



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson Proposes \$21 Million Investment in Improvements at NMSU

Governor's Investment Part of "Year of the Child" Legislative Proposals

LAS CRUCES -- Governor Bill Richardson today announced \$19 million in investments in bricks and mortar projects at New Mexico State University. Funding for these projects will be included in the Governor's capital outlay budget recommendations to be considered during the upcoming legislative session.

"These investments show that I am committed to southern New Mexico and to NMSU," said Governor Richardson. "Our education system can become an engine of economic prosperity and help us keep New Mexico's best and brightest in New Mexico. These investments will help us do just that."

Governor Richardson's funding priorities include:

Renovations and an addition to Gardiner Hall: \$10 million

Gardiner Hall is one of the most heavily used buildings on campus. This project will also help integrate the departments of astronomy, geology and physics, and improve NMSU's already strong science curriculum.

Native American Cultural Center: \$5 million

This funding will help with the construction of a Native American Cultural Center to be located near the Corbett Center. This facility will both serve NMSU's vibrant American Indian community and help educate others about New Mexico's tribes and pueblos. It will also support NMSU's extensive efforts to recruit, retain and educate Native American students.

College of Health and Social Services Building: \$2 million

This investment in the completion of NMSU's College of Health and Social Services Building will help the college continue to develop world class health and human services professionals. This includes the nurses, social workers and public health experts so needed in the border region.

Dona Ana Branch Community College, East Mesa Center: \$4 million

This 24,000 square foot facility with classrooms, labs and an auditorium will invest needed resources in one of New Mexico's fastest growing colleges, located in one of the fastest growing counties in the state.

These funding proposals join Governor Richardson's recently announced Year of the Child agenda for higher education. This agenda includes:

\$50 million investment in a College Affordability Endowment. The endowment will immediately generate investment income that can be used for need-based scholarships at New Mexico colleges and universities. The new scholarships will enable thousands of new students to enroll in higher education institutions in New Mexico. And with just a modest return on a \$50-million dollar endowment, the state can help many New Mexicans begin – and most importantly – complete their education. Scholarships would be worth as much as \$1,000 per semester, and would fund unmet need of financially disadvantaged students.

\$10 million for Career Technical-Vocational programs – Last year, Governor Richardson and the Legislature invested \$10 million in Career Technical Centers/Vocational Charter High Schools at 18 different institutions. This year, with another \$10 million, these programs can be expanded and additional ones added to increase the number of students served. These Centers create career pathways for juniors and seniors in high school and help prepare them for the future, beginning now.

\$1 million to align High Schools with Higher Education – Governor Richardson is proposing to redefine the New Mexico High School Competency Exam by making it more relevant, especially for students who are going on to college. Governor Richardson is proposing \$1 million to develop a new test that both meets the requirements of high school graduation and better prepares students for higher education.

“With a strong financial outlook, now is the time to invest in New Mexicans,” said Governor Richardson. “We can do this in a fiscally prudent manner – by funding projects and initiatives that will benefit thousands of New Mexico students and help us build a high-wage economy.”