

The Power of Degrees and Credentials for New Mexico's Graduates

BACHELORS DEGREES

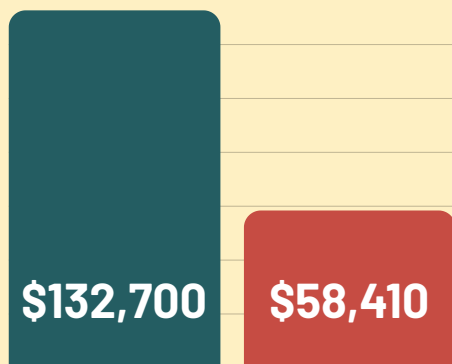


This fact sheet helps New Mexico students and families understand the value of a bachelor's degree, how to choose the right program, and how to make college affordable.

When is a bachelor's degree right for me?



Nationally, bachelor's degree household income out-earns high school graduate household incomes by more than 2 times.



Households **with** a bachelor's degree.

Households **without** a bachelor's degree.

What is a bachelor's degree?

A bachelor's degree is awarded to students who complete a four- to six-year series of courses aligned to a specific college or university major. Examples of bachelor's degrees in high demand in New Mexico include Healthcare, Business and Management, and Computer and Information Services[1].

How should I choose the best bachelor's degree to pursue?

Putting in the time and resources to earn a bachelor's degree is a significant commitment. Make the most of those investments by beginning with the end in mind: "Where will my education take me?" Some of those considerations include:

- What bachelor's degrees are in high demand from New Mexico employers?
- What careers are of greatest interest to me?
- What degrees do those careers require?
- What colleges offer these degrees, and what are their job placement rates for graduates?
- Where can I learn that/those degrees at best cost and in the least amount of time?

When deciding, it's also helpful to get real-world experience in a job or industry through work-based learning:



Job shadowing



Internships



Apprenticeships



Part-time or summer jobs

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Work-based learning is tied to Career Readiness, not only building skills but also helping students know which college majors lead directly to rewarding careers.

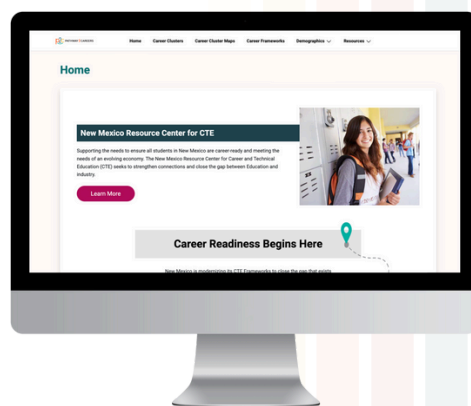
Students can also get hands-on experience and connect with industry professionals by participating in a Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO). Learn more about CTSOs [here](#).

How can I learn more about aligning my education with a future job or career?

In New Mexico, the best way to learn about Career Pathways to industries and occupations is to visit the [New Mexico Resource Center for CTE](#). These pathways align education with high-demand, growing occupations that pay living wages or higher.

The site connects all of the dots to help you navigate your career journey:

- Explore the jobs in your community by choosing your school district on the [Career Clusters](#) Page. Compare wages, number of jobs, and projected growth, as well as the education needed.
- [P2C Career Explorer](#) helps students understand interests, values, and career clusters, and then explore jobs aligned to those answers.
- On the [Career Frameworks](#) page, jobs are linked to the skills and credentials required, along with other relevant information.



Bachelor's degree holders in New Mexico have the highest workforce participation rate (83%), the lowest unemployment rate (3.1%), and median earnings of \$52,592.[3]

Career-connected education has been proven to increase high school and college completion rates.

Where can I learn a Bachelor's Degree?

New Mexico has a rich diversity of colleges and universities. There are three research universities, four regional universities, four tribal colleges, and several private institutions.

- Public colleges and universities receive state funding to help keep the cost of education as affordable as possible.
- The state does not fund private colleges and universities, and tuition tends to be higher.

[Access a full list](#) of colleges and universities in New Mexico.

To learn more about how to qualify for each college or university, check their individual websites for Application Requirements.

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How much does it cost to earn a Bachelor's Degree?

New Mexico is well known for college affordability. Programs like the Lottery Scholarship, the Opportunity Scholarship, and high school Dual Credit courses help keep the cost of earning a degree at a public New Mexico college or university relatively low for all students in the state, regardless of background or income level. Students in Dual Credit courses also graduate high school at higher rates than non-Dual Credit students.[2]



STUDENTS & PARENTS: Talk with your counselor about options for Dual Credit Courses or Early College options that can **save thousands in future college costs.**



Some students take advantage of lower tuition rates at community colleges to complete general education coursework, like English and History, in their first two years, or to earn shorter-term, skill-based credentials or Associate Degrees, then transfer those credits to universities to earn bachelor's degrees.

According to [College Scorecard](#), New Mexico's estimated cost to attend a four-year university ranges from \$5,000 to \$17,000 per year. Factors that impact those costs include tuition, on- or off-campus housing, meals, textbooks or other course materials, and fees.

It's important to factor in all of the costs to attend a specific college or university when determining the best path forward for you.

Where can I find help to pay for a Bachelor's Degree?

To find out all of the funding assistance you may qualify for, fill out the Free Application for Student Assistance (FAFSA). The FAFSA will provide an outline of scholarships, grants, or loans available to you based on your family or individual income. To fill out and submit a FAFSA, click [here](#). To learn more about other available scholarship resources, click [here](#).



-  Visit the [New Mexico Resource Center for CTE](#) to explore programs and pathways.
-  Talk with your school counselor about dual credit and scholarship options.
-  Complete your FAFSA at [FAFSA.gov](#) to explore financial aid opportunities.

References:

[1] Lightcast Jobs Posting Database, October 22, 2025.

[2] New Mexico Dual Credit Report 2023-24, New Mexico Departments of Higher Education and Public Education.

[3] U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 and 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, population 25 to 64 years old.