CONNECT new mexico
Office of Broadband Access & Expansion

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Rural students in Rio Arriba County get access to broadband

Española, N.M. –More than 170 rural students in the Española Public Schools now have access to high-speed internet following the completion of a state-funded broadband project in Rio Arriba County.

The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) awarded Ethos Broadband, an internet service provider headquartered in Albuquerque, a $1.3 million Student Connect grant to build broadband infrastructure to connect 173 rural students in the school district.

“It is imperative that we provide broadband access to students who lack this vital infrastructure,” said **Jeff Lopez**, director of OBAE. “The completion of this project will transform students’ lives in the Espanola area, enabling them to get online at home to do homework, apply to colleges or access learning resources once they get out of school.”

The Student Connect program is specifically designed to bring internet access to the households of rural students and school staff, many of whom only have access to high-speed internet while at school.

The grant allowed Ethos Broadband to construct a wireless tower, fixed wireless infrastructure and receivers for the designated student homes in hard-to-reach parts of the Española region. OBAE awarded Ethos Broadband the grant in February 2025.

Student households can now sign up to receive the fixed wireless internet service. The project also stipulates that students and school staff will receive up to three years of free internet.

“At Ethos Broadband, we work closely with rural communities, and we see every day how reliable internet can remove barriers in the classroom,” said **Nectarios “Neo” Nicolaou**, general manager at Ethos Broadband. “We’re proud to play a role in helping educators teach and students learn without technology getting in the way. We’re truly thankful for our partnership with OBAE and the opportunity to support faculty and students across the state.”

Student Connect dollars come from OBAE’s Connect New Mexico Fund, established in 2021 through the Connect New Mexico Act. Lawmakers appropriated $25 million for public school projects, and in the fall of 2024, OBAE created the Student Connect program.

Eligible households can sign up for service here.

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The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion is dedicated to serving New Mexico with a commitment to make high-speed broadband accessible to all New Mexicans. OBAE’s mission is to expand and improve high-speed internet service with passionate leadership that drives bold, equitable, affordable and inclusive broadband solutions. OBAE seeks results that honor the state’s rich heritage and elevate quality of life for all.

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