



NEW MEXICO ASSOCIATION
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Santa Fe Community College
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Bill McCamley
Cabinet Secretary
Department of Workforce Solutions
401 Broadway NE
Albuquerque, NM 87102

May 6, 2020

RE: NMDWS/NMICC/NMACC Request for Collaborative Application to the Department of Labor for National Dislocated Worker Grant Program Online Dislocated Worker Grants

During this unprecedented time of crisis for dislocated workers, the New Mexico Independent Community Colleges of Community Colleges (NMACC) stand ready to provide an immediate, agile, and creative response to the needs of our dislocated workers. The collaborative partnership between these groups of higher education institutions and the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions for funds available through the U.S. Department of Labor's National Dislocated Worker Grant Program

NMICC was formed in 2006 to support the mission of independently governed community colleges that have a significant community college mission.

NMICC is well-positioned to support the growing number of workers dislocated by the COVID-19 pandemic. New Mexico Independent Community Colleges annually serve more than 60,000 students in core credit courses. In addition, more than 100,000 college students are enrolled in NMICC institutions. In addition to college credit courses, NMICC institutions serve thousands more through Adult Basic Education, non-credit courses, technical training courses, certificate/credential programs, and a comprehensive array of economic development programs.

The New Mexico Association of Community Colleges (NMACC) comprises ten branch community colleges that serve over 1 million students. NMACC provides quality higher education to students in community colleges and the communities they serve. NMACC provides a learning environment fostering student development. In addition, and similar to NMICC, NMACC also provides dual credit enrollment, language classes, adult basic education, and workforce preparation, and

community events. The NMICC and NMACC have also been instrumental in providing support to rural and urban communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NMICC and NMACC have proactively engaged in a number of initiatives that have increased the availability of services and resources which are both timely and effective. The NMICC will address the needs of the many displaced workers that are anticipated in New Mexico over the next months and possible years. Leveraging our connections with industry partners and our ability to provide wrap-around services for current students and newly displaced workers who will need immediate support, such as emergency scholarship assistance, academic coaching, professional development, internships, apprenticeships, and employer partnerships.

New Mexico's unemployment rate (4.9%) has risen to 5.9% and is still rising. Over 125,000 New Mexicans have filed for unemployment out of a total workforce of just over 800,000. With thousands of new unemployment claims being filed weekly, about half of the state's workforce at high risk of being displaced. This is an unprecedented scale of workforce training capabilities, flexible and affordable academic and non-academic programs, and connections with industry partners throughout the state, and supporting resources, NMICC and NMACC colleges are in a strong position to lead the effort to re-skill recent displaced workers for the most high need and recession-resistant employment opportunities that currently exist and will become available over the coming months.

As a group, the colleges are prepared to quickly ramp-up the availability of online courses that fit immediate workforce needs, such as healthcare, education, professional and business services, construction, and manufacturing. Concurrently, the colleges will also collaborate to explore competency-based education (CBE) and credit learning (CLE) options for programs that provide retraining opportunities for dislocated workers. NMICC and NMACC are also working to increase credit transfer agreements across all colleges. New programs are being developed in response to the immediate needs of New Mexico industry and employers thus enabling any dislocated worker anywhere in the state to learn what they need to know to quickly re-enter the workforce and contribute to a sustainable economic recovery.

Both individually and combined, they have proven track records of successfully managing large-scale, multi-million-dollar grant-funded projects.

Recent consortium project success includes a Department of Education Title IV-E Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCC1) grant which created the "Skill-UP Network Pathways Acceleration in Technology and Healthcare" (SUN-PATH) project. This project, in partnership with healthcare employers, improved healthcare curricula, increased the number of degrees, certificates and industry-recognized credits earned by participating students, and helped to improve employment outcomes in healthcare fields. The SUN-PATH project development, execution, lessons learned, and resulting successes will serve as a model for partnership, communication, and collaboration among the NMICC and NMACC colleges.

During this unprecedented time of economic distress, increased uncertainty, and severe job losses, NMACC and NMICC are currently working with the National Demand Training all-Mexican program available through the National Skills Workforce can provide vital funding during this period of economic distress. The consortium of NMICC and NMACC is committed to working with NMDWS to find mutually agreed-upon solutions to assist all Mexicans in obtaining the high-quality training assistance they need to help create and be successful in the new economy.

We are currently working on a proposal to the Department of Labor for Displaced Worker Grant funding.



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