



New Mexico
EPSCoR

Advancing Collaborative Research Excellence in New Mexico

NM EPSCoR: Research as the Engine of Innovation in New Mexico

Science, Technology and Telecommunications Committee

September 22, 2025

Mesalands Community College, Tucumcari

A True Research Ecosystem Includes All Institutions

When we think of research in New Mexico, we rightly think of our **world-renowned national laboratories**, our **major universities**, and our **innovation hubs in big cities**.

But a **truly strong ecosystem** must also include our **25 two- and four-year institutions spread across the state**, where teaching is central, and students deserve the same access to research opportunities.

Responding to Technological Opportunities as One!

To build a **transformational high-tech economy**, in fields such as Quantum Science, Biotechnology, Cybersecurity, Additive Manufacturing, and Aerospace, all New Mexicans must have **equitable access to research infrastructure and pathways**.

The state must function as **one connected research ecosystem**.

Is there a way to involve more NM institutions in research?

Small Investments, Big Response

In 2025, NM EPSCoR launched a series of micro-grants to expand access for two- and four-year colleges.

	Number of Applications	Awards made	Percentage awarded	Average award size	Average award duration
CONNECT - Workshop Awards	8	7	88%	\$7,500	1 year
SURE Awards	14	3	21%	\$15,000	1 year
SPARK - Seed Awards	54	2	<4%	\$50,000	1-2 years

The response was overwhelming: **76 proposals received, 12 funded across the state and interest continues to grow!**

Today, I'd Like to Talk About...

- **NM EPSCoR's vision for New Mexico's Research Ecosystem**
Where we are today and where we need to go
- **Expanding Access**
Why two- and four-year institutions matter
- **E-CORE and Micro-Grants**
How targeted investments are transforming opportunity statewide
- **Looking beyond federal support**
Why legislative support is critical to building a connected, high-tech future for all New Mexicans

NM EPSCoR's Vision for New Mexico's Research Ecosystem

- **Inclusive** – Every institution, from national labs to rural community colleges, has a role to play
- **Connected** – Build a statewide network that shares research infrastructure, expertise, and opportunities
- **Equitable** – Ensure students and faculty at two- and four-year colleges have the same access as those at large universities
- **Transformational** – Leverage small seed investments into large federal awards, new industries, and high-tech jobs for New Mexicans

 We have 25 years of experience supporting NM's research ecosystem.

NM EPSCoR State Office

Ganesh Balakrishnan

Director & Principal Investigator

Selena Connealy

Associate Director

Andra Kiscaden

Senior Business Manager

Dustin Allen

Systems & Network Analyst

Brittney Van Der Werff

Communication & Outreach Specialist



NM EPSCoR State Committee

CO-CHAIRS

Jack Jekowski

Consultant, Innovative Technology Partnerships, LLC

Stephanie Rodriguez

Cabinet Secretary, New Mexico Higher Education Department

UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVES

Patricia Sullivan

Interim Vice President for Research, NMSU

Ellen Fisher

Vice President for Research, UNM

Lique Coolen

Vice President for Research, NMT

W. Jack Crocker

Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs, WNMU

John Montgomery

Assistant Dean, Liberal Arts and Sciences, ENMU

UNIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVES

Ian Williamson

Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Grants, and Contracts, NMHU

Vacant

NNMC

Philip Lister

Dean, School of Math, Science & Engineering, CNM

PRIVATE INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES

Jon Hawkins

Manager of Advanced Technology and Strategy, PNM Resources

Bill Kipnis

Senior Project Developer, Empower Renewables USA

LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY (LANL) REPRESENTATIVE

Kathy Keith

Director of Community Programs Office, LANL

SANDIA NATIONAL LABORATORIES (SNL) REPRESENTATIVE

Adele Doser

Manager, SNL

NEW MEXICO CONSORTIUM REPRESENTATIVE

John Engen

Director, NMC

STATE GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

Nora Sackett

Director, Office of Strategy, Science and Technology, Economic Development Department

