



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **OBAE Announces Launch of the Connect New Mexico Fund *\$70 Million Available in Grant Funding to Enable Broadband Deployment***

**Santa Fe, NM** – Today, the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) announced the launch of the Connect New Mexico Fund (“Fund”) in conjunction with the release of the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The Connect New Mexico Fund includes a \$70 million grant program to foster the deployment of broadband access to unserved and underserved locations (residents, businesses, and community institutions).

The fund will make it easier for OBAE, which provides support for scalable, sustainable networks to facilitate reliable, affordable high-speed broadband solutions, to carry out its mission. Public-private partnerships through grant funds are a priority for the state as a means to enhance broadband availability and maximize digital inclusion. A recent external analysis concluded that substantial funding is required for New Mexico to deploy terrestrial networks to fully bridge the digital divide. The Connect New Mexico Fund will help address funding gaps and serve as a catalyst to attract private investment.

“Residents throughout the state of New Mexico will benefit greatly from this new funding source which allows us to advance our mission to achieve universal broadband availability and foster social and economic development on behalf of our communities.” stated OBAE Acting Director Drew Lovelace.

The NOFO sets forth the program purpose, eligibility factors (e.g., project types, technologies, service areas, entities), allowable expenditures, performance requirements (e.g., network performance, service offerings, etc.), evaluation criteria, and post-award compliance requirements. Additionally the NOFO recognizes that various broadband networks (last-mile and middle-mile) and technologies (fiber, fixed wireless, non-terrestrial) are required to connect all New Mexicans.

“New Mexico constitutes one of the largest sized but least densely populated states. This State-funded program shall consider various technologies, network strategies, and business models,” noted Sandeep Taxali, Program Advisor to OBAE for funding programs and project evaluation.

**Applications are due on March 11, 2024** and the application, scoring guide, and other program materials are available on the Connect New Mexico Fund website: <https://connect.nm.gov/connect-nm-fund.html>.