

Connecting the DOTs

October – December, 2022



Connecting the DOTs Quarterly Newsletter is a product of the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES
EVAN WILLIAMS

Serving Our Region

The COG team continues to perform as we are extremely proud of serving our region and wanted to provide some key highlights.

Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plans – 100+

- Municipalities – 7
- Pueblos – 3
- Navajo Chapters – 51
- Special Districts – 38
- Senior Centers – 42

Capital Outlay Requests & Reauthorizations – 75+

Legislative Forums – 3

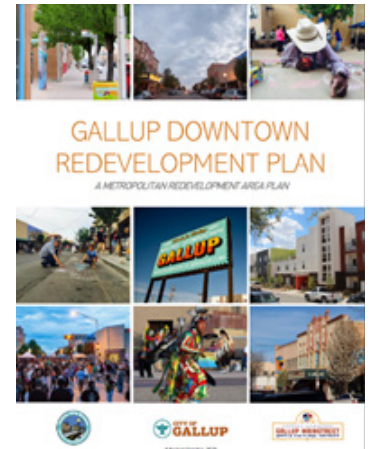
- Cibola Area Legislative Forum
- Gallup-McKinley Area Legislative Forum
- Navajo Nation Chapter Legislative Forum

Exceling on Special Projects

- Gallup Downtown Redevelopment Plan – NADO Award
- Central 66 MRA Blight Assessment Report
- Zuni Mountains Trail Design & Quality Assurance Work
- Revolving Loan Fund
- Prewitt-Milan Transportation Master Plan

Grant Awards

- Congressional Directed Spending – \$7.75M
- Regional Recreational Grants – \$8.7M
- Food Security Grant - \$1.8M
- Capacity Building Grants - \$250 K



Capacity Building Grants

During the 2021 Legislative Session, \$1.5 million was appropriated for grant writing and grant management services in conjunction with the lack of capacity around the State of New Mexico especially related and in response to the Federal Infrastructure Bills.

In September, the Department of Finance & Administration published requirements and opened the grant application portal.

The COG quickly developed an approach that would provide the most efficient and effective use of funds as they need to be spent and closed by June 2023. The COG invited its members to participate in the following scope-of-services:

Scope of Services

Investment in the COG to grow its capacity and fulfill grantwriting service needs in Northwest New Mexico.

The COG provide the following services:

1. Assist local governments in defining and prioritizing projects
2. Assist local governments to match funding opportunities with projects to create comprehensive funding strategies
3. Hire two or more contract grantwriters who will focus on writing grant applications that can be used when the grant opens up and recycled for other projects in the future.
4. These grantwriters will identify technical documents needed that need technical experts to provide.
5. COG will contract with engineering or technical firms to provide these documents.
6. COG will learn from both grantwriting and technical firms for future efforts moving forward.

Each member that signed up to participate submitted a grant application and awardees include:

- Village of Milan: \$50,000
- City of Grants: \$50,000
- City of Gallup: \$50,000
- Cibola County: \$50,000
- McKinley County: \$50,000

Based on these awards, the COG posted a request for qualifications and has received over 10 proposals from highly qualified grantwriters and firms. The COG will likely contract with a Compliance Officer and Quality Control and Quality Assurance Manager to assist in implementing a successful program. Once selected, COG will consult with participating members on top grant priorities and task application development to selected grantwriters, firms, and teams.



NWNMCOG | NORTHWEST NEW MEXICO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
106 West Aztec Avenue
Gallup, NM 87301
Phone: [505] 722-4327
Fax: [505] 722-9211

US Economic Development District #1
NM State Planning District #1
www.nwnmco.org
Executive Director | Evan Williams

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS 2022-005
TECHNICAL & GRANT WRITING SERVICES
For technical and grant writing services to win applications for strategic infrastructure, facilities, programs and projects in communities within Northwest New Mexico.