STATE GOVERNMENT LEGISLATORS

Representative Debra Sariñana

District 21, Bernalillo County

Senator William Soules

District 37, Doña Ana County

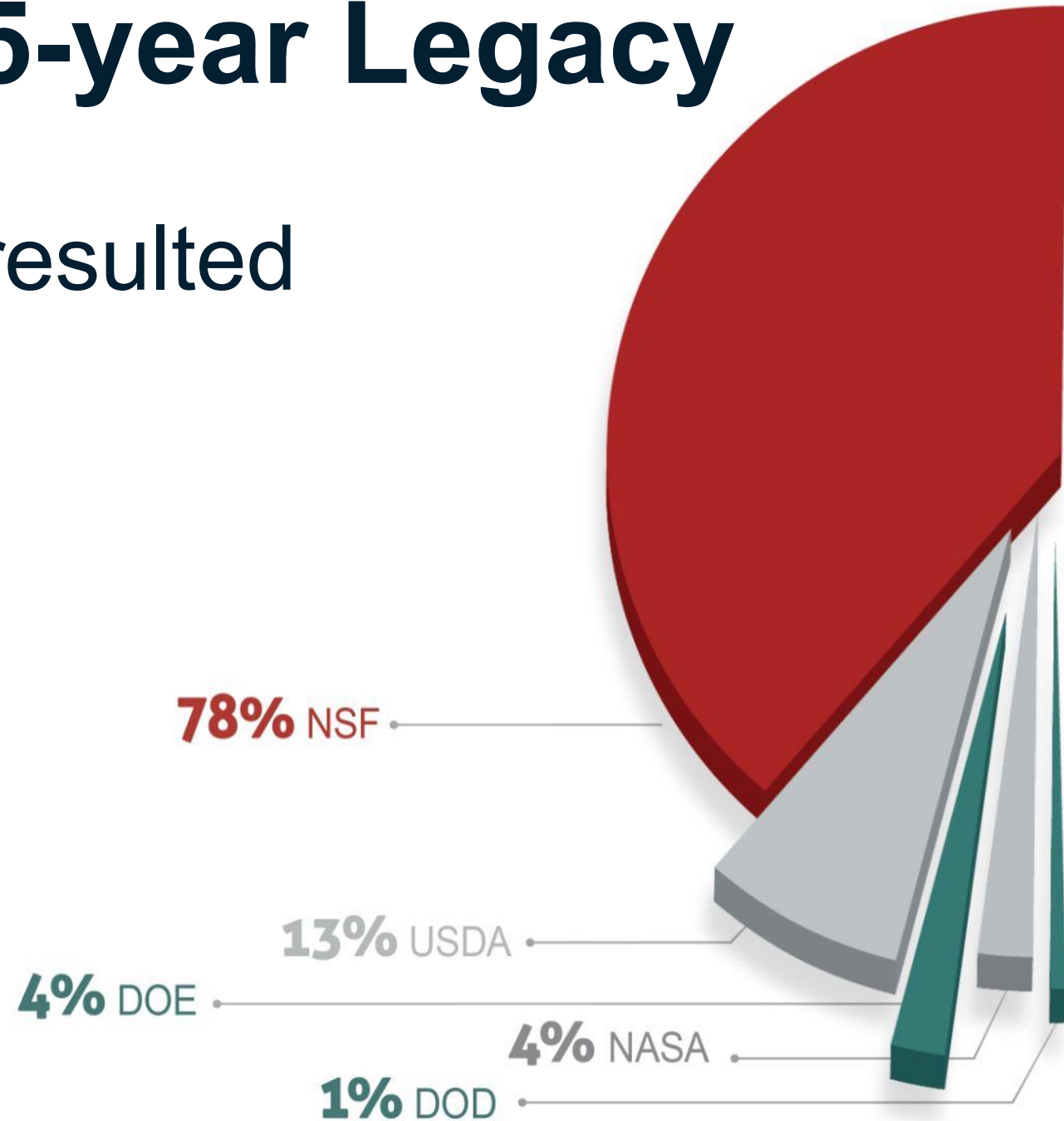
STATE EPSCoR OFFICE (NON-VOTING)

