



NEW MEXICO JUDICIARY

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



About the cover: Brianda Aguilar Giron, a senior human resources administrator at Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court took this photo of Hermit Peak in the Santa Fe National Forest in 2021. In 2022, the Calf Canyon/ Hermits Peak Fire burned 341,471 acres, becoming the most destructive wildfire in New Mexico's history.

Acknowledgements: This report was prepared with assistance from staff at courts statewide and the Administrative Office of the Courts. Percentages in charts may not total 100% due to rounding.

Editors: Barry Massey, Beth Wojahn

Graphic Design: Indre Bruze, Advanced Robotic Solutions

Above: The New Mexico Supreme Court engaged in an hour-long discussion with Rocinante High School students from Mr. Robert Silentman's Leadership Class for the Rule of Law Program, a civics education program for students to learn about the judicial system.

CONTENT

- 2** Message from the Chief Justice
- 3** Message from the Director
- 4** Judicial Budget
- 5** Courts
- 6** Supreme Court
- 8** Court of Appeals
- 10** District Courts Statewide
- 24** Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court
- 25** Magistrate Courts
- 26** Programs
- 44** A Year in Pictures

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is required by law to submit an annual report to the New Mexico Supreme Court and the Legislature. NMSA 1978, § 34-9-3 (2019). This report is an overview of the Judiciary's accomplishments during the 2025 fiscal year (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025) and includes a summary of statistical data for New Mexico's appellate, district, metropolitan, and magistrate courts. Find this report, as well as the complete Statistical Addendum, at

www.nmcourts.gov



Message from the Chief Justice



I am pleased to present the Judicial Branch's 2025 Annual Report. This report highlights the Judiciary's commitment to a professional branch of government exemplified by conscientious and well-trained employees. These achievements are accomplished by the prudent and thoughtful expenditure of appropriations by the Legislature. Additionally, they demonstrate our ability to work with the executive branch and the Legislature to meet new challenges, most notably constructing the foundation of a new behavioral health system through working with regional planning structures.

The data associated with our courts' performance measures continues to be especially impressive. The Annual Report breaks down cases in each district that have been filed and closed, as well as the number of jury trials held. Our appellate courts also increased their performance measures by deciding an unprecedented number of appeals. In fact, the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals each achieved a 108% clearance rate in FY25.

We meet our performance measures in two ways: first, through innovation like speech to text records

for all of our courts, and second, by maintaining national leadership in language access and validating our Pretrial Services Program.

In these pages, you will see the proud, hardworking employees of New Mexico's Judicial Branch. Our employees are grateful for the funding to increase salaries for our entry level employees, which has allowed them to focus on their work, rather than worry about how they will support their families. We are committed to ensuring a safe and secure work environment for them. Verbal and physical threats toward our judges and staff have increased this year, and we know the Legislative and Executive branches will provide funding to increase safety and security in our courts.

We are not complacent and continue to move forward. In 2026, we will conduct the first-of-its-kind partnership with the National Judicial College to collaborate on the education of our judges and leverage the wonderful resources of this great state, including the national labs, Santa Fe Institute, and St. Johns College. The Judiciary will continue to investigate cutting edge strategies and tools to provide access to justice for all New Mexicans.

Thank you for reviewing the important work of the Judiciary. We look forward to working with the Legislature and Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham in the upcoming year to serve the people of the State of New Mexico.

David K. Thomson
Chief Justice

Message from the Director



The Judiciary continues to work diligently to strengthen public trust, ensure that every New Mexican has meaningful access to the courts, and confront the systemic challenges facing our state.

New Mexico's Courts are answering the call to improve behavioral health services across the state. In the last few months we have stood up multiple diversion and assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) programs across the state. These programs assist New Mexicans involved in the

justice system who are also confronting behavioral health challenges. They are located in the:

- First Judicial District Court (Santa Fe, Rio Arriba, Los Alamos counties.)
- Second Judicial District Court (Bernalillo County)
- Third Judicial District Court (Doña Ana)
- Fourth Judicial District Court (San Miguel, Mora, Guadalupe)
- Twelfth Judicial District Court (Lincoln and Otero)

In the coming months we plan to add another program in Bernalillo County as well as programs in the Eleventh Judicial District Court (San Juan and McKinley).

The Judicial Branch is also helping local communities plan their priorities related to the Behavioral Health Reform and Investment Act. Using money provided in the 2025 legislative session, the Judiciary has provided planning grants to communities across the state so they are able to better access legislative funding for behavioral health projects. We will remain engaged in this process to ensure the planning is completed in the coming months.

State courts decided cases efficiently in the 2025 fiscal year. District, magistrate and metropolitan courts had a combined clearance rate of 101%, and the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals each had disposition rates of 108%. These high rates indicate that the state court system, as a whole, is deciding cases faster than incoming cases and appeals. The caseload in district courts across New Mexico increased by 7% in FY25 compared to the

year before. The Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court experienced a nearly 8% increase over the same period. The caseload in magistrate courts statewide decreased slightly, by about 1%. The Court's self-help efforts remain strong. Our partnership with the Modest Means Legal Helpline continues to improve services to New Mexicans who would not otherwise have access to an attorney. Scribing services exist in all courts across the state, and allow court staff to assist the public in filling out paperwork. Language access services also exist in all courts to provide translation and interpretation services in a variety of languages. The Courts' statewide customer service hotline (855-268-7804) responds to more than 10,000 calls each month helping the public access the courts, reschedule hearings, and receive copies of documents. The hotline is available Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays.

This annual report reflects both the achievements and the ongoing work that define the pursuit of justice in New Mexico. From advancing technology and improving case management to expanding community outreach and professional development, the collective efforts of judges, staff, and partners have reinforced the courts' mission to serve with integrity and excellence. We look forward to working with all of our partners to ensure sufficient funding and staffing for courts.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl W. Reifsteck".

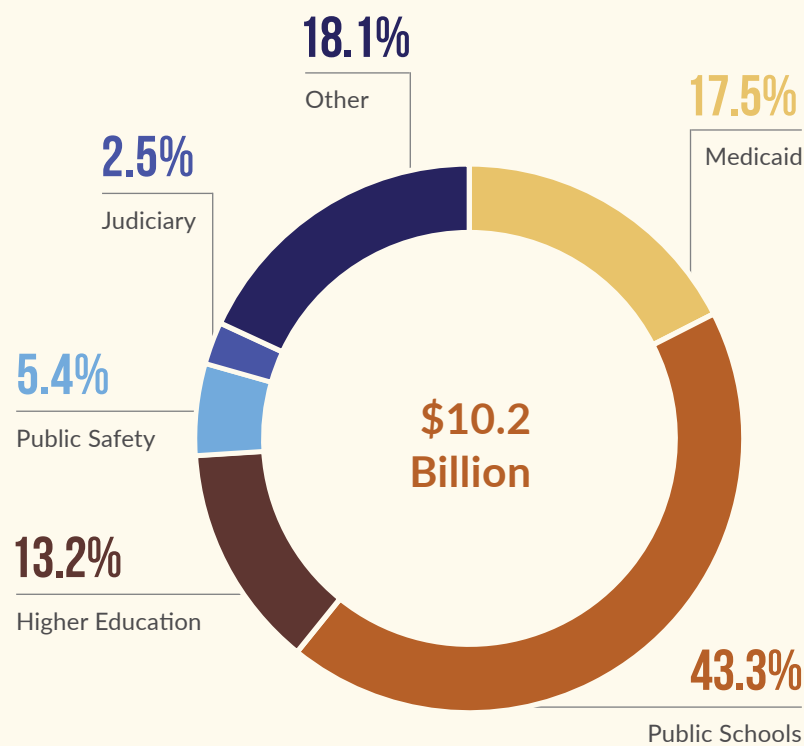
Karl W. Reifsteck

Director, Administrative Office of the Courts

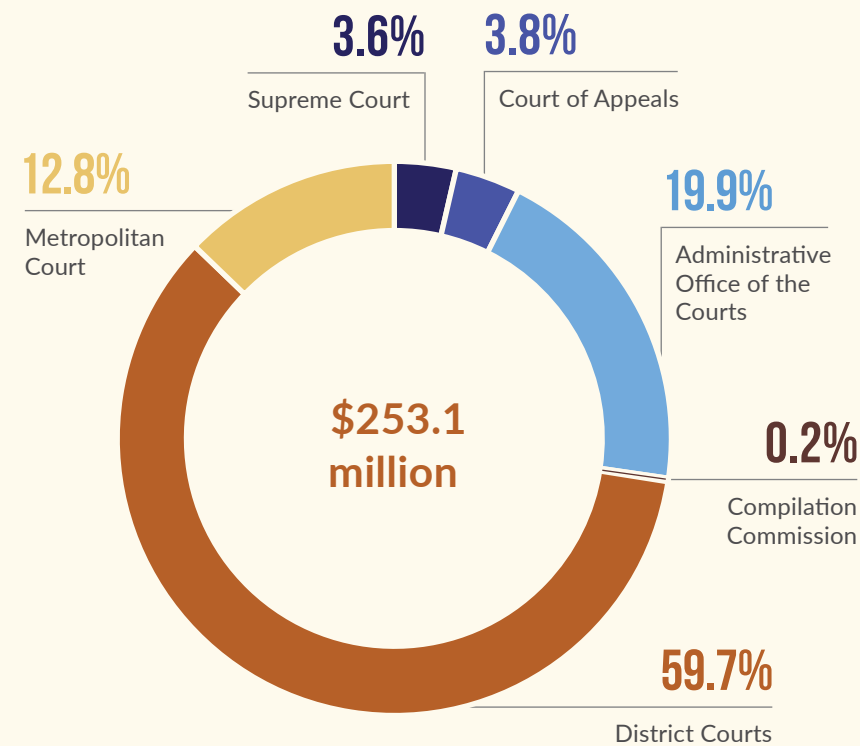
Judicial Budget

The Judiciary's general fund operating budget totaled \$253.1 million in the 2025 fiscal year — an increase of about \$25 million or nearly 11% from FY24. Appropriations to the Judiciary represented 2.5% of the \$10.2 billion general fund budget for state government, including public education and health care programs.

FY25 State General Fund Budget



New Mexico Judiciary FY25 Operating Budget





COURTS

- Supreme Court >
- Court of Appeals >
- District Courts Statewide >
- Judicial Districts >
- Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court >
- Magistrate Courts >

Supreme Court



Justice Julie J. Vargas, Senior Justice Michael E. Vigil, Chief Justice David K. Thomson, Justice C. Shannon Bacon and Justice Briana H. Zamora.

5 Justices, 59 Full-Time Employees

The Supreme Court is the highest court for the State of New Mexico. It is the final authority on questions of law and can review decisions of the Court of Appeals as well as district courts. Appeals in capital criminal cases, Public Regulation Commission (PRC) decisions and election challenges go directly to the Court. The Constitution authorizes the Supreme Court to order certain remedies through issuing extraordinary writs. The Court also acts on recommendations by investigatory boards and commissions for disciplining judges and attorneys, and oversees the admission and regulation of attorneys in New Mexico. The Supreme Court determines the rules of practice and procedure for the state bar and all state courts. It exercises supervisory control over state courts in New Mexico, including municipal and probate courts. Local governments fund municipal and probate courts, which are not part of the Judiciary's unified budget process.

2025 Fiscal Year Caseload

New, reactivated, and reopened cases: **521**

10%

Capital, PRC, elections, pretrial detention-release appeals

7%

Attorney & judicial discipline, regulation

3%

All other case types

16%

Review habeas corpus denials

51%

Review Court of Appeals rulings

13%

Extraordinary writs

Disposition Rate

| | | |
|------|-------------|------|
| FY25 | <div></div> | 108% |
| FY24 | <div></div> | 108% |
| FY23 | <div></div> | 103% |
| FY22 | <div></div> | 106% |
| FY21 | <div></div> | 97% |

Highlights

Resolving Cases. The Court disposed of 54 cases submitted during its first term, which began in September 2024 and ended on July 15, 2025. The Court also resolved 39 non-term cases.

Access to Justice. The Court received a State Justice Institute grant to assess bar licensure and rural access to justice.

National Recognition. Chief Clerk Elizabeth A. Garcia was elected to a two-year term on the executive committee of the National Conference of Appellate Court Clerks (NCACC). New Mexico hosted the NCACC annual meeting in Albuquerque.

Local Recognition. State Law Librarian Stephanie Wilson was elected secretary of the New Mexico Commission of Public Records. Francesca Martinez, human resources administrator senior at the Court, serves as president of the Governor's Commission on Disability.

Civics Education. Students learned about the role of courts by attending an oral argument in person and remotely for the Court's Rule of Law Program at San Juan College in Farmington in August 2025.

Judicial Pipeline. Eight students were selected for the Judicial Clerkship Program in its fifth year.

New Attorneys. The Court swore in 601 attorneys to the New Mexico Bar in FY25. The Court also established a single unified database for attorney records.

Rule Changes. The Court approved amendments to 96 rules, forms, and uniform jury instructions in the New Mexico Rules Annotated.



Retired Justice Joseph F. Baca (center) in the Supreme Court Law Library after receiving a commemorative volume of opinions he wrote. Seated with him are Justice Michael E. Vigil (at left), and U.S. District Judge Kenneth J. Gonzales (at right), the chief federal judge in New Mexico and a former law clerk for Justice Baca. Standing (left to right): Justice Julie J. Vargas, Chief Justice David K. Thomson, and Justice Briana H. Zamora.



Chief Justice David K. Thomson presents Aztec/Farmington District Court Manager Ashley Lucero with a coin for serving in the Judiciary for 20 years and 11 months on August 28, 2025.

Retired Justices Honored. The Court published commemorative volumes of opinions written by retired Justice Joseph Baca during his tenure in 1989-2002, and retired Justice H. Vern Payne, who served from 1977 to 1983. They are among five former justices honored by the Court in this way.

Employee Recognition. Employees who have worked for the Judiciary 15 or more years were honored for their longevity by Supreme Court Chief Justice David K. Thomson during ceremonies throughout the year. Chief Justice Thomson presented each honoree with a challenge coin that he helped design.

