

RECOMMENDED CONCEPT AND IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

New Mexico New Deal Art and History Initiative

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Lord Cultural Resources

Making the World a Better Place Through Culture

Lord Cultural Resources is a global professional practice dedicated to making the world a better place through culture.

We assist people, communities, and organizations to realize and enhance cultural meaning and expression.

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

We value and believe in cultural expression as essential for all people. We conduct ourselves with respect for collaboration, local adaptation and cultural diversity, embodying the highest standards of integrity, ethics and professional practice.

We help clients clarify their goals; we provide them with the tools to achieve those goals; and we leave a legacy as a result of training and collaboration.

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



Lloyd Moylan
Rain on the Reservation
About 1939–1943
Watercolor on paper
20⅞" W x 14¾" H

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Executive Summary

New Mexico holds one of the most significant and distinctive concentrations of New Deal art, architecture, and public works in the United States. Across the state, murals, paintings, public buildings, civic spaces, parks, schools, libraries, courthouses, and community art center legacies continue to tell the story of a transformative period in American and New Mexican history. Since these assets are distributed across many communities, institutions, jurisdictions, and stewardship arrangements, many remain difficult for the public to find, understand, access, or experience as part of a larger statewide story.

Early stages of this work examined the feasibility of a decentralized New Deal art and history museum model for New Mexico. In 2025 Gail Anderson & Associates' work concluded that a centralized National New Deal Art Museum in New Mexico was not feasible at this time, which led to Lord exploring alternative models that could leverage the state's existing assets without requiring the creation of a new bricks-and-mortar museum.

This study concluded that New Mexico's New Deal legacy is best advanced through a statewide initiative rather than a single museum, which should connect existing sites, collections, communities, and stories through a coordinated interpretive, digital, and visitor-facing framework. It should begin with a practical, fundable, and visible pilot activation that can demonstrate value, clarify partner roles, test community participation, and build a foundation for future growth.

This report recommends launching the New Mexico New Deal Art & History Initiative through a two-year pre-implementation and pilot activation phase. The recommended initial investment is at least $500,000 over two years, with the intent that these funds will position the initiative to attract additional public, philanthropic, and implementation funding over time.

The recommended first expression of the initiative is a cultural / heritage trail model that connects New Deal sites across priority communities through shared branding, interpretive framing, digital mapping, QR-linked content, and locally grounded storytelling. The trail model is recommended because it builds from

assets that already exist, has a low barrier to entry compared with a new museum or permanent organization, and creates the interpretive and digital infrastructure needed for later program growth.

The six priority communities for the initial phase are:

- Gallup
- Albuquerque
- Roswell
- Las Vegas
- Taos
- Santa Fe

Additional communities, including smaller and rural communities such as Artesia and Farmington, should be considered through the pre-implementation asset inventory and community engagement process.

The initiative should be structured as a partnership among the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, the Economic Development Department / New Mexico MainStreet, the New Mexico Tourism Department, gallupARTS, local communities, site stewards, tribal nations, subject matter experts, and other relevant partners. gallupARTS is recommended as the initial lead coordinator, provided that funding is made available to hire a dedicated project lead who can work closely with gallupARTS Executive Director Rose Eason and partner agencies.

The purpose of the two-year period is to move the initiative from concept to launch readiness and early public activation. The work should include asset inventory, documentation, mapping, community outreach, governance design, interpretive framework development, digital and signage planning, partnership agreements, and initial implementation of the trail model.

By beginning with a pilot activation, New Mexico can create a first-of-its-kind statewide model for interpreting and activating New Deal art and history. The initiative can honor the legacy of the New Deal while also carrying forward its deeper civic purpose: expanding access to culture, investing in local communities, supporting creative work, and connecting public history to contemporary life.

1. Introduction

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

This project emerged from a statewide interest in New Mexico's New Deal art, architecture, and history, and from the recognition that New Mexico's New Deal legacy is both unusually rich and unusually dispersed. Between 1933 and 1943, New Deal programs shaped communities across New Mexico through investment in public art, architecture, parks, civic buildings, education, infrastructure, and creative labor.

