

ECOSYSTEM ANALYSIS

New Mexico New Deal Art and History Initiative

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Contact Information:
Holly Shen, Senior Director
Phone: 917.364.1073
Email: hshen@lord.ca

Lord Cultural Resources

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We distinguish ourselves through a comprehensive and integrated full-service offering built on a foundation of key competencies: visioning, planning and implementation.

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Our Los Angeles office occupies the ancestral and traditional lands still inhabited and cared for by the Gabrieliño-Tongva. Our New York office is located on the traditional lands of the Lenape peoples.
Our Toronto office is located within the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples. Toronto is home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples.

We honor and pay respect to the Elders and descendants — past, present, and emerging — as they continue their stewardship of these lands and waters. We encourage you to acknowledge their presence, wherever you are.



Józef Bakoś
Cottonwoods
About 1935-1939
Watercolor on paper
16⅝" W x 23¾" H

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1. Contextual and Comparable Analysis

New Mexico presents a distinctive environment for this work. The state holds one of the most extensive concentrations of New Deal art and architecture in the United States, with assets distributed across urban centers, rural communities, tribal lands, and public buildings such as schools, courthouses, and post offices. At the same time, stewardship, interpretation, and access to these resources are fragmented across a wide range of institutions, jurisdictions, and communities.

This combination of abundance and dispersion creates both a challenge and an opportunity. While the geographic spread and complex ownership structures of New Deal assets limit the feasibility of a single, centralized museum model, they also position New Mexico as an ideal context for exploring decentralized approaches that connect existing sites, organizations, and audiences into a more cohesive system.

The contextual and comparable analysis examines the broader context within which a New Mexico–based New Deal art and history initiative could take shape, articulating the cultural, institutional, and market conditions that influence what is feasible, effective, and sustainable.

The analysis that follows is organized into three primary areas:

- Current trends in New Deal art and history projects, including shifts in preservation, interpretation, and digital access at the national, regional, and state levels.
- An introduction to decentralized museum and cultural organization frameworks, which provide a conceptual foundation for understanding how distributed cultural assets can be coordinated and experienced as part of a unified initiative and how they connect to rural arts and cultural development, recognizing the importance of geographic scale, capacity, and community context in shaping viable models. It also

includes a review of comparable organizations and systems that have adopted these models
- An overview of New Mexico's existing cultural infrastructure at the state, regional, and local levels.

1.1 TRENDS IN NEW DEAL ART AND HISTORY PROJECTS

Interest in New Deal art and history is growing across the United States, and the topic continues to generate scholarship, advocacy, preservation work, digital innovation, and public debate. However, the field remains highly fragmented. Activity is distributed across independent projects, organizations, and regions rather than coordinated through a single institutional framework. As a result, current efforts are characterized by strong but dispersed initiatives in documentation, preservation, interpretation, and public engagement—without a unifying system to connect them.

Understanding current trends requires examining activity at three interconnected scales: national, regional, and state. Across all three, a common pattern emerges—expanding interest and activity, coupled with structural gaps in coordination, interpretation, and long-term stewardship.

National and Federal

At the national level, major institutions, federal agencies, nonprofits, and scholars are increasingly focused on documenting, preserving, and reinterpreting New Deal art and history.

Living New Deal
The most significant development in this space has been the growth of the Living New Deal (LND), founded in 2007 at the University of California, Berkeley. Through its comprehensive mapping and documentation efforts, LND has become the closest approximation of a national platform for New Deal–related resources. In fact, the state of New Mexico's own advocacy organization recently merged with LND, now serving as its New Mexico chapter.

In its first decade or so, LND primarily functioned as a public-facing registry and research tool rather than a fully-fledged interpretive or institutional framework, although the latter elements are now in development. In 2023 LND expanded its website to enable greater access to many resources, including webinars, bibliographies, photographs, and maps. Its work underscores both the scale of the resource and the absence of a centralized entity dedicated to coordinated interpretation, exhibition, or public engagement at a national level.

Academic publications, conferences, and initiatives such as LND's "Advocating for New Deal Art" reflect a growing effort to reassess the legacy of New Deal programs, particularly in relation to race, representation, and authorship.

Controversies surrounding murals depicting Indigenous and Hispanic communities, as well as the removal or loss of artworks, have intensified calls for more nuanced and inclusive interpretation.

Beyond Living New Deal, recent milestones—including the 90th anniversary of the Federal Art Project in 2025—have generated renewed scholarly and public attention. At the same time, federal policy and funding conditions introduce ongoing uncertainty. Reductions in staffing for federal stewardship bodies, including the General Services Administration (GSA), and the potential sale of federal buildings containing New Deal artworks have heightened concerns around preservation and long-term access.[1]

Regional, Distributed and Localized Growth

Parallel to these national developments, there has been a notable increase in localized and regional initiatives focused on New Deal art and history. These include exhibitions, rural heritage projects, community-based interpretation efforts, and subject-specific research initiatives across multiple states. Examples range from rural documentation and interpretation projects in states such as West Virginia, to exhibitions focused on African American New Deal artists in the South, to major institutional exhibitions such as the forthcoming "Citizen Artist" exhibition in Delaware. In New Mexico and elsewhere, community-based efforts—such as the Gallup New Deal Art Virtual Museum—demonstrate how local organizations are advancing interpretation and access in ways that are place-based and community-driven.

While these initiatives reflect growing momentum and innovation, they remain largely independent and uncoordinated. Collectively, they point to a field that is expanding through distributed, place-based efforts rather than through centralized institutional development. This pattern reinforces both the vitality of the subject matter and the absence of a cohesive framework connecting such efforts at a broader scale.

Particularly across the Intermountain West and Southwest, New Deal art and history have become increasingly tied to heritage tourism, cultural identity, and community-based preservation. The distinctive character of New Deal production in this region, shaped by Indigenous, Hispanic, and frontier narratives, continues to attract scholarly attention and public interest. Regional initiatives often take the form of collaborative documentation efforts, tourism routes, and partnerships between local historical societies, nonprofits, and cultural organizations. For example, post office mural tourism and similar heritage travel experiences have emerged as identifiable niche offerings, supported by digital tools and grassroots research. In Texas, community efforts to document and tour WPA-era post offices and buildings have grown through the work of local

[1] *New York Times*, "Murals in the Wilbur Cohen Building by Guston and Shahn Reconsidered," February 5, 2026.

historical societies working with the Living New Deal's national database, including San Antonio's historic Alamo Stadium constructed by the WPA in 1938–40.

At the same time, the Intermountain West and Southwest regions have been at the forefront of critical reinterpretation. Scholars and communities are increasingly examining how New Deal programs represented—or misrepresented—Indigenous and Hispanic communities, raising questions about authorship, narrative authority, and the ethics of preservation. The question of who told whose story in Southwestern murals — and who was rendered in/visible — has been central to community debates in cities like Gallup, Albuquerque, and Santa Fe where New Deal artworks remain highly visible in public buildings and civic spaces.

