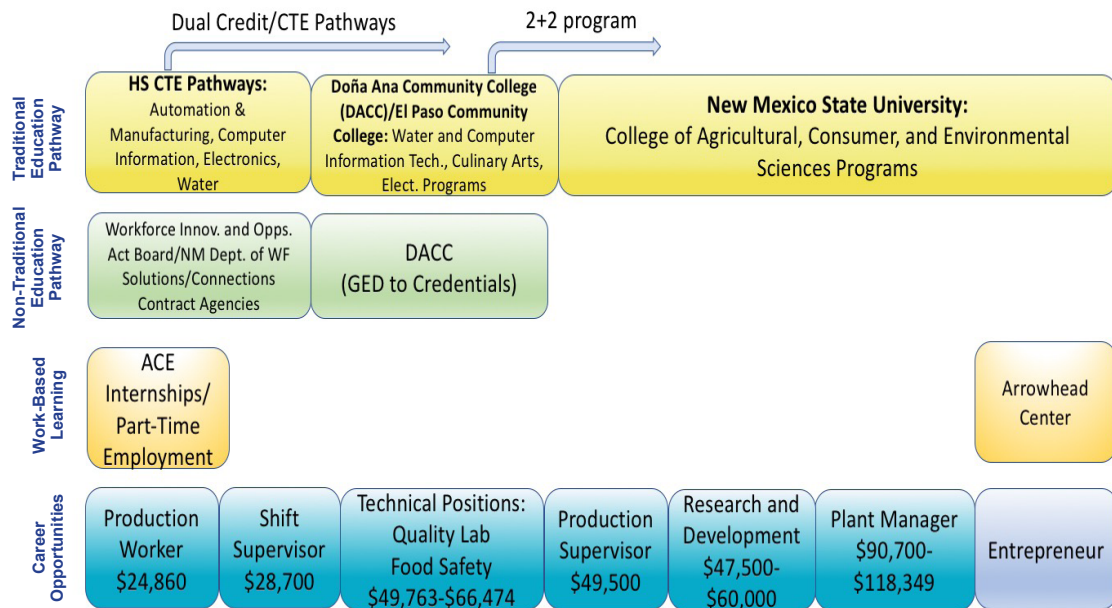


Figure 10

For Value-Added Agriculture, there is work to be done to build the industry, too. Opportunities to build current and future value-added ag businesses will require the same kind of alignment of existing resources, including:

- Implementing the recommendations for the next generation farmers and ranchers outlined in the [Resilience in New Mexico Agriculture Strategic Plan](#) (specific recommendations appear in the appendix).
- Leveraging the micro-business Farm Fresh program of La Semilla to invest in and connect local growers to businesses, schools, and access to capital
- Partnering with the USDA and NMSU College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES) to adopt the Stronger Communities to Together model for boosting the local agriculture-related economy
- Leveraging assets of the NMSU College of ACES, USDA, NMSU Cooperative Extension Services, DACC Small Business Development office, the Arrowhead Center, and ACCION New Mexico to partner in building the Value-Added Agriculture industry through seeding and growing entrepreneurs
 - o Explore the Michigan Good Food Fund as a model
 - o Identify funders to support
 - o Link to health gaps and improving access for low-income residents
 - o Connect with Border Industrial Association efforts
 - o Integrate iPad access into South Central Regional Transit
 - o Use rural gathering areas, like the Women's Intercultural Center, as resource centers

At the 2017 Domenici Public Policy Conference, New Mexico Secretary of Workforce Solutions Celina Bussey confirmed our approach, stating that those communities who find a way to put workforce development at the forefront of economic development will succeed. Other recommendations from the conference can be found in the appendix.

Building the Region's Talent Pipeline

Successfully building a Comprehensive Approach to Talent Development (Figure 2) requires the connection and coordination of all players and tools in the continuum toward these eight target industries and mobilizing target audiences to gain the knowledge and skills needed to become active contributors to the region's workforce and economy.

However, one overarching initiative must be done to ensure the success of the rest. Across the region, the greatest barrier to success is the overarching lack of awareness on a host of connected issues, and it must be addressed first.

AWARENESS

Across the community, huge awareness gaps exist that prevent access, engagement, and partnership vital to changing the current underproduction of, and misalignment between education and skills needed in, the region's current workforce talent. This lack of awareness is driven by a predominantly negative narrative of the region that perpetuates low expectations, hopelessness, disconnects, and resistance to collaboration among the various players in the pipeline, which exacerbates conditions related to the pernicious nature and corresponding impacts of generational poverty, a shortage or complete absence of positive role models, and the absence of a common vision for success.

Therefore, our strategic initiatives must target all participants in the talent pipeline and build awareness about:

- Career exposure, or the overarching knowledge of the industries themselves, the numerous career opportunities within each industry, the education and skills need for success in these careers, the earning potential and opportunities for advancement
 - Existing Department of Workforce Solutions resources, including:
 - [New Mexico Career Solutions](#)
 - [My Next Move](#)
 - [Why I Work](#)
 - Career exploration in the K-12 system through Career and Technical Education, Programs of Study, and the value of the Early College High Schools, including efforts to engage parents in better guiding their children
 - We will seek to build a connected series of experiences throughout the education continuum, informed by Workforce Readiness Forum Report prepared for The Bridge that create a progression toward career focus for youth and preparedness for their futures

Level 1 – Focus on career exploration of relevant industries through speakers, seminars, job fairs, and field trips

Level 2 – Exposure youth to more in-depth activities that facilitate narrowing of potential careers that bring students into the experience of a career, including field trips, job shadowing, one-on-one mentoring, and inquiry-based interviews. Also includes support for teachers and mentors

Level 3 – Most intensive and narrow and focus on internships and provides legitimacy as potential workforce professionals

- Necessary skills and knowledge needed for success, including employability (or “soft”) skills; STEM-related coursework and skills; the importance of being bi- and tri-lingual (basic and professional English and Spanish, as well as another language, like computer coding); the importance of clean background, i.e. criminal history, drug and alcohol offenses, and credit checks. This includes launching a campaign for employers and prospective candidates to implement some of the [Southern Regional Education Board NM Labor Market Analysis Recommendations](#), include identifying technical and workplace readiness standards and assessments, like WorkKeys and ACT, to:
 - Communicate the value of the credential and encourage them to recognize, request, or require the credential
 - Identify the standards in these foundational skills and establish them as prerequisites for entering WIOA-approved training programs
 - Encourage job seekers to pursue the credential as part of an intentional career planning process
- Elevate awareness and understanding of skills-based assessment in partnership with Innovate+Educate, the Community Action Agency, Tresco, Workforce Connections, and HELP-NM with employers and potential talent
- Available training resources, including education providers, workforce development contractors that support potential talent with federal and state-funded programs
- Real time job and career opportunities
- Opportunities for the business community to play a role in solving their collective challenges

To ensure the broadest access and deepest penetration of information into target audiences, we will launch a coordinated set of communications efforts to overcome awareness gaps for target audiences including:

- A regional, bilingual public service ad campaign targeting multiple media outlets and including a specific call to action to learn more or connect with employment resources
- New Mexico TrueTalent mobile app that connects career exploration with education and skill-building resources for in-school youth, Opportunity Youth, and adult audiences

- The beginnings of New Mexico TrueTalent can be found on The Bridge of Southern New Mexico's website at www.NewMexicoTrueTalent.org
 - Integrate NM Department of Workforce Solutions' [Students Work](#) portal into candidate screening/job opportunities for youth workers
- A centralized regional website with round-the-clock access to resources, including industry career exposure, real-time job opportunities, educational resources, as well as access to WorkKeys, Prove It, and KeyTrain to build the ability of prospective talent to increase their skill-based learning and enable earning of industry-recognized credentials.

POLICY

Underlying the construction and sustainability of this comprehensive continuum is federal, state and local policy that simultaneously removes barriers and strengthens engagement and connection of all players. Driven by the deep poverty of the majority of residents in our region, federal funding through the Workforce Innovation & Opportunities Act (WIOA) must be better directed in support of career education, skills-based hiring, and job placement in the eight industry sectors for those they serve. The federal mandate for WIOA to collaborate with other federal funding streams presents the opportunity to create new opportunities for combining workforce revenue streams and jointly-funded projects by expanding the partnership between WIOA and Carl. B. Perkins Career and Technical Education funding at the public and higher ed levels. Ideally, Doña Ana Community College has a pivotal role to play in cultivating credit and non-credit-bearing programs to skill-up available talent for success in the career continuum of our eight target industries, and these additional funding sources would expand its ability to do so.

In considering the identified target audiences, federal investments receive the best return on investment by prioritizing services to support young parents:

- Help them secure living wage jobs or return to school
- Streamline state services (human services, work, education) and align policies and funding to incentivize bundling services
- Provide year-round support for parents who are students by coordinating workforce development or post-secondary education programs with wrap-around services year-round
- Increase access to benefits for student parents, prioritizing the role of community colleges

State-funded agencies and contractors in the Workforce Talent pipeline have the opportunity to provide better, more direct advisement and support for their clients to engage in higher-skilled, higher-paying career fields. They are the primary sources for delivery of skills-based hiring tools and credentials but need to foster deeper connections with employers in these eight sectors to gauge clearly exactly what skills are needed, which proficiencies can be measured by WorkKeys and Prove It, and build the relationships with educational providers to increase the skills of their clients.

State policy in support of successful workforce development efforts should advance the following solutions:

- Tax credit incentives for employers who participate in internships, apprenticeships, and work-based learning
- Improved data sharing agreements between public education, higher education, and the Department of Workforce Solutions

Incentivize high schools to expand industry-driven career and technical education in partnership with community colleges leading to industry-valued credentials upon high school graduation. California and Colorado provide models for this in California's Strong Workforce Program established in 2016's [C.A.S. 830](#), and Colorado's Career Development Success Pilot Program established in 2016's [C.O. H 1289](#).

WIOA contractors should be encouraged to adopt the framework presented in [WorkAdvance: Testing a New Approach to Increase Employment Advancement for Low-Skilled Adults](#), to support successful employment in target sectors through:

- Intensive screening of applicants' ability to complete training and meet employer needs
 - Identify and overcome barriers to successful employment and education, including access to high-quality childcare, transportation, and other wrap-around services.
- Provide sector-focused pre-employment services
- Sector-specific occupational skills training
- Sector-specific job development and placement
- Postemployment retention and advancement services

The full report can be found [here](#).

Doña Ana County government and the City of Las Cruces have sought to better understand their role in cultivating a higher-skilled workforce, as evidenced by the jointly sponsored Live Well Summit. Their partnership in this continuum provides the opportunity to leverage regularly occurring functions of government (procurement requirements, community-focused communications and meetings, economic development, etc.) with city- and county-sponsored programs that can be integrated into the continuum. Additionally, both entities should add performance-driven metrics about workforce development into their internal processes and identify opportunities for innovation and engagement. Finally, as employers themselves, both entities have the opportunity to "lead by doing" by integrating youth employment opportunities and job shadowing, as well partnership with workforce development contractors to leverage tuition assistance and skill-building resources for low-skilled workers, into the function of government. The City has already provided specific direction for these activities in its [2017-2022 Strategic Plan](#).

Doña Ana County seeks to revitalize its efforts to boost services and quality of life for colonia residents. The county has an important role to play in uniting its governmental services with the Gadsden school district, Doña Ana Community College, and workforce

service providers to maximize co-location of services in the communities where these families live. Leveraging the physical spaces that are already there through the community schools model would enable greater access for families to education, training, career exploration, on-line courses, assessment tools, childcare and transportation assistance, and truly, a comprehensive set of services to help families break through the geographic barriers that perpetuate barriers to employment.

The traditional educational pathway into each career field will be dependent upon education policy, which will either work for or against our efforts. Prioritizing funding and student participation in Career and Technical Education Pathways and dual credit courses will propel student into post-secondary engagement, attainment, and success more quickly, while also proving to increase high school graduation rates in the region. These investments have the greatest return on investment potential, due simply to the scalability to reach more students and increasing the likelihood that students will graduate with both their high school diploma and an employer-valued career credential. Whether they go straight into the workforce or on to pursue additional higher education, maximizing cooperation between educational institutions dramatically improves the future earning potential of students from high school graduation and beyond.

BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

The role of business in building its own current and future talent pool is paramount, and frankly, has been the key ingredient missing from the successful development of a larger pool of skilled and ready talent. However, we have already seen the potential for dramatic change that occurs when the business community is mobilized toward a shared goal. The Regional Education Initiative, which became The Bridge of Southern New Mexico, is directly tied to the increase in graduation rates from 49% to 80% countywide in the last decade, outperforming the state and similar communities.

Work-and-learn programs are powerful, meaningful ways to support business engagement, while closing the “soft-skills gap” among young workers. The New York Times reported that 40% of college students work at least 30 hours per week, and one in four works full time. The US Chamber of Commerce, the [National Network Connecting Learning and Work](#), and others provide models for business engagement.

As we approach our work, we will advocate for the role of business in these eight industries (and so many others that benefit from the economic empowerment of citizens in our region) to be thought of in terms of five “ships:”

- Leadership - Shaping and influencing instruction
- Mentorship - Real experience shared by real experts in the field
- Internship - Work-based learning experiences for students
- Apprenticeship - Work-and-learn experiences that lead directly to jobs
- Externship - On-site learning experiences for teachers

Banks are uniquely incentivized to play a role in community workforce efforts by the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), which awards CRA credits to those who participate or invest in workforce development. This includes direct participation with workforce boards, hiring youth interns, and providing financial literacy to youth and young adults. This would be especially meaningful for Opportunity Youth.

Leadership

Across the talent continuum, the voice of employers and industry leaders should drive the education and engagement of all. Establishing industry-led, cross-sector advisory committees, the voice of business will drive construction of their industry's talent pipelines including:

- Identifying required proficiencies needed for specific jobs within industries
- Influencing curriculum and instruction for all education providers in the continuum
- Identifying the right mix of skill-based hiring tests and certifications to be successful
- Modifying industry pathways as needed

With business in the driver's seat, it becomes a thought partner in solving the persistent problems that have hindered their industries' ability to thrive and grow. The Brown Center on Education Policy at Brookings has developed a community-college specific model for this in its report, [Connecting community college with employers: A toolkit for building successful partnerships](#), that could be more broadly replicated across all of the educational institutions.

Initial efforts should begin by leveraging the already established industry-focused workgroups of the Borderplex Alliance: Advanced Logistics, Advanced Manufacturing, Defense and Aerospace, and Life Sciences & Healthcare; and Border Industrial Association. Additional workgroups for Energy, Value-Added Agriculture, and Digital Media will need to be established.

