



2016 STATEWIDE TOWN HALL

Economic Security and Vitality for New Mexico

FINAL REPORT

- This report presents the results from the May 19-20, 2016 statewide town hall.
- Albuquerque, NM

CONVENER

New Mexico First



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New Mexicans want a robust economic policy that provides security for our families and fosters a vibrant business community that creates quality jobs for all our communities. They want to explore the potential of alternative workforce models that would meet today's and future workforce demands. They also want to reform incentives and other elements of the state tax structure so that more businesses and families can thrive in New Mexico.

These recommendations and others resulted from the *Economic Security and Vitality for New Mexico Town Hall*, held May 19-20, 2016 in Albuquerque. With over 200 registrants, the town hall produced a platform of 11 consensus recommendations, each garnering support from more than 85 percent of the participants.

Town Hall Process

Prior to the town hall, all participants received a background report on the state's economy. It is available at nmfirst.org.

"We need to come together and align ourselves with a common vision for the state and collaborate, collaborate, collaborate. That is going to be key... there are a lot of good ideas at this town hall and if we decide to collaborate, we can go a long way."

-- Jami Grindatto, Sandoval Economic Alliance

The event opened with guest speakers, including video presentations from U.S. Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich. A panel of experts provided additional context for the small group discussions which followed.

Participants then divided into small groups, during which they assessed New Mexico's opportunities and barriers for effective economic development policy. They prioritized those issues into recommendations. All participants reviewed and refined the work of the other groups.

Recommendation Overview

ACTIVELY SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESS

Town hall participants recognized that small business and entrepreneurship play a vital role in the growth of the economy. When these sectors thrive, living standards improve, poverty rates fall, jobs emerge, wealth generates, and thriving companies stimulate more businesses. To make these advances occur in New Mexico, the town hall called for excellent small business training and financing tools, as well as improved coordination among both public and private sectors. Innovation remains a key to success, such as new technology solutions for expanded broadband, creative business incentives, and cultivating the next generation of entrepreneurs.

CREATE THRIVING RURAL AND TRIBAL ECONOMIES

The issues facing rural and tribal communities in New Mexico are significant. The town hall recognized that economically sustainable tribal and rural communities are key to our state's overall future. Participants called for smart private and public sector investments in rural, tribal and frontier communities; most suggestions focused on using existing government dollars more effectively rather than increasing state spending. In addition, people looked to the future, pointing out that rural and tribal areas will become increasingly vulnerable if the next generation migrates to cities. So the town hall

recommended smart investments in youth programs that provide skills to help young professionals prosper in these smaller communities.

FURTHER DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY

New Mexico ranks seventh worst in the nation for industry diversification and we also operate within an unusual taxation system that is quite different from most other states. The town hall recognized that our tax structure makes it more difficult to attract new industries that would diversify the economy. Participants thus called for a major overhaul in the tax system, urging strategies that attract future businesses, meet state revenue needs, and support families. The town hall also called for cohesive strategies to make economic development efforts more efficient, regionally integrated and consistently funded.

“There is no silver bullet except for us pulling together and deciding we are going to spend our resources, our time and our energy making New Mexico better for everyone. Job creation is part of the solution, but it’s not the only answer. We have to focus on the big picture.”

-- Ruth Hoffman, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry-NM

ADVANCE EFFECTIVE ROLES OF GOVERNMENT

The role of government in New Mexico is profound, both in terms of dollars and influence. The amount of state revenue that comes from federal, state and tribal sources plays a very significant role on our economic picture. Thousands of federally funded jobs and contracts contribute enormously to our state’s tax base through the national labs, military bases and healthcare services. Additionally, government affects our economy indirectly through regulation, permitting and authorizing varying

budgets. The town hall called for reforms to make government more efficient, consistent and inclusive. Participants also want smart, straightforward pathways from “tech transfer” between government labs and the private sector – thus diversifying the overall economy.

FOCUS ON FAMILY ECONOMIES

Town hall participants were keenly aware that more people in New Mexico live in poverty than in almost any other state. Even middle class families can find themselves struggling to make ends meet. While all the town hall’s recommendations are intended to create economic opportunities and thus indirectly support families, one group at the town hall focused on the direct economic and social challenges facing parents and children. This group called for a “family-friendly culture” that helps all generations succeed educationally, balances family and work obligations, and considers the effects on families (similar to the way we currently evaluate economic impacts) when developing new laws or regulations.

STRENGTHEN THE WORKFORCE THROUGH EDUCATION

High unemployment, low job creation, high poverty, shrinking population, and limited education all present barriers to building a strong workforce. All six small groups at the town hall prioritized education and workforce development in some way. Fundamentally, the town hall called for excellence this arena – recognizing that New Mexico’s economy *will* grow if all our people carry the skills to succeed in the workplace. Suggested reforms focus on improved alignment between colleges and employers, major efforts to get students through school, renewed commitments to vocational training, financial literacy, and consideration of additional group processes that might unite efforts strategically and cohesively.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Town Hall

A vibrant economy is perhaps the most sought-after policy goal for our state. Many businesses, government agencies and nonprofits advance this goal in New Mexico every day. Some of their activities are working and should be continued. There are also opportunities for change and expansion. Ultimately, economic development in New Mexico offers improved national rankings and can result in serious reductions in poverty and increased opportunities for all New Mexicans to thrive. The May 2016 town hall gathered the wisdom of our citizens, inviting them focus on outlining economic policy that can bring both security and vitality to New Mexico’s economy.