The feasibility study prepared by Gail Anderson & Associates in 2025, was initiated to assess the potential for a National New Deal Art Museum in New Mexico. The study found that a centralized national museum model was not feasible at this time. Key challenges included the complexity of federal ownership and stewardship of New Deal artworks, the absence of a clearly available permanent collection, limited philanthropic capacity, lack of a single institutional champion with sufficient resources, and the high cost of launching and sustaining a new museum.

gallupARTS subsequently received state funding to explore an alternative direction: a New Mexico-centered, decentralized model that could bring New Deal art and history to light without requiring a new physical museum. Lord Cultural Resources was engaged to further this study, with support from New Mexico-based advisors and stakeholders.

1.2 PROCESS OVERVIEW

The process to identify, evaluate, and refine viable approaches for advancing New Mexico's New Deal art and history assets combined background research, comparative analysis, stakeholder engagement, and visioning to move from concept development to a recommended implementation approach. Through this staged methodology, ideas were explored, tested, and refined to ensure

that recommendations are both responsive to stakeholder priorities and feasible within New Mexico's cultural, institutional, and funding context.

Concept Options Development

Exploring potential models for a New Mexico-based New Deal art and history initiative, included a review of existing studies, analysis of comparable models, stakeholder consultations, and a facilitated visioning process. The assessment of alternative decentralized museum concepts and identified key opportunities, challenges, and priorities for future action.

Options Appraisal and Recommended Concept

Through options appraisal, review, and strategic analysis, the project team refined the preferred concept into a practical and implementable framework. This work considered governance, partnerships, interpretation, operations, visitor experience, and funding requirements. As a result, this report recommends the creation of a New Mexico New Deal Art & History Initiative and proposes a two-year roadmap for pre-implementation and pilot activation.

2. Ecosystem Analysis: From Museum to Initiative

The central goal of an ecosystem analysis was to identify viable models for leveraging New Mexico's New Deal assets in a way that is practical, compelling, and supported by stakeholders statewide. This included research into comparable decentralized cultural models (including ecomuseums, alliances, and foundations), review of New Deal art and history trends, consideration of New Mexico's cultural infrastructure, potential market analysis, and stakeholder engagement.

This work confirmed several key points:

- New Mexico has a uniquely strong New Deal legacy with assets distributed across many communities.
- A centralized museum model is not the right near-term path.
- Stakeholders are interested in the project, but cautious about launching a new organization before there is a clearer operating model, funding pathway, and proof of concept.
- There is no single statewide or national coordinating entity currently connecting New Mexico's New Deal art and history assets into a cohesive public experience.
- Digital interpretation, heritage tourism, and community-based storytelling are promising tools for making this history visible.
- A phased pilot activation is the most viable next step.

A major finding is that the word "museum" no longer fully captures the most appropriate path forward. The long-term initiative may eventually include exhibitions, collections access, digital interpretation, educational resources, artist commissions, and even a more formal alliance or organization. However, the near-term opportunity is not to create a museum in the conventional sense.

Rather, it is to create a statewide interpretive and activation framework that connects existing assets and empowers local communities to participate.

For this reason, this report recommends shifting the title and framing of the project from a "New Deal Art and History Museum" to the "New Mexico New Deal Art & History Initiative". This language better reflects the recommended approach: statewide, collaborative, distributed, practical, expandable, and rooted in existing places.

3. Strategic Recommendations

3.1 ORGANIZING CONCEPT

Based on research, stakeholder input, and the refinement of concept options, this work can be advanced most successfully through a statewide stewardship and activation initiative—the New Deal Art & History Initiative— rather than a physical or decentralized museum concept. This recommendation reflects the realities of New Mexico's New Deal assets: they are significant, widely distributed, locally embedded, and held across multiple stewardship arrangements. A physical museum cannot realistically steward or display in-situ assets and even the notion of a "decentralized museum" implies the creation or establishment of a new organization, which is challenging to advance without a proof of concept. On the other hand, a statewide stewardship and activation framework recognizes the need to:

- Help communities understand and identify their New Deal assets
- Ensure that residents and visitors can find New Deal assets
- Help shape public understanding and interpretation of New Deal assets

The recommended initiative should function as a coordinated framework for interpretation, access, documentation, public engagement, tourism, preservation awareness, and future programming. It should begin with a focused pilot activation and grow over time as partnerships, resources, and public interest develop.