The business leadership will be solidified by establishing advisory committees for each industry target comprised of:

- A majority number of industry experts (Management level, human resources) willing to offer on-site training/internships/apprenticeships and participate in on-campus experiences
- High school CTE teacher(s)
- CTE-aligned professor(s) who provides dual credit instruction at the community college as part of their classes
- Dean or associate-dean level university representative
- Parent(s) of student in aligned CTE pathways
- Student(s) in aligned CTE pathways

Business associations, including the chambers of commerce, MVEDA, the BIA, and aligned-industry associations can take the lead in certifying qualified youth candidates through a “Hire Me First” program:

- Partner secondary and post-secondary leadership from each district with local chambers to develop and launch the program
- Use “[Making Youth Employment Work](#),” resources from the US Chamber of Commerce to guide activities of the public and private sector partners
- Replicate industry-specific partnerships using best practices laid out in the report from US Chamber of Commerce [Learning to Work, Working to Learn](#)
- Build upon assets of “Skill-Ready Doña Ana” to certify the preparedness of non-traditional candidates
- Demonstrate proficiencies in employability skills through SkillBot program completion and/or WorkKeys assessment

Additionally, the business community in each industry sector has unlimited potential to affect current and long-term change by mobilizing their collective voice and influence with their own employees. Business leaders are a pivotal connection in support of the educational and career success of growing the next generation of talent for this community by engaging their employees in building awareness, providing access to information and resources employees may not be aware of, and encouraging involvement in mentoring their children and other young people toward academic completion and the skills needed for career success. Employers can have immediate impact on their employees’ futures by connecting them to the value of high-quality early learning environments for their children. These investments are proven to produce the highest return on investment. The US Chamber of Commerce has studied the subject deeply, and provided guidelines on best practices for business leadership in the early education continuum [here](#).

Mentorship

Advisory committee members and industry-aligned Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance, Chambers of Commerce, and Border Industrial Association membership to build partnerships with middle and high schools to provide a consistent voice and presence for on-campus mentorship and career exploration and job shadowing opportunities. To truly engage students in high-quality, work-based learning experiences on-campus, each industry advisory should develop grade-level, “real-world” projects for students to engage them early in creative problem solving, team-building, communication, research, and other activities that support increasing students’ “employability skills.”

The US Chamber of Commerce has several a readily implementable approaches to building and expanding business mentorship outlined in [Connected to Careers: Expanding Employer Leadership In Career Development](#):

- Represent the business community in schools
- Serve as a subject matter expert on career pathways

- Help vetting and matching students with employers through Academic Career Experience (ACE) and summer employment
- Validate skills acquired during work-based learning experiences
- Organize diverse talent sourcing networks
 - o Work with teachers to identify diverse and high-caliber candidates with interests aligned to target industries

Internship

Across the board, to close gaps in employability skills and harness the talent of the community as early as possible, youth employment must become a focused priority. As a state, New Mexico ranks dead last (51st) in youth employment, according to the [Opportunity Index](#) produced by Opportunity Nation. “Research shows that if young adults do not get early work experience, they are likely to sustain permanent loss of lifetime income, and consequently, dramatically lessen their contribution to the economy as taxpayers,” *Making Youth Employment Work*, US Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

Therefore, the business community is perfectly positioned to close this long-standing gap by harnessing the existing model provided by the Las Cruces Public Schools’ ACE program, as well as piloting and launching summer employment for youth in the targeted industries.

- Work with LCPS staff to strengthen recruitment and communication efforts by ACE
 - o Reconstruct employer recruitment materials
 - o Reconstruct pre-placement experience for students
 - o Provide on-line training for employers
 - o Integrate industry advisory committee members into guidance for students and teachers
 - o Identify areas to expand industry-aligned initiatives like the CI-TraM internship which provides work-based learning on higher education campi
- Expand upon the career exploration model developed by Southwestern NM WIOA board to offer career exploration or career training tracks
- Rebrand and integrate employability skills training from the MVEDA boot-camp model
- Complete summer employment with WorkKeys assessment to inform students of skill-based competencies beyond their academic credentials and training to inform their personal efforts to skill up for future employment
- Integrate regional transit resources to help students with transportation barriers

The report, [Expanding Economic Opportunity for Youth through Summer Jobs](#), by the J.P. Morgan Chase's New Skills at Work initiative explores the importance of summer employment in not just increasing high school graduation but "paving the way to a successful progression into adulthood." The reports finds summer jobs contribute to:

- Skills development
- Increased earnings
- Improved school attendance and educational outcomes, especially for those at risk of dropping out
- Reduced involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice system
- A pipeline of workers and reduced poverty

The report also points to the connection between summer jobs and long-term employment outcomes, including:

- 86% of teens who work are more likely to be employed in the next year
- Work-based learning activity can increase a young person's salary by as much as 11% for up to eight years after high school

College-level internships are already embedded in some college degree requirements, but they need to be expanded to students who don't receive college credit for work-based learning experiences. Industry advisory committees will be best positioned to identify these opportunities, and partner with peer business community members to launch new opportunities.

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is a practice traditionally discussed in the trades-related career fields, and frequently established by labor unions in specific fields. In our region, there is a huge shortage of paid apprenticeship and cooperative opportunities for entry-level and low-skilled workers, even in the trades, but the reality is that apprenticeships can be established in any career field. According to Forbes Magazine, in the article, [Why Investing in Apprenticeship Makes Good Dollars and Sense, Forbes, Nov. 1, 2016:](#)

- Every federal dollar invested in apprenticeship programs brings a [\\$27 return on investment](#)
- Every \$1 spent by the employer earns \$1.47 in return in increased productivity, reduced waste, and greater front-line innovation.
- Apprenticeship combines hands-on training with college coursework, and is paired with scalable wage increases
- Earn-while-you-learn model leads directly to mastery of a trade without the burden of high tuition fees and student loan debt
- Key to addressing youth unemployment and inequitable incomes
- 9 of 10 apprentices are employed immediately upon finishing their training
- 87% of apprentices become employed
- \$50,000 starting wage, which leads to out-earning their peers by \$300,000 over their careers

That said, we can identify key points of transition from low-skilled to mid-skilled jobs, or mid-skilled to high-skilled jobs in each of the eight industries and cultivate apprenticeships to grow the capacity of the workforce already in place, or open opportunities to those who can demonstrate skill-based proficiency and have the potential to step into higher-skilled, higher-paying opportunities.

An apprenticeship model already developed by Dr. Joseph Goins for the NM Public Education Department could be implemented for WIOA/WFC clients using those funding streams to support on-the-job training in each industry sector. Apprenticeship candidates could be ACE graduates who've earned a high school diploma and hold a career certification. Additionally, the chambers of commerce and BIA could recruit their members into the effort, cultivating at least one apprenticeship program per economic development target. Jobs for the Future provides support for these partnerships through its [Center for Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning](#).

The State of Colorado has taken this effort on through [CareerWise Colorado](#) model, which targets youth apprenticeships. After finding that their education system only works for 18-23% of their students, it created a blended approach for education, guaranteed transfer courses in higher education, and competency-based graduation, learning, and work at community colleges. The CareerWise Colorado apprenticeships split time between high school, work on the job, and pathway-specific skills training. This approach could be developed locally and deployed as a pilot.

Externship

The key to long-term change for workforce preparedness lies in better educating teachers on the needs of business and industry, so that information can be translated into classroom instruction and work-based learning opportunities on a far grander scale. Across the country, businesses are using teacher externships to “train the trainer” and equip the teacher force with up-to-date experiences, equipment, and information to improve delivery of instruction.

Implementation should be tied to each industry advisory committee's work. A publicly available guide for establishing a successful externship program, [Career Academy Support Network's Teacher Externship Guide](#) can guide the development of externships in each industry. Recommended processes include:

- Application required
- Two weeks, on-site training
- \$1,200 stipend for teacher
- Support beyond the externship:
- Cross-sector curriculum and project development
- Professional development for their peers
- Business mentoring from host site with teachers' students in the following year

Grant funding will be sought to pilot these externships, but ideally, their value will become so apparent that industry partners integrate them into their annual budgets to ensure sustainability.

STEM-H/STEM/STEAM PROFICIENCY

STEM-related education, and especially STEM-H, is a vital thread that must be woven across all efforts to equip the skilled and ready workforce. Every one of the eight industry targets is driven by STEM-related skills and knowledge, and every list of highest paying career fields based on education status is dominated by STEM degrees. STEM graduates tend to out-earn their non-STEM peers. A 2014 report by the Georgetown University Center on Education and Workforce found that “demand for applicants with STEM competencies far outstripped the 5% of professions traditionally determined to be in the STEM fields. STEM-literate graduates are not only needed in those fields, but also in areas like advanced manufacturing, mining and utilities and transportation.” Significant career opportunities in STEM fields have the potential to propel the economy forward with the plethora of jobs on the region’s four military bases through both military and civilian job opportunities, including NASA’s Johnson Space Center that is part of White Sands Missile Range, and Spaceport America which is growing in use and opportunity.

Therefore, our goal is to harness the collective STEM assets of this region to facilitate the construction and mapping of a [STEM Ecosystem](#) embedded in the Workforce Talent pipeline we seek to create, while also being intentional about demystifying STEM so that it is both approachable and engaging for audiences who traditionally are underrepresented in STEM fields.

Growing a STEM Ecosystem will provide valuable learning in a connected set of metrics which have huge implications for vaulting this region from low rankings in math and science to the head of state and national proficiencies. A STEM Ecosystem would produce a harvest of benefits, including:

- Cultivating successful college goers and graduates in STEM-related majors by prioritizing the collective impact model advanced by CAHSI Includes pilot being led by NMSU, UTEP, and DACC.
- Increasing the success of Hispanic and low-income students in STEM education, and therefore, future careers in high-paying, middle-skill and high-skill STEM careers
- Developing a localized model for a cloud-enabled workforce built on Project Lead the Way and aligned similarly to the [Kentucky Cloud Career Pathways](#) public-private collaboration.
- Enhancing in-school and after-school implementation of evidence-based STEM curriculum and integration into hands-on learning in community-wide experiential learning environments and MakerSpaces
- Making intentional connections that lead students into interest-area-aligned Career and Technical Education pathways that include college-level dual credit coursework

- Piloting and growing “near peer” learning between higher education and public education students by fostering reverse-tech transfer, the cultivation of a new training ground for future STEM teachers, and mobilizing a corps of STEM mentors in the community
- Closing outcome gaps for specific student groups while increasing access to postsecondary education for low-income and Hispanic students
- Fostering engagement in STEM-focused learning and academic pathways with bi-lingual mobile technology to encourage student and family engagement in STEM
- Integrating business community mentors into the ecosystem to informing students of real and relevant STEM-focused careers locally and regionally
- Incorporating experiential learning for students using the Building Experiential Skilled Student Talent model used by Tech Parks Arizona of the University of Arizona.

Doña Ana County and the region are uniquely equipped for success in this effort. The presence of the state’s land grant university, New Mexico State University, is of huge benefit. STEM instruction, industry-related leadership, entrepreneur development, and community engagement through a host of after-school programs provides a solid foundation upon which we can build. Additionally, Doña Ana Community College produces most of the career certifications and associate degrees needed in the eight industries and offers dual credit coursework to students in the three school districts, including the region’s three Early College High Schools. In fact, Arrowhead Park Early College High School is a STEM-focused program and produces students with a number of STEM-related associate degrees along with their high school diplomas. Arrowhead Park Medical Academy provides an unparalleled environment for STEM-H education and is now being used more broadly to train Healthcare CTE students across the district.

Las Cruces has two experiential assets that bring unprecedented “learn-by-doing opportunities:” the Challenger Center of Las Cruces Public Schools and the new Department of Defense learning lab being installed in the College of Education at NMSU. We need to expand on these assets with the birth of makerspaces throughout the community, especially in our rural communities that have limited exposure to STEM educational resources outside of a traditional school environment. MakerSpaces translate book learning into real world application, and they are capturing the imaginations of those least likely to participate in STEM education and changing their futures for good.

A STEM Ecosystem also solves a critical need in the region. The state of New Mexico, as a whole, suffers from dismal proficiency scores on reading, math, and science tests, but this need not be the case. This region can cultivate a successful STEM Ecosystem by positioning the NMSU College of Engineering Community Outreach Coordinator as the lead liaison for this effort. This position already leads K-12 engagement in boosting STEM education, access, proficiency, and by partnering with the new School of STEM

at the NMSU College of Education, we additional opportunities to build the quality of our STEM instruction across the community, including:

- Supporting and expanding of in-school STEM instruction through Project Lead the Way (Engineering, Computer Science, Bio-Medical) and out-of-school STEM enrichment programs conducted by the College of Education
- Providing on-going professional development for educators
- Partnering graduate students with educators and cultivating mentorship opportunities with students throughout the PK-12 system
- Inviting undergraduate students to engage in afterschool STEM programs and potentially transform them into future STEM educators
- Expanding the “Strategic Doing” model into STEM-related high-school Programs of Study

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

Without question, the PK-12 system is the foundational education pillar upon which a highly-skilled, highly-paid talent pipeline can be built. If we seek to “grow our own” work-force, which includes maximizing the career opportunities for young people in the region and reducing the much-discussed issue of “brain drain,” then the role of public education in equipping the region’s young people for these eight industries is paramount.

A recent [report](#) by the World Economic Forum indicates that 65% of elementary school students now will be employed in jobs that don’t exist today. Success in cultivating our talent demands we prepare students not just for today’s jobs, but for those we cannot see. Education, and especially the high school experience, must evolve to meet the demands of this future, if we are to serve this region’s youth well. Education expert Tony Wagner recently identified [seven “survival skills of the future”](#) outlined by the business community that are consistent with the employability skills demanded by employers today:

- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Collaboration across networks and leading by influence
- Agility and adaptability
- Initiative and entrepreneurship
- Effective oral and written communication
- Accessing and analyzing information
- Curiosity and imagination

This emphasizes why business engagement in the education continuum is not just important – it’s imperative.

Additionally, the importance of high-quality, early learning experiences, which are proven to increase students' ability to achieve grade-level reading and math proficiency, is critical to start as many students on the right trajectory, as possible. Students who are ready to read are ready to learn.

A recent study of employer vacancies by the Department of Workforce Solutions indicated that New Mexico employers ask for higher academic credentials for their jobs than similar jobs in other parts of the country in order to secure some level of assurance about the ability of candidates to perform basic reading and math skills. This trend means employers are self-creating a credentialing crisis and an unforced misalignment between available jobs and available workers. We simply must increase student proficiencies in foundational subjects.