Court of Appeals



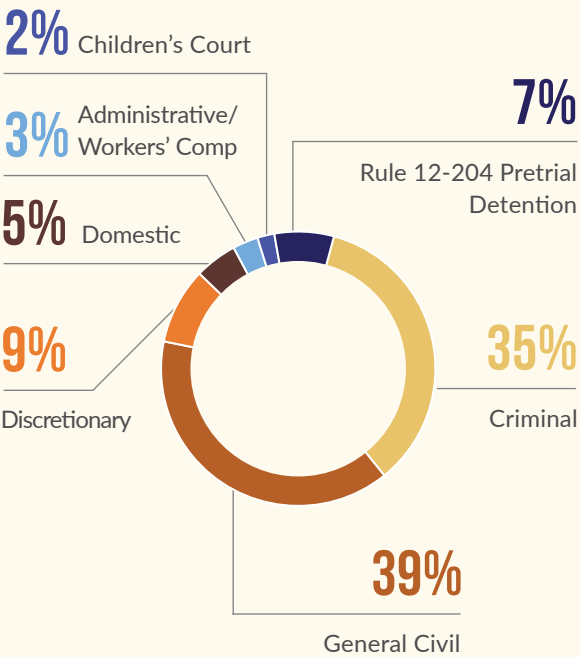
Standing from left to right: Judges Gerald Baca, Shammara Henderson, Zachary Ives, Jane Yohalem, and Katherine Wray. Seated from left to right: Chief Judge Jacqueline Medina, Judges J. Miles Hanisee, Jennifer Attrep, Kristina Bogardus (retired on June 7, 2025), and Megan Duffy.

10 Justices, **55** Full-Time Employees

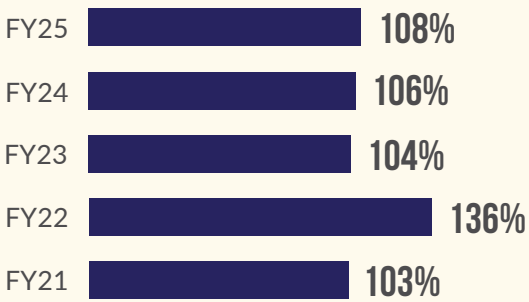
The Court of Appeals is New Mexico’s intermediate appellate court. It is the first and often final appellate court for most types of cases. The court has mandatory jurisdiction in all civil non-capital criminal and juvenile cases, and discretionary jurisdiction over most cases appealed from administrative agencies. The court acts in three-judge panels and at least two judges must agree to decide a case.

The Division of Appellate Court Attorneys screens all appeals for assignment to the court’s summary and general calendars. Staff attorneys provide the court with proposed opinions and recommendations on applications for interlocutory appeals, petitions for writs of certiorari, and petitions for writs of error.

2025 Fiscal Year Caseload
New, reactivated, and reopened cases: **722**



Disposition Rate



Highlights

New Judge. Judge Kristopher N. Houghton was appointed to the court in August 2025. He filled a vacancy from the retirement of Judge Kristina Bogardus.

Court Administration. Mark Reynolds returned to serve as Chief Appellate Court Clerk and Alan Heinz was selected as Deputy Chief Appellate Court Clerk.

Court Leadership. Judge Jacqueline R. Medina became chief judge of the Court of Appeals in April 2025, succeeding Judge Jennifer Attrep.



Chief Judge Jacqueline R. Medina with her law clerk, Logan Stokes.

Clearing Cases. The Court achieved a disposition rate of 108%, the seventh consecutive year in which the Court resolved more cases than were opened.

Reduced Pending Cases. The total number of open cases before the Court dropped 13% in FY25, reaching 621 at the end of the year. The number of cases on the general calendar fell by 23% to 130 cases.

Alternative Dispute Resolution. A pilot mediation program has achieved promising results since starting in February 2024. Of the 76 cases mediated, 45 were settled — a 59% success rate.

Speedier Decisions. The average time it takes to resolve appeals dropped by 15% in criminal cases (from 418 days in FY24 to 355 days in FY25), and 18% in civil cases (from 392 days in FY24 to 323 days in FY25). The Court continued a pilot project to streamline criminal case appeals.

Educational Outreach. The Court held an oral argument at Roswell High School in May 2025, and judges answered questions from students. The Law Day program helps students learn about the role of courts.



Court of Appeals judges hear an oral argument at Roswell High School.

District Courts Statewide

102 Judges, **1,348** Full-Time Employees

District courts are general jurisdiction courts. They hear and determine adult and juvenile criminal cases as well as civil matters, including contract disputes, personal injury litigation, and domestic relations cases such as divorce, custody, and child support enforcement.

District courts oversee the operations of magistrate courts within their judicial districts, except in the Second Judicial District where there is a metropolitan court.

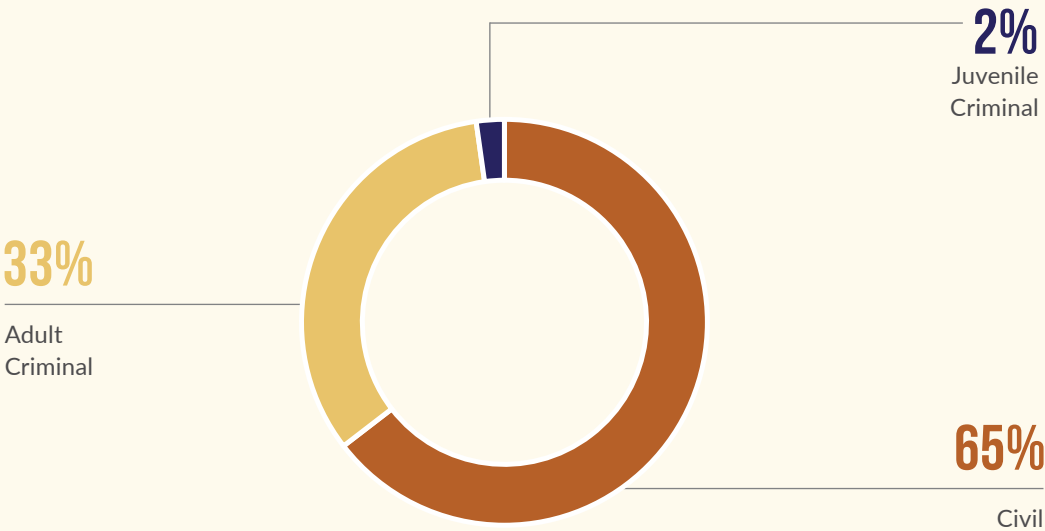
There were 102 judges in 34 district courts across New Mexico in the 2025 fiscal year. District judges serve six-year terms. Judicial nominating commissions screen applicants for open judgeships and recommend nominees for possible appointment by the governor.

Highlights

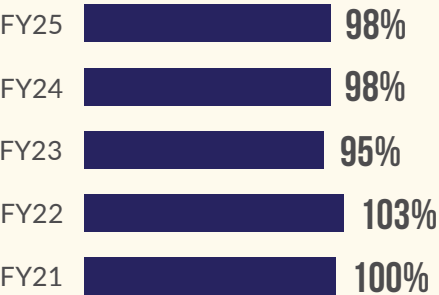
Clearing Cases. The average time for district courts statewide to resolve a criminal case declined by 12% to 197 days in FY25. The average age of active pending criminal cases fell by 5% to 354 days.

Increased Caseload. District courts faced a larger civil and criminal caseload statewide in FY25. The number of newly filed, reopened and reactivated adult and juvenile criminal cases increased by 10%, and civil cases grew by 5% from FY24.

2025 Fiscal Year Caseload
New, reactivated, and reopened cases: **125,681**



Disposition Rate



Disposition rate measures whether a court is keeping up with incoming cases. It is the number of resolved cases as a percentage of the number of incoming cases. A rate of 100% or higher indicates a court is clearing at least as many cases as have been filed, reopened and reactivated during a fiscal year. A disposition rate below 100% results in a growing backlog of cases awaiting disposition.

1st Judicial District

10 District Court Judges, **7** Magistrate Court Judges, **131** Full-Time Employees

Highlights

Jury Trials. District courts conducted 40 civil and criminal jury trials. Magistrate courts held 16 jury trials.

Behavioral Health. An Assisted Outpatient Treatment Program and a Competency Diversion Program were implemented to help people struggling with mental health disorders.

Resolving Cases. New procedural deadlines take effect in 2026 to speed up the resolution of criminal cases in district courts.

Pretrial Justice. The Pretrial Services Division supervised defendants in 670 cases at the end of the 2025 fiscal year. Just over 2,000 cases were referred to pretrial services during the year.

Alternative Dispute Resolution. Settlements were reached in 45% of the 79 cases referred to the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program. Nearly four dozen attorneys serve as ADR settlement facilitators.

Settling Foreclosures. Homeowners were able to remain in their houses in more than half of the 28 cases resolved through a foreclosure settlement facilitation program.

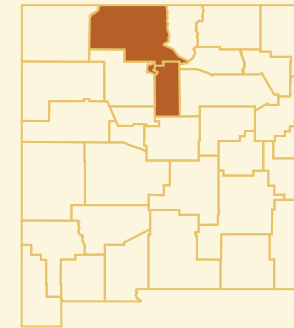
Overcoming Barriers. Court interpreters assisted non-English speakers in 1,322 court proceedings. Spanish accounted for 97% of the interpreting services but other languages included Chinese, Farsi, and Gujarati.

Access to Justice. Legal fairs were conducted in Santa Fe and Española. Local attorneys offered no-cost mediation services to settle divorce and custody cases during monthly Family Court Resolution Days. People received free legal advice over the telephone in domestic and civil matters during bimonthly clinics.

New Judge. District Judge Anastasia R. Martin took the oath of office in July 2025. She filled a vacancy from the retirement of Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer.



First Judicial District Judge Anastasia Martin addresses the audience at her investiture.

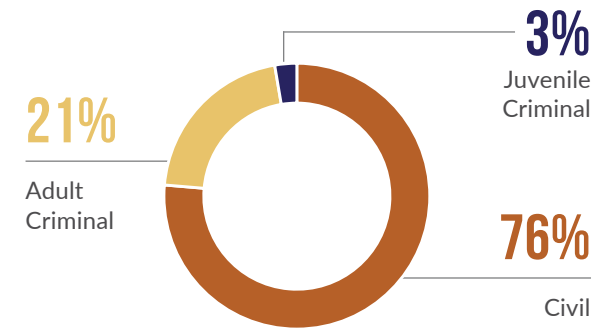


Counties:

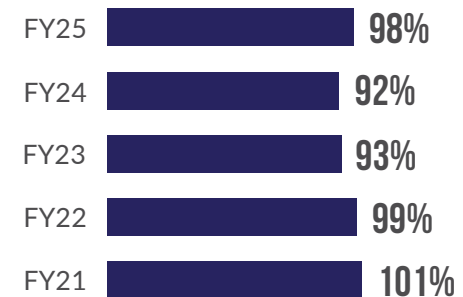
Santa Fe,
Rio Arriba,
Los Alamos

2025 Fiscal Year Caseload

New, reactivated, and reopened cases: **9,727**



Disposition Rate



2nd Judicial District

30 District Court Judges, 362 Full-Time Employees

Highlights

Jury Trials. The district court conducted 130 civil and criminal jury trials.

New Judges. 3 new judges joined the district court. Judge Bryan T. Fox filled a vacancy from the retirement of Judge Gerard Lavelle. Judge Crystal Lees replaced Judge Debra Ramirez, who retired. Judge Matthew Chavez succeeded Judge Stan Whitaker after his retirement.

Treatment Courts. 91 people graduated from adult, young adult, felony DWI, and behavioral health treatment courts.

Meeting Community Needs. The court clerk's office assisted 69,983 people in person, and responded to 45,946 phone calls. Clerks docketed 599,623 events in court cases.

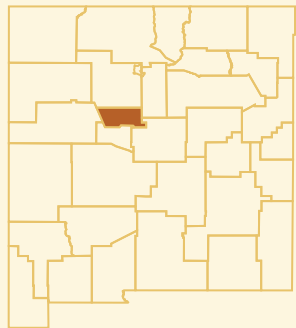
Access to Justice. The Center for Self-Help assisted 17,405 people.

Serving Children. Arranged 2,702 supervised visits and safe exchanges for children in cases involving parental disputes, including divorce, custody, and domestic violence. 43 youth were referred to the court's Community Gun Violence Intervention Program. CASA volunteers served 145 children in abuse and neglect cases.

Assisting Families. The Family Court Clinic offered services to 360 families. Parents and their children receive assistance from licensed mental health professionals and paraprofessionals. The clinic helps the parties in family court cases resolve conflict through mediation, consultations, and other dispute resolution alternatives.



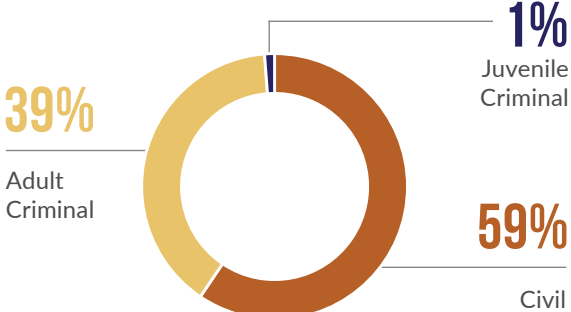
The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Court celebrated its fifth anniversary. Judge Catherine Begaye (third from right in front row) leads the court.



County:
Bernalillo

2025 Fiscal Year Caseload

New, reactivated, and reopened cases: **45,497**



| Category | Percentage |
|-------------------|------------|
| Adult Criminal | 39% |
| Civil | 59% |
| Juvenile Criminal | 1% |

Disposition Rate

| | |
|------|------|
| FY25 | 97% |
| FY24 | 101% |
| FY23 | 92% |
| FY22 | 99% |
| FY21 | 99% |

3rd Judicial District

9 District Court Judges, 7 Magistrate Court Judges, 125 Full-Time Employees

Highlights

Jury Trials. The district court conducted 50 criminal jury trials. The magistrate court held 14 jury trials.

Court Leadership. Judge Richard Jacquez was elected chief judge of the district. He has served four years on the district court and previously was on the magistrate court.

New Judges. Magistrate Judge Rosenda Chavez-Lara was elected to the court and started her term in January 2025. Magistrate Judge Jannette Mondragón was appointed by the governor to a vacancy created by the resignation of Judge Joel Cano.

Treatment Courts. 22 people graduated from adult, juvenile, DWI, family, and veterans treatment courts, which participated in the annual Recovery Celebration in Las Cruces. The event helped raise public awareness about the role of treatment courts.

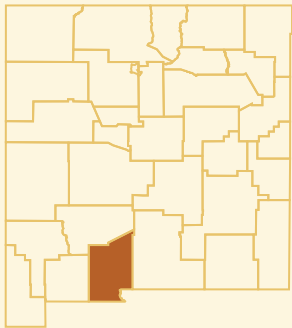
Access to Justice. The self-help center assisted nearly 5,200 people. Free legal fairs aided 304 people. The pro bono committee also worked with the district court to hold mediation days for self-represented litigants.

Helping Families. 692 supervised visits and safe exchanges were held for children in cases involving parental disputes, including divorce, custody, and domestic violence. CASA volunteers served 127 children in abuse and neglect cases.

