



Build Them Up

Education and Workforce Policy for New Mexico's Boys and Young Men

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“What we’re learning is that when we don’t think about boys and just assume they’re going to be OK because they’ve been running the world and they’ve got all the advantages relative to the girls – and all of which has historically been true in all kinds of ways. But precisely because of that, if you’re not thinking about what’s happening to boys and how are they being raised, then that can actually hurt women...

We rightly have tried to invest in girls to make sure that there’s a level playing field and then they’re not barred from opportunities. But we haven’t been as willing, I think, to be intentional about investing in the boys. And that’s been a mistake... if we do better by our boys and we’re producing stronger, more confident men, that’s gonna be good for our girls and our women as well.”

Barack Obama



**Problems With Education & Workforce Issues
Across New Mexico ARE Gendered.**

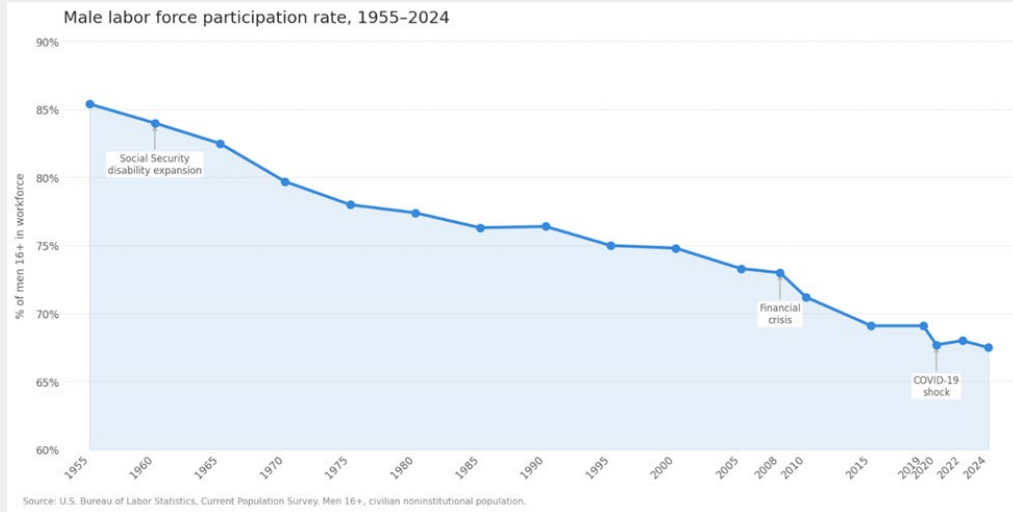
We Need to Recognise This.

The Numbers

- 40% of men are depressed.
- 44% had thoughts about suicide in the last 2 weeks.
- Men are 3.5-4X more likely to kill ourselves than women.
- We use and **get addicted** to drugs more- 70% of opioid OD's by men.
- 15%-28% of young men admit to having no close friend.
- 93% of **prisoners** and 70% of those living **on the street** are men.
- We are **addicted to porn**, and **more obese**.
- 97% of mass shooters are young men.

The Biggest Killer of American Men Under 45 is... Ourselves.

Economy



- In 1960, almost every guy who could get a job, did. Since then, increase in the number of men who can work, but don't.
- 64% of young men 16-24 were in the job market in 2014. Now? That number is only 56%.
- Now close to 40M men completely out of labor force.
- 2x the amount of men aged 25-34 live with their parents than women.

Economy Cont.

- Men choose occupations fixing stuff. AI/Robots making those jobs less available.
- Men: 80% of Comp Sci majors. Since 2022, 25% of entry level coding jobs switched to AI. Also, financial planning & legal support... both trending male.
- Men: 71% of Manufacturing jobs. MIT & BU project that AI & robotics will replace 2 M manufacturing workers globally by 2026. By 2030, half of assembly line, packaging, & quality control positions may be automated, with assembly line employment projected to decline from 2.1 million in 2024 to just 1.0 million.

