

Farmington, Albuquerque, State of N.M. win Family Friendly Business Award

Written by By Finance New Mexico
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Businesses, nonprofits, governments can apply online

The City of Farmington and the City of Albuquerque have joined the State of New Mexico as recipients of the Family Friendly Business Award in recognition of their family-friendly workplace policies. Farmington and the State of New Mexico received Platinum level recognition (the highest), while Albuquerque was recognized at the Gold level. The awards are bestowed by Family Friendly New Mexico, a nonprofit organization that recognizes New Mexico businesses, governments and organizations that implement policies deemed friendly to working families.

Offering flexible work schedules is one method employers can use to support working families. Other family-friendly policies include offering employer-sponsored healthcare and retirement plans. Policies like telecommuting and job-sharing have also been shown to help working families, while at the same time providing employers with cost savings through lower real estate costs and reduced turnover.

Studies show that employers benefit significantly when they take a family friendly approach. One recent study by Microsoft Japan demonstrated that productivity increased 40 percent after employees took advantage of an offer to work their typical weekly hours over a four-day week, while still earning their five-day pay. Other research indicates that increased productivity more than makes up for the costs associated with implementing family-friendly policies.

A RANGE OF OPTIONS

Family Friendly New Mexico bases its awards on four categories. Platinum level organizations must have adopted at least two policies in each of four categories pertaining to paid leave, health support, work schedules and economic support. Recipients of the Platinum award must also attest to having policies that address pay equity, diversity and inclusion, and community investment - such as providing paid time off for volunteer activities or offering employer-matched donations.

Gold level organizations, known as Committed Leaders, must have at least one family- friendly policy in each category, while Silver and Bronze level organizations, known as Rising Leaders and On the Pathway, are not held to specific requirements, but they must demonstrate having at least one to two family-friendly policies in place.

Compliance with state laws factor in also. For example, organizations must ensure that their policies support the New Mexico breastfeeding law by offering a safe and private place for mothers to breastfeed. Policies must also comply with the Promoting Financial Independence for Victims of Domestic Abuse Act.

Julianna Silva, chief operating officer of Family Friendly New Mexico, said there are distinct advantages for employers that provide a family friendly workplace. "Increased job satisfaction leads to higher morale and less turnover, which can reduce expenses related to recruiting and training. And happy employees are more productive."

Any New Mexico business, government or organization can apply to receive recognition. Organizations that meet the criteria receive a certificate, the Family Friendly Business Award logo, to utilize in their employee recruitment materials, a window sticker identifying them to customers as family friendly, and opportunities and events that showcase their family friendly status. For example, Family Friendly New Mexico plans a media event during the Family Friendly Business Day at the Capitol Rotunda Jan. 23.

Silva said the online application takes less than ten minutes to complete and is based on the honor system, where organizations provide information about their employment policies. Visit nmfamilyfriendlybusiness.org for more information and to fill out the application.

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