During this two-day town hall, participants explored the state’s opportunities and barriers in six primary policy areas.

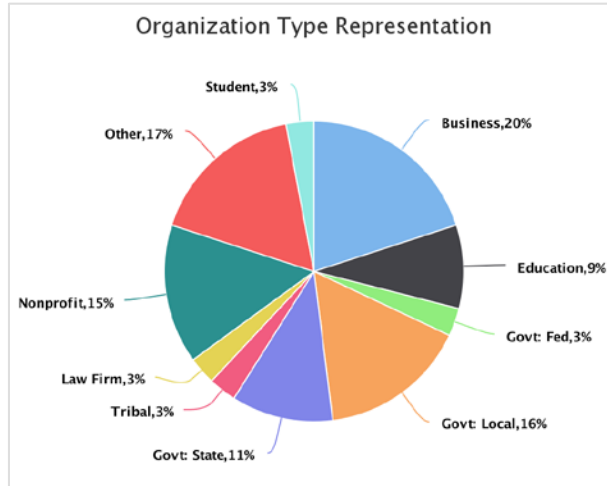
1. Small Business Climate and Entrepreneurship
2. Rural and Tribal Development
3. Diversifying Our Economy
4. Government and the NM Economy
5. Economic Security for Families
6. A Changing Workforce

About New Mexico First

New Mexico First engages people in important issues facing their state or community. Established in 1986, the public policy organization offers unique town halls and forums that bring people together to develop recommendations for policymakers and the public. New Mexico First also produces nonpartisan policy reports on critical issues facing the state. These reports – on topics like water, education, healthcare, the economy, and energy – are available at nmfirst.org.



Our state’s two U.S. Senators – Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich – serve as New Mexico First’s honorary co-chairs. The organization was co-founded in 1986 by U.S. Senators Jeff Bingaman and Pete Domenici.



Who Attended?

Attended by close to 200 people, the town hall brought together people from all seven New Mexico regions. Participants came from urban, rural, and tribal communities, and included business and nonprofit professionals, entrepreneurs, educators, students, and government officials.¹

Implementation

The town hall recommendations will be advocated to federal, tribal, state, and local policymakers as well as private sector leaders by an implementation team comprised of

volunteers from the event. The team will be led by co-chairs Bill Garcia, former NM Department of Economic Development cabinet secretary and the current president of NM Highlands University Foundation; and Tom Taylor former NM state representative and current board director for Four Corners Economic Development, Inc.

Town Hall Background Report

Prior to the town hall, participants received a comprehensive background report that outlines the current state of New Mexico's economy in six different issue areas, and overviews potential economic development options for each of those areas. With help from a statewide research committee, the report was designed to broaden the understanding of citizens and lawmakers about the economic policy issues facing New Mexico. It is available in the online library at nmfirst.org.

Extra Ideas

In the appendix, readers will find additional ideas and resources of interest:

- Vision statements, imagining New Mexico's ideal economic future, developed by each small group
- One small group recommendation that offers valuable ideas but did not achieve the consensus of the full town hall
- Four "wild card" recommendations that were developed by small groups to spark creative thinking but were not submitted to the full town hall for consensus consideration

In addition, interviewers spoke with several town hall participants, asking them to share one "big idea" for improving New Mexico's economy. Throughout this report we quote some of these comments. A video compilation of the participant interviews, prepared by New Mexico PBS, is available at nmfirst.org.

¹ Fewer Native Americans took part in the town hall than organizers had hoped, in part due to a major tribal governors' meeting that took place the same days. For this reason, the New Mexico First staff believed it was important to test the town hall recommendations' applicability to tribal communities. Staff sat in on the June 2016 State Tribal Leadership Summit session on economic development and conferred with event organizers. The priorities identified at that summit aligned excellently with town hall recommendations. This alignment points to collaboration opportunities between New Mexico First and organizations advancing tribal economic growth.

TOWN HALL PROCESS

Using **New Mexico First's** proven consensus-building process, the two-day event asked participants to share their best ideas for making progress as a state on economic development. During the town hall, participants were divided into small groups to discuss policy options, as well as develop and refine recommendations for addressing the critical issues.

Step 1: Learn the Issues

Background Report: Review report before attending the town hall.

Context Setting and Shared Learning: Listen to guest speakers and ask questions.

Step 2: Explore Possibilities

Small Group Discussions: Consider promising opportunities or crucial issues that need to be addressed.



