

LFC Requester:	
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AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS - 2026 REGULAR SESSION

WITHIN 24 HOURS OF BILL POSTING, UPLOAD ANALYSIS TO
AgencyAnalysis.nmlegis.gov and email to billanalysis@dfa.nm.gov
(Analysis must be uploaded as a PDF)

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}

Date Prepared: 1/31/2026 *Check all that apply:*
Bill Number: H 255 Original Correction
 Amendment Substitute

Sponsor:	Rep. Charlotte Little	Agency Name and Code	DFA-341
	Rep. Meredith A. Dixon		
Short Title:	Rep. Sarah Silva	Number:	
	Rep. Cathrynn N. Brown		
	PUBLIC SAFETY WORKFORCE	Person Writing	<u>George Hypolite</u>
	BUILDING PROGRAM	Phone:	<u>(505) 490-2840</u>
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SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27		
	\$50	Nonrecurring	GF

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27	FY28		

(Parenthesis () indicate revenue decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total						

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:
 Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis:

House Bill 255 (HB 255) aims to improve public safety in New Mexico by streamlining funding and initiatives for workforce shortages, collaboration, and capacity. It establishes the Public Safety Workforce Building Program and Capacity Building Fund, providing stable, adaptable funding to meet current and future needs.

- Creation of the Public Safety Workforce Building Program:
 - HB 255 creates the Public Safety Workforce Building Program, which provides grant funding for initiatives that increase the workforce capacity of public safety professionals, including law enforcement, firefighting, detention or corrections personnel, and licensed attorneys in district attorney or public defender offices.
 - Grant Program Details:
 - Application Process: Applicants must submit a detailed proposal that includes initiative descriptions, objectives, expected costs, and completion timelines. Applications will undergo a competitive review, and funding amounts may be adjusted based on reasonable costs.
 - Grant Award Criteria: Considerations include public-safety professional vacancy rates, local cost of living, market compensation, and crime rates. Priority is given to initiatives that recruit experienced professionals not currently employed by the state, support jurisdictional collaborations, and increase investigative, response, or case management capacity.
 - Grant Allocation: Funds are distributed equitably based on county population:
 - 25% for counties with populations of at least 500,000.
 - 35% for counties with populations between 100,000 and 500,000.
 - Remaining funds for counties with populations under 100,000.
 - Permitted Uses of Grant Money:
 - Recruitment and retention differential disbursements (e.g., relocation expenses).
 - Professional development initiatives for recruitment, training, or retention.
 - Recruitment campaigns targeting in-state or out-of-state professionals.
 - Equipment purchases or upgrades tied to professional development.

- Prohibited Uses of Grant Money:
 - Recurring initiatives without a plan for replacing nonrecurring funds.
 - Creation of new public safety positions or funding base salaries for existing positions.
 - Reporting Requirements:
 - Grantees must submit expenditure reports every 90 days until funds are expended or the initiative is completed.
 - Unused funds must revert to the fund within 30 days of initiative completion.
- Establishment of the Public Safety Workforce Capacity Building Fund:
 - HB 255 establishes a nonreverting fund in the state treasury to support the program's objectives and to be administered by the Department of Finance and Administration.
 - Fund sources include distributions, appropriations, gifts, grants, donations, and investment income.
 - The Department of Finance and Administration is allocated 3% of the annual fund balance to cover administrative costs.
- Transfer of Existing Funds:
 - The balances from the Law Enforcement Workforce Capacity Building Fund, Public Attorney Workforce Capacity Building Fund, and Detention and Corrections Workforce Capacity Building Fund will be consolidated into the new fund on July 1, 2026.
 - Additional appropriations from prior laws (2022, 2023, and 2024) addressing public safety workforce capacity issues will also be transferred to the new fund.
- Annual Reporting and Rulemaking:
 - Annual Report: By November 1 each fiscal year, DFA must report to the Legislative Finance Committee on grant applicants, awarded grants, initiative descriptions, evaluations, and workload study results.
 - Rulemaking: HB 255 requires DFA to establish rules for application submission, evaluation, and prioritization of areas with the greatest need.
- Repeal of Previous Legislation:
 - Sections 9-6-17 through 9-6-19 NMSA 1978 (Laws 2023, Chapter 188, Sections 1-3) are repealed.

