



# NEW MEXICO COUNTIES

33 STRONG

## 2025 Legislative Priorities

Approved by the NMC Board of Directors  
August 1, 2024



**Date:** September 10, 2024  
**To:** Courts, Corrections, & Justice Committee Members  
**From:** Joy Esparsen, Executive Director  
**Re:** 2025 Legislative Priorities

In 2024, the New Mexico Legislature and Governor Lujan Grisham were quick to respond to critical local government needs for public safety personnel and resources. The appropriations you provided are vital to filling vacancies in county detention centers, fire districts, and emergency response as well as increasing support services for the EMS Bureau and 700 MHz radio interoperability. We are also requesting continued funding for state district courthouses and an increase to the reimbursement amount for state prisoners housed in county detention facilities.

**HB2 Appropriation Requests:**

- ◆ \$8.2 million for the County Detention Facility Reimbursement Fund
- ◆ \$20 million for state district courthouses
- ◆ \$25 million Detention and Fire/EMS Recruitment
- ◆ 10% Health Insurance Premium Tax to EMS Bureau (SB151—2024)
- ◆ \$6 million for 700 MHz radios

The NMC Board is also advocating for legislative action to create equitable disclosure of commercial property sales to Assessors, amend the Inspection of Public Records Act, and secure local government funding to support state and federal initiatives related to border humanitarian efforts and crime prevention. Throughout the interim, NMC is actively collaborating with multiple stakeholders to refine these proposals.

On behalf of the NMC Board of Directors, we are grateful for your unwavering commitment to addressing the needs of county governments. Your thoughtful consideration and proactive approach have not only strengthened our local communities but have also set a commendable precedent for collaborative governance. It is through your dedicated efforts that we are able to build a more resilient and responsive system of local administration. Thank you for your continued support and for working together to make New Mexico a better place for all its residents.

For more information, please see the attached background on each of these initiatives or contact me at (505) 660-9629 or [jesparsen@nmcountries.org](mailto:jesparsen@nmcountries.org).

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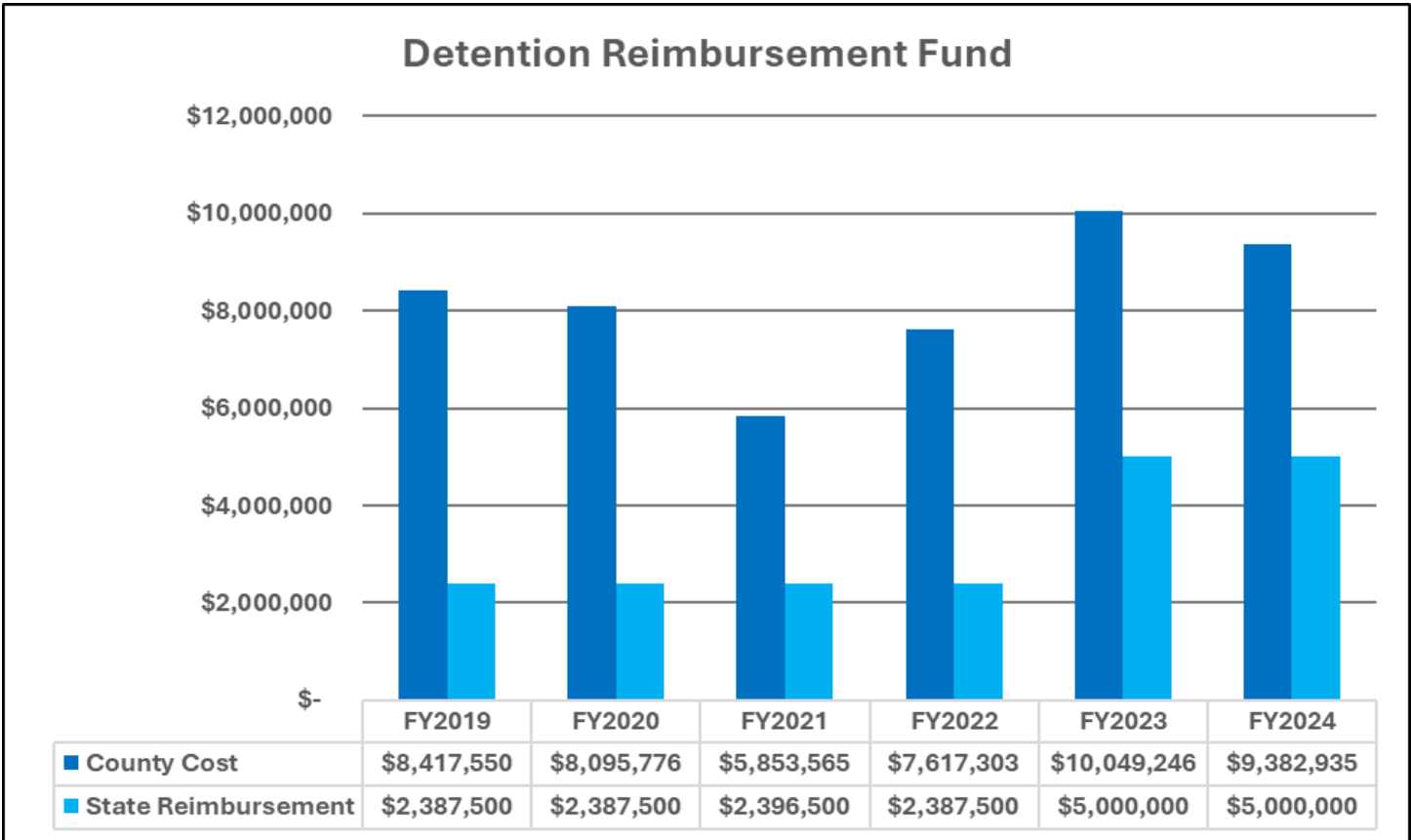
**NMCOUNTIES.ORG**

