

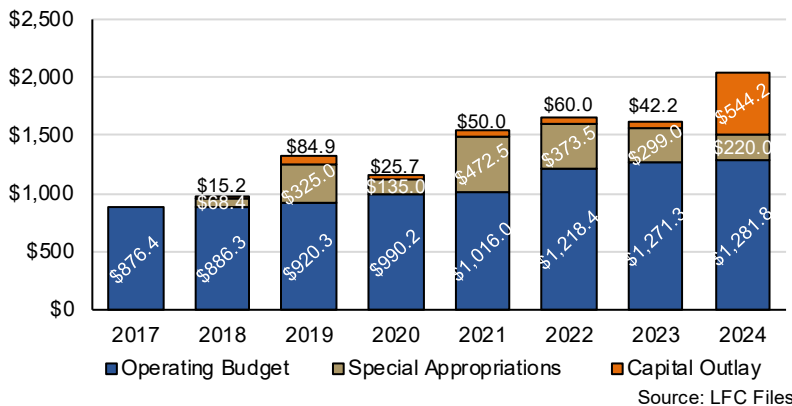
Topic Area: Transportation

The Legislature has made significant resources available to the Department of Transportation (NMDOT) to improve the quality of New Mexico’s roadways and manage other transportation programs. Overall, the transportation budget has grown substantially in recent years, supplemented by nonrecurring funding sources made possible by windfall oil and gas revenue. Including funds for local government roads, transportation appropriations rose from \$876 million at the 2017 legislative session, to more than \$2 billion in 2024, offering the department an opportunity to get ahead of road construction and maintenance needs.

How the department manages these investments will determine the state of New Mexico’s roads in the future. Monitoring the department’s performance through on-time project completion, ability to maintain a consistent letting schedule, and ability to hit longer-term planning and construction benchmarks will show progress toward improving the state’s road network. The department has identified staffing as a critical area for investment and monitoring the ability of NMDOT to fill and retain employees in key roles will demonstrate the capacity for the department to continue managing large investments. Finally, the safety of New Mexicans is the primary concern of NMDOT and drives investment decisions. Currently, New Mexico ranks worse than other states in motor vehicle fatalities; reducing fatalities will show the impact the state’s investments are having on New Mexicans.

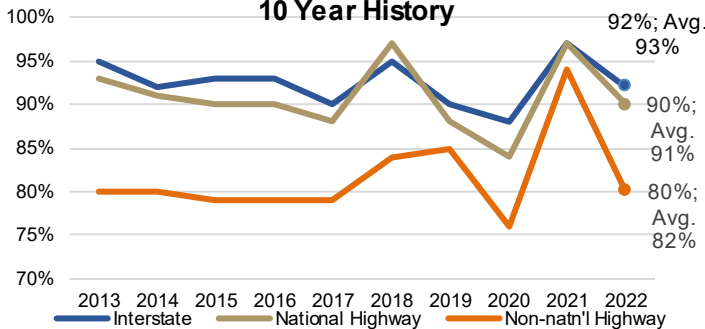
Key Data

NMDOT Appropriations by Session Year



- During the 2024 legislative session, NMDOT received more than \$2 billion in appropriations for transportation programs, including a \$1.28 billion operating budget, \$220 million in special appropriations, and \$544 million in capital outlay projects.
- Capital outlay appropriations included \$320 million in STBs for nine major infrastructure projects between FY25 and FY27.
- The agency’s recurring operating budget grew by 46 percent between FY18 and FY25, an average of 6.9 percent per year.

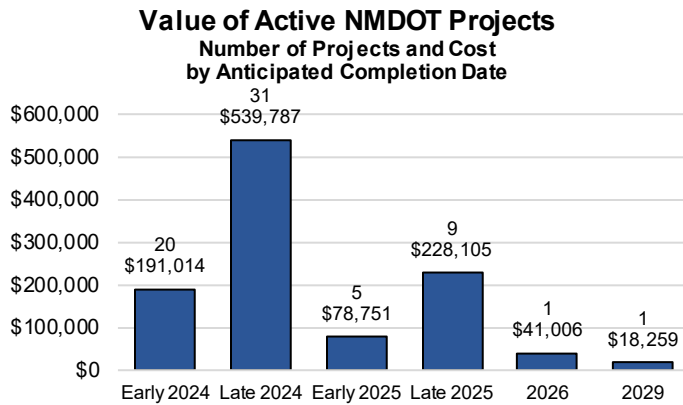
**New Mexico Road Conditions Survey
10 Year History**



- After a brief uptick in calendar year 2021, NMDOT reported road conditions slightly below the 10-year average in 2022. Typically, road conditions are best on the interstates, followed by non-interstate national highways, followed by state roads not a part of the national highway system.
- To improve road conditions, the Legislature has allocated general fund appropriations to NMDOT for road maintenance projects.

