

new mexico DAILY LOBO

The Independent Voice of UNM since 1895

Simple checking, more freedom

OPEN AN ACCOUNT TODAY!



Insured by NCUA | New applicants must qualify for membership



The entrance of Netflix Albuquerque Studios on Sunday, Jan. 28, 2024.

Photo by [Katrina Estrada](#) / [@rinaphoto](#) / [Daily Lobo](#) | The Daily Lobo

NEWS

NM film industry rebounds as productions ramp up

State film office eyes 2027 growth

[George Slad](#)

October 5, 2026 | 2:51pm MDT

New Mexico's film industry is beginning to recover from a sharp national contraction, with more productions returning to the state, independent films remaining active and officials expecting continued growth into 2027.

Steve Graham, director of the New Mexico Film Office, said the industry is still dealing with the effects of several difficult years, including the pandemic, Hollywood labor strikes and broader changes in how film and television projects are financed and distributed.

Larger series and studio productions began ramping up again in 2026, while at least five independent films with budgets between roughly \$1 million and \$10 million were shooting across New Mexico, Graham told the Daily Lobo. He specifically identified NBCUniversal's "The Four Seasons," filmed in New Mexico for Netflix; AMC's "Dark Winds," which has worked at Camel Rock Studios; and Apple TV+'s "Pluribus," produced in the state. Graham also said Netflix had a couple of other productions filming in New Mexico, though he did not identify them by name, and he expected the company's activity to continue.

Those productions reflect two different pieces of the state's strategy. Graham said large studio projects, especially television series, can provide workers with longer stretches of employment, while independent films help create a more diverse production ecosystem with more employers and opportunities.

The need for work remains significant. Graham said many experienced New Mexico crew members have gone long periods without employment as production slowed nationwide. The industry has been reduced by roughly 40% to 50% nationally over the previous two to three years, and Graham previously told KRQE that some New Mexico workers had not worked in two years.

The downturn is also visible in state spending figures. New Mexico recorded \$855.4 million in production spending in fiscal year 2022, before spending fell to \$323 million in fiscal year 2025. The Film Office's economic impact report attributed the decline primarily to an industry-wide contraction.

Graham described 2025 as a period of dramatic decline, followed by a modest increase in 2026, and said he expects another increase in 2027.

Project counts have nevertheless moved upward. The New Mexico Film Office website had 55 listed productions in New Mexico in 2025, with the current number for 2026 sitting at 19. Graham said the state's film incentives remain central to attracting productions, but incentives are not the only factor. He pointed to New Mexico's experienced crews, production infrastructure and reputation among filmmakers as reasons productions return.

The Film Office's 2025 economic impact report similarly said industry professionals identified the tax credit as a major factor in decisions to film in New Mexico. The report said the credit ranges from a 25% base rate to as high as 40% with qualifying uplifts.

The state is also trying to spread production outside Albuquerque and Santa Fe. New Mexico's Uplift Zone provides an additional 10% incentive on qualifying expenditures for productions working 60 or more miles outside of the state's main production hubs in Albuquerque and Santa Fe. Film Office data shows that spending in the Uplift Zone reached \$32 million in fiscal year 2025 after hitting \$50.2 million in fiscal year 2022.

Graham said areas including Las Cruces and Truth or Consequences have benefited from efforts to bring film activity beyond the state's traditional production centers. The Film Office reported that rural production spending reached a record \$55.74 million in fiscal year 2026.

Workforce development remains another priority. Graham said 16 higher education institutions in New Mexico offer some form of film education, alongside high schools, nonprofits and unions. He also highlighted Central New Mexico Community College as a partner in preparing below-the-line crew workers, referring to those on a production crew besides the principal actors, writers, directors, producers and casting staff.

Graham described workforce development as an “idea of abundance,” arguing that New Mexico needs to support experienced workers while continuing to create pathways for newcomers so the state is prepared when production expands again.

For Graham, the immediate goal remains bringing productions and employment back to New Mexico while maintaining the workforce and infrastructure that helped establish the state as a major production center.

After several years of disruption, he said the direction is improving, with more series, independent films and other productions creating reasons for cautious optimism heading into 2027.

Productions also generate spending beyond the set itself. Graham said visiting productions hire New Mexicans and purchase goods and services from local businesses, allowing film activity to support accommodations, transportation and other sectors. He described film as a comparatively high-paying industry with strong benefits and said that economic activity can reach communities well beyond Albuquerque and Santa Fe across the state economy.

George Slad is a freelance photographer for the Daily Lobo. He can be reached at photo@dailylobo.com or on X @SladGeorge

NEWS
SPORTS
CULTURE
OPINION
MULTIMEDIA

ADVERTISE
CONTACT US
NEWSLETTER
CLASSIFIED
PRINT EDITIONS



(505) 277-7527
UNM Board of Student Publications
University of New Mexico