According to the New Mexico Public Education Department, only 28% of Doña Ana County's 4th graders score proficient in reading, 22% score proficient in math, and 37% score proficient in science. Rallying support to double or triple these proficiency rates must be achieved. It is important to rally community support behind the early learning community and support the roles of Ngage, the Children's Reading Alliance, Early Head-Start, HeadStart, and AVANCE, among others. Parents should be encouraged to understand the importance of literacy in English and/or Spanish as foundational to student success. The Center for English Language Programs is an important asset in this community that should be integrated into this work.

In fact, best-practice dual language programs across our districts should be expanded to equip more students with proficiency in both languages, refining their skills in the high school to be bilingual in industry-relevant terms. Integration of a third language, computer coding, would be a game-changer for the future prospects of these young people.

We also need a school culture that encourages parents as partners with teachers to support student success. Community Schools are emerging an important component in middle school to foster better, stronger connections among non-profit partners and those who provide wrap-around services to families that are also proven to support student success in the middle-school to high-school transition. Relationships with the Community Action Agency, Workforce Connections and HELP-NM, the Chambers of Commerce, the Roadrunner Food Bank, La Clinica de Familia, and others will provide comprehensive, two-generation support and access to education and resources for students and parents simultaneously.

Interestingly, the Early College High School model that was piloted in the Las Cruces district and expanded into the Gadsden district has shown us how to help young people succeed in graduating high school and persisting into college. With very near 100% graduation rates, the Early College High School model has demonstrably shown:

- Career-focused, course-aligned pathways through high school and into postsecondary are successful in helping first generation, low-income, and primarily Hispanic high school students to:

- o Outperform their own expectations of themselves
- o Earn valuable career certifications and associate degrees simultaneously with their high school diplomas
- o Not waste valuable time (and the corresponding cost) in college remediation courses, which are highly correlated to non-completion in higher ed
- o Graduate high school ready to go on in learning (to higher degrees) or earning (to higher skilled jobs and careers)
- Students who begin these pathways succeed regardless of their incoming GPAs when they experience education in this environment.
- The handoff between K-12 and post-secondary is most effective when it takes place during the high school experience.
- The best return on investment of valuable state dollars in promoting educational success.

Bringing these important lessons to scale to help even more students will not just transform student success and increase graduation rates across the continuum, it will embed career preparation into the K-12 system to transform the readiness of young people across our community. The very best investments in career preparedness will be made within the educational system, rather than higher cost of creating change outside of it. The adage, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” rings true with targeting the best investments of time and resources in connecting education and workforce preparedness.

Propelling students from 8th grade and through their high school years provides the opportunity to build a culture of high expectations, the value of completion, and instilling a commitment to lifelong learning. Students need to understand not just the “what” of education but “why” education is so important to their futures.

The in-school youth career preparedness continuum should include both instruction and work-based learning:

- 8th grade: career exploration, Next Step Plan, Programs of Study, career days
- 9th-10th grade: job shadowing, on-campus mentoring, Innoventure entrepreneur development
 - o Summer employability skills instruction through Skillbot with a micro-badge to show completion
- 11th-12th grade: Career and Technical Education, Dual Credit Courses, Student Internships, Apprenticeships, and WorkKeys certifications
- Across the continuum: CTE Teacher Externships in relevant industries funded through a combination of employer contributions and grant funding

According to [Preparing Students for College and Career in the US: the Effects of Career-Themed Programs of Study on High School Performance](#), program of study enrollment improved students' probability of graduation by 11.3% and that each additional CTE credit earned in programs of study increased their probability of graduation by 4%.

Career exploration should begin no later than middle school (as well as training in the Microsoft Office Suite, which is completely absent from the education continuum at this time), transitioning into Career and Technical Education Pathways and career-focused Programs of Study, or one of the three Early College High Schools, to guide students through their high school experience and provide early exposure to college-level work through integrated dual credit coursework.

Changes at the state level have created Career Clusters that already exist and are aligned to our targeted industries:

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
- Architecture & Construction
- Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications
- Health Science
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics

The success of the pathways can be maximized by the integration of employability skills (or soft skills), work-based learning, and skill-based assessments that give young people a better understanding of their readiness for the work environment. Recommended courses of action from the Workforce Readiness Forum Report, produced for The Bridge included:

- Embedding WorkKeys into student experiences
- Elevate KeyTrain as an asset for helping students “skill up”
- Making work/school look/feel more like school/work
 - o SCORE offers a team of mentors at no cost to the schools to provide students with the connections between how they approach school and how that ties to future workforce success.

High school graduation is the first point that simply must be completed, but then students need to understand a better, richer, more complete story about the options available to them in higher education: career certifications, associates' degrees, bachelors' degrees and above. The current “university for all” strategy is failing far too many students, and there is a general lack of awareness about other options, including the value of the community college in building skills for the future. Students should be encouraged to cross multiple “finish lines” in their education, but two at a minimum – and those should be best suited to the careers students wish to pursue.

As workforce education expert Kevin Fleming outlines, student counseling should be completely flipped, to focus first on what career a young person seeks to engage in, what education is needed to be qualified for that career, and then what college or university program is best able to get them there successfully. This provides the opportunity to evaluate pay scales in the positions they wish to pursue and then make the best decisions on how to use post-secondary education to give them the best return on their academic investment. For example, two-year degree nurses make only \$1 per hour less than four-year-degree nurses but having a four-year degree may open doors of opportunity that two-year degree nurses wouldn't qualify for. And engineering technicians (two-year degrees) can easily out-earn numerous four-year degrees. Transforming high school counseling from the function of college entrance exams to providing better cost-benefit analysis for students would create transformational change. This is a pivotal area for deeper business engagement.

We must identify far better guidance systems for students than only their high school counselors can provide on their own. Surrounding them with industry mentors and accessible technology can expand students' ability to access career information, exploration and advisement. A bilingual mobile technology platform would support students in real time and provide an avenue for two-way information to all members of the workforce talent continuum.

Additionally, building partnerships with other community resources, like the Community Action Agency, can expand the ability of low-income families to access the full set of benefits needed to be successful in a post-secondary environment. For example, FAFSA preparation, Individual Development Accounts, and counseling about other available resources could make a huge difference for families. Students attending LCPS' Rio Grande Prep and the GRADS programs located in three of their high schools would benefit greatly from making strong, intentional connections between these providers.

The "lost" senior year is the subject of much discussion nationally, and as the ECHS model demonstrates, students will graduate at 100% when their senior year is focused on college-level work. Solving the dual credit funding crisis for higher education would fling open the doors of opportunity to truly maximize college-level learning during the senior year. Ideally, the senior year would include:

- Summer employment for students between their junior and senior years, facilitated by ACE teachers
- Maximum dual credit coursework
- Securing a career certification or associates degree
- Engaging in work-based learning through ACE in the fall and spring
- Understanding their career readiness based upon WorkKeys and Prove It competency-based evaluation

There is great return on investment in this restructuring, just based on the increased earning power youth would have upon graduation. Students who earn a career credential alongside their high school diploma increase their annual earning power by \$5,000 on average. ECHS students who earn Associates Degrees upon graduation increasing their annual earning potential by \$12,000 on average. Whether they go on to pursue higher degrees or go straight into their careers, the ability to earn more increases their lifetime earnings, shortens the time to completion and reduces the cost of college.

CAREER CERTIFICATIONS AND TWO-YEAR COLLEGE COMPLETION

Economic transformation when workforce talent development becomes a driver for economic development can only be achieved when we unleash the power of the community college to provide the skills and training needed for entry-level and middle-skilled workers upon which the higher-skilled career opportunities rest. For far too long, we've over-produced at the higher-skilled end of industry but failed in creating a holistic continuum. According to Kevin Fleming's video, ["Success in the New Economy."](#) for every occupation that requires one graduate degree, there are two bachelor-level degrees, and more than six certifications or associate level degrees needed to support them. We see this locally in the projections cited by the Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine that has predicted that for every Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine that graduates and goes into practice creates the need for nine more jobs at other, lower educational levels to support him or her.

Diminishing state funding, a gaping lack of understanding about the programs available of Doña Ana Community College (and El Paso Community College regionally), and the former disconnect between the community college and the university has truly handicapped the people who live here. However, thanks to strong leadership at NMSU and the desire to better leverage the collective assets of the NMSU system, there is now unprecedented alignment among our higher educational partners. The launch of Aggie Pathways and a growing awareness of DACC among students and parents being advanced by The Bridge are just two early signs of progress. The purpose of the Aggie Pathway program is to provide a smooth transition for students transferring from an NMSU community college campus to the NMSU Las Cruces campus, particularly those who initially did not meet NMSU Las Cruces' recently increased admission standards. In fact, students who've been placed in Aggie Pathways are outperforming the general population of the university.

According to the most recent data of the College Scorecard for the four main institutions in this region:

Post-Secondary Institution	Cost to Attend	Graduation Rate	Salary After Attending
New Mexico State University	\$9,663	44%	\$33,400
Doña Ana Community College	\$6,092	11%	\$33,400
University of Texas at El Paso	\$6,638	39%	\$38,900
El Paso Community College	\$3,355	13%	\$25,300

Especially at a time when the New Mexico Lottery Scholarship covers a much smaller percentage of total educational cost, the greatest return on higher education investment will come from expanding the role of the community college(s) in creating new, or strategically consolidating industry-specific stackable training clusters, that include:

- Dual credit-driven pathways to career credentials for high school students
- Pathways to career certifications that can also reduce time to associate degrees
- More connected programs that connect one and two-year (1+1, 1+2, and 2+2) programs between institutions leading to employer-required certification and degrees
- Quick-turn, non-credit training programs
- Continuing and professional education for those currently in the workforce

At this unique moment in our region, Doña Ana Community College, and nearby El Paso Community College, have an unprecedented opportunity to drive workforce transformation by locally pioneering short-term, industry-relevant credentials through the [Right Signals Initiative](#) currently in 20 schools across the country, and learning from the work of the [Credential Engine initiative](#) funded by the Lumina Foundation, to certify the value of these credentials to local employers. These institutions can serve their communities and their students best by aligning their programs to labor market data. Several colleges were recognized for their success in this alignment with the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. Leadership of our community colleges should look to these institutions for the best, readily adaptable approaches for optimal alignment, and do so in partnership with our workforce service providers.

The community college is the right answer for skilling-up adult workers with free training in online courses, computer skills, and other certifications. Taking the concept behind Community Schools to the higher ed level, community college campuses can be used to co-locate services in “Pathway to Success” Centers located in underserved communities and in places where people already congregate:

- Anthony
- Chaparral
- Las Cruces
- Santa Teresa

Whether DACC’s students come through traditional K-12 educational pathways or federal and state-funded workforce assistance programs, there is much to be gained by coalescing federal, state, and even local funding into the region’s best-equipped workforce development entity.

There is an immediate need for new certifications and degrees in Transportation and Logistics to support the employer base at the \$1.2-billion economic engine that is the Border Industrial Park, as those programs are not currently in place. Additionally, there is a huge need to do a better job of reverse-awarding associate degrees to NMSU students in the course of their programs, providing them with an alternative qualification should they be unable to persist onto a four-year degree.

Industry advisory committees have the potential to strengthen instruction and outline the most valued credentials for their industries. This presents another opportunity to amplify business voice in solving its own workforce talent challenges.

FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE COMPLETION

Economic development is a precept of the land-grant institution, creating economic opportunities for individuals and growth opportunities for enterprises. New Mexico State University deploys resources statewide and provides outreach to constituents in every sector of the state. Through a blend of private and public ventures, NMSU sponsors numerous opportunities to seed innovative ideas, teams, businesses, and endeavors.

One example at NMSU can be found at Arrowhead Center. The mission of Arrowhead Center is to contribute to economic development through innovation, entrepreneurship, and workforce development. The Arrowhead Center makes available to individuals and firms the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to be successful in innovation-driven business development and entrepreneurship. Through its promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship, the Arrowhead Center provides the private sector with enhanced capabilities to create economic growth.

In this regard, for some, Arrowhead is a sandbox – a place to play, learn, and develop the innovative mindset and to some degree skills requisite to any workforce, whether it be logistics, health care or any of the other clusters in which the region aspires to excel,

whether one is an entrepreneur or not. Others view Arrowhead as providing the innovative capability to be an entrepreneur – a startup, standalone company and/or a solo worker.

NMSU's contribution to innovation and capacity (and, therefore, economic development) extends far beyond Arrowhead. It is found in every college and campus of the NMSU system and in the vast majority of academic programs. Too often, though, academic courses are packaged as off-the-shelf degree plans to be sold to households (the customer), taken by students (the consumer).

The NMSU System, which teaches innovation, must itself be innovative. Without abandoning degree plans for households and students, NMSU may need to tear them down, repackage, and distribute them differently to employers and their employees. That rethinking must begin with dual credit, associate degrees, and certificate programs designed to meet the needs of the customer and consumer – employers and those they employ – with the flexibility to lead to baccalaureate and graduate degrees.

Scholarship, particularly that derived at the laboratories—[research infrastructure](#)—complements learning as a basis of innovation and part of the capacity that the NMSU System contributes to economic development. Research infrastructure, like degree programs before it, has been developed, packaged and distributed for a different customer – the federal government. The research, how it is conducted, reported, and managed largely has been for that single customer. If instead the customer is industry, the rules of engagement change rather significantly. Perhaps, like other universities—for example, [Stanford](#)—the NMSU System should consider an Industrial Contracts Office, one that supports research by negotiating agreements balancing university and industry interests.

Learning, scholarship, engagement. The mission of the NMSU System and all land grant institutions of higher education can transform to include a broader, yet more focused perspective.

WORKFORCE INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES ACT (WIOA)/ WORKFORCE CONNECTIONS CLIENTS

Nearly \$25 million in federal and state investments were made in New Mexico in 2017, and yet we continue to lag in numerous employment indicators. The Southwestern Region receives \$4.4 million allotted for:

- Adult - \$1.3 million
- Dislocated Worker - \$1.4 million
- Youth - \$1.7 million

According to the [2016 WIOA State of New Mexico Annual Report](#), the Southwest Region leads the state in unemployment rates at 7.8% in 2016. The region received \$5,337,433 and served 545 adults, or \$9,793 per person.

In Doña Ana County, as in other parts of the country, high poverty rates are significant contributors to every other well-being indicator. However, hitting right at the root of poverty by targeting these investments to remove barriers and increase access for the 51% of families in the region who are 200% below poverty, change becomes both attainable and rapid.