Performance Challenge: Managing Transportation Investments

NMDOT maintains a multi-year financial plan for current and upcoming projects known as the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, which is required by federal regulations. NMDOT’s current STIP includes nearly 1,400 projects with a total cost estimate of more than \$6.9 billion. An additional 139 projects worth more than \$800 million are included as “informational” items, identifying future projects for which the department has no yet assigned a specific funding source. More than 900 STIP items are NMDOT-led projects are on this list.



- NMDOT reports a total of 82 active construction projects led by the department on roads throughout the state. These projects have a collective value of almost \$1.1 billion, based on the contractor’s bid.
- 25 of the 67 projects have a cost of more than \$20 million; 3 projects cost more than \$40 million. Most of these large projects should be complete in the last half of 2024.
- Attachment #1 has additional details on where large projects are located and when they are anticipated to be complete.
- Using the current active project list as a benchmark, the committee can monitor the department’s success at bringing projects to a close, on time and on budget.

On-Time Project Performance and Cost-Over-Bid by Quarter

	Annual Total			Target		
	On Time Letting	On Time Complete	On Budget	On Time Letting	On Time Complete	On Budget
FY19	49%	86%	0.22%	67%	88%	3%
FY20	75%	92%	1.00%	67%	88%	3%
FY21	77%	94%	1.80%	67%	88%	3%
FY22	98%	91%	1.15%	67%	88%	3%
FY23	98%	85%	2.00%	75%	88%	3%
FY24	93%	78%	0.00%	75%	88%	2%

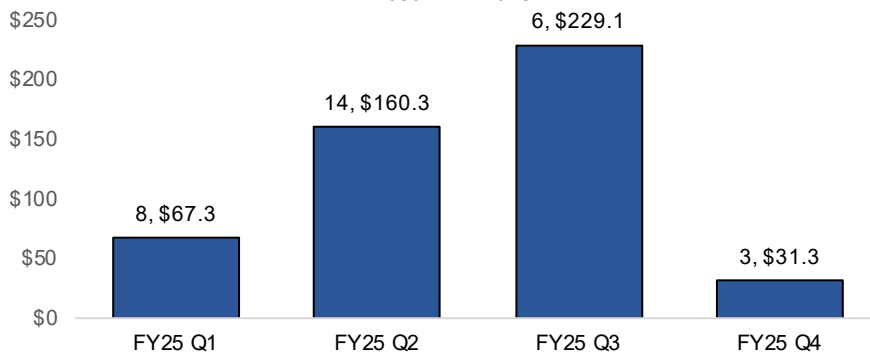
Above Target

Below Target

Source: NMDOT Performance Reports

NMDOT FY25 Letting Schedule by Quarter

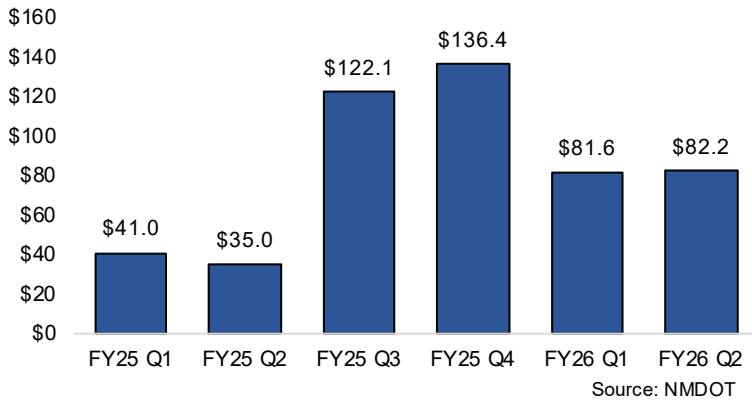
Number of Projects and Estimated Cost Cost in Millions



Note: Cost estimates are based on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program estimated construction costs, not including preliminary engineering or right-of-way costs. Source: LFC Files

- NMDOT maintains a one year “letting schedule” to assist the contracting community with planning and preparing to bid on NMDOT projects.
- For FY25, the schedule includes projects with a total estimated cost of \$456.7 million. NMDOT adjusts the letting schedule each month, adding new projects or adjusting the timing of existing projects to address issues that have arisen with the project.
- Changes to this schedule provide an opportunity to review NMDOT’s performance in getting planned projects out to bid so construction can begin.