Step 3: Develop Common Ground

Draft Recommendations: Write actions and strategies that will impact the state's future progress.

Amend Recommendations: Refine recommendations for consideration by full group.

Agree on Final Recommendations: Reach consensus on final recommendations in the full group.

Step 4: Advance Change

A final report will be sent to all stakeholders, including community and business leaders, policymakers, media, and all town hall registrants. The Implementation Team will work to advance the recommendations agreed to by town hall participants.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were developed by participants in small groups at the town hall. Then the entire town hall reviewed each other's work, offered refinements, and ultimately voted on their level of support for each recommendation. All of the following items achieved a high consensus threshold, receiving support from 85 percent or the town hall.

Actively Support Small Business

Town hall participants recognized that small business and entrepreneurship play a vital role in the growth of the economy. When these sectors thrive, living standards improve, poverty rates fall, jobs emerge, wealth generates, and thriving companies stimulate yet more businesses. To make these advances occur in New Mexico, the town hall called for excellent small business training and financing tools, as well as improved coordination among both public and private sectors. Innovation remains a key to success, such as new technology solutions for expanded broadband, creative business incentives, and cultivating the next generation of entrepreneurs.

"We need to focus on getting and retaining small business in New Mexico. Right now there are a lot of barriers to entry. We need to get out-of-state businesses in and keep the ones we have so we are not losing them to other states."

*-- Ezra Baldwin, NYU Student,
Albuquerque Native*

RECOMMENDATION 1: RESOURCE TOOLBOX

ACTION: Develop a fully resourced small business development toolbox.

STRATEGIES:

- a) Market powerful tax and financial incentives for small businesses, placing as much emphasis as is devoted to large economic base industries.
- b) Promote resources and support to engage New Mexico small businesses and recruit out-of-state small business leaders to the state.
- c) Improve access to capital, and explore micro finance alternatives, especially in rural, tribal and frontier areas.
- d) Encourage entrepreneurial thinking in K-12 curricula and establish, improve or expand community entrepreneurial incubators.
- e) Map, align and coordinate resources at all levels of government and across sectors to provide access to the small business development toolbox.

RECOMMENDATION 2: FUND INNOVATION, QUALITY AND ALIGNMENT

ACTION: Identify and provide adequate funding to support the growth of innovative business, quality jobs, and aligned skill set training programs.

STRATEGIES:

- a) Be first in the nation to adopt high-speed broadband statewide, using innovative means such as high altitude technology.
- b) Invest and reinvest in existing small businesses statewide (similar to the level of effort to recruit Tesla), to grow and sustain employment and thus increase the economic base; recognize the strengths of New Mexico small businesses, and improve them until they are nationally recognized.

- c) Study the impacts on small businesses of the anti-donation clause in the state constitution.
- d) Explore options for increased revenue, such as dramatically increasing exports.
- e) Establish incentives such as:
 - i. A boomerang program to return the best and brightest to New Mexico
 - ii. Advancing the film industry with minimum regulation, leveraging the natural beauty of our state
 - iii. Incentivizing software development, similar to the strategies used to expand the film industry
 - iv. Providing a \$1,000 incentive for every entrepreneur who remains in business for one year and employs at least one person
- f) Develop and implement alternative measures for economic success that take a “multivariate approach” reflecting the complexity of the system; utilize these measures to inform resource allocation. (For example: As opposed to only measuring job creation, instead weave in secondary measures like quality of life or educational outcomes.)

Create Thriving Rural and Tribal Economies

The issues facing rural and tribal communities in New Mexico are significant. Non-urban areas make up the vast majority of the state’s land, so the town hall recognized that economically sustainable tribal and rural communities are key to our state’s overall future. To that end, they called for smart private and

“We need to improve the relationship between the tribes and the state. Both sides have a lot to offer as far as natural resources as well as manpower and that needs to be improved both ways.”

-- Wainwright Velarde, Jicarilla Apache Tribal Council

public sector investments in rural, tribal and frontier communities; most suggestions focused on using existing dollars more effectively rather than increasing government spending. In addition, people looked to the future, pointing out that rural and tribal areas will become increasingly vulnerable if the next generation migrates to cities. So the town hall recommended smart investments in youth programs that provide skills to help young professionals prosper in these smaller communities.

RECOMMENDATION 3: INVEST IN RURAL AND TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

ACTION: Enhance public investment in tribal, rural and frontier communities.

STRATEGIES:

- a) Remove regulatory barriers that hinder access for small businesses and entrepreneurs to the New Mexico Local Economic Development Act (LEDA), the New Mexico Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP), and other economic development programs.
- b) Reserve a percentage of the New Mexico Catalyst Fund for early seed investments in startups to create a pipeline of qualified companies for venture capitalist investment.
- c) Remove regulatory barriers that impose unnecessary expenses or delays to public infrastructure projects.
- d) Eliminate policy barriers that prevent tribal, rural and frontier communities from accessing LEDA funds (i.e., requirements that smaller communities may lack capacity to meet).