According to the report, [Efficient, Effective Services: Career Pathways and Lasting Economic Stability for Families](#) by ASCEND at The Aspen Institute:

- An increase of \$1,000 in average household income during a child's early years is associated with school readiness
- For families experiencing an annual income of less than \$15,000 per year, a \$10,000 increase in annual income averaged over the first five years of a child's life nearly triples the odds the child will finish high school
- Provide real opportunities for parents with low incomes to access the education, training, and supports needed to find and keep jobs in high-demand industries that promote economic mobility and bring the promise of long-term financial security for themselves and their children.

Approval of the WIOA Combined State Plan 2016-2019 gives us the opportunity to target these investments to support talent pipeline development, specifically for non-traditional pathways into the workforce. The Governor's Key Workforce System Goals include:

- The workforce system will become an employer-driven system and is not driven by government agencies, public education systems, or program providers.
- The workforce system will continuously strive to maintain the maximum allowed flexibility to approve programs, allocate funding, measure outcomes and refine programs and funding as needed to drive business growth through an effective model for achieving employability.
- The workforce system will exist to serve two customer groups:
 - o Employers who can grow the state's economy and revenue through a prospering and expanding business which relies, in a large part, on a trained, competent, and employable workforce.
 - o New Mexico citizens who must strive to remain employable and skilled for current and future jobs.
- The workforce system will continuously work toward the alignment of resources, policies, and metrics to ensure the workforce system meets the employability requirements of business.

The state's strategies are to:

- Strengthen workforce development and education linkages.
- Emphasize work-based experiences for target populations

- Emphasize broader participation in career pathways and sector strategies
- Increase coordination efforts between employment and training activities and partner programs to improve the quality of participants' experiences and interactions with the workforce system

Recommendations for leveraging federal and state investments in support of this work will be guided by those set out in the [Efficient, Effective Services: Career Pathways and Lasting Economic Stability for Families](#) report by ASCEND at The Aspen Institute:

- Create strong pathways to career jobs that offer parents a living wage and needed benefits, such as healthcare and family leave, which enables them to provide for their children and help their families attain lasting economic stability.
 - o Incentivize coordination among human services providers, workforce training, and post-secondary education programs
 - o Increase access to quality early childhood development services
- Design services to support young parents
 - o WIOA funds help young parents secure living wage jobs or return to school
 - o Streamline state services (human services, work, education) and align policies and funding to incentivize bundling services
 - o Provide year-round support for parents who are students by coordinating workforce development or post-secondary education programs with wrap-around services, including financial literacy
 - o Increase access to benefits for student parents, prioritizing the role of the community colleges
- Make it easier for families to access critical financial support
 - o On-site childcare for registration process
 - o Simplify application process
 - o Co-locate workforce centers where families live and create family-friendly waiting areas

Colorado has launched an internship program that reimburses employers in targeted ["Innovative Industries"](#) \$5,000 for hiring interns. This model should be integrated into the Youth Program of the Southwestern Workforce Board in order to prioritize internships in these industries.

WIOA is primarily transactional in its work. Real innovation and implementation is conducted by their contractual partners: ResCare, Doña Ana Community College, HELP-NM, Dynamic Workforce Solutions, Workforce Connections, and Job Corps. Their role in the continuum will be pivotal to mobilizing resources in support of moving their clients successfully into the talent continuum.

WIOA distribution occurs through six core programs:

- Adult Program (WIOA Title I)
- Dislocated Worker Program (WIOA Title I)
- Youth Program (WIOA Title I)
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program (WIOA Title II)
- Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965)

However, WIOA is now mandated to expand their partnerships to other federal funding streams in ways that maximize the power of those investments. We will benefit by channeling as much WIOA funding as possible to work with Carl Perkins funds, which support Career and Technical Education, to use federal dollars to increase quality and quantity of career-focused instruction possible in both the K-12 and community college systems. These funds could also support the expansion of ACE to support youth employment for WIOA-qualified in-school students.

Additionally, WIOA can partner with Housing and Urban Development investments to establish “Pathways to Success” Centers in multi-family housing communities that don’t have access to a Community School or Community College. These centers would provide multi-generation support – access to WorkKeys, Prove It, Key Train, and other on-line workforce education for adults, but partner it with early learning opportunities for children 0-5. Pathways Centers would also create new jobs on site for early childhood educators and on-site facilitators to help parents with technology and access to education and resources.

There are pilot programs in other parts of the country that would benefit from public investments used as matching funds or piloting funds to implement small, targeted two-generation strategies to help young, single mothers by connecting workforce education with social services that will undergird their successful employment and high-quality early learning programs for their children while they work. The Jeremiah Program is a model that could be replicated here.

Ngage and the Success Partnership are taking the lead in establishing a community data resource to capture and evaluate information on the financial well-being of families. Their work could inform these public-sector investments, and then partner with the providers to measure not just outputs (how many are served by the programs) but rather outcomes (what happened to those in the programs because of their participation). Using this resource, we can also integrate geo-mapping functions that would help identify gaps in access to high-quality childcare, guide the realignment of the most beneficial public transit routes and times, and identify opportunities to co-locate joint educational and workforce resources in rural communities and high-need population centers that would benefit most from those services.

Evaluation and Accountability

The enormity of this effort requires a thoughtful, strategic approach to implementation. True success will be achieved over time, but we must establish mile markers along the way by which progress toward goals can be measured, course corrections can be made, and partners in the effort can be held accountable for their role in advancing transformative change.

We must also establish a baseline of quantitative countywide data to track over time and report to the community via a web-based dashboard of success:

- Higher high school, community college, and university graduation rates
- Increased number of STEM degrees (community college and university)
- Majority of students proficient in math, reading, and science
- High quality early childhood education
- Launch of a Community workforce network information hub
- Positive narrative about the community
- Improved quality of life (housing/transportation, etc.)

Other indicators that will reflect the impact of this work include:

- Increase in median income
- Reduction in the percentage of those living in poverty
 - o Targeted demographics should also include children and single-parent families
- Reduction in the percentage of those unemployed
- Increase in the labor participation rate
- Metrics of businesses in the county/region in each of the eight sectors:
 - o New businesses attracted
 - o Growth of existing businesses
 - o Jobs in each of the eight sectors
 - o Average wages for workers in each sector
- Increase in high school, community college, and university graduation/completion rates
- Increase in youth employment
- Reduction in percentage of Opportunity Youth
- Increase in percentage of the population with postsecondary credentials

Using the metrics provided by national and state thought leaders, we can also measure the process of change:

- Increase in access to industry-relevant training for all regional residents
- Increase in business participation in education
- Increase capacity for career exploration and counseling
- Increase in the number of community schools
- Increase in students taking dual credit courses
- Increase in number of students in Career and Technical Education pathways

Based on the recommendations of Prestige Consulting, values-based accountability for the implementation of this plan falls within four stakeholder groups who will thrive when we achieve five interconnected, overarching outcomes:

- Current and Future Workforce Talent
 - o Have the mechanisms in place for them to become a skilled, competent, and ready regional workforce
 - o Grow regional career development and job opportunities for them
- Employers
 - o Exceed employer needs with a pipeline of industry-ready job seekers
- Families
 - o Improve the overall quality of life for the people of our region
- Community
 - o Become a vibrant region driven by strong partnership networks across the workforce talent continuum

There are 29 indicators proposed by Prestige that will point to the progress as implementation takes place. They can be viewed in Appendix A.

The Workforce Talent Collaborative will develop a process for evaluation and communication toward goals that begins within the networks established by the Workforce Talent Collaborative, the Community of Progress, and the industry advisory committees to establish an advisory role for each of the four stakeholder groups and the communications vehicles that will share progress and results beyond these audiences.

The Workforce Talent Collaborative will integrate a mechanism for evaluating and communicating change to the community through the web portal that serves as the point of connection for all efforts, as well as reporting through The Bridge of Southern New Mexico's website.

Leveraging the relationships in the collaborative, we will also collect and communicate qualitative and anecdotal research to convey the impact of the work on a personal level. When possible, we will identify opportunities to share lessons learned through case studies that combine qualitative, quantitative, and anecdotal data to help other communities like ours benefit from our work.

Conclusion

Doña Ana County and the region are at a unique moment in time. Policy, practice, and partners are all answering a rallying cry to change the economic future by harnessing the rich assets already here to spark economic transformation.

However, this will not happen without intentional coordination, collaboration, and action. This plan provides the actions that will be prioritized into a blueprint for progress... but it is just a plan. We will only be successful if every player in the workforce development continuum owns their role in implementation and carries it through to completion. We must transform the future of the region by boosting the earning potential of our today's talent and better equip tomorrow's talent to take on careers that may not even exist yet.

This is a clarion call for our community and our region. Will we continue to let our deficiencies define us, or will we work together towards a new narrative for Doña Ana County and the region – one shaped by the promise and potential that is clearly within our reach? Will we create a vibrant ecosystem that captures the interest and involvement of the current and future talent of this community to propel us forward? Or will we let long-standing barriers and divisions continue to let opportunity slip through our collective fingers?

Now is the time for Doña Ana County and the region to rise up and show other communities what can be achieved when all members of a workforce continuum work together toward a common goal – or in this case, a common set of economic development targets.

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.



Appendices

Appendix A – Workforce Development Value Proposition Profile

The Value Proposition Profile was developed by the Prestige staff derived from the drafts of the Doña Ana County/ Borderplex Joint Regional Workforce Development Plan for further refinement and endorsement by the Workforce Talent Collaborative (Version 1.0).

STAKE-HOLDER GROUP	VALUE PROPOSITION SUMMARY AREA	CONTRIBUTING VALUE PROPOSITIONS
REGIONAL WORKFORCE TALENT	Building a Skilled, Competent, and Ready Regional Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing an educated and highly skilled workforce talent focused on academic, post-secondary, career, and life readiness Connecting effective job seeker access to education, training, employment and support services to succeed in the labor market Building marketable skills marketable and transferable across multiple careers Growing workforce readiness to earn income virtually Nurturing of a regional mindset in students and adults Retraining of the current workforce with updated skills to address regional job opportunities for regional global competitiveness Capitalizing on the inherent assets of our regional talent to foster a growing regional economy
	Growing Regional Career Development and Job Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing workforce experience and career readiness through system-wide post-secondary internship and apprenticeship opportunities Engaging students early in their education with their own career, college, and life readiness process Facilitating access to institutional resources/practices that enhance workforce readiness and employability Providing an environment that promotes innovation and entrepreneurship leading to new job creation
REGIONAL EMPLOYERS	Exceeding Regional Employer Needs With a Pipeline of Industry Ready Jobseekers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matching of employer talent needs with skilled workers necessary to compete in the global economy Providing workplace learning opportunities and experiences to enhance workforce training and development programs beyond the classroom Improving productivity across the region Creating meaningful employment options and careers including building a STEM eco-system growing high-tech, high-wage, and high-skills jobs Anticipating future job market trends aligned with the eight identified regional industries and strategic opportunities Fostering an environment that encourages promoting and supporting innovation & entrepreneurship
REGIONAL FAMILIES	Enhancing the Quality of Lives for Families Throughout the Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving economic self-sufficiency and lasting stability through post-secondary credentials and degrees Maintaining the value of the region's bicultural identity Breaking the cycle of poverty through increased earning capacity Reducing the strain on regional social services Providing lasting and meaningful economic stability and prosperity Addressing income equity including youth employment
REGIONAL COMMUNITY & PARTNERS	Building a Flourishing Region With Strong Partnership Network and Alliances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing the region as a destination for its high-quality, mobilized talent Driving a synergistic model for demand / supply side alignment and collaboration Appreciating the value and relevance of a ready workforce Sharing / optimizing partner resources/ funding for maximum outcomes Attracting outside resources/ funding for transformed regional economy Advancing education, employment and economic development opportunities through strategic alliances

Appendix B – Making the Connections Infographic



Everyone Has a Role to Play in Building a Skilled and Ready Workforce

The economic potential of Doña Ana County will be unleashed when we target, align, and mobilize the assets we already have to boost the skills and earning potential of those who call this county home.



1. **EDUCATION** is the key to producing talent.

Industry voice and involvement in educational career pathways will support success at many levels for youth and adult workers.



2. **TALENT** is the key to attracting jobs.

Work-based learning experiences and targeted federal and state investments will close employability skill gaps and expand opportunity for highly-skilled, STEM-proficient talent pursuing employment or entrepreneurship.



3. **JOBS** are the key to economic development.

Entire industries will thrive when businesses create a continuum of career opportunities that provide mobility and increased earnings for well-qualified, well-prepared workers.



4. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** is the key to regional prosperity.

Skilled and ready talent aligned to the needs of business and industry will transform the economic future of families and improve a host of outcomes that supports and sustains generational change.

Thanks to the work of the cross-sector Workforce Talent Collaborative and the mission-aligned Community of Progress, Doña Ana County and the region now have a plan and an identified set of resources and programs that can cultivate the highly-skilled workforce our industries and communities need. However, this will not happen without intentional coordination, collaboration, and action.

We will only be successful if every player in the workforce development continuum (businesses, public school and college-level educators, federal and state workforce entities, and policymakers) owns their role in implementation and carries it through to completion.

Will you join us, as we work to transform the future of the region by boosting the earning potential of our today's talent, and better equip tomorrow's talent to take on the careers of the future?