Major Project Letting Estimates Quarter
Estimated Costs in Millions



- With more than 1,500 projects in NMDOT’s planning pipeline it is unfeasible for the Legislature to monitor detail performance on all of these projects.
- To monitor delivery on major investment, LFC staff have proposed a smaller list of major infrastructure projects to track through the Legistat process, focusing on high-dollar projects expected to go to bid over the next two years.
- A complete list of these projects, with schedule milestones is included in Attachment #2.
- NMDOT will shortly launch a performance dashboard for major infrastructure projects.

NMDOT Pavement Preservation by Quarter

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Target
FY20	1,228	1,039	331	1,372	3,970	2,750
FY21	1,418	1,040	385	1,009	3,852	3,000
FY22	2,031	1,304	205	833	4,373	3,000
FY23	907	983	264	1,236	3,390	3,500
FY24	999	2,025	1,117		4,141	3,500

Year-over-Year Increase	Year-over-Year Decrease
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Source: NMDOT Performance Reports

- In addition to road construction, NMDOT needs to support a strong road maintenance program.
- The department has consistently beaten performance measure targets for pavement preservation.
- Where the department has fallen short, it is often related to extraordinary events. For example, in the summers of 2022 and 2023 some NMDOT staff were diverted to emergency response activity, such as wildfires. This limited maintenance activity in some cases.

Suggested Questions

1. NMDOT’s typical project schedule spans multiple years. How accurate are NMDOT’s estimates of projects completion? What can cause a project to fall behind schedule or run over budget?
2. With a significant influx of resources for major construction projects, how much capacity to add new projects to the schedule?
3. With additional funding to address maintenance needs, does the department believe road its annual road condition survey will show improvements in the coming years? Does the department anticipate improvements when the calendar year 2023 survey is released later this year and will that report be available for the October Legistat hearing?

Performance Challenge: Maintaining a Qualified and Skilled Staff

NMDOT has identified maintaining a qualified and skilled staff as critical to addressing road and infrastructure needs. While NMDOT requires employees from a wide variety of backgrounds and skills, including business and finance, information technology, and legal profession, the department employees a large number of maintenance workers, accounting for about one-third of all positions. Additionally, the department has reported difficulty in attracting and recruiting engineering professionals—those licensed by the Board of Professional Engineers or who are training to become licensed—and engineering technicians, who perform key technical work but can begin working for the department with only a high school diploma.

Key Data

Employment at NMDOT as of 5/1/2024

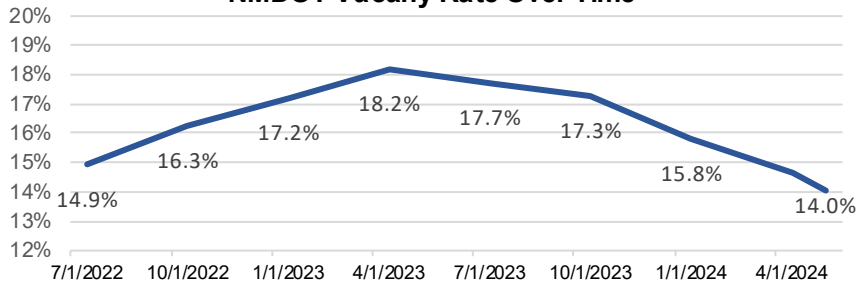
Position Type	Filled	Vacant	Total
Budgeted	2,181	401	2,582
Not Budgeted	43	48	91

Total Filled Position	2,224
FY24 OpBud FTE	2,587.5
Vacancies vs. Budget	363.50
Vacancy Rate	14.0%

Source: LFC Files

- Currently, NMDOT’s budget is based on a 2,587.5 FTE, but the department’s organizational listing maintains a large number of unbudgeted positions.
- Of the 2,582 NMDOT positions, 401 of them are currently vacant, but when calculated based on the authorized FTE total, the department’s current vacancy rate is only 14 percent, well below the statewide average.
- Notably, the department has been active in recruiting interns, which are often temporary, unbudgeted positions, pushing up total headcount.

