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State-funded project distributes laptops to close digital divide

Recipients across state receive hardware and digital skills

ALBUQUERQUE – In the last six months, a state-funded pilot program put laptop computers in the hands of 170 New Mexico families across 33 communities — many of them receiving their first personal computer — and delivered nearly 1,600 digital training sessions to help them use it.

The New Mexico Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) provide d more than $300,000 to Adelante DiverseIT to launch a statewide project called TechUp! New Mexico, with a mission to donate computer hardware to families and to expand digital access and opportunities for New Mexicans. People of all ages in urban, rural and Tribal communities received computers. In addition to distributing the devices, the project provided digital training and technical support for recipients.

“This investment and collaboration with DiverseIT exemplifies the hard work being done to ensure no one is left behind in the digital world,” said **Jeff Lopez,** OBAE director. “Our mission goes beyond expanding broadband; our work includes improving access to technology, digital skills and ongoing support.”

“At DiverseIT, we've spent years helping New Mexicans build technology skills and gain access to computers, and this project reinforced how life-changing that combination can be,” said **Jill Beets**, Adelante and DiverseIT vice president of marketing & communications. “When people have a reliable computer and the training to use it, technology becomes a pathway to education, employment, healthcare, and greater independence.”

The project included a mix of group classes, one-on-one sessions, emails and phone support.

DiverseIT says TechUp! New Mexico not only allowed recipients to gain access to technology, but the project also increased their ability to communicate, create documents, protect themselves online, access information and use essential digital tools with greater confidence. Participants consistently described the value of having a computer in today’s world, where school, healthcare, communication, employment and daily tasks increasingly require digital access.

The project is already showing results. Recipients reported using their laptops for college coursework, GED classes, job searches, telehealth appointments, paying bills, running a small business, completing school assignments and staying connected with family and community. Several participants shared that this was their first personal computer and described the laptop and training as life changing.

“We are grateful to OBAE for its partnership and vision, and we hope the success of TechUp! New Mexico helps open the door to serving even more communities across our state,” said **Beets**.

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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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