- g) Encourage business-minded people to reside in rural or tribal communities by: ²
 - i. Creating a rural business corps to provide entrepreneurial education scholarships or loan repayment in exchange for relocating or returning to rural or tribal communities to build/expand businesses
 - ii. Incentivizing rural/tribal employers to offer tuition reimbursement or student loan forgiveness

“We need to put vocational and agriculture schooling back into the high schools. Invest in our youth.”

– David Kraenzel, NMSU Cooperative Extension Service

RECOMMENDATION 4: INVEST IN YOUTH

ACTION: Invest in youth programs (in rural and tribal communities) that teach social, agricultural, financial, technical, vocational, organizational and employment preparation skills.

STRATEGIES:

a) Create workforce pathways in all the areas described in the action statement above.

- b) Provide more resources to grow farm-to-school programs, such as Future Farmers of America, 4H, and similar projects.
- c) Expand the NM Youth Conservation Corps to increase the number of projects statewide that teach the skills listed in the action statement above.
- d) Identify youth programs with proven outcomes and follow-up monitoring to ensure effectiveness.
- e) Create a centralized “home” (or referral system) for identifying gaps, eliminating duplication and providing access within the wide array of existing social, financial, agricultural, technical, water management and conservation programs.
- f) Expand opportunities for youth to connect directly with employers, bridging skills development and employer needs (example of good model: ACE Leadership High School in Albuquerque).

Further Diversify the Economy

A diversified economy is one in which employment and revenue streams come from multiple industries. When jobs and revenues are concentrated in just a few types of businesses, a state’s economic stability becomes sensitive to volatile business

cycles. New Mexico ranks seventh worst in the nation for industry diversification and we also operate within an unusual taxation system that is quite different from most other states. The town hall recognized that our tax structure makes it more difficult to attract new industries that would diversify

“We need an increase in funding, true funding for economic development, reform the gross receipts tax, and we certainly need regulatory reform.”

– Raymond Mondragon, Eastern Plains

the economy. Participants thus called for a major overhaul in the tax system, urging strategies that attract future businesses, meet state revenue needs and support families. The town hall also called for cohesive strategies to make economic development efforts more efficient, regionally integrated and consistently funded.

² This strategy was initially drafted as part of Recommendation 2 and was moved to the rural/tribal section for clarity. Recommendation 1-e and 10-e for additional ideas affecting rural and tribal areas.

RECOMMENDATION 5: RESTRUCTURE THE TAX CODE

ACTION: Comprehensively restructure the state tax code for the purposes of attracting and retaining current and future economic base businesses and supporting New Mexico’s families, while providing adequate revenue for state operations without disproportionately burdening low-income families.

STRATEGIES:

- a) Form and empower a commission with specific responsibility to:
 - i. Study and recommend reforms to the tax code, including broadening the tax base³
 - ii. Develop a revenue model to evaluate a wide range of proposed changes to taxes individually and comprehensively
 - iii. Bring commission’s resulting proposal to the legislature
- b) Identify and articulate attributes for businesses and industries that need tax reform in order to attract or retain them.

RECOMMENDATION 6: ADVANCE A CULTURE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ACTION: Create a culture of economic development with robust local and state funding.

“New Mexico is blessed to be one of the most multicultural and multilingual places in the world. But we don’t celebrate that as a part of our economy. If I could wave my magic wand, I would turn us into the most international of any of the United States and diversify our economy by making us a center of multicultural learning and enterprise.”

-- David Campbell, U.S. State Department

STRATEGIES:

- a) Support economic development organizations locally to increase effectiveness and capacity for growing the economy.
- b) Promote regionalism in economic development efforts.
- c) Substantially increase and stabilize funding, specifically for economic development to become competitive with other states.
- d) Substantially increase the state’s annual investment in economic base growth and projects, and establish metrics on the long-term effectiveness of these investments.
- e) Refocus the New Mexico Partnership⁴ to primarily work on generating business leads, thus enabling other state, regional and local economic development organizations to finalize subsequent relocation or expansion arrangements. The goal of this division of responsibility would be to minimize redundancies and increase effectiveness.
- f) Grow border economies by developing a statewide supply chain program to recruit Tier 1 and Tier 2 suppliers to New Mexico, and connect them with industries on the U.S. side of the border that export to Mexico.

³ Part of this strategy was developed by the rural/tribal group and was drafted as part of Recommendation 3. It was moved here for clarity.

⁴ The New Mexico Partnership is an organization contracted by the state’s Economic Development Department to support companies that are considering relocating or expanding in New Mexico.

Advance Effective Roles of Government

The role of government on New Mexico is profound, both in terms of dollars and influence. The amount of state revenue that comes from federal, state and tribal sources plays a very significant role on our economic picture. Thousands of federally funded jobs and contracts contribute enormously to our state's tax base through the national labs, military bases and healthcare services. Additionally, government affects our economy indirectly through regulation, permitting and authorizing varying budgets. The town hall called for reforms to make government more efficient, consistent and inclusive. Participants also want smart, straightforward pathways from "tech transfer" between government labs and the private sector – thus diversifying the overall economy.

