



REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION

Workforce and Academic Network

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**For 25 years the Regional Development Corporation has been convening industry, education, and governmental partners to address the economic needs in northern New Mexico. Our team experience in coordinating partnerships and consortial agreements in the interest of workforce development is unsurpassed.**



northern New Mexico institutions of higher education set out to identify the best way to meet our regional workforce needs. Through this effort our partners have coordinated with academic and training partners and support organizations to successfully qualify more northern New Mexico residents in the skilled trades and construction industry. I am confident that this process can be used to meet the needs in our community.

– Val Alonzo

We have been able to establish a successful track record for managing grant-funded efforts that has resulted in job placement of northern New Mexicans so they are able to work and grow in our region and support northern New Mexico businesses.

Relationships are at the cornerstone of the RDC's work. The Workforce and Academic Network established between construction industry employers, labor unions, and the

## WHAT **COULD** WE DO TOGETHER?

Imagine that students and job seekers easily access training and education for the construction industry in northern New Mexico that has defined requirements which are consistent and transferable, recognized by all entities so that they can fill open positions and thrive in their communities.

Northern New Mexico is no different than the rest of the nation with a labor shortage in the skilled trades and construction industry. Meanwhile, there are a number of training, education, and support organizations seeking to support workforce and economic development in our region. Many of our communities have aging infrastructure and are experiencing growth, only heightening the need for a trained and qualified workforce. Oftentimes large municipal, industrial or housing projects have required recruitment of the skilled workforce from out-of-state. Relocation costs to meet the local workforce need with out-of-state workers is a burden to employers. Many of these relocated workers return to their homes out of state and leave an economic vacuum and does little to contribute to the workforce infrastructure necessary to maintain and develop our communities.

By using the Strategic Doing<sup>®</sup> Process with planning support from Dr. Lauren Goldstein of NMSU to create a collaborative network among employers, labor unions, the northern New Mexico institutions of higher education, and governmental agencies, all of which have programs and services to address the skilled labor workforce, we can make better use of the resources in our region.

## WHAT **SHOULD** WE DO TOGETHER?

### There is

- a national construction trades workforce deficit
- a multitude of efforts to qualify and support the development of this workforce
- inconsistent alignment among workforce preparation programs and industry needs
- an opportunity to better align statewide efforts to meet both job seeker and employer's workforce needs

### Stakeholders

- Industry Employers
- State agencies (NM Department of Workforce Solutions, NM Licensing & Regulation, HED, PED)
- Association of Independent Community Colleges, UNM and NMSU satellites
- Trade unions (Local 412, IBEW, etc.)
- Municipalities and county representation
- Public and Private Secondary Education Leaders

### Convene

- clarify roles and opportunities for alignment with other groups
- gain consensus on efforts toward alignment and collaborative workforce support

### Agreed to

- align objectives and outcomes toward per-apprenticeship
- establish matriculation and recognition of acquired skill-sets
- establish collaborative efforts toward workforce recruitment
- identify wrap-around support for trainees and prospective employees
- establish common mechanism for supporting collaborative network and individual strategies



**Camilla Bustamante, PhD. MPH**  
Workforce and Academic Network Development

With over 25 years in education, training and community advancement, as an academic dean, project coordinator, team leader, trainer, and educator, Camilla Bustamante has led and participated in regional and community planning, educational and economic program development and assessment in the interest of community resilience and sustainability.



**Dan Gerry**  
Strategic Doing Consultant

Dan Gerry has a degree in Behavioral Psychology with extensive experience in neuroscience-informed Leadership and Organization Development consulting and training and has been certified in many leadership development assessments and practices including Strategic Doing, Strategic Planning, DiSC Workstyles, Social Styles, Quality Systems, experiential team building facilitation, Crucial Conversations, Totally Responsible Person Training, Open Space Technology, Grove Graphical Facilitation, Appreciative Inquiry, Future Search Conferences, Employee Engagement practices, Dialogue Methodology and the Technology of Participation.



## INVESTMENT IN THE BUILDING TRADES WORKFORCE BUILDS COMMUNITIES

The skilled labor shortage has been dire since the early to mid 2000s and became “critical” during the pandemic. In New Mexico academic and training organizations, as well as workforce development support services, are plentiful, though lack of alignment and need for collaboration has had little impact in building this workforce. In the interest of addressing the gaps in support by leveraging training, education, governmental and non-profit assets, the RDC embarked on establishing the Workforce and Academic Network (WAN).

