



# EDD

ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT

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## **EDD Announces More “Boots on the Ground” for Rural and Regional Assistance**

*EDD doubles its ability to assist local businesses and communities  
through its professional cadre of regional representatives*

**SANTA FE, N.M.** – The New Mexico Economic Development Department (EDD) has nearly doubled its staff responsible for assisting businesses and communities at the local level, EDD Cabinet Secretary Alicia J. Keyes announced today. The team supports the agency’s Community, Business, and Rural Development program (CBRD) through local regional representatives who live and work within the communities they serve.

Created by the Legislature in 2000, CBRD has since evolved to include high-level economic development professionals who provide technical assistance to the businesses and communities in their respective regions, guiding them to reach their economic development goals.

The EDD now has regional representatives living in the following communities: Mora, Las Cruces, Portales, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Bernalillo, Gallup, and Roswell.

“EDD’s team of regional representatives gives us 'boots on the ground' in communities all across the state,” Cabinet Secretary Keyes said. “They are already providing frontline assistance and technical expertise to small businesses and rural communities. We thank lawmakers for investing in this regional and local outreach. Please contact your rep if you have questions about any of our economic development initiatives.”

In 2020, EDD collaborated with several state agencies and local stakeholders to create a [long-term strategic plan](#) to inform New Mexico’s economic path forward. The state plan is a critical first step toward unifying New Mexico’s economic development ecosystem. One of the key takeaways of the data collected is the need for more assistance, especially in rural and other underserved communities. EDD’s expansion of CRBD will allow them to accomplish this.

EDD has broken the state into six regions, previously each with a single representative supporting several counties. The expansion to ten, plus one vacancy and a centrally located team leader, vastly improves the agency’s ability to reach every corner of the state. Additional hires were made possible with funding from the 2022 Legislature.

Regional representatives can help businesses and communities in many ways. They are called upon to assist with state incentive programs such as the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA), Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP), and the Collateral

Assistance Program (CAP). They can also advise their constituents on available state tax credits, the FUNDIT business financing program, potential recruitment opportunities, state regulations, and other EDD programs (international trade, outdoor recreation, film, science and technology, New Mexico MainStreet, Frontier and Native American Communities Initiative, and more).

Regional representatives have already been doing the hard work. They are respected members of their communities and always eager to help. They are driven by a passion to make their communities stronger and educate their constituents about the many resources available locally and through the state. EDD is grateful for their work: Lorraine Ruggles (region 1), Peter Mitchell (region 2), Tim Hageman (region 4), and Louise Marquez (region 5). See map below to view what counties each region covers.

**EDD is excited to introduce New Mexico their new regional representatives:**



**Jennifer Myers (CBRD Team Leader)**

Jennifer Myers graduated magna cum laude from University of New Mexico with a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration. She began her career as a Business Development Manager at Albuquerque Economic Development and had a varied work experience: account specialist at RiskSense, Inc., operations support manager at ClosedWon, and assistant director for the government sales division at Speridian Technologies.

EDD hired Myers to serve as the statewide disaster recovery coordinator, and in May 2022, she was promoted to the newly created position of Community, Business, and Rural Development team leader, responsible for managing the regional reps across the state of NM.

**Keegan Mackenzie-Chavez (Region 1: Northwest New Mexico)**

Mackenzie-Chavez has a bachelor's degree in Business/Accounting from the University of San Francisco. She joined the Peace Corps after graduating as a cooperatives agent and worked with coffee farmers in Togo, West Africa. Upon returning home Mackenzie-Chavez became a Peace Corps Fellow and a teacher in the Gallup-McKinley County Schools.



Mackenzie-Chavez holds a master's degrees in both Secondary Education and Architecture from UNM. She served as a commissioner on the Planning and Zoning Board for the City of Gallup. She is passionate about economic development and looks forward to further serving her community.



**Paige Ryan (Region 2: North Central New Mexico)**

Paige Ryan is a global business development professional with a background in branding, design, media production and government relations. She served as director of new partnerships for Hornall Anderson, a Seattle-based creative agency, director of client relations for a large water feature design and engineering firm with an international practice, and as development director for Thinkwell Group, a creative agency specializing in creating attractions and environments for brands, theme parks, and

destinations worldwide.

