New Mexico Comprehensive Energy Transition Strategy

Policy Memos - Workforce Readiness and Equitable Opportunity

About CETS

The Comprehensive Energy Transition Strategy (CETS) is an initiative of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) to develop New Mexico's first integrated roadmap for delivering reliable, affordable, safe, and sustainable energy. Launched in May 2025, the strategy will provide analysis and recommendations to guide near-, mid-, and long-term policy. These Draft Policy Memos form the CETS baseline analysis, combining research on existing policies and regulations with stakeholder engagement across the state legislature, agencies, industry, and advocacy organizations. Phase 2 (October 2025 - June 2026) will feature more extensive engagement and finalized recommendations.

Where New Mexico Stands Today

This context provides the foundation for the Phase I policy memos that follow.

Strong fiscal foundation
oil and gas revenues (currently about 40% of the general fund) and permanent funds that can support economic diversification.

Exceptional energy resources
including solar, wind, geothermal, and existing infrastructure with potential for regional transmission.

Community and workforce expertise
engaged Tribal and local communities, supportive policies, national laboratories, and skilled energy workforce.

Exposure to more extreme weather
increasing heat, droughts, and storms challenge grid resilience, energy reliability, and communities.

Phase 1: Policy Memos

New Mexico has made substantial progress in advancing its energy transition. Building on strong existing efforts, the policy memos in this phase identify strategic opportunities, implementation gaps, and enforcement challenges across nine critical areas:

1. **Innovation in Clean, Firm Power Generation**
Examines clean, firm power options—geothermal, nuclear, carbon capture, hydrogen, hydropower, and long-duration storage—to ensure reliability, affordability, and durable community support, advancing the energy transition.

2. **Grid Modernization**
Investigates how to align New Mexico's grid with its energy transition and economic growth goals and outlines targeted reforms to accelerate deployment and improve resilience.

3. **Electricity Transmission Capacity Expansion**
Examines the planning and permitting challenges that limit timely transmission deployment and outlines potential solutions to support transmission expansion to accelerate the clean energy transition.

4. **Decarbonization of the Building Sector**
Focuses on targeted reforms to strengthen the Sustainable Buildings Tax Credit, making it more equitable, transparent, and effective in driving building decarbonization statewide.

5. **Workforce Readiness and Equitable Opportunity**
Highlights opportunities to improve alignment between policy design and implementation, ensuring that New Mexico's clean energy investments deliver broad, equitable, and lasting economic benefits for its residents.

6. **Policy Implementation**
Examines how enhancing agency capacity, authority, tools, and resources can strengthen effective implementation of New Mexico's energy transition.

7. **Clear Subsurface Authorities and Definitions**
Explores how greater clarity for geologic hydrogen, geothermal, and methane can reduce uncertainty, attract investment, and advance New Mexico's energy transition.

8. **Energy Systems Data and Emissions Reporting**
Identifies data and governance gaps that limit New Mexico's ability to manage its energy transition effectively and outlines how to achieve close to real-time data visibility, evaluate policy impacts, and measure progress.

9. **Investing in the Future: Revenue Diversification**
Considers diversifying New Mexico's revenue base as the energy transition progresses into growing clean energy industries, reducing fiscal volatility, and stabilizing revenues.

Dr. Van Romero
van.romero@nmt.edu

Memo #5: Workforce readiness and equitable opportunity: Strategies for today's sustainable job growth while preparing for tomorrow's workforce

To: Secretary Melanie Kenderdine, New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department
From: The Comprehensive Energy Transition Strategy (CETS) team
Date: October 7, 2025
Subject: Workforce readiness and equitable opportunity: Strategies for today's sustainable job growth while preparing for tomorrow's workforce

Bottom Line Up Front

New Mexico's clean energy expansion is generating thousands of new jobs and offering a major opportunity to strengthen the state's workforce and economic base. The Energy Transition Act (ETA)'s apprenticeship provisions and the Governor's Executive Order 2024-152, which established a statewide climate-ready workforce framework, provide important foundations for coordinated workforce development. However, low local-hire rates, limited enforcement authority across agencies, and the absence of clear accountability mechanisms have constrained progress in connecting New Mexicans to clean energy careers. Rural and Tribal communities, particularly those affected by fossil fuel transitions such as San Juan County, continue to face barriers to re-employment despite strong state investment in training and transition support. This memo highlights opportunities to improve alignment between policy design and implementation through actions such as consolidating oversight under the Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS), establishing enforceable local-hire and apprenticeship standards for energy projects, creating binding agreements with prevailing wage and training requirements, and embedding workforce provisions in public incentive programs. Together, these steps would ensure that New Mexico's clean energy investments deliver broad, equitable, and lasting economic benefits for its residents.

