NEW MEXICO HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (NMHED)

Research & Public Service Project (RPSP) and other Funding Requests

FY2028

Print, sign, and submit cover sheet and individual submissions to NMHED by September 15, 2026

Institution: New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Primary Contact for

Name and Title: Dr. Heather Miller, Superintendent

Phone: 575-439-4413

Email: HeatherMiller@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us

Governing Board Signature: Agnes Vallejos Date: 9/14/26

Institutional Rank (priority)	Program/Project Title *(Please ensure your Program/Project Title are named the same in all documents)*	Request in FY28	New Program (X)	Expansion Program (X)	Continuing Program (X)	Closeout Program (X)
1	Low Vision Clinic/Outreach	111,100.00				
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						
	Total Funding Request	**$ 111,100.00**				0

Please insert additional lines as needed.

NEW MEXICO HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (NMHED)

Research & Public Service Project (RPSP)

FY2028

Fill and submit packet to NMHED per instructions by September 15, 2026

Formula Do not Override

Institution: New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Formula Do not Override

Title of Project: Low Vision Clinic/Outreach Program

RPSP Type Continuing - Funding to maintain existing service levels

RPSP Account Code 97900-9792-7426 Low vision clinic programs

Note: Ensure you are choosing the account code for your HEI. If it is not listed leave blank.

FY28 Funding Request $ 111,100.00

If previously funded, enter amount that was awarded in FY27 OpBud. $ 111,100.00

Type of Project Academic

1 Number of years the project has received General Fund support: (Disregard if new program) 15

Increase cell size as necessary for narratives, if you are sending a PDF please be sure your narratives are fully visible.

2 **Project Description/Executive Summary:**

A visual impairment is defined as a vision loss severe enough to interfere with the ability to perform everyday tasks or activities and that cannot be corrected to normal by conventional eyeglasses or contact lenses. (Jose, 1992) As of July, 2026, the New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired served over 2,200 students throughout the state from birth to 22. It is estimated that approximately 10% of these students will have no usable vision (Kahn & Moorhead, 1973). That leaves 1,980 students in New Mexico with some degree of vision that could potentially be maximized through the appropriate use of 21st century assessment and technology. There are four components to this request for funding;

- A low vision traveling clinic,
- A network of highly trained professionals strategically placed throughout the state to support the local districts,
- A university personnel preparation program that prepares teachers of students with visual impairments and orientation and mobility instructors for the state and dedicated NMSBVI mentors to support the PPP students,
- A statewide vision specific database.

All components are directly related to the school's mission to ensure that students who are blind or visually impaired will receive quality education ensuring that they will become independent, productive members of their communities.

Low Vision Clinic

NMSBVI understands the importance of ensuring that NM students, in need of low vision medical evaluations, have access to highly qualified professionals so that these students have the technology needed to support their learning. In addition, because of the rural nature of the state, NMSBVI recognizes the need to make sure low vision clinic services are available to all of NM students in need of the service regardless of the area of the state in which they live. In order to build capacity, the school is committed to sponsoring this traveling clinic not only to help NM students but to increase capacity in the state by supporting the state's optometrists as they become highly qualified evaluators of students with low vision.

Mentorship Support/Personnel Preparation

Like most states, New Mexico continues to see a widening gap between the capacity of its students who are blind/VI and those students without a disability. When the Authorization of the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) was first enacted in 1975, the educational push for all students with disabilities was to meet their needs in the regular classroom. Over time, this decision resulted in a critical reduction in specialized instruction for students who are blind/VI, in accommodations for blindness including students receiving Braille instruction, and in the number of highly qualified personnel in the field of blindness education. The results of this generic education have now been translated to the work force. When one looks at the national and state employability statistics for individuals who are blind, there has been no change in the employability rate for individuals with blindness in the past 40 years (Com. f/t Blind, Greg

In order to change the face of blindness in New Mexico, networks must be established that support and promote training at the university level. At the district level, systems must exist that provide on-going training and mentorship support to newly trained educators as well as seasoned teachers who need support for complicated students. A unified database can be used to support this network by creating a single system for districts to track students' progress in core areas of reading and math, order braille books and other blindness specific adapted materials, register students with the federal quota registry, and help determine a district's VI caseload and need for VI personnel

3 **Budget Narrative (Overview only - Budget Detail follows on next worksheet):**

see Budget Sheet

4 **Program Mission (Include population served, other demographic information):**

NMSBVI's Mission Statement States "NMSBVI, an innovative and transformative leader and unifying entity in the field of educating students birth through high school who are blind or visually impaired, will identify students and promote quality education through collaborative relationships with students, families, and local/state/national partners through outstanding advocacy, training, resources, and support services, thus empowering all students who are blind or visually impaired to become independent, productive members of their communities."

