Best Practices in Criminal Justice

Technology's Role in Public Safety

July 23, 2025

Overview

- Technology's role in criminal justice
- New Mexico's current efforts
- Performance outcomes and challenges
- Innovations from other states
- Recommendations for New Mexico

Technology's Role in Criminal Justice

- **Crime Prevention**
  - Predictive analytics, real-time data

- **Efficient Policing**
  - Intelligence-led strategies, officer safety

- **Transparency and Accountability**
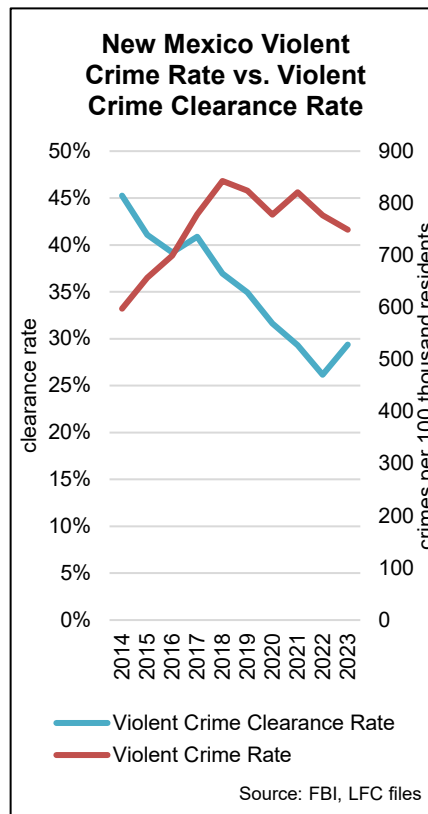 - Body-worn cameras, data-driven training, digital records management

Public Safety Investments

- **Increased Law Enforcement Capacity**
  - Certified officer headcount in NM increased 27 percent (from 4,024 in 2020 to 5,111 in 2024)

- **Real-Time Crime Centers**:
  - Albuquerque and Las Cruces are using analytics software for rapid crime response

- **Enhanced Accountability**
  - Updated officer training and certification standards
  - Technology-based systems

Crime Trends and Public Safety Outcomes
(2020-2024)

- **Violent Crime Rates**
  - Slight downward trend, though it remains higher than the national average.
- **Property Crime Rates**
  - Consistent reduction in burglary and auto theft
- **NM crime rates are decreasing faster than national trends**
  - APD cites decreases in rates of homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault are steeper than national rate decreases for the same crimes.

New Mexico Violent Crime Rate vs. Violent Crime Clearance Rate

Source: FBI, LFC files

Violent Crime Clearance Rate
Violent Crime Rate

Crime Trends

APD recently reported a year-over-year decrease in quarterly violent crime and property crime. Outpacing similar decreases in national crime rates.

% Change from 2024 Q1

Aggravated Assault:	-18%
Shooting with Injuries:	-50%
Homicides:	-48%
Robbery:	-31%
Rape:	-19%
Burglary/B&E:	-24%
Destruction/Vandalism:	-28%
Larceny/Theft:	-21%
Motor Vehicle Theft:	-47%

The number of felony arrests is also up 12 percent from the first quarter of FY24

Performance Outcomes and Implementation Challenges

- **Positive Trends:**
  - Juvenile Justice improvements: Sustained reduction in youth incarceration (257 youth in 2012 to 86 youth in 2024).
  - Improved crime response via real-time crime analytics.

- **Challenges:**
  - High vacancy rates limit full implementation at law enforcement, community support agencies, and oversight boards.
  - Underuse of technological resources in courts and correctional settings.
  - Perceptions remain of upward trends in juvenile crime. LFC has a forthcoming report on juvenile justice.

Effective Policing and Community Trust

- **Strengthened Officer Standards:**
  - Rigorous training in the use of force, accountability via digital records.
  - Decertification mechanisms improved for non-compliant officers.
- **Community Engagement:**
  - Transparent communication using body-camera footage and public data platforms.

Innovations from Other States

- **Predictive Policing**
  - California and Illinois are using sophisticated software for crime forecasting.

- **Regional Data Integration Centers**
  - Texas and Arizona are connecting agencies to enhance response.

- **Cybersecurity & Digital Forensics**
  - Virginia and New York are building advanced capacities to counter cyber threats.

Progress in New Mexico

- **Crime Reduction Grants**
  - Sentencing Commission awarding grants to multiple judicial districts, district attorneys, courts, and criminal justice coordinating committees. It could be more effective if the agency stopped funding recurring positions with non-recurring money.

- **Intelligence-Led Policing**
  - Implement a new system to incorporate data analytics functions to generate valuable intelligence to deliver proactive information to law enforcement. Phase two is expected to be completed by June 2027, with a revised total cost estimate of $16.1 million.

- **Crime Strategies Unit** (2nd Judicial District)
  - Works to strengthen cases for prosecution, conduct fugitive apprehensions, and facilitates an intelligence-driven strategy of crime reduction using cutting-edge data technology.

Recommendations for New Mexico

- **Expand Regional Crime Centers**
  - Invest in data gathering capabilities for both rural and urban law enforcement agencies to broaden statewide intelligence sharing

- **Enhance Inter-agency Data Sharing**
  - Implement statewide interoperability standards and integrated technology platforms.

- **Digital Forensics and Cybersecurity Investments**
  - Increase funding for cybercrime investigation and prevention.

- **Ongoing Training and Accountability**
  - Leverage advanced virtual training, transparency, and public reporting tools.

Conclusions and Next Steps

- Technology will be central to addressing criminal justice challenges.

- New Mexico has made significant investments, showing measurable outcomes, but must address persistent implementation gaps.

- Adopting recognized best practices could further enhance public safety.

- Legislative action may be needed to support these initiatives.