# 2025 Legislative Priorities

## Detention Reimbursement Fund

New Mexico Counties requests an appropriation of **\$8.2 million** for the County Detention Facility Reimbursement Fund, (NMSA 1978 §33-3B-4), to reimburse counties a percentage of the cost for housing felony offenders who have been sentenced to confinement in state correctional facilities, in county facilities.

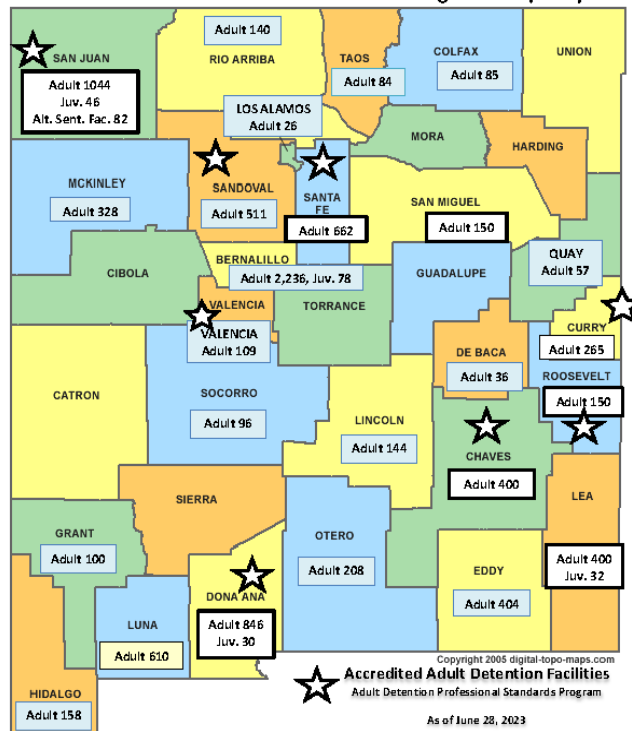
The County Detention Reimbursement Fund was **created in 2007 with a \$5 million** appropriation following litigation between the counties and state. It diminished to less than \$2.5 million over the next decade. The Legislature **restored it to the 2007 amount of \$5 million** in 2022 but the five-year average cost to house New Mexico Corrections Department inmates has been calculated by the New Mexico Sentencing Commission to be \$8.2 million.