Vision

The New Mexico New Deal Art & History Initiative will connect, interpret, and activate New Mexico's New Deal legacy through a statewide network of sites, communities, stories, and public experiences.

The initiative will bring visibility to New Deal art, architecture, public works, and community histories while supporting education, heritage tourism, preservation awareness, local storytelling, and contemporary creative engagement.

Purpose

The purpose of the initiative is to:

- Make New Mexico's New Deal art and history more visible and accessible.
- Connect dispersed assets through a shared statewide interpretive framework.
- Support local communities in telling their own New Deal stories.
- Encourage preservation, stewardship, and documentation of New Deal assets.
- Strengthen heritage tourism and cultural economic development.
- Create a platform for future programming, exhibitions, artist responses, and education.
- Position New Mexico as a national leader in reinterpreting and activating New Deal legacy.
- Lay the groundwork for a potential long-term, formally organized New Mexico art and history alliance or similarly situated organization.

Guiding Principles

The initiative should be guided by the following principles:

Statewide, not centralized.
The initiative should connect assets across New Mexico rather than relocate them or concentrate interpretation in a single place.

Locally grounded.
Communities should retain voice and authority in how their local assets and histories are interpreted.

Historically rigorous and interpretively honest.
The initiative should celebrate the New Deal's civic and artistic legacy while also addressing the limitations, exclusions, stereotypes, and contested narratives embedded in some New Deal-era works.

Accessible in person and digitally.
The initiative should serve both travelers and residents, including those who may never visit every site in person.

Built on existing infrastructure.
The initiative should leverage existing sites, organizations, cultural districts, tourism systems, MainStreet networks, digital platforms, and public agencies.

Scalable over time.
The first phase should be focused enough to implement well, while creating a foundation that can expand to additional communities, programs, and partnerships.

Designed for partnership.
No single organization should carry the initiative alone. The model should be state-enabled, locally implemented, and coordinated through a clear but flexible partnership structure.

3.2 INTERPRETIVE FRAMEWORK

Overview

The recommended interpretive framework is a cultural / heritage trail model that connects New Deal sites across priority communities through a shared interpretive and visitor-facing framework. This trail-first model should be understood as the first public expression of the New Mexico New Deal Art & History Initiative. It is not the entirety of the initiative. Rather, it is the foundation upon which future programming, exhibitions, artist commissions, events, and digital experiences can be built.

Why Start with a Trail
A trail model is recommended because it:

- Uses existing assets rather than requiring a new building.
- Creates a visible and fundable first deliverable.
- Supports both tourism and local education.
- Allows communities to participate at different levels of capacity.
- Can be launched in phases.
- Builds the digital and interpretive backbone for future activities.
- Has precedent in New Mexico through existing cultural trails, Arts & Cultural Districts, MainStreet programs, and Route 66-related tourism initiatives.
- Can help test whether residents and visitors can find, understand, and value New Deal assets when they are presented as part of a larger story.

The trail model also aligns with the original spirit of the New Deal. New Deal programs did not operate as a single centralized cultural institution. They functioned as a distributed system of federal support, local implementation, public investment, and community access. A statewide trail-first initiative echoes that structure in a contemporary form.

Priority Communities

The initial pilot activation should focus on six priority communities:

Gallup

Gallup is central to this initiative because of its New Deal art assets, the McKinley County Courthouse murals and decorative arts, the legacy of the Gallup Federal Art Center, and gallupARTS' leadership in creating the Gallup New Deal Art Virtual Museum.

Albuquerque

Albuquerque offers significant New Deal assets, including federal building murals, university-related assets, civic infrastructure, and a large resident and visitor market. It also offers opportunities for partnership with cultural institutions, universities, and tourism networks.