RECOMMENDATION 7: BUILD A RESULTS-DRIVEN GOVERNMENT

ACTION: Build a government that is results-driven, transparent, as well as effective for businesses and communities.

STRATEGIES:

- a) Review licensing and permitting requirements that limit access to occupations and hinder economic development.
- b) Provide sufficient and consistent long-term funding of proven effective programs, with established measurable goals for success.
- c) Facilitate broader public participation in government.

RECOMMENDATION 8: IMPROVE TECH TRANSFER

ACTION: Design pathways and reduce barriers to transition technologies and ideas out of the national labs and universities to private industry or nonprofit sectors.

STRATEGIES:

- a) Identify more sources of capital for early stage companies, technology maturation funds for advancing nascent technologies, and pilot projects that demonstrate the technologies and ideas coming out of the labs and educational institutions.
- b) Identify, reduce, and/or remove roadblocks that impede commercialization of viable technologies, and encourage communication and partnerships between technical developers, businesses and/or nonprofits to facilitate commercialization.
- c) Empower individual entrepreneurs to protect and allow ownership of their ideas or patents, grant exclusive licenses, provide a safety net for individual risk, and avoid penalizing the entrepreneur for taking entrepreneurial leave.
- d) Periodically request that our federal congressional delegation and the labs report on their efforts to facilitate such transitions from the national labs to private and nonprofit sectors.
- e) Provide incentives to businesses for apprenticeship and mentorship opportunities, and recognize entrepreneurs who are taking risks of starting new endeavors and keeping them in New Mexico.



Focus on Family Economies

Town hall participants were keenly aware that more people in New Mexico live in poverty than in almost any other state. Even middle class families can find themselves struggling to make ends meet. All the recommendations above are intended to create jobs and thus indirectly support families, but one group at the town hall focused on the *direct* economic and social challenges facing families. This group – with endorsement from the full town hall – advanced the need for a “family-friendly culture” that helps people succeed, balances family and work obligations, and considers the needs of families (similar to the way we currently evaluate economic impacts) when developing new laws or regulations.

RECOMMENDATION 9: ADVANCE FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES

ACTION: Promote a family-friendly culture that helps people succeed, through the adoption, support and funding of family-oriented policies.

STRATEGIES:

- a) Increase investments in education from birth through adulthood, including financial literacy. Explore ways to decrease costs for higher education students.
- b) Support family caregivers, including consideration of paid leave.
- c) Include family impact considerations in the development of public policy.
- d) Eliminate disincentives to earning more income for people in poverty, such as “cliff effects” in work support programs (i.e., childcare, Medicaid or SNAP).⁵
- e) Broaden availability and options for health care services.
- f) Incentivize employers to adopt family-friendly policies.

We can't ignore that 20 percent of our population is suffering. Part of that is coming up with livable compensation, not just wages but also health insurance, retirement plan everything we say a person needs to be self-sufficient in the U.S. and New Mexico.
– Jim Gannon, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe

Strengthen the Workforce through Education

High unemployment, low job creation, high poverty, shrinking population, and limited education all present barriers to building a strong workforce. New Mexico is battling all of them. Without significant changes, by 2020, most New Mexico students will not have the education, credentials or degrees required

“We need to make sure that we focus on our workforce to make sure we have the capability to attract businesses or to sustain businesses that we have. We need to invest in our kids. That really is the answer.”

– Liddie Martinez, Regional Development Corp.

to fill 63 percent of the state’s jobs. All six small groups at the town hall prioritized education and workforce development in some way. Fundamentally, the town hall called for excellence this arena – recognizing that New Mexico’s economy will grow if all our people carry the skills to succeed in the workplace. Suggested reforms focus on improved alignment between colleges and employers, major efforts to get students through school, renewed commitments to vocational training,

⁵ Both the family security and workforce development groups developed similar strategies around cliff effects or other disincentives. They are combined in this report for clarity.

financial literacy, and consideration of additional group processes that might unite efforts strategically and cohesively.

RECOMMENDATION 10: ALIGN WORKFORCE WITH ECONOMY

ACTION: Align job creation, education and workforce development with the existing and emerging economy, while drawing on principles of equity to increase opportunities for a diverse workforce.

STRATEGIES:

- a) Effect a united, organized and well-funded effort by all New Mexicans to develop a workforce qualified to satisfy the needs of current and future employers and employees.⁶
- b) Identify and consider strategies that promote life-long academic success. Possible options could include: incentivizing high school graduation, paying some students to stay in school, mentorships, proactive advising, partnerships with businesses, paid internships or summer employment programs.
- c) Reform funding mechanisms to support and encourage diverse career and college pathways that reflect anticipated workforce needs and include all vocational, trade and certificate programs.
- d) Modify the state higher education funding formula to allow reimbursement for new, in-demand courses tied to new economic development efforts.
- e) Re-establish and fully fund vocational programs in K-12 public education, including rural and tribal communities.
- f) Align high school and two and four-year higher education curriculum and articulation (i.e. transferring credits between institutions).