Predominantly rural, northern New Mexico’s population is sparse with rich cultural history. By aligning resources such as sharing curriculum and extending wrap around services, the RDC can have the population necessary to accommodate large industry workforce needs in any single business sector. In 2019, Los Alamos National Laboratory announced plans for projected 5 billion dollars in construction projects in Los Alamos and surrounding

communities in the upcoming 5 years. With an initial workforce need for an estimated 1200 skilled craft employees annually in the first three years, and **7000 skilled crafts/construction jobs** overall, it is necessary to coordinate and support workforce development in all counties in northern New Mexico. Over decades of the Laboratory’s existence, LANL jobs have been sometimes filled by locals who acquired the requisite education and skills, but otherwise they have been filled primarily by people who relocated to northern New Mexico. Industry projects such as these provide the opportunity to develop the **skillsets of northern New Mexicans in a manner that will contribute to infrastructure improvements in the communities in which they live.** Comprised of primarily rural historic and tribal communities with aging or non-existent infrastructure, developing skillsets in the construction trades can restore pride and economic well-being on terms acceptable to Northern NM residents.



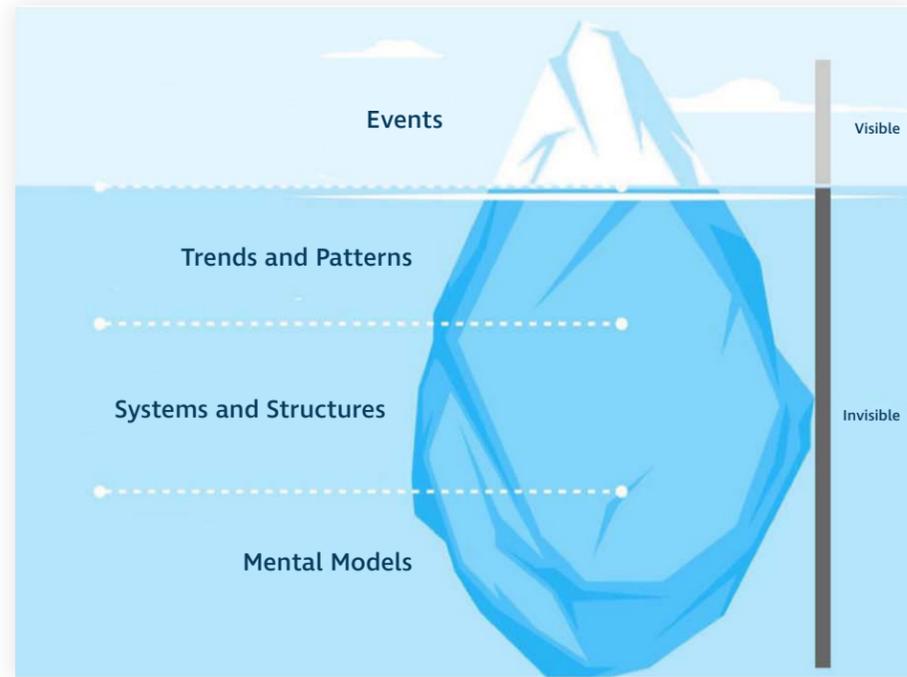
**In 2019, Los Alamos National Laboratory announced plans for projected 5 billion dollars in construction projects in Los Alamos and surrounding communities in the upcoming 5 years.**

# CONVENE FOR COLLABORATION

**Building by Leveraging Assets:** Strategic Doing is a process that provides a system for forming quick collaborations and moving those collaborations directly to action and implementation. The process leverages loosely connected networks of people and their assets—social, physical, skills and capital. It provides a dynamic, action-based process that allows for new participants to engage at any time and at multiple levels.

The agencies and organizations who participated were:

- Santa Fe Area Home Builders Association
- New Mexico Public Education Department
- New Mexico Higher Education Department
- New Mexico Workforce Solutions
- Local 412 Plumbers and Pipefitters
- IBEW Local 611
- New Mexico Building and Construction Trades Council
- Los Alamos National Laboratory
- Association of General Contractors
- Associated Builders and Contractors
- New Mexico Regulation and Licensing—Construction Industries Division
- UNM Los Alamos
- UNM Taos
- Northern New Mexico College
- Santa Fe Community College
- Luna Community College
- Senator Martin Heinrich
- Senator Ben Ray Lujan
- Representative Teresa Leger Fernandez