# NM County Detention Facilities' Design Bed Capacity & Accreditation Status



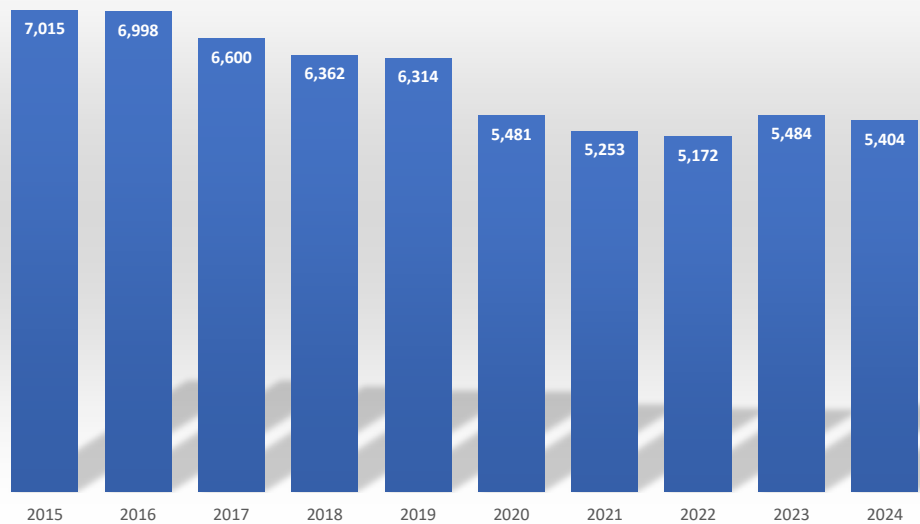
NM Detention Accredited Facilities & Design Bed Capacity



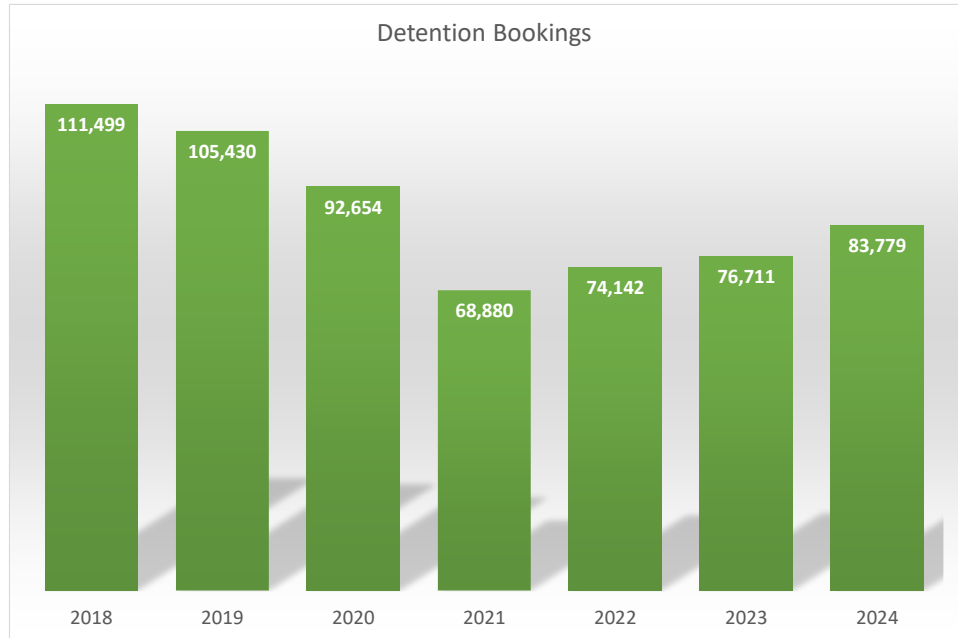
# Adult Detention Average Daily Population 2015 - 2024