New Mexico

Within this broader landscape, New Mexico stands out as one of the richest New Deal states in the nation, containing a remarkable concentration of murals, paintings, sculptures, and architectural features created between 1933 and 1943. Many of these remain *in situ* across more than 90 communities, including artworks created by Indigenous and Hispanic artworks who set a template for what Southwestern art "should" look like.

These assets have supported an active, though still loosely organized, ecosystem of preservationists, scholars, arts organizations, and community leaders. A key leader and steward of this legacy was Kathryn Flynn who in 2012 compiled nearly 400 pages of New Deal projects in *Public Art and Architecture in New Mexico 1933–1943: A Guide to the New Deal Legacy* (Sunstone Press). She also formed the National New Deal Preservation Association (NNDPA) which led efforts for many years to document, restore, and interpret New Deal assets in the state. As noted earlier, this organization more recently transitioned to become part of Living New Deal as a New Mexico chapter.

New Mexico has also emerged as a leader in digital access and community-based interpretation. The Gallup New Deal Art Virtual Museum, which debuted online in March 2025, represents a significant advancement in making dispersed collections publicly accessible while incorporating contemporary voices and perspectives into interpretation. This work reflects a broader trend toward participatory and community-informed approaches. Statewide, a trend toward interpretive complexity is visible: community conversations about murals that depict Native peoples in stereotypical or romanticized ways are now paired with efforts to commission responses from living Indigenous artists rather than simply removing or covering historical works (e.g., UNM Zimmerman murals). Still, education, conversation, and restoration needs remain significant.

New Mexico's New Deal art community is navigating several concurrent pressures: aging infrastructure in historic buildings that house murals, uncertainty

over federal building sales affecting GSA-held artworks, and growing demand from Native and Hispanic communities for interpretive authority over works that depict their ancestors.

At the same time, New Mexico reflects many of the broader challenges facing the field. Stewardship responsibilities are dispersed across federal, state, and local entities; many artworks are housed in aging buildings requiring maintenance; and there is increasing demand from Indigenous and Hispanic communities for greater interpretive authority over works that depict their histories and identities.

It remains essential that whichever model or approach is advanced, it must acknowledge and address the problematics of New Deal art in rural New Mexico, as across much of the United States. While the programs expanded access to cultural production, it is well known that they were often not neutral. Some initial ways to transparently confront this almost 100 years later include:

- Applying a critical lens to certain stereotypical, romanticized or unjust depictions in New Deal artworks of particularly indigenous and Hispanic communities.
- Ensuring resources are distributed fairly and even generously to rural populations that are home to New Deal Art assets, while accommodating flexible levels of participation based on capacity.
- Rebalancing authorship by ensuring all communities have a voice in how their New Deal assets are interpreted and shared, incorporating local values and storytelling techniques.

Digital as Catalyst

Across all scales, digital platforms and digital humanities approaches are becoming essential infrastructure for the field. Beyond simple digitization, these tools enable mapping, storytelling, research access, and interpretive layering across geographically dispersed sites.

Digital initiatives—such as online archives, virtual exhibitions, and interactive maps—are increasingly serving as connective tissue between otherwise isolated collections and projects. At the same time, there remains a gap between documentation and fully developed digital interpretation, as many organizations lack the capacity or resources to build robust digital exhibitions and platforms. In this context, digital approaches are not only expanding access but also enabling new forms of coordination and visibility across a fragmented landscape.

Key Implications

Taken together, these trends reveal a field that is active, evolving and increasingly relevant, yet structurally incomplete. There is strong and growing interest in New Deal art and history, but no single institution or system currently

provides cohesive interpretation, coordinated access or shared visibility at a national or regional scale.

Instead, the field is characterized by:

- Distributed and place-based initiatives
- Fragmented stewardship and interpretation
- Growing demand for more inclusive and community-driven narratives
- Increasing reliance on digital tools to connect dispersed resources.

These conditions point toward the need for models that can link existing assets, organizations, and initiatives into a more coherent system—without requiring centralized ownership or relocation. As explored in the following section, decentralized museum and cultural organization models offer a framework for addressing these challenges while building on the strengths of the current landscape.

1.2 DECENTRALIZED MUSEUM AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION MODELS

Decentralized museum and cultural organization models have emerged as a significant and increasingly relevant approach for interpreting dispersed cultural assets, expanding access and leveraging existing infrastructure. Rather than consolidating collections and programming within a single physical institution, these models distribute interpretation, engagement and stewardship across multiple sites, organizations, and communities. This approach is particularly well-suited to contexts—such as New Mexico—where cultural resources are geographically widespread, embedded within existing buildings and landscapes and held by a diverse range of stakeholders.

The concept of decentralization is not new. In many ways, it reflects the original logic of the New Deal itself, which operated through a distributed system of federally supported but locally implemented programs. Across the United States, and especially in New Mexico, New Deal initiatives established networks of art centers, public buildings, and community programs that collectively expanded access to arts and culture beyond major urban centers. Contemporary decentralized museum models build on similar principles, using networked structures to connect sites, partners, and audiences.

Through research and the project visioning workshop, several primary decentralized model typologies were identified. These are not mutually exclusive and are often combined into hybrid structures.

Hub-and-Spoke

The hub-and-spoke model is one of the most widely recognized frameworks for decentralized (or at least partly decentralized, depending on the relative size of the central hub vis à vis the spokes, and the extent of the network) cultural systems. In this model, a central "hub" provides overall leadership, coordination, and interpretive framing, while a network of "spoke" sites—such as museums, historic buildings, visitor centers, or program-based locations—deliver localized experiences.

The hub typically serves several core functions: establishing a unifying narrative or brand, coordinating marketing and communications, supporting fundraising and grant development, and providing shared resources to partners. Spokes, in turn, contribute site-specific content, programming, and community engagement, often drawing on their unique collections or local context.

A key strength of this model is its ability to balance consistency and flexibility. The central hub can ensure a cohesive identity and visitor experience, while individual sites retain the ability to differentiate their offerings. It is also inherently scalable, allowing new partners or locations to be added over time. However, the model depends heavily on strong leadership, clear communication, and trust between the hub and participating sites. Without these, there is a risk of imbalance or disengagement among partners. Workshop participants also noted that centralized models may create concerns around control, resource allocation, and representation—particularly in regions with strong local identities or histories of underrepresentation.

Network / Pillar

The network (or "pillar") model represents a more distributed approach, in which multiple organizations operate as relatively equal partners within a coordinated system. Rather than relying on a single central authority, participating institutions collaborate around shared goals, branding or initiatives while maintaining autonomy over their own programming and operations, although there is often an "umbrella" organization that coordinates certain functions (such as marketing and communication, for example). Each of the partners retains complete institutional independence; the binding tie is the common subject matter theme (in this case, New Mexico New Deal art).

This model is particularly effective in environments where there are already multiple established organizations with capacity, expertise, and community trust. It allows for shared leadership and can reduce the risks associated with over-centralization. Partners may collaborate on joint initiatives such as exhibitions, grant applications, or marketing campaigns, while continuing to advance their individual missions. In terms of its constituent partners, it is a very flexible model as different types of organizations may participate, from 501 c 3 organizations to

educational institutions to even for-profit attractions – just so long as all are committed to certain standards of interpretation of the subject matter.