Roswell

Roswell is significant because of its Federal Art Center legacy and existing cultural infrastructure, including the Roswell Museum. Its identity as an arts community offers an important counterpoint to its better-known tourism associations.

Las Vegas

Las Vegas has an important New Deal Art Center history and a strong connection to historic preservation, architecture, and educational institutions.

Taos

Taos offers nationally significant arts history, courthouse murals, artist legacy, and deep cultural tourism infrastructure. It also presents opportunities to connect New Deal interpretation with broader conversations about Southwestern art, representation, and cultural authority.

Santa Fe

Santa Fe contains major New Deal art assets, state cultural institutions, archives, museums, and public buildings. It also serves as an important statewide cultural and policy hub.

Additional Communities

The pre-implementation phase should include an asset inventory and engagement process that identifies additional communities for later participation or selective inclusion. Smaller communities and rural sites should be considered based on asset significance, access, local readiness, geographic balance, interpretive relevance, and partner capacity.

Communities for consideration may include Artesia, Farmington, and others identified through the asset inventory and stakeholder engagement process.

Visitor-Facing Components

Each participating site or community could receive a combination of the following:

- Common statewide branding.
- Interpretive panel or marker.
- QR code linked to digital content.
- Inclusion on a statewide digital map.
- Short-form historical and interpretive narrative.
- Local voice or community-authored content.
- Visitor information, such as access hours and location.
- Connection to related New Deal sites or stories.
- Educational or classroom resources, where appropriate.

Digital Layer

The digital layer is essential. It should not be treated as supplemental. Because the assets are geographically dispersed, digitally linked interpretation will be the connective tissue of the initiative.

The digital layer should include:

- A mobile-friendly statewide map.
- Individual site pages.
- QR-linked interpretive content.
- Photographs and documentation.
- Short essays or interpretive narratives.
- Community reflections or oral history excerpts.
- Links to existing platforms, including the Gallup New Deal Art Virtual Museum and Living New Deal resources where appropriate.
- A framework that can expand over time.

Interpretive Framework
The trail should be organized around a shared interpretive framework that connects individual sites to a larger statewide story. This framework should be developed by subject matter experts in partnership with community representatives and site stewards.

Potential interpretive themes may include:

- The New Deal and the making of modern New Mexico.
- Public art as public work.
- Art, labor, and civic life during the Great Depression.
- Rural communities and cultural access.
- Federal investment and local implementation.
- Indigenous and Hispano/a/x artists, craftspeople, and cultural traditions.
- Representation, authorship, and contested narratives.
- New Deal legacies in architecture, infrastructure, and public space.
- The relevance of New Deal ideas to contemporary cultural policy.

Passport-Style Participation
A passport-style participation model should be explored as one possible visitor engagement tool, but not as the governing structure of the initiative. This could include digital check-ins, printed passports, stamps, badges, or incentives for visiting multiple sites.

Such a model may be useful because it can encourage visitors to move across communities, create a sense of discovery, and make a distributed trail more legible. However, the initiative should not be positioned as a MainStreet-led passport program. Rather, passport-style participation should be considered as one optional tactic within a broader DCA-enabled, cross-agency cultural initiative.

3.3 OPERATIONS & ROADMAP TO LAUNCH

Purpose of the Two-Year Phase

The recommended two-year phase should move the initiative from concept to launch readiness and early public activation. This period should include both pre-implementation work and pilot activation.

The pre-implementation work is essential because the state does not yet have a complete, current, implementation-ready inventory of priority New Deal assets, site conditions, access issues, interpretive needs, partner readiness, or local

capacity. Without this foundational work, a statewide trail risks being too broad, inconsistent, or difficult to maintain.

The results of the pre-implementation work will be used for the pilot activation to launch a focused first phase of the trail.

Year 1: Pre-Implementation

Year 1 should focus on planning, asset inventory, partnership development, and implementation design.

