

Recommendations to support Economic Opportunity

Otero County Healthcare Services Department

Full report available at: <https://www.co.tero.nm.us/374/Community-Health-Assessment>



Economic Opportunity in Otero County

- A strong local economy is closely linked to lower rates of poverty and unemployment; in many rural areas, poverty and unemployment rates are higher than in urban and suburban areas
- Our unique location between the *Sacramento Mountains* and *White Sands National Park*, our proximity to and strong relationships with *Holloman Air Force Base* and *White Sands Missile Range*, and our quality educational, medical, and public health systems all contribute to a thriving economy for many residents
- However, there are **significant inequities in access to resources, educational attainment, and income**¹:
 - The percentage of the *population below the poverty level* varies by ZCTA (a general representation of USPS zip codes by the US Census Bureau) and ranges from **0% to 43.7%**
 - **40%** of Hispanic children in Otero County live in *households with incomes below the poverty level*, compared with **16%** of non-Hispanic White children in Otero County
 - **27%** of Native Americans and **31%** of Hispanic adults aged 25+ in Otero County do not have a *high school diploma*, compared with **15%** of non-Hispanic White adults age 25+
 - **81%** of households in Otero County have *access to high-speed internet*, which is lower than the rest of NM (**86%**) and the US (**94%**)



Recommendations based on evidence, community input, and current priorities

- Support *time-limited, subsidized, paid job opportunities* that provide a bridge to unsubsidized employment
- Align *career and vocational educational and training opportunities* with needs of regional employers within specific sectors
- Recruit and attract *employers who provide paid sick leave and paid family leave* to their employees
- Advocate for policies that mandate paid sick leave for all employees
- Advocate for *policies that increase minimum wage*
- Promote local organizations that provide *training and support to small businesses*
- Leverage existing relationships with tribal, medical, military, and educational organizations to improve *regional educational, employment, and transportation access*



Sources:

¹[U.S. Census Bureau, 2019](#)