Issue Statement

New Mexico is experiencing unprecedented private investment in clean energy infrastructure, creating significant job opportunities across construction, skilled trades, and technical fields. However, the extent to which these economic benefits reach local communities remains limited without stronger workforce coordination and clearer requirements for hiring local labor.

The scale of opportunity is substantial. Clean energy projects like High Lonesome Mesa generate $14 million annually in property taxes and $19 million in lease payments to local

communities,[1] while the Western Spirit transmission line will contribute $28 million in county taxes over 40 years.[2] The $11 billion SunZia transmission project represents the largest opportunity, creating approximately 1,800 construction jobs and 100 permanent jobs while potentially anchoring a 6-8 gigawatt renewable manufacturing hub in the state.[3] While the number of term-limited jobs created by such projects is substantial, the number of permanent jobs is often scaled down considerably. One stakeholder highlighted the difference, noting they are "working on two 4GW wind projects there. In terms of those two projects alone, they expect to create 90 full-time jobs once in operation. There's thousands of construction jobs, of course, too."

Clean energy development extends across multiple sectors. Under the Community Solar Act, private developers selected through a PRC-administered solicitation are developing 200 megawatts of projects statewide, with half serving low-income subscribers with 15-20% bill savings while creating 3,760 jobs in various sectors across New Mexico.[4] The Community Energy Efficiency Development (CEED) Block Grant retrofit program generates sustained employment in energy auditing and skilled trades,[5] and emerging geothermal development offers additional opportunities in drilling and engineering, highlighted by the State Investment Council's backing of XGS Energy's $1 billion project.

State leaders, labor organizations, utilities, and developers have made notable progress in workforce preparation through the ETA's workforce provisions, expanded training capacity in community colleges, apprenticeship programs, and strong local hiring on select transmission projects. In the near term, New Mexico's Home Energy Rebates (HEAR/HER) will drive a multi-year ramp in residential electrification and efficiency, with authorized-contractor requirements that can be tied to state credentials and local-hire reporting. The Energy Conservation and Management Division (ECAM)'s Training for Residential Energy Contractors (TREC) is building that capacity by funding training, testing, and certifications for residential contractors aligned to HEAR/HER demand.[6] Further, Executive Order 2024-152 establishes a climate-ready workforce framework—designating the Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS) to coordinate across agencies and setting a goal to train 2,000 workers by December 31, 2026.

However, significant gaps in workforce enforcement remain. Currently, gaps in workforce policy, enforcement authority, and inter-agency coordination allow developers to sidestep New Mexico's training pipelines and limit local hiring. A stakeholder noted that on major projects, "developers import all of their workers from Florida, Texas—anywhere in the Gulf South," despite state apprenticeship requirements, because "licensing requirements are not enforced."

Bridging these workforce gaps is especially critical for rural and Tribal communities, where clean energy investment could be most transformative. From 2010 to 2018, employment growth in rural areas (4.3%) continued to lag behind urban areas (5.7%), which exemplifies the need for targeted clean energy economic development strategies.[7] New Mexico residents experience nearly one outage per year, among the highest rates in the Mountain

West.[8] In fact, Navajo Nation has the highest concentration of unelectrified homes in the country.[9] This is the result of decades of exclusion from electrification programs and underinvestment, leaving communities without the infrastructure to benefit from energy produced on their land. Clean energy projects like solar installations and wind farms can provide both construction jobs and long-term economic opportunities in rural and Tribal communities that often have fewer employment alternatives than urban areas.

Additionally, on average, eight in ten households lack access to fiber internet,[10] which may limit participation in programs that increasingly require online enrollment. These infrastructure deficits, including unreliable electricity and limited broadband, create barriers to attracting new businesses and clean energy investments that could help close the rural-urban employment gap. Without reliable power and internet connectivity, rural areas struggle to participate in the modern economy or access clean energy incentive programs that require online applications.