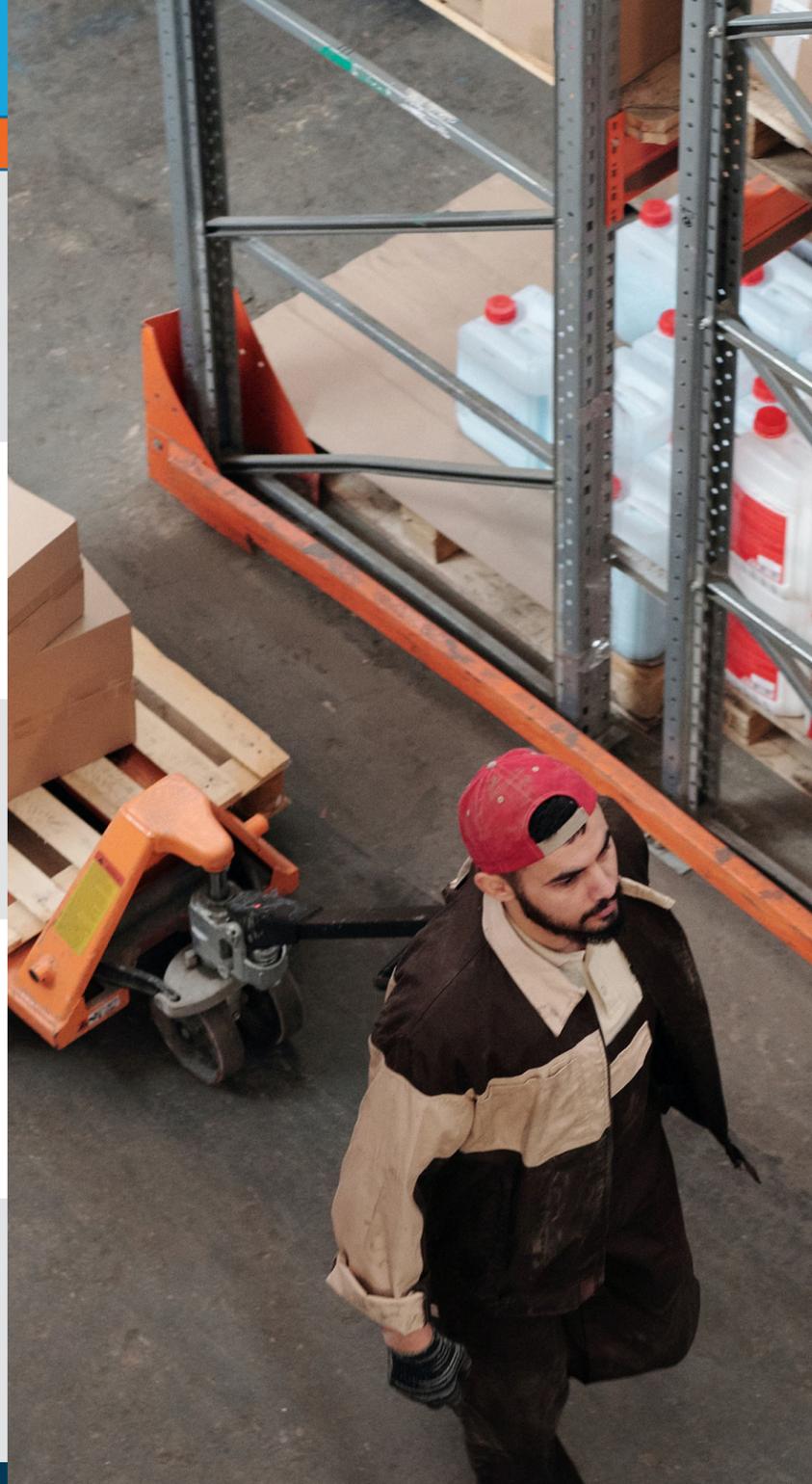
**Figure 4.3.5a: The iceberg model.** The iceberg model suggests four levels of thinking to understand complex socio-technical subsystems (monat & Gannon, 2015; Blokland & Reniers 202).



**Figure 4.3.5b: The Strategic Doing iceberg model.** The iceberg model suggests a theory of change based on positive deviance. Participants in a Strategic Doing workshop may behave their way into new ways of thinking.