The primary challenge of the network model lies in coordination. Without a clear central structure, decision-making can be slower, and alignment across partners may require ongoing facilitation. In existing examples of this type of distributed museum, the umbrella organization that coordinates the group may have representation from each of the partners on its board, but this is not necessarily always the case, and in some cases a financial contribution to the support of the umbrella organization's functions, however extensive or limited they may be, is a requirement for participation. All depends on agreements between the potential participants, and the success of this model depends on strong relationships, clearly defined roles, and a shared commitment to collective outcomes.

Association

The association model functions as a looser form of network, typically organized around membership. In this structure, a central entity acts as a convener, providing a platform for knowledge-sharing, professional development, and collective advocacy, rather than directing programming or interpretation. Associations often include a wide range of participants—institutions, individuals, and community organizations—who share a common interest or thematic focus. The model is particularly effective for building field-wide awareness, disseminating best practices, and fostering collaboration across a broad geographic area.

While associations can play an important role in strengthening connections and visibility, they generally do not provide the level of coordination or unified visitor experience associated with more integrated models. As such, they are often best understood as complementary to, rather than a replacement for, other decentralized structures.

Digital & Hybrid

In practice, many contemporary cultural initiatives adopt hybrid approaches that combine elements of the models described above. For example, a system may include a central coordinating entity (hub) while also fostering peer-to-peer collaboration among partner organizations (network) and offering broader participation through membership structures (association).

Hybrid models can also incorporate both physical and digital components. A "virtual hub" may serve as a central platform for interpretation, storytelling, and visitor orientation, while physical sites across a region provide in-person experiences. This approach expands access and allows for participation by organizations that may not have the capacity to serve as full-scale visitor destinations.

Workshop discussions emphasized that hybridization may be particularly relevant in New Mexico, where institutional capacity varies widely across communities, and where geographic scale and rural conditions present both challenges and opportunities. Participants also highlighted the importance of participatory frameworks—ensuring that both partner organizations and audiences can actively contribute to the interpretation and presentation of New Deal art and history.

Relevance for Rural Populations

Rural cultural development is most effective when it is asset-based, cross-sector, and rooted in existing community capacity rather than reliant on large-scale new infrastructure that often is not even located locally. As across much of the United States, many New Deal artworks in New Mexico remain embedded in everyday civic buildings. In New Mexico, however, this condition is intensified by the state's geographic scale, rural distribution, and the strong alignment of New Deal production with regional cultural identities.

Decentralized models allow these assets to be activated *in situ*, rather than removed or recentralized. For example, New Deal murals in small-town post offices or schools can function as "micro-sites" within a broader network, supported by shared interpretation, digital storytelling (for example, via a mobile app and online, which allows people who would not visit in person to access the assets as well), and coordinated programming across sites similar to that organised by History Colorado (see below Section 2.3). Hybrid and digital approaches can further support rural inclusion by allowing sites with limited staffing or infrastructure to participate through virtual platforms, shared content, or seasonal programming, rather than requiring permanent visitor services.

A hub-and-spoke or hybrid system could connect these sites to larger institutions such as a 'New Deal Art Discovery Center' as in the case of the Public Lands Interpretive Association (see below Section 2.3) or eventually even the New Mexico Museum of Art or the University of New Mexico if such a partnership is decided upon and agreed. This enables resource-sharing (conservation expertise, interpretation, marketing) while maintaining local stewardship with cultural value remaining embedded in the community. Likewise, economic benefits—such as heritage tourism—are more evenly distributed.

Cross-sector partnerships are also critical in rural contexts. Libraries, schools, tribal cultural centers, and local government buildings can all act as interpretive nodes, allowing New Deal art to intersect with education, civic life, and tourism infrastructure. This reflects, in many ways, the original distributed logic of the Works Progress Administration, which embedded cultural production directly within public life rather than isolating it in elite institutions.

These decentralized models offer a way to reconcile the distributed legacy of New Deal art with contemporary priorities of equity, sustainability, and local

agency. By leveraging existing local institutions, cultural assets, and cross-sector partnerships, they respond to geographic dispersion and limited resources while supporting incremental growth, shared ownership, and a cohesive regional narrative. In doing so, they enable rural communities not only to steward heritage, but to actively shape its interpretation and future development through sustainable, locally grounded approaches.

Key Considerations Across Models

Across all decentralized approaches, several common considerations emerge:

- Access and Distribution: Decentralized models expand geographic reach and reduce barriers to access by bringing experiences closer to communities.
- Use of Existing Assets: These models leverage existing institutions, sites, and infrastructure rather than requiring significant new capital investment.
- Brand and Narrative Cohesion: A unifying story or identity is critical to ensuring that distributed experiences are understood as part of a larger whole.
- Partnership and Trust: Successful implementation depends on strong relationships, clear roles, and mutual benefit among participating organizations.
- Scalability and Flexibility: Decentralized systems can evolve over time, adding new partners, sites, or programmatic elements as capacity grows.
- Authenticity and Transparency: With regards to interpretive strategies, it is essential that some of the problematic elements of New Deal legacies are transparently confronted and that ownership and authorship of interpretation and meaning prioritize the collaboration or input of community voices and organizations.

1.3 COMPARABLE ORGANIZATIONS

This section examines a range of organizations and systems whose operating models, partnerships, and program strategies offer relevant insights for the development of a New Mexico New Deal art and history initiative. Rather than identifying direct analogs, the analysis focuses on how different entities have addressed challenges like those identified in this study—particularly the interpretation of dispersed cultural assets, coordination across multiple stakeholders, and expansion of access through both physical and digital means. Each example is aligned to one or more of the decentralized model types introduced in the previous section, illustrating how these frameworks operate in practice.

History Colorado

As the nation's largest preservation program of its kind, History Colorado provides a strong example of a **hub-and-spoke model** adapted to a statewide context,

demonstrating how cultural resources distributed across a wide geographic area can be connected through coordinated systems with a leading entity at the helm. Established in 1879, it is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and operates under the State of Colorado's Department of Higher Education.

The organization operates a central flagship museum—the purpose-built History Colorado Center—alongside a network of ten regional museums and historic sites, mostly located in traditional and pre-existing buildings. For the most part, each museum tells the story of a specific group of Coloradans: women, the Ute people, Civil War soldiers, or miners, and the histories of local towns. Across these sites, as well as at the free public research center and Colorado's Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, History Colorado stewards the State's collection of some 15 million objects, photographs, and archival resources, with a dynamic public offering that includes field trips, day camps, and traveling programs across the state of Colorado. Its grant-making arm, the Colorado State Historical Fund, also continuously works on heritage preservation projects beyond the museums.

Through this structure, History Colorado combines centralized leadership, branding, and administrative support with localized interpretation and sometimes multi-site programming. Its model illustrates how a statewide system can balance consistency and regional specificity, while also integrating education, preservation, and tourism objectives.