Appendix C - Stakeholder Input and Recommendations to Guide Strategies and Implementation

NATIONAL

- Best practices being pursued by [J.P. Morgan Chase Skills at Work Communities](#) in New York, the California Bay Area, Los Angeles, and Miami-Dade, Florida:
 - Expand a sector-focused workforce development system
 - Create additional career pathways aligned with labor demand in high-target industries
 - Implement policies that incentivize a systemic approach to sector-focused career pathway development
 - Develop funding strategies that can sustain and scale a system of career pathways and expand the sector-focused approach to workforce development
 - Ensure residents are aware of middle-skill jobs opportunities in high target industries
 - Develop pathways that integrate adult literacy and industry-aligned skills training
 - Make work readiness a regional priority
 - Assess current and expected regional demand for middle-skill workers -- and adjust education and training accordingly
 - Expand work-based learning across the pipeline
 - Develop contextualized “bridge” programs to prepare low-skilled youth and adults for success in high-target sectors
 - Develop employer-endorsed standards and assessments for employability skills
 - Develop a marketing and outreach campaign to increase awareness about middle-skill careers in high-target sectors
 - Support and scale training programs for high-target sectors
 - Increase the capacity of the backbone organization to serve as the intermediary to help scale and sustain the work
 - Strengthen middle-skill opportunities in the region
 - Develop a comprehensive regional system of career pathways to effectively prepare low-skilled individuals for middle-skill occupations in target industries
 - Map out pathways to careers within and across industry sectors to help job seekers leverage transferable skills
 - Expand work-based learning and career advancement strategies that are mutually beneficial to low-skilled workers and employers
 - Build capacity to take a regional approach to education, workforce development, and economic development

➤ National Skills Coalition: WIOA, Perkins, and ESSA:
Intersections and Opportunities

- States may elect, instead, to create a combined plan: Unified plan with six core programs plus at least 1 optional program, including Perkins CTE)
- WIOA and Career Pathways:
 - o State board must develop strategies to support the use of career pathways
 - o Local board must lead efforts to develop and implement career pathways with secondary and postsecondary providers and include descriptions in their local plans
 - o Youth service strategies must include career pathways
 - ◆ In-school (25%)
 - 14-21 years of age
 - Low income
 - One of the following:
 1. Basic skills deficient
 2. ELL
 3. Offender
 4. Homeless
 5. Pregnant or parenting
 6. Disabled
 7. Requiring additional assistance to enter or complete education program, or secure or hold employment
 - ◆ Out-of-School (75%)
 - 16-24 years old
 - One of the following:
 1. Dropout
 2. Within the age of compulsory school attendance but has not been in school for at least the most recent completed school year
 3. Subject to juvenile or adult justice system
 4. Homeless
 5. Pregnant or parenting
 6. Disabled

7. Low-income requiring additional assistance to enter or complete education program, or secure or hold employment

◆ Elements of Youth Program

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of HS diploma, GED, or career credential
 - Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include:
 1. Summer employment and other employment opportunities
 2. Pre-apprenticeship programs
 3. Internships and job shadowing
 4. On-the-job training
 - Occupational skill training (prioritizing those leading to career credential)
 - Education offered concurrently with an in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster
 - Leadership development opportunities
 - Supportive services
 - Adult mentoring for one year or more
 - Financial literacy
 - Entrepreneurial skills training
 - Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services
 - Activities that help youth prepare for, and transition to, postsecondary education and training.
- ◆ Minimum 20% must be spend on work experiences

- [National Roadmap for Opportunity Youth, Civic Enterprises](#)
 - Increase pathways to secondary and postsecondary success for out-of-school youth.
 - Meaningfully engage employers as part of the solution
 - Improve opportunities for community collaboration and collective impact
 - Strengthen connections to community through service and mentorship
 - Invest in successful federal programs for opportunity youth
 - Reauthorize and reform critical education and workforce legislation
 - Improve data collection and quality and ensure accountability.

- [College and Career Readiness Begins with a Well-Rounded Education: Opportunities Under the Every Student Succeeds Act](#) recommendations include:
 - Alignment with system-wide college and career-ready expectations, including remediation-free college entrance requirements and industry certification requirements
 - Employment-focused content aligned with needs of employers and prioritizes STEM and CTE courses, as well as employability skills transferable across careers, such as critical thinking, collaboration, and digital literacy
 - Rigorous academic course taking, including intense math, reading, English language arts and advanced placement and dual credit courses
 - Work-based learning experiences inside and outside the classroom

- [How States are Making Career Readiness Count: A 2016 Update,](#) Advance CTE & Achieve
 - Career readiness indicators
 - o Dual enrollment
 - o Post-secondary enrollment
 - o CTE participation
 - o Earning industry-recognized credentials/certificates
 - o Placement into vocational/technical training program, employment, military enlistment upon graduation
 - o Remediation rates
 - o Work-based learning
 - New Mexico's system draws a distinction between participation and success when assigning weights in its accountability formula, an approach that incentivizes schools' participation in career-ready metrics and places a premium on making sure students succeed in their career-ready endeavors. The formula allows for a suite of CCR indicators including concurrent enrollment/dual credit in an accredited New Mexico postsecond-

ary institution and a Career Program of Studies, which is a sequence of high school courses that lead to industry-recognized certification. Participation in one of the CCR indicators is valued at five points and success at 10 points, yielding a total 15 points in the high school's overall grade out of 100 points (15 percent).

- [Good Jobs that Pay without a BA](#), Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce
 - 52% of workers without BA's have good jobs (151,000), 48% have at least a BA (139,000)
 - \$58,000 median earnings of non-BA workers with good jobs
 - 70% of all New Mexico workers do not have a BA
 - Non-BA good jobs are evenly distributed between blue collar and skilled service jobs
 - Earnings distribution of non-BA good jobs
 - o 56% earn \$55,000 or higher
 - o 25% earn \$55,000 - \$45,000
 - o 19% earn \$45,000 - \$35,000
- [Diversity and Inclusion for the 21st Century Economy: An Imperative for Chambers of Commerce](#) (Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives)
 - Business ownership by people of color on the rise, including 34.5% increase in Hispanic-owned businesses between 2007-2012
 - Immigrant owned businesses are 18.4% of US population
 - Cities and regions that embrace diversity do better economically
- [Tony Wagner's Seven Survival Skills](#) (as defined by business leaders in their own words)
 - Critical thinking and problem solving
 - Collaboration across networks and leading by influence
 - Agility and adaptability
 - Initiative and entrepreneurship
 - Effective oral and written communication
 - Accessing and analyzing information
 - Curiosity and imagination

NEW MEXICO

➤ State of New Mexico Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan 2016-2019

- NMDWS has identified “Star Occupations” -- those that meet multiple positive criteria related to employment growth
 - o Employment growth rate must be above average rate of 12.0
 - o Number of annual job openings over 50
 - o Median annual wage above the “all-occupation” median of \$31,490, as of 2013
- Top private sector Star Occupations in 8 targeted pathways include:
 - o Medical and Health Services Manager
 - o Registered Nurses
 - o General and Operations Managers
 - o Management Analysts
 - o Industrial Machinery Mechanics
 - o Computer Systems Analysts
 - o Clinical Counseling and School Psychologists
 - o Medical and Clinical Lab Technicians
 - o Systems Software Developers
 - o Computer User Support Specialists
 - o Supervisors of Office & Administrative Workers
 - o Licensed Practical and Vocational Nurses
 - o Emergency Medical Techs and Paramedics
- Highest paying Mean Wage Occupations (2014)
 - o Management
 - o Architecture and Engineering
 - o Life, Physical & Social Science
 - o Healthcare Practitioner and Technical
 - o Computer and Mathematical
 - o Business and Financial
 - o Transportation and Material Moving
 - o Healthcare Support
- NM Workforce System Strategies
 - o Strengthen workforce development and education linkages
 - ◆ improving alignment between workforce training and education and promote cross-agency planning, communication, and goal setting between the Adult Education and Literacy Program and workforce system partners through State Board and State Administrative Entity partnerships; and
 - ◆ working to improve developmental education programs and curricula by:

- collaborating with employers and industry organizations to ensure postsecondary and adult education curricula are relevant to the needs of growing industry sectors and credentials validated by employers;
 - integrating remedial material directly into occupational skills training to ensure postsecondary and adult education remedial coursework and curricula are relevant to the job market;
 - improving adult education and postsecondary collaboration and curriculum alignment to provide better remediation for matriculated postsecondary students; and
 - leveraging resources across workforce development and the Adult Education and Literacy Program, when possible.
- o Emphasize work-based experience for target populations
 - ◆ Registered Apprenticeship
 - ◆ On-the-job (OJT)
 - ◆ Customized, and incumbent worker training
 - ◆ Transitional jobs
 - ◆ Internships
 - promoting the value of occupational learning through paid work experience on the job, such as through the development of apprenticeships, paid internships, incumbent worker or customized training, and transitional jobs;
 - encouraging public/private partnerships among business, education, community and civic organizations, and economic development to create work-based training opportunities that both feed career pathways for job seekers and satisfy job-driven strategies of employers and industries;
 - using skills assessments and credentialing to promote the value of job ready individuals to potential employers in developing work-based experiences; and
 - exploring the offerings of other related programs, outside of the state plan, that offer opportunities to help individuals gain increased skills and experience that can lead to potential future job opportunities and employment.

- o Emphasize broader participation in career pathways and sector strategies
 - ◆ coordinating strategic planning efforts around high-demand sectors with local industries, community colleges, adult education and literacy programs, and workforce boards as a means to building and leveraging those partnerships;
 - ◆ incentivizing collaboration between local boards, and education and training providers to explore career pathway models that begin in community colleges and combine classroom instruction and academic credential attainment with paid work experience, including such models that integrate basic skills instruction with postsecondary courses; and
 - ◆ supporting the needs of regional economies by using and relying on labor market analysis and other information, such as job vacancy postings:
 - to identify and capitalize on areas with growth opportunity and gaps in service where workforce development activities can be strengthened;
 - to educate businesses on the types of customized solutions that can be developed to meet their needs; and
 - to inform regional strategies and local decision making and policies.

➤ The New Mexico Job Vacancy Survey: Hiring Difficulties

- 74% of employers had at least one difficult position to fill
- 79.2% of healthcare and social assistance positions are difficult to fill
- Agriculture and construction has the largest shares of difficult to fill positions (92% and 82%)
- 91% of installation, maintenance, and repair are largest hard to fill occupations
- Largest share of difficult to fill detailed occupations were in heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers (90.7) and automotive service technicians and mechanics (87.5)
- Most common difficult to fill positions required a license or certification (83.7%)
- Major Industry Sectors with largest percentage of difficult to fill positions included:

- o Agriculture
 - o Wholesale Trade
 - o Healthcare and Social Assistance
 - o Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
 - o Transportation and Warehousing
 - o Manufacturing
 - o Utilities
- Major occupational groups with the highest percentage of difficult to fill positions
 - o Installation Maintenance and Repair
 - o Healthcare Practitioners and Technical
 - o Computer and Mathematical
 - o Transportation and Material Moving
 - o Architecture and Engineering
 - o Healthcare Support
 - o Production
- Assuring Career and Workforce Readiness in New Mexico: A Journey from School to the Workplace
 - Motivating Students to Prepare: Students work harder and succeed when school curricula are connected to the real world and grounded in authentic career opportunities; Learning that their degrees and certificate are valued in the workplace will help students focus on the hard work of school as primary vehicle for career and workforce readiness.
 - Employers are reporting on the inability of high school and even college graduates to perform basic mathematics, think critically, communicate well, and display other basic skills essential for the workplace. Roughly 60% of job openings require basic literacy in STEM skills, and 42% require advanced STEM knowledge
 - Recommendations to assure career and workplace readiness:
 - o Students need to know that the degrees and certificates they pursue can be used in the workplace
 - o Education must match the needs of the marketplace
 - o Education needs to be driven by external realities, as well as internal traditions
 - o Labor market information needs to be used to define goals and priorities in education and prepare students for high-demand jobs
 - Supply, Demand and Skills: Discrepancy between skills required and skilled workers available to business:
 - o Applicants don't have required skills
 - o Students preparing for jobs for which there is no demand

- Improvements to CTE
 - o Engage employers as partners
 - o Enhance the quality of career preparation
 - ◆ Aligned to post-secondary
 - ◆ Raise rigor
 - ◆ Expand work-based learning
 - ◆ Expand career guidance and support services
 - ◆ Use state funding to scale-up pathways in highest demand
 - ◆ Build capacity of teachers through deeper engagement with business and industry
 - Elevate Career Readiness
- [Labor Market Analysis of New Mexico's Workforce Regions \(Southern Regional Education Board\)](#)
- Core recommendations:
 - o NM needs to establish a vision of rigorous, relevant career pathways that build bridges from high school to postsecondary education and the workplace and help more young adults earn industry and postsecondary credentials
 - o In order to prepare more students for college and careers, New Mexico needs to raise the quality of instruction and assignments offered by its high school CTE teachers
 - o New Mexico's middle grade schools and high schools need to prepare their students for challenging high school and post-secondary studies and the rising requirements of the workplace by implementing strategies designed to improve literacy and math achievement
 - o New Mexico needs to broaden its graduates' horizons by ensuring that all students have ongoing opportunities to explore life after high school with caring adults in their schools, on postsecondary campuses, at work sites and in their communities
 - o To support its efforts to build high-quality career pathways, New Mexico needs to refine its accountability system to ensure that it equally values academic and technical readiness for college and careers
 - Data tied to target economic development targets
 - o Healthcare and Related Occupations
 - ◆ NMSU produces 1/3 the number of completions of UNM
 - ◆ DACC produces 19% of the completions of CNM

- Breakdown of population 25+ by education level in Southwestern WIOA region
 - o 27,888 < 9th grade
 - o 14,955 - 9 to 12th grade
 - o 48,469 - HS diploma
 - o 39,777 - Some College
 - o 13,402 - Assoc. Degree
 - o 29,039 - Bachelor Degree
 - o 18,245 - Graduate Degree or Higher
- DAC Workforce Data
 - o 93,179 total workforce
 - ◆ 86,311 employed
 - ◆ 6,868 unemployed
 - o Highest unemployment rates in NM among women, Hispanic, men 20-24 years old, and youth (16-19 years of age) populations
- Highest poverty rates among New Mexicans with less than a high school diploma (35%)
- 5 of the top 8 most jobs by industry are public sector jobs
- In the SW Region of WIOA:
 - o Highest demand masters and above jobs in healthcare
 - o Highest demand bachelors degree jobs:
 - ◆ Nurses
 - ◆ Teachers
 - ◆ Managers
 - ◆ Accountants/Auditors
 - o Highest demand associate degrees
 - ◆ PK teachers
 - ◆ Healthcare-related techs
 - o Highest demand certificates
 - ◆ CNA and healthcare-related
 - ◆ Heavy equipment and tractor trailer drivers
 - o Highest demand HS diploma
 - ◆ Customer service
 - ◆ Food service
 - ◆ Retail
 - ◆ Maintenance and Repair
 - ◆ Office Administration-related

➤ NM First Town Hall Findings/Recommendations:

- Findings
 - o By 2020, most NM students will not have the education, credentials, or degrees required to fill 63% of the state's jobs
 - ◆ Improve alignment between colleges and employers, major efforts to get students through school, renewed commitments to CTE and financial literacy
- Recommendations:
 - o Focus on family economies
 - o Strengthen the workforce through education
 - ◆ Invest in youth programs that teach social, agricultural, financial, technical, vocational, organizational and employment preparation skills
 - Create pathways
 - Create a centralized “home” for identifying gaps, eliminating duplication, and providing access within the wide array of the existing social, financial, agricultural, technical, water management and conservation programs
 - Expand opportunities for youth to connect directly with employers, bridging skills development and employer needs
 - ◆ Reform funding mechanisms to support and encourage diverse career and college pathways that reflect anticipated workforce needs and include all CTE and certificate programs
 - ◆ Align high school and 2/4-year education curriculum and articulation, transferring credit between institutions
 - o Advance a culture of economic development (align workforce with the economy)
 - ◆ Promote regionalism in economic development efforts
 - o Advance a purpose-driven economy
 - ◆ Fund a “Design Thinking Process” to “inspire, ideate, implement and evaluate” high-impact employment opportunities that include economic-based strategies, job creation, workforce development, education, and family supports that protect everyone during times of economic insecurity
 - ◆ Invest in early workforce education by improving K-12 reading, writing and math skills, as well as requiring financial literacy and career planning

- Computing Technology Industry Association
 - Evaluation of New Mexico's tech industry revealed 47,200 jobs, 3,000 companies and better wage growth than all but four other states
 - Average tech salary in New Mexico is \$85,200

- [NM Jobs Council](#)
 - Legislative recommendations
 - o Middle school physics pilot
 - o Workforce Gap Prediction Model
 - o WorkKeys Assessment
 - o Solo work startup, expansion and recruiting pilot
 - o NMSU Stem E program

- [New Mexico DWS - 2016 State of the Workforce Report](#)
 - Healthcare and social assistance largest sector statewide
 - Jobs declining include manufacturing, information, professional and technical services
 - STEM occupations were the highest paying

- [Resilience in New Mexico Agriculture Strategic Plan](#) - Recommendations and Strategies
 - RECOMMENDATION 1: EDUCATION AND TRAINING: Promote and expand agricultural education and training opportunities as pathways to successful careers in the industry, recognizing that new technologies should be deployed to reach young audiences. Strategies include:
 - o Convene stakeholders to develop a framework and possible financing options for a centralized beginning farmer and rancher center at New Mexico State University to coordinate statewide outreach, education and technical services. See Appendix A for information on similar state models and opportunities.
 - o Increase financial and institutional support for agricultural education in K-12 public schools, including but not limited to existing programs such as Future Farmers of America (FFA) and 4-H. Funding may come from any combination of legislative appropriations, the Public Education Department or private funding.
 - o Encourage policymakers to partner with industry in developing an outreach campaign targeting students, parents, teachers and the general public to promote agriculture and food-related jobs in New Mexico.
 - o Support the implementation of an ongoing, agricultural dual-credit initiative at NMSU to encourage youth to pursue agriculture as a career.