5 **Key Project Objectives (Overview only - Details and Measures on following worksheet):**

The Low Vision Clinic/Outreach project is a statewide network of support and services designed to support students, teachers and school districts.
As a result of the NMSBVI strategic plan, the Low Vision Clinic/Outreach Services Project is designed to meet the following outcomes.

• A training system that results in sufficient numbers of specialized staff in the field of blindness and visual impairment for the state of New Mexico;

• A system to convey and receive information about blindness and visual impairment, educational services, trends, research, etc. to all those involved or interested in serving students who are blind or visually impaired;

• A system of data-driven decision making that will be used collaboratively to determine goals, services and settings for educating New Mexico students with blindness or visual impairments;

• A system that supports the successful transition of students with blindness or visual impairment and their programming across settings.

6 **For existing projects, describe major accomplishments in a single paragraph, and if applicable, any obstacles encountered the previous fiscal year. For new projects, identify the top objectives and challenges for the current fiscal year:**

NMSBVI Low Vision Clinic would benefit from having at least one clunic day in the Northwest part of the state. We currently do not have a doctor who can cover that area. NMSBVI currently has enough mentors to support the students currently enrolled in personnel preparation programs to become highly qualified as a teacher of the visually impaired or an orientation and mobility instructor. NMSBVI has also created the statewide database for tracking students with vision impairments throughout the state. At this time, 100% of school districts are inputting data in the system.
Obstacles:
• Difficulty ensuring highly qualified TSVI/O&M staff are available in all areas of our large, rural state.
• Retirements/resignations of current staff who have acquired expert level skills
• Difficult to find NM optometrists with skills in pediatric low vision.
Finding interested, qualified doctors and staff is an ongoing process. The availability of our doctors can be a challenge. We continue searching for a doctor in the northwest region of New Mexico to expand our Low Vision Clinics and make them more accessible to our families and students.

7 **Describe the Project Impact (Statewide impact, Governor's initiatives, and/or specific student outcomes):**

This is a statewide project. Of the approximately 850 school-aged New Mexico students who have been identified in need of specialized services related to their blindness, all can potentially benefit from this project.

• The low vision clinic was designed to provide one on one education to parents and teachers at the clinic by an optometrist trained in low vision. This is a service a student and family would not receive at a typical ophthalmologist or optometrist appointment. The inclusion of both educational and medical aspects of the visual impairment, addressing functional needs as well as medical ones, produces effective outcomes for students in educational settings.
• As the state's TVIs and O&Ms have more experience with the use of low vision devices, students benefit from that expertise. Students receive consistent training in the use of low vision devices and, experience has shown, the increased competence at the student level results in increased compliance in usage.
• As TSVI and O&Ms receive quality mentorship, this will help ensure that students with visual impairments or blindness in the state of NM have access to highly qualified vision professionals. This will help ensure these students can acheive their highest potential.

8 **Describe Student Population Served (in-state vs out-of-state students):**

This is a one of a kind offering in the state of NM. In FY 26, we saw 46 students at the Low Vision Clinic, from around the state. NMSBVI's services to families and districts are free. In the 25-26 school year, 10 students were enrolled in the NMSU/NMSBVI Vision Impairment Program (VIP). NMSBVI currently has enough mentors to support the students currently enrolled in personnel preparation programs to become highly qualified as a teacher of the visually impaired or an orientation and mobility instructor.

9 **Does the project receive awards, private donations or federal grants? Have you sought out funding from other sources?**

The NMSBVI Low Vision Clinic has received private foundation grant funding from the Lineberry Foundation in the past.

10 **Medical Projects Only - How many graduates stay and practice in New Mexico?**

RPSP-Budget 1

NEW MEXICO HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (NMHED)
Research & Public Service Project (RPSP)
Project Budget Sheet

Institution: *Formula Do Not Override*
New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

