



**New Mexico Chamber of Commerce Foundation
STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2028**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Action and Impact for New Mexico's Economic Future

New Mexico is full of potential: thriving industries, rich cultural traditions, and communities eager to grow. Yet, we also face challenges: talent shortages, uneven opportunity, and a business climate that is often misunderstood outside our borders.

That is where the **New Mexico Chamber of Commerce Foundation (NMCC Foundation)** comes in. We lead from the front, bringing together key players from business, education, government, and tribal nations to create practical solutions. The Foundation's action focuses on **research, education, and programs that deliver impact for people and communities across the state.**

Over the next three years, the NMCC Foundation is setting bold goals:



Accelerate Economic Competitiveness



Build Industry-Aligned Workforce



Lead Innovation for Improved Business Climate & Infrastructure

At the heart of this plan is a simple belief:

New Mexico's future is bright when we invest in our people and regions, and when we tell the story of what's working.

By supporting the NMCC Foundation, you are not just funding programs. You are helping build a stronger, more competitive, more hopeful New Mexico. Together, with the Chamber's advocacy and the Foundation's solutions, we can secure the future of our state for the next generation.

INTRODUCTION

The New Mexico Chamber of Commerce and the NMCC Foundation are aligned but distinct in purpose. **The Chamber** is the statewide voice of business, leading on **policy, advocacy, and membership support**. **The Foundation** strengthens this work by serving as a **nonpartisan thought leader and program driver**. Its role is to produce **data-driven research, educate and inform** stakeholders across business, government, education, and tribal nations, and pilot or scale **programs that deliver measurable workforce and economic outcomes**.

This plan builds on survey responses and a strategic workshop held with board members and stakeholders in July and August 2025. Across both exercises, several themes consistently surfaced:

- + The need for the Foundation to **differentiate itself from the Chamber** by focusing on research, education, programming, and execution rather than advocacy.
- + A strong desire for **regionalism** as the organizing lens for prosperity, instead of the oversimplified “urban vs. rural” divide.
- + The opportunity to serve as the **positive voice for New Mexico’s economy**, balancing realism about challenges with amplification of bright spots.
- + Recognition that programs like **Be Pro Be Proud NM** are delivering tangible outcomes, and that more such initiatives are needed.
- + Recognition that the Foundation is a **credible partner and convener** in collaborative problem-solving with diverse stakeholders.



NORTH STAR

To strengthen New Mexico by empowering people and communities through research, education, and programs that build talent, innovation, and economic opportunity.

MISSION

We advance statewide prosperity by:

- Generating **insightful, data-driven research** to inform decision-making.
- **Co-creating solutions and aligning priorities with diverse stakeholders** to build economic prosperity for **all** New Mexicans.
- Delivering **on-the-ground programs** that strengthen economic development and the workforce pipeline.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Accelerate Economic Competitiveness & Regional Prosperity

The NMCC Foundation frames New Mexico's growth opportunities through a **regional lens**, acknowledging the unique economic engines of areas such as the northern cultural corridor, the southern border economy, agricultural regions, and energy-rich areas. By defining five economic regions, the NMCC Foundation will become the **go-to leader** for discussions of prosperity that are both specific and actionable. The Foundation will generate research that strengthens the Chamber's advocacy while providing independent insight to business leaders. A focus will be on **permitting, regulatory complexity, and competitiveness metrics**, areas that stakeholders consistently flagged as barriers to growth.

Action Ideas

- Define economic regions and convene working groups in each to address obstacles head on.
- Publish an annual **Regional Prosperity Index** to track progress.
- Use NMCC Foundation research to help the Chamber advocate more effectively for regional priorities.
- Research permitting reform, regulatory barriers, and competitiveness.
- Host **legislative education forums** outside of session to share findings.
- Launch a campaign balancing realism with optimism (e.g., "*Stop Bagging, Start Bragging*"). We could take the tone of highlighting New Mexico's bright spots, showcasing what is working, where innovation is happening, and how communities are succeeding, while still being honest about the challenges that remain.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

2. Lead Innovation for Improved Business Climate & Infrastructure

The NMCC Foundation is the innovation engine for programs and policy supporting New Mexico's **emerging industries** — quantum and advanced computing, advanced energy, space/aerospace/defense, advanced manufacturing, agriculture/biosciences, and outdoor recreation — through research, convening, and storytelling. Special emphasis will be placed on **entrepreneurship support**, a widely acknowledged barrier in moving innovations forward to market.