Recognition. Judge James Martin celebrated 20 years of serving on the district court. The Third Judicial District Pro Bono Committee received the Pro Bono Committee of the Year award from the State Bar of New Mexico and the New Mexico Legal Aid Volunteer Attorney Program.

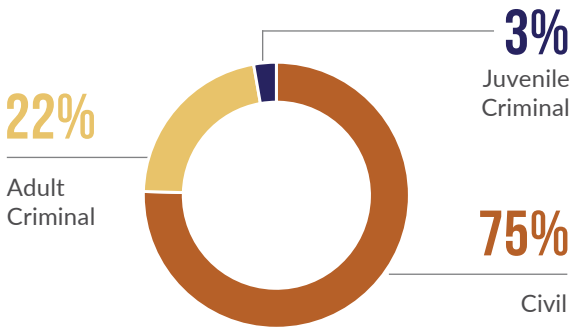


Judge James Martin celebrates his 20th anniversary on the district court.



County:
Doña Ana

2025 Fiscal Year Caseload
New, reactivated, and reopened cases: 11,663



Disposition Rate



4th Judicial District

3 District Court Judges, 4 Magistrate Court Judges, 51 Full-Time Employees

Highlights

Jury Trials. District courts conducted 8 civil and criminal trials. Magistrate courts held six jury trials.

Treatment Courts. 27 people graduated from the adult drug court and magistrate DWI treatment court in Las Vegas. A behavioral health treatment court marked its first year of operation in January 2025.

Serving Children and Families. 248 supervised visits and safe exchanges were held for children in cases involving parental disputes, including divorce, custody, and domestic violence.

Access to Justice. Volunteer attorneys provided assistance during a legal fair in Las Vegas for people needing help on civil and domestic relations matters.

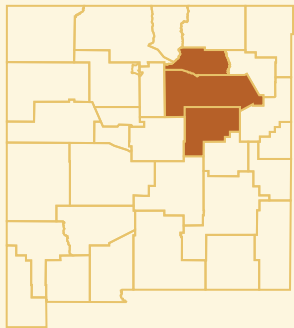
Clearing Cases. The number of active pending criminal cases in the district courts declined by 15% in the fiscal year 2025. The average time to resolve a district court criminal case dropped by 8%, reaching 125 days, which was below the statewide average in FY25.

Competency Diversion. A competency diversion pilot program assisted 20 individuals with a history of severe mental illness. The program provides a path to stability and recovery by connecting participants to treatment and community-based services.

Assisted Outpatient Treatment. A newly launched Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) program allows a district court to order community-based treatment for people who repeatedly have failed to adhere to voluntary mental health treatment.

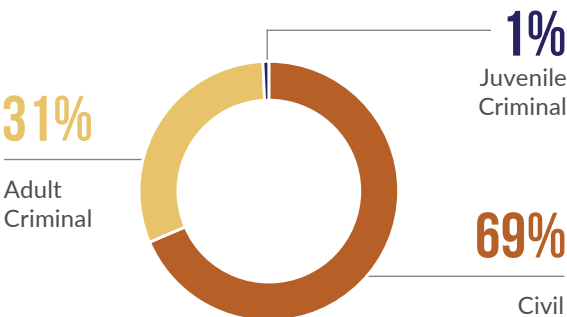


Fourth Judicial District Chief Judge Flora Gallegos Vance (on left) with Seventh Judicial District Chief Judge Mercedes Murphy.



Counties:
San Miguel,
Mora,
Guadalupe

2025 Fiscal Year Caseload
New, reactivated, and reopened cases: 3,000



Disposition Rate



5th Judicial District

12 District Court Judges, **9** Magistrate Court Judges, **118** Full-Time Employees

Highlights

Jury Trials. District courts conducted 79 civil and criminal jury trials. Magistrate courts held 27 jury trials.

New Judge. Judge Eileen P. Riordan joined the district court in October 2025, filling a vacancy from the retirement of Judge Jane Shuler Gray.

Treatment Courts. 13 people graduated from the adult drug court in Roswell and the magistrate DWI drug court in Carlsbad.

Clearing Cases. The number of active pending criminal cases in magistrate courts declined 20% from fiscal year 2024 to 2025. The average time to resolve a magistrate court criminal case dropped by 10% to 80 days in FY25.

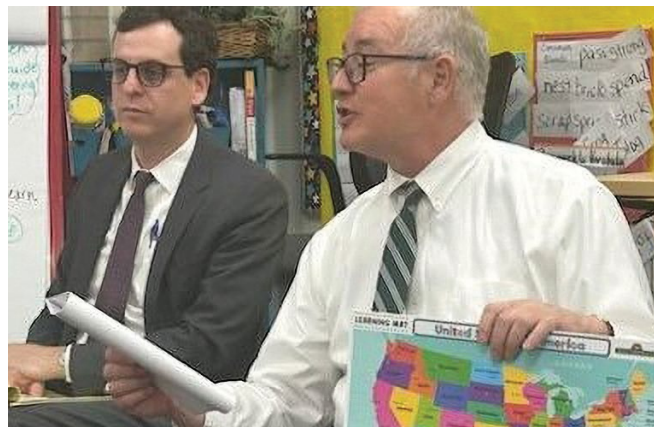
Public Outreach. District and magistrate judges visited schools to meet with students and spoke at civic and other educational events to raise public awareness about state courts, the rule of law, the Constitution, and other legal issues.

Helping Families. 1,784 supervised visits and safe exchanges were held for children in cases involving parental disputes, including divorce, custody and domestic violence.

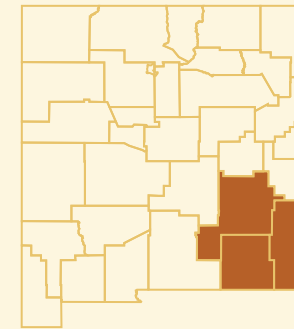
Serving Children. 420 children in abuse and neglect cases were served by CASA volunteers.



Judges and staff of the Chaves County Magistrate Court in Roswell. Back row (left to right): Ashley Loya, Teresa Gordon, Judge James Mason, Judge K.C. Rogers, Maria Borunda, Mayra Ceballos. Front row (l-r): Lexie Guilez, Jessica Tirado, Hana Lopez and Joanna Albarez.



Attorney Drew Stout (left) and Judge Mark Sánchez spoke to second graders at College Lane Elementary School in Hobbs about the U.S. Constitution and the rule of law.

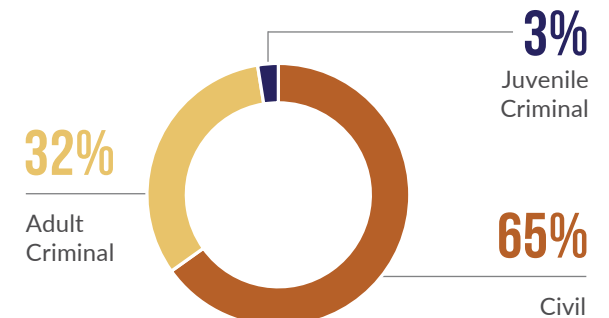


Counties:

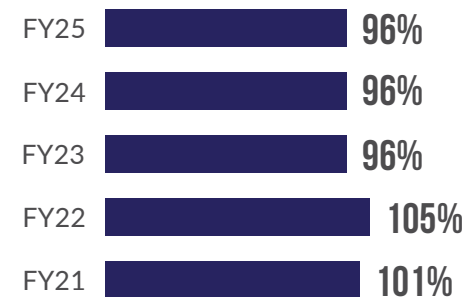
Chaves,
Eddy,
Lea

2025 Fiscal Year Caseload

New, reactivated, and reopened cases: **13,725**



Disposition Rate



6th Judicial District

4 District Court Judges, 4 Magistrate Court Judges, 67 Full-Time Employees

Highlights

Jury Trials. The district courts conducted 17 jury trials. The magistrate courts held 10 jury trials.

New Judge. Grant County Magistrate Judge D. Matthew Runnels took office on Jan. 1, 2025.

Honoring Judges. Courtrooms in Lordsburg and Bayard were dedicated in honor of former judges. Retired Judge Y.B. Morales attended the dedication ceremony for the Grant County Magistrate Court Division II courtroom. He won election in 1968 to become Bayard's first magistrate judge and served for more than three decades. The courtroom in the Hidalgo County District Court was dedicated to Judge Manuel D.V. Saucedo, who served from 1985 to 1996.



The Hidalgo County District Court courtroom was dedicated in October 2024 to retired Judge Manuel D. V. Saucedo (second from left). Also pictured (from the left): District Judge Tom Stewart, Chief Judge Jarod Hofacket and District Judge Jim Foy.

Treatment Courts. 16 people graduated from adult drug courts in Silver City, Deming, and Lordsburg. The Luna County Adult Treatment Court was among 10 programs nationwide selected for a study of harm reduction strategies. The district's treatment courts received a state Sentencing Commission grant for incentives for program participants.

Access to Justice. A legal clinic in Deming assisted 20 members of the public.

Pretrial Justice. Pretrial Program Manager Corina Castillo and Pretrial Services Officer Griselda Uriaga earned national certification as pretrial service professionals in recognition of their expertise and commitment to pretrial best practices.

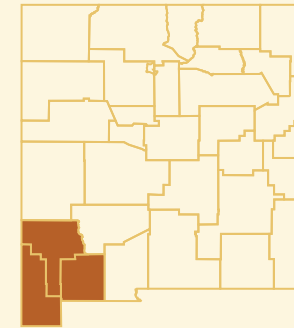
Helping Families. 1,496 supervised visits and safe exchanges were held for children in cases involving parental disputes, including divorce, custody, and domestic violence. CASA volunteers served 33 children in abuse and neglect cases.



Retired Judge Y. B. Morales at the Bayard Magistrate Court after the courtroom was dedicated to him. He was Bayard's first magistrate judge.



Luna County Adult Treatment Court Program Manager Bobby Brookhouser standing in the House gallery after being recognized for his work by Chief Justice David K. Thomson during the State of the Judiciary address to the Legislature in January 2025.

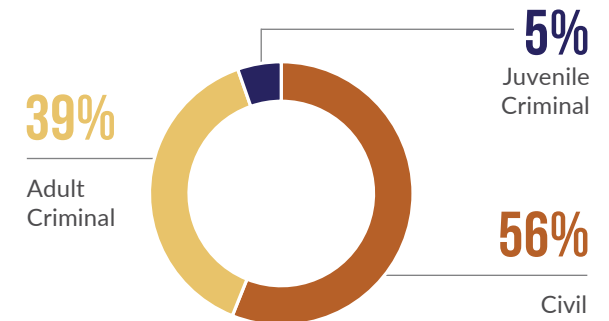


Counties:

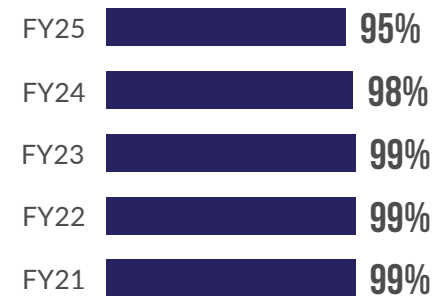
Grant,
Hidalgo,
Luna

2025 Fiscal Year Caseload

New, reactivated, and reopened cases: **4,051**



Disposition Rate



7th Judicial District

3 District Court Judges, 4 Magistrate Court Judges, 46 Full-Time Employees

Highlights

Jury trials. District courts conducted 16 trials, and magistrate courts held four trials.

New Leadership. Dorella Molina became the court executive officer for the judicial district. She succeeded Jason Jones, who retired after 29 years of public service in the Seventh Judicial District. Molina previously was the chief financial officer for the Second Judicial District Court. Jones started with the judiciary in 1996 as a court monitor, then worked as a financial specialist and began serving as the court administrator in 2006.

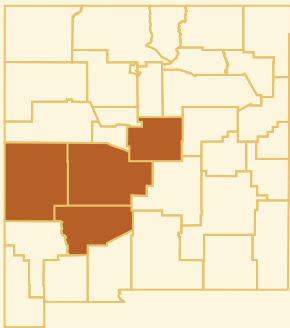
Pretrial Justice. A pretrial services program was implemented in August 2025 to enhance public safety and ensure individuals awaiting trial appear for future court hearings. The initiative was part of the Judiciary's continued expansion of pretrial programs statewide.

Treatment Courts. Six people graduated from the adult drug court in Socorro and the magistrate DWI treatment court in Torrance County.

Helping Children. CASA volunteers served 7 children in abuse and neglect cases.



Adult treatment court graduate Alice Pargas (on the right) with Chief Judge Mercedes Murphy.

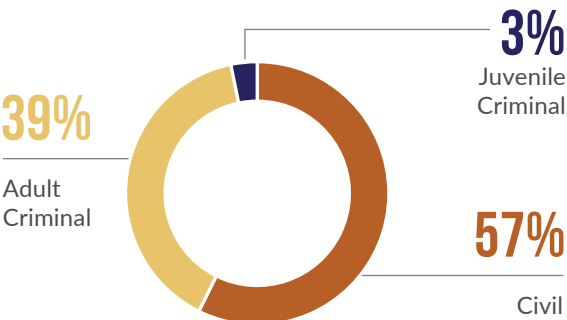


Counties:

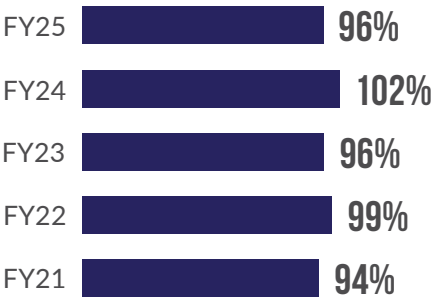
Catron,
Sierra,
Socorro,
Torrance

2025 Fiscal Year Caseload

New, reactivated, and reopened cases: 2,891



Disposition Rate



8th Judicial District

3 District Court Judges, 5 Magistrate Court Judges, 54 Full-Time Employees

Highlights

Jury Trials. District courts conducted 31 criminal and civil trials. Magistrate courts held 11 trials.

Congratulations. April Gallegos retired in June 2025, after serving 28 years in the Judiciary. She was Judge Jeffrey Shannon’s trial court administrative assistant.

Treatment Courts. Drug courts in Taos and Raton and a family violence court served 72 participants, with 11 graduating. An alumni group was started for the Taos County Recovery Court to support program participants and their families.

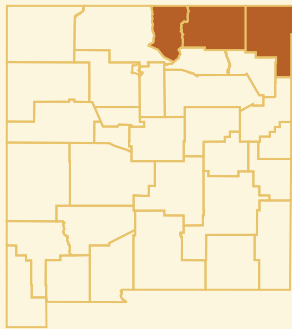
Serving Children and Families. The district court entered into an agreement with the First Judicial District’s Family Court Clinic for mediation and consultation services to improve outcomes for parents and children.

