

Lucero Center /
Española Library
www.raalp.org
read@raalp.org

Rio Arriba Adult Literacy Program

Transforming Lives Through Literacy



New Mexico Senate
Finance Committee
490 Old Santa Fe Trail
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Greetings,

My name is Devon Hoffman and I am the Program Director at the Rio Arriba Adult Literacy Program. I urge you to support S.B. 135, the New Mexico Opportunity Scholarship Act.

State-funded college tuition programs like the Opportunity Scholarship are game-changers for our students and communities. Many of our adult students have set their sights on college, and seek out our program to improve their literacy before applying. But literacy is rarely the only obstacle facing these students; prohibitive costs and scholarships that are inflexible to their working family lives put college beyond often reach to even the most ambitious student. However, improving the Opportunity Scholarship could make it a model for a program that works for *all* students' needs.

With the passage of S.B. 135, we can restore access to tuition-free college for thousands of New Mexico students, and extend this benefit for the first time to returning adult learners and part-time students, who often do not qualify for other scholarships.

The Opportunity Scholarship also compliments the Lottery Scholarship by closing the tuition gap for Lottery-eligible students, and also expands the impact of federal aid benefits for students by freeing up remaining aid for expenses like books, transportation, and childcare, that can often be barriers to accessing education.

With the full recommended amount of \$46 million, we can help up to 50,000 New Mexicans make the dream of a college degree a reality, and bring an additional \$175 million in revenue to our state via their contributions as taxpayers and savings to public assistance programs.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to helping New Mexico's students. I appreciate your time and consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Devon Hoffman

Director, RAALP

