

NORTHWEST NEW MEXICO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
administrative agent for the Farmington MPO

JOB PROSPECTUS

MPO Officer and MPO Planner

May 2019

THE COG ORGANIZATION:

Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments ("the COG") was formed in 1972 as one of 7 regional planning districts in New Mexico, currently covering Cibola, McKinley and San Juan Counties. The northwest region is also home to four Native American tribal nations, inhabiting dozens of rural communities across the 15,000-square-mile landscape.

The COG's annual budgets average around \$1 million, depending on available grant and contract funding from various sources. Base funding comes from membership dues from the region's cities and counties, annual appropriations from the State Legislature for regional planning districts, the State Department of Transportation for administering the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO), and the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) for economic development planning and TA. Other funding comes from special grants and contracts from Federal, State, Local, and Foundation agencies. The current portfolio includes a management contract with the City of Farmington for the Farmington Metropolitan Planning Organization (FMPO).

The COG Board of Directors is comprised of representatives from the 6 city governments and the 3 county governments in the region, and the COG maintains a team of 6 to 10 staff, depending on available budget for personnel.

The *mission* of the Council of Governments is to advance Northwest New Mexico by serving local governments in regional partnership. To that end, the COG's *vision* is to "lead the field" in the work of empowering communities, promoting regional competence and moving the region forward.

The COG work includes research and technical assistance to local governments and other stakeholders in policymaking, planning, project development, research, resource development, regionalization, convening and facilitating groups, communicating between and among agencies, and coordinating efforts across the many disciplines of community and economic development.

The FARMINGTON MPO

The Farmington Metropolitan Planning Organization (FMPO), headquartered in downtown Farmington, was formed in 2003 when the 2000 Census designated the Farmington area as exceeding 50,000 in population, thus forming an *Urbanized Area* (UZA). The FMPO was formed by Joint Powers Agreement among the Cities of Aztec, Bloomfield and Farmington and San Juan County, recently joined by the Town of Kirtland. The City of Farmington serves as fiscal agent. The FMPO joined Mesilla Valley (Las Cruces area) and Santa Fe as small-metro MPOs in New Mexico, with Mid-Region MPO (Albuquerque area) the State's only "*Transportation Management Area*" with population over 200,000.

The Farmington MPO's mission is to provide a forum for planning and developing an effective transportation system in the Farmington urbanized area to support the safe, economic and efficient movement of people and goods, while maintaining a high quality of life.

The Farmington MPO's work is guided by a *Unified Planning Work Program*, (UPWP), approved periodically by the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT), along with associated plans and documents designed to ensure FMPO compliance with Federal and State requirements, while engaging local leadership in fashioning plans and setting priorities for investment in the area's transportation facilities.

As the region's planning agency, the COG assisted forming the FMPO in the early 2000s, and in 2018 was contracted by the City of Farmington to take over administration of the MPO program.

The FMPO budget is based on funding formulas set by the Federal government, with required local matching funds provided by the FMPO member entities. Total annual budget for the FMPO is about \$300,000, supporting three full-time personnel. As of this announcement, only the Administrative Assistant position is filled, with the COG Executive Director serving as Interim MPO Officer.

THE POSITIONS

The COG is seeking to re-staff the Farmington MPO by hiring an **MPO Officer** and an **MPO Planner**. These professional staff will carry out the tasks outlined in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The positions are outlined below.

MPO Officer

The MPO Officer will need to be a seasoned professional, with expertise and experience in both planning and program management. Specific background in transportation planning and in small- metro localities will be important professional assets.

Candidates will need to demonstrate a strong academic background in fields related to the transportation planning work of the FMPO, as well as training and successful experience in managing complex programs and projects, and in supervising professional personnel. Advanced technical expertise in the electronic and conceptual tools of the transportation planning trade, such as in GIS mapping and traffic modeling skills, will be much preferred.

We are looking for professionals with desire and motivation to take on the challenge of planning and development in a small-metro area that is some distance from major metropolitan centers and that has infrastructural and socioeconomic needs that exceed available resources. We will also place high priority on social skills, including ability to relate to staff, manage complex communication networks and build trust with a diverse range of stakeholders.

In addition to overseeing the professional planning work of FMPO staff, the MPO Officer will need competence and interest in, managing, documenting and reporting program and budgetary compliance with the *Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)*, as well as with other agreements, rules and requirements.

The position will be housed in the FMPO offices on the second story of the Downtown Center in downtown Farmington. In-region and out-of-region travel will be required on a periodic and as- needed basis. Close communications with the COG, the City of Farmington, funders and stakeholders will be key.

Beginning annual salary for this position is budgeted in the Senior Professional range (\$60,000s).

MPO Planner

The COG is seeking qualified professionals to fulfill the Farmington MPO's transportation planning function. The Planner function includes two levels: a Senior Planner; and an Associate Planner. Qualified candidates will be considered for one of these positions, which will serve as fulfilling the MPO's planning function, under the supervision of the MPO Officer and with the guidance and direction of the Policy and Technical Committees of the MPO.

While both positions will perform tasks within the planning function, the Senior Planner will be assumed to have a high degree of experience, expertise and skill and will be given broader scope and self-direction the performance of planning tasks. In the absence of a Senior Planner, the MPO will outsource for specialized planning services, and the Associate Planner will be given a work plan commensurate with skills and background, along with additional training and progressively more responsibility.

The MPO Planner should have both academic background and practical experience in the transportation planning field, and should possess strong computer skills including the use of technical planning tools. In general, the MPO Planning function includes performing professional and technical transportation planning activities for the MPO in alignment with the objectives and tasks outlined in the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), including researching, preparing and/or reviewing analytical studies, preparing maps and other graphics, conducting GIS and transportation modeling work, and presenting to committees, boards and councils.

The Planner assists with performance, monitoring and reporting of tasks as required, as well as with the public outreach functions of the MPO.

Beginning annual salary for the MPO Planner positions range from the \$40,000s to the \$50,000s.

Farmington Metropolitan Planning Organization (FMPO) ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

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