Upgrading Technology. Audio and video connections in courtrooms were modernized with the installation of integrated software and hardware. The upgrades are part of a statewide effort to improve courtroom technology.

Access to Justice. The Help Desk assisted 1,461 people, including reviewing documents for completeness and answering questions from the public. 45 people received assistance during a legal fair hosted by the Help Desk, which partnered with 13 local attorneys.



Students from Cimarron Elementary participate in a mock trial at the historic county courthouse in Raton.

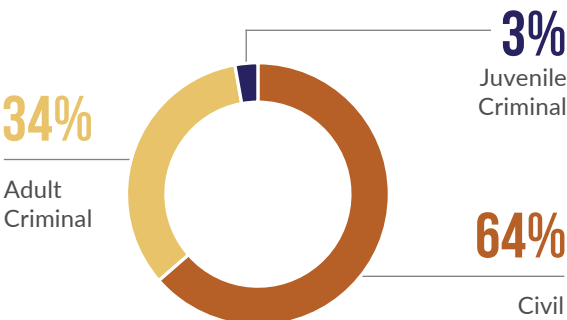


Counties:

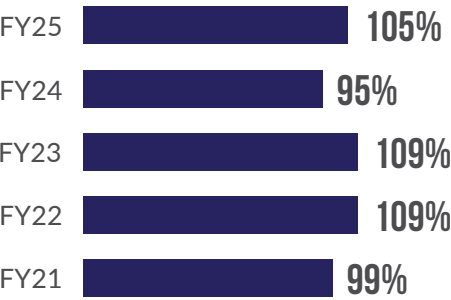
Colfax,
Taos,
Union

2025 Fiscal Year Caseload

New, reactivated, and reopened cases: 3,022



Disposition Rate



9th Judicial District

5 District Court Judges, 3 Magistrate Court Judges, 58 Full-Time Employees

Highlights

Jury Trials. District courts conducted 20 jury trials. Magistrate courts held 23 jury trials.

Treatment Courts. 9 participants graduated from adult treatment courts in Clovis and Portales. Five past graduates were certified as treatment court alumni coordinators. An alumni coordinator in Roosevelt County was selected by the Administrative Office of the Courts to attend a national training conference.

Public Outreach. The court interacted with 389 students at assemblies and court tours.

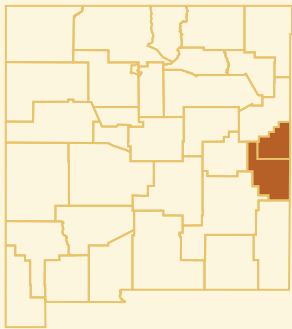
Access to Justice. A scribing program helped 180 people complete court forms and jury questionnaires. A total of 76 hours of assistance was provided to individuals with difficulty reading or writing, including those with limited English proficiency.

Serving the Public. Bilingual employees serving as language access specialists – a fifth of the district’s staff – assisted non-English speakers 1,803 times during the fiscal year.

Resolving Disputes. 73 mediations were conducted through a district court program that offers alternative dispute resolution in domestic relations and civil cases. More than 90% of the participants were litigants without an attorney.

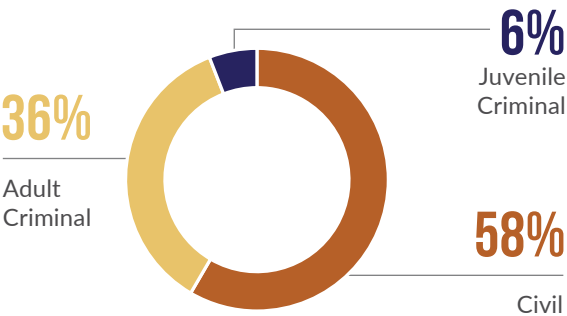


Judges and court staff spoke to Clovis High School students about career opportunities in the Judiciary. Seated are Magistrate Judge Janemarie Vander Dussen, Chief Judge Donna Mowrer, and District Judge Benjamin Cross.

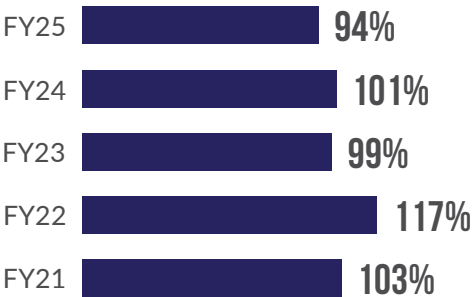


Counties:
Curry,
Roosevelt

2025 Fiscal Year Caseload
New, reactivated, and reopened cases: **3,848**



Disposition Rate



10th Judicial District

1 District Court Judge, **3** Magistrate Court Judges, **16** Full-Time Employees

Highlights

Jury Trials. 6 civil and criminal jury trials were conducted in district court, and 8 jury trials were held in magistrate courts.

Pretrial Justice. The district joined with the Ninth Judicial District Court to implement a pretrial services program that uses research-based practices to promote public safety and help ensure people awaiting trial appear for future hearings. Pretrial Services Officer Andrea Shafer offers services in person and remotely across the district.

Speedier Cases. The average time to resolve a criminal case in district court dropped by 24% in FY25 to 160 days, which was below the statewide average. The time to disposition for a criminal case in magistrate court averaged 81 days, a nearly 46% decline from FY24 to FY25.

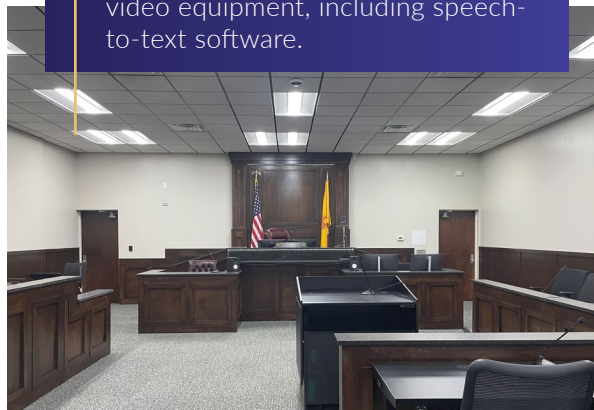
Serving the Public. Three new judicial specialists started in the district: April Apodaca and Leslee Nunez with the Quay County Magistrate Court and Jackie Mackey-Dutton in the Harding County District Court. Michelle Jaynes joined the judiciary as a business specialist.



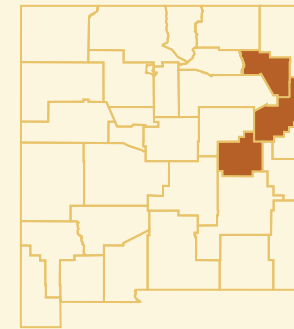
Tenth Judicial District Court Executive Officer Amanda Hammer with Eleventh Judicial District Deputy Court Executive Officer John Guaderrama.

Courthouse Improvements.

Security upgrades were made at the Quay County Courthouse and the courtroom was remodeled to prepare for the installation of new audio and video equipment, including speech-to-text software.



The remodeled courtroom in the Quay County Courthouse.

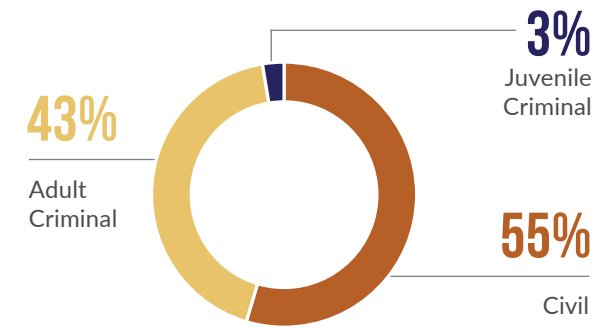


Counties:

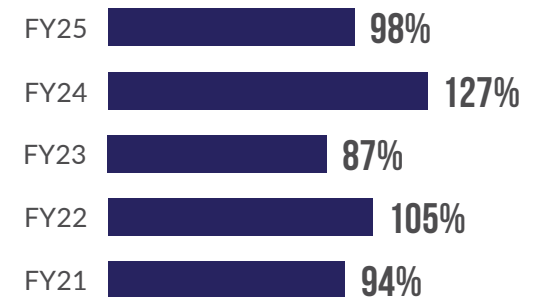
DeBaca,
Harding,
Quay

2025 Fiscal Year Caseload

New, reactivated, and reopened cases: **879**



Disposition Rate



11th Judicial District

8 District Court Judges, **9** Magistrate Court Judges, **133** Full-Time Employees

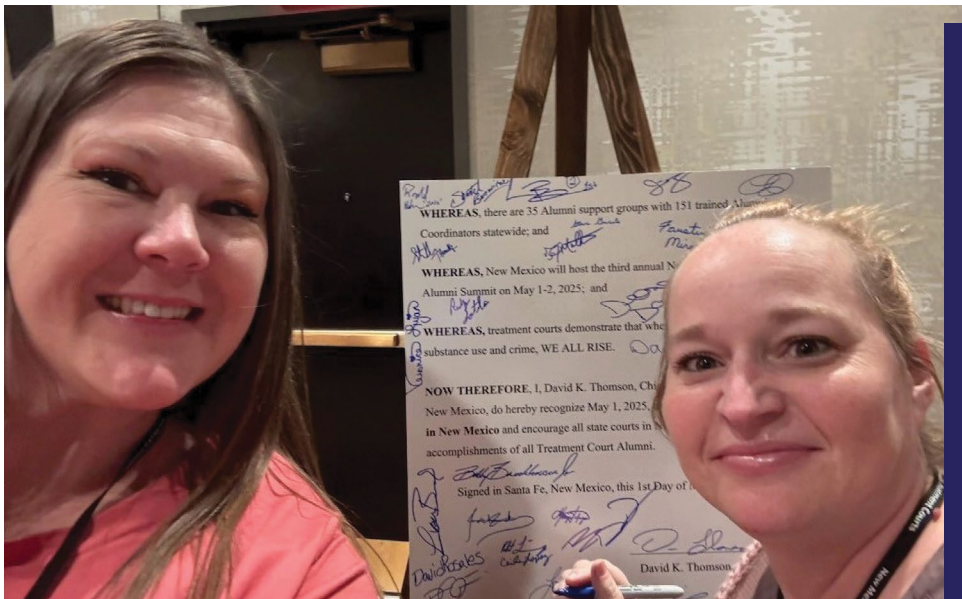
Highlights

Jury Trials. District courts held 23 jury trials. Magistrate courts conducted 19 jury trials.

New Judge. Judge Brenna Clani-Washinawatok joined the district court in March 2025, becoming the first Native American to serve as a district court judge in San Juan and McKinley counties. She succeeded Judge Daylene Marsh, who retired after 12 years on the court.

Community Service. The district's court executive officer and local quilting organizations donated blankets for babies born to treatment court participants. Court programs organized a Christmas toy drive that provided gifts for 106 children of treatment court participants.

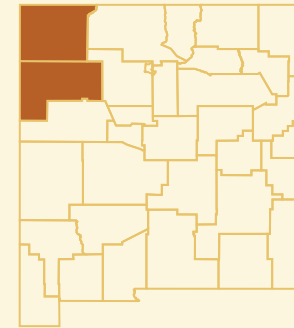
Helping Young Adults. The Young Adult Court assisted 11 participants in obtaining a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. A celebration, including a cap and gown and photographs for participants, is held upon completion of a GED.



Program manager Charity Norman and Court Probation Officer Heather Baker at a statewide treatment court alumni summit. They signed a proclamation by Chief Justice David K. Thomson recognizing the work of treatment court graduates who share their experiences and successes with current program participants.

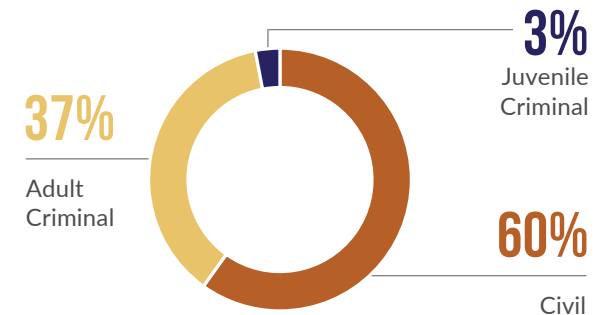
Treatment Courts.

63 participants graduated from the adult drug court, mental health court, and the magistrate DWI court. Program Manager Charity Norman spoke at a statewide summit in Albuquerque for treatment court alumni, which was attended by 15 program participants.

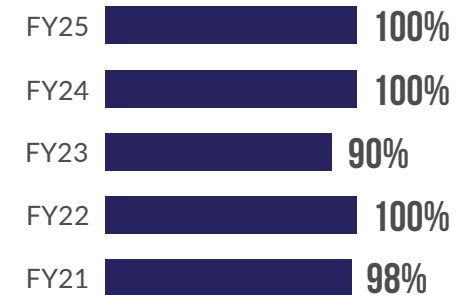


Counties:
McKinley,
San Juan

2025 Fiscal Year Caseload
New, reactivated, and reopened cases: **10,221**



Disposition Rate



12th Judicial District

5 District Court Judges, **4** Magistrate Court Judges, **62** Full-Time Employees

Highlights

Jury Trials. District courts conducted 61 criminal and civil jury trials. Magistrate courts held 24 jury trials.

Court Leadership. Judge Daniel A. Bryant became chief judge in the judicial district following a six-year term by Judge Angie K. Schneider.

New Judge. District Judge Lori Gibson Willard was appointed to fill a vacancy after the retirement of Judge Ellen Jessen in March 2025.

Congratulations. Specialty Court Program Manager Georgetta Corbett retired after 29 years of service, and Judicial Specialist Arden Rainey retired after 10 years of public service.

Behavioral Health. A competency diversion pilot program was implemented to help people with severe mental illness who are arrested for misdemeanors and nonviolent felonies. The program guides participants to treatment and other community services and diverts them from the justice system.

Treatment Courts. 12 people graduated from adult drug courts in Alamogordo and Ruidoso, and a veterans treatment court.

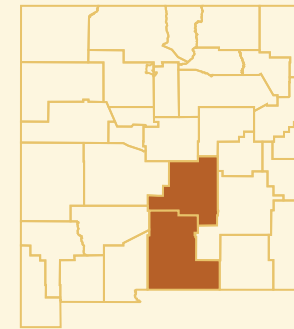
Pretrial Services. An average of 55 people a month were referred to pretrial services for supervision while awaiting trial.