- o Encourage the states' departments of economic development, workforce solutions, public education, higher education and agriculture to convene a group to identify effective best practices and incentives for state approved, industry-led apprenticeship and mentorship programs as well as other workforce development opportunities that expand the state's food industry. Utilize the proposed NMSU beginning farmer and rancher center to coordinate and professionalize these opportunities.
 - o Support and expand agricultural incubator programs throughout New Mexico to provide hands-on training to aspiring farmers and ranchers. Encourage state and local government entities to assess potential locations for new incubation programs.
 - o Establish a new student loan repayment program within the state's Higher Education Department for reimbursing individuals who operate farms or ranches in New Mexico.
- Recommendations from national and state workforce experts at the Pete V. Domenici Public Policy Conference include:
 - Ken Eisen, Amazon Web Service
 - o Project Lead the Way is important for experiential learning
 - o Higher skills require judgment and technical skills – align education to this:
 - ◆ Computational thinking
 - ◆ Coding (code.org)
 - ◆ Computer science
 - ◆ Machine learning
 - ◆ Digital literacy
 - ◆ Cloud literacy
 - ◆ Linux A+
 - ◆ Python
 - o Also need:
 - ◆ Writing
 - ◆ Communication
 - ◆ Decision-making
 - o Get them “thinking big”
 - o Iterative mindset – failure is good and something to be learned from
 - o Industry partnership with education needs to grow and disrupt
 - o AWS Educate is a free, on-line resource for:
 - ◆ Professional development
 - ◆ Open Course Content
 - ◆ Communities of Collaboration
 - ◆ Student entrepreneurship
 - ◆ Credentialing

- Celina Bussey, Secretary, New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions
 - o 66% of jobs will demand higher education
 - o Largest growth will be in masters and beyond
 - o Greater access to work-based learning younger
 - o Business has a role to play in closing the soft-skills gap
 - o 93% of employers want critical thinking, clear communications, complex problem solving over candidate's undergraduate major
 - o More than 75% want higher education to place more emphasis on critical thinking, complex problem solving, written and oral communication, and applied knowledge
 - o Involve students in collaborative problem solving, research, internships, senior projects, community engagement
 - o Apprenticeships
 - o Two-generation approaches – critical
 - o Community schools provide powerful opportunities for parents and children
 - o Innovation is a priority
 - o Find a way to put workforce development at the forefront of economic development decisions – then we will succeed
 - o Build a workforce that is high-quality today with the ability to improve for the future
 - o Help them establish roots, grounding them in NM through their education (BA-MD model)
 - o Build the workforce today – chicken/egg problem
 - o No disconnect between WF and Eco Dev
 - o Map the pathway for students and find a way to introduce work-based learning, internships, tuition assistance
 - o Go to the 14-24 year olds where they are. They are not going to set foot on a college campus when they've already failed at education

- Seth Harris, former Undersecretary, US Department of Labor
 - o 47% of today's jobs could be replaced by technology
 - o 5 tips for success in Labor Force:
 - ◆ Education
 - ◆ Love and adapt to change and ambiguity
 - ◆ Develop high concept, high touch skills
 - ◆ Pursue your passions with an eye on the future
 - ◆ Participate in enacting public policies that make economy and society more fair, just, productive
 - o More access to college and promote completion

- o Shorten time to complete
 - ◆ Expense
 - ◆ Helps families
- o Prevent “brain drain” by understanding the importance of the quality of life over the money
- o Career lattices – jobs with career ladder opportunities for more education to advance

REGIONAL/LOCAL

➤ Assessment of Middle and Advanced Skills: Life Sciences and Advanced Manufacturing - El Paso, TX

- Demographics
 - o Regional civilian labor force - 444,000
 - o 40% of residents are bilingual
 - o Median age of 32
 - o 21% of population holds bachelor’s degree or higher
- Manufacturing:
 - o Employers report most difficult hires in:
 - ◆ Sales engineers
 - ◆ Managers
 - ◆ Industrial machinery mechanics
 - ◆ First-line Supervisors
 - ◆ Mechanical Engineers
 - ◆ Fork Lift Operators
 - o Most common hiring difficulty reasons
 - ◆ Lack of technical/hard skills
 - ◆ Experience
 - ◆ Salary and wage expectations
 - o Top needs:
 - ◆ Maintenance and repair occupations are among the top 20 middle-skilled occupations for the manufacturing industry with application across defense, utilities, and public sector
 - ◆ Sales occupations are among top 20 advanced skill occupations
 - ◆ Human resource occupations are in demand, but no local degree programs are available
 - ◆ Apprenticeship models are underutilized
 - ◆ Fragmented manufacturing associations

- Life Sciences
 - o Employers report:
 - ◆ Need for basic digital literacy and computer skills across all occupations
 - ◆ Greatest demand for:
 - IT professionals
 - Data-enabled analysts
 - Cybersecurity
 - ◆ Producing 10 times more medical assistants than need and not considered as a springboard into higher-skilled healthcare careers
 - ◆ Registered nurses are in top demand
 - ◆ Shortage of physicians and surgeons
 - ◆ Rehabilitation therapists are hard to fill positions
 - ◆ Customer service and communication were top skilled needed
- Strategic Recommendations:
 - o Addressing wages
 - ◆ Raise awareness of the benefits to employers of raising wages
 - ◆ Support locally-based employers in strengthening company culture to support talent retention and attraction
 - o Transitioning the workforce
 - ◆ Engage and assist employers in upskilling their workers and formalizing their on-the-job training programs
 - ◆ Strengthen the employability skills of the next generation of workers
- Leveraging assets for growth
 - o Convene leadership in the local manufacturing community to create an employer-led association or partnership as a vehicle for industry collaboration and input
 - o Continue to cultivate existing business relationships and build new relationships with additional employers
 - o Leverage the local higher education assets and research infrastructure to encourage innovation and entrepreneurial growth
 - o Nurture the expansion of manufacturers with a current presence in the region
 - o Work with Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center at UTEP to build the region's capacity to provide technical assistance to manufacturers

- Connecting residents to in-demand jobs
 - o Enhance career exploration activities for students and their parents with employer participation
 - o Provide career counselors, case managers, and career navigators with good information about in-demand careers and resources available to support their efforts
 - o Make it easier for employers to connect with workforce training providers and their work-ready clients
 - o Help connect employers with educational institutions and students
 - o Partner with education and training providers to ensure that educational training programs are well-aligned with industry needs
- MVEDA Board Retreat:
 - 2026 Goal: Market responsive school systems to align with employer programs
 - 90% of people in DAC can read and do math at 9th grade level
- [Live Well Summit Background Report](#) (Doña Ana County, City of Las Cruces):
 - Transportation
 - o 24% have no vehicle (transportation needs to be available extended times and on weekends)
 - o 27% have no drivers license
 - o 5% can't afford to maintain a vehicle
 - o 5% lacked gas money
 - Education
 - o 99% more earnings for bachelors degrees
 - o Graduates 25-32 earn \$17,500 for full time work than just HS diploma
 - o Community Schools have a role to play
 - o Need to further target at-risk student pops:
 - ◆ Habitually truant
 - ◆ Young mothers
 - ◆ Adults 25+ without HS diploma
 - o STEM students were better prepared
 - o State Youth Employment Strategy should be expanded (career pathways for disconnected youth)
 - Family and Social Support
 - o 37% of DAC children live in single-parent homes
 - ◆ 9% more female-headed households in poverty than male
 - o 10% of NM children being raised by grandparents or other family members

- o Children in single-parent families 4X more likely to be poor than married families
- o Children in co-habiting families 3X more likely to be poor than married families
- Economic & Workforce Development
 - o 13% increase in trade, transportation, and utilities jobs
 - o Government, manufacturing, and information sectors posted job losses
 - o 39% of county are “working poor”; 16% live in poverty
 - o Poverty Thresh holds:
 - ◆ \$12,331 - 1 person under 65
 - ◆ \$16,337 - 2 people under 65
 - ◆ \$19,096 - 3 people
 - ◆ \$24,120 - 4 people
 - ◆ \$27,853 - 5 people
 - ◆ \$31,078 - 6 people
 - ◆ \$38,668 - 7 people
 - ◆ \$45,822 - 8 people or more
 - o 66% of minimum wage workers are in businesses with 10 employees or more
 - o Single mother of 2 children loses \$1,190/mo. If income rises from \$13.21/hour to \$15.41/hour.

➤ [Live Well Summit Summary](#)

- Community schools and comprehensive community-based workforce training systems most recommended
- Finance a cross-sector workforce development strategy within the city and county governments
 - o Develop a comprehensive community-based workforce training system; partnering with schools to advance Career and Technical Education and soft skills training (leverage federal partners and investments)
 - o Launch “Hire Me First campaign tied to WorkKeys and/or Career and Technical Education
 - o Strengthen health career pipeline - utilize county and city funds to expand family medicine and psychiatric medical training (Target higher-skilled, higher-paying jobs/careers in HC)
 - o Incentivize high-quality early learning and childcare environments with round-the-clock services

➤ NM Pathways Project (covers Doña Ana, Luna, Otero, and El Paso Counties)

- 2.7 unemployed people for every job advertised
- 51% live below the 200% Federal Poverty Limit

- What do we know?
 - o Brain Drain of higher educated workers
 - o Low education levels, lack of skills
 - o Geographic isolation of rural communities
 - o Need to develop work skills in high school
 - o Lack of jobs for college graduates and young adults
 - o Jobs are scarce in rural communities
 - o Lack of knowledge, lack of interest, lack of pride
- What do we need to know?
 - o The culture is sometimes interpreted as weaknesses
 - o Access to childcare is limited in rural communities
 - o DAC will have more manufacturing jobs than being predicted
 - o Teenagers need better guidance toward future
 - o Large percentage of families on state support and not working
 - o Digital divide
 - o Immigration status affects wages and employment
- Target Populations that plan should address:
 - o Young people want to go to school, but can't afford tuition, transportation, childcare.
 - o Programs to understand students' needs (especially those with children.)
- Barriers experienced by out-of-work, underemployed in our community:
 - o Transportation
 - o Childcare
 - o Senior care
 - o Criminal records
 - o Parenting
 - o Cliff effect
 - o Under-resourced classrooms
 - o 2 generation approached needed
 - o Skills gap (middle skills)
 - o Lack of reading/math skills
 - o Remediation makes progress difficult
 - o Students opposed to education have been through some kind of trauma
 - o ESL population
 - o Domestic violence and child abuse
 - o Dependency issues
 - o Broadband/technology access
 - o Basic human needs
 - o Low income
 - o STEM shyness (lack of confidence to pursue)
 - o Cultural hurdles - parents placing a value in education
 - o Feelings of hopelessness and not knowing how to overcome

- o Awareness barriers
 - o Vulnerable populations intimidated to apply at NMSU/DACC
 - o Navigating the FAFSA
 - o Poverty misconceptions
 - o Youth of all backgrounds (foster children, children in poverty)
- What are the current WFD programs and plans that best support those in poverty?
 - o Institute for Parent Engagement (LCPS)
 - o DACC Employer feedback certifications
 - ◆ Need to be in technical areas
 - ◆ Prioritizing credentialing
 - o Transportation distribution
 - o Addressing industry gaps
 - ◆ Role of BIA/Chambers
 - o Underrepresented populations in various fields
- What do we already know about DAC's skill-based hiring and skill-up programs?
 - o Job descriptions require higher credentials than necessary
 - o Tuition reimbursement, training
 - o Immigrant farm workers are helping NM
 - o Sunland Park needs training
- What tools do we already have that we could use?
 - o Career Ready 101 through State Workforce Office
 - o Career Readiness boot camps supported by MVEDA, DACC, and NMDWS
 - o TANF recipients in quick skill-up programs through DACC
 - o NMWFC training programs (2-4-year degree programs)
 - ◆ Those without HS diploma
 - ◆ 90% retention rate in employment
 - ◆ 6 mo. program
 - ◆ \$30,000 per year average
- Technology Tools
 - o Workforce and Economic Opportunity Dashboard
 - o CoreScore - Soft skills assessment
- Next Steps
 - o Community forums in rural communities - share information and listen
 - o More robust transit system
 - o Pathway to Success Centers in Anthony, Chaparral, Las Cruces, Salem, Butterfield
 - o Broadband

