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## **PED receives grant funds to provide free digital citizenship training for New Mexico residents**

**SANTA FE, NM** – The New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) was recently awarded a \$453,000 Google Kids Initiative grant as a result of a 2021 settlement agreement between the New Mexico Department of Justice and Google. The PED will be using grant funds to provide digital citizenship training to New Mexico residents. Training sessions will provide instruction to educators, parents and community members on key topics such as screen time, social media, AI and Internet safety for children.

The first two trainings are scheduled for July 29 and 30 in Santa Fe. A training session in Taos is scheduled for August 1.

“In today’s digital age, it is imperative that we provide students and families with the tools to navigate the online world safely,” said **Public Education Secretary Arsenio Romero**.

The Google Kids Initiative grant is intended to fund programs that focus on increasing access to technology among children in underserved areas and educating children on how to safely use that technology. The Google Kids Initiative grant is managed by New Mexico Community Trust.

The Google New Mexico Kids Initiative was created as a result of legal action taken against Google over allegations Google violated the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) and New Mexico state consumer protection laws. The New Mexico Department of Justice (formerly the Attorney General’s Office) reached a settlement agreement with Google in 2021, a condition of which was to create and fund the Google New Mexico Kids Initiative to promote education, privacy and safety for New Mexico children across the state.

The New Mexico Legislature passed the Digital Equity for Education Act during the 2023 session, further establishing the state’s commitment to equal access to technology for all students. Funding from the Google Kids Initiative grant will support outcomes that align with the state’s commitment to promote digital equity for students and foster digital citizenship practices to ensure the safe, ethical, responsible and informed use of technology.

To support New Mexico’s commitment to digital equity, the PED, Digital Respons-Ability, Regional Education Centers and other partners will provide digital citizenship learning to New Mexico residents. Over the next two years educators can expect to see a plan for strategically supporting the implementation of professional development for educators statewide on essential skills and knowledge regarding data privacy, digital citizenship and creating students who are informed lifelong consumers of digital information

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