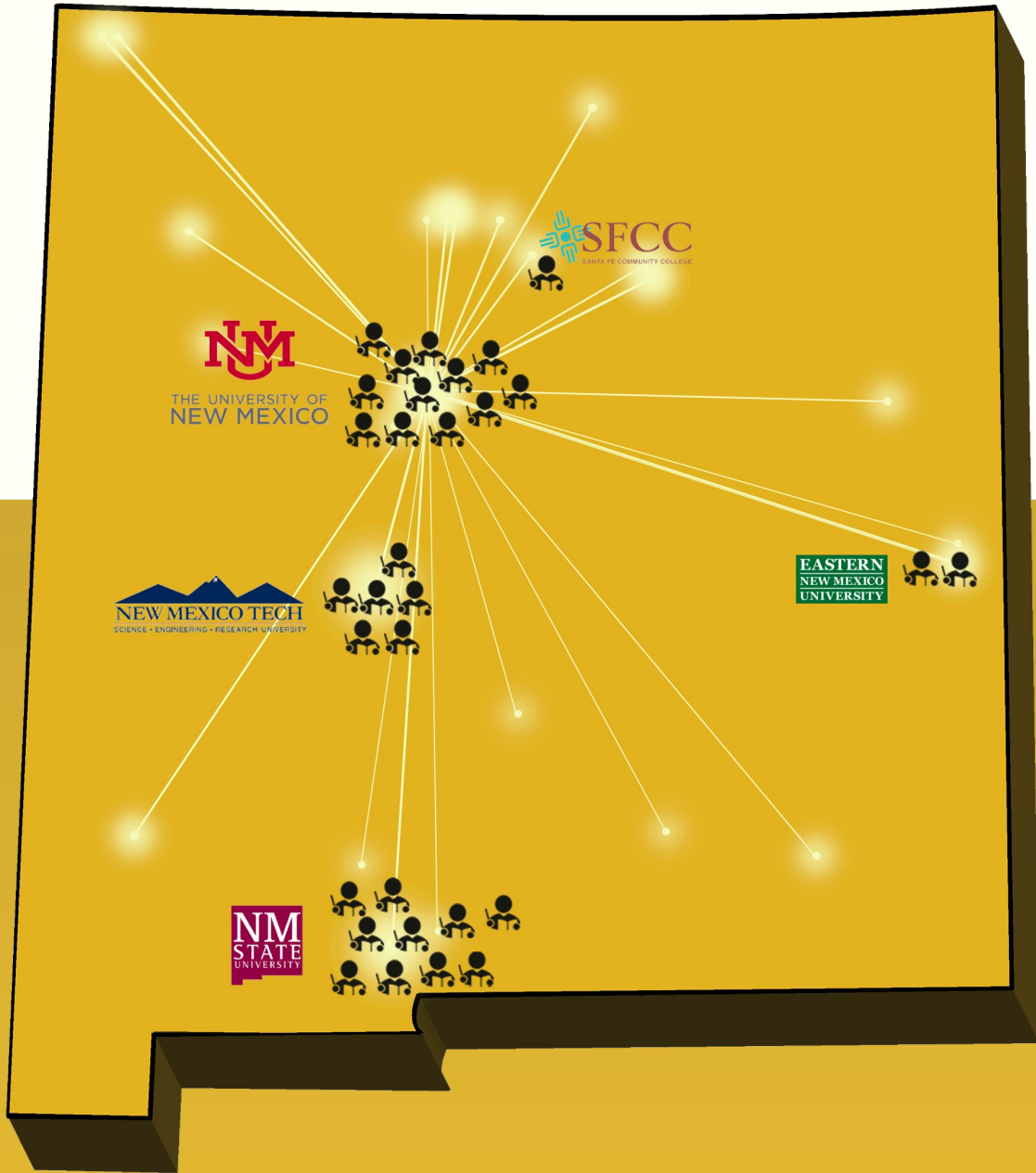
Ganesh Balakrishnan

NM EPSCoR State Director

NM EPSCoR – a 25-year Legacy

EPSCoR eligibility has resulted in over **\$276 million** in federal investment in New Mexico since 2000





Faculty hires

32

72% Remain in state

Research Project ROI: NM SMART Grid Center (2018-2024)

2018 **\$4M** state investment + **\$20M** federal investment

2024 **\$103M** additional federal dollars for NM research

4:1

ROI for the
project as a
whole

30:1

ROI for the initial state investment

Expanding Access

Essential role of two- and four-year institutions

64% of the US's middle-skill STEM workforce are not 4-year or graduate degree holders.

50% of NM's STEM students are in our community colleges.



NSF awards \$38M to strengthen research infrastructure, build partnerships and improve STEM workforce development