Judicial employees and judges donated clothing, household goods and nonperishable food for a free Legal and Disaster Relief Fair on September 6, 2025. From l-r: Twelfth Judicial District Court Executive Officer Audrey Hukari, District Judge John Sugg, Trial Court Administrative Assistant Rachel Skinner, Erin Atkins, Tedorsha Balajadia, and Chief Justice David K. Thomson.



The Lincoln County Magistrate Court in Ruidoso celebrated Judicial Specialist Arden Rainey's retirement. From left: Magistrate Judge Katie Lund, Court Manager Brittany Aguilar, Judicial Specialists Rylah Zamora, Rainey and Lisa Abeyta, and Court Executive Officer Audrey Hukari.

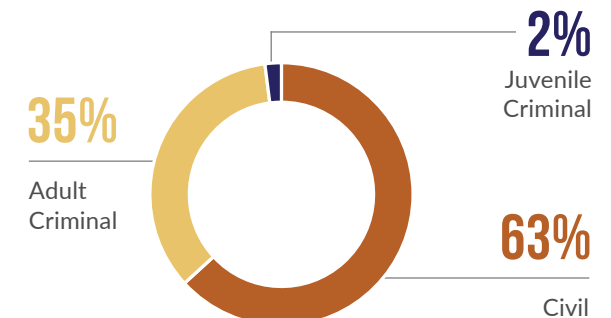


Counties:

Lincoln,
Otero

2025 Fiscal Year Caseload

New, reactivated, and reopened cases: **4,662**



Disposition Rate



13th Judicial District

9 District Court Judges, 8 Magistrate Court Judges, 125 Full-Time Employees

Highlights

Jury Trials. District courts conducted 21 criminal and civil jury trials. Magistrate courts held 3 jury trials.

Pretrial Services. 2,415 people were referred to pretrial services for supervision pending trial. 94% of defendants under supervision remained arrest-free for a violent offense while they awaited trial. The pretrial program provides support and supervision using research-based practices to help individuals appear at future court hearings and remain arrest-free pending trial.

Assisting Homeowners. Settlements occurred in 95% of the 75 cases in which homeowners and other parties fully participated in the district's foreclosure settlement program. The program also serves three other judicial districts and Lea County.

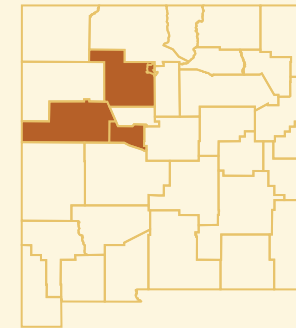
Alternative Dispute Resolution. Settlements were reached in 62% of domestic relations and civil cases that fully participated in a court mediation program for self-represented litigants.

Treatment Courts. 66 people graduated from adult and juvenile treatment courts, a magistrate DWI court, and a behavioral health treatment court. The juvenile treatment court had an 81% success rate and partnered with the Santa Fe Mountain Center for weekend programming.

Access to Justice. 20 people received assistance at a Family Law Legal Fair in Cibola County conducted in partnership with the Volunteer Attorney Program and New Mexico Legal Aid.



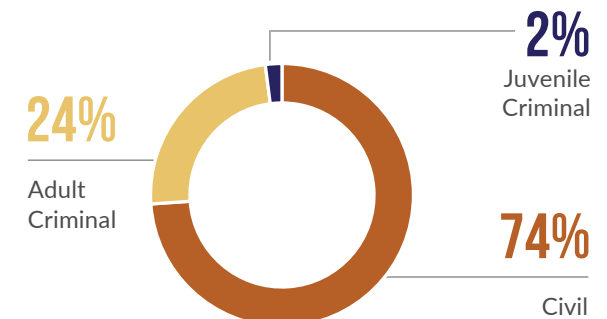
Retired Justice H. Vern Payne holds a commemorative volume of opinions he wrote while on the state Supreme Court. He was the fourth former justice to receive such a compilation from the Court. Justice Payne's son-in-law, Thirteenth Judicial District Judge Allen Smith, is next to him.



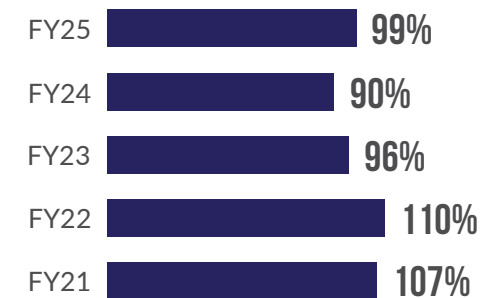
Counties:
Cibola,
Sandoval,
Valencia

2025 Fiscal Year Caseload

New, reactivated, and reopened cases: **12,495**



Disposition Rate



Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court

19 Judges, **315** Full-Time Employees

Highlights

Jury Trials. 22 jury trials were conducted.

New Judges. Judges Andrea I. Gunderson and Ramon J. Maestas were appointed to the court in March 2025. They succeeded Judges Linda S. Rogers and Frank A. Sedillo, who retired.

Court Leadership. Judge Jason M. Jaramillo was appointed presiding judge over the court's civil division.

Community Service. Metro Court marked the 25th year that judges performed Valentine's Day weddings for the public.

Treatment Courts. 148 participants graduated from treatment courts, including the DWI Recovery Court, Urban Native American Healing to Wellness Court, and the Community Veterans Court. Specialty court case managers participated in 17 outreach and resource events.

Growing Caseload. Felony case filings increased by nearly 31% from FY24. The 9,617 felony filings, including felony DWI cases, were the highest number to date for the court.

Jury Management. 11,505 people were summoned to jury duty and 642 were postponed to a later date. Nearly half of those were disqualified, excused, did not respond, had an undeliverable summons, or were postponed.

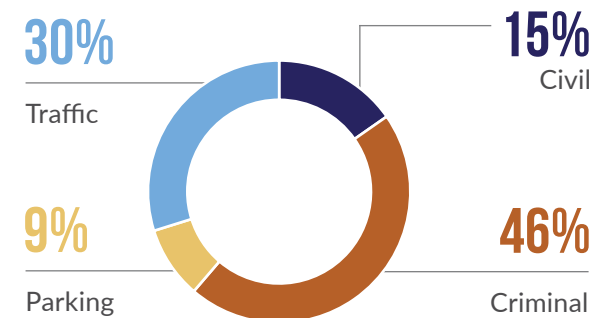
Access to Justice. The Customer Service Division assisted 102,706 people by telephone and in person at the courthouse. The Self-Help Center aided 18,495 litigants. Courtroom interpretation services were provided in Spanish to 3,763 people and to 330 individuals in other languages.



Judge Jill M. Martinez weds one of 55 couples who were married during the 25th anniversary of the court performing Valentine's Day weddings for the public.

2025 Fiscal Year Caseload

New, reactivated, and reopened cases: **84,548**



Disposition Rate



Magistrate Courts

43 Courts Statewide, 67 Judges

Magistrate courts have limited jurisdiction and handle DWI cases, misdemeanors, traffic violations, civil actions up to \$10,000, and hold preliminary hearings to determine probable cause on felony charges. Magistrate judges are not required to be lawyers except in Doña Ana County. Judges serve four-year terms and must run for election in partisan elections. District courts administratively oversee the magistrate courts within their districts.

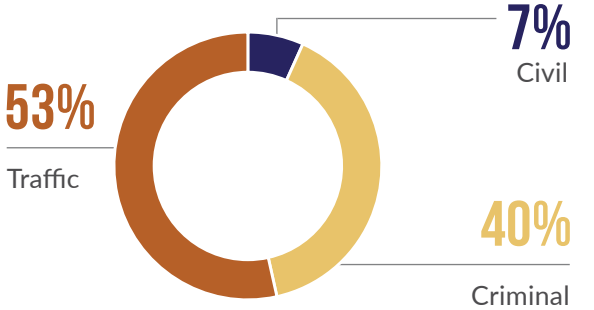
Highlights

Magistrate courts statewide conducted 165 jury trials in FY25, a 7% increase from the previous year. The average time to disposition of a criminal case dropped by 14%, reaching 85 days in FY25. The courts experienced a nearly 7% increase in new, reopened, and reactivated civil cases in FY25, while the criminal caseload declined by about 1% and the number of traffic cases fell by 2.7% from FY24.



New Mexico State University students in Prof. Dwight Kealy's (shown at left) undergraduate business law class visited the magistrate and district courts in Las Cruces to observe hearings in cases.

2025 Fiscal Year Caseload New, reactivated, and reopened cases: 154,664



Disposition Rate





PROGRAMS

- Community Problem Solvers >
- Enhancing Public Access >
- Serving Children >
- Fostering Leadership >
- Improving Outcomes >

Community Problem Solvers

Competency Diversion Programs >

Assisted Outpatient Treatment >

Behavioral Health Reform >

Treatment Courts >



The Santa Fe Magistrate Court hosted a community event in September 2025 for a newly implemented competency diversion pilot program.

Courts occupy a front row seat for many of the challenges facing New Mexico, including how to help people struggling with severe mental illness who if left untreated may cycle repeatedly through homelessness, hospital emergency rooms, jails, and courts.

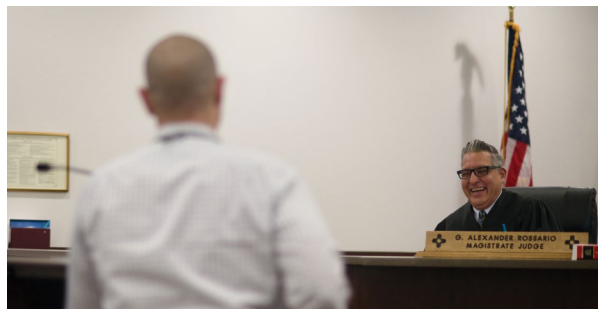
The Judiciary has responded to community needs with innovative, collaborative solutions. State courts launched competency diversion and assisted outpatient treatment programs with funding provided by the Legislature and support from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The judicial branch of government also assumed a role in carrying out behavioral health reforms approved by the Legislature and Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham in 2025.

Competency Diversion Programs

The Judiciary has established competency diversion pilot programs in the First, Third, Fourth and Twelfth Judicial Districts. Planning is underway to start a program in the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court. These initiatives steer people away from the justice system and connect them to treatment and community-based services needed for recovery. People with severe mental illness who are charged with misdemeanors, except DWI, and nonviolent felony offenses may qualify for the program.

Trained staff, called navigators, help guide program participants to treatment and services, including housing, food, and job assistance. Courts dismiss charges when individuals successfully complete a navigation plan developed in collaboration with them. Criminal cases proceed for participants who fail to remain engaged with available services.

Competency diversion programs provide individuals with a potential path to recovery and promote community safety by lowering the likelihood of rearrests for people with a history of mental illness. Currently, individuals with untreated mental illness have their charges dismissed if they are found incompetent to stand trial. If these individuals are rearrested for a new offense, the cycle of incompetency and dismissal of charges may occur again.



Doña Ana County Magistrate Judge Alexander Rosario presides over a hearing in December 2024 for the court's competency diversion program. Photo by New Mexico In Depth – Ted Alcorn.

Assisted Outpatient Treatment

Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) programs help people who repeatedly have been hospitalized or jailed because they do not voluntarily participate in treatment and they exhibit violent behavior or threaten harm to themselves or others. Family members, behavioral health providers and certain others can request a court order to require qualifying individuals to participate in community-based treatment.

Court-ordered treatment occurs through a civil legal process that protects a person's due process rights. The First Judicial District implemented an AOT program in early 2025, and the Judiciary is planning a program in the Eleventh Judicial District.

Assisted outpatient treatment takes a collaborative approach. A behavioral health provider develops a treatment plan with input from the AOT participant, family and friends. A court-led team, including the AOT program manager and the program's behavioral health provider, helps individuals obtain treatment and other services such as housing assistance. The court holds the program participant and behavioral health provider accountable to ensure adherence to the treatment plan.



Supreme Court justices, district court judges, court staff, and community partners at the launch of an Assisted Outpatient Treatment Program at the First Judicial District Court in Santa Fe.



Members of the Behavioral Health Reform and Investment Act Executive Committee meet in the Capitol. Pictured from left: Administrative Office of the Courts Director Karl Reifsteck, retired Sen. Jerry Ortiz y Pino, Behavioral Health Services Division Director Nick Boukas, Health Authority Secretary Kari Armijo, and Dr. Violette Cloud.

Behavioral Health Reform

The Behavioral Health Reform and Investment Act (Senate Bill 3 in the 2025 Legislature) provides for a regional approach to improving behavioral health care in New Mexico.

The law assigned several tasks to the AOC:

- Coordinate the development of regional plans for behavioral health services;
- Facilitate meetings of stakeholders in each of the state's newly designated 13 behavioral health regions;
- Complete Sequential Intercept Mapping (SIM) of the state to identify behavioral health resources and gaps in services. The AOC had performed Sequential Intercept Mapping in six counties as part of its work to implement court-based behavioral health pilot programs.

The AOC has developed a grant process to provide financial assistance for local, tribal or quasi-governmental organizations for the development of the regional plans. The AOC director serves on a statutorily created executive committee that will review and approve the regional plans and oversee state funding of the plans.

Treatment Courts

District, metropolitan and magistrate courts operate more than 50 treatment court programs across the state. These programs help people overcome substance use and mental health conditions while supporting and holding the offender accountable through frequent drug tests, supervisory support visits, and judicial hearings. Studies have found that treatment courts are more effective than prison in preventing re-arrest and are less expensive.

In FY25, 511 people graduated from treatment courts across New Mexico. The programs exist in 12 of the 13 judicial districts, serving 22 of 33 counties. New Mexico also stands out as a national leader in the training and development of treatment court alumni. Thirty-one alumni groups statewide and 152 trained alumni coordinators provide critical support and resources for recent treatment court graduates. New Mexico hosts a yearly summit to foster peer support and community engagement by alumni.



Treatment courts in the Third Judicial District participated in an annual event in Las Cruces promoting and supporting recovery from mental health and substance use conditions.

Enhancing Public Access

Jury and Witness Program >

Judicial Information Division >

Court Operations >

Language Access >

NM Access to Justice
Commission >

Alternative Dispute Resolution >

Statewide Office of
the ADA Title II Coordinator >

Supreme Court Law Library >

Compilation Commission >

Jury and Witness Program

The Jury and Witness Program in the Administrative Office of the Courts oversees the usage of jurors and support of witnesses by trial courts. It manages payments for jurors and travel and lodging expenses for witnesses in some trials and related proceedings.