NMDOT Vacany Rate Over Time

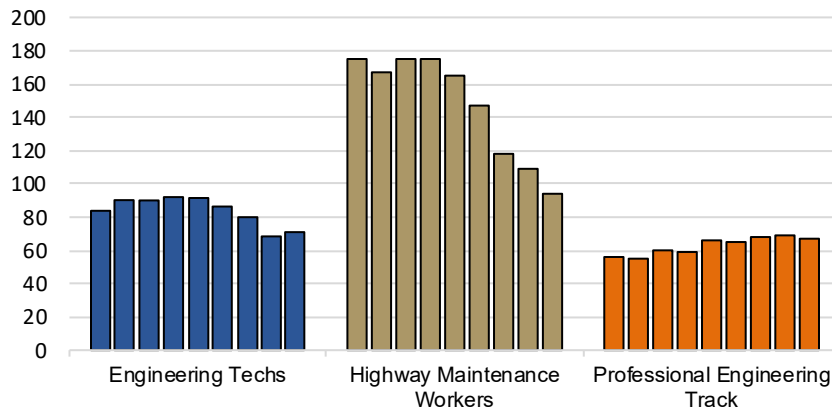


Note: Vacancy rate calculated based on filled positions and authorized FTE pursuant to the agency's operating budget.

Source: LFC Files

- NMDOT began FY24 with an inflated vacancy rate, rising from 15 percent at the beginning of FY22 to its peak of 18 percent in the spring of 2023.
- However, since then the department has been successful at filling vacant positions, reducing the overall vacancy rate to 14 percent in May 2024.
- A 1 percentage point increase or decrease in the vacancy rate represents about 22 jobs at NMDOT.

**Vacancies in Key Job Areas
by Quarter, July 2022 - May 2024**



- NMDOT has been successful at reducing vacancies in some key job areas.
- For highway maintenance workers, vacancies fell from 175 at the beginning of FY23 to 94 in May 2024, although 9 vacant positions were eliminated. Vacant engineering technician positions also fell, from 84 to 71.
- However, for professional engineers and those training to become professional engineers saw an increase from 56 vacancies to 67.

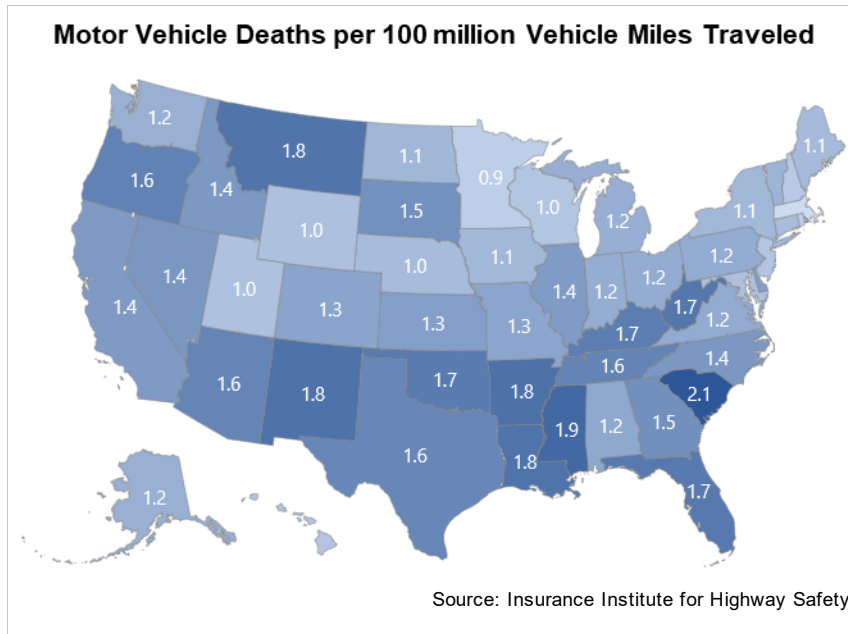
Suggested Questions

1. How does geography factor into the department's staffing challenges? Are there certain areas of the state where it is more difficult to recruit and retain qualified employees?
2. How does NMDOT work with other departments and public schools to help drive prospective employees to the department.
3. How successful has the department been at retaining individuals over time? When NMDOT invests resources in training an individual, is that person more likely to stay with the department over a longer period?