December 5, 2022

The Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments (COG) is seeking one or more technical and grant writers to develop, write, and submit grant applications, primarily for federal grants under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, otherwise known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021. Proposals may be regional or local in scope, and applicants may include COG, local governments, tribal governments, and special districts such as water and wastewater associations. The scope of services will vary by assignment but may include the following:

- Identify grant opportunities that align with COG priorities;
- Advise COG regarding the competitiveness of the applicant and proposal in relation to the funding source and opportunity;
- Write grant applications and/or provide technical documents in support of a grant applications (e.g. technical reports, data-driven analysis, design alternatives, cost-benefit analysis, equity plans, etc.);
- Develop project budgets as directed by the grant opportunity;
- Work with the applicant and partners to define project and implementation details;
- Develop timelines, project plans, organizational charts, process flow charts, infographics, etc. as needed for grant applications;
- Develop metrics and performance measures to assess performance and success of various initiatives;
- Ensure timely submission of grants; and
- Be familiar with grant submittal on grants.gov.

Responses to this Solicitation
COG is seeking individual(s), a team(s) or firm to fulfill this scope of work. To respond to this solicitation, please email a letter of interest and the following information to mwhitmore@nwnmco.org

1. Number of years and description of grant writing experience;
2. List of relevant grants applied for, including applicants, amounts requested, and amounts obtained;
3. A list of all personnel who will provide services and a statement of qualifications for each;
4. Contacts for at least three (3) local and/or tribal agencies who have received grant-writing services; and
5. Hourly rates for all personnel providing services, indicating rates for specific services, if appropriate.

Consultants may provide qualifications and may be selected for a portion or all items of work. This is all contingent on funding and executed contracts and final contracts and their negotiations will be the sole discretion of the COG to determine if there is adequate appropriations.

Carbon Coal Road Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Carbon Coal Road providing access to the Industrial Park opportunities in the former Gamerco Mine area held a ribbon cutting ceremony on November 30 at 10:00 am – on the Gamerco side of the road project. This paved four-lane road extends from the intersection with US491 in Gamerco for 5 & ½ miles to the former Gamerco Mine area, where coal is still off-loading for transport to regional power plants.

The project in this area is to invite industry, including energy production along with potential for an inland port to involve warehousing for the exchange of cargo between rail and freight delivery to the broader Four-Corners multi- state region. This could eventually create opportunities for hundreds of jobs for our region. This 5&1/2 mile paved four lane road is a major step in the viability of this former mining area to invite industry to our region creating multiple job opportunities, especially since it will be served by both regional trucking, and the BNSF Rail Line.

The cost of \$33 million to complete this four lane corridor could be easily retrieved in a short period of time, if industry begins to grow in this former mining area; creating significant industry, economic development, and job opportunities for the City of Gallup, McKinley County, and the Navajo Nation.



CDBG / Capital Outlay: Important Dates and Keys to the Game

Community Development Block Grant

The **Community Development Block Grant** (CDBG) is an annual grant program that funds capital infrastructure and community development projects that are critical to the health and safety of low- to moderate-income communities. The COG is assisting the County in organizing and facilitating public hearings to gain public input on proposed projects from communities across the county. The first CDBG public hearing was held virtually on December 22nd, with an additional two hearings to follow.

The CDBG grant application timeline typically starts around April/May with an August deadline for application submissions. Pre-application activities (December through February) begin with public hearings and project selection, which is currently in process. Once all public hearings have been finalized, COG will present a list of proposed projects to the County Commission for review and selection.

If the Commission decides to select a project for support, COG will move forward with application activities, including Threshold Compliance and Low- to Moderate-Income (LMI) surveying of the community of the selected project. In this case, the County automatically meets threshold compliance as it does not have a current or active project to complete.

For the Cibola County area, COG is in the process of conducting similar public hearings for the Village of Milan and Cibola County. Thus far, Milan has conducted two public hearings and public hearings for Cibola County are forthcoming.

