

Albuquerque drives New Mexico’s high violent crime rates, making up almost half the state’s violent crimes despite comprising only about a quarter of the state’s population. Concerns over crime in Albuquerque were a focus of the 2022 legislative session, with data from the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) indicating increases in violent crime in 2021, including a record number of homicides.

New Mexico’s policymakers are often forced to make decisions without the benefit of timely data on statewide crime trends. The Department of Public Safety (DPS) is in the midst of a multi-year transition to the new National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which should allow it to provide more timely and comprehensive data, but in July, 51 of 115 law enforcement agencies were not reporting to NIBRS, including the two largest agencies in the state, APD and the New Mexico State Police (NMSP). Delays in DPS’s implementation of a new records management system create further delays in NMSP’s reporting.

Law Enforcement

Operations. In FY22, NMSP conducted 22 percent more DWI checkpoints than in FY21, and although the agency fell slightly short of its target, it did see improved results as DWI arrests rose 14 percent compared with last year. This aligns with preliminary data from the Department of Transportation showing alcohol-involved traffic fatalities are up about 18 percent compared with FY21. However, enforcement and arrests are not always clearly correlated; for example, in the fourth quarter of FY22, saturation patrols increased 32 percent compared with the third quarter but DWI arrests fell 32 percent. Notably, DWI arrests have fallen substantially over the past five years, with arrests in FY22 down 44 percent compared with FY18.

State police arrests fell 7 percent overall in FY22, with misdemeanor arrests down 17 percent and felonies down 26 percent; however, 14 percent of total arrests were not classified as either felony or misdemeanor at the time of reporting.

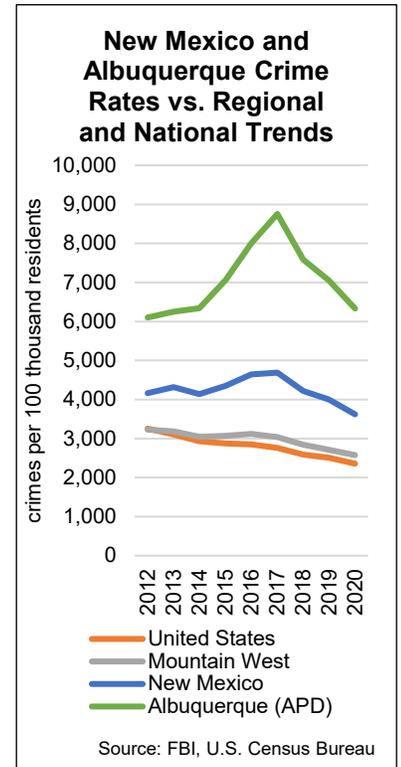
DPS substantially exceeded its target for the number of commercial vehicle safety inspections conducted in FY22, with 35 percent more inspections completed this year than in FY21. State police issued 17.7 thousand commercial motor vehicle citations in FY22, about 17 percent of the total number of inspections conducted, in line with the average of 19 percent between FY18 and FY21.

Manpower. DPS reported the state police force comprised a total of 636 commissioned state police officers at the close of FY22, a vacancy rate of about 12 percent. In the fourth quarter, 30 officers graduated from recruit and lateral schools, increasing the force by a net of 18 officers compared with the third quarter. NMSP force strength averaged 635 over the course of FY22, its lowest levels since prior to FY16 and 5 percent lower than FY21.

The 2022 GAA provided \$2 million for NMSP to expand its recruit and lateral schools beginning in FY23, which will be necessary to combat unusually large

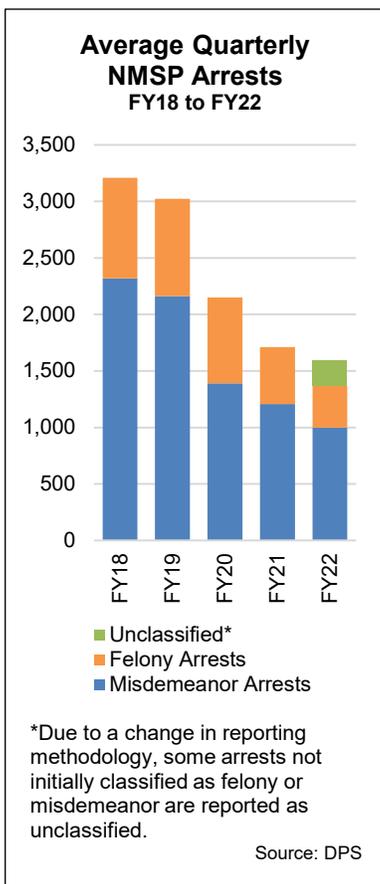
ACTION PLAN

Submitted by agency?	Yes
Timeline assigned?	No
Responsibility assigned?	No



State Police FY22 Stats

88%	homicide clearance rate
6,804	cases investigated
1,494	felony arrests
3,992	misdemeanor arrests
108	crime scenes investigated
329	stolen vehicles recovered



retirement rates. A record 46 officers retired in FY22, more than double the retirements in FY21 and 140 percent more than the average 19 retirements between FY16 and FY21.

The Legislature also made significant investments to retain high-quality law enforcement officers, including almost \$9 million to provide pay increases to NMSP officers. Overall, state police officers, sergeants, lieutenants, and captains received 15 percent raises while majors and deputy chiefs received 14 percent raises in July. Eligible officers, sergeants, and lieutenants also received one-step increases. In June, DPS also used its vacancy savings to provide \$1,700 one-time retention stipends to all officers in June.