National Trails System

Similarly, national trail and byway systems—such as those administered through the National Trails System and the America's Byways program—offer a **network model** that does not rely on a single institution but instead connects geographically dispersed sites through a shared narrative, designation framework, and federal-state partnership structure. There are multiple trails and scenic passageway programs in the United States, many of which are private-public partnerships, that feature and raise awareness of cultural and historically important areas in the country. Interpretation occurs across multiple locations, often *in situ*, while coordination is achieved through interagency collaboration and standardized frameworks.

The National Trails System, signed into law by Lyndon B. Johnson in 1968, established three types of trails: national scenic trails, national recreation trails, and connecting-and-side trails and in1978, a fourth national historic trails category was added. While establishing a new trail is a 6–15-year long process that requires feasibility studies and eventually sponsorship and signing into law, the National Trails System demonstrates that large-scale cultural narratives can be effectively interpreted across multiple sites without requiring centralized ownership or relocation of assets. It also highlights the importance of clear frameworks, branding, and coordination mechanisms in making distributed systems legible and accessible to the public. A partnership with the Native Lands,

National Trails (NLNT) initiative further informs interpretation strategies "to advance the NTS' knowledge of ancestral Lands...with Indigenous communities along National Scenic and Historic Trails."

Another program is *The America's Byways program*, part of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and is administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). It is an umbrella term for roads designated as National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads. The U.S. Secretary of Transportation is the official responsible for recognizing and designating these roads. Together, there is an *Intergovernmental Committee*, with members from the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Department of Transportation, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. As stated in the Committee's MOU: "*federal transportation funds, administered by the States through Federal Highway Administration [which does not own or manage any trails itself], are a major funding source for National Trails and National Trail-related projects through Federal surface transportation funding programs."*

Public Lands Interpretive Association

The Public Lands Interpretive Association (PLIA) is a strong example of an **association model** that operates as a nonprofit partner to federal land management agencies to support interpretation, education, and retail services across a network of sites. The association is based on formal partnerships (primarily with the Bureau of Land Management and the US Forest Service), allowing it to provide consistent visitor-facing services while working across multiple locations and jurisdictions transcending state borders in New Mexico and Arizona.

Its Public Lands Discovery Center focuses on community gathering, education and awareness of use of public lands, rather than being a museum or interpretation center. Likewise, the New Mexico Mobile Visitor Center program aims to bring the PLIA's resources to communities across the state via events in communities and public lands, distributing free maps, guidebooks for recreation around the state, and "America the Beautiful" federal public lands passes.

Native Arts & Culture Foundation

The Native Arts and Culture Foundation (NACF) offers a different but complementary type of **association model** that leverages its role as a nonprofit intermediary. With a national scope, it supports Indigenous artists and cultural organizations through grants, programs, and advocacy. Rather than operating physical sites, NACF functions as an enabling organization—building capacity, supporting networks, and advancing shared goals across a distributed field.

These association model examples demonstrate how nonprofit intermediaries can play a critical role in coordinating activity, supporting partners, and securing

resources within decentralized systems—without requiring direct control over sites or collections.

Mountain-Plains Museums Association

The Mountain-Plains Museums Association (MPMA) is another **association model** that leverages regional membership organizations to connect museums and cultural institutions across a multi-state area, including New Mexico. It provides professional development, networking opportunities, and a platform for knowledge-sharing among its members.

While associations do not typically coordinate interpretation or visitor experience in a direct way, they play a critical role in strengthening the field, building relationships, and disseminating best practices. In the context of a New Deal initiative, this type of model highlights the potential value of a convening and support function alongside more programmatic or interpretive structures.

Rijksmuseum

The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, widely recognized for its leadership in digital access, is a strong example of a **hybrid digital model.** Through its Rijksstudio platform, the museum has made high-resolution images of its collection freely available for public use, encouraging creative engagement, research, and reinterpretation. This approach shifts the role of the institution from gatekeeper to platform, enabling broader participation and visibility.

Similarly, initiatives such as community curation programs at institutions like the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) demonstrate how digital and participatory strategies can expand interpretation beyond institutional walls, incorporating diverse voices and perspectives. These models underscore how digital strategies are increasingly central to how cultural organizations expand access and enable audience-led storytelling—an essential component of any decentralized cultural initiative or when working across dispersed collections or sites.

Key Takeaways from Comparables

Across these examples, several consistent themes emerge:

- Decentralization is operationalized in multiple ways, including hub-and-spoke systems, networks of independent partners, and looser association models.
- Strong coordination mechanisms are essential, whether through a central hub, an intermediary organization, or a shared framework.
- Partnerships are foundational, particularly in contexts where assets, authority, and capacity are distributed across multiple entities.

- Digital platforms extend and connect physical experiences, enabling access, interpretation, and engagement across geographic boundaries.
- Successful models build on existing infrastructure, rather than creating entirely new institutions from scratch.

These insights reinforce the relevance of decentralized and hybrid approaches for New Mexico, where cultural assets, institutional capacity, and community contexts are similarly distributed. They also provide a set of practical reference points for evaluating and refining concept options in the next phase of the study.

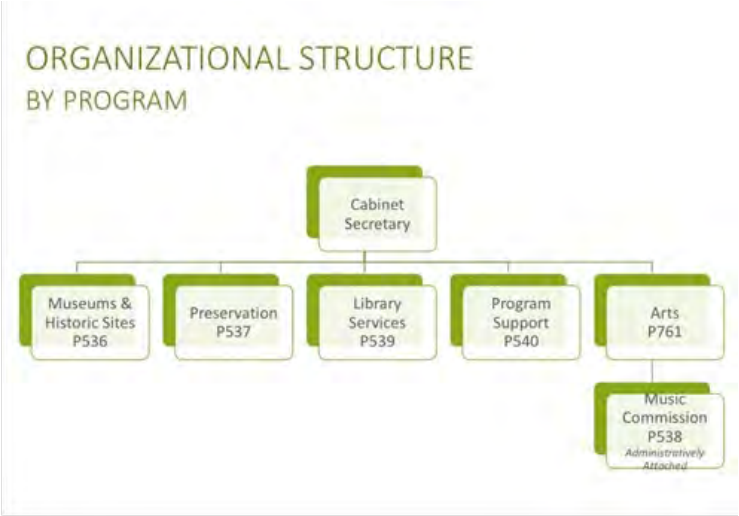
1.4 CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE IN NEW MEXICO

New Mexico's cultural infrastructure is among the most extensive and diverse of any U.S. state, administered primarily through the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). The DCA oversees a broad network of institutions, programs, and support services that collectively preserve, present, and nurture the state's multi-layered cultural heritage — including Indigenous and Hispanic traditions. To support the planning of a decentralized New Deal Art and History Museum, we have researched New Mexico's programs, support systems, and infrastructure that can help fund, manage, and operate cultural offerings.

New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs

The State of New Mexico's Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) was created in 1978 and operates as a cabinet-level department, with its Cabinet Secretary reporting to the Governor to oversee state museums, historic sites, and cultural programs. The following diagram shows the organizational breakdown of the department, illustrating its broad oversight of 15 divisions that carry out its mission, programs and services.





