



PRESS RELEASE

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--Empowering New Mexico: Bridging the Digital Divide Through Innovative Initiatives: Part 1

Santa Fe, NM - New Mexico is taking bold strides to bridge the digital divide, ensuring that every resident has equal access to the opportunities presented by the digital age. A series of groundbreaking initiatives have been launched across the state, playing a pivotal role in ensuring equitable access to technology and online resources.

Serving Students

NM Student Connect: Initiated in 2021, the NM Student Connect program has emerged as a beacon of hope for students and educators lacking high-speed broadband internet service or devices. The program unveiled a multilingual Public Education Department Help Desk, providing critical assistance to students and teachers in need of internet access. Through extensive outreach efforts, the program engaged with more than 16,000 student households, guiding families toward the federal Emergency Broadband Benefit. Notably, the initiative facilitated the application process for over \$65 million in Emergency Connectivity Fund funding, benefiting 110 school districts, tribal-affiliated schools, and charter schools.

Broadband For Education/NM Homework Gap Team: The Broadband For Education/NM Homework Gap Team has revolutionized the education landscape by deploying essential resources to Tribal communities. With the distribution of 700 hotspots, 6,200 Chromebooks, and 102 Cradle Points, students in underserved areas are now empowered to engage in digital learning with ease. The program's commitment to accessibility is further reflected in its collection of over 51,000 quotes from ISPs, addressing broadband solutions for up to 19,000 students across 12,000 addresses. The online portal created for school districts to shop for

quotes has made a significant impact. With funding from the CARES Act Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund, the cost of service for students without home access is no longer a barrier.

Serving Seniors and Underserved Communities

Teeniors: In a heartening effort to bridge generational gaps, the nonprofit Teeniors has taken center stage. By connecting tech-savvy teenagers with senior citizens, the organization is empowering older adults to embrace and utilize technology. Generous donations, grants, and local sponsorships have enabled Teeniors to provide coaching to seniors who may not have the means to afford such training.

Adelante/DiverseIT: The Adelante/DiverseIT program is leading the way in fostering inclusivity within the technology field. Through targeted training and employment opportunities, the program is empowering people with disabilities, seniors, people of color, and women to step into the technology sector. The computers refurbished through this program are donated to individuals or organizations in need or made available at a low cost to the public. The organization also offers cost-effective computer repair services, IT support, and digital skills training.

These initiatives underscore New Mexico's dedication to ensuring digital inclusivity and opportunity for all. By serving underrepresented communities and offering technology access, education, and support, the state is paving the way for a future where every resident can harness the power of technology to thrive.

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