- Effective Date:
 - The act will take effect on July 1, 2026.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

DFA anticipates that HB255 will have positive fiscal impacts for both the state and public safety entities statewide and does not require a new appropriation.

- Creation of the Public Safety Workforce Capacity Building Fund: HB 255 creates the Public Safety Workforce Capacity Building Fund as a non-reverting fund within the state treasury, consisting of distributions, appropriations, gifts, grants, donations, and investment income.
 - HB 255 consolidates existing balances of funding from other disjointed public safety workforce capacity programs (i.e., the Law Enforcement Workforce Capacity Building Fund, Public Attorney Workforce Capacity Building Fund, and Detention and Corrections Workforce Capacity Building Fund) and from other special appropriations from previous sessions to seed the fund.
 - As a result, the creation of the fund is revenue-neutral and will not constrain any appropriations from the session. DFA projects initial transfers to the fund totaling roughly \$40 million to support public safety workforce capacity.
 - Additionally, consolidating multiple funds into one may streamline administrative processes and reduce redundant expenditures.
- Administrative Costs: DFA anticipates incurring rule-making, grant application processing and review, program administration, and reporting costs for the administration of the program and fund.
 - DFA anticipates an initial 300 work hours (300 hrs. x \$150 per work hr = \$45,000) for rulemaking and grant application development, plus 5,736 annual work hours for the above administrative tasks (totaling \$363,984 per year) [\$408,984 for the first year].
 - Administrative expenses for managing the fund are capped at 3% of the fund's annual balance, well within the anticipated costs outlined above. This ensures that most of the fund's resources go to grant disbursements rather than operational overhead.
- Potential Fiscal Benefits: By prioritizing recruitment, retention, and professional development, HB 255 will reduce vacancy rates and improve public safety outcomes, while providing dynamic, stable, and flexible funding to spur innovation in local and multijurisdictional public safety capacity-building programs. These efforts will lower costs associated with crime and emergency-response inefficiencies.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

N/A.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

HB 255 has several potential positive performance implications, particularly in strengthening public safety workforce capacity and addressing critical challenges in recruitment, retention, and collaboration. Below are the key areas where the bill could have a positive impact:

- **Enhanced Recruitment of Public Safety Professionals:**
 - HB 255 prioritizes initiatives to recruit experienced public safety professionals who are not currently employed by governmental entities within the state. This could help fill critical vacancies in law enforcement, firefighting, detention, corrections, and public attorney roles.
 - Grants can be used for recruitment differential disbursements, including relocation expenses, to attract qualified professionals from both in-state and out-of-state.
- **Improved Retention of Existing Workforce:**
 - HB 255 allows for retention differential disbursements to public safety professionals already employed, encouraging them to remain in their roles and reducing turnover.
 - Initiatives to train and develop existing personnel for new roles can improve job satisfaction and career growth opportunities, further enhancing retention.
- **Increased Collaboration Across Jurisdictions:**
 - HB 255 prioritizes initiatives that foster collaboration among overlapping jurisdictions. This will lead to more efficient use of resources, better communication, and improved coordination in addressing public safety challenges throughout New Mexico.
- **Strengthened Investigative and Response Capacity:**
 - HB 255 emphasizes initiatives that expand investigative, response, and case management capacity. This could lead to faster case resolution, improved public safety outcomes, and enhanced community trust in public safety agencies.
- **Equitable Resource Allocation:**
 - **County-Based Distribution:** HB 255 ensures equitable allocation of grant funds based on county population, with specific percentages designated for large,

medium, and small counties. This approach ensures that resources are distributed fairly and that the unique needs of different communities are addressed.

- **Accountability and Data-Driven Improvements:**
 - **Regular Reporting:** Grantees must report on initiative progress and expenditures every 90 days to ensure accountability and transparency in the use of funds.
 - **Annual Program Evaluation:** DFA will provide annual reports to the Legislative Finance Committee, including data on the effectiveness of initiatives and workload studies. This enables ongoing evaluation and adjustments to improve program performance.
- **Consolidation of Resources:**
 - By consolidating multiple workforce capacity-building funds into one, HB255 reduces administrative inefficiencies and ensures that resources are focused on a unified set of objectives.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

HB 255 outlines several administrative responsibilities for DFA, which will oversee the implementation and management of the Public Safety Workforce Building Program and the Public Safety Workforce Capacity Building Fund.