RPSP Project: *Formula Do Not Override*
Low Vision Clinic/Outreach Program

Total: *Formula Do Not Override*
$ 111,100.00

Budget verses Actual ******Enter data in Yellow cells only******

Revenue and Transfers	FY26 RPSP Expenditures	Budget FY27 (OpBud)	Change Requested (Formula Do Not Override)	Request FY28	Comments
Beginning Fund Balance			$ -	$ -	
Appropriations					
Federal			$ -		
State plus Tobacco Settlement Fund	$ 111,100.00	$ 111,100.00	$ -	$ 111,100.00	State Appropriation
Local			$ -		
Total Appropriations	$ 111,100.00	$ 111,100.00	$ -	$ 111,100.00	
Grants and Contracts					
Federal			$ -		
State			$ -		
Local	$ 23,500.00	$ 23,500.00	$ -	$ 23,500.00	JPAs-Direct Svc Itinerant Income
Total Grants and Contracts	$ 23,500.00	$ 23,500.00	$ -	$ 23,500.00	
Private Gifts, Grants and Contracts			$ -		
Land & Permanent Fund or Local Property Taxes	$ 1,000,629.56	$ 1,000,629.56	$ (22,933.03)	$ 977,696.53	Permanent Fund
Tuition and Fees			$ -		
Endowment			$ -		
Sales and Services			$ -		
Other Sources - Detail in Comments			$ -		
Total Revenues	$ 1,135,229.56	$ 1,135,229.56	$ (22,933.03)	$ 1,112,296.53	
Transfers (to) from					
Instruction and General			$ -		
Student Social and Cultural			$ -		
Research			$ -		
Public Service			$ -		
Internal Service			$ -		
Student Aid			$ -		
Auxiliary Enterprises			$ -		
Athletics			$ -		
Independent Operations			$ -		
Capital Outlay			$ -		
Renewal and Replacement			$ -		
Total Transfers	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	

Expenses - If multiple revenue sources, provide a breakdown of each revenue source per expense category

	FY27 FTE		Change FTE		Change FTE	$ -	FY28 FTE		
Faculty Salaries	8.5	$ 778,906.06	-0.5	$ 778,906.06	-0.5	$ (26,348.22)	8.0	$ 752,557.84	Coordinators, Itinerants
Professional Salaries			0.0		0.0	$ -			
Other Staff Salaries	1.5	$ 63,724.54	-0.5	$ 63,724.54	-0.5	$ (7,302.46)	1.0	$ 56,422.08	Secretary, Other
Student Salaries (GA/TA)			0.0		0.0	$ -			
Other Salaries			0.0		0.0	$ -			
Total All Salaries	10.0	$ 842,630.60	-1.0	$ 842,630.60	-1.0	$ (33,650.68)	9.0	$ 808,979.92	
Fringe Benefits		$ 292,598.96		$ 292,598.96		$ 10,717.65		$ 303,316.61	
Travel						$ -			
Utilities						$ -			
Institutional Support Charges						$ -			
Plant Operation and Maintenance Charges						$ -			
Supplies and Expenses						$ -			
Equipment						$ -			
Other Expenditures						$ -			
Total Expenditures	10.0	$ 1,135,229.56	-1.0	$ 1,135,229.56	-1.0	$ (22,933.03)	9.0	$ 1,112,296.53	
Ending Fund Balance		$ -		$ -		$ 0.00		$ -	

RPSP-Objectives 1

NEW MEXICO HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (NMHED)
Research & Public Service Project (RPSP)
Project Objectives Sheet

Institution: New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

RPSP Project: Low Vision Clinic/Outreach Program

Total $ 111,100.00

	Demonstrable goal based on benefit to students (especially at-risk), generation of degrees (especially STEM-H) and the people of New Mexico	Actuals for FY26	Target for FY27	Target for FY28	Comments - Demonstrate consistent improvement as a result of the awarded RPSP, trends, etc.
1	Increase the number of NM students with low vision who have an opportunity to receive assessment, equipment and educational support through the LVC.	We saw 28 students in low vision clinic in FY 26. We had 56 appointments scheduled.	60 Students to be seen	50 students to be seen.	We are trying to figure out ways to decrease the amount of last minute cancellations and no-shows we have at clinic as they have greatly increased. Decreasing goal as we are still rebuilding the clinic.
2	Create a low vision clinic with staff dedicated to the clinic.	Currently work with a doctor in the south and one in the Albuquerque/metro area. Still have a need for a doctor in the Northwest/four corners area	Fully staffed clinic with at least 3 doctors available to hold clinics in areas of the state with a high need.	ors available to hold clinic	Our doctor in the north is unable to travel out of the Albuquerque area at this time. We still need a doctor for the four corners area for at least one clinic day.
3	NM students will have access to highly qualified teachers of the visually impaired and orientation and mobility instructors in their local school districts.	We had 10 students in the visual impairment program (VIP). Of those, 6 were working towards TSVI licensure and 4towards COMS.	Continue to provide scholarships and mentorship to at least 24 students in the Visual Impairment Program and focus on areas of the state in which there are currently no TSVI or COMS services available	Continue to provide scholarships and mentorship to at least 24 students in the Visual Impairment Program and focus on areas of the state in which there are currently no TSVI or COMS services available	
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					

Add Additional lines as needed