

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Future Leaders to Convene at University of New Mexico for 2026 Dennis Chavez New Mexico LDZ

**ALBUQUERQUE, NM** – The National Hispanic Institute (NHI) today announced that it will host the 5th Annual Dennis Chavez New Mexico Leadership Development Program (LDZ) from June 7–14, 2026, at the University of New Mexico (UNM) campus. The program will bring together 150 top-achieving high school sophomores and juniors to participate in a weeklong, intensive legislative simulation.

The event honors the legacy of Dennis Chavez, the first Hispanic person elected to a full term in the U.S. Senate and the first senator to be born in New Mexico. This unique experience challenges students to step into the roles of community leaders, working together to propose and adopt policies that address issues relevant to the Latino community.

The LDZ is designed to be a transformative experience in which students learn to build systems, mobilize people, and influence decisions that shape communities. Participants engage in real-world challenges that foster personal growth and self-awareness, creating a decisive shift in mindset.

"The LDZ is not a civics lesson, but a leadership game for anyone who aspires to make a future impact," said Gloria de Leon, NHI Cofounder and Director of the Dennis Chavez LDZ. "It provides an opportunity for high-ability students to gain the confidence and skills needed to become powerful change-makers in their own right".

The Dennis Chavez New Mexico LDZ is fully funded by the New Mexico State Legislature, with support from Senator Michael Padilla, making it a tuition-free experience for New Mexico students.

#### Key Program Details:

- **Dates:** June 7–14, 2026
- **Location:** University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, with activities including a session at the State Capitol in Santa Fe
- **Participants:** Open to any college-bound high school sophomores and juniors from New Mexico
- **Cost:** Free for New Mexico students, covered by funding from the state legislature
- **Application Information:** The application requires a high school transcript and a list of activities. The regular admission deadline is Monday, December 15, 2025.

Through the LDZ, students form a network of peers and mentors who share their aspirations. The program is a powerful opportunity to develop real-world leadership competencies, including public speaking, policy writing, and constituency development.

For more information and to apply, please visit the National Hispanic Institute website at <https://nationalhispanicinstitute.org>.

**About the National Hispanic Institute (NHI)**

The National Hispanic Institute is an international non-profit organization dedicated to serving the future leadership needs of the community. Through its innovative and experiential leadership programs, NHI has been developing high-achieving high school and college students for over 45 years.

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