

**Resolution Supporting the New Mexico Counties
2026 Legislative Priorities**

WHEREAS, in August 2025, the New Mexico Counties Board of Directors approved four legislative priorities for consideration by the New Mexico Legislature at its 2026 session; *and*

WHEREAS, NMC has requested that the Board of County Commissioners in each of the state's 33 counties discuss and approve support for NMC's legislative priorities as an important step in assuring maximum understanding of NMC's legislative priorities at the county level; *and*

WHEREAS, county support enables NMC to demonstrate strong local and statewide support to the state legislature for the following issues:

1. HB 2 Appropriations

Detention Reimbursement Fund

Fully fund County Detention Facility Reimbursement Act Fund to reimburse counties for the actual cost of housing state inmates.

- According to the New Mexico Sentencing Commission, the five-year average cost to house New Mexico Corrections Department inmates is \$9.3 million.
- Current fund at \$5 million

Courthouse Funding

Authorize continued funding to AOC for construction and renovation of state district courthouses.

- Counties maintain that courthouses are a state responsibility and that the rising costs of construction, security, and IT necessitate a shared revenue stream.

Detention Recruitment and Retention

Authorize continued funding for the newly formed Corrections Workforce Capacity Building Fund administered by DFA.

- Adequate detention staff are essential to a safe, well-operated detention facility, which is directly correlated to community safety.

Firefighter/EMS Recruitment Fund

Authorize continued funding for the Fire & EMS Recruitment Fund administered by DFA for fire departments to staff, recruit, and retain career and volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel.

- Call volume has increased by as much as 50%.
- Response systems are overburdened.
- Average age of New Mexican volunteer is 65.

700 MHz Radios

Authorize continued funding for the monthly operational costs of 700 MHz radios to build out state interconnectivity infrastructure.

RISE Funding

Secure HSD funding for county participation in the RISE (Reach, Intervene, Support, and Engage) Program to provide behavioral health, medically assisted treatment (MAT), housing, vocational, and other services to people in detention.

2. IPRA Improvements

Amend the Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA) to exempt from disclosing specific information and prohibit certain requests used to compromise and obstruct critical local government services.


3. Timeline for Veteran Property Tax Exemptions

Require all veterans to file for a property tax exemptions within the existing property tax annual schedule to ensure equitable treatment for all taxpayers and allow counties to accurately budget for the fiscal year. Veterans would have 30-days after the notice of value to file an exemption or request an extension for up to 180 days to resolve any delays in certification.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the [County Name] Board of County Commissioners does hereby support NMC's legislative priorities as set forth above and urges that legislation incorporating these priorities be enacted by the state legislature during its 2025 session.

ADOPTED this 16th of December, 2025.

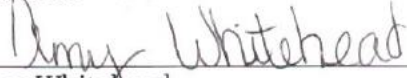
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF [COUNTY], NEW MEXICO


James Paxon, District [1] For / Against


Hank Hopkins, District [3] For / Against


Sandy R Jones, District [2] For / Against

ATTEST:


Amy Whitehead
County Clerk



Memorandum

Date: September 19, 2025
To: NMC Board of Directors, Commissioners, and County Managers
From: Joy Esparsen, NMC Executive Director
Re: Protocol for Board of County Commission NMC 2026 Legislative Priority Endorsement

The New Mexico Counties (NMC) Board of Directors approved four legislative priorities for consideration by the New Mexico Legislature during the 2026 session.

- 1) HB2 Appropriations
 - Detention Reimbursement Fund
 - Courthouse Funding
 - Detention Recruitment and Retention
 - Firefighter/EMS Recruitment Fund
 - 700 MHz Radios
 - RISE Funding
- 2) IPRA Improvements
- 3) Timeline for Veteran Property Tax Exemptions

In preparation for the 2026 session and to promote communication among NMC and the 33 counties, we request that board members present the 2026 NMC legislative priorities to their Board of County Commission (BCC) for support. Please send a signed copy of your BCC support for the priorities to Hannah Kase Woods (hwoods@nmcountries.org) by December 31, 2025.

Included:

- 2026 NMC Legislative Priorities Handout
- 2026 NMC Priorities Support Resolution Template

Sincerely,

Joy Esparsen
Executive Director

444 Galisteo Street
Santa Fe, NM 87501

877-983-2101
505-983-2101
Fax: 505-983-4396

NMCOUNTIES.ORG



New Mexico Counties 2026 Legislative Priorities

HB2 Appropriations

Detention Reimbursement Fund

Fully fund the County Detention Facility Reimbursement Act Fund to reimburse counties for the actual cost of housing state inmates. The statutory obligation, according to the New Mexico Sentencing Commission is \$9.38 million, but only \$4.7 million was appropriated in 2025.

Courthouse Funding

Authorize continued funding to the Administrative Office of the Courts for the construction and renovation of state district courthouses. Counties maintain that these courthouses are a state responsibility and that the rising costs of construction, security, and IT necessitate a shared revenue stream.

700 MHz Radios

Authorize continued funding for the monthly operational costs of 700 MHz radios to build out state interconnectivity infrastructure.

Detention Recruitment & Retention

Authorize continued funding for the Corrections Workforce Capacity Building Fund administered by DFA. Adequate detention staff are essential to a safe, well-operated facility, which is directly correlated to community safety.

Firefighter/EMS Recruitment Fund

Authorize continued funding for the Fire & EMS Recruitment Fund administered by DFA for fire departments to staff firefighters and EMS personnel. Call volumes have increased by 50% and response systems remain significantly over-burdened.

RISE Funding

Secure HSD funding for county participation in the RISE (Reach, Intervene, Support, and Engage) Program to provide behavioral health, medically assisted treatment (MAT), housing, vocational, and other services to people in detention.

IPRA Improvements

Amend the Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA) to exempt from disclosing specific information and prohibit certain requests used to compromise and obstruct critical local government services.

Property Tax Exemptions Deadline for Veterans

Require all veterans to file for a property tax exemptions within the existing property tax annual schedule to ensure equitable treatment for all taxpayers and allow counties to accurately budget for the fiscal year. Veterans would have 30-days after the notice of value to file an exemption or request an extension for up to 180 days to resolve any delays in certification.

Joy Esparsen

Executive Director
(505) 660-9629
jesparsen@nmcounties.org

Katherine Carroll

Government Relations
(505) 350-9357
kcrociata@outlook.com

Grace Philips

Risk Management Director
(505) 690-6319
gphilips@nmcounties.org

Hannah Kase Woods

Government Relations Specialist
(505) 820-8102
hwoods@nmcounties.org

Mark Allen

General Counsel
(505) 313-0103
mallen@nmcounties.org