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EDD's initiatives invest in high-paying jobs and economic security
Budget priorities focus on bi-partisan initiatives: technology, outdoor rec, food security

SANTA FE, N.M. — Secretary-Designate Rob Black said on Monday that the New Mexico Economic Development Department (EDD) is asking lawmakers to support proven initiatives that diversify New Mexico's economy and offer high-paying jobs and a more skilled workforce.

Black is set to present the agency's fiscal year 2026 budget and strategic priorities to members of the Legislative Finance Committee in the afternoon on Monday, December 9.

For the 12-month period ending in October, New Mexico ranked 5th nationally in manufacturing job growth and since the Gov, Michelle Lujan Grisham took office, average weekly wages in New Mexico have increased 30%, the 12th highest growth rate in the nation.

EDD's budget priorities will further build on that success.

"EDD has seen bi-partisan support for our job-creation programs in outdoor recreation, film and media, science, technology, and manufacturing," Black explained. "Our budget in the coming year looks to fortify these efforts so we can continue to build a more secure future for New Mexico's families."

Among the proposed increases to the agency's base budget:

- \$1 million to the New Mexico Partnership to boost marketing and recruitment for companies looking to relocate to the state with a focus on the Borderzone, technology, advanced energy, and manufacturing.
- \$1 million to increase recurring funds for the Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP), encourages hiring for high-paying positions with added benefits for New Mexico Veterans, recent graduates from New Mexico higher education programs, and rural-based trainees.
- \$112,000 to fund an entrepreneur specialist in the Office of Strategy, Science & Technology, focused on growing job-rich innovation sectors in advanced energy, biosciences, aerospace, advanced computing, and water technology.
- \$95,000 to retain the Outdoor Recreation Division's marketing coordinator, currently grant-funded position.

EDD's one-time special appropriation requests include:

- \$38 million to fully fund the job-creation Local Economic Development Act (LEDA), the state's closing fund earmarked for economic-base businesses looking to expand in or relocate in New Mexico.
- \$10 million for the Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP), which has supported hiring and skill-building at 221 businesses since 2019.
- \$1.5 million for operations at the Media Arts Academy in Albuquerque and Las Cruces.

- \$3 million for the Outdoor Equity Fund, which has deployed \$6.5 million in grants since 2019, focused on getting more than 83,000 youth outside for educational experiences.
- \$3.2 million for Healthy Food Financing Grants, which awards dollars in the farm and food industries to businesses, nonprofits, and entrepreneurs looking to fortify the agricultural economy and build a more sustainable food and nutrition supply chain, especially in rural and underserved communities.

The Economic Development Department is also supporting legislation outside the budget that will develop a statewide site-readiness strategy, enable quicker deployment of infrastructure to potential identified economic development locations, and improve regulatory and permitting transparency.

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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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