Invest in internship and mentorship programs and add courses that teach students how to be adults, how to do their taxes and pay for mortgages. And we need to invest in minority families.

-- Karen Sanchez, ENMU Student

RECOMMENDATION 11: ADVANCE A PURPOSE-DRIVEN ECONOMY

ACTION: Develop New Mexico’s identity as a purpose-driven economy with a strong workforce, deploying an approach (such as “Human-Centered Design”) that enables individuals and communities to recognize, understand and overcome challenges through an action-oriented feedback and adjustment process.

STRATEGIES:

- a) Fund a “Design Thinking Process” to “inspire, ideate, implement and evaluate” high impact employment opportunities that include economic-based strategies, job creation, workforce development, education and family supports that protect everyone during times of economic insecurity.⁷
- b) Increase job creation by improving regulatory structures (i.e., tax structures, broadband, occupational licensing, tech transfer, extractive industries and renewable industries).
- c) Invest in early workforce education by improving K-12 reading, writing and math skills, as well as requiring financial literacy and career planning.

⁶ This strategy was originally developed as part of Recommendation 6 and moved here for clarity. Also, See Recommendation 1, strategy d for related ideas.

⁷ “Human-Centered Design” is a term advanced by the Harvard Family Research Project. The related notion: “Design Thinking Process” is championed by Stanford University. Both approaches focus on defining the problem from the perspective of the user demographic. Ongoing testing is key so that participants can continue to learn and improve on initial ideas. (ReDesigning Theater, 2012)

TOWN HALL IMPLEMENTATION

The recommendations will not sit on a shelf. **New Mexico First** will organize an implementation team to advance the town hall's priorities. Implementation efforts often run for 12-18 months. The process will be co-chaired by Bill Garcia and Tom Taylor. They will lead the effort to advance the recommendations with federal, tribal, state, local and private sector leaders.



Bill Garcia brings decades of policy experience to this role, having served as Cabinet Secretary for the New Mexico Department of Economic Development under Governor Bruce King. Since then, Garcia has occupied many roles in telecom, economic development and micro-chip manufacturing. He has been active in community development throughout his business career, having chaired the Central New Mexico United Way campaign, New Mexico First, ABQ Economic Forum, and the Catholic Foundation of New Mexico. Garcia is currently Board President of New Mexico Highlands University Foundation. He attended NMHU and holds a master's degree in business administration from Arizona State University.

Tom Taylor has long served in elected office: 16 years as a New Mexico Representative, 12 years as Farmington Mayor, and four years as a Farmington City Councilor. As a lifelong resident of Farmington, business owner and member of numerous civic boards, he has always been a regional thinker recognizing that communities and economies reach far beyond traditional governmental boundaries. Taylor is self-employed as an investor and currently serves on the board of directors of Four Corners Economic Development. In college, he studied Architecture with minors in Math, Civil Engineering, and Photography.

APPENDIX A: VISION STATEMENTS

Each discussion group was asked to craft an aspirational vision statement, addressing the following question:

Imagine it is the year 2026 and New Mexico has benefited from a decade of consistent and innovative policies that have led to secure families and a vital economy. Our state is nationally recognized for excellence. What does excellence look like?



DISCUSSION GROUP	VISION STATEMENT
Secure Families	<p>In 2026, New Mexico is a state with a thriving economy that serves families, peoples and communities, through community support and interdependence based upon enlightened public policy and family-friendly businesses.</p> <p>New Mexicans have educational and health resources to prepare them to be successful, from the earliest ages through college and beyond. Young adults have the resources to help them begin their careers.</p> <p>Families feel empowered to succeed and have a high quality of life, avoiding high levels of stress. They have the resources that they need to maintain careers and families. People have the resources to be independent, engaged, and secure as they age.</p> <p>Because of this, businesses are attracted to the state. Poverty is reduced. Substance abuse and crime are addressed. New Mexicans value their communities, benefit from the strengths of all cultures, and support one another.</p>
Changing Workforce	<p>In 2026, all New Mexicans are inspired and equipped to succeed in our emerging economy.</p> <p>NM is on the cutting edge of dramatically reducing poverty and increasing educational achievement at all levels. Diverse and increased opportunities exist that allow equitable access to quality employment, affordable healthcare and wellness for all New Mexicans.</p>
Small Business/ Entrepreneurship	<p>By 2026, New Mexico has a flourishing, diverse widely recognized economy, that promotes an innovative – even intergalactic⁸ – entrepreneurial environment, with</p>

⁸ Contextually, this term referred to the potential economic development opportunities of Spaceport America, located in Truth or Consequences, NM.