- o Identify and involve more of business community
 - o Advocate for evidence-based approaches
 - o Train and build from within
 - o DACC/EPE Lineman training program as model
- DA Education Context Report 2016 (Ngage)
 - 53% of DAC births are to single mothers
 - 36% of children live with grandparent
 - Gadsden and Hatch districts lag in 4-year or higher degree completion; Las Cruces is right at national averages
 - Per pupil spending
 - o LCPS - \$8,450
 - o Gadsden - \$8,965
 - o Hatch - \$10,330
 - Higher Education
 - o College Remediation Rates for HS Grads (Avg. by HS):
 - ◆ 60% - Gadsden
 - ◆ 43% - Las Cruces Traditional HSs
 - ◆ 62% - Las Cruces Charter HSs
 - ◆ Hispanic 6-year graduation rates at NMSU are flat at 40%, but below 48% for white students
 - ◆ Retention rates went down since 2009, but are now flat at 61%
 - ◆ NM ranks 40th in students in families completing the FAFSA
 - ◆ ¼ of NMSU incoming NM freshmen taking at least 1 remedial course
 - DAC lags NM Household Incomes (\$37,933 vs. \$44,927)
 - o Lowest median incomes in:
 - ◆ Anthony - \$20,379
 - ◆ Chaparral - \$26,326
 - ◆ Sunland Park - \$28,119
 - ◆ Hatch - \$28,214
 - DAC has higher unemployment than state average (7.4% vs. 6.6%)
 - o 19% unemployment rate for DAC women with children under 6
 - Education Programs to leverage for STEM instruction through NMSU STEM Outreach Center
 - o Science, Engineering, Mathematics and Aerospace Academy
 - o Readers Theater
 - o Project GUTS (Growing Up Thinking Scientifically)
 - o DiMA (Digital Media Academy)
 - o Creating Opportunities Using Numerical Thinking

- [An Equity Profile of Las Cruces](#) (Policy Link)
 - Implications (Recommendations)
 - o Grow good jobs
 - ◆ Focus on entrepreneurship and business development
 - ◆ Pays enough to support one's family and put away money for the future; provides healthcare and other benefits; safe, dignified, family-friendly working conditions
 - Leverage public investments to maximize investments in entrepreneurs of color and trip-bottom line businesses
 - o Increase economic security and mobility of vulnerable families and workers
 - o Cultivate homegrown talent through a strong cradle-to-career pipeline
 - Industries by Wage-Level, Average Annual Earnings that demonstrate growth in earnings
 - o High skilled:
 - ◆ \$74,014 (31%↑) Management of Companies and Enterprises
 - ◆ \$51,825 (8%↑) Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
 - ◆ \$67,342 (46%↑) Utilities
 - ◆ \$43,865 (30%↑) Finance and Insurance
 - ◆ \$45,133 (42%↑) Wholesale Trade
 - o Middle skilled:
 - ◆ \$34,744 (13%↑) Healthcare and Social Service
 - ◆ \$47,522 (55%↑) Manufacturing
 - ◆ \$35,316 (29%↑) Transportation and Warehousing
 - ◆ \$34,535 (34%↑) Construction
 - Economic Vitality
 - o Industry strength index=size + concentration + job quality + growth
 - ◆ Growth industries include:
 - Healthcare and social assistance (98)
 - Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (62.9)
 - Utilities (39.7)
 - Professional, scientific, and technical services (29.9)
 - Management of Companies and Enterprises (7.3)
 - Accommodation and food services (2.6)

- ◆ Declining industries include:
 - Wholesale trade (-18.5)
 - Manufacturing (-26.4)
 - Transportation and Warehousing (-34.2)
 - 42% of Las Cruces Residents and 35% of DAC residents hold an associate degree or higher
 - 63% of jobs in 2020 will require some college or higher
 - o 52% of Latinos will have those qualifications
 - 9% of DAC youth are Opportunity Youth
 - o 8% of Las Cruces youth
- Las Cruces Economic Development Plan 2013
 - Identified Local Economic Problems:
 - o Braindrain
 - o Low average salary relative to the US
 - o Low labor force participation rate (relative to US)
 - o High unemployment rate (relative to US)
 - o Insufficiently diversified economy reliant on trade and government spending
 - Goal Statement and Goal Objectives:
 - o General guiding principles:
 - ◆ Strive to develop an economy such that young people, discouraged workers, and the unemployed have the option of finding challenging and rewarding jobs and the potential for creating business
 - ◆ Strive for a local economy such that residents of the Las Cruces area who have left to explore the world and want to return to Las Cruces can do so without facing the economic obstacle of few jobs at relatively low salaries.
 - ◆ Diversify the local economy by focusing on industries with long-term growth potential and above average paying jobs - industries that hold the promise of helping drive the Las Cruces economy in the long term such as aerospace, professional and technical services, support companies to the maquiladora manufacturing industry, health care, and value-added agricultural food processing.
 - o Goals include:
 - ◆ Creating 150 to 200 new jobs annually
 - ◆ Entice young people just graduating to enter the local labor force
 - ◆ Diversify by developing industry clusters

➤ [2015 US Census Data for Doña Ana County via TownCharts](#)

- Median Earnings By Worker: \$32,807
 - o NM \$39,551
 - o US \$44,178
- Median Household Income: \$38,426
 - o NM \$44,968
 - o US \$53,482
- Breakdown by Income Bracket:
 - o 28% earn less than \$10,000
 - o 11% earn \$10,000 to \$14,999
 - o 11% earn \$15,000 to \$19,999
 - o 29% earn \$20,000 to \$49,999
 - o 13% earn \$50,000 to \$74,999
 - o 4% earn \$75,000 to \$99,999
 - o 4% earn \$100,000+
- Median Household Income by Age Group
 - o \$20,728 Under 25
 - o \$37,770 25-44
 - o \$49,291 45-64
 - o \$39,435 65+
- 57,837 live in poverty (27.8%)
 - o 62% unmarried females with children
 - o 57% unmarried parents with children
 - o 29% unmarried men with children
 - o 26% married with children
- By Education Level
 - o 42% less than HS
 - o 20% HS graduate
 - o 16% some college
 - o 7% college graduate

➤ [Viva Doña Ana Report](#)

- 15% of all businesses in the county are outside of Las Cruces (1,130)
- 85% of all businesses are in Las Cruces (5,865)
- 2/3 of all businesses have less than 4 employees
- 6% minority owned

➤ Border Industrial Association Workforce Study

- Primary types of business
 - o 26.8% manufacturing
 - o 24.4% logistics and warehousing
 - o 7.3% wholesale trade
 - o 7.3% professional, scientific, and/or technical
 - o 4.9% real estate development
 - o 4.9% food processing/production
 - o 24.4% include construction, solar generation, disposal, transportation, metals processing, recycling, aviation
- Recruitment
 - o 27.5% temp agency
 - o 22.5% internet
 - o 20% newspaper
 - o 17.5% other
 - o 7.5% job fairs
 - o 5% NM DWS
- Highest average turnover in line workers and logistics (32 and 17)
 - o Matches numbers for hiring each month
- Most requested educational attainment is HS diploma or GED

➤ 60x30 EP

- 29.8% of El Paso's population has associates degree or higher
- \$18,200 average wage per capita for working age adults 25-64

Appendix D – Workforce Development Programs and Resources in the Region

Doña Ana County and the region's success in building a highly-skilled workforce with the foundational and specialized skills required for every level of the eight targeted industries is dependent upon connecting all members of the community who have the resources, programs, and people. Breaking down silos, expanding access in rural areas, focusing federal and state funds to support targeted efforts, and innovative collaboration between entities literally guarantees the success of this region-wide effort.

The required workforce development continuum is made up of many stakeholders, including Government Entities, Public Education, Higher Education, the private sector, non-profit organizations, and other assets and tools.

➤ Government Entities

- City of Las Cruces
- Village of Hatch
- City of Sunland Park
- City of Anthony
- Rio Grande Council of Governments
- Doña Ana County
- New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions/Workforce Connections
- US Department of Labor Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act Southwestern Region
- US Department of Agriculture
- NM Department of Agriculture
- Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas – El Paso Branch
- Air Force Research Lab Scholars Program
- Housing and Urban Development's Training Programs
- Housing Authority's Family Self-Sufficiency Program

➤ Public Education

- Las Cruces Public Schools Career and Technical Education Programs, Arrowhead Park Early College High School, Arrowhead Park Medical Academy, Rio Grande Prep, Las Montañas, New America School
- Gadsden Independent School District Career and Technical Education Programs and Alta Vista Early College High School
- Hatch Valley Public Schools
- Early Head Start and Head Start
- Texas Education Service Center Region 19

➤ Higher Education Entities/Assets

- New Mexico State University
- University of Texas-El Paso
- Doña Ana Community College
- El Paso Community College
- Small Business Development Center at DACC

➤ Major Private Sector STEM Employers

- US Department of Defense civilian contractors
 - White Sands Missile Range/Johnson Space Center civilian contractors
- El Paso Electric
- Border Industrial Park Companies
- Memorial Medical Center
- Mountain View Regional Hospital
- La Clinica de Familia
- Private medical and dental practices
- Vendors in Mexico's maquiladoras
- Comcast
- CenturyLink
- ADP in El Paso
- Prudential in El Paso
- Schwab in El Paso

➤ Mission-Related Non-Profits

- The Bridge of Southern New Mexico
- Borderplex Alliance
- Border Industrial Association
- Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce
- Las Cruces Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Las Cruces Green Chamber
- El Paso Chamber of Commerce
- Community Action Agency
- CommUNITY en ACCION from El Paso
- South Central Regional Transit
- Empowerment Congress
- Community promotoras
- Women's Intercultural Center
- NGAGE
- New Mexico Childcare and Education Association
- Project Arriba (El Paso)
- Regional Data Institute
- The Hunt Institute
- Innovate+Educate
- Medical Center of the Americas
- La Semilla
- SCORE

➤ Assets/Tools

- Arrowhead Center
- Partner with Innovate+Educate on New Mexico Workforce Health & Opportunity Index
- WorkKeys
- DACC's training assets and career certification programs
- Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce's Workforce Committee
- Las Cruces Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Education Committee
- Las Cruces Green Chamber
- Assets of the Borderplex Alliance Workforce Development Committee
- Assets of the Skill-Ready Doña Ana Initiative
- olInnoventure
- MVEDA Bootcamp model/curriculum
- ONET Career Exploration Platform
- Campus2Careers Career Exploration Platform
- Career Cruising Career Exploration Platform
- Skillbot
- Apprenticeship model developed for NM PED
- NM Public Education Department's CTE pathways to career certifications initiative
- Innovation Lab at NMSU's College of Engineering
- School of STEM at NMSU's College of Education
- STEM-focused after-school programs
- CI-TraM Internship Program at NMSU
- Job Corps

Appendix E – Workforce Development Board Functions

To address the strengths and weaknesses of New Mexico's economy and workforce conditions, the State's workforce system partners serve a broad spectrum of the state's population, providing training and services to adults and youth, including dislocated workers, low-income individuals, migrants and seasonal farm workers, individuals training for nontraditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients, and individuals with multiple barriers to employment, including older individuals, individuals with limited English-speaking proficiency, and individuals with disabilities. Workforce system partners are responsible for the delivery of a broad range of services focused on education, workforce education and training for this diverse pool of participants. Core and required partners agree through Memoranda of Understanding to make their core services available and seamless as directed by the operator of the Workforce Connection Center. These partners will also participate in cross-training, and establish with the local board areas, shared success indicators, operating strategies and procedures, and customer flow, where appropriate, for effective seamless service delivery.

The State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, the Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, as well as other key one-stop delivery system partner programs, are briefly described below. Other sections of this plan provide more detail about how these partners will coordinate to deliver services in accordance with WIOA.

► **WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth**

WIOA provides for career and training services at the State's 21 Workforce Connection Centers, also called one-stops. The WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, in coordination with the Wagner-Peyser (WP) Employment Service (ES), are pivotal pieces of the one-stop delivery system, and the foundation of the workforce system. The system provides universal access to career and training services to meet the diverse needs of participants. WIOA made some significant reforms to how services are delivered in the one-stop delivery system to adults, dislocated workers, and youth, providing for enhanced access and flexibility for work-based training options, such as Registered Apprenticeship, on-the-job training, customized training, and incumbent worker training. Training is supported through a robust Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), comprised of entities with a proven capability of securing quality employment outcomes for participants. Other types of career and training services offered include comprehensive and specialized skill assessments, literacy activities, career planning, and labor market information. More information on the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs can be found in the Program-Specific Requirements.

► **Wagner-Peyser Employment Services**

A key role of this program is to identify potential matches between employers and jobseekers. Employment Services staff work cooperatively and collaboratively with the Local Workforce and Workforce Connection Centers to provide universal access to an integrated array to workers, jobseekers, and employers, such as entry, review, and maintenance of job listings in the New Mexico Workforce

Connection On-Line System (NMWCOS), specialized assessment and testing of applicants, job search assistance, reemployment services to unemployment insurance claimants, labor market information, evaluation and assessment of knowledge, skills, and abilities, and referral to training and support services. The program's service delivery approach includes self-service, facilitated self-help, and staff-assisted services, and involves a number of other tools and resources. More information on the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services Program, including the Agricultural Outreach Plan can be found in the Program-Specific Requirements.

► **Adult Education**

The Adult Education Program supports the development of the workforce by providing foundational education necessary for such employment and can benefit from better connections to the State's one-stop center resources. Adult Education programs provide opportunities for learning basic literacy skills; placement and retention in employment and workplace programs; obtaining a High School Equivalency (HSE); enrolling in post-secondary education programs; and English Learning Acquisition (ELA) and civics instruction. The Adult Education program resides in the New Mexico Higher Education Department, and includes 27 programs that provide adult literacy, workplace adult education and literacy, family literacy instruction, English language acquisition instruction, integrated English literacy and civics education and activities, workforce preparation activities, and integrated education and training. As appropriate, these services are also provided in classes at local provider locations, in one-to-one tutoring, and in classes at employer workplaces. Increasingly, local programs are providing hybrid face-to-face/distance classes using various technology platforms. Most local providers are housed at community colleges and branch campuses; one is at Alamo Nava-jo school district; and four are at community-based organizations.

Education is an essential foundation for building New Mexico's economy and preparing New Mexico workers to fill the middle skill jobs of the future. Adult educators help adult students to design individual learning plans that correspond to their personal needs and goals such as: getting a job, obtaining an HSE, enrolling in post-secondary education or other training, learning the English language, understanding U.S. culture and participating in society, helping their children achieve success in school, and leaving public assistance and earning a family-sustaining income. All Adult Education programs provide services free of charge to the community, and all books and necessary materials are provided. Adult Education serves adults who are unemployed and employed adults, on public assistance, have disabilities, or are incarcerated adults Annually, Adult Education serves between 16,000 and 23,000 learners aged 16 and over, not enrolled in high school, and basic skills deficient, as follows.

