

LFC Requester:	Scott Sanchez
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AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS – 2026 SESSION

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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: 2/2/2026 *Check all that apply:*
Bill Number: HB255 Original Correction
 Amendment Substitute

Sponsor:	<u>Charlotte Little and Meredith A. Dixon and Sarah Silva and Cathrynn N. Brown</u>	Agency Name and Code	<u>790 – Department of Public Safety</u>
Short Title:	<u>PUBLIC SAFETYWORKFORCE</u>	Person Writing	<u>Jacob Garcia, Captain NMSP</u>
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SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27		
NFI	NFI	NFI	N/A

(Parenthesis () indicate expenditure decreases)

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27	FY28		
NFI	NFI	NFI	NFI	N/A

(Parentheses () indicate revenue decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total	NFI	NFI	NFI	NFI	NFI	N/A

(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

House Bill 255 (HB-255) establishes a Public Safety Workforce Building Program administered by the Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) to provide competitive grants to state and local governments for strengthening public safety workforce capacity. The program is designed to support targeted, data-driven investments guided by vacancy rates, cost-of-living and market compensation considerations, and local crime rates

The bill authorizes grant funding for recruitment and retention differential payments (including relocation assistance), professional development initiatives that recruit, train, and retain personnel, in-state and out-of-state recruitment campaigns, and certain equipment purchases when directly tied to workforce development and recruitment objectives.

HB-255 prioritizes initiatives that recruit experienced public safety professionals from outside New Mexico government, promote collaboration across overlapping jurisdictions, and expand investigative, response, and case-management capacity, including training personnel into new public safety roles.

The program includes fiscal accountability measures, including a general two-year expenditure period and reporting requirements, while allowing recurring initiatives when accompanied by a sustainability plan to transition to recurring funding sources.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

No fiscal implications to DPS.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The bill's emphasis on strategic, time-limited investments provides DPS with valuable flexibility to address immediate workforce needs while maintaining fiscal discipline. However, the restriction against funding permanent positions means DPS must pair grant-funded recruitment or retention incentives with reliable recurring appropriations to avoid staffing losses once grant periods end. As a result, the department may need to prioritize short-term capacity boosts—such as lateral recruitment, specialized training, or equipment tied to personnel efficiency—over broader structural workforce expansion. This approach places a premium on careful planning and coordination with DPS's base budget to ensure that temporary investments translate into lasting improvements in public safety operations.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

New Mexico faces persistent vacancy rates across law enforcement, corrections, firefighting, and investigative roles, which directly impacts response times, investigations, and officer safety. HB 255 creates a dedicated, statewide program to increase workforce capacity, rather than relying on piecemeal or agency-specific fixes.

DPS appreciates the bill's emphasis on recruiting experienced public safety professionals, including those coming from outside New Mexico. This helps agencies fill critical roles faster than relying solely on new recruits, reducing training delays and immediately strengthening investigative and response capacity.

HB 255 merges several existing workforce capacity funds into a single public safety workforce capacity building fund, simplifying administration and improving transparency. This reduces fragmentation and allows the state to take a more strategic, coordinated approach to workforce