	<p>access to capital and robust infrastructure, with broad opportunities statewide for work, play, and high quality learning.</p>
<p>Industry Diversification</p>	<p>By 2026, New Mexico is a model state for the nation and a source of pride for our people, recognized for excellence in employment that supports families and quality of life, while leveraging New Mexico’s cultural diversity.</p> <p>New Mexico is a leader in education as measured by high graduation rates, a workforce ready for emerging industries and high wage jobs. We have a diversified economy in multiple sectors including research and development, healthcare, technology, natural resources, agriculture and energy.</p> <p>New Mexico is known for its affordable and available housing, healthcare for all, state-of-the-art technology and infrastructure, and an environment attractive to non-New Mexicans. Jobs and quality of life draws new residents to our state.</p> <p>Strategic public and private partnerships, as well as an effective taxation and regulatory structure, have created a business environment that enables existing and new entrepreneurs to thrive, while addressing climate change and water resource allocation.</p>
<p>Rural & Tribal Development</p>	<p>In 2026, New Mexico is proactive and thriving, having achieved harmony of diverse people, traditions (including matriarchal), and planetary sustainability, where populations everywhere in the state are educated and employed, where poverty is sharply reduced, families thrive and young talent is retained, invested in and attracted, and our rural and indigenous communities enjoy a high quality of life.</p> <p>Agriculture and natural resources are being utilized in ways that combine traditional, sustainable, and progressive practices while maintaining a thriving population and environment.</p>
<p>Role of Government</p>	<p>In 2026, New Mexico is a model of ethical and transparent government, supportive of business growth, families, workers, and our natural environment.</p> <p>Our public education supports the community from pre-birth (via family programs) to post-secondary levels, we have full employment and opportunities and inducements for young adults to remain in our state.</p> <p>New Mexico has a vibrant and diverse economy that reflects our traditional cultures and ethnic diversity, that supports community-based economic development and investment in local business, agriculture, technology, and education.</p> <p>We are a U.S. leader in national and international enterprises, by harnessing our unique talents, diverse communities, technological innovations, and natural resources.</p>

APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL IDEAS

Small Group Recommendation

To be included in the official town hall platform a recommendation had to receive a vote of support from at least 85 percent of the town hall participants. The following recommendation did not achieve that level of support from the full town hall. It is noteworthy, however, that the central notion (considering impacts of new public policies on families) was supported by the full town hall in Recommendation 9, strategy c. The main difference between the approved language and text below was the *requirement* the family impact analysis before passage of legislation. Several town hall participants believed making the analyses mandatory was a step too far, but they supported the overall concept of assessing family impacts within the overall policy process.

Secure Families Group, 78% vote of support

ACTION: Require family impact analysis of all legislative policy and implementation proposals

STRATEGIES:

1. Create a legislative study committee for implementation.
2. Refer to Prosperity Works family impact analysis as a framework.
3. Refer to prior legislative efforts/proposals.

Wild Card Recommendations

Discussion groups were offered the option of submitting a “wild card” recommendation if they had time and interest. Though not a part of the official town hall platform, this option allowed groups to share what might have been their boldest or most creative idea – even though it may not have achieved even the consensus of their small group. Four of the six discussion groups submitted a wild card recommendation as detailed below.

SMALL GROUP	WILD CARD RECOMMENDATION
Secure Families	ACTION: Create a state bank modeled on North Dakota’s, which produces revenue to the state. (For example, infrastructure can be funded without bonds.)
Role of Government	ACTION: Promote the expectation of excellence, success and innovation among New Mexicans, and recognize New Mexico’s strengths, ingenuity and assets. STRATEGIES: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider initiatives like “Expect More, Arizona” that encourages community ownership and responsibility for driving change. 2. Encourage “both/and” rather than “either/or” problem solving. 3. Work with media to change how they report about New Mexico (more positively.)
Changing Workforce	ACTION: Clean up New Mexico. STRATEGIES: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a marketing program and provide funding to help beautification initiatives. 2. Increase awareness education of housing and land values, and create a sense of stewardship and knowledge of sustainable gardening. 3. Inspire and incentivize value-based community identity.

SMALL GROUP WILD CARD RECOMMENDATION

Industry
Diversification

ACTION:

Support the retooling and rethinking of the agricultural industry and improve the rural economy by using cutting-edge science to address water scarcity by improving soil quality.

STRATEGIES:

1. Engage a public/private partnership to obtain funding for a proof of concept pilot project for capturing CO2 through agricultural practice.
2. Through this agricultural practice, the farmers and ranchers will be able to reduce their water usage and improve the soil fertility.



