

NORTHWEST NEW MEXICO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

JOB PROSPECTUS

October 2025

Regional Planner/RTPO Program Manager

THE ORGANIZATION:

Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments was formed in 1972 as one of 7 regional planning districts in the State of New Mexico, covering Cibola, McKinley and San Juan Counties. The Council's annual budgets range from \$600,000 to \$2,000,000, depending on available grants and contracts from a variety of sources. Base funding is provided by membership dues from the cities and counties of the region, by the State Legislature through annual appropriations for regional planning districts, by the State Department of Transportation for management of the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO), and by the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) for economic development planning and technical assistance. Other funding is provided by special grants and subcontracts from Federal, State, Local, and Foundation agencies.

The COG Board of Directors is comprised of representatives from the 6 city governments and the 3 county governments in the region, and the COG maintains a team of 7 to 10 staff, depending on available budget for personnel.

The mission of the Council of Governments is to advance Northwest New Mexico by serving local governments in regional partnership. To that end, the COG aspires to "**lead the field**" in the work of **empowering communities**, promoting regional competence and **moving the region** forward. The COG work includes research and technical assistance to local governments and other stakeholders in policymaking, planning, project development, research, resource development, regionalization, convening and facilitating groups, communicating between and among agencies, and coordinating efforts across the many disciplines of community and economic development.

The Northwest Regional Transportation Planning Organization (NWRTPO) is one of the major programs administered by the COG, ever since the early 1990s when "regional planning organizations," or RPOs, were first established in New Mexico. Now known as "RTPOs," these organizations have been formed in response to Federal legislation, beginning with the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1992, for the purpose of ensuring inclusion by local public officials in the process of planning and prioritizing Federal investments in transportation facilities.

Historically, the RTPO has been staffed by one or more planning professionals within the COG planning team, and recent increases in the RTPO budget have enabled the COG to provide further focus to this regional planning program.

THE POSITION:

The COG is looking for an experienced professional to take on the role of **Regional Planner**, with specific assignment to serve as **Program Manager** for the **Northwest Regional Transportation Planning Organization (NWRTPO)**. Strong analytical, project management, planning, computer, GIS mapping and social skills are recommended for the position, with a preference for background in transportation planning, civil engineering and/or related fields.

While generally serving as a contributing team member on the COG's planning team (currently numbering 3), the Planner will be specifically responsible for managing all aspects of the RTPO program, under annual funding provided by the New Mexico Department of Transportation. An overview of the primary responsibilities are outlined in NMDOT's Planning Procedures Manual, a recent copy can be viewed at: https://www.nwnmcog.org/uploads/1/2/8/7/12873976/2020_0514_nmdot_ppm_4th_amend_final_w_appendix.pdf

Foremost among the Planner/Program Manager's duties is the staffing of the RTPO Policy & Technical Committee, which is comprised of representatives of city, county and tribal governments in the region, and which meets monthly. Within that framework, and within the broader mission of ensuring input by local officials into the region's transportation plans and investments, a primary RTPO goal is to solicit, vet and prioritize projects for inclusion in the biannual "RTIPR" (Regional Transportation Improvement Plan Recommendations), which in turn is submitted to the State DOT, with federally-eligible projects considered for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The position also includes significant public involvement work, as well as technical assistance to RTPO members in grantsmanship, project development, management, and finance as needed by the members.

Recently, the RTPO finalized its update of the Northwest New Mexico regional long-range plan. It will be a primary focus to implement this plan including data gathering, analysis, prioritization, and evaluation. The RTPO Program Manager will also be actively involved in the ongoing design, development and utilization of the project collaboration and tracking software technology.

The Regional Planner will need to be a self-starter, as well as a good teammate, and should be proactive in managing the assigned work programs. Beyond the RTPO focus, the Planner may also be assigned to participate in other projects and programs of the COG organization, as needed and feasible, and particularly where integration of transportation issues into other plans is called for.