



**Eastern New Mexico University  
Ruidoso Branch Community College  
Strategic Plan  
2024 – 2029**

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Finally, we sought some high-level data from our local environment, much of which affirmed our understanding of our community. In particular, ***Lincoln County households are less likely to have children under the age of 18 living in them than the rest of the state, and enrollment in local K-12 schools has declined by more than 10% in the last 6 years.*** The median age in the Village is 51, and the number of retirees in the area is growing.

The Village also has broad economic disparities. Approximately 15% of the population lives below the poverty line and wages are about 30% lower than they are in the rest of the state, even as construction and housing prices have both increased over the last 10 years. ***A May 2023 survey of students attending ENMU-Ruidoso indicated that 68% of students are food insecure and 37% reported being homeless in the last 12 months.***

Each of these data points informed some aspect of the strategic plan, either by bringing a strategic priority to the forefront or by illuminating a specific strategy.

## Part III: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)

In Part II, we described the process we deployed to develop this strategic plan. Each feature of this process – from the expert insights of our Steering Committee to the internal and external data we harvested to the valued input from our key constituencies – has helped us develop a broad understanding of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. These elements of our internal operations and our external environment have laid the groundwork for our strategic priorities.

We count a number of strengths at ENMU-Ruidoso. Perhaps the most obvious of these strengths is our strong and supportive local community. These people take pride in our College and continue to engage us by attending events and contributing to our programs. Our College is also poised to succeed. We already boast small class sizes and strong student-faculty relations, as well as a strong dual-credit program that builds a pipeline of potential students. ENMU-Ruidoso also has a strategic and nimble administration and staff with an eye toward the future, as evidenced by our recent acquisition of the adjoining Sierra Mall. This space will present us with opportunities to grow our programs and appeal to students in the coming years.

We also acknowledge some weaknesses, which we should work to address in this strategic plan. We struggle to retain students, especially those who are already prone to academic challenges. Likewise, we struggle to bring new faculty and staff to our team, owing, in part, to our recruitment efforts. In particular, the interaction between our human capital and our infrastructure is a point of growth. Finally, we lack local brand awareness and visibility, though, recent activities to this end have been promising.

Looking externally, we also have a number of opportunities. We are part of the ENMU system, and that relationship provides opportunities for growth and infrastructure development. The Village of Ruidoso constantly sees new industries and businesses introduced to its system, many of which could benefit from workforce training and development. We also have the potential for growth through our traditional programming (and tapping yet unreached markets of students in surrounding communities), online programming, and potentially, athletics.