- **Program Administration:** DFA is responsible for creating and managing the Public Safety Workforce Building Program, including overseeing grant applications and awards, as well as monitoring initiatives.
 - **Grant Application Process:** DFA must design and provide application forms and establish procedures for submitting, reviewing, evaluating, and approving grant proposals. Applications must include detailed descriptions of the initiative, objectives, expected costs, and completion timelines.
 - **Competitive Review Process:** DFA must conduct a competitive review of grant applications using criteria such as vacancy rates, cost of living, crime rates, and initiative priorities (e.g., recruitment, jurisdictional collaboration, and investigative capacity).
 - **Grant Monitoring and Reporting:** DFA must ensure that grantees report on initiative progress and expenditures every 90 days until funds are expended or the initiative is completed. Unused funds must be returned to the fund within 30 days of the initiative's completion.
- **Annual Reporting:** By November 1 of each fiscal year, the DFA must submit a report to the Legislative Finance Committee.
 - This report must include:
 - Information about grant applicants, requested amounts, and initiative

- descriptions.
- Details of awarded grants, including grantee agencies and initiative evaluations.
- Data on the efficacy of initiatives and workload study results.
- Rulemaking: DFA must promulgate rules to administer the program, including:
 - Procedures for application submission, review, and approval.
 - Prioritization of areas with the greatest need.
 - Evaluation of applicants' ability to efficiently complete initiatives.
- Fund Management: DFA will manage the Public Safety Workforce Capacity Building Fund, ensuring proper disbursement of grant funds and adherence to the 3% cap on administrative costs.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

N/A.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

N/A.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

N/A.

ALTERNATIVES

N/A.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

If HB 255 is not enacted, several negative consequences could arise, particularly in the public safety workforce, including shortages, inefficiencies, and an inability to address critical challenges in recruitment, retention, and collaboration.

- Persistent Workforce Shortages
 - Vacancy Rates Remain High: Without targeted initiatives that span multiple fiscal years and are available when shortages arise, vacancy rates in law enforcement, firefighting, detention, corrections, and public attorney roles may remain unaddressed, leading to understaffed agencies and continued negative public safety outcomes.
 - Difficulty Attracting Talent: The lack of recruitment incentives, such as relocation allowances or differential pay, may make it harder to attract qualified professionals, especially in rural or underserved areas.

- Increased Turnover and Low Retention
 - Retention Challenges: Without retention differential payments or professional development opportunities, existing public safety professionals may leave their positions for better opportunities elsewhere, worsening workforce shortages.

- Limited Collaboration Across Jurisdictions
 - Missed Opportunities for Coordination: Without funding for initiatives that promote jurisdictional collaboration, overlapping agencies may struggle to coordinate effectively, leading to inefficiencies and duplication of effort.
 - Fragmented Responses: Public safety agencies may struggle to address complex issues, such as crime investigations or emergency responses, due to a lack of collaborative frameworks.

- Reduced Investigative and Response Capacity
 - Slower Case Resolution: Without funding to expand investigative, response, and case management capacity, public safety agencies may struggle to resolve cases efficiently, resulting in delays in justice and reduced public trust.
 - Inadequate Training: A lack of resources for professional development may prevent agencies from training personnel for new roles, limiting their ability to adapt to evolving public safety needs.

- Inequitable Resource Distribution
 - Disparities Among Counties: Without equitable allocation of funds based on county population, smaller or underserved counties may continue to face significant challenges in meeting public safety needs, thereby widening disparities across the state.
 - Fragmented Funding: Without consolidating existing workforce capacity-building funds into a single fund, administrative inefficiencies may persist, and resources may not be used effectively to address statewide priorities.
 - Missed Opportunities for Streamlining: The absence of a unified program may lead to overlapping initiatives and wasted resources.

- Economic and Social Consequences
 - Higher Costs: Without proactive measures to address workforce shortages, the state may face higher long-term costs due to increased overtime, recruitment challenges, and inefficiencies.
 - Negative Impact on Communities: Insufficient public safety resources can heighten residents' fear and insecurity, undermining community well-being and

economic development.

In summary, not implementing HB 255 may lead to unnecessary complications in getting funding to public safety departments to address shortages, which could lower public safety outcomes. These issues could weaken the state's capacity to safeguard its residents and erode trust in public safety institutions.

AMENDMENTS

N/A.