Key activities should include:

Project startup and staffing

- Confirm lead coordinator and fiscal structure.
- Hire a dedicated project lead.
- Establish a project steering committee or working group.
- Confirm DCA, EDD/NM MainStreet, Tourism, gallupARTS, and local partner roles.

Asset inventory and documentation

- Develop an inventory methodology.
- Review existing New Deal inventories and documentation.
- Identify priority assets in the six core communities.
- Identify additional assets in smaller communities for future consideration.
- Document basic information: location, ownership/stewardship, access, condition, interpretive potential, existing documentation, and partner contact.
- Identify gaps requiring further research or conservation review.

Community and stakeholder engagement

- Meet with local partners in priority communities.
- Identify site stewards, community liaisons, cultural organizations, local governments, tribal representatives, and tourism partners.
- Assess local interest, capacity, concerns, and participation needs.
- Identify where local stipends or liaison support may be required.

Interpretive framework

- Engage subject matter experts.
- Draft a statewide interpretive framework.

- Identify site-specific stories and thematic connections.
- Establish interpretive standards for accuracy, accessibility, and community voice.

Digital and visitor experience scoping

- Define requirements for a digital map and QR-linked content.
- Identify whether to build a new platform or connect to existing platforms.
- Scope signage, panels, and marker needs.
- Develop accessibility and maintenance considerations.

Governance and partnership design

- Clarify roles for DCA, EDD/NM MainStreet, Tourism, gallupARTS, and local communities.
- Draft participation criteria.
- Draft partner agreements or memoranda of understanding as needed.
- Define decision-making structure and long-term stewardship responsibilities.

Implementation roadmap

- Finalize pilot communities and sites.
- Produce a detailed Year 2 implementation plan.
- Refine budget and fundraising strategy.
- Identify matching funds, sponsorship opportunities, and philanthropic prospects.

Year 2: Pilot Activation

Year 2 should focus on implementing the first public-facing phase of the trail.

Key activities should include:

Finalize participating sites

- Confirm 8–12 initial trail sites across the priority communities.
- Confirm participation agreements and site access information.
- Establish local points of contact.

Brand and identity

- Develop the initiative name, visual identity, and visitor-facing language.
- Create brand guidelines for use by local partners.

Interpretive content

- Finalize site narratives.
- Produce panel text, QR-linked content, and digital content.
- Incorporate community and subject matter expert review.

Digital launch

- Build and launch a mobile-friendly digital map.
- Create site pages.
- Link QR codes to digital content.
- Ensure the platform can expand in later phases.

Physical activation

- Design and produce interpretive panels, markers, or signage.
- Install or distribute site materials where appropriate.
- Provide local partner toolkits.

Promotion

- Coordinate with the New Mexico Tourism Department on promotion.
- Coordinate with local tourism offices and visitor centers.
- Explore alignment with New Mexico True and community-level destination marketing.
- Consider a limited passport-style engagement component.

Opening Day Activation

- Plan to celebrate the trail's launch and generate excitement
- Coordinate with communities to organize small events (like press conferences or receptions)

Evaluation

- Track participation, site visits where measurable, digital engagement, partner satisfaction, and public feedback.
- Identify lessons learned.
- Prepare recommendations for Tier 2 expansion.

3.4 GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

Recommended Partnership Structure

The initiative should be structured as a state-enabled, locally grounded partnership. No single agency or organization should be expected to carry out the work alone.

Recommended core partners include:

- New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs.
- Economic Development Department / New Mexico MainStreet.
- New Mexico Tourism Department.
- gallupARTS.
- Local governments and MainStreet organizations where relevant.
- Site stewards, including museums, libraries, courthouses, universities, public buildings, and cultural organizations.
- Tribal nations and Indigenous cultural representatives where relevant.
- Subject matter experts, historians, artists, and preservation specialists.
- The New Mexico Chapter of the Living New Deal and/or Living New Deal representatives, where appropriate.

Role of DCA
DCA plays an important role as a steward of New Mexico's New Deal resources as particularly visible through the New Mexico Museum of Art - which houses a very significant collection of New Deal works. Hence, the DCA should serve as a principal state partner and cultural steward.