- English Language Acquisition (ELA) ~35-40%
- Low literacy (grades 0-4) ~15-18%
- Mid-level (grades 5-8) ~35-40%
- High literacy (grades 9+) ~6-10%

Participant barriers can include education and training deficits, language issues, child care and transportation problems, as well as isolation and geography. The Adult Education program is also challenged to serve students ranging from low-to-no literacy (“most in need”) to those almost college ready. While one-third of participants come to the program already employed, their job and family situations are not always conducive to furthering their education. More information on the Adult Education Program can be found in the Program-Specific Requirements.

- **Vocational Rehabilitation**

New Mexico has two vocational rehabilitation programs. The Commission for the Blind (Commission), an independent state agency, serves individuals who are blind or visually impaired, while the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), which is housed within the New Mexico Public Education Department, serves individuals with all other disabilities. Both programs focus on preparing their respective participants for suitable work. DVR serves all eligible New Mexicans with disabilities other than participants in vocational rehabilitation through the Commission. These programs provide guidance and counseling, transition services, job search and placement, assistive technology and equipment, as well as other services tailored to the specific needs of their respective clients. DVR and the Commission very occasionally provide service to mutual participants and work together to avoid duplication of services. An MOU between DVR and the Commission has existed for many years to coordinate the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, processing of referrals, transitioning of cases, handling of joint cases, sharing of office space, sharing of confidential information, and representation on the State Workforce Board.

- **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation serves New Mexicans with disabilities toward suitable employment. To be eligible for services an applicant must have a physical or mental impairment, which constitutes a substantial impediment to employment, and can benefit from DVR services in terms of an employment outcome. Services to participants are individualized and are based on a comprehensive evaluation of the person’s strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice. Some of the types of services available include the following.

- o Medical, psychological, and vocational evaluations
- o Counseling and guidance
- o Medical and psychological treatment
- o Help with expenses due to participation in rehabilitation
- o Job search and placement services
- o Transition-to-work services for disabled high school students
- o Supported employment persons with severe disabilities

- o Rehabilitation technology
- o Vocational and other training
- o Disability and employment assessment
- o Occupational licenses, tools, and other equipment
- o Assistance with small-business plan development
- o Interpreter services
- o Help to maintain work
- o Post-employment Services
- o Special modifications to vehicles

Vocational counseling and guidance by vocational rehabilitation counselors is the primary service to participants. An Individualized Plan for Employment is developed in partnership with the participant, and legal guardian, when appropriate. This plan is the basis for what services will be provided, how the services will be provided, the timeline for services and how progress will be measured toward achieving the employment outcome. Any addition or change to planned services, the vocational goal, service providers or timeframes is accomplished by amendment to the service plan, which is again developed and approved by the participant and the VR counselor. Because each participant's needs and goals are individualized, services provided vary significantly between participants and plans. Some services are available to all participants, if needed to participate in services and achieve employment, such as assessment to determine eligibility and/or vocational rehabilitation needs, referral to services offered by other agencies that can aid in accomplishing vocational goals, interpreter services, rehabilitation teaching, orientation and mobility services, reader services, job search, placement and retention services and post-employment services.

The barriers to employment that DVR's participants face are as varied as the participants themselves. Each individual has unique challenges depending on impediments caused by a disability or disabilities; lack of available resources, supports, services and accommodations; socio-economic factors; lack of family and other natural supports; limited or no access to transportation; a limited job market; attitudinal barriers; cultural barriers; structural barriers and other factors.

Commission for the Blind

The Commission for the Blind's customers fall in to one of two basic population groups, the first being individuals seeking to be employed and receiving vocational rehabilitation services, and the second being persons seeking to live independently in their homes and communities and receiving independent living services. While the Commission serves children, youth, adult, and older individuals, strategies in the WIOA state plan focus on the population of persons receiving vocational rehabilitation services who want to remain or become employed. The Commission typically opens a vocational rehabilitation case starting at age 14, and provides the following services:

- o guidance and counseling,
- o transition services that can include participation in a summer youth training program called STEP,
- o assistive equipment, such as computers equipped with screen readers or screen enlargement software, specialized Braille computers, video magnifiers or other rehabilitation technology,
- o assistive technology and other supports to become or remain employed in a specific job,
- o six to nine months of intensive blindness skills training at the Commission's Orientation Center,
- o six to nine months of training at a blindness training program in a different state,
- o independent living training,
- o assistive technology training,
- o support attending college or graduate school,
- o job placement services, and
- o support in starting a self-employment business.

Vocational rehabilitation services are provided to individuals who need and can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services as it relates to an employment outcome. The services are provided through an Individualized Plan for Employment. The Commission for the Blind provides services through eight vocational rehabilitation counselors dispersed throughout the state. These counselors are required to obtain a graduate degree in rehabilitation counseling or closely related field and certification from the Commission on Rehabilitation Counseling. The Commission also operates a residential training program with eight highly qualified teachers in Alamogordo where individuals who are blind receive six to nine months of intensive training in Braille, orientation and mobility, assistive technology, personal management, home management, and industrial arts.

- **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)**
The Combined Plan incorporates the state plan of one of the WIOA required partner, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), submitted by the Aging and Long-Term Services Department. SCSEP provides employment and training services to older New Mexicans. The program has two goals: assisting income-eligible persons, age 55 or older, to obtain employment; and providing community service through paid, part-time, training positions. Enrolled participants receive work experience and on-the-job training to develop new or improved skills; and support to overcome barriers to employment, such as lack of self-confidence, lack of English language fluency, or physical disabilities. Three organizations work together to provide services for these older adults with low incomes in New Mexico, including Goodwill Industries International, the National Indian Council on Aging, and the New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services Department. More information on the SCSEP can be found in the Program-Specific Requirements, included in the New Mexico Senior Employment Plan.

- **Other Required Partner Programs**

WIOA designates a number of required partners in the one-stop system. If these partners carry out their activities in a given local area, they are required to make their core services available at one-stop centers, provide funding for one-stop administration, if co-located, and provide representation on the local boards, where applicable. Each local area has one comprehensive one-stop center that provides access to physical services of the core programs and other required partners. In addition to the core programs and the Senior Community Service Employment Program, the following partner programs provide access through the Workforce Connection Centers for individuals with multiple needs to access the services: Community Service Block Grant Employment and Training, Housing and Urban Development Employment and Training, Job Corps, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) Program, Native American programs, Postsecondary Vocational Education/Perkins Act programs, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Food Stamp Employment and Training programs, Trade Adjustment Assistance Act programs, Unemployment Insurance, and Veterans Title 38 Workforce programs.

Appendix F - Services Available through WIOA Service Providers

Business Services		
Serve as a single point of contact for businesses, responding to all requests in a timely manner	Provide information and services related to Unemployment Insurance taxes and claims	Assist with disability and communication accommodations, including job coaches
Conduct outreach regarding Local workforce system's services and products	Conduct on-site Rapid Response activities regarding closures and downsizings	Develop On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts, incumbent worker contracts, or pay-for-performance contract strategies
Provide access to labor market information	Provide customized recruitment and job applicant screening, assessment, and referral services	Provide employer and industry cluster-driven Occupational Skills Training through Individual Training Accounts with eligible training providers
Assist with the interpretation of labor market information	Conduct and or assist with job fairs and hiring events	Develop customized training opportunities to meet specific employer and/or industry cluster needs
Use of one-stop center facilities for recruiting and interviewing job applicants	Consult on human resources issues	Coordinate with employers to develop and implement layoff aversion strategies
Post job vacancies in the state labor exchange system and take and fill job orders	Provide information regarding disability awareness issues	Provide incumbent worker upgrade training through various modalities
Provide information regarding workforce development initiatives and programs	Provide information regarding assistive technology and communication accommodations	Develop, convene, or implement industry or sector partnerships

Job Seeker Services		
Basic Career Services	Individualized Career Services	Training
Outreach, intake and orientation to the information, services, programs, tools and resources available through the Local workforce system	Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skills levels and service needs	Occupational skills training through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)
Initial assessments of skill level(s), aptitudes, abilities and supportive service needs	Development of an individual employability development plan to identify employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the customer to achieve the employment goals	Adult education and literacy activities, including English language acquisition (ELA), provided in combination with the training services described above
Job search and placement assistance (including provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations and non-traditional employment	Referral to training services	On-the-Job Training (OJT)
Access to employment opportunity and labor market information	Group career counseling	Incumbent Worker Training
Performance information and program costs for eligible providers of training, education, and workforce services	Literacy activities related to work readiness	Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction which may include cooperative education
Information on performance of the local workforce system	Individual counseling and career planning	Training programs operated by the public and private sector
Information on the availability of supportive services and referral to such, as appropriate	Case management for customers seeking training services; individual in and out of area job search, referral, and placement assistance	Skill upgrading and retraining

Information for Unemployment Insurance claim filing	Work experience, transitional jobs, registered apprenticeships, and internships	Entrepreneurial training
Determination of potential eligibility for workforce Partner services, programs, and referral(s)	Workforce preparation services (e.g., development of learning skills, punctuality, communication skills, interviewing skills, personal maintenance, literacy skills, financial literacy skills, and professional conduct) to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training	Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training
Information and assistance in applying for financial aid for training and education programs not provided under WIOA		Other training services as determined by the workforce partners' governing rules
Follow up services		Post-employment follow- up services and support

Youth Services

Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential	Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate
Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include: Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training opportunities	Occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved
Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster	Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate
Supportive services	Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months
Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate	Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate
Financial literacy education	Entrepreneurial skills training

Appendix G –Southwestern Workforce Board Service Locations and Contractors

One Stop:

New Mexico Workforce Connections -
226 South Alameda Blvd.
Las Cruces, NM 88005
575-524-6250

Co-Located Workforce Partners:

Partner Program	Partner Organization	Authorization / Category	Director	Contact Information
Jobs for Veterans State Grant	NM Dept. of Workforce Solutions	Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), authorized under chapter 41 of title 38, U.S.C.	Gilbert Olivas Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist	226 S. Alameda Las Cruces, NM 88005 575-524-6250 gilbert.olivas@state.nm.us
Trade Adjustment Assistance	NM Dept. of Workforce Solutions	Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.)	Celina Bussey Secretary	P. O. Box 1928 Albuquerque, NM 87103-1928 505-841-8912 celina.bussey@state.nm.us
Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment	NM Dept. of Workforce Solutions	Budget Control Act, 2016, WIOA Act of 2014, Unemployment Insurance Program Letter 19 - 15	Celina Bussey Secretary	P O Box 1928 Albuquerque, NM 87103-1928 505-841-8912 celina.bussey@state.nm.us

Offsite Workforce Partners:				
Partner Program	Partner Organization	Authorization / Category	Director	Contact Information
WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs	ResCare Workforce Services	WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker WIOA Act of 2014	Tara Escalante Project Director	226 S. Alameda Las Cruces, NM 88005 575-524-6250 Ext. 1009 tara.escalante@rescare.com
WIOA Youth Program	Help - New Mexico, Inc.	WIOA Title I Youth Program WIOA Act of 2014	Miguel Martinez Regional Manager	715 E. Idaho Ave, 4B Las Cruces, NM 88001 575-526-2402 Miguel@helpnm.com
Adult Basic Education	Adult Education ABE	WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) Program	Fred Owensby Executive Director	Doña Ana Community College 2345 E. Nevada Ave. Las Cruces, NM 88001 W: 575-527-7543 C: 575-640-9467 fowensby@nmsu.edu
Adult Basic Education	Adult Education ABE	WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) Program	Debbie MalDoña do Director	Western New Mexico University P. O. Box 680 Silver City, NM 88062 575-574-5114 main office 575-574-5101 Debbie.MalDoña do@wnmu.edu

NM Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services	NM Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services	State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.), as amended by title IV of WIOA	Erik Padilla Program Manager	NM DVR Area 3 3381 Del Rey Blvd. Las Cruces, NM 88012 575-524-6135 Ext. 36641 Erik.Padilla@state.nm.us
Job Corps	Job Corps	Job Corps, WIOA Title 1, Subtitle C	Myriam Martinez OA/CTS Manager	226 S. Alameda Las Cruces, NM 88005 575-524-6250 Martinez.Myriam@jobcorps.org

Non-Co-Located Workforce Partners:				
Partner Program	Partner Organization	Authorization / Category	Director	Contact Information
Alamo Navajo Reservation	Alamo Navajo School Board	WIOA Title I Youth	Marlene Herrera Community Services Director	Alamo Navajo Schools P. O. Box 907 Magdalena, NM 87825 Alamo Navajo School Board, Inc. c/o Division of Community Services W: 575-854-2609 Ext. 1403 C: 575-517-7640 marleneh@ansbi.org

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	SL Start (service provider)	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), authorized under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) 3	Tierra Trujillo Regional Director	655 Utah Ave. Las Cruces, NM 88001 575-386-4936 ttrujillo@slstart.com
Senior Community Service Employment Program SCSEP	Goodwill Industries of New Mexico	Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 seq.)	Adam Bayless SCSEP Service Coordinator	2407 W. Pica-cho Ave., Suite A-113 Las Cruces, NM 88007 575-323-5146 abayless@goodwillnm.org
National Farm-worker Jobs Program Employment and Training Grants	Help - New Mexico, Inc.	National Farm-worker Job Program (NFJP) WIOA Sec. 167	Miguel Martinez Regional Manager	715 E. Idaho Ave, 4B Las Cruces, NM 88001 575-526-2402 Miguel@helpnm.com
Adult Basic Education	Adult Basic Education ABE	WIOA title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) Program	Tina Hite	UNM Valencia 280 La Entrada Los Lunas, NM 87031 505-925-8920 tinan@unm.edu
Community College	Public Education Department Carl Perkins Act	Career and technical education (CTE) programs at the postsecondary level, authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)	Fred Owensby Executive Director	Doña Ana Community College 2345 E. Nevada Ave. Las Cruces, NM 88001 W: 575-527-7543 C: 575-640-9467 fowensby@nmsu.edu

Community Services Block Grant Act (CSBG)	New Mexico Department of Human Services	Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (CSBG) (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)	Brent Earnest Secretary	Office of the Secretary P. O. Box 2348 Santa Fe, NM 87504 505-827-7750 brent.earnest@state.nm.us
Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services	Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardon Services	Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO), programs authorized under sec. 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532) and WIOA sec. 169	Eric Erickson Operations Manager Recidivism Reduction Division	615 1st Street, NW Albuquerque, NM 87102 505-382-1775 eric.erickson@state.nm.us



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