

## **RISK MANAGEMENT AND CLAIMS SERVICES**

The New Mexico County Insurance Authority's (NMCIA) risk management staff and multi-line claims examiners are very experienced and, most importantly, work exclusively on county risk and claims matters. Thus, staff is extremely knowledgeable on how counties operate and the laws that apply to county government, especially in reference to the Tort Claims Act and federal civil rights laws. In addition, outside defense counsel are also very experienced and have a high degree of expertise working on all types of cases, ranging from employment and civil rights matters to automobile accidents. It should be noted that it is the Insurance Authority's policy to have an outside claims audit performed every two years so that claims handling can be objectively evaluated.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT STAFF**

**Steven Kopelman, Risk Management Director**, has been a practicing attorney for 25 years, and oversees and manages the three self-insurance pools. Mr. Kopelman has done insurance defense litigation in private practice and has also worked in the public sector for over 15 years. He was the Santa Fe County Attorney for approximately six years, and has been the Risk Manager for the NMCIA for approximately six years.

**Becky Tafoya, Assistant Risk Management Director**, has 15 years experience in the insurance industry as a claims examiner, agent and in management. Becky assist's the Risk Manager in all areas of risk management and staff supervision. She develops and prepares loss run reports for member Counties. She collects, processes, analyzes and disseminates underwriting and loss data, including developing and analysis of loss trends. Becky has a B.S. degree in Business Administration and currently pursuing her Associates in Risk Management in Public Entities certification (ARM-P).

**Susan Mayes, Administrative Assistant**, has over 26 years of business-related management experience. Susan is the liaison for county pool members, the NMCIA Pool Board of Directors, the multi-line claims staff, the insurance broker, and other pool vendors and consultants. She is responsible for collecting and updating county data and information, and for all pool board meetings. She has a B.S. degree, has been with NMCIA for two years, and has been very actively involved in ongoing insurance education and training.

### **MULTI-LINE DEPARTMENT STAFF**

The NMCIA Multi-Line Department staff consists of six qualified and experienced claims examiners and two support staff. The claims examiners have a combined experience of 60 years in claims handling in addition to diverse experience in the areas of

public government, paralegal and business administration. The staff has received training in the areas of general liability, civil rights, law enforcement and employment issues.

The Multi-Line Department staff includes the following individuals:

**Robin Martinez, Multi-Line Claims Manager**, has been a claims examiner with NMCIA for seven years and has been the Claims Manager for three years. Ms. Martinez handles high exposure claims involving strip searches and failure to protect within detention centers, law enforcement excessive force claims, sexual misconduct and sexual harassment. Ms. Martinez has an Associate of Arts Degree in Business Administration and has 20 years experience as a paralegal having worked for litigation attorneys specializing in the defense of litigation regarding insurance, civil rights employment, negligence and public entity defense. This experience includes having worked for two attorney lobbyists providing lobbying services before the New Mexico Legislature on behalf of clients in the insurance, liquor and oil and gas industries. Ms. Martinez provided paralegal services for the various attorneys in private practice, general counsel for state agency, as well as for two Senators within the New Mexico State Legislature. Ms. Martinez has participated in numerous training in the areas of law enforcement, civil rights and employment issues.

**Diane Blackburn, Senior Claims Examiner**, has been a claims examiner with NMCIA for three years. Ms. Blackburn handles claims involving law enforcement excessive force, civil rights employment, as well as general liability. Ms. Blackburn has over 30 years experience as a claims adjuster, having worked for companies including Allstate Insurance and Aetna Casualty in California and Washington, D.C. Her experience includes having worked for the New Mexico State Department of Insurance and the New Mexico Risk Management Division. She has broad experience in personal and commercial lines of insurance, as well as public entity. Ms. Blackburn has taken numerous courses relating to personal and commercial lines of insurance, as well as civil rights and employment matters.

**Jennifer Ortiz, Claims Examiner**, has been a claims examiner with NMCIA for eight years. Ms. Ortiz handles first and third party auto, property, general liability, and law enforcement claims. Ms. Ortiz has experience as a claims specialist, having worked for a physician and other medical providers. She received a certificate for completing the training course at Vale National for Liability Loss Adjuster and has taken courses relating to civil liabilities.

**Kerry Kent, Claims Examiner**, has been a claims examiner with NMCIA for two years. She handles first and third party auto, property, general liability and law enforcement claims. Ms. Kent has 13 years experience as an adjuster, having worked for companies including Kemper Insurance, Hartford Insurance, as well as Colorado Intergovernmental Risk Sharing Agency. Her most recent experience has been working as an independent field claims adjuster for Carl Warren & Company, whose clients include private organizations such as Raley's Supermarkets and Bank of America, as well public entities, including the New Mexico Public School Insurance Authority. Ms. Kent obtained a Bachelor Degree in Liberal Arts from Arizona State University. Ms. Kent is a licensed adjuster with the State of New Mexico.

**Randy Chaves, Claims Examiner**, recently joined NMCIA in May of 2009. Mr. Chavez retired as the jail administrator for Los Alamos County and provides NMCIA with is extensive experience in jail and employment issues. Mr. Chaves served several tiers as NMAC's Detention Administrator's Affiliate Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary Treasurer. He is a New Mexico Highlands graduate with a BA in Geology and Minor in Environmental Science.

**Darlene Salazar, Claims Examiner**, has been with NMCIA for four years, providing assistance to the other claims examiners with the daily maintenance of claims, including opening and closing claims, paying insured, claimants and vendors, pursuing deductibles from insured, handling 1<sup>st</sup> party property claims, and other technical and clerical duties. Ms. Salazar has an Associate of Arts Degree in Early Childhood Development.

**Jeremy Munoz, Claims Clerk**, has been with NMCIA for two years. He provides assistance to the claims examiners in opening and closing claims and other clerical duties. Mr. Munoz has experience having worked for New Mexico State Government.