Without stronger enforcement, New Mexico risks becoming a pass-through state—exporting renewable energy while importing the majority of the labor. The successes of projects like SunZia and Western Spirit demonstrate that better outcomes are possible, but these occurred under favorable conditions that are not standard practice. Expanding those positive outcomes across all energy sectors and throughout the community requires closing enforcement gaps with enforceable local hire targets, state-accredited apprenticeship utilization, and clear labor standards.

Supporting Analysis

This analysis draws on three primary sources: (1) review of relevant statutes, regulations, and policy frameworks; (2) semi-structured interviews with stakeholders across state agencies, industry, and advocacy groups; and (3) survey responses from over 60 stakeholders representing government, industry, community organizations, and research institutions. The triangulation of these methods reveals opportunities to strengthen New Mexico's workforce development capacity. These findings are described in further detail below.

New Mexico's workforce development infrastructure could be more impactful through enhanced enforcement and accountability measures.

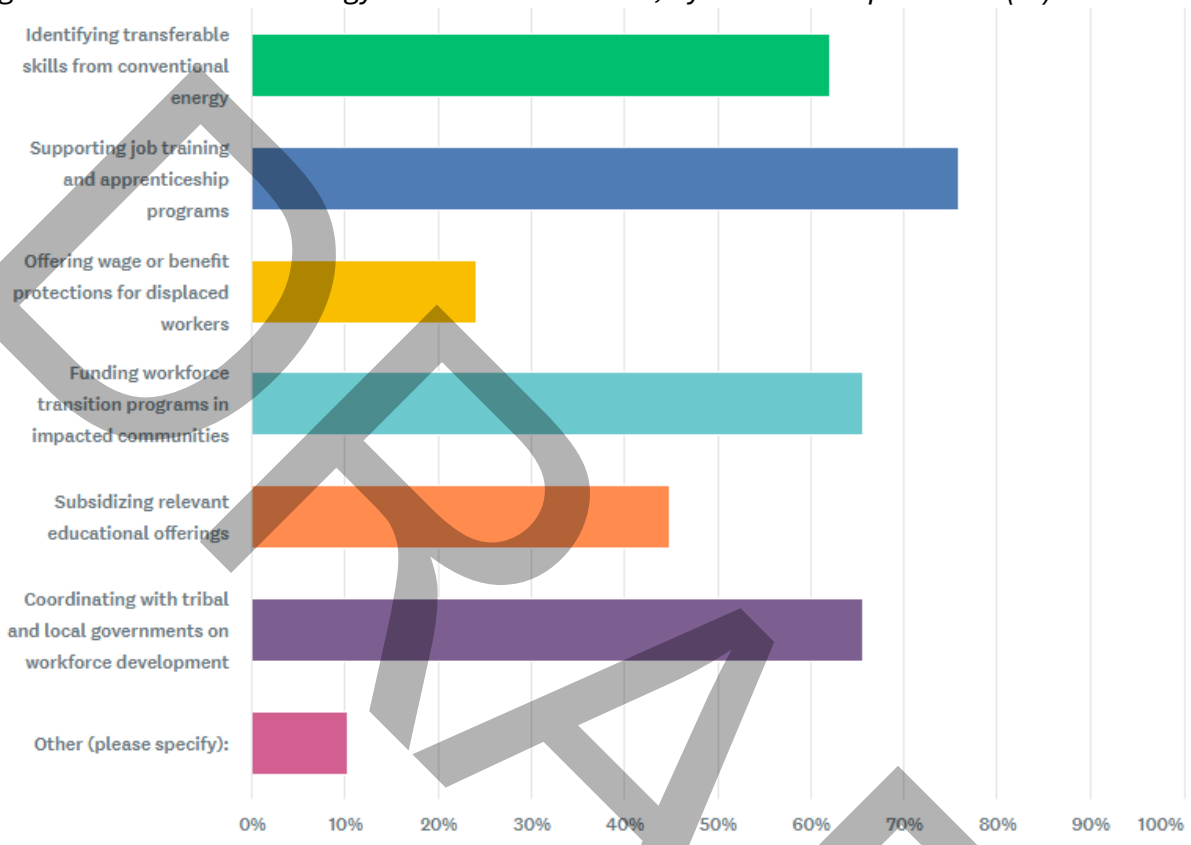
Local hiring has significant potential for growth but remains well below capacity. Document review and interview data consistently indicate low in-state hiring rates for major renewable energy projects, particularly in construction phases. Some projects employ as few as 10% local workers, despite the availability of state-accredited apprenticeship programs and a skilled workforce.[11] According to the survey, 33% of respondents reported working regularly with labor or workforce organizations, yet low local

hiring rates persist. This evidence suggests that even with extensive engagement between sectors, project-level hiring outcomes are not aligned with available workforce capacity.