DPS and the Legislature have also targeted high vacancy rates among dispatchers and transportation inspectors, providing pay increases for these positions in FY21 and FY22. Vacancy rates among transportation inspectors fell from almost 30 percent in FY20 and FY22 to about 11 percent in FY22. However, vacancies among dispatchers rose significantly despite these pay increases, from about 25 percent in FY21 to 37 percent in FY22. For FY23, the Legislature provided funds for 19.5 percent pay increases for transportation inspectors and 18.4 percent increases for dispatchers, which the department implemented in July.

Budget: \$130,229.2 **FTE:** 1,093.3

	FY20 Actual	FY21 Actual	FY22 Target	FY22 Actual	Rating
DWI checkpoints conducted	123	231	150	188	G
DWI saturation patrols conducted	1,933	2,290	3,000	2,805	Y
Commercial motor vehicle safety inspections conducted	68,378	76,269	90,000	102,972	G
Misdemeanor and felony arrests*	New	6,844	N/A	6,375	
DWI arrests*	1,647	1,272	N/A	1,450	
Commissioned state police officer vacancy rate*	New	8.7%	N/A	12.1%	
Commissioned state police officer turnover rate*	New	6.44	N/A	10.87	
Graduation rate of the New Mexico State Police recruit school*	New	71%	N/A	53.6%	
Program Rating	G	Y		G	

*Measure is classified as explanatory and does not have a target.

State Police Force Strength

Fiscal Year	Recruit and Lateral Officer Hires	Total Force Strength*
FY18	60	665
FY19	47	662
FY20	52	674
FY21	22	656
FY22	46	636

*Reflects force strength at the close of the fiscal year.

Source: Department of Public Safety

Statewide Law Enforcement Support

Forensic Laboratory. During the course of FY22, the forensic laboratory completed analysis on 31 percent more cases than in FY21, while the total number of cases received for analysis fell 2 percent. Overall, the laboratory’s outstanding case backlog fell by almost 2,000 cases, or 29 percent, between the end of FY21 and FY22, to almost 4,900 cases outstanding at the close of FY22. The reduction in backlog was largely driven by the Chemistry Unit, which received 2 percent fewer cases in FY22 than in FY21 and completed 39 percent more. This unit filled one of its vacant positions in May. Additionally, the Latent Print Unit has almost eliminated its backlog, with just seven cases outstanding at the end of FY22. This unit filled one of its two vacant positions in March.

The Firearm and Toolmark Unit received 40 percent fewer cases in the fourth quarter of FY22 than in the third, allowing it to reduce its case backlog. Although

it did not reach its target for FY22, the unit completed 90 percent more cases than it did in FY21. The unit is now fully staffed, and one of its staff members will be beginning to work independently in the first quarter of FY23. The Biology Unit completed 2 percent more cases in FY22 than in FY21; however, the unit received 8 percent more cases and completed 88 percent of cases it received this year.

**Department of Public Safety
FY22 Q4 Forensic Cases Received and Completed**

Unit	Cases Received	Cases Completed	Completion Rate	Pending Cases	Scientist/ Technician Vacancy Rate
Firearm and Toolmark	175	219	125%	1,844	0%
Latent Print	86	96	112%	7	17%
Chemistry	1,230	1,495	122%	1,387	28%
Biology	477	427	90%	1,659	27%

Source: DPS, State Personnel Office organizational listing report

The vacancy rate among forensic scientists and technicians rose about 2 percentage points in FY22 compared with FY21, with an overall vacancy rate averaging 25 percent. While vacancies have historically impacted the laboratory’s productivity, turnover also significantly affects case completions, as new scientists may require extensive training before they can be as productive as more experienced staff. Retention is therefore a high priority for the laboratory. Almost \$600 thousand in recurring general fund appropriations in the GAA support reducing laboratory backlogs by adding support staff and increasing forensic scientist and technician compensation. The agency plans to add higher level forensic scientist positions, providing more options for career advancement among laboratory staff and improving retention.

Law Enforcement Academy Board. After carrying a backlog of complaint cases in FY19 and FY20, in FY21 and FY22 the Law Enforcement Academy Board began cutting down on this backlog, and at the close of FY22, 44 cases were outstanding. Although it did not meet in the third quarter, the board met twice in June to adjudicate misconduct cases. Significant changes to law enforcement officer training and certification are set to take place in FY24 under legislation passed during the 2022 session.

Budget: \$22,253.2 **FTE:** 161.0

	FY20 Actual	FY21 Actual	FY22 Target	FY22 Actual	Rating
Forensic firearm and toolmark cases completed	80%	37%	100%	81%	Y
Forensic latent fingerprint cases completed	65%	150%	100%	155%	G
Forensic chemistry cases completed	93%	103%	100%	146%	G
Forensic biology and DNA cases completed	73%	93%	100%	88%	Y
Forensic scientist and forensic technician vacancy rate*	New	22.9%	N/A	25%	
Complaint cases reviewed and adjudicated by the New Mexico Law Enforcement Academy Board* 1	43%	194%	N/A	130%	
Program Rating	Y	G		G	

*Measure is classified as explanatory and does not have a target.
1. LFC, DFA, and DPS agreed to change the methodology for calculating this measure in FY22 Q2 and recalculated historical data displayed here using the same methodology.

