

# **New Mexico nonprofit wins AARP Prize for tech access in rural communities**

Aron Casillas, founder of the Mycelia Foundation in Las Cruces, has been named a winner of the AARP Purpose Prize.

The annual award recognizes leaders who use their knowledge and life experiences to create a lasting impact.



Each honoree will receive \$75,000 to support their organization, along with a year of technical assistance to help expand their reach and impact.

"We are proud to honor our AARP Purpose Prize winners – remarkable individuals who have transformed decades of life experience into innovative solutions for how we live and age," said Dr. Myechia Minter-Jordan, CEO of AARP. "Their work tackles urgent social challenges in their communities and demonstrates what it truly means to live with purpose."

The Mycelia Foundation connects underserved and rural communities with high-speed broadband and artificial intelligence-enhanced digital literacy programs and curriculum. Through its NET approach, combining networks, education and technology, the organization empowers families across New Mexico with essential connectivity and bilingual support, ensuring technology's benefits reach all communities.

"We are delighted that New Mexico has an AARP Purpose Prize Winner this year. As we know, broadband and internet connection are challenging for many across our state. This funding will allow the Mycelia Foundation to continue this innovative work connecting more people to technology and providing much-needed education on how it works," said AARP New Mexico State Director Joseph Roybal.

“This recognition amplifies our mission to connect underserved families across New Mexico,” Casillas said.