Education

- Female students are outperforming males at every level of education. NCES longitudinal data show that 46.4% of high school girls took either an AP or IB course, compared to only 37.8% of high school boys . Roughly 70% of high school valedictorians were female last year.
- Boys are 2x as likely to be suspended out of school, and 4x more likely to be expelled. If you dropout of high school, you are 8x more likely to end up in the correctional system.
- Men who never finished high school spend way more time (23% of weeks) not working or looking for a job than those with a high school diploma (15% of weeks) or with an Associate's Degree (11% of weeks).

Education Cont.

- College enrollment today is 57% female, with a 61% share of graduates.
- Men receive just 39% of BA degrees... the lowest male share on record & roughly equivalent to what women received in 1970.

NM Data from American Institute of Boys & Men

Educational Achievement and Pipeline Deficits

- Only 19% of New Mexico fourth-grade boys read at or above proficiency, which is the *lowest rate in the nation* and trails the 22% proficiency rate for girls.
- Men represent only *39% of the state's total undergraduate enrollment*, compared to 61% for women.

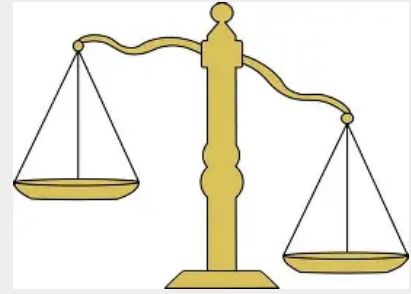
Workforce Disconnection and Economic Instability

- Currently, 18% of young men aged 16–24 in New Mexico are neither working nor in school, marking the *third-highest rate of disconnected youth in the nation*.
- Men account for 65% of the state's unsheltered population and 60% of all people experiencing homelessness.

Severe Behavioral Health Vulnerabilities

- The state's male suicide rate is 40 per 100,000, ranking as the *fourth highest in the United States*.
- Suicide rates are particularly acute among Native American males in the state, reaching 42 deaths per 100,000.
- New Mexico experiences a male overdose death rate of 49 per 100,000, which is the *fifth highest nationally*.

Supporting Boys/Men: Not A Zero Sum Game



“Helping boys and men is the right thing to do in itself. But it is also the right thing to do for women and girls. In the long run, a world of floundering men is not likely to be a world of flourishing women. Broadening the gender equality movement to include men will not hinder the progress of women. Failing to, just might.”

Melinda Gates

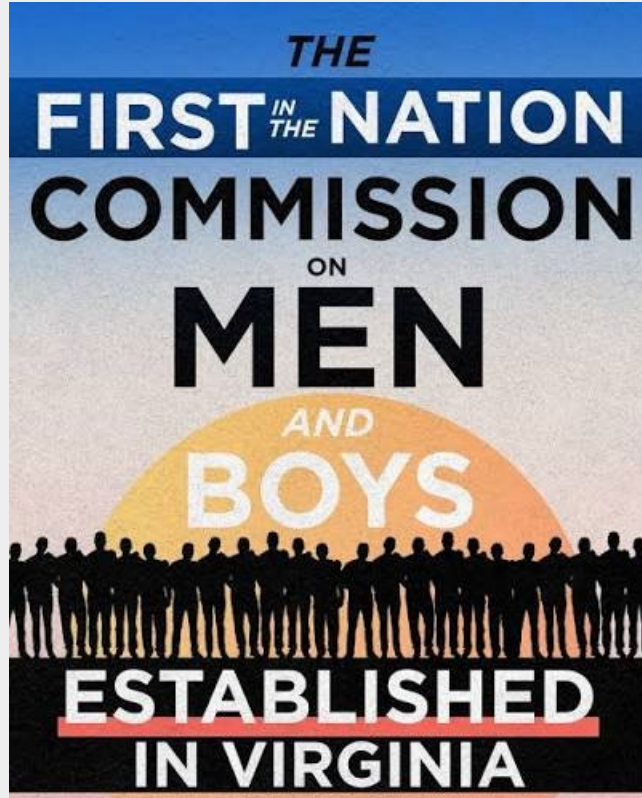
A zero-sum game is a situation where one group or individual's gain is exactly balanced by another's loss, resulting in a total sum of gains and losses equal to zero. Helping boys and men is NOT one of these scenarios with women.