APPENDIX C: RECOMMENDATION SUPPORT LEVELS

Rec #	Action	Highly Support	Moderately Support	Do not support	TOTAL Support
Rec 1	ACTION: Develop a fully resourced small business development toolbox.	60%	36%	4%	96%
Rec 2	ACTION: Identify and provide adequate funding to support the growth of innovative business, quality jobs, and aligned skill set training programs.	38%	51%	11%	89%
Rec 3	ACTION: Enhance public investment in tribal, rural and frontier communities.	53%	38%	9%	91%
Rec 4	ACTION: Invest in youth programs (in rural and tribal communities) that teach social, agricultural, financial, technical, vocational, organizational and employment preparation skills.	30%	59%	11%	89%
Rec 5	ACTION: Comprehensively restructure the New Mexico tax code for the purposes of attracting and retaining current and future economic base businesses and supporting New Mexico’s families, while providing adequate revenue for state operations without disproportionately burdening low-income families.	53%	39%	8%	92%
Rec 6	ACTION: Create a culture of economic development with robust local and state funding.	42%	48%	10%	90%
Rec 7	ACTION: Build a government that is results-driven, transparent, and business and community effective.	67%	32%	1%	99%
Rec 8	ACTION: Design pathways and reduce barriers to transition technologies and ideas out of the national labs and universities to private industry or nonprofit sectors.	55%	36%	9%	91%
Rec 9	ACTION: Promote a family-friendly culture that helps people succeed, through the adoption, support and funding of family-oriented policies.	49%	49%	2%	98%
Rec 10	ACTION: Align job creation, education and workforce development with the existing and emerging economy, while drawing on principles of equity to increase opportunities for a diverse workforce.	54%	37%	9%	91%
Rec 11	ACTION: Develop New Mexico’s identity as a purpose-driven economy with a strong workforce, deploying an approach (such as “Human-Centered Design”) that enables individuals and communities to recognize, understand and overcome challenges through an action-oriented feedback and adjustment process.	49%	43%	8%	92%

APPENDIX D: TOWN HALL LEADERS

Town Hall Speakers

Experts and Honored Guests

- U.S. Senator Tom Udall (video)
- U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich (video)
- Scott Miller, Circles USA
- Alvin Warren, W.K. Kellogg Foundation
- Jami Grindatto, Sandoval Economic Alliance
- Davin Lopez, Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance
- Sam Donaldson, Former ABC News Reporter

New Mexico First Staff/Board Speakers

- Joan Drake, Board Chair
- Valerie Romero-Leggott, Board Chair-Elect
- Kurt Steinhaus, Plenary Co-Chair
- Heather Balas, President & Executive Director
- Pamela K. Blackwell, Economic Policy Director

Town Hall Leadership Team

- Christy Albright
- Joaquin Baca
- J.D. Bullington
- Lynne Canning
- Sue Coates
- Katherine Cordova
- Philip Crump
- Grace Griffin
- Carol Hinton
- Kathy Komoll
- Leslie Kryder
- Jessica Lawrence
- Kathleen Oweegon
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Research Committee

A statewide committee of researchers and reviewers contributed to this New Mexico First background report. The lead authors are Heather Balas, Autumn Gray and Pamela Blackwell. A special thanks to the following committed New Mexicans for sharing their time and expertise (and for being willing to review this report in its multiple iterations)!

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- Johnny Montoya, Century Link
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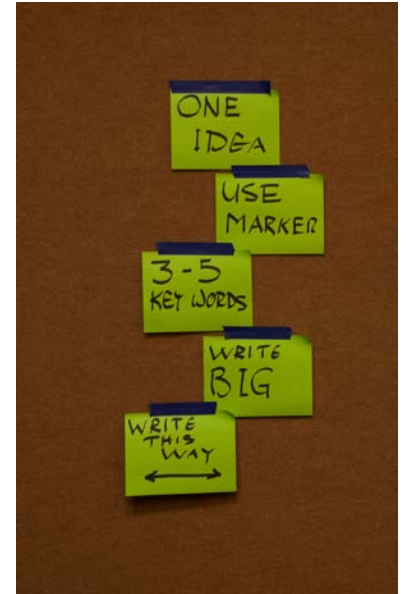
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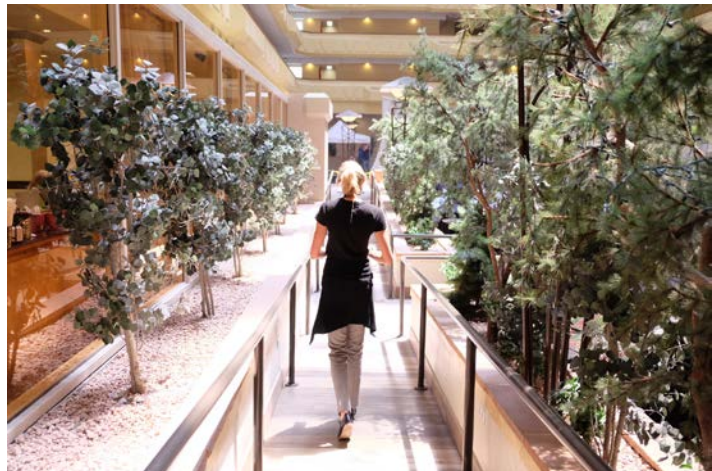
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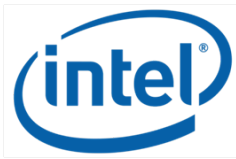
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