The Energy Transition Act (ETA)'s apprenticeship provisions lack sufficient enforcement. Developers meet requirements by counting workers in federally approved programs with minimal connections to New Mexico. One participant observed that "out of 25 apprentices they list, only two are from New Mexico—the rest are from everywhere else." Despite this, the ETA represents a positive step forward, though its enforcement has been criticized for being inconsistent. As one stakeholder noted, "[we're] preparing to go to court on [the] provision of [the] ETA that requires utilization of apprentices… [t]he biggest insult is there are requirements in New Mexico that aren't enforced by the state." This policy fragmentation permits public investments to proceed without enforceable local hiring, training, or skills development provisions.

Survey results point to a clear mandate for state action: about 75% of respondents prioritized supporting job training and apprenticeship programs; roughly 66% emphasized coordinating with Tribal and local governments; a majority called for funding workforce transition programs in impacted communities; and more than half want the state to identify transferable skills from conventional energy. Yet no single agency currently has authority to deliver across this full remit or to enforce it, which enables developers to lean on lower-cost labor sourced through temporary staffing agencies or out-of-state recruitment. This fragmentation is particularly problematic given the scope of coordination required (see Figure 1). Multiple interviewees described developers as "masterful at sidestepping rules." They noted that enforcement of even well-written provisions often requires costly legal action. However, exceptions exist. Interviewees point to transmission projects such as SunZia and Western Spirit, which achieved higher local hire and union engagement under favorable contractual and regulatory conditions. These successes demonstrate that with the right conditions and enforcement, more widespread positive outcomes can be achieved across other energy sectors.

Figure 1. State roles in energy workforce transition, by share of respondents (%)



New Mexico's IRA Home Energy Rebates—Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates (HEAR) and Home Efficiency Rebates (HER)—are live and create a multi-year demand signal for residential retrofit labor. Launched in September 2024, HEAR and HER have programs running for four years and rolling out in phases.[12] HEAR caps support at up to $14,000 per address and, for many measures (e.g., heat pumps, wiring, panels), requires installation by an Authorized Program Contractor (with an authorized-contractor list slated for publication in fall 2025), giving the state leverage to tie rebates to credentials and local hiring. This dovetails with EMNRD's TREC initiative to train residential energy contractors on the exact skills HEAR/HER require, positioning TREC as the pipeline for authorized-installer capacity. The CEED block grant program complements this by funding upgrades in underserved communities through local and Tribal partnerships to deploy TREC-trained workers where access has lagged.

The Governor's Executive Order 2024-152: "Building New Mexico's Workforce to Foster the Clean Energy Transition, Infrastructure Investments, and Resilient Communities," creates "Partnership Agencies"[13] (DWS, DOT, NMED, EMNRD, PED/HED, RLD, EDD,

OBAE, Housing, OSE), requires each to appoint a DWS liaison, share program data into a common DWS repository, and tasks DWS with an annual infrastructure and climate-ready workforce report. It also sets a 2,000-worker training goal by December 2026 and prioritizes equity and wraparound supports. This provides a ready vehicle to track local-hire, apprenticeship utilization, and authorized-contractor credentials across HEAR/HER, CEED, and TREC.

Potential Solutions

The Legislature could strengthen apprenticeship mandates to correct the low in-state hiring and inconsistent ETA enforcement described above. Requiring projects to use state-accredited programs, backing that with penalties for non-compliance, and creating a project-level registry to track apprenticeship participation and local-hire commitments would align outcomes with New Mexico's existing talent base.

The Legislature could embed these same terms into SBTC-eligible construction and retrofits. It could require participating contractors to meet clear local-hire and apprenticeship-utilization thresholds and paid on-the-job training for underrepresented workers, channeling the near-term demand from HEAR/HER and community upgrades through CEED into in-state jobs, rather than out-of-state crews.

