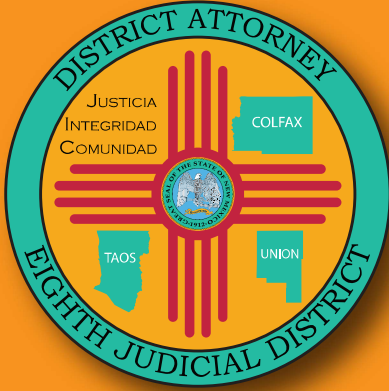


8TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

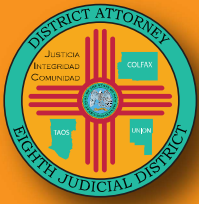
Marcus J. Montoya

Taos, Union, & Colfax Counties



LEGISLATIVE FINANCE COMMITTEE
Wednesday, November 19, 2025

8th Judicial District Attorney Budget Request
105 Albright St., Suite L
Taos, NM 87571
www.8thda.com



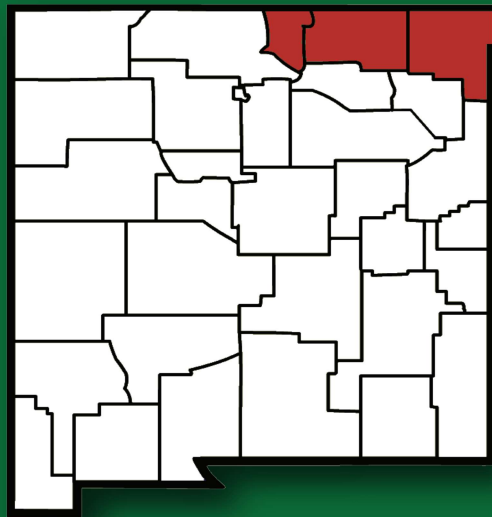
MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Mission: Pursuing public safety by promoting justice through fair and impartial prosecution of criminal cases and miscellaneous civil matters

Vision: Contributing to communal health, promoting public safety, balancing the sometimes competing interests of defendant's rights with victim's rights, while striving to provide accountability to the community.

Values: Hard work, transparency, accountability, humility, and prudence in our approach to serving the citizens of New Mexico.

The 8th Judicial District Attorney's Office delivers a comprehensive range of services: case investigation, victim assistance, trial preparation, administrative support, law enforcement coordination, technical assistance, and community outreach.



Primary beneficiaries include residents of Taos, Union, and Colfax counties. The 8th Judicial District Attorney's Office also collaborates with other judicial district attorney offices. Current service levels include thorough case screening, investigative support, and active partnerships with community organizations and agencies.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS & OUTCOMES

Our office remains committed to prosecuting violent felonies, DWIs, and domestic violence cases. We have successfully tried several high-profile cases involving gun violence and continue to allocate resources toward juvenile crime prevention through early intervention.

We continue to work closely with the Taos County Juvenile Justice Board, adult drug courts, the LEAD program, Family Violence Court, and juvenile probation services. Several program graduates are now making positive contributions to their communities.

NOTABLE CASES

- State v. Martin Palomino** – First-Degree Murder-DETAINED -Trial scheduled for 2026
 - State v. Sijifredo Palomino** – First-Degree Murder – DETAINED-Trial scheduled for 2026
 - State v. Jonah Ward** – First-Degree Murder – DETAINED -Trial scheduled for 2026
 - State v. David Degroat** – First-Degree Murder – DETAINED -Trial scheduled for 2026
 - State v. Rainer Joiner** – First-Degree Murder – DETAINED -Trial scheduled for 2026
- Five Juveniles Detained After July 3 Residential Shooting in Taos

LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING

Our office provides high-quality training to law enforcement agencies across the district, including legislative updates, best practices in investigation, effective courtroom testimony, and criminal report writing. These training courses meet Continuing Legal Education (CLE) requirements.