We can walk and chew gum at the same time.

Solutions

1. Pass law establishing NM Commission on Men and Boys. VA can be model.
1. Specific teacher residency program for men.
1. Triple allocation for Dept of Workforce Solutions for pre-apprenticeship programs from \$1.8k to \$5M.

Virginia: Commission on Boys and Men



NM can do the same: Please see draft legislation. Five issues:

- Economy
- Education
- Social Media
- Physical Health
- Mental Health

Male Teacher Numbers. Low and Falling

The overall share of male teachers in US public schools declined from 30% in 1987 to 23% in 2022.

Current Numbers:

- Elementary schools: 89% female, 11% male.
- Middle school specifically: about 72% female, 28% male.
- High school specifically: roughly 60% female, 40% male

Female teachers are more likely to teach in generalist subjects like math and natural science; male teachers are focussed on social sciences, physical education, and technical/vocational subjects.

Consequences

“Assignment to a same-gender teacher significantly improves the achievement of both girls and boys as well as teacher perceptions of student performance and student engagement with the teacher's subject.”

Dee, Thomas S. (2007). "Teachers and the Gender Gaps in Student Achievement." *Journal of Human Resources*, 42(3), 528–554.

“Male teachers can sometimes earn their male students’ trust in a different way, or at a higher rate. And therefore they can naturally form stronger relationships. Part of being a good, effective teacher is forming strong, trusting relationships with your students.”

Gershenson, Seth, Stephen B. Holt, and Nicholas W. Papageorge. (2016). "Who Believes in Me? The Effect of Student–Teacher Demographic Match on Teacher Expectations." *Economics of Education Review*, 52, 209–224.

Teacher Residencies as a Solution

Dallas ISD. [Male Residency Program](#).

The Male Residency Program is a paid residency designed to provide candidates with a best-practice residency experience. As a non-traditional pathway into teaching, participants are placed with highly effective mentor teachers and supported through co-teaching, coaching, and cohort-based learning. This structure allows them to build skills, confidence, and their own teaching style before taking on a classroom independently.

Proposal: NM can do something similar. Please see handout.

Apprenticeships

The US has approximately 650,000 active apprentices. NM contributing with 2,607.

- [American Staffing Association](#): 33% of U.S. adults would now advise a graduating high schooler to attend vocational/trade school, versus 28% who'd recommend a four-year college. 1st time trades out-recommended college.
- [American Student Alliance](#): Interest in vocational schools, apprenticeships & technical boot camp programs more than tripled, from 12% in 2018 to 38% in 2024.
- [Harris Poll, 2026](#): Six in 10 Gen Zers plan to pursue jobs in construction, electrical, HVAC, plumbing, building maintenance and manufacturing, among other trades.

Construction trades are over 90% male.

Problem: Retention Rates

[US DOL 2021](#): Non-completion (dropout/cancellation) is roughly 65–76%, cumulative over the full length of the apprenticeship (typically 2–5 years).

Research identifies financial hardship, social isolation, and lack of mentorship as the leading reasons apprentices, disproportionately young men, drop out.

The higher education pathway young men are pursuing more has an unacceptable number of dropouts.

How Pre-Apprenticeships Help

[2011 Australian Pre-Apprenticeship Survey](#): Students who complete quality pre-apprenticeship 23% more likely to finish construction apprenticeship program.

[Kelly, Wilkinson, Eyo-Idahor & Williams \(2022\)](#), *Journal of Applied Social Science*: “We further find that non-financial services, ready supplies, and childcare services have a positive impact on completion, with receipt of non-financial support having the largest impact on completion.”

More Pre-Apprenticeship Opportunities Increase Apprentice Completions

Solution

Triple allocation for Dept of Workforce Solutions for pre-apprenticeship programs from \$1.8k to \$5M.