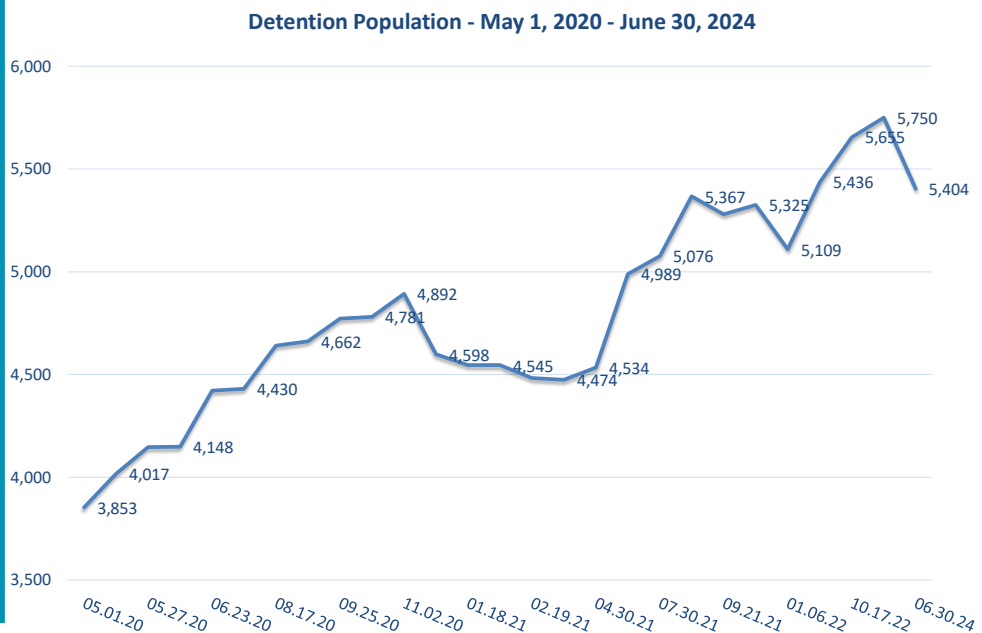
Adult Detention ADP



# Statewide Detention Bookings 2018-2024



# Statewide Detention Population May 1, 2020 - June 30, 2024



## Courthouse Funding

New Mexico Counties requests continued funding to the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) for the construction and renovation of state district courthouse complexes. State district courts no longer reflect a single judge residing at a county facility the way the territorial statute first intended. State courthouse complexes can reach well over \$50 million in construction costs, and the **addition of a single judge can cost a county \$2-\$3 million** for renovation and increased operational support. Counties maintain that courthouses are a state responsibility and that the rising costs of construction, security, and IT necessitate a shared revenue stream.

In 2023, the Legislature appropriated \$23 million to AOC to assist with these critical needs. \$15 million was designated to resolve litigation between the 8th Judicial District Court and Otero County. AOC received over **\$22 million in requests for the remaining \$8 million.**

In 2024, the Legislature appropriated \$10,000,000 to AOC to continue this shared revenue stream, contingent upon a county match of at least 50 percent of project costs. The Budget Committee met in May 2024 to consider project proposals and awarded the bulk of this funding. However, \$1,315,000 in matching funds remain and AOC is currently requesting proposals for this balance. A continued appropriation is necessary to meet the ongoing needs of state district court complexes.

### Historic Increases in District Court Judges

JUDICIAL DISTRICT	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
1st	9	9	10	10	10	10	10
2nd	27	27	29	29	30	30	30
3rd	8	8	9	9	9	9	9
4th	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
5th	11	11	11	11	12	12	12
6th	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
7th	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
8th	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
9th	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
10th	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
11th	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
12th	4	4	5	5	5	5	5
13th	8	8	8	8	9	9	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>102</b>

## Detention Recruitment

### Detention & Corrections Workforce Capacity

Awarded Entities and Departments	# of Officers
Acoma Adult Temporary Holding Facility	4
Bernalillo County Metropolitan Detention Center	23
Bernalillo County Youth Services Center	10
Bernalillo County Youth Services Center (Juvenile)	10
Colfax County - Vigil Maldonado Detention Center	4
Curry County	7
Eddy County Detention	10
Grant County Detention Center	4
Hobbs Detention Facility	3
Luna County	10
New Mexico Corrections Department	46
Otero County Detention Center	4
Quay County Detention Center	3
Rio Arriba County Detention Center	4
Roosevelt County Detention Center	3
San Juan County Adult Detention Center	10
San Miguel County Detention Center	5
Sandoval County Detention Center	6
Santa Fe County	7
Sierra County	2
Socorro County Detention Center	4
Taos Adult Detention Center	5
Valencia County Detention Center	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>189</b>

New Mexico Counties requests an additional appropriation for the Detention and Corrections Workforce Capacity Building Fund established by the legislature in 2023 (NMSA 1978 §9-6-19). The Fund was created to assist counties with critical detention officer vacancy levels in county facilities notwithstanding significant pay increases, to attract and retain employees.

In 2024, the Legislature appropriated \$25 million to the Department of Finance & Administration (DFA) for grants to bolster public safety. This significant investment is designed to help offset the cost of new detention and correctional officer salaries for three years. DFA received requests for over **850** positions. Final awards included **189** new officer positions to provide critical support to 22 local entities and the New Mexico Corrections Department. It is evident in the number of requests that the need is greater than the funding provided and consideration for an additional appropriation is a priority for New Mexico counties.

## Firefighter & EMS Recruitment

New Mexico Counties requests an additional appropriation for the Fire & Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Recruitment Fund. New Mexico's counties rely heavily on volunteer personnel for fire, EMS, and emergency management services. In many counties, paid staff is limited to one or two individuals. Increasing the number of paid firefighters and EMTs will improve response times, department capacity, and Insurance Services Office (ISO) ratings.

