



**Michelle Lujan Grisham**  
Governor

**Alicia J. Keyes**  
Cabinet Secretary

**Amber Dodson**  
Director

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

October 26, 2020

**Jennifer Esquivel**

**505-469-2915**

[Jennifer@nmfilm.com](mailto:Jennifer@nmfilm.com)

## **New Mexico's Film Crew Advancement Program Provides Training to New Mexico's Film Crew**

Over 3,000 participants have received on-the-job training for below the line film crew positions since 2004

**SANTA FE, NM** - The New Mexico Film Office (NMFO) Director, Amber Dodson announced today, that in Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20), NMFO had 135 participants in its Film Crew Advancement Program (FCAP). FCAP is a workforce development program, aimed at providing career advancement training for New Mexico's film crew.

FCAP is managed and administered through the New Mexico Film Office and is intended to increase skill sets and the hireability of New Mexico residents in the film and television industry and emerging media related jobs. Training is meant to provide New Mexico residents with high-wage jobs, and support economic growth in New Mexico.

"The Film Crew Advancement Program provides on-the-job career training for New Mexicans in areas including production accounting, costumes, and construction," said New Mexico Economic Development Department Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes. "These are high-wage jobs and this is just one way that we are building wealth for New Mexicans in the film and television industry."

Implemented in 2004, FCAP is an incentive program for participating production companies to provide on-the-job training opportunities to New Mexico residents working primarily in technical below-the-line positions who are ready to move up or add a new skill set. FCAP is part of the New Mexico Economic Development Department's [Job Training Incentive Program](#), which provides classroom and on-the-job training for newly-created jobs in expanding or relocating businesses in New Mexico.

The program provides a 50% reimbursement of the qualified employee participant wages to the participating hiring company for up to 1,040 hours worked in the approved position.

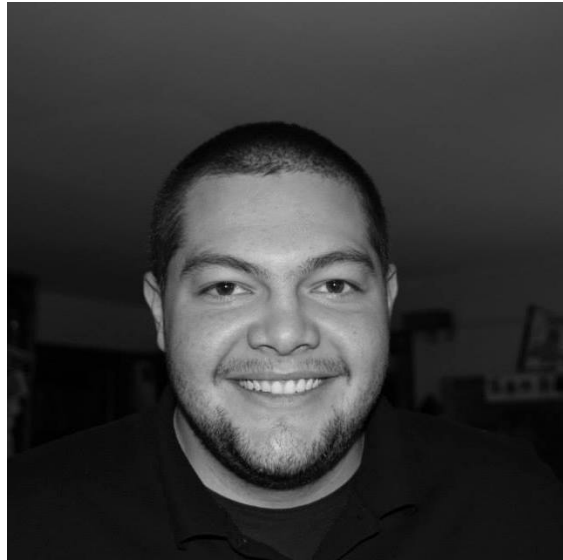
Since FY04, 244 production companies qualified for FCAP with 3,186 resident participants. The average wage of participants is \$26.87 per hour.

"FCAP is forward thinking workforce development program that is filling New Mexico's film and television crew base and supporting their upward career mobility, as well as providing additional incentive opportunities for productions to give back to New Mexico," Amber Dodson, New Mexico Film Office Director.

Dodson added, "We have a good pipeline of productions for the remainder of 2020 and going into 2021, so well-trained, hardworking crew are in high demand. We are going to continue to push to fund these highly successful workforce development programs in order to meet the industry's needs."

## PROGRAM PARTICIPANT STORIES:

Derek M. Chavez, a native New Mexican from Albuquerque, was first introduced to the film industry when his mother was renting furnished housing to film and television production crew members in Albuquerque. While working with production members of *Employee of the Month*, Derek joined his mother to visit the set. Unsure of his career direction at the time, meeting the stars had a major impact on Derek that was unshakable. "It gave me a glimpse into another world and I started to realize that's where I wanted to be," said Chavez.



In 2009, Derek was offered a job as a Production Assistant on the Starz show, *Crash*. "At the time, I had no real direction for my career other than knowing I was capable of much more than the life I was living. I showed up without a clue of how anything worked, but I knew this was my shot at building a better life. FCAP incentivized the show to take a chance on a kid that just needed a break," said Chavez. "I came in early, left late, and soaked up everything I could every single day. I was at the bottom of the pecking order, making endless copies, getting producer's coffee and trying to keep up with constant tasks. I received good advice early on to treat everything like it was the most important thing I'll do that day."

Since 2009, Derek has moved up in the industry rapidly due to the New Mexico Film Office's Film Advancement Crew Program. Productions that Derek has served on that took advantage of the New Mexico Film Office's Film Advancement Crew Program include:

*Jackie* - Production Secretary

*Geronimo* - Production Secretary

*Longmire Season 1* - Payroll Clerk

*Lone Survivor* - Assistant Production Coordinator (APOC)

*Frank* - Assistant Production Coordinator (APOC)

*Jane Got A Gun* - Travel Coordinator

*The Condemned 2* - Production Coordinator

"There is no doubt that the FCAP program has helped get me where I am today. The program incentivized many different shows to take a chance on me, and has opened doors for me. I am very grateful," said Derek M. Chavez.

In 2012, Derek was accepted into IATSE Local 480. "That was an enormous deal for me at the time. Being accepted into the union awarded (sic) me benefits such as healthcare and a 401k."

Recently, Derek has worked to help get the new NBCUniversal (NBCU) production studio in Albuquerque up and running and is working for NBCU as a Production Supervisor. Derek also serves as the co-chair of the IATSE Local 480 Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

Derek's dream is to continue to grow in his career and eventually become a UPM and Producer.

Another successful FCAP participant is Michael Garcia.

Michael made his initial connection to the film industry when working for Southwest Studio Services, renting out air conditioners and heaters to location departments for various television shows. When delivering or picking

up equipment, Michael would meet and interact with members of Teamsters Local 492. After learning more about the role Teamsters play in the film industry, Michael wanted to work in the film industry, so he enrolled in Rocky Mountain Truck Driving School taking classes at nights and on weekends to earn his class A Commercial Driver's License (CDL). After receiving his license in 2011, Michael landed his first job in the industry on the production *In Plain Sight* as a picture car assistant. That experience got Michael's foot in the door and the 30 days experience on a production that is required to join Teamsters Local 492.



With now over 10 years' of experience in the industry, Michael has worked his way up the transportation career ladder. Productions that Michael has served on that took advantage of the New Mexico Film Office's FCAP Program include:

- Glow with the Flow* – Transportation Coordinator
- The Brave: Season 1* – Picture Car Coordinator
- Benefactor Productions* – Picture Car Coordinator
- The Minuteman* – Transportation Captain
- Will Gardner* – Transportation Captain

"FCAP has been a great experience for me and delivered great results for my career," said Michael Garcia. "The program gives New Mexico film workers the opportunity to become leaders in the industry and has given productions more of an incentive to hire New Mexicans that have the knowledge and skills but lack the experience and connections."

More information on FCAP and other programs can be found online at [www.nmfilm.com](http://www.nmfilm.com)  
###

**The New Mexico Film Office**  
1100 S. St. Francis Drive, Suite 1213  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
(505) 476-5600  
[info@nmfilm.com](mailto:info@nmfilm.com)  
[nmfilm.com](http://nmfilm.com)

A division of the [New Mexico Economic Development Department](http://www.nm.gov/economic-development)



*The Economic Development Department's Mission is to improve the lives of New Mexico families by increasing economic opportunities and providing a place for businesses to thrive.*

