



Administrative Office of the Courts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 28, 2026

New Mexico Supreme Court exceeds performance measures for handling cases

SANTA FE – The state Supreme Court exceeded key performance targets for handling cases in the most recent fiscal year.

The Court cleared more cases than were incoming in the 2026 fiscal year, achieving a disposition rate of 103 percent and surpassing the target of a 100 percent rate.

“By exceeding yearly performance measures, the Court demonstrated it efficiently resolved cases and responsively served the people of New Mexico,” said Chief Justice Julie J. Vargas.

Courts across the country use their disposition or clearance rate as a tool to measure how well they manage their caseloads. A disposition rate of 100 percent indicates a court has kept pace with its incoming cases — those that were newly filed, reopened or reactivated. A rate below 100 percent results in a growing backlog of cases awaiting disposition.

The Supreme Court had 544 outgoing cases – those that were closed or inactivated – and 527 incoming cases in FY26, which ran from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026. Cases can range from requests for review of lower court decisions – a matter that is discretionary for the Supreme Court – to appeals of Public Regulation Commission decisions and first-degree murder cases, which state law requires the Court to decide.

The New Mexico Accountability in Government Act requires the Judiciary and state governmental agencies to establish yearly targets to measure their performance. The performance measures are reported to the legislative and executive branches of government for budgeting and program evaluation.

Other Supreme Court performance measures for FY26:

- In 100 percent of criminal case discretionary appeals, the Court reviewed and decided in 180 days or less whether to hear the legal matter. The time period begins with the filing of a petition asking the justices to review a lower court’s decision. The Court had 199 discretionary criminal case appeals in FY26.
- 97 percent of all resolved cases had a disposition within 672 days. That timeframe reflects the deadlines and requirements in rules for the procedural steps that occur to

resolve appeals, such as the time provided for the parties to prepare and submit legal briefs. The count starts when cases are filed with the Court. The FY26 performance target was for a disposition by the Court within 672 days for at least 75 percent of the total cases it resolved during the fiscal year.

###



Chief Justice Julie J. Vargas
(Photo courtesy of NM Supreme Court)