

# COVID 19: Internet Access & the Impact on New Mexico Tribal Communities

Following New Mexico's public health and stay-at-home orders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many New Mexicans have found themselves working and learning from home. The need and demand for internet access has become increasingly apparent as many New Mexicans have relied on high-speed internet to not only work and learn from home, but to access healthcare services via telehealth, and stay connected to loved ones.



According to Census estimates, **approximately 26% of New Mexico's population** lacks broadband connections.

**Nearly 10%** of the state's population **cannot purchase** a high-speed internet connection due to a **lack of broadband capacity** where they live.

For more information and a full list of sources and citations, see: [COVID 19: Internet Access and the Impact on New Mexico Tribal Communities](#) (Authors: G. Sanchez, C. Roybal, A. Joshi); UNM Native American Budget & Policy Institute: [nabpi.unm.edu/covid-19-resources](http://nabpi.unm.edu/covid-19-resources); UNM Center for Social Policy: <http://csp.unm.edu/research/2020-census.html>

## Native Americans have the LOWEST Access to High-Speed Internet



In 2020, the US Government Accountability Office reported that **1.5 million people on tribal lands are WITHOUT essential services.**



One estimate reports **80%** of individuals residing on **tribal lands** in New Mexico **do not** have internet services.



Nationally, **68% of ALL tribal communities on reservations** lack access to broadband services (FCC).

Additionally, **10% of New Mexicans cannot afford** high-speed internet.



According to the FCC, **50% of Indian Health Service (IHS) Clinics** rely on **outdated service connections.**

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## The Widespread Impact of Limited Broadband Connectivity

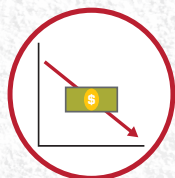
### Census 2020: Everyone HAS to Count

In a 2019 statewide survey, **only 71% of Native Americans reported having internet access at home or at work** that would allow them to submit their Census information online **compared to nearly 90% of all other New Mexicans.**



### Health Disparities are Exacerbated

The American Hospital Association reports that 76% of U.S. hospitals connect with patients through telehealth services. **Yet, HALF of IHS Clinics lack adequate service connections.**

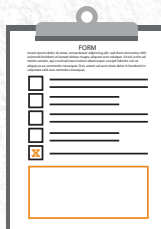


For tribes, a mere 1% UNDERCOUNT could equal a loss of over **\$2 MILLION A YEAR** in federal funding.

### Educational & Economic Impact

Lack of access to high speed internet for home-schooling **WILL INCREASE existing inequalities in education outcomes** for Native American students.

That equals nearly **\$21.5 MILLION LOST for critical community programs across 10 years** for tribes in New Mexico.



From February 2020 to April 2020, **the state unemployment rate increased from 4.8% to 11.3%.<sup>1</sup>** Native Americans have the highest unemployment rate in New Mexico, making this rise in unemployment and access to benefits even more challenging for tribes.

<sup>1</sup>Information obtained from Bureau of Labor Statistics (<https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.nm.html>)