Ryan also served as media producer at Stun Creative, an advertising agency and production company. Most recently, she worked in Government Affairs on legislative issues for Animal Protection Voters.

**Yuriria Morales (Region 3: Central New Mexico)**

Yuriria (Yuri) Morales was born and raised in Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico and has lived in Albuquerque since 2006. She earned a bachelor's degree with a focus on International Affairs from the Universidad Internacional (UNINTER) in Cuernavaca, Morelos,

Mexico. Later Morales studies as an international student and earned her master's degree in public administration from the University of New Mexico.



Morales has spent the past 10 years promoting economic development and tourism domestically and internationally for the Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce and as the executive director for Global Ties ABQ. She serves as a board member with the Albuquerque Balloon Museum Foundation, eVolv Strong Corporate Board, and is the founder and vice president for government affairs for the US-Mexico Latin America Chamber of Commerce. Morales was awarded a 2021 New Mexico's Top 40 Under Forty by the Albuquerque Business First.



**Julia T. Brown, Esq. (Region 5: Southwest New Mexico)**

Julia T. Brown is a graduate of Oklahoma State University and the University of Oklahoma, College of Law, where she was law class president. Brown currently serves as the National Board Chair of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the nation's leading voice promoting equity and education for women and girls. She also serves on the Regional Board of Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest and the NAACP Doña Ana County Branch.

Brown has served as Sunland Park City Manager, Doña Ana County Manager, vice president and CRA officer for Charles Schwab Bank, and director of the Oakland Office of Economic Development and Employment. Additionally, she served in several federal and state agencies including both the District of Columbia and Oklahoma Public Utility Commissions, as an Assistant Attorney General in Oklahoma, and in various public administrative and public policy positions in the District of Columbia, Oklahoma, California, and New Mexico.

Brown is proud to have served as an enlisted soldier and an Army Judge Advocate General's Corps (JAG) Officer, retiring from the armed services as a Lieutenant Colonel and Deputy Commander of the 75th Legal Support Organization.

**Jim Lucero (Region 6: Southeast New Mexico)**

Jim Lucero was born and raised in Portales and is currently in his second term on city council for the City of Portales. Throughout his tenure as councilman, Lucero has represented the City of Portales on the board of directors of the Eastern New Mexico Water Utility. Mr. Lucero also served on the board of directors for the Roosevelt County Chamber of Commerce and Eastern New Mexico University's Foundation and numerous other committees. Prior to his role as city councilor, Mr. Lucero worked at the local Coca-Cola Bottler, Southwest Cannery, Inc., for 24 years advancing up the hierarchy from entry level to plant manager. He was also the plant manager for Sunland, Inc and The Ready Roast Nut Co.