Capital Outlay

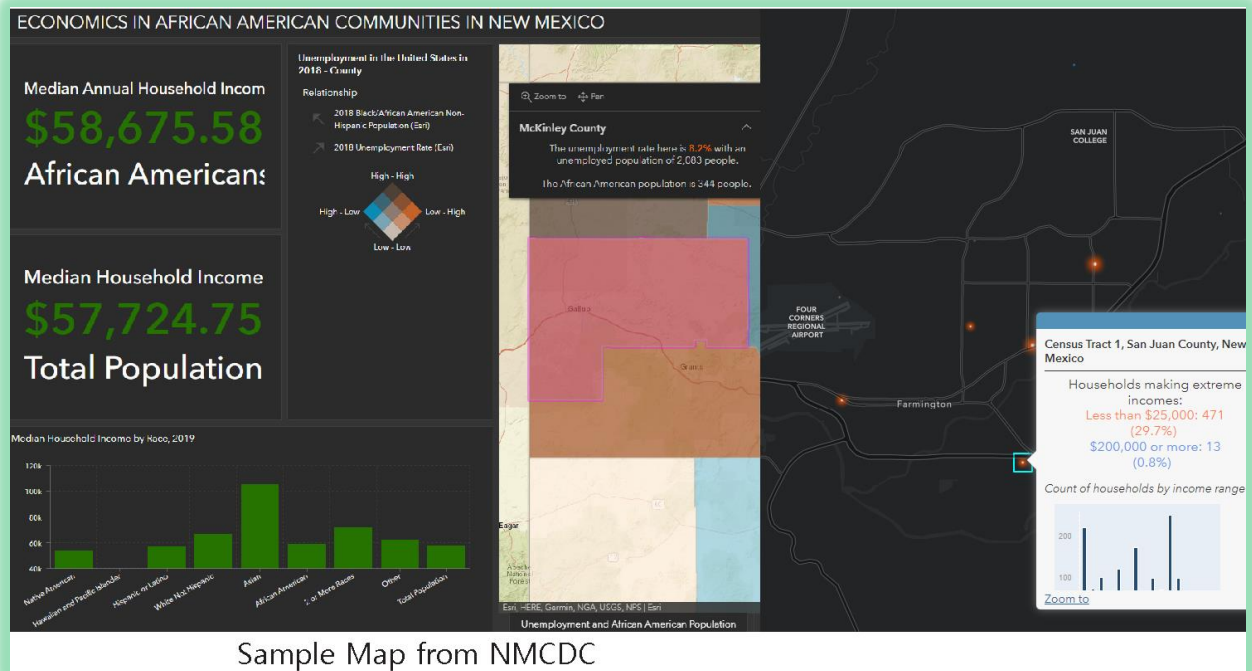
Capital outlay season is in full swing. The COG organized and facilitated Legislative Forums for both McKinley and Cibola Counties, where local governments and nonprofit organizations had the opportunity to present capital outlay priorities to area legislators.

Additionally, COG is assisting special districts and Navajo Chapters is submitting capital outlay requests for the upcoming 2023 Legislative Session (60-day). The following is a general timeline of what to expect.

Capital Outlay Deadline	January 12, 2023, by 3:00 pm
Legislative Session Opens	January 17, 2023 (Noon)
Reauthorization Deadline	February 13, 2023, by Noon
Legislative Session Ends	March 18, 2023 (Noon)

Data Dashboard

The COG is working rigorously to provide existing US Census data in an interactive mapping dashboard. Utilizing ESRI's ArcGIS Dashboard enables users to view geographic information, data to monitor events of Census, American Community Survey, pertinent data, see trends, and make decisions. Geoprocessing and other methods are necessary to provide a user-friendly environment of our northwest region of New Mexico, our COG. The dashboard is like web maps with charts, gauges, lists, tables, and indicators. The image illustrates a sample of ESRI's capabilities.



