

New Mexico Counties 2023 Legislative Priorities

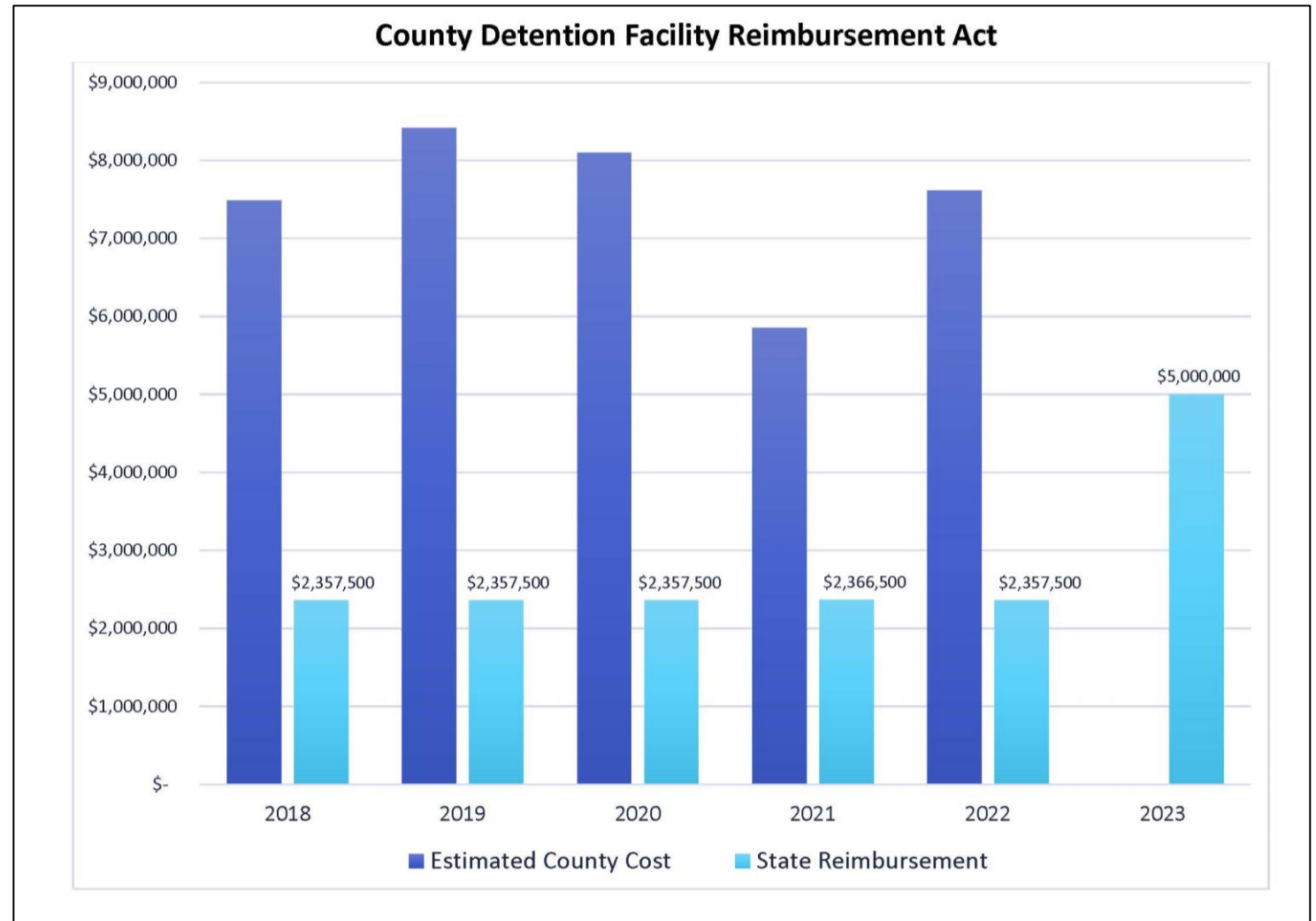


**NEW MEXICO
COUNTIES**
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Detention Reimbursement Fund

Increase the County Detention Facilities Reimbursement Act Fund to reimburse counties for the cost of housing New Mexico Corrections Department (NMCD) inmates.

- In 2022, the New Mexico Legislature restored the fund to the original 2007 funding amount of \$5 million.
- According to the New Mexico Sentencing Commission, the five-year average cost to house NMCD inmates is \$7.5 million.



Prisoner Transport & Extradition

Create a line item in the New Mexico Department of Finance & Administration budget with \$750,000 to reimburse counties that provide transportation for state prisoners.

- Statute 4-44-18C NMSA requires the state to make such payment.
- Counties should not be responsible to pay for state prisoner extradition.
- Has never been funded even though it is authorized.



Emergency Medical Services

Create a line item in the Department of Health Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Bureau budget with \$10 million to assist local government EMS services.

- Rural communities are challenged by inadequate health care facilities, limited access to preventive and primary care services, and greater distances to regionalized specialty care services.
- EMS is often called upon for long distance transports and to fill a gap for services that exist, particularly in rural and frontier areas of New Mexico.
- EMS has been significantly underfunded for years.
- Current state appropriations, taxes collected through local GRT increments, and other sources of revenue do not provide sufficient support to local governments to meet community needs.



Public Safety Package

Recruitment and Retention

Local governments struggle to fill critical public safety staffing positions. Carving out a narrow solution for the detention staffing crisis is critical. Allowing able and willing retirees to return to work in security staff positions would create a pool of desperately needed qualified applicants to fill essential positions and improve safety and working conditions for detention staff.

Sufficient numbers of detention staff are essential to a safe and well-operated detention facility which is directly correlated to community safety. A public safety recruitment and retention fund, like the recently established law enforcement fund, would provide local governments with much needed resources to provide detention services to their communities.

More than half of New Mexico detention facilities have a staff vacancy rate of more than 20%

6 have vacancy rates of over 33.5%

3 have vacancy rates of over 42%

2 have vacancy rates of over 50%

1 had a 65% vacancy rate on 10-17-2022

Public Safety Package

New Mexico is facing a staffing crisis in fire and EMS, especially in rural communities.

NMC encourages the legislature to create a Fire & EMS Fund of \$50 million to support the recruitment and retention of volunteer and paid staff.

County Fire Districts	
Career Departments	Volunteer Departments
25	242

- Many New Mexico fire departments are volunteer or combination departments.
- Rural communities rely heavily on volunteer members.
- The number of volunteers has greatly declined due to certification requirements, pandemic risks, etc.
- The New Mexico Fire Protection Fund (59A-53-8) specifically excludes EMS salaries.
- Call volume and large events continue to rise in New Mexico.

Courthouse Funding

Create a fund for construction and renovation of state district courthouses. While statute holds counties responsible for maintaining 'adequate quarters', smaller counties with less of a tax base do not have the bonding capacity to obtain adequate construction dollars.

Courts are a state system and assistance is needed to construct state district courthouses that meet the demand of modern technology, security, and energy demands.

Access to safe, efficient, and accessible court facilities should be equal statewide.



Election Related Records & Data

Over the past couple of years, County Clerk's offices have been inundated with an overwhelming number of Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA) requests prior to and immediately following an election.

Clerks should be able to prioritize their elections and the monumental task at hand rather than staff being overly burdened with responding to IPRA requests.

NMC seeks legislation to clearly define how IPRA relates to election records/data and to provide clarity on what constitutes a public record while protecting the sanctity of a confidential vote.



Thank You

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