The Governor could issue an executive order to consolidate energy workforce oversight under a single lead agency—DWS—with clear accountability. This could help fix the governance fragmentation that the interviews and survey highlight**.** Building on the Governor's executive order, DWS should own a shared data system and publish performance metrics (e.g., placements, local-hire percentages, apprenticeship utilization, credential attainment) tied to the ETA's workforce provisions, while administering dedicated funding streams for skills-based retraining that leverage TREC. A single point of authority with transparent metrics gives agencies, developers, and communities one playbook, and ensures public incentives reliably produce measurable local hiring and durable placements.

Worker transitions could be streamlined through improved timing and expanded eligibility frameworks.

Worker displacement is accelerating while transition programs underperform. The San Juan Generating Station closure eliminated approximately 1,500 total jobs (when including suppliers), with about 200 direct plant employees affected.[14] About half of these displaced workers were Native Americans from the Navajo Nation, where unemployment already stands at 48.5%. The broader San Juan County, where the plant was located, has a poverty rate of 26.7%.[15] Years after the closure, only 126 displaced workers are employed full time—less than 8.5% of those affected—though many reported decreased wages averaging $27,000 less than before.[16]

This pattern of displacing vulnerable workers extends beyond coal plant closures. More than 40% of New Mexico's oil and gas workforce is Latino, with most workers lacking union representation, pensions, or unemployment benefits.[17] Undocumented workers cannot access social security benefits, and during industry downturns, they lack unemployment support. As the state transitions away from fossil fuels, these workers face similar barriers to accessing adequate support. Without comprehensive transition programs, energy sector changes risk deepening existing inequalities rather than creating pathways to economic opportunity in the clean energy sector.

Survey data confirms stakeholder priorities for stronger transition support. Seventy-six percent of survey respondents prioritized job training and apprenticeship programs; 66% supported funding for workforce transition programs in impacted communities; and 45% advocated for wage or benefit protections for displaced workers. These priorities align with the ETA's design, which allocated over $40 million for economic development, severance and retraining, including $2.8 million specifically for training programs and $12 million for a displaced worker fund.

However, implementation failures have undermined the law's potential effectiveness. When the ETA passed in 2019, legislators expected funding for displaced workers to be available as layoffs occurred. However, layoffs began in 2020, but the state did not receive funds from PNM until July 2022. The 12-month eligibility window meant workers laid off in 2020 or 2021 were excluded from assistance, leaving hundreds of displaced workers without help. The delay was partly due to court battles and PNM's decision to wait until late 2022 to file its rate case, thus delaying when the company would issue the bonds needed to fund the program.[18] These timing failures demonstrate how weak implementation can render well-intentioned policies ineffective. The Legislature recognized this problem and in 2023 passed legislation to eliminate the 12-month eligibility requirement, allowing workers laid off in 2020 and 2021 to access assistance.[19]

Potential Solutions

The Governor's office could, through EO 2024-152, grant DWS explicit enforcement authority to translate transition policy into actual re-employment for displaced workers. The San Juan experience—long lags in aid, fragmented oversight, and fewer than 10% back in full-time work—shows that voluntary commitments and diffuse accountability don't protect workers. Empowering DWS to monitor local hiring on permitted or incentivized energy projects and to impose penalties for non-compliance would create a clear line of accountability and a timely remedy when hiring pledges are not met. With DWS as the hub for tracking placements and local hires, the state can prioritize affected workers (including Navajo Nation and other impacted communities) and help prevent the wage erosion seen among those who find new jobs.

The Legislature could require large energy projects receiving state permits or incentives to enter Community Workforce Agreements (CWAs) that set minimum local-hire percentages, state-accredited apprenticeship utilization, and prevailing wages. These agreements should establish minimum local hiring percentages, apprenticeship utilization requirements, and prevailing wage standards. This could help create a predictable set of opportunities for the workforce. CWAs directly address some of this section's core problems: imported labor displacing local candidates and lower post-layoff wages. Paired with DWS enforcement, CWAs convert stakeholder priorities (apprenticeships, wage/benefit protections) into enforceable terms, ensuring that new investments consistently create in-state, career-path jobs for workers most affected by the transition. CWAs also benefit companies by increasing visibility into the local workforce's availability, enabling them to better plan for their workforce needs.