Highlights

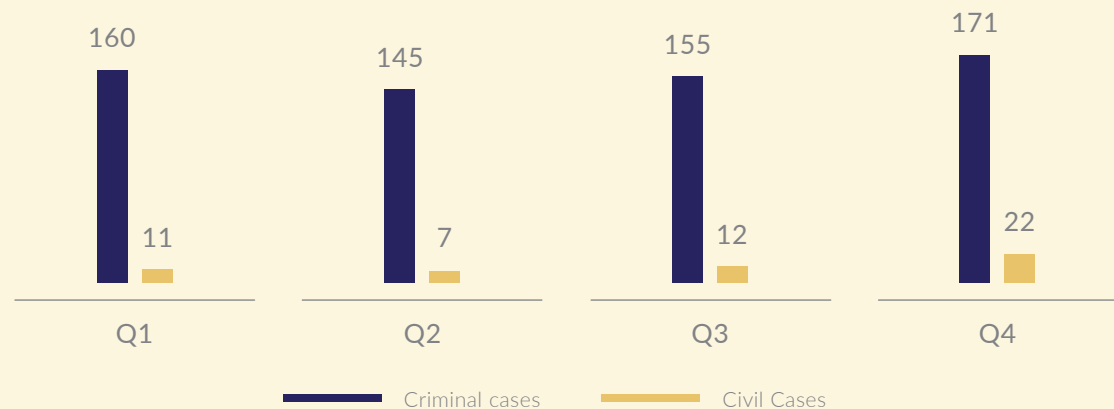
- New Mexico became the first statewide court system to use a bilingual postcard summons. The postcards provide instructions in English and Spanish to people ordered to jury duty.
- Guidelines for expenses of witnesses were revised to better control costs and more clearly define when the state of New Mexico or others are responsible for payments.
- Data was integrated from two judicial computer systems to eliminate the manual collection of information on juror utilization by courts.

- A new procedure was developed for docketing jury trials in the electronic case management system to provide for more consistent and reliable data.
- Results of exit surveys of jurors are compiled monthly and shared with courts to improve jury management practices.

Next Steps

- A new orientation video for jurors will be developed, highlighting the critical role of juries in the legal system.
- In-person training sessions for courts will be launched to strengthen jury management.
- A continuing collaboration with NM dataXchange will create visual dashboards to help courts more effectively manage how many potential jurors they need to call for trials.

Criminal and Civil Trials by FY25 Quarter



Judicial Information Division

The Judicial Information Division (JID) is the technology arm of the New Mexico Judiciary. It provides technical and cybersecurity support for all state courts, including network access, email, and information technology hardware and software.

Highlights

- New cybersecurity tools were added for around-the-clock monitoring of the judicial network.
- Data center upgrades were implemented to strengthen the security and monitoring of judicial data and IT assets. Improvements were made to the hardware and software that run IT services – from VPN connections to shared files – to meet increasing user demands.
- 88 courtrooms and hearing rooms have been modernized as of Sept. 30, 2025, to replace outdated analog equipment and audio CDs with fully integrated digital systems. Audio serves as the official record of court proceedings. The multi-year modernization project improves audio and video in courtrooms and hearing rooms by upgrading hardware, software as well as electrical and data cabling. The new software includes a specialized AI-powered speech-to-text transcription feature to support the official judicial record of proceedings.

Next Steps

- In FY26, JID will continue the next phase of the modernization project, which includes courtrooms in Grants, Bernalillo, Los Alamos, Farmington, Gallup, Clovis, Carrizozo, Socorro, Santa Rosa, Las Vegas, and Truth or Consequences.



Information technology and cybersecurity personnel from New Mexico Courts at the Court Technology Conference in Kansas City. (l-r) Michelle Valdez (AOC-JID), Joseph Moore (1st District), Philip Hefter (12th District), Brittany Aguilar (12th District), Jeremy Domingo (12th District), Franklyn Aragona (Metro), Phillip Gallegos (Metro). Front: Logan Fernandez (AOC-JID) and Jennifer Vallejos (AOC).

Court Operations Division

The Court Operations Division supports courts with a range of services, including maintenance of magistrate court buildings, security, internal process and data analysis, and citation processing.

Highlights

- Provided ongoing support to Magistrate and District Courts by addressing over 80 repair and upgrade requests to maintain operational efficiency, including a \$6 million investment in statewide security renovations.

- Optimized resources with closures and mergers: Closed Hatch and Jal circuit courts; Tierra Amarilla and Chama Magistrate Courts will merge in late 2025.
- The Citation Processing and Customer Service Units have processed over 13,896 citations and handled 91,566 calls in support of magistrate courts, the Supreme Court and the Administrative Office of the Courts.
- The Court Operations Analysis Team designed training programs and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for court personnel, hosted a statewide Magistrate Court Manager Forum, and had a Safe Surrender event in Española that resolved 501 cases.



Members of the Court Operations Division with local security at the Rule of Law Program in Farmington.

Next Steps

- Complete Curry County and Santa Fe Magistrate Court projects on schedule and resolve funding/land issues for courts in Cibola and Doña Ana counties.
- Expand training programs and SOP development to address emerging operational needs.
- Continue improving case management systems and public access tools.

Language Access Services

Language Access Services (LAS) in the Administrative Office of the Courts coordinates and funds court interpreting and other services to ensure equal access to the state courts for people with limited proficiency in English and deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

Highlights

- Significant progress has been made in expanding the statewide roster of interpreters since LAS updated training methods, recruitment strategies, and implemented structured mentoring in the Justice System Interpreter (JSI) certification program. A dozen people achieved JSI certification during FY25, and two of those went on to receive an additional level of certification by scoring 70% or higher on all portions of an oral examination.



Interpreter Matilda Matchers translates a Supreme Court oral argument into Diné for the Rule of Law Program. The argument was conducted at San Juan College in Farmington.

- LAS staff presented for the third consecutive year at the Council for Language Access Coordinators Conference. The presentations highlighted how certified bilingual court staff serve as a first point of contact for Limited English Proficient court users, and addressed language access challenges in unified court systems like the one in New Mexico.

Next Steps

- In FY26, LAS will continue to prioritize interpreter certification to expand the pool of qualified professionals available to the courts. The program also will focus on implementing a statewide system for remotely providing interpretation services to ensure equitable access across all judicial districts.

NM Access to Justice Commission

The state Supreme Court established the Access to Justice Commission in 2004 to expand and improve civil legal assistance in New Mexico.

Highlights

- The commission developed a proposal in FY25 for a legal assistance portal that would help the public with civil legal issues.
- Work continued on several initiatives, including a statewide customer call center that will direct people to free legal resources, available court forms, and online resources. The commission also is helping to revise current court forms to make them more user-friendly.

- Statewide webinars were conducted on timely legal topics, including a foreclosure settlement program. The online seminars are archived on the NM Courts YouTube channel.

Next Steps

- In FY26, the commission will conduct outreach to promote the new statewide help center, study the benefits of using kiosks to aid courthouse visitors, and will explore alternatives for free or subsidized legal assistance to the public.

**New Mexico Commission on
Access to Justice**
Community Webinar Series
July 16, 2025

**Missing And Murdered Indigenous
Women And Relatives (MMIWR)**

Presented by
Shereena Baker and
Jodi Burshia

Moderated by
Juan Abeyta

This webinar highlights the presenters' work with the Albuquerque chapter of Sing Our Rivers Red, who focus on raising awareness about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives that is community-driven and rooted in education and prevention.

The Access to Justice Commission hosts community webinars throughout the year.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

The Alternative Dispute Resolution Program in the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) offers mediation services for child welfare cases in district courts and for general civil cases in magistrate courts. An impartial mediator helps the parties in a case to resolve their differences and reach a settlement, avoiding lengthy litigation.

The Children’s Court Mediation Program (CCMP) offers mediation at each stage of a child abuse and neglect case. Mediation participants may include parents and others such as child advocates, social workers, and potential adoptive families. The Magistrate Court Mediation Program (MCMP) serves all magistrate courts statewide.

Highlights

- The CCMP began accepting cases from the First Judicial District in FY25, making it a statewide program.
- Agreements were reached in half of the 646 cases referred to the MCMP. Magistrate courts in Las Cruces and Bernalillo referred the most cases to mediation.
- The MCMP streamlined its referral and mediation process, and further integrated interpreting services into the program.
- The Alternative Dispute Resolution Program issued scholarships to judicial staff to attend a 40-hour basic mediation course. Attendees earn a certification of completion, allowing them to begin mediating for court-connected ADR programs.

Next Steps

- The MCMP will collaborate with the Judicial Information Division to improve a software application that lessens the administrative workload for mediators and court staff. The app allows mediation documents to be uploaded and mediators to set their availability.



| Children's Court Mediation Program - Total Referral | | | |
|---|------|------|----------|
| Judicial District | FY24 | FY25 | % Change |
| 1st | 0 | 9 | - |
| 2nd | 173 | 108 | -38% |
| 3rd | 71 | 99 | 39% |
| 4th | 36 | 19 | -47% |
| 5th | 51 | 69 | 35% |
| 6th | 38 | 51 | 34% |
| 7th | 7 | 7 | 0% |
| 8th | 45 | 39 | -13% |
| 9th | 1 | 1 | 0% |
| 10th | 0 | 0 | 0% |
| 11th | 37 | 57 | 54% |
| 12th | 57 | 23 | -60% |
| 13th | 86 | 87 | 1% |
| All | 602 | 569 | -5% |

Statewide Office of the ADA Title II Coordinator

The Statewide Office of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II Coordinator helps ensure people with disabilities have full and equal access to courts and judicial services.

Highlights

- The office, working with a vendor, conducted ADA self-evaluations throughout the Judiciary as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The evaluations were completed on buildings, programs, services, activities, and websites to identify barriers that could prevent access to courts for a person with disabilities.
- Statewide ADA Title II Coordinator Peggy Cadwell spoke about New Mexico’s scribing program at the ADA National Symposium. Scribing is available at courts statewide to help self-represented litigants and jurors fill out judicial forms.

- 947 scribing sessions were conducted statewide in FY25, averaging almost 80 monthly. Half of those were helping people complete their juror questionnaire.
- Courts provided 730 ADA accommodations during the fiscal year, with about a fourth of those involving assistive listening devices and nearly a fifth related to physical access.
- Twenty trainings, presentations, and webinars were offered on scribing and ADA topics for judicial employees and national audiences.
- The office updated its online Accommodation Request Forms, Complaint Form, and Grievance Procedure to meet new digital accessibility standards. The upgrades included making forms compatible with screen reader technology.



Statewide ADA Title II Coordinator Peggy Cadwell delivers a presentation about New Mexico’s scribing program at a national symposium in Atlanta, Georgia.

Next Steps

- The office will work with its evaluation vendor to create transition plans for each judicial district that outline barriers to required ADA access and a prioritization schedule for eliminating the barriers.

Supreme Court Law Library

The Law Library in the Supreme Court Building is the only public law library in New Mexico and maintains a research collection of nearly 276,000 cataloged volumes. In-person assistance at the reference desk is the most popular method for people to contact the library.

Highlights

- 199 patrons used the library's public computers and microform scanner for free access to resources including online legal research services and word processing software.
- Staff attended legal fairs in Española and Albuquerque, and hosted exhibits at several events, including the State Bar of New Mexico's annual meeting and at Meow Wolf in Santa Fe.
- The library completed 2,632 reference transactions during FY25, and sent 346 responses to prisoners seeking information.
- Staff created lesson plans and educational materials for the Supreme Court's Rule of Law Program, in which students observe an oral argument in a pending case.
- The library conducted research for a NM PBS program about New Mexico's territorial justices and the Court's ongoing project to publish commemorative volumes of opinions written by now retired justices.
- Staff guided 31 tours of the Supreme Court Building for the public, community groups, and court staff, including the Texas Second Court of Appeals and Leadership Roswell.

Next Steps

- Complete a report about the Hall of Chief Justices in the Supreme Court Building, which contains portraits of chief justices. The report will make recommendations to the Court for preserving the existing portraits and planning for adding more in the future.



The law library serves as an accessible space for the public and court staff to view the Supreme Court's livestreamed oral arguments, increasing public access to the courts.

Compilation Commission

The New Mexico Compilation Commission is the state's official legal publisher. It offers a free online database of appellate court opinions, current and historical versions of state statutes, court rules, session laws, the administrative code, and other publications. Printed books, mobile apps, and eBooks also are available.

Highlights

- The commission completed a project of using artificial intelligence software to generate summaries of nearly 12,000 appellate opinions from 1990 through 2025. The summaries are available to the public at no cost online for research and analysis.
- At the direction of the Supreme Court, the commission published a commemorative volume of opinions written by retired Justice Joseph F. Baca. This was the fifth in a series for a Court project honoring former justices and their contributions to New Mexico law.

Next Steps

- The commission will prepare additional volumes of New Mexico Commemorative Appellate Reports. Volumes are planned to honor retired Justices Petra Jimenez Maes, Kenneth B. Wilson, and Patricio M. Serna.



Retired Justice Joseph Baca holds a commemorative volume of his opinions during a ceremony in the Hall of Chief Justices. The Compilation Commission published the volume for the Supreme Court to honor Justice Baca and his contributions to New Mexico law.

Serving Children

Court Improvement Program >

Court Appointed Attorney Program >

Court Appointed Special Advocates >

Safe Exchange and Supervised Visitation >

Children's Court Judges Association >

Court Improvement Program

The federally sponsored State Court Improvement Program provides grant funds to the highest court in all 50 states for improving the child welfare system. The Administrative Office of the Courts manages the program in New Mexico.

Highlights

- The Children's Court Improvement Commission completed its 2021 strategic plan and drafted a new plan focusing on prevention and facilitating permanency. Divided among five workgroups, the goals of the plan are prevention, facilitating permanency, crossover, data, and practice and policy support.
- Supported training opportunities in collaboration with the University of New Mexico's Corinne Wolfe Center for Child and Family Justice, which hosts two trainings annually.
- The Court Improvement Program assists with the annual Children's Law Institute, a conference drawing more than 1,200 child welfare and juvenile justice practitioners and hosted by New Mexico State University's Center of Innovation for Behavioral Health and Wellbeing.

Next Steps

- Continue to promote consistent quality improvement of court processes and legal representation in child welfare.
- Enhance and expand collaboration between the state judiciary, the child welfare agency, and tribes to improve child welfare outcomes.

Court Appointed Attorney Program

The Court Appointed Attorney Program (CAAP) in the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) oversees contracts and payments for attorneys that courts have ordered to represent clients to protect the person's liberty interests. These include matters requiring a guardian ad litem for children and proceedings for mental health commitment. The CAAP staff also coordinated with other AOC divisions to provide court appointed attorneys for other programs, including assisted outpatient treatment.

Highlights

- Program staff administered 14 contracts with attorneys, and processed 96 applications from non-contract attorneys appointed by a court to represent clients.

 **14**
contracts

 **96**
applications

Next Steps

- A new RFP for contract attorneys will be issued in FY26 for all judicial districts.
- Coordinate more with courts state-wide to provide education about the appointments available using CAAP.