Action Ideas

- Commission a **state of tech transfer** study and recommend solutions to challenges.
- Entrepreneurship ecosystem support, education, and programming initiatives.
- Convene an **Innovation Policy Co-Lab** with labs, universities, and industry.
- Highlight bright spots through communications, shifting the narrative toward opportunity.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

3. Build Industry-Aligned Workforce & Education Pipeline

New Mexico faces persistent skill gaps, low educational attainment, and out-migration of young talent. Stakeholders consistently pointed to the **disconnect between classroom learning and career pathways**, as well as the need to expand **career technical education and apprenticeships**. The NMCC Foundation is well-positioned to both scale its successful programs and unite fragmented efforts into a more coherent statewide strategy.

Action Ideas

- Expand **Be Pro Be Proud NM** with additional mobile units, outreach campaigns, and outcome tracking.
- Convene cross-sector partners to identify the **key priorities** most likely to move the needle statewide.
- Foster program solutions to address aging workforce, reshoring of manufacturing, remote workforce rise, reskilling/upskilling existing workforce for occupations in emerging industries.

BOLD MOVES (2025-2028)

- + **Regional Prosperity Index** – benchmark competitiveness across five economic regions.
- + **Innovation Co-Lab** – convene stakeholders to tackle barriers in emerging industries.
- + **Leverage Competitiveness Research Study** Insights and Recommendations as actionable solutions.
- + **Be Pro Be Proud Expansion** – double reach, add a second mobile unit, and establish outcome tracking.
- + **Non-Partisan Impact Collective** – convene non-partisan cohorts of policy makers and community leaders to collaboratively solve specific issues.

NEXT STEPS

- + **Fall 2025:** Board review and alignment with Chamber retreat outcomes.
- + **November 2025:** Present draft economic regional framework.
- + **Q1 2026:** Roll out new communications supporting recent and upcoming strategic initiatives.
- + **2026 onward:** Quarterly dashboards reporting progress against KPIs.



APPENDIX

Context from Discussions

1. Regional Prosperity & Economic Competitiveness

- Strong alignment that “urban vs. rural” framing is too broad; regions better reflect real economic drivers.
- Recognition that other entities (e.g., EDD, Perkins grants, tourism) use regional divisions, but no business-led body has unified these perspectives.
- Interest in a “Regional Prosperity Index” to benchmark competitiveness across metrics such as workforce readiness, infrastructure, and innovation.

2. Workforce & Education Pipeline

- Workforce shortages ranked as a top barrier for employers (47%).
- Strong support for expanding **Be Pro Be Proud NM**, with calls for Spanish-language access, female-focused outreach, and stronger employer linkages.
- Recognition that workforce challenges are interconnected with healthcare, childcare, and housing.
- Interest in the Foundation serving as a **convener of workforce organizations**, reducing duplication, and aligning around 1–2 big priorities.

3. Innovation & Industry Development

- Participants noted a lack of coordination in tech transfer from labs/universities to entrepreneurs.
- Some stakeholders emphasized rural innovation (e.g., NMSU dairy technology, ranching advances).
- The Economic Development Department has identified five priority clusters (advanced computing, defense/space, advanced energy, agriculture/bioscience, outdoor rec). Alignment with these priorities is important.
- The Foundation can convene an “Innovation Co-Lab” to co-create solutions and test scalable approaches.

4. Business Climate Insight

- Repeated mention of “slow permitting processes” and “unpredictable regulatory environment.”
- Concern that NM ranks 47th nationally in economic opportunity indices.
- Agreement that advocacy is the Chamber’s role, but the Foundation can provide the **data backbone**.
- Recognition that the Foundation can also amplify **positive business stories** to counterbalance negative headlines.

5. Communications & Stakeholder Engagement

- Some survey responses confused Chamber and Foundation roles, showing a need for clarity.
- Strong interest in amplifying **positive stories** of success across the state.
- Recognition that stakeholders such as tribal nations, border towns, and Spanish-speaking business owners, among others, are underrepresented.