In 2024, the Legislature appropriated \$25 million to the Department of Finance & Administration (DFA) to help offset the cost of fire and EMT salaries for three years. DFA received 64 requests for over **330** positions. Final awards included **190** new positions to provide critical support to 59 local entities and the New Mexico Corrections Department. It is evident in the number of requests that the need is greater than the funding provided and consideration for an additional appropriation is a priority for New Mexico counties.



## Emergency Medical Services

In 2024, SB151: Premium Tax for Emergency Services, as amended by Senate Tax, redistributes a portion of the Premium Tax from health insurance business to the Emergency Medical Services Fund at the New Mexico Department of Health.

The amendment also added an **\$11 million** non-reverting, General Fund appropriation to the Emergency Medical Services Fund for use in FY2025 and beyond to carry out the purposes of the Fund.

These changes provide a critically needed reoccurring revenue stream for EMS statewide.

### History of EMS Funding

1978	EMS statute created; distributed \$500,000 to 96 services
1978-1988	EMS services increased from 96 to 227
1980s	GF distribution of \$500,000 to DOH for EMS Fund
1986	State advisory committee recommended sustainable EMS Fund
1987	EMS Fund established "\$1 for Life"; generated \$1.8 Million
1988-1994	EMS Services increased from 227 to 294
1992	Legislation to increase the EMS Fund appropriation failed
1994	EMS Fund reverts back to GF
1994	EMS Fund distribution is \$2.9 million for 316 services
2000s	Legislation to add 10¢ to Liquor Tax for EMS Fund failed
2008-2010	EMS Fund distribution is \$3.8 million
2011	Fire Protection Fund amended to include some EMS
2019	Memorial to study sustainable EMS funding needs failed
2020	EMS Fund distribution is \$2.8 million
2020	Legislation to increase EMS Fund to \$5 million failed
2024	SB151 passed to provide a continued revenue stream for EMS

## 700 MHz Radios

NMC requests **\$6 million** in continued funding to the Department of Information Technology for use in FY2025 to fund the payment of subscriber fees for the digital trunked radio communications system for municipal, county and tribal public safety agencies that provide law enforcement, fire, medical or other emergency services.

## Equitable Disclosure

NMC seeks legislation to treat nonresidential (commercial) property owners the same as residential (homeowners) to ensure that property transfers and sales are handled fairly and equitably. Currently, commercial owners are held to a lesser degree of accountability than homeowners. All **property should be accurately assessed at fair market value** to ensure transparency for the property owner, reduce the risk of sudden and unanticipated increases, as well as provide stability for county revenues and services.

NMC and the Assessors' Affiliate are hosting statewide public meetings throughout the interim to garner input from business owners, realtors, builders, and other associations. This is an important discussion this year with the **two veteran ballot initiatives** that are likely to reduce impact property taxes. The potential impact cannot be made up through yield control as many counties are already at their mill rate caps.

## Inspection of Public Records Improvements

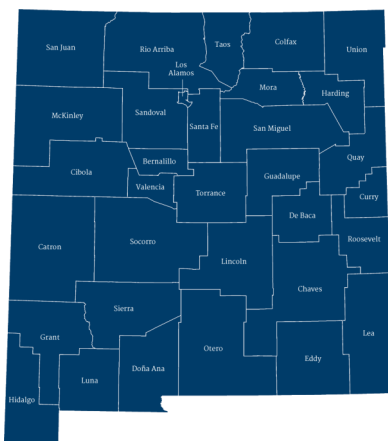
NMC seeks to amend the Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA) to exempt from disclosing specific information and **prohibit certain requests used to compromise and obstruct critical local government services**. IPRA was intended to provide government accountability and transparency. Instead, overwhelmingly burdensome and often frivolous requests have been submitted solely for the purpose of interfering with vital services such as elections and public safety.

During the interim, NMC is working with multiple stakeholders to refine this proposal and identify solutions that do not interfere with the original intent of the Act. In 2023, HB232: Disclosure of Certain Information amended IPRA by enacting changes for the protection of critical IT systems, undercover law enforcement, and restricting certain proprietary technical and business information. It was the first time that IPRA had been amended since its enactment.

## Resources to Support Border-Related Humanitarian & Crime Efforts

NMC requests an appropriation of **\$5 million** to counties for services provided to state and federal agencies to support border humanitarian and crime efforts. This funding will be used to combat drug and human trafficking networks; to coordinate with community services that provide food, transportation, shelter, and family location; and to coordinate with state and federal agencies on information sharing and coordination of state law enforcement activities.

## New Mexico Counties Legislative Team



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