Zuni Mountain Trails Project

Frozen earth, limited access due to road conditions, and other factors has stopped Singletrack Trails, LLC trail construction for the winter season on the McKenzie Ridge Trail – Twin Springs Trail System. Clearing trees ended on McKenzie Ridge proper, approximate elevation of 8670 feet, essentially southwest of Foster Canyon. In the interim the US Forest Service has pending reroutes on McKenzie Ridge Connector that is part of the Twin Springs Trail System that borders both McKinley County and Cibola County. Trail designed for trail sustainability, proposed reroutes, await approval from the Forest Service. The Zuni Mountain Trails Project and Partners are continuously hopeful for these trail systems to be completed in Quartz Hill, Bluewater Creek, Ojo Redondo, and more. Spring season is near and hope everyone enjoys these trails systems as that they are built for hikers, bikers, and horseback riders.



Industrial Workforce Program 3-Year Impact

The Greater Gallup Industrial Workforce Program (IWP) was developed for the purpose of training a career-ready workforce in the Greater Gallup region. The IWP initiative seeks to fill a shortfall in the community's capacity and readiness for economic development and to bridge the gap between the skills needed by local industrial employers and the actual skills represented in the community's workforce.

The IWP program emerged as an essential component of the economic development strategy for the Greater Gallup region, as reflected in Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation's (GGEDC) interviews and ongoing communications with the area's key industrial employers under its Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program. Area employers consistently identified "workforce" as their top challenge and further bemoaned (a) the lack of local applicants with the employability and industrial trades skills needed for their industries and (b) the lack of accessible training programs and resources with the flexibility and responsiveness needed for their hiring cycles

Funded by the US Economic Development Administration, the IWP pilot project partnered with local employers to identify core skills and specific abilities, followed by building a responsive program, thus striving to provide a sustainable pipeline of work-ready applicants to fill current and future industrial jobs needed by the employers. This critical relationship with industrial employers was further embodied in the program's "Leadership Team" composed of representatives from local employers who worked with the GGEDC staff team to review, advise on and approve program policies and budgets, curricula, certification paths and training plans and approaches aligned with the needs of industry.

The GGEDC proceeded to activate the IWP Leadership Team, identify and access appropriate funding resources, hire staff, design program, tailor NCCER curriculum and certification requirements to local labor needs, build inter-agency partnerships, put in place a trainee recruitment program, and initiate scheduling and implementation of training courses.

The Results:

Class #	Dates	# Enrolled	# Completed	# Job-Placed
1	Oct – Dec 2019	12	12	12
2	Jan – Mar 2020	15	12	12
3	Oct – Dec 2020	5	4	4
4	Jan – Mar 2021	5	3	3
5	Oct 2021 – Jan 2022	6	5	4
6	Jan – Mar 2022	9	7	6
7	Mar – Jun 2022	13	12	9
8	Jul – Sep 2022	9	7	2
Totals:		74	62	52

Revolving Loan Fund

In the final quarter of 2022, marketing and outreach efforts continued in support of promoting the Revolving Loan Fund. In addition to business outreach, efforts focused on developing and leveraging collaborative partnerships. In November 2022, in partnership with WESST, the Revolving Loan Fund conducted its first training for potential applicants entitled, How to Develop a Personal Financial Statement.

To provide maximum flexibility for business owners morning and afternoon training sessions were held, and applicants were provided the option to participate via remote video conference. The training session was recorded and will be available as a resource.

A Personal Financial Statement is a required document for the Revolving Loan Fund. It is the intent of the NWNMCOG to conduct training sessions on each document required for the Revolving Loan Fund application process, thereby providing a complete catalog of videos which can be posted online and accessed anytime by potential business applicants. By increasing resource content available to potential business applicants, the Revolving Loan Fund is looking to develop a pipeline of potential applicants at various stages of readiness.

Quarter by the Numbers:

Number of Businesses Contacted – 11

- Cibola County - 0
- McKinley County - 5
- San Juan County - 6

Number of RLF Presentation – 8

- WESST (Albuquerque, NM)
- NM Tribal Entrepreneurship Enhancement Program (Shiprock, NM)
- SBDC – Farmington (Farmington, NM)
- Minority Business Development Agency (Albuquerque, NM)
- Dineh Chamber of Commerce (Window Rock, AZ)
- Bank of America (Albuquerque, NM)

For the next quarter, the RLF Program is focused on marketing and outreach including creating a digital newsletter. Efforts will continue to grow and expand partnerships to leverage opportunities for additional business training and business resources. Additional efforts are underway to establish a pathway for tribal lending.