Skills gaps in rural areas could be addressed through location-specific training.

Clean energy job growth is concentrated in urban areas, while rural energy communities continue to face decline. While New Mexico's clean energy sector added 12,686 jobs in 2022—ranking fifth nationally for clean energy job growth—these opportunities are not reaching the communities most affected by traditional energy job losses.[20] Albuquerque alone captures 7,295 clean energy jobs, while only 23% are located in rural areas where coal plant and oil field closures have eliminated thousands of positions. This geographic mismatch means that rural workers displaced from fossil fuel industries cannot easily access replacement employment without relocating.

One immediate barrier is digital access, which enables both training and remote work. Eight in ten New Mexicans currently cannot purchase a fiber internet plan, and New Mexico ranks 37th among states in internet coverage, speed and availability.[21] This digital divide prevents rural and Tribal communities from enrolling in and completing modern training programs and from competing for remote or hybrid roles in development, energy services, and back-office functions that could be performed at home. Despite receiving nearly $942.1 million in state and federal broadband funding since 2021, New Mexico still faces a $2.1 billion funding gap for broadband deployment.[22] Combined with slow federal timelines, this leaves many areas without the connectivity needed to participate in the clean-energy labor market.

Against that backdrop, ECAM's TREC program is a step toward closing the residential retrofit skills gaps, but it is too early to judge results. TREC is structured to subsidize training, exams, and credentials for contractors and to align those credentials with the Home Energy Rebates (HEAR/HER) authorized contractor requirements. The state has funded the launch and issued a request for proposals to deliver courses through community colleges, labor, and industry partners, with an authorized-contractor list expected later (targeted for late fall 2025). Stakeholders report strong interest and full

classes, but the state has not yet published outcome metrics (such as enrollments, completions, pass rates, placements), making it too soon to confirm it is working.

New Mexico has built substantial workforce capacity, and recent initiatives like TREC can strengthen it further. Institutions such as Mesalands Community College rank among the nation's top wind-technician programs and are attracting major employers offering graduates guaranteed employment and $3,000 sign-on bonuses.[23] Nationally, apprentices who complete programs like these earn average starting salaries of over $70,000, with 92% employment retention rates. The opportunity now is to ensure these assets meet workers where they are, so training, credentials, and hiring pathways line up with real projects in communities across the state.

However, accessibility barriers prevent many workers from utilizing these programs. Long work hours, limited English language skills, lack of digital access, and rural locations create obstacles to accessing workforce development opportunities. As one advocate noted, "We just don't have the kinds of programs that we need in these communities." The programs exist, but they're not designed to meet workers where they are—geographically, linguistically, or economically. A recent analysis found 49% of respondents cite scheduling conflicts with current employment as the primary barrier, while 26% identify childcare access and 32% note transportation limitations. Additionally, 42% express interest in clean energy training, but only 15% know that New Mexico's higher education system provides relevant programs.[24]

Even when workers complete training, many cannot secure local positions due to out-of-state hiring. As one stakeholder noted, "We have an abundance of people who've been through those programs but not enough apprentice spots because they're being displaced." This creates a cycle where the state invests in training infrastructure that produces qualified candidates, but accessibility barriers and weak local hiring enforcement prevent workers from accessing either the programs or the jobs they prepare for.

A recent study mapped the skills of oil and gas professionals against low-carbon technologies and found that core technical competencies like geoscience, reservoir engineering, and drilling are highly transferable to areas such as carbon capture and storage, underground energy storage, and geothermal, while non-technical skills such as project management and business development remain broadly relevant across the clean energy sector.[25] Much of the workforce that has powered New Mexico's oil and gas industry is already equipped with these skills. For geothermal in particular, analysts estimate that over 60% of petroleum industry occupations map directly onto geothermal positions, meaning that New Mexico can leverage existing expertise into a growing clean energy sector with relatively little retraining.[26] However, the vast difference in the size of the oil and gas industry compared with the geothermal industry means demand for such skillsets will take time to ramp up.

