

“Replacing and fixing broadband infrastructure is vital to communities as they work to rebuild,” Lopez said.

To qualify for grant funding with OBAE, projects must deliver service to locations that have little to no high-speed internet, characterized by download speeds of anywhere from zero to 100 megabits per second.



Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

Jeff Lopez
Broadband Director

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State awards \$1.25M for Lincoln County broadband recovery *Two providers will rebuild networks damaged by wildfires and flooding*

ALBUQUERQUE – The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) has awarded more than \$1.25 million in disaster grants to restore or reroute high-speed internet services in Lincoln County for communities hit by wildfires and flooding.

Penasco Valley Telephone Cooperative will receive \$1 million and TDS Telecom will get \$251,300 through the state’s Connectivity to Declared Disaster Areas Grants program. The funding comes from New Mexico’s \$117 million American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocation dedicated to expanding broadband access.

“The Office of Broadband stands ready to support families and communities recovering from these devastating incidents,” said **Jeff Lopez**, director of OBAE. “Replacing and fixing broadband infrastructure is vital to communities as they work to rebuild.”

The grants will fund repairs, replacement of broadband networks and fiber redundancy in communities damaged by wildfires, floods or other disasters declared by the Governor between 2022 and 2024. All projects must deliver service to locations that are currently unserved (less than 25 Mbps download/3 Mbps upload) or underserved locations (up to 100 Mbps download/20 Mbps upload).

Penasco Valley Telephone Cooperative will use their grant to provide fiber redundancy to ensure the Capitan community is not cut off should wildfires strike again. The route will also connect

Fort Stanton with fiber broadband access. TDS will use its funds to pay for construction in remote and costly areas. Infrastructure in Lincoln County has been damaged by wildfires and the resulting flooding during the past year. Most recently, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham requested a major disaster declaration in response to the July 8 flooding in Ruidoso.

Eligible applicants for the OBAE disaster grants have included Tribal governments, local governments, local and state agencies, for-profits, non-profits, cooperatives, and utilities.

Projects funded by these grants must be completed by December 31, 2026.

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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.