Department of Finance & Administration

Regional Recreation and Quality of Life Grant Awards

During the 2022 New Mexico Legislative Session, legislators introduced into House Bill 2 (budget bill) a one-time special appropriation of \$45 million to support regional recreation and quality of life projects throughout the state. During the introduction of this special appropriation, COG staff began to work closely with members to gather potential projects, develop 2-page project profiles, and draft letters to legislators to advocate for large scale recreation and quality of life projects in Northwest New Mexico.

In July of 2022, the Department of Finance & Administration officially released the call for projects for this pot funds and immediately, COG staff began to reach out to members to schedule work sessions to breakdown the application, assign roles and responsibilities and secure financial commitment from governments. COG staff also attended two application training webinars hosted by DFA to gain insight into the application process, scoring criteria and timeline. COG then proceeded to develop and submit four applications which included: Red Rock Park Improvements - McKinley County, Artificial Turf Replacement – City of Gallup, Multipurpose Arena Construction – City of Grants, and Swimming Pool Improvements – Village of Milan.

On December 21, 2023, the Department of Finance & Administration notified awarded applicants of their successful applications. In Northwest New Mexico, McKinley County was awarded approximately \$3.5 million, and the City of Grants was awarded approximately \$5.3 million. McKinley County intends to utilize the funds to renovate and improve buildings and amenities at the park to include but is not limited to roof repairs, HVAC replacements, lighting and electrical upgrades, restroom and kitchen renovations, and



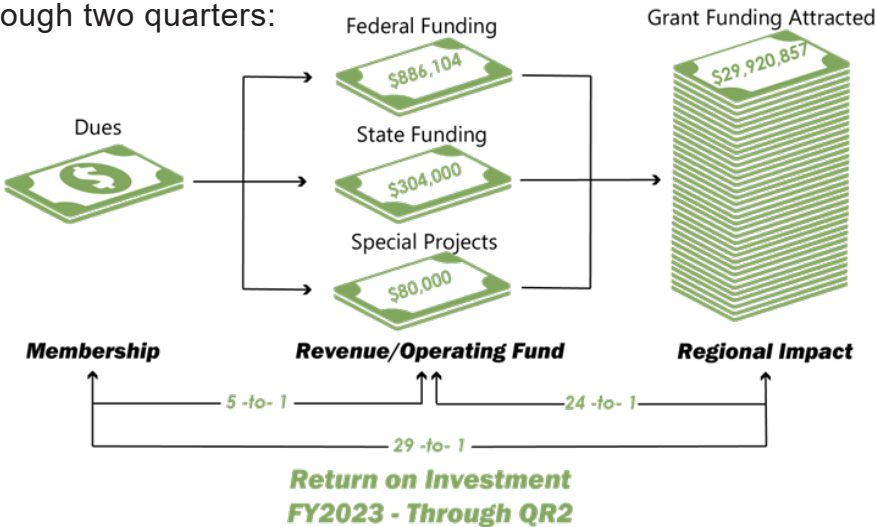
City of Grants will utilize the funding to erect the recently purchased metal canopy which will cover the rodeo arena, will construct improvements to the parking lot including sidewalks, replace sound systems and upgrade lighting. These awards account for roughly 19.5% of the total amount available.



COG appreciates the New Mexico Legislature for providing this special one-time appropriation and we look forward to future opportunities to improve regional recreation and quality of life in Northwest New Mexico.

Grantsmanship & Return on Investment

Since taking over the helm as Executive Director, Mr. Williams has worked with his staff to conduct annual return on investment reports to member governments who financially contribute to the COG. These reports include highlights of accomplishments and a monetary return on investment recap. Below is the COG’s current ROI through two quarters:



Through two quarters, COG staff has been able to assist the region in securing \$29,920,857 in grant funding. With 20+ grant applications pending, two more quarters to go, and numerous applications to be submitted, COG staff is on pace to far exceed the regional impact total from FY22 which was \$31,202,923. FY23 will go down as one of, if not the best year to date.