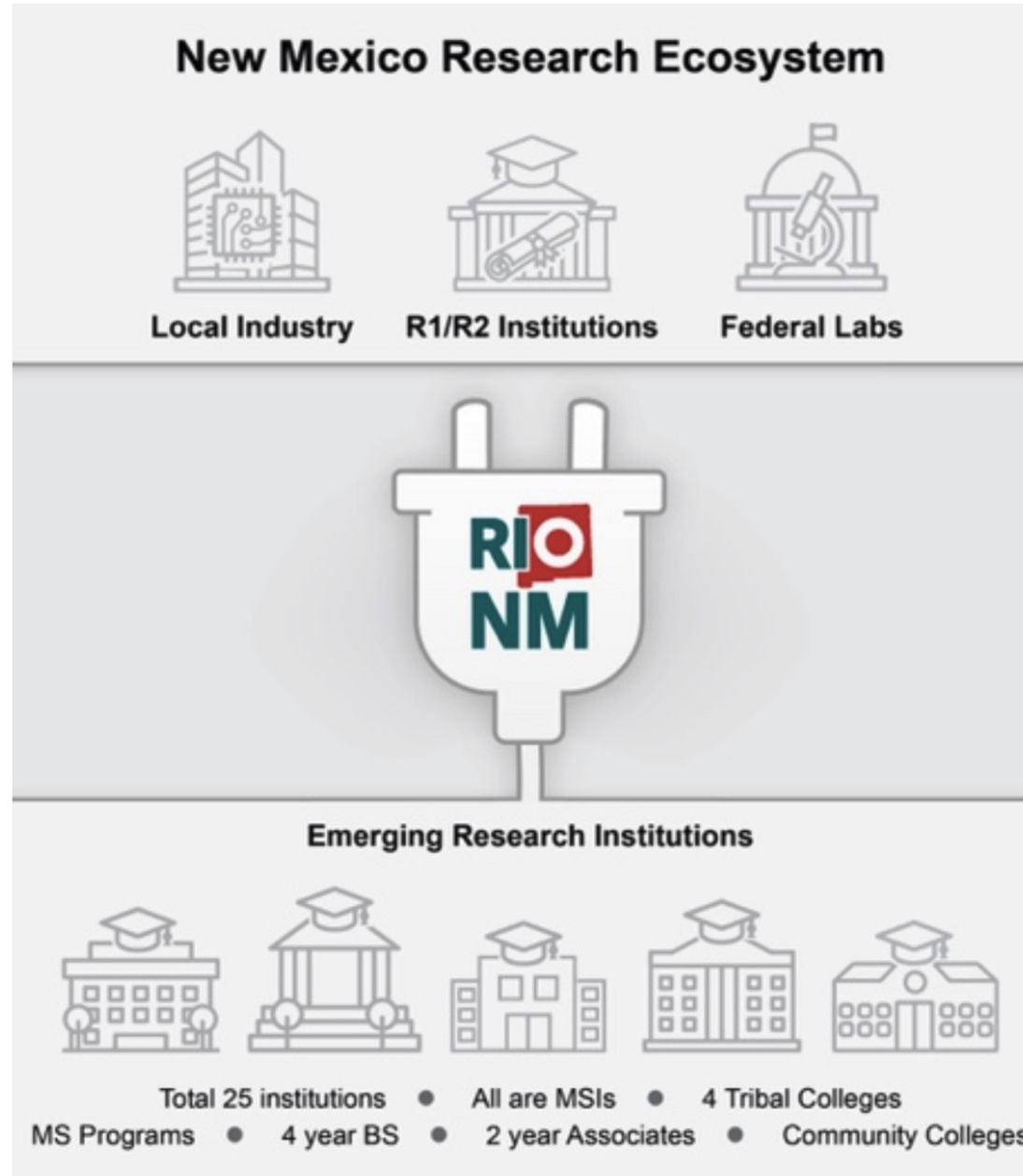
August 20, 2024

[E-CORE RII: Research Infrastructure Optimization for New Mexico](#)

Led by The University of New Mexico, this project aims to connect New Mexico's emerging research institutions (ERIs) with the broader state research ecosystem consisting of national laboratories, high-tech industries and established research universities. By strengthening New Mexico's research infrastructure, the project will foster innovation, which will lead to economic growth in critical sectors and create high-value employment opportunities for graduates from ERIs. The project will also provide the state legislature with insights on economic and workforce trends to enable strategic investments in key areas and foster a culture of inclusion and diversity, thereby broadening participation in the scientific enterprise across individuals, institutions and sectors.

Collaborating institutions (subawardees): Central New Mexico Community College, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, Navajo Technical University and New Mexico State University.

Research Infrastructure Optimization for New Mexico (RIO-NM)



Micro-grants for NM Institutions

Conversation → **Involvement** → **Participation**

- **Conversations**

CONNECT *Workshop Awards* – discuss new ideas, connect faculty & students

- **Involvement**