Its role may include:

- Providing leadership and legitimacy.
- Helping align the initiative with state cultural priorities.
- Connecting relevant divisions, including New Mexico Arts and Historic Preservation.
- Supporting standards for interpretation, preservation awareness, and public access.
- Helping convene partner agencies and cultural stakeholders.
- Supporting funding pathways.

DCA should not be expected to directly administer every aspect of implementation without dedicated project capacity.

Role of EDD / New Mexico MainStreet

EDD / New Mexico MainStreet should be a strategic partner, particularly where trail sites overlap with MainStreet communities, Arts & Cultural Districts, downtown revitalization, and local economic development goals.

Its role may include:

- Advising on local participation models.
- Connecting to MainStreet directors and local economic development partners.
- Supporting community readiness and local implementation.
- Advising on models such as passports, district-based activation, and downtown visitor circulation.
- Helping align the initiative with cultural economic development strategies.

However, the initiative should not be framed as solely a MainStreet program. MainStreet should be a partner, not the sole owner or administrator.

Role of the New Mexico Tourism Department

The Tourism Department should be engaged as a partner in visitor-facing strategy, marketing, and statewide promotion.

Its role may include:

- Advising on tourism positioning.
- Helping connect the trail to statewide destination marketing.
- Supporting visitor-facing language and digital discoverability.
- Coordinating with local tourism offices.
- Exploring integration with existing tourism campaigns or platforms.

Role of gallupARTS

gallupARTS is recommended as the initial lead coordinator for the two-year phase, provided that funding is made available for a dedicated project lead. This recommendation reflects gallupARTS' existing leadership in New Deal interpretation, its experience developing the Gallup New Deal Art Virtual Museum, and its role in initiating this companion feasibility work.

The dedicated project lead should work closely with gallupARTS' Executive Director Rose Eason but should not rely on Rose's existing capacity alone. The success of the initiative will require focused project management, coordination across agencies, community engagement, consultant management, and implementation oversight.

gallupARTS' role may include:

- Serving as lead coordinator or fiscal steward.

- Hosting or supervising the project lead.
- Coordinating with DCA and state partners.
- Supporting community engagement and interpretive planning.
- Sharing lessons learned from the Gallup New Deal Art Virtual Museum.
- Helping design a replicable model for other communities.

Advisory Committee / Working Group
A steering committee or working group should be established during Year 1. This body should include representatives from DCA, EDD/NM MainStreet, Tourism, gallupARTS, subject matter experts, and selected community representatives.

The working group should guide:

- Inventory methodology.
- Community selection.
- Interpretive framework.
- Participation criteria.
- Governance decisions.
- Evaluation and future expansion.

3.5 BUDGET AND FUNDING

Recommended Initial Investment

This report recommends an initial investment of at least $500,000 over two years to support pre-implementation and pilot activation. This investment should be understood as seed funding that enables the initiative to move from concept to early implementation. It should also position the initiative to seek matching funds, philanthropic support, sponsorships, tourism-related funding, and future implementation resources.

High-Level Budget Framework

Budget Area	Estimated Range
Year 1: Pre-Implementation	$150,000–$200,000
Year 2: Pilot Activation	$300,000–$350,000
Evaluation, contingency, and scale-up planning	Included across both years
Total Recommended Initial Investment	**At least $500,000**

Year 1 Pre-Implementation Budget Detail

Year 1 Activity	Estimated Range
Project lead / coordination	$45,000–$65,000
Asset inventory, documentation, and mapping	$40,000–$60,000
Community outreach and local engagement	$20,000–$35,000
Subject matter expert support and interpretive framework	$20,000–$35,000
Digital platform and signage scoping	$10,000–$20,000
Governance, partnership, and implementation roadmap	$10,000–$20,000
Contingency	$5,000–$15,000
Estimated Year 1 Total	**$150,000–$200,000**

Year 2 Pilot Activation Budget Detail

Year 2 Activity	Estimated Range
Project management and partner coordination	$50,000–$75,000
Branding and design	$25,000–$40,000
Interpretive writing, editing, and content production	$35,000–$55,000
Digital map, QR-linked content, and web implementation	$60,000–$90,000
Signage, panels, fabrication, and installation support	$75,000–$110,000
Community stipends / local liaison support	$30,000–$50,000
Promotion and tourism coordination	$20,000–$35,000
Evaluation and scale-up planning	$10,000–$20,000
Contingency	$15,000–$30,000
Estimated Year 2 Total	**$300,000–$350,000**

Funding Considerations
The $500,000 initial investment should be used to establish momentum and demonstrate value. It should not be assumed to cover all future implementation or expansion costs.

