

**2023 APPROVED
WORK PLAN AND MEETING SCHEDULE
for the
ECONOMIC AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY COMMITTEE**

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Work Plan

The Economic and Rural Development and Policy Committee (ERDPC) was created by the New Mexico Legislative Council on May 1, 2023. During the 2023 interim, and as time permits, the ERDPC will discuss areas and specific issues affecting economic development and policy as follows.

Broadband and Economic Development

The committee will hear updates on:

A. broadband implementation progress made by the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion and the Connect New Mexico Council;

B. updates on broadband projects throughout New Mexico; and

- C. internet coverage in rural areas.

Statewide and Local Economic Development Initiatives

The committee will hear updates from the Economic Development Department on:

- A. currently available economic development incentives and programs developed from recently passed legislation;
- B. the development, use and cost of the state's economic development incentives;
- C. areas for improvement in different regions of the state, community outreach and legislative action;
- D. improving New Mexico's ability to attract businesses; and
- E. the economic development needs of rural New Mexico.

Issues Impacting Local and Small Businesses

The committee will discuss the following issues related to small business:

- A. challenges and opportunities posed by and methods of prioritizing site readiness; and methods of reducing the cost of opening a small business;
- B. new regulations and requirements regarding taxes, employees and sick leave;
- C. workforce development, recruitment, training and employee retention, including competitive and affordable wages;
- D. challenges to, successes of and opportunities for state assistance for minority and LGBTQ+ businesses;
- E. methods of supporting employees with disabilities;
- F. changes to the workforce and hiring post-COVID-19 pandemic;
- G. the Catastrophic Business Relief Fund;
- H. challenges facing labor and employers in New Mexico;
- I. potential impacts of establishing a public bank;
- J. hotel and mall renovation tax credits;

K. the COVID-19 pandemic's influence on small businesses and the impact of legislative action, including the Small Business Recovery and Stimulus Act;

L. the role of the gig economy in New Mexico;

M. reducing brain drain and retaining the next generation in New Mexico's workforce;

N. challenges and opportunities in New Mexico's medical economy for rural health care providers;

O. the economic impact of nonprofit organizations and mitigating the effects of minimum wage increases on nonprofit contracts;

P. the economic effects of affordable housing; and

Q. the types and impacts of tax increment development districts.

Updates from the Workforce Solutions Department

The committee will hear updates from the Workforce Solutions Department on:

A. programs for small businesses;

B. barriers that prevent employees from accessing unemployment benefits;

C. fiscal challenges faced by the department and possible avenues of legislative action;

D. paid family and medical leave;

E. the department's proposed Local News Fellowship Program;

F. unemployment fraud and recovery of overpaid unemployment insurance benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

G. the effect of changes to federal work requirements for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.

Economic Impacts of Adult-Use Cannabis

The committee will hear:

A. reports from the Regulation and Licensing Department on the process of applying for different cannabis licenses and the number of licenses obtained;

B. how recreational cannabis businesses can benefit from statewide and regional resources;

C. challenges faced by the cannabis industry, such as banking oversight, legislative impacts, grower expansion and issuance of licenses;

D. a presentation on cannabis farming; and

E. using recreational cannabis revenue to fund state programs.

Opportunities Available for the Film Industry, the Outdoor Economy and Creative Industries

The committee will discuss:

A. the potential of the creative industries economy and the implementation of House Bill 8 (2023);

B. the economic impact and possible overpayment of film tax credits and ways to grow the industry and workforce throughout the state;

C. indigenous filmmaking and filming on tribal land; and

D. outdoor recreation opportunities and development throughout New Mexico.

Impact of Transportation Infrastructure on State and Local Economies

The committee will receive reports on:

A. New Mexico's ports of entry and their economic impacts to the state;

B. industrial logistics in the movement of goods via air, rail, truck and interstate;

C. the economic impact of short line railroads; and

D. the relationship between transportation infrastructure and tribal, state and local economies.

Farming and Livestock Industries as Economic Generators

The committee will receive updates on:

A. state meat inspectors assigned to the New Mexico Livestock Board;

B. reinstatement of a meat processing plant in eastern New Mexico;

C. the economic impact of drought on farming and ranching and technological methods of mitigation;

D. managing water resources for long-term economic well-being;

- E. the impact of veterinarian shortages on agriculture; and
- F. developing lumber microindustries in rural New Mexico.

Renewable Energy as an Economic Generator

The committee will hear presentations on:

- A. the development of a renewable energy industry and economy while transitioning from extractive industries and modernizing the grid;
- B. hydrogen production, including green hydrogen production in rural areas, pink hydrogen and blue hydrogen;
- C. renewable energy investment and needs assessment;
- D. the development of geothermal energy;
- E. fostering New Mexico's energy transmission economy; and
- F. implementation of the Energy Transition Act and the mitigation of economic effects on local economies.

Educational Institutions and Economic Development

The committee will hear presentations on:

- A. job training programs at community colleges throughout the state and how community colleges serve their regions;
- B. the Central New Mexico Community College Women in Trades program;
- C. the economic benefits of the medical field from New Mexico's medical schools;
- D. career and technical education in public schools;
- E. the impact of the Opportunity Scholarship; and
- F. collaborative efforts between the Higher Education Department, Workforce Solutions Department and the Health Care Authority Department to track and prepare students for employment trends.

Restaurant, Brewery and Distillery Industry Needs

The committee will discuss:

- A. the challenges and needs of the New Mexico wine industry;
- B. the challenges and successes of small distilleries and breweries; and
- C. the impacts of House Bill 255 (2021) on liquor licenses.

Economic Impact of Federal Installations

The committee will hear presentations on the economic impact of military bases and national laboratories on state and local economies.

**Economic and Rural Development and Policy Committee
2023 Approved Meeting Schedule**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
June 21	Santa Fe
July 6-7	Albuquerque
August 28-30	Santa Teresa/Las Cruces
September 20-22	Silver City/Deming
October 11-13	Taos/Los Alamos/Santa Fe