

The New Mexico Workforce Conference, Innovate+Educate, and AIR.org announce leading workforce event to be held May 2026

State and national leaders will convene in Santa Fe to advance skills-based workforce solutions, AI's impact on the future of work, and economic mobility.

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[Innovate+Educate](#), in partnership with the [American Institutes for Research \(AIR\)](#) and the [New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions](#) (NMDWS), today announced a strategic collaboration to co-produce the

2026 Close It Workforce Summit, a national convening focused on closing skills gaps, advancing workforce innovation, and strengthening economic mobility across New Mexico and the nation.



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Secretary Sarita Nair, New Mexico

For the first time, the Close It Summit and the New Mexico Workforce Conference will be held together in one venue, bringing state and national leaders into a single collaborative forum. The event will take place at the Santa Fe Community Convention Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico, with pre-events beginning Sunday, May 3, followed by the full summit on May 4–5, 2026. This multi-sector partnership brings together state leadership, national workforce innovators, and leading research organizations to position participants at the forefront of skills-based workforce transformation and the future of work and learning.

Jamai Blivin, Founder and CEO of Innovate+Educate and Founder of the Close It Summit, emphasized the collaborative strength behind the 2026 event.

“We are so pleased to join forces with the New Mexico Workforce Conference to create both state and national impact,” said Blivin. “It’s all about collaboration. That’s what creates true

system change.”

The American Institutes for Research (AIR), one of the nation’s leading research and evaluation organizations, will contribute research insights, evidence-based strategies, and policy analysis to inform summit dialogue and implementation strategies.

Stephanie Veck of AIR underscored the importance of moving beyond traditional conference models. “We are excited to be co-producing this summit with such strong partners who are truly focused on system change, not just a conference that ends after two days,” said Veck. “This collaboration is about translating research and policy into sustained action that improves workforce and education outcomes.”

Sarita Nair, Secretary of the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, emphasized the state’s leadership in shaping the future of work.

“New Mexico is not waiting to adapt to the future of work — we are helping shape it,” said Secretary Nair. “Hosting and co-producing the 2026 Workforce Summit with such strong national partners reinforces our belief that workforce transformation requires alignment, evidence, and action. Together, we are building a model for system change that extends far beyond a two-day event.”

The summit will bring together leaders from community and technical colleges, universities, industry, workforce agencies, philanthropy, and national policy organizations. Designed as a working convening rather than a traditional conference, the event will emphasize implementation strategies, cross-sector accountability, and measurable progress.

Pre-events on May 3 will include specialized convenings and partner-led sessions designed to foster deeper collaboration among invited leaders and stakeholders.

For more information, visit <https://closeit.org>
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