Additional funding may be needed for:

- Expansion to additional communities.
- Conservation assessments or preservation work.
- Larger-scale digital platform development.
- Contemporary artist commissions.
- Traveling or multi-site exhibitions.
- Public programs and annual events.
- Education and curriculum resources.
- Long-term staffing or organizational development.

Potential future funding sources may include state allocations, tourism and economic development funds, private philanthropy, corporate sponsorships, federal grants where available, foundation support, and local matching funds.

4. Future Growth Opportunities

The trail-first pilot activation should be designed to support future growth. Once the core interpretive, digital, and partnership infrastructure is in place, the initiative can expand through additional tiers of activity.

New Mexico New Deal Art & History Week

A durational statewide event could activate participating sites during a designated week each year. Programs could include tours, talks, open houses, school programs, community meals, artist conversations, film screenings, preservation workshops, and public performances.

This would create a clear annual moment for promotion and participation.

Contemporary Artist Responses

The initiative should eventually include opportunities for contemporary artists to respond to New Deal art, history, and legacy. This is especially important because many New Deal works raise complex questions about representation, authorship, cultural authority, and public memory.

Artist response projects could include temporary installations, digital commissions, murals, performances, writing, community workshops, or site-specific interpretation.

Traveling or Multi-Site Exhibition

A future phase could include a traveling exhibition or multi-site exhibition that circulates across participating communities. This exhibition could combine reproductions, interpretive panels, archival materials, contemporary responses, and digital media.

Expanded Digital / Virtual Museum Platform

Over time, the digital map could grow into a more robust statewide virtual museum or digital archive. This could include deeper research, oral histories, classroom resources, digitized collections, conservation information, and community-submitted materials.

Statewide Alliance or Long-Term Organization

Upon the success of the pilot activation, the initiative could eventually grow into a formal statewide alliance or organization. As previously established, an alliance or organization should not be the first step. The first step should demonstrate value, build partnerships, and clarify what level of long-term structure is needed for this initiative.

5. Conclusion and Immediate Next Steps

New Mexico has an extraordinary opportunity to lead nationally in the interpretation, activation, and stewardship of New Deal art and history. The state's New Deal assets are rich, distinctive, and widely distributed. Its communities hold stories that are local, statewide, and nationally significant, while the state's cultural infrastructure offers multiple pathways for partnership.

The recommended path forward is a statewide initiative that begins with a practical, visible, and scalable pilot activation. The New Mexico New Deal Art & History Initiative should launch through a two-year, pre-implementation and pilot activation phase, supported by an initial investment of at least $500,000. This phase should include asset inventory, documentation, mapping, community engagement, interpretive planning, partnership development, digital and signage design, and initial trail activation across priority communities.

Immediate next steps include:

1. Confirm state interest in funding a two-year pre-implementation and pilot activation phase.
2. Identify the appropriate funding mechanism and agency partnership structure.
3. Confirm gallupARTS as initial lead coordinator, with funding for a dedicated project lead.
4. Convene DCA, EDD/NM MainStreet, Tourism, gallupARTS, and key advisors to define roles.
5. Begin asset inventory and community outreach in the six priority communities.
6. Develop the implementation roadmap, budget refinement, and partnership agreements.
7. Launch the first public-facing trail activation in Year 2.

By taking this approach, New Mexico can honor the legacy of the New Deal not only by preserving and interpreting its past, but by carrying forward its values: public investment, cultural access, local creativity, and the belief that art and civic life belong together.