DCA both funds and directly operates cultural infrastructure, including management of the country's largest state sponsored museum system, which includes nine historic sites and eight state-run museums, Office of Archeological studies, while the sub-divisions of New Mexico Arts, New Mexico State Library, and Historic Preservation together manage all other state's cultural, historic, and artistic heritage.

As a division of the DCA, The New Mexico Museum of Art is particularly important to the future development of a statewide New Deal Art and History initiative. The Museum serves as a steward of the largest state-owned collection of New Deal-era artworks in New Mexico, making it one of the most significant repositories of the state's New Deal cultural legacy – making it well positioned to serve as a key anchor institution within a statewide New Deal network.

Economic and Social Impact Study of New Mexico's Arts and Culture Industry

Arts and cultural industries in New Mexico enjoy a national reputation that is far beyond the state's size or economic standing. The Americans for the Arts Economic Prosperity Study conducted in 2022, which focused exclusively on the nonprofit arts sector, noted that the sector generated $740.9 million in economic activity in the state.[2] It also found that 18.3% of New Mexico's arts and culture attendees were non-locals who spent an average of $121.74.

Specifically, in the City of Albuquerque, the sector generated $270.7 million in economic activity. In Taos County, 67.1% of attendees were nonlocal visitors who traveled from outside of the County, where majority of them stated that the

[2] Americans for the Arts, Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 Study conducted in partnership with the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs.

primary purpose of their visit was to specifically visit an arts and culture related event, exhibit, or venue.

The results of the study demonstrated that the arts and culture industry of New Mexico is one with strong economic and social impact – creating jobs, revenue, and cultural experiences that attract visitors and new residents. Such experiences create livable communities and strengthen a sense of belonging. Based on these findings, investing in a decentralized New Deal art and history initiative would support and contribute significantly to New Mexico's long-term economic developing and community well-being goals.

Cultural Districts

Cultural activity in New Mexico is distributed across a wide geographic range, from urban centers to rural communities. In 2007, the Arts & Cultural Districts program was established as a comprehensive economic development strategy designed to capitalize on the expanding creative economy. These districts are zones defined as well-recognized areas of a city in which a high concentration of cultural facilities and programs serve as the main anchor of attraction, and they play an important role in concentrating investment and foot traffic.

New Mexico has 13 affiliated Arts & Cultural Districts, which operate at a local level but are supported through a coordinated framework with the DCA, New Mexico Arts Commission, and New Mexico MainStreet. It serves as a strong example of a state-wide initiative being implemented on the ground, while demonstrating a model of cross-agency collaboration for cultural and economic development. Gallup and Albuquerque are both State-Authorized Arts & Cultural Districts.

2. Market Analysis

New Mexico is home to some of the oldest continually inhabited communities in the U.S.; however, it was the 47th state to join the Union, a little more than 5 weeks before Arizona completed the contiguous United States in 1912—and only two decades before the New Deal federal relief programs began across the country. The identity of the state was thus indelibly shaped by New Deal-era art and architecture as much as it was influenced by its shared borders with five states and Mexico.

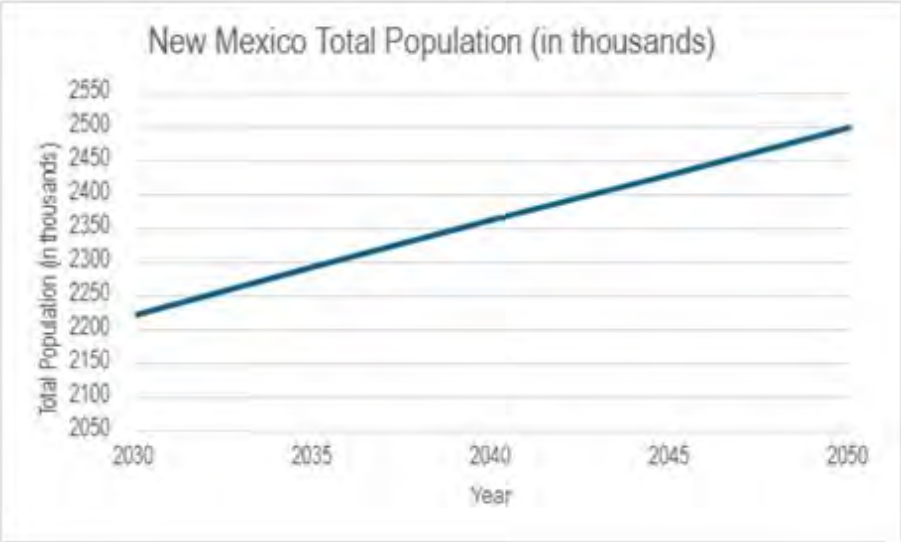
The market analysis looks at the potential markets and relevant demographics for a New Mexico–based New Deal art and history initiative, at the state-wide level and for four selected cities, Albuquerque, Gallup, Roswell and Taos. In this context, "market" refers not to competitive positioning or institutional readiness, but to the place-based audiences, communities and geographies through which New Deal art and history can be experienced, interpreted and activated. Therefore, the analysis does not evaluate or rank locations but rather identifies how different communities across New Mexico represent distinct but complementary market contexts, each with its own audience base, cultural infrastructure, tourism dynamics and opportunities for engagement. Each city profile integrates demographic context with an overview of New Deal assets, as well as the ways in which these assets are currently accessed, interpreted, and experienced. This approach situates market potential within the physical and cultural landscape of each place, rather than abstract indicators alone.

The goal is to understand how these varied markets, taken together, could support a distributed system of sites, programs and experiences, rather than a single destination. This approach reflects both the geographic reality of New Mexico and the original New Deal legacy itself, which embedded art and infrastructure across communities of all sizes.

2.1 STATE-WIDE DEMOGRAPHICS & MARKETS

Population

New Mexico presents a distinctive market environment shaped by geography, demographics and tourism patterns. It is the fifth-largest state by area but has a relatively small and widely dispersed population of approximately 2.1 million residents. This spatial distribution—characterized by large rural regions and smaller population centers—has direct implications for how cultural assets are accessed and experienced.



New Mexico's population is project to reach 2.16 million by 2035 and 2.5 million by 2050, representing steady but modest. The total residential population average annual rate of growth projected for 2020-2060 is 0.57% - which is comparable to the national average of 0.58%.

Indigenous Populations

Indigenous peoples have shaped New Mexico's land, history and culture for thousands of years, with Taos Pueblo and Acoma Pueblo considered among the oldest continuously inhabited communities in North America. Today, New Mexico is home to 23 federally recognized Native Nations, including nineteen Pueblos, three Apache nations, and the Navajo Nation (Diné). Each Nation is a sovereign entity with its own governance systems, laws, languages, traditions and cultural practices. Indigenous peoples comprise approximately 11% of New Mexico's population, with Albuquerque having one of the largest urban Indigenous communities in the U.S. Many residents across the state continue to speak Indigenous languages such as Diné, Keres, Tewa, Towa and Zuni.