Court Appointed Special Advocates

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for Children is a network of community-based programs that recruit, train, and support citizen-volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in courtrooms and communities. These programs house volunteers who provide foster children with individualized advocacy as the children move through the child welfare system. The volunteer advocates inform judges with reports and recommendations in order to make the best possible decision for each child. One year of CASA advocacy costs less than one month of keeping a child in foster care. A child with a court appointed special advocate is more likely to find a safe and permanent home, half as likely to reenter foster care, and is more likely to succeed in schools, according to national data.

Highlights

- Expanded volunteer recruitment initiatives statewide by providing dedicated support to each local CASA program to build stronger outreach strategies and grow their volunteer base.
- Implemented statewide board governance training and coaching to strengthen fiduciary, leadership, and oversight skills of local CASA program boards.

Next Steps

- Host statewide think tanks and strategic planning sessions to establish a modern, sustainable CASA funding model for local programs.
- Explore areas of improvement for data collection and integrity.

CASA at a glance:



13
CASA programs in
26 counties.



11,315
hours of advocacy
for children in
foster care by CASA
volunteers.



993
children and youth
received support
from a CASA.



708
cases were assigned
a CASA advocate.



43%
CASAs are assigned
to 43% of kids in care
in New Mexico.

Safe Exchange and Supervised Visitation

Providers in the Safe Exchange and Supervised Visitation (SESV) program preserve relationships between children and their parents by monitoring their visits and offering protection from harm in safe, child-friendly environments during times of high family conflict in divorce, custody, and domestic violence cases.

Highlights

- The SESV program implemented an in-state mentorship network training initiative for start-up programs.
- Four local New Mexico programs attended the International Supervised Visitation Network conference, which collaborated with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges to offer Domestic Violence Court specific training.
- Established a mentorship program to connect new supervised visitation providers with experienced programs, strengthening service quality statewide.

Next Steps

- Collaborate with New Mexico partners to expand Justice for Families training initiatives with local SESV providers and courts.
- Partner with the Supervised Visitation Network (SVN) to implement a New Mexico-specific SESV training pathway, guaranteeing that every program will have an in-house staff member credentialed with the 24-hour SVN Certificate to strengthen service quality statewide.



FY25 SESV Year End Performance Data

| Judicial District | Visits & Exchanges |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| First JD | 1,090 |
| Second JD | 2,702 |
| Third JD | 692 |
| Fourth | 248 |
| Fifth JD | 1,784 |
| Sixth JD | 1,496 |
| Eighth JD | 188 |
| Ninth JD | 127 |
| Eleventh JD | 461 |
| Twelfth JD | 161 |
| Thirteenth JD | 1,504 |
| Total Visits & Exchanges | 10,453 |
| Avg. Per Month | 871 |

| | | |
|--|---------------------|----------------|
| Families Served Each Month | Children Served | Adults Served |
| | 706 | 1,004 |
| Services Provided This Year | Supervised Visits | Safe Exchanges |
| | 7,398 | 3,055 |
| Hours of Service Invested in the Safety of New Mexico Families | Total Service Hours | |
| | 15,059 | |

Children's Court Judges Association

The Children's Court Judges Association (CCJA) consists of judicial officers who hear child welfare and juvenile justice cases. Twelfth Judicial District Judge Angie Schneider chaired the association in FY25. Staff support was provided by the Legal Services Division of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Highlights

- CCJA hosted a luncheon at the 2025 Children's Law Institute for judicial officers and young people with lived experience in child welfare and juvenile justice matters. The event provided a casual setting for judges to hear from young people affected by the justice system
- The association held an annual half-day training at which a Fordham University professor spoke about case management, delinquency risk reduction, and positive youth development.
- New Mexico's Corinne Wolfe Center for Child and Family Justice provided CCJA with four, one-hour trainings.

Next Steps

- CCJA will continue to meet monthly for trainings, updates, and open discussions of issues. In FY25, discussion topics included juvenile competency evaluations, the Kevin S. settlement, and the federal Child and Family Service Review.



Retired Supreme Court Justice Petra Jimenez Maes (standing at center) speaks to Children's Court judges at an annual luncheon.



Children's Law Institute (CLI) annual luncheon for judges and young people with lived experience.



The Petra Jimenez Maes "Raising the Bar" Children's Court pre-conclave session at the State Bar of New Mexico in June 2025.

Fostering Leadership

Court Education Institute >

Judicial Performance
Evaluation Commission >

Equity, Inclusion and Justice >

Human Resources Division >

Tribal-State Judicial Consortium >

Court Education Institute

Established in 2023, the Court Education Institute (CEI) offers training and other educational opportunities for judges and court personnel. The division assumed responsibilities previously assigned to the University of New Mexico.

Highlights

- Awarded the 2025 Anthology Catalyst Award in the 'Leading Change' category for the transformative way the division developed judicial education through a learning management system that offers and tracks online training, automates manual processes, and expands access to learning.
- Hosted in-person conferences for all court jurisdictions – probate, municipal, magistrate, metropolitan, district, appellate, and tribal – with nationally recognized speakers and justice partners.
- Published updated DWI and Ethics Handbooks for use by judges.
- Introduced a high school intern program with two summer interns.

- Launched the Judicial Insights Webinar Series, featuring accessible, high-quality education on emerging topics.

Next Steps

- Preparing new judicial manuals, including for probate and municipal judges and a resource guide for traffic cases.
- Co-hosting the 2026 National Judicial Summit in Santa Fe in partnership with the National Judicial College, highlighting the state's leadership in innovative curricula.
- Developing online judicial toolkits, offering judges quick access to law, theory, and practice at the point of need.
- Creating civics education programs for high schools and community groups, broadening public understanding of the justice system.
- Developing the Legacy Leadership and Management Programs, designed to cultivate future leaders within the Judiciary.



Members of the Court Education Institute. Front row from l-r: Business Specialist II Supervisor Jazmine Herrera, Statewide Program Manager Margarita G. Terrell, Director Paula Couselo-Findikoglu, Program Manager Diana Bennett, Administrative Assistant II Vanessa Baca. Middle row l-r: Attorney Supervisor Sonya Duke-Noel, Statewide Training Coordinator Arlene Baca, Attorney Senior Sarah Pepin, Event Planner Laurie Moreau, Attorney Associate Aspen J. Harris-Grigg. Back row l-r: Attorney Senior Michael Stewart and Program Manager Santana Kujawa.

Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission

The Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission (JPEC) was established by the Supreme Court in 1997 to help judges improve their job performance and provide voters with reliable, nonpartisan information in deciding whether to retain a judge in office.

Highlights

- Successfully completed the final phase of the 2024 retention cycle.
- Distributed and posted JPEC voter recommendations (nmjpec.org) on September 13, 2024, ahead of the General Election and announced the results the same day.
- Conducted evaluations for 31 district court judges.
- Issued retention recommendations to judges receiving a final evaluation for the 2026 retention election.

Next Steps

- In 2026, JPEC will be making recommendations to voters on approximately 45 judges standing for retention.



45

Judges Up for Retention

Equity, Inclusion and Justice

The Statewide Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Program in the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) works to create equitable and inclusive environments throughout the Judiciary. It addresses disparities and systemic inequities, including those related to race, ethnicity, national or tribal origin, age, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or presentation, disabilities, and English language proficiency.

Highlights

- Developed and conducted over 65 small group training sessions within the Judiciary to help employees, judges, and justices learn how to identify and remedy challenges that impact all aspects of the judicial process.
- Training audiences included newly hired judicial personnel, all employees, judges, and justices at the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, the

AOC, and the Second Judicial District Court, and members of several Supreme Court commissions and committees.

- Presented to magistrate, district, tribal, and appellate judges and justices on introductory and advanced equity challenges, including microaggressions.
- Advanced procedural justice by submitting rule changes to the Supreme Court, including for the Rules of Professionalism, Code of Judicial Conduct, and Uniform Jury Instructions.

Next Steps

- Continue to expand the training audience to every judge and judicial employee statewide.
- Continue to collaborate with the State Bar of New Mexico to address areas of disparate impact and inequities in our legal system.



Statewide Equity and Inclusion Manager Torri Jacobus participated in an Access to Justice panel at the National Conference of Appellate Court Clerks in Albuquerque. From l-r - John Tomasino, Justice C. Shannon Bacon, Grace Spulak, Torri Jacobus, and Julie Ballinger.

Human Resources Division

The Human Resources Division (HRD) of the Administrative Office of the Courts supports 2,150 judges and court employees statewide. The team strives to improve the Judiciary's effectiveness by recruiting and retaining a diverse, talented workforce, and providing training on workplace issues.

Highlights

- Administered a Supreme Court initiative that increased wages 2% to 16% for 1,400 of the lowest paid employees. This is in addition to the 4% salary increase effective in FY26, which HRD implemented for all judicial employees.
- Managed the Workforce Investment Plan, moving employees through pay ranges based on time in the job classification.
- Provided onboarding and new employee orientation monthly to about 181 judicial employees through a hybrid platform and hosted on-site new employee orientation to welcome and connect with new members of the Judiciary.
- Processed 180 out-of-cycle and 66 filled reclassification requests, and 492 supporting documentation forms.
- Recruited for approximately 814 job opportunities across the Judiciary.
- Presented "Top 10 Rules and Policies New District Judges Should Know" at Judicial Conclave, personnel management tools at the 2024 Court Staff Conference, and conducted one-on-one trainings for HR professionals throughout the state.



AOC Human Resources was in charge of teaching the Supervisory Mentorship Training Program for statewide supervisors.

Next Steps

- Collaborating with the AOC Court Education Institute to develop and revise personnel rules and policy.
- Exploring government human resources software and management solutions tools for recruiting and performance appraisal and planning.

Next Steps

- The consortium will work on the new plan's three overarching goals: to provide training and outreach to strengthen mutual understanding, respect, and trust; create awareness of and facilitate access to tribal and state legal resources; and continue to advise and recommend rules and forms for tribal and state courts.

Tribal-State Judicial Consortium

Fourteen tribal and state court judges serve on the New Mexico Tribal-State Judicial Consortium (TSJC), an advisory body of the state Supreme Court that establishes and fosters working relationships based on mutual understanding and trust among tribal and state court to assure seamless justice.

Highlights

- In FY25, the TSJC completed 2022 strategic planning objectives and created a new strategic plan.



Tribal-State Judicial Consortium members developed a new strategic plan in 2025.

Improving Outcomes

Behavioral Health >

Pretrial Justice >

Therapeutic Justice >

Guardians and Conservators >

Protective Orders - Background Checks >

Records Expungement >

Behavioral Health

The Behavioral Health Program in the Administrative Office of the Courts collaborates with courts and communities to improve and strengthen how the justice system responds to people struggling with mental health issues.

Highlights

- Launched Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) in the First Judicial District in FY25. AOT is a civil proceeding in which courts can order certain individuals to outpatient treatment for behavioral health disorders.
- Implemented competency diversion programs in the First, Third, Fourth and Twelfth Judicial Districts. Program staff – called navigators – connect newly arrested qualifying individuals with severe mental illness and a history of incompetency to community-based support services and treatment.
- Facilitated Sequential Intercept Mapping (SIM) workshops in the First and Fourth Judicial Districts, bringing together local partners to identify and address gaps in behavioral health services. The mapping helps develop strategies for improving the response to individuals with behavioral health needs.



Santa Fe Magistrate Judge Donita Sena visiting with people who attended a public event launching a competency diversion program in the First Judicial District.

Next Steps

- A competency diversion program is scheduled to launch in the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court in FY26, and AOT was implemented in the Fourth Judicial District in November 2025. These initiatives are part of an ongoing commitment by the Judiciary to build sustainable community-based programs to improve outcomes for individuals with behavioral health issues who come into contact with the civil and criminal justice systems.

Pretrial Justice

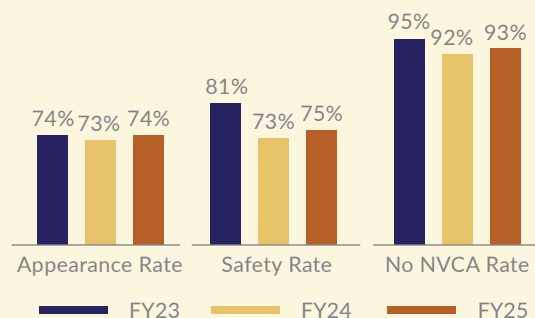
The Pretrial Justice Program of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) fosters the use of evidence-based practices by state courts to maximize public safety and ensure people charged with a crime appear at court proceedings if they are released from custody to await trial.

Highlights

- Pretrial programs were implemented in the Seventh, Eighth, Ninth and Tenth Judicial Districts, which cover a dozen counties. Pretrial services already were in place in seven districts.
- The AOC pretrial program updated and standardized best practices for state courts to use in supervising individuals awaiting trial. The goal is ensure consistency by courts across the state and enhance transparency of pretrial programs.
- The AOC program started visiting pretrial sites to ensure programs align with legal requirements and best practices. Eleven site visits have been completed. This process marked a transition for the AOC from initial implementation of pretrial services to sustaining improvements to the pretrial justice system through data-driven strategies.

- Pretrial navigators were created in two pilot sites to connect individuals under pretrial supervision to needed community-based support services. The initiative helps improve how individuals engage with their local pretrial program.
- The AOC program was recognized nationally for its pretrial messaging system that sends text and email reminders to individuals about upcoming court hearing dates, office visits, and check-ins. If individuals fail to appear, they receive a message with instructions on how to get back into compliance. More than 700,000 messages in multiple languages have been sent. The program received an honorable mention for an excellence award at the National Association for Court Management's annual conference.

Pretrial Outcomes FY 23-FY25



The third annual pretrial summit was held in Ruidoso to strengthen strategies and leadership. Pretrial program staff from across the state heard from national experts from Arizona, Pennsylvania, and Illinois.

Next Steps

- Statewide implementation of pretrial services will occur in FY26 with the launch of a court-based program in the Fifth Judicial District of Chaves, Eddy and Lea counties.

Therapeutic Justice

The Therapeutic Justice Support Program within the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) oversees and supports the state's 55 treatment courts. These courts treat a person's substance use and mental health disorders while supervising them to promote long-term recovery and increase public safety by lessening the likelihood of rearrests.

Highlights

- The AOC program delivered refresher training for treatment courts, piloting newly developed implementation materials to support effective delivery of services. The AOC also worked to streamline the creation of new treatment courts and improve evaluation methods.
- 269 treatment court graduates and others, including judges and program coordinators, attended the third annual statewide alumni summit in Albuquerque. Training is provided to help graduates provide peer support for treatment court participants. Alumni successes are spotlighted to showcase treatment court benefits.
- There were 50 newly trained alumni coordinators in FY25. Seventeen certified alumni coordinators were selected to participate in the annual Leadership Training Institute at the RISE25 conference in Florida. New Mexico is unique in sponsoring the attendance of alumni at the national conference.