Stakeholder survey results strongly support a focus on helping workers navigate the transition: 68% said the state should prioritize "identifying transferable skills from conventional energy," and 76% emphasized expanding job training and apprenticeship programs. The state is beginning to put structures in place to support this expansion. Governor Lujan Grisham's EO 2024-152 set a goal of training 2,000 workers for climate-ready professions by the end of 2026, creating a clear pathway for workers to shift into clean energy careers. Educational institutions are also stepping up: as of July 2025, the Higher Learning Commission approved a new Graduate Certificate in Geothermal Energy at New Mexico Tech. The 15-credit program will draw on faculty from engineering, hydrology, and the Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources to provide specialized training in geothermal technologies.

Policy misalignment remains a key obstacle in fully leveraging workforce potential. The absence of workforce requirements (e.g., prevailing wage standards, apprenticeship mandates, local hiring goals) in major state policies and funding mechanisms, such as the Sustainable Building Tax Credit, Public Utilities Act planning, and the State Energy Security Plan, limits the integration of workforce development into broader clean energy strategies. Additionally, regulations for emerging sectors like geothermal lack clear workforce pathway requirements such as training programs, apprenticeships, and local hiring commitments that would connect new projects to local workers. Without these, the state misses opportunities to embed workforce benefits from the outset.

This fragmentation allows significant public investments in clean energy to proceed without coordinated workforce benefits. While individual programs, such as the Energy Transition Act, show promise, the lack of systematic integration across all energy policies prevents New Mexico from maximizing returns on its workforce development investments.

Potential Solutions

DWS and EDD could commission a state-sponsored mapping of fossil-energy roles to transferable clean-energy skill sets across renewable energy, energy efficiency, hydrogen, and carbon capture sectors in partnership with labor organizations, higher education, and industry. A statewide skills map could identify county- and Tribe-specific retraining priorities (e.g., heat-pump installs, electrical panel upgrades, geothermal drilling tech), and then inform course menus, delivery models (evening/weekend, hybrid, bilingual), and recruitment. It could also align with HEAR/HER authorized-contractor needs and help steer TREC capacity to rural and energy-impacted communities where replacement employment is scarcest.

EDD and EMNRD could integrate clear local-hire, state-accredited apprenticeship utilization, and basic reporting standards into Community Benefit Fund awards, CEED retrofits, and HEAR/HER projects. This could guarantee that rebate and grant spending consistently creates in-state jobs instead of defaulting to imported labor, hard-wiring workforce requirements into public dollars. New Mexico Finance Authority, working with

the New Mexico Climate Investment Center, the state green bank, can attach similar workforce conditions to financed projects, reinforcing these standards across the investment stack. Together, these steps make every public incentive a vehicle for local hiring, accredited training, and measurable placements.

Summary of Potential Solutions

Key
Solution may be pursued through:
Legislative Action
Administrative/Regulatory Action

Table 1. Feasible and Impactful Solutions

Gap	Feasible and Impactful Solutions
 New Mexico's workforce development infrastructure could be more impactful through enhanced enforcement and accountability measures.	**The Legislature could strengthen apprenticeship mandates to correct the low in-state hiring and inconsistent ETA enforcement described above.** Requiring projects to use state-accredited programs, backing that with penalties for non-compliance, and creating a project-level registry to track apprenticeship participation and local-hire commitments would align outcomes with New Mexico's existing talent base.
	The Legislature could embed these same terms into SBTC-eligible construction and retrofits. It could require participating contractors to meet clear local-hire and apprenticeship-utilization thresholds and paid on-the-job training for underrepresented workers, channeling the near-term demand from HEAR/HER and community upgrades through CEED into in-state jobs, rather than out-of-state crews.
	The Governor could issue an executive order to consolidate energy workforce oversight under a single lead agency—DWS—with clear accountability. This could help fix the governance fragmentation that the interviews and survey highlight**.** Building on the Governor's executive order, DWS should own a shared data system and publish performance metrics (e.g., placements, local-hire percentages, apprenticeship utilization, credential attainment) tied to the ETA's workforce provisions, while administering dedicated funding streams for skills-based retraining that leverage TREC. A single point of authority with transparent metrics gives agencies, developers, and communities one playbook, and ensures public incentives reliably produce measurable local hiring and durable placements.
 Worker transitions could be streamlined through improved timing and expanded eligibility frameworks.	**The Governor's office could, through EO 2024-152, grant DWS explicit enforcement authority to translate transition policy into actual re-employment for displaced workers.** The San Juan experience—long lags in aid, fragmented oversight, and fewer than 10% back in full-time work—shows that voluntary commitments and diffuse accountability don't protect workers. Empowering DWS to monitor local hiring on permitted or incentivized energy projects and to impose penalties for non-compliance would create a clear line of accountability and a timely remedy when hiring pledges are not met. With DWS as the hub for tracking placements and local hires, the state can prioritize affected workers (including Navajo Nation and other impacted communities) and help prevent the wage erosion seen among those who find new jobs.
	The Legislature could require large energy projects receiving state permits or incentives to enter Community Workforce Agreements (CWAs) that set minimum local-hire percentages, state-accredited apprenticeship utilization, and prevailing wages. These agreements should establish minimum local hiring percentages, apprenticeship utilization requirements, and prevailing wage standards. This could help create a predictable set of opportunities for the workforce. CWAs