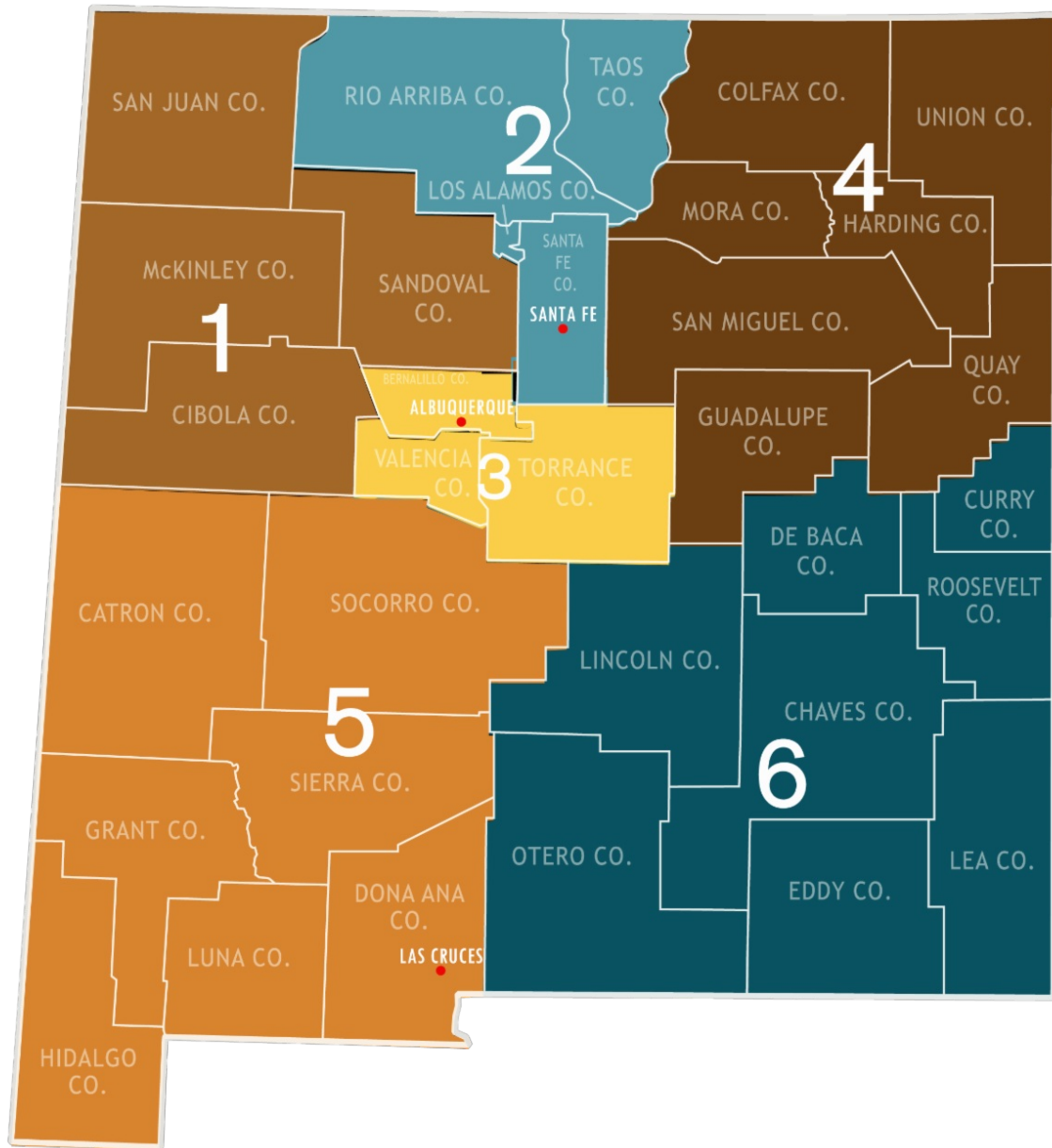
Lucero served as director for economic development for the Roosevelt County Community Development Corporation (RCCDC). During that time, Mr. Lucero assisted in getting an unprecedented 28 COVID relief grants for Portales businesses and three LEDA grants.



**Kevin Wilson (Region 6: Southeast New Mexico)**

Kevin Wilson has lived in Southeastern New Mexico for more than 25 years. Following his graduation from Eastern New Mexico University, where he majored in journalism, the Montana native joined the Portales News-Tribune as its sports editor. He remained with the parent company for nearly 22 years and served as managing editor at all three of the company's publications in Clovis, Portales, and Tucumcari. In 2022 Wilson pursued a new career in the City of Roswell's Public Affairs office and assisted family-owned small businesses. He has lived in three of Region 6's eight counties and always strives to help improve his community.





EDD CBRD Region Map

[Learn more about the CBRD on the EDD website at edd.newmexico.gov/community-development.](http://edd.newmexico.gov/community-development)

[Download a pdf of the CBRD map and regional representative contact information.](#)

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*EDD's mission is to improve the lives of New Mexico families by increasing economic opportunities and providing a place for businesses to thrive. EDD's programs contribute directly to this mission by training our workforce, providing infrastructure that supports business growth, and helping every community create a thriving economy.*

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