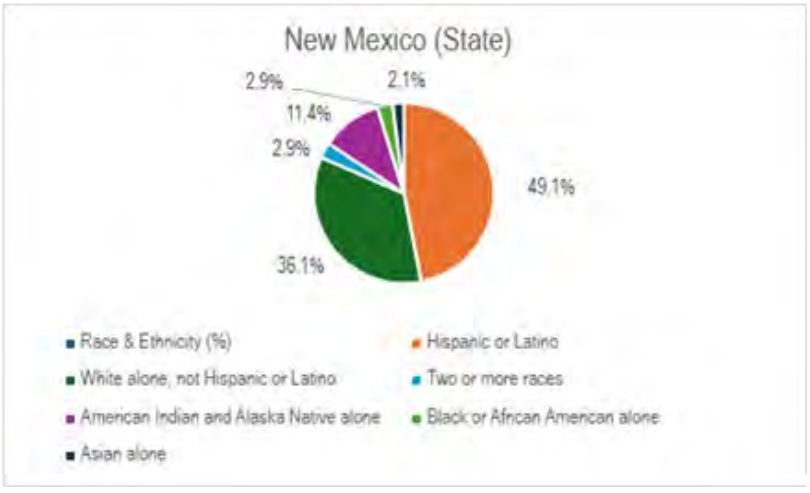
Indigenous territories and communities extend across both rural and urban areas, and across state boundaries, such as the Navajo Nation, which spans New Mexico, Arizona and Utah. Many more communities also exist beyond those that are formally recognized by the state.

Cultural traditions such as feast days, dances and crafts continue to be a highly visible part of Indigenous community life, contributing significantly to the State's cultural and social landscape, with many visitors particularly drawn to artisan markets and events (such as the *Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial)*.

During the New Deal era, New Mexico became a hub for Indigenous art, with federal programs boosting careers of Native artists like Allan Houser, Pablita Velarde, Pop Chalee, and Gerald Nailor. These artists created iconic murals and paintings, often using a "Studio Style" flat, linear aesthetic, heavily influenced by education at the Santa Fe Indian School. Federal programs such as the Works Progress Administration and the Federal Art Project actively supported Indigenous artists, commissioning works, sustaining traditional practices, and in many cases launching or advancing the careers of artists who would become foundational figures in Southwestern and Native art.

Thus, Indigenous communities are central to understanding the legacy of New Deal art in New Mexico—where Indigenous communities remain culturally and geographically integral. This creates both a responsibility and an opportunity to ensure that New Deal art is understood not only as a historical artifact, but as part of an ongoing, living cultural narrative.

Ethnicity, Language, Age



Presently, 49.1% of New Mexico's population is Hispanic or Latino, the highest percentage in the US and more than twice the national percentage of 20%, with

growth projections indicating that it will continue to rank first as the state grows. Additionally, a substantial share of New Mexico residents speak a language other than English at home, reflecting longstanding bilingual and multilingual traditions rather than recent migration alone. Spanish and Indigenous languages are embedded in daily life, underscoring the need for a New Deal Art & History initiative to treat linguistic diversity as part of its core, not an afterthought. Multilingual texts, auditory elements, and symbolic references can transform public spaces into places of recognition and belonging.

Notably, New Mexico's population is aging. Nearly one-quarter of residents are projected to be over the age of 65 by 2040, while younger populations are expected to decline. However, audiences for art typically tend to be older and the widening age distribution could help position a New Deal Art & History initiative as a tool for intergenerational engagement to preserve cultural memory, sustain community cohesion and reinforce belonging and long-term community attachment across generations.

Poverty, Income & Education

Employment in New Mexico is expected to expand steadily but at a relatively slow pace compared to faster-growing western states. Economic indicators reveal significant disparities across New Mexico communities. These patterns echo historical conditions of limited employment that originally motivated New Deal cultural programs, a connection that could be further explored for the project. This means that price sensitivity is likely a strong factor for any charged cultural attractions.

New Mexico ranks near the bottom nationally in per capita personal income, and data suggest that New Mexico has considerable rates of underemployment, higher levels of people working in service-providing sectors and a greater presence of nontraditional forms of work. Within the context of a New Deal art and history initiative, marketing and outreach might consider how participating sites could encourage visitors to spend time in multiple communities to distribute the economic benefits more broadly.

Educational attainment is another key indicator of cultural participation, with higher levels of education associated with stronger cultural engagement. In New Mexico, the percentage of population attaining a bachelor's degree or higher is ~5% lower than in the United States overall.

State Tourism

Tourism is a major economic driver in New Mexico and plays a central role in shaping how visitors engage with the state's cultural and historical assets. In recent years, the state has experienced sustained growth in visitation and visitor spending, with tourism supporting tens of thousands of jobs and generating

significant tax revenue. This growth reflects both post-pandemic recovery and a longer-term shift toward experience-based travel.

A defining characteristic of New Mexico's tourism market is the centrality of culture as a primary motivator. Visitors are drawn not only to landscapes and outdoor recreation, but to the state's layered cultural identity—encompassing Indigenous, Hispanic and Anglo histories, as well as art, architecture and place-based traditions. Participation in cultural activities among visitors is significantly higher than the national average, underscoring the degree to which arts and heritage function as core components of the state's tourism offer.
At the same time, tourism in New Mexico is geographically distributed and unevenly concentrated. Established destinations such as Santa Fe and Taos have long benefited from strong cultural tourism economies, while other communities—including Gallup and Roswell—are actively working to expand and diversify their visitor base. This uneven distribution has led to increased attention on destination stewardship, with communities seeking to balance economic opportunity with cultural integrity, infrastructure capacity, and quality of life.

Current tourism trends also indicate growing demand for authentic, place-based and participatory experiences. Visitors are increasingly interested in engaging with local histories and communities in ways that go beyond passive consumption. This includes interest in storytelling, guided interpretation and opportunities to connect historical narratives with contemporary perspectives. These trends align closely with the nature of New Deal assets in New Mexico, which are often embedded in everyday civic spaces and tied to specific local histories.

Despite its strengths, the tourism sector faces several structural challenges. These include the state's large geographic scale, which can make travel between destinations time-intensive; infrastructure limitations in rural areas; and ongoing uncertainty related to public funding for arts, culture and historic preservation. In addition, many cultural assets—including New Deal artworks—are not consistently interpreted or promoted as part of a cohesive statewide narrative. Taken together, these conditions suggest that New Mexico's tourism industry is well positioned to support expanded engagement with New Deal art and history, particularly through approaches that emphasize distributed access, regional storytelling and integration with existing cultural experiences. Rather than relying on a single destination, the state's tourism landscape supports a model in which multiple communities contribute to a broader, interconnected visitor experience.

2.2 SELECTED NEW MEXICO CITIES: MARKET PROFILES

Four New Mexico cities—Albuquerque, Gallup, Roswell and Taos—were identified for further market analysis based on geographic distribution, documented New Deal assets, existing cultural infrastructure, relevance to stakeholder discussions and considerations of how each location could contribute to a networked model. The findings reveal a landscape in which capacity, readiness and alignment with New Deal storytelling vary significantly across communities—suggesting that a distributed approach is not only preferable, but necessary.