	directly address some of this section's core problems: imported labor displacing local candidates and lower post-layoff wages. Paired with DWS enforcement, CWAs convert stakeholder priorities (apprenticeships, wage/benefit protections) into enforceable terms, ensuring that new investments consistently create in-state, career-path jobs for workers most affected by the transition. CWAs also benefit companies by increasing visibility into the local workforce's availability, enabling them to better plan for their workforce needs.
 Skills gaps in rural areas could be addressed through location-specific training.	**DWS and EDD could commission a state-sponsored mapping of fossil-energy roles to transferable clean-energy skill sets across renewable energy, energy efficiency, hydrogen, and carbon capture sectors in partnership with labor organizations, higher education, and industry.** A statewide skills map could identify county- and Tribe-specific retraining priorities (e.g., heat-pump installs, electrical panel upgrades, geothermal drilling tech), and then inform course menus, delivery models (evening/weekend, hybrid, bilingual), and recruitment. It could also align with HEAR/HER authorized-contractor needs and help steer TREC capacity to rural and energy-impacted communities where replacement employment is scarcest.
	EDD and EMNRD could integrate clear local-hire, state-accredited apprenticeship utilization, and basic reporting standards into Community Benefit Fund awards, CEED retrofits, and HEAR/HER projects. This could guarantee that rebate and grant spending consistently creates in-state jobs instead of defaulting to imported labor, hard-wiring workforce requirements into public dollars. New Mexico Finance Authority, working with the New Mexico Climate Investment Center, the state green bank, can attach similar workforce conditions to financed projects, reinforcing these standards across the investment stack. Together, these steps make every public incentive a vehicle for local hiring, accredited training, and measurable placements.

Stakeholder Overview

The following table and list highlight examples of legislative champions (lawmakers who have sponsored or supported policies relevant to clean energy workforce development) and other stakeholders whose roles, expertise, or influence intersect with workforce issues in New Mexico.

Table 2. Potential Legislative Champions

Role	Name	District	Justification
Rep	Christine Chandler	43	Labor advocate with support from building trades and workforce development initiatives
Senator	Antoinette Sedillo Lopez	16	Proponent of "Green Amendments" for environmental justice and support for community benefit requirements
Rep	Angelica Rubio	35	Co-sponsored the Workforce & Economic Prosperity Act (HB 297)
Senator	Mimi Stewart	17	Senate sponsor of SB 48 (Community Benefit Fund) supporting workforce training

Preliminary List of Key Stakeholders

- **State Agencies**: Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS); Economic Development Department (EDD); Higher Education Department (HED); Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD)
- **Quasi-Governmental Entities**: Renewable Energy Transmission Authority (RETA)
- **Labor and Workforce Organizations**: New Mexico Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO; State Building & Construction Trades Council
- **Tribal Governments and Organizations**: Tribal governments; All Pueblo Council of Governors
- **Educational Institutions**: Community colleges; University of New Mexico (UNM); New Mexico State University (NMSU); K-12 districts in impacted areas (Four Corners region)
- **Industry and Developers**: Pattern Energy; NextEra; renewable energy developers
- **Investor-Owned Utilities and Cooperatives**: IOUs; electric cooperatives
- **Community-Based Organizations**: Conservation Voters NM Education Fund; Four Corners Economic Development

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