SURE *Awards* – support undergraduate research experiences

- **Participation**

SPARK *Seed Awards* – launch projects that can grow into larger endeavors

To recap,

In 2025, NM EPSCoR launched a series of micro-grants to expand access for two- and four-year colleges.

	Number of Applications	Awards made	Percentage awarded	Average award size	Average award duration
CONNECT - Workshop Awards	8	7	88%	\$7,500	1 year
SURE Awards	14	3	21%	\$15,000	1 year
SPARK - Seed Awards	54	2	<4%	\$50,000	1-2 years

The response was overwhelming: **76 proposals received, 12 funded across the state and interest continues to grow!**

Looking Beyond Federal Support



Sustain micro-grants

that expand access for rural, and tribal institutions



Invest in workforce pathways

connecting two- and four-year colleges with high-tech industries



Support infrastructure

that enables equitable access to labs, data, and training statewide

Thank you for your time and support!

**Ganesh
Balakrishnan** *(he/him)*

Director, NM EPSCoR
Professor, ECE Department, UNM

✉ gunny@epscor.unm.edu

☎ 505-259-6412

📍 1312 Basehart SE
Albuquerque, NM 87106

🏠 University of New Mexico
MSC04 2815
Albuquerque, NM 87131



www.nmepscor.org

**SELENA
CONNEALY, PhD** *(she/her)*

Associate Director

✉ connealy@epscor.unm.edu

☎ 505-217-5605

📍 1312 Basehart SE
Albuquerque, NM 87106

🏠 University of New Mexico
MSC04 2815
Albuquerque, NM 87131