Legislative Forums Recap and Session Outlook

During the 2nd quarter of FY23, COG staff ramped up efforts to assist local governments, tribal entities, and special districts with legislative activities to prepare for the upcoming 60-day legislative session. This work included one-on-one project implementation strategy sessions with county and city managers, special district directors and staff, and Navajo Chapter managers, and was followed up by three legislative forums.

Gallup/McKinley County Legislative Forum: The first legislative forum was held for Gallup / McKinley County organizations and provided an opportunity for local governments, hospitals, education institutions, and other organizations to present capital outlay and policy priorities to area legislators. The following entities presented to the area legislators: McKinley County, City of Gallup, UNM-Gallup, Gallup-McKinley County Schools, Rehoboth McKinley Christian Hospital, Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation, Gallup McKinley County Chamber of Commerce, Gallup Mainstreet, and Gallup Arts.



Cibola Area Legislative Forum: The second legislative forum was held for Cibola County organizations and was structured in a similar fashion to the Gallup / McKinley County forum. The following entities presented to area legislators: Cibola County, City of Grants, Village of Milan, Pueblo of Acoma, Pueblo of Laguna, Ramah Navajo, NMSU-Grants, Grants Cibola County Schools, Cibola Communities Economic Development Foundation, Bluewater Acres Water and Sanitation District.



Navajo Nation Chapters Legislative Forum: Per request from area legislators, a third legislative forum was held in Gallup for Navajo Nation Chapters. With limited time, COG was able to secure presentations from 33 chapters from across Northwest New Mexico. The forum was well attended and included numerous area legislators. This all day event provided the much needed opportunity for chapters to present capital priorities to area legislators in preparation for the upcoming legislative session.

Video recordings of the legislative forums and copies of the presentations can be found on the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments' website: <https://www.nwnmcog.org/2023-legislature.html>

2023 Legislative Session Dates

- Capital Outlay Deadline – January 12, 2023 (3:00 pm)
- Opening Day – January 17, 2023 (12:00 pm)
- Reauthorization Deadline – February 13, 2023 (12:00 pm)
- Deadline For Introduction – February 16, 2023
- Session Ends – March 18, 2023 (12:00 pm)
- Legislation Not acted upon by governor is pocket vetoed – April 7, 2023

The upcoming 60-day legislative session will provide numerous opportunities for local governments, tribal entities, and special districts of the state to advocate for capital projects, propose and support new and modified legislation, and to gain insight into future opportunities that would support their communities. COG staff will once again provide on-sight assistance and will have staff stationed in Santa Fe to support our region's communities. Please contact the COG for legislative assistance during the 2023 legislative session.





McKinley County Water Update

In the final months of 2022, the County's *Water Regionalization Initiative* made tremendous progress in the formation of a "Joint Powers Agreement Entity." This initiative is more than 17 years in the making and the County, with its working partners, has reached a major milestone in establishing this historic partnership.

In October, the contract attorney, Dominique Cartron, of Cartron & Associates, developed and finalized a legal joint powers agreement that allowed three local small water systems — White Cliffs Mutual Domestic Water Users Association, Gamarco Water and Sanitation District, and Yahtahey Water and Sanitation District — to unify and create the new **Northwest New Mexico Utility Authority** (NWNMUA). This new entity is currently finalizing organizational setup with state agencies, etc.



On another note, the COG continues to facilitate the Regional Water Commons (RWC) program with bi-monthly meetings. The previous RWC meeting was held in November that covered capital outlay priorities and other funding programs that are currently available through the NM Environment Department (NMED). The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) is for wastewater projects and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) is for water projects.

Additionally, COG and the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) continue to provide technical assistance and outreach activities with regional small water system in both McKinley and Cibola Counties. In recollection, this partnership was established through the acquisition of the EPA WIIN grant more than a year ago. This is a 3-year work program that started in 2022 and will progress through 2024.