| Focus Group  | Survey Results   |
|--|--|
| Industry Employers   | <p><b>How we get our employees:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We use word of mouth / Indeed / Facebook / other job posting services</li> <li>“Steal people already working”</li> <li>Provide a good work environment</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not enough qualified workers</li> <li>Lack of work ethic</li> <li>Large companies can pay better than we can afford</li> <li>We need workers who care about “the task at hand”</li> </ul> <p><b>Does hiring local makes a difference?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% Respondents reported that they prefer to hire locally</li> </ul> <p><b>How can the industry be supported:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow work for education</li> <li>Introduce trades programs early in the schools</li> <li>Increase workforce pool of those with basic skills – ex. job site safety, basic life skills, basic tools skill</li> </ul>   |
| State agencies (NM Department of Workforce Solutions, NM Licensing & Regulation, HED, PED) | <p><b>How do we support Career Technical Programs?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collectively use existing resources to work with industry</li> <li>Set differences aside and create working pathways for inter-agency collaboration</li> <li>Explore endowed positions for skilled instructors</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of alignment between non-academic training centers and academic institutions</li> </ul> <p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include skilled crafts and CTE in early conversations about career – START EARLY!</li> <li>Enhanced collaboration across state agencies will enable the best use of agency resources to meet student/trainee/job seeker needs</li> <li>Integrate Northern Board activities to academic and training institutions</li> <li>Assure equity and address the student perspective</li> <li>Align industry credentials and Quality Indicators</li> <li>Strengthen pre-apprenticeship programs</li> </ul>   |
| Labor Training Organizations   | <p><b>How do we recruit?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnerships with learning centers</li> <li>Job postings</li> <li>Offer GED support</li> <li>Labor Union Membership</li> <li>Emphasis on safety and high standards</li> </ul> <p><b>Advantages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MC3 is recognized by the Public Education Department</li> </ul> <p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support paid career exploration</li> <li>Support qualified instructors</li> <li>Support initiatives that help a job-seeker get a clean drug test</li> <li>Try to keep people working close to where they live</li> </ul>   |
| Educational Institutions – participants •Secondary and post secondary                      | <p><b>Programs offered among institutions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building Construction, electricity, plumbing and HVAC, welding, Commercial Driver’s License</li> <li>Skills USA</li> <li>Participating in renovation of City and community structure and programs through partnerships with contractors</li> </ul> <p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate enrollment</li> <li>Qualified faculty are practitioners who will garner a higher wage in the field</li> </ul> <p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contextualized general education for the industry</li> <li>I-BEST</li> <li>Tied to employer, a student can go back to school and all is “forgiven” no record of mistakes. (Look at Open Door , PILAS and ProTech Model – Washington State \$16000 per year per student to work with an employer)</li> <li>Curriculum crosswalk from Industry Training, Secondary hands-on experience, and community college education</li> <li>Shared content</li> <li>Strong advisory group participation</li> </ul> |
| Youth Group  | <p><b>What brought you to construction training?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent was in the field</li> <li>Recommended by a relative, friend, or guidance counselor</li> <li>Didn’t like traditional educational pathways</li> <li>I like making and plan and learning on my own</li> </ul> <p><b>Barriers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of experience,</li> <li>Age to be on work-site</li> <li>Lack of support from job service</li> <li>Job applications can be complicated and confusing</li> </ul> <p><b>Things that work well:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial literacy class was helpful</li> <li>Non-judgmental support</li> </ul>   |



## WHAT DID WE DO?

### TEAM 1:

#### Aligning Educational Pathways

Imagine that Skilled Trades education providers work together to agree on common high standards and shared course content and delivery.

**Pathfinder Project:** Compile all certifications, mentorships, and job training programs in NM to train the workforce in skilled trades with a focus on construction industry in one state database.

**Primary Outcome:** Team 1 created a survey and compiled information on all the training and education skilled trades programs in northern New Mexico. This information will be made public as part of the overall communication and recruitment effort.

### TEAM 2:

#### Aligning Non-Credit Training and Education

Imagine that students in Skilled Trades programs are able to stack credentials and receive credit for past courses and work experience.

**Pathfinder Project:** Create a proposal to HED to establish industry-wide common course numbering and train the trainer program.

**Primary Outcomes:** The New Mexico Higher Education Department has provided support for common course numbering and credit for prior learning for Career Technical Education Programs in New Mexico.

### TEAM 3:

#### Establishing Avenues and Content for Marketing, Promotion and Communication

Imagine that job seekers and community members learn about and realize the value of Skilled Trades jobs and careers.

**Pathfinder Project:** Identify target groups and develop messaging for each group.

**Primary Outcomes:** Team 3 initiated contact with high school counselors and identified outreach opportunities, role models and resources that appeal to students and job seekers.

### TEAM 4:

#### Assuring Wrap Around Services at All Locations

Imagine that job seekers and students receive the support and assistance needed to complete their qualifications for employment.

**Pathfinder Project:** Create a shared resources HUB that identifies regional wrap around service resources.

**Primary Outcome:** Team 4 compiled an extensive list of regional wrap-around resources that will be made available at a resource web location.

### TEAM 5:

#### Building Regional Industry Partnerships

Imagine that regional Skilled Trades employers actively engage with Workforce & Academic Network partners in initiatives that improve job seeker recruiting, education and employability.

**Pathfinder Project:** Establish train-the-trainer opportunities with industry professionals who will both recruit and train in their communities.

**Primary Outcome:** Open communication between labor and training organizations for train-the-trainer opportunities.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



US Senator Martin Heinrich  
US Representative Teresa Leger Fernandez  
US Senator Ben Ray Lujan