- Treatment courts statewide celebrated Recovery Month by educating their communities about the programs and providing resources for individuals impacted by the effects of untreated substance use and mental health disorders.



511

treatment court graduates in FY25.



851

active participants, June 30, 2025.



76%

of graduates had no new convictions within 3 years.



\$65.72

cost per day for each participant.

Next Steps

- The AOC program will assist treatment courts in preparing for a new certification cycle. This will occur after revisions are finished to treatment court standards.



NM treatment court alumni coordinators at the RISE25 National Conference.

Guardians and Conservators

A district court judge may appoint a guardian or conservator for an adult found to lack the capacity to manage their finances, property, health care, or living arrangements. The Guardianship Annual Report Review Division (GARRD) in the Administrative Office of the Courts is responsible for reviewing all annual reports filed by court-appointed Guardians.

Highlights

- In FY25, GARRD completed 5,143 reviews of annual reports filed by court-appointed guardians.

BILL OF RIGHTS FOR ADULTS WHO HAVE A GUARDIAN
You have the following rights at all times when you have a guardian:

Access to Justice Rights

- 1. Keep Your Rights:** You keep all the rights that the court has not given to your guardian.
- 2. Get a Lawyer:** You have the right to get a lawyer.
- 3. Attend Court:** You have the right to be at and take part in all court hearings.
- 4. Voice Your Concerns:** You have the right to tell the court your concerns or complaints about your guardianship.
- 5. Look at Your Abilities:** If there is a question about what you can do, you have the right to have a qualified person of your choice evaluate your abilities and see if some or all of your rights can be restored.
- 6. Ask for Review:** You have the right to ask the court to review if your guardianship should change, continue, or end, and if your guardian is right for you.
- 7. Support and Help:** You have the right to get the support and help you need to effectively communicate with the court and understand the court proceedings.
- 8. Clear Explanation:** You have the right to have your rights explained to you in a way you understand and in the language you choose.

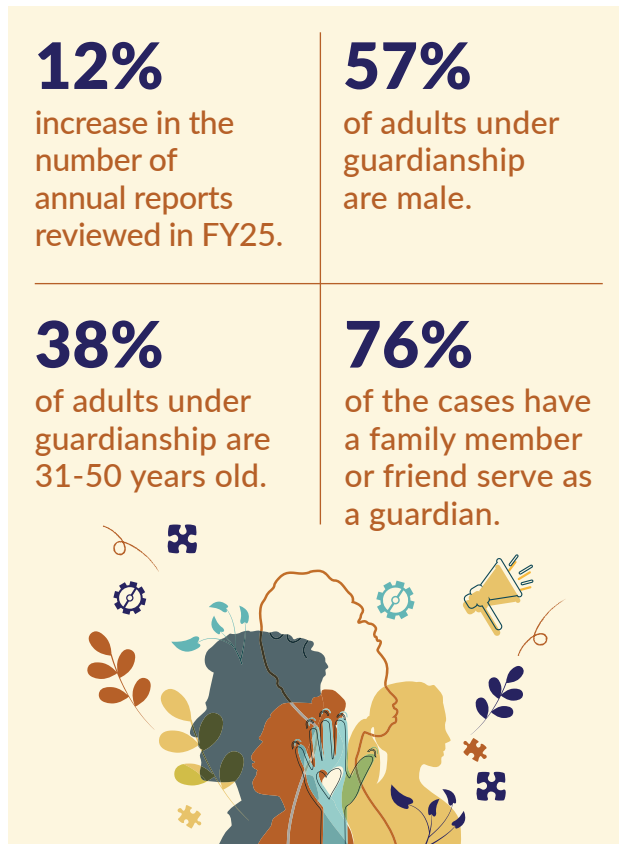
Core Human Rights

- 9. Dignity and Respect:** You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- 10. Freedom from Harm:** You have the right to be free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and discrimination.
- 11. Independence:** You have the right to stay as independent as you can.
- 12. Religious Freedom:** You have the right to practice your own religious preferences.
- 13. Privacy:** You have the right to personal privacy.
- 14. Safe Living Conditions:** You have the right to live, learn, and work in safe, clean, and humane environments.
- 15. Gender and Sexuality:** You have the right to express your sexuality and have your gender identity respected.

Decision-Making Rights

- 16. Competent Guardian:** You have the right to a guardian who understands your needs, goals, and preferences, including medical treatment preferences, cultural practices, and religious beliefs.
- 17. Participate in Decisions:** You have the right to take part in all decisions, especially those affecting your care, where you live, who you live with, your activities, and your social interactions, as much as you want and are able to.
- 18. Necessary Services:** You have the right to get the services and rehabilitation you need, within available resources, that protect your freedom and are provided in the least restrictive conditions.
- 19. Manage Resources:** You have the right to have your guardian manage your resources carefully.
- 20. Financial Decisions:** You have the right to take part in decisions about how your property is managed, as much as you want and are able to.
- 21. Confidentiality:** You have the right to keep your matters confidential, unless sharing the information is necessary to get services, prevent abuse, neglect, or exploitation, or to change the guardianship order.

The 'Bill of Rights for Adults Who Have a Guardian' created by the Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders (WINGS), was adopted by the state Supreme Court in 2025.



Next Steps

- Convene a working group to review the current format for annual reports filed by guardians.
- Continue to provide judges with quarterly lists of cases of guardians and conservators missing annual report submission deadlines.

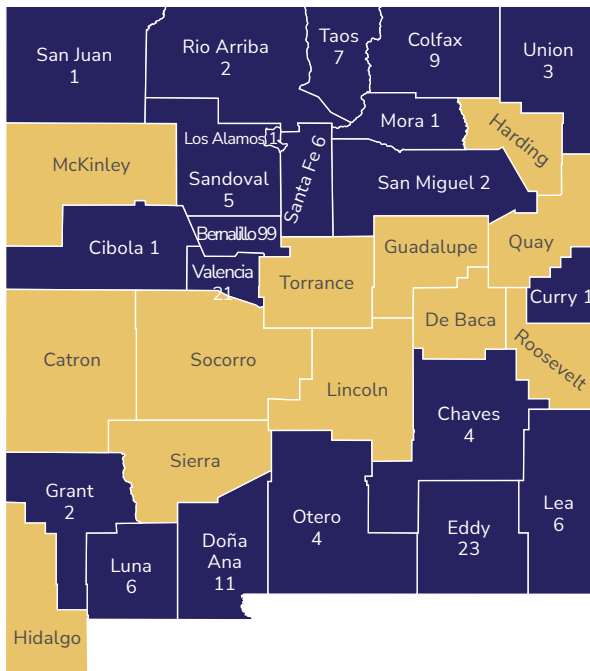
Domestic Violence – Firearm Relinquishment

State law allows judges to order the relinquishment of firearms in a domestic violence order of protection case if the judge makes a separate finding that the restrained party “presents a credible threat to the physical safety of the household member.” If the restrained party states that they do not own any firearms, then a statement of non-relinquishment is filed with the court.

Court forms are used when a judge makes a credible threat finding. Firearm relinquishment forms were filed in 215 domestic violence order of protection cases in FY25.

Highlights

- In 67 cases, the restrained party relinquished their firearms to law enforcement or a federal firearms licensee.
- In 148 cases, the restrained party stated they did not own or possess any firearms that could be surrendered.



Statewide Implementation

■ Firearm relinquishment forms filed in FY25
 ■ No firearm relinquishment forms filed FY25

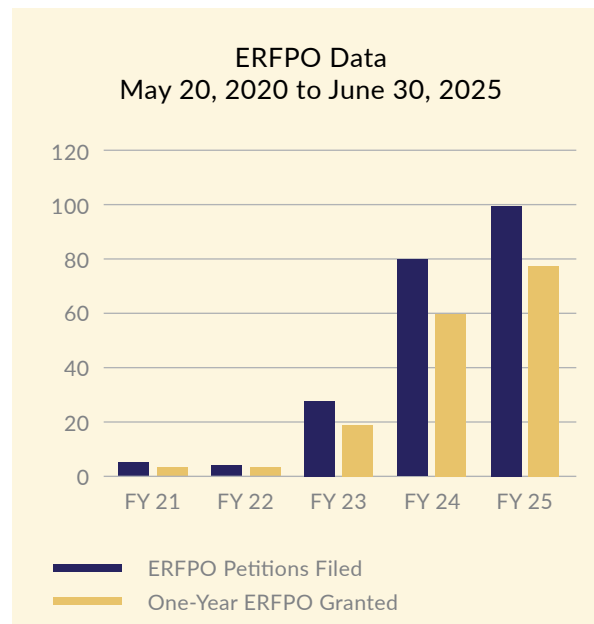
Firearm Protection Orders - NICS Reporting

The National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) is used by the FBI to determine whether a person is eligible to purchase or possess a firearm. The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) reports five different case types to the FBI for entry into NICS: felony convictions, all restrained parties under a domestic violence order of protection, mental health cases, convictions for certain misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence, and respondents under an extreme risk firearm protection order (ERFPO) under the state's "red flag law".

The AOC reviews New Mexico court records for accuracy if an attempted firearm purchase is subject to a required enhanced background check, or to a firearm challenge by the attempted firearm purchaser. The AOC also reviews New Mexico court records for accuracy upon request by the FBI during a federal firearm background check for an attempted firearm purchase.

Highlights

- 2,784 enhanced background checks for attempted gun buyers between the ages of 18 and 20 were processed in FY25. Twenty-one individuals were denied based upon current criminal history or enhanced research that found federal firearm prohibitors.
- The number of ERFPO petitions filed statewide increased by 25% from FY24 to FY25. [Monthly data](#) on ERFPOs is posted on the nmcourts.gov website.



Records Expungement

New Mexico law requires the automatic expungement of cannabis-related charges and convictions. To assist courts in carrying out this directive, the Legal Services Division of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) operates a program that reviews court records to determine whether an individual's case qualifies for expungement.

Highlights

- After the AOC completed the manual review of 14,000 cases that involve marijuana or synthetic cannabinoid charges, 13,712 cases have been expunged and 515 warrants have been inactivated.
- The AOC reviewed 4,916 cases that had multiple marijuana charges, resulting in the expungement of 2,833 cases and inactivation of warrants in 30 of those cases.

Next Steps

- AOC is examining cases with charges for unspecified controlled substances to determine which ones qualify for expungement and whether there are outstanding warrants or financial balances that should be inactivated.

A Year in Pictures



Luna County Adult Treatment Court Program Manager Bobby Brookhauser (standing, facing Legislature) was recognized by Chief Justice David K. Thomson in his State of the Judiciary address for his commitment to the people in the program and the people in his community.



The New Mexico Supreme Court hears oral arguments in *Butterworth v. Jackson* for the Rule of Law Program at the San Juan College Henderson Fine Arts Center in Farmington.



Eleventh Judicial District Court employees Erin Wooten and Gentrey Aylett assist a program participant with Christmas gifts.



Chief Justice David K. Thomson and General Counsel Ann Keith before the State of the Judiciary Address.



2025 Judicial Clerkship Program kickoff at the New Mexico Supreme Court.



Judges gather in the First Judicial District Court for the investiture of Judge Anastasia R. Martin. Back row l-r: Rio Arriba County Magistrate Judge Alexandra Naranjo, Santa Fe County Magistrate Judges Donita Sena and Michelle Mascarenas, First Judicial District Chief Judge Bryan Biedscheid, and Second Judicial District Judge David Murphy. Front row (l-r): Court of Appeals Judge Jennifer Attrep, First Judicial District Judges T. Glenn Ellington, Francis Mathew, Matthew J. Wilson, Jason Lidy, Shannon Broderick Bulman, Kathleen McGarry Ellenwood, Denise M. Thomas, and Anastasia R. Martin.



Second Judicial District Court Executive Officer Katina Watson received the Distinguished Bar Service Non-Lawyer Award from State Bar Commissioner Mitchell Mender in October 2024.



Sharon Payne, a court manager from the Fifth Judicial District, received the inaugural Arthur W. Pepin Outstanding Judicial Service Award for her leadership and contributions to improving the administration of justice in New Mexico. From l-r: Senior Justice Michael E. Vigil, Chief Justice David K. Thomson, Sharon Payne, Fifth Judicial District Court Judge David Finger, Justice C. Shannon Bacon, Justice Julie J. Vargas, and Justice Briana H. Zamora.



Cynthia Pacheco was honored with the Arthur W. Pepin Outstanding Judicial Service Award for her commitment to improving the state court system. Pacheco is the Director of Court Operations for the Administrative Office of the Courts. From l-r: Chief Justice David K. Thomson, Senior Justice Michael E. Vigil, Cynthia Pacheco, Estevan Pacheco, Justice C. Shannon Bacon, Justice Julie J. Vargas, and Justice Briana H. Zamora.



Current and former judges from the Twelfth Judicial District gathered for the investiture of District Judge Lori Gibson Willard (holding the gavel). Pictured from left: Alamogordo Municipal Judge David Overstreet, District Judge John Sugg, former Magistrate Judge Michael Suggs, District Judge Stephen Ochoa, Magistrate Judge Mickie Vega, Chief Judge Daniel Bryant, retired District Judges Frank Wilson and Karen Parsons, Judge Willard, District Judge Angie Schneider, former Magistrate Judge Irene Mirabal-Counts, and retired District Judges James Waylon Counts and Robert M. Doughty.



First Judicial District Judge Anastasia R. Martin is sworn in by Chief Judge Bryan Biedscheid.



Eleventh Judicial District Judge Brenna Clani-Washinawatok being robed by Judge Curtis Gurley in April, 2025.



Newly sworn Court of Appeals Judge Kristopher Houghton (left) and his wife are congratulated by Judge J. Miles Hanisee.



Doña Ana County Magistrate Judges Jannette Mondragón (left photo) and Rosenda Chavez-Lara (at right with hand raised) taking the oath of office.



Grant County Magistrate Judge D. Matt Runnels was sworn in by Sixth Judicial District Judge James Foy in January, 2025.



Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court Judge Andrea I. Gunderson takes the oath of office from Chief Judge Joshua J. Sánchez as her parents look on.



Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court Judge Ramon J. Maestas takes the oath of office from retired Court of Appeals Judge Joseph Alarid. Supreme Court Justice C. Shannon Bacon and Second Judicial District Judge David A. Murphy also took part in the ceremony.



Chief Justice David K. Thomson delivered the State of Judiciary address to a joint session of the Legislature on Jan. 23, 2025.



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