We also offer opportunities for local officers to attend the Albuquerque Police Department Detective Academy—a three-week intensive course covering mock crime scene investigations, victim and suspect interviews, and courtroom presentation skills.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

We have actively engaged in public education and safety initiatives, including National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, DWI Awareness Day, Taos Town Hall on Immigration, Public Safety Town Hall in Raton, and Career Day at Raton High School.

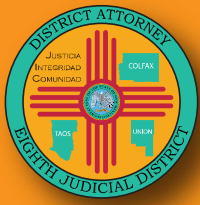
JUNIOR DISTRICT ATTORNEY PROGRAM



Students from Taos High School in grades 9 through 11 participate annually in the Junior District Attorney Program. Now in its third cohort, the program fosters career aspirations and builds confidence among youth.

Participants gain firsthand experience with the criminal justice system and interact with attorneys, law enforcement officers, judges, and other professionals - building relationships that support future career development.





CHALLENGES

CURRENT FLEET STATUS

The 8th Judicial District Attorney's Office currently maintains a fleet of ten vehicles used primarily by support staff, investigators, and prosecutors to fulfill essential duties such as attending court proceedings, serving subpoenas, and participating in critical meetings throughout the district.

Our jurisdiction spans the rural counties of Colfax, Taos, and Union—covering approximately 9,803 square miles and serving a population of roughly 51,000 residents. The courthouses in Raton, Clayton, and Taos require frequent travel by staff, with round trips ranging from 140 miles (Taos to Raton) to 266 miles (Taos to Clayton). These routes traverse mountainous terrain and are subject to hazardous weather conditions during the winter and spring months.

Currently, two vehicles in our fleet have exceeded 100,000 miles. Notably, a 2005 Toyota Matrix—assigned to a senior trial attorney covering Raton and Clayton—has logged 142,282 miles. According to Kelley Blue Book, the average lifespan for this model is approximately 147,428 miles, indicating imminent need for replacement.

PUBLIC SAFETY & ATTORNEY WORK LOAD

The 8th Judicial District faces a surge in drug-related and violent crimes, especially in Taos County, straining prosecutors, investigators, and staff.

Overdose deaths have risen 340% since 2024, and ER visits are up 240%, driven largely by fentanyl in street drugs. Most victims are under 44, fueling property crime, juvenile offenses, and violence.

Current caseload includes:

63 juvenile cases, including a recent shooting involving six minors. 12 active murder cases, with two more expected soon.

Prosecutors have filed multiple pretrial detention motions, and trials are scheduled throughout the next year. The complexity and volume of these cases demand additional legal resources to ensure justice and protect public safety.



2027 BUDGET REQUEST

Total Amount Requested: \$6,164,600

The Eighth Judicial District Attorney's Fiscal Year 2027 budget submission reflects **a base increase of 4.4 percent**, attributable primarily to an expansion request for a Senior Trial Attorney position and an additional \$75,000 to support fleet maintenance and vehicle replacement.

In addition to the district's base request, we are submitting **a unified 20-percent attorney salary increase proposal** being advanced collectively by all fourteen judicial district attorney offices. This statewide initiative is intended to sustain competitive compensation levels, mitigate attorney turnover, and enhance our ability to recruit and retain experienced legal professionals in an increasingly demanding environment.

Without these investments, our ability to prosecute violent crime, manage complex and high-risk cases, and protect the community will be significantly impaired. This request is not discretionary; it is necessary to uphold justice and maintain public safety.

FY	200 CATEGORY	300 CATEGORY	400 CATEGORY
FY 2025	4,127,400	228,100	354,300
FY 2026	4,498,700	148,100	308,500
FY 2027	5,441,600	151,100	412,400

"Thank you for your commitment and investment to the Eighth Judicial District . Together we can make a positive impact on the citizens of the district and state."

-DA Marcus Montoya

Paula Sisneros, Chief Financial Officer email: psisneros@da.state.nm.us

Victoria Bransford, District Office Manager email: vbransford@da.state.nm.us