Albuquerque

As the state's largest metropolitan area, Albuquerque has a diverse and comparatively dense population base, as well as higher levels of educational attainment relative to other regions in the state. It also functions as a major tourism gateway, supported by transportation infrastructure and hospitality services, while at the same time serving as a primary access point for residents.

The city's cultural infrastructure is likewise extensive, including major institutions such as the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center and three Smithsonian-affiliated sites (National Hispanic Cultural Center, National Museum of Nuclear Science & History and New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science). Arts and culture are actively promoted through initiatives such as the Downtown Arts & Cultural District, with a strong emphasis on accessibility and visitor engagement. Its designation as a Main Street America–accredited Arts & Cultural District and its position along Route 66, which is the longest continuous urban stretch of Route 66 in the country, further reinforce its role as a primary tourism gateway and natural hub.

Of all four cities studied, Albuquerque features the highest concentration of New Deal assets, with **approximately 26 documented New Deal sites**[3], including artworks embedded in federal buildings, university campuses and cultural institutions. Despite this robust volume, New Deal art and architecture do not appear to be a central component of Albuquerque's current cultural identity or tourism positioning. While assets are present and accessible, existing cultural promotion emphasizes broader histories, science and regional identity, with limited integration of New Deal-era art and architecture into public-facing narratives or visitor experiences.

Regardless, from a market perspective, Albuquerque offers significant opportunities as a point of entry and orientation, where large and diverse

[3] The Living New Deal, Albuquerque, New Mexico Site Map. A digital archive and mapping project of New Deal public works and artworks. https://livingnewdeal.org/us/nm/albuquerque-nm/

audiences can be introduced to New Deal art and history. Its scale, infrastructure and visibility position it to support:

- High-volume public access
- Educational programming
- Institutional partnerships
- Gateway experiences that connect visitors to sites across the state

Within a decentralized system, Albuquerque could function as a significant access and interpretation hub, complementing other locations that offer more place-specific or immersive experiences.

Gallup

Gallup represents a distinctive market context within New Mexico, defined less by scale—it has a small population of roughly 22K, the second-smallest city of the four after Taos—and more by its role as a site of active interpretation, community engagement and cultural dialogue around New Deal art. Located along historic Route 66 in northwestern New Mexico, the city serves as a regional hub for surrounding communities, including nearby Navajo Nation and Zuni Pueblo. American Indian and Alaska Native residents constitute much of the population (53.8%), shaping a unique cultural landscape that influences how historical narratives are interpreted and experienced.

Reflecting this tradition, Gallup's cultural infrastructure is rooted in community-based arts organizations and local programming, with the city's local arts agency **gallupARTS** playing a central role in advancing interpretation, education and public engagement. Gallup is also integrated into statewide cultural infrastructure, including the New Mexico Arts Art Trails program and its designation as a MainStreet Arts & Cultural District (currently under recertification).

Gallup is home to **at least four documented New Deal sites**[4], including murals and artworks located in civic buildings such as the McKinley County Courthouse, as well as additional works distributed across public settings. Such assets are notable not only for their historical significance but also for the ongoing conversations they generate, particularly regarding representation, authorship and historical narrative. More recently, engagement with New Deal-era art and architecture has been explored via digital platforms, including the **Gallup New Deal Art Virtual Museum**, which enables digital access to local assets while incorporating contemporary perspectives and critical interpretation.

This level of initiative is exceptional in a statewide context where many communities possess New Deal resources but lack the capacity or coordination to interpret them. Gallup has effectively demonstrated a model for making dispersed assets visible and meaningful through a combination of digital access,

[4] The Living New Deal, Gallup, New Mexico Site Map. A digital archive and mapping project of New Deal public works and artworks. https://livingnewdeal.org/us/nm/gallup-nm/

community engagement and place-based storytelling. As highlighted in recent coverage of local mural preservation and reinterpretation efforts, gallupARTS and other partners are also engaging critically with the legacy of New Deal art—using it as a platform for contemporary dialogue rather than static display.

At the same time, Gallup's leadership-driven model introduces a structural limitation. Much of the current momentum is tied to a small number of individuals and organizations, raising questions about long-term sustainability and scalability. While Gallup has effectively functioned as a proof of concept, a statewide initiative cannot exclusively rely on a single community—particularly one with limited institutional capacity—to power its program. Instead, Gallup's strength lies in its role as an incubator of ideas and practices that could be extended and adapted elsewhere.

Thus, from a market perspective, Gallup offers a model for participatory and community-centered engagement, including:

- Locally driven programming
- Indigenous perspectives and leadership
- Educational initiatives
- Hybrid physical and digital experiences

Within a decentralized system, Gallup could function as a node focused on interpretation, dialogue and community engagement, complementing other locations oriented toward tourism or institutional access.

Roswell

Roswell occupies a middle ground in terms of both assets and infrastructure. The city's population size of 48K makes it the second largest in this study after Albuquerque, and its economy is closely tied to tourism, which is widely known for its association with extraterrestrial themes. This dominant tourism identity not only attracts a steady stream of visitors but more broadly contributes to its overall awareness within national cultural consciousness.

At the same time, Roswell has a developed arts infrastructure, including the Roswell Museum and Art Center, the Artist-in-Residence program, and multiple arts organizations and galleries. This creates a layered cultural environment in which contemporary arts programming coexists with a strong tourism brand, giving rise to the slogan: "Come for the aliens, stay for the art!"

With **approximately eight documented New Deal sites[5]—including the historic Federal Art Center**—Roswell has a strong connection to New Deal programming, and the legacy of the Federal Art Project remains visible today through institutions such as the Roswell Museum and the long-running Artist-in-Residence

[5] The Living New Deal, Roswell, New Mexico Site Map. A digital archive and mapping project of New Deal public works and artworks. https://livingnewdeal.org/us/nm/roswell-nm/

program. And while New Deal assets are not currently central to the city's tourism identity, their presence—particularly the legacy of the Federal Art Center—offers opportunities to connect historical narratives with ongoing artistic production.

Notably, Roswell faces distinct challenges around infrastructure and environmental pressures, including recent flooding impacts and relocation needs for cultural facilities. These conditions introduce a level of uncertainty at a moment when stability and investment would be required to support a larger role within a statewide initiative.

From a market perspective, Roswell presents opportunities to serve as a tourism-oriented node, where New Deal art and history are integrated into broader visitor experiences and positioned as part of a multi-layered cultural offering:

- Expanding existing tourism experiences
- Introducing visitors to additional cultural narratives
- Connecting New Deal history with contemporary arts programming

Taos

Despite its relatively small population of approximately 6,500 where, like other smaller towns, nearly one-third of residents are aged 65 and older, Taos has an outsized cultural presence, supported in part by its history as an artist colony and its continued appeal to visitors seeking arts, culture and natural landscapes. It stands apart from the other cities in that this cultural identity predates—and in many ways supersedes—its New Deal connections. The presence of Taos Pueblo, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, further reinforces its significance as a destination rooted in Indigenous history and living culture.