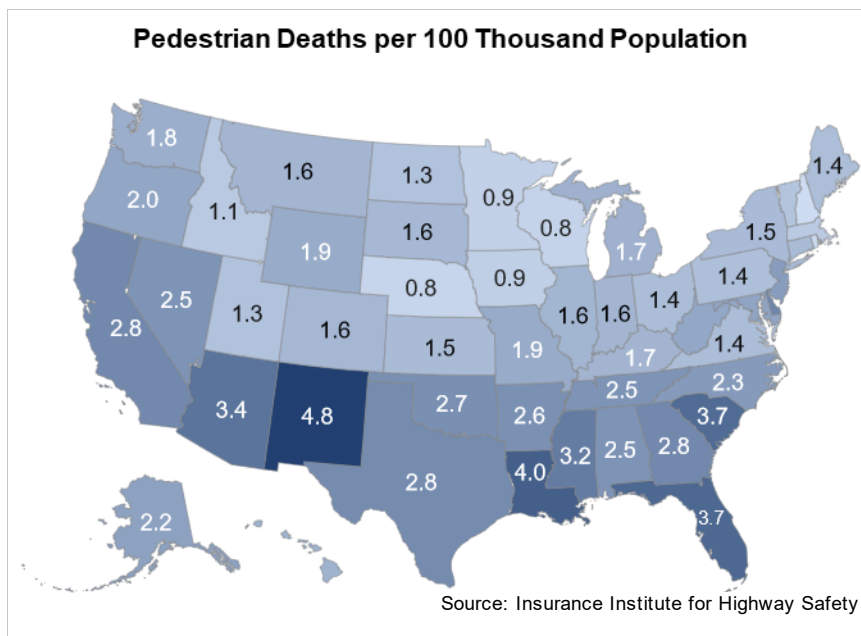
Performance Challenge: Providing Safe Roads for the Traveling Public

The ultimate goal of NMDOT is to provide safe roads for the traveling public. New Mexico has among the highest number of motor-vehicle related fatalities in the country and the highest rate of fatalities for pedestrians involved in motor vehicle crashes. Using federal data from 2021, the Insurance Institute of for Highway Safety reports 427 fatal motor vehicle crashes resulting in 481 deaths. The U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Roadway Safety Strategy focuses on a “safe system” approach that combines improved roadway design, encourages responsible personal behavior, and promotes safer speeds.

Key Data



- In 2021, 481 people died in motor vehicle crashes, higher than the national average. That amounts to 22.7 fatalities per 100,000 in population or 1.79 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.
- New Mexico ranks fourth in motor vehicle fatalities in relation to miles traveled according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, behind only South Carolina, Mississippi, and Arkansas.
- Were the number of deaths in New Mexico to fall to the national average of 1.37 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, 114 fewer New Mexicans per year would be involved in fatal crashes.



- Based on population size, more pedestrians in New Mexico died motor vehicle crashes than in any other state in the nation.
- On average, 2.2 pedestrians died from motor vehicle accidents in the United States, less than half of New Mexico's rate of 4.8.
- Although circumstances vary by state, New Mexico ranked well below other large, sparsely populated states such as Montana, Idaho, North Dakota or South Dakota.

Fatal Crash Hotspots

State Roadway Intersections	City and County Roads
I-40 & Coors Blvd., Albuquerque	Central & Wyoming, Albuquerque
I-40 & Carlisle Blvd., Albuquerque	Central & Rio Grande, Albuquerque
Coors Blvd & Illif Road, Albuquerque	Central & Eubank, Albuquerque
I-40 & Unser Blvd., Albuquerque	Lomas & Louisiana, Albuquerque
I-40 & 4 th Street, Albuquerque	Menaul & Carlisle, Albuquerque

Source: University of New Mexico, Geospatial and Population Studies

Pedestrian Crash Hotspots

State Roadway Intersections	City and County Roads
Coors & Central, Albuquerque	Central & Wyoming, Albuquerque
Coors Blvd & Illif Road, Albuquerque	Central & San Mateo, Albuquerque
I-40 & 2nd Street, Albuquerque	Central & Louisiana, Albuquerque
Cerrillos & Camino Carlos Rey, Santa Fe	Central & Eubank, Albuquerque
I-40 & Coors Blvd., Albuquerque	San Mateo & Montgomery, Albuquerque

Source: University of New Mexico, Geospatial and Population Studies

- Analysis of NMDOT traffic safety data from the Geospatial and Population Studies at the University of New Mexico has shown the intersections with the most fatal crashes.
- Fatal crash data can be used by the department to identify areas
- UNM notes heavily traveled areas will see more crashes. Future analysis could consider traffic counts to identify less-traveled areas seeing a disproportionate number of fatalities.
- Different types of roads lead to different types of crashes. Often, pedestrian fatalities are more frequent in areas with larger homeless populations.
- NMDOT maintains an online, vulnerable road user [dashboard](#) with additional data on pedestrian and cyclist crashes.

Suggested Questions

1. How does NMDOT use traffic safety data to inform investment decisions?
2. Many motor vehicle fatalities take place on roads maintained by local governments. How does NMDOT support local governments in a effort to reduce traffic fatalities?