Taos has a dense and highly active arts ecosystem, including museums, artist collectives, and museums such as the Harwood Museum of Art, as well as active arts organizations and networks. It also features a well-developed tourism economy and economic development structures. Recent initiatives such as the Taos Destination Stewardship Plan further demonstrate a high level of organizational coordination and strategic thinking around cultural tourism and community impact.

Alongside its ecosystem of museums, galleries and cultural institutions, the town is home to **approximately four New Deal sites**[6]. Within this context, New Deal assets are part of a broader cultural landscape rather than a defining feature. However, they contribute to the layered historical narrative of the region and offer opportunities for integration into existing heritage and arts programming.

[6] The Living New Deal, Taos, New Mexico Site Map. A digital archive and mapping project of New Deal public works and artworks. https://livingnewdeal.org/us/nm/taos-nm/

From a market perspective, Taos offers strengths in:

- Cultural tourism
- High-value, experience-driven visitation
- Integration of history, art and landscape

Within a decentralized system, Taos could function as a heritage-focused node, where New Deal art and history are incorporated into a broader narrative of artistic and cultural continuity.

2.3 KEY FINDINGS

The analysis of these cities reveals a set of structural conditions that have direct implications for the development of a statewide New Deal art and history initiative.

1. **The overall market for cultural engagement and cultural tourism in the State of New Mexico is inherently distributed.**
   New Mexico's geography, population distribution and tourism patterns currently reflect a model in which audiences engage with cultural assets across multiple locations rather than through a single destination.

2. **Cultural tourism is a strong and growing driver, but not yet mobilized around New Deal assets.**
   While visitor demand for authentic, place-based experiences conceptually aligns with the nature of New Deal assets, which are often tied to specific communities, histories and landscapes, and while each city participates in New Mexico's broader cultural tourism economy, New Deal art and history are not consistently positioned as a unifying or marketable theme.

3. **New Deal assets are widely dispersed and variably interpreted.**
   Across all locations, New Deal artworks are widely distributed and embedded within civic buildings, institutions, and public spaces. However, their visibility and interpretation vary, and they are not consistently documented or connected. This points to a primary gap in coordination as opposed to content, and the opportunity lies in linking existing resources, rather than creating new ones, to enhance access, storytelling and public engagement.

4. **Community context shapes interpretation.**
   In locations such as Gallup, local demographics and cultural relationships—particularly with Indigenous communities—play a central role in how New Deal art is understood and presented.

5. **Gallup demonstrates a viable proof of concept—although scaling may present challenges**.
   The work of gallupARTS illustrates how New Deal assets can be activated through digital tools and community engagement. However, capacity

limitations of local leadership underscore the need for a broader support structure.

6. **Individually, no one location or major population has a critical mass of New Deal assets that may be worth leveraging as a single destination.** This suggests that a decentralized, network-based approach, in which multiple locations connect assets and contribute to a cohesive but distributed system of interpretation, access and engagement is a viable future approach to a New Mexico New Deal art and history initiative.

3. Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

On February 3, 2026, the project team convened key stakeholders (attendees listed below) from relevant state- and nationally relevant organizations at a Visioning Workshop to discuss possible concepts and actionable priorities for a decentralized initiative. The group engaged in robust discussions that stressed, no matter what concept model is ultimately chosen, the initiative must have strong leadership and a variety of sources of support and members.

Workshop Attendees

Meredith Doborski – Public Art Program Director, New Mexico Arts (Department of Cultural Affairs)
Erika Doss – Edith O'Donnell Distinguished Chair in Art History, The Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History (University of Texas, Dallas)
Jennifer Gibson – formerly at GSA Fine Arts
Karla McWilliams – Deputy Director, HPD Deputy SHPO, NM Historic Preservation Department (Department of Cultural Affairs)
Carol Sarath – **Board Member, gallupARTS**
Chris Shaw – Liaison, NM Chapter, The Living New Deal
Richard Walker – Director, The Living New Deal

Goals of the meeting:

- Review environmental context and concept models among cultural organizations
- Establish a shared vision and priorities
- Determine key priorities and planning directions that can be tested, refined and developed into detailed recommendations.

Environmental context

Given the ubiquity of in situ New Deal artworks throughout the state, the initiative under discussion can encompass a multitude of programs:

- Heritage and archaeology
- Social and community centers
- Public spaces and parks
- Performing arts
- Museums
- Educational institutions
- Festivals and events
- Traditions and folklore

Potential concept models

Three potential concept models were discussed:

- **Hub and spoke,** which includes characteristics such as centralized leadership providing connections to outlying "spokes" from the central hub. The examples of History Colorado and the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences were cited as an exemplar of a functioning hub and spoke model.
- **Pillar network:** also known as an "ecomuseum" model, the pillar network is a formalized network of independent sites and institutions united by a common interpretive theme and overseen by an umbrella organization. Operations are decentralized. Examples include the Ekomuseum Bergslagen in Sweden.
- **Association:** A loosely, constituted, membership-based organization united by a common interest and focused on goals such as advocacy, member support and capacity-building. Member organizations are completely independent. Examples cited included the Council of American Jewish Museums and the North American Reciprocal Museum Association.

Model-wise, participants tended to prefer a strong central hub in an ideal world. But the realities of the project, the funding climate and the nature of the cultural resources tells us that there might be a need to move across the spectrum to a more decentralized model, perhaps an ecomuseum or a multi-hub version of an ecomuseum, where the hubs would be those established institutions with relevant collections and sufficient financial resources.

Governance, Staffing and Funding

Key discussion outcomes regarding governance, staffing and funding included the following observations:

- Establishing leadership is key: for the hub and spoke to be implemented, there obviously needs to be a willing leading organization.
- Network models make more sense where there are a lot of organizations working in the same thematic and subject matter "space". If this is not the

case, and it may not be in New Mexico, then the hub and spoke model would work best here.
- Understanding existing sources of support is crucial for implementability; if sources exist for one or another model, that will be a major determining factor with regard to the model to be implemented.
- The art of the New Deal, as opposed to the historical aspects of the program, should be the new institution's focus.

Vision

Aspirations discussed during the workshop included the following:
- Build community (in terms of echoing the overall goal of the New Deal when implemented in the 1930s)
- Develop engaged, active citizens via civic education
- Encourage creativity, especially among children and youth.

Interview Participants

David Abbey – Retired Director, Legislative Finance Committee
Gail Anderson – Consultant, GA Associates
Caroline Brooks – Director, Roswell Museum
Andrew Connors – Director, Albuquerque Museum
Meredith Doborski - Public Art Program Director, New Mexico Arts (Department of Cultural Affairs)
Juniper Leherissey - Executive Director, Harwood Museum of Art, Taos
Alana McGratten – Chair, New Mexico Chapter, Living New Deal
Mary Okin - Living New Deal
Lisa Pellegrino-Spear - Executive Director, Clovis Main Streets
Jessica Stern - Economic Development Director, Taos County
Britney Swart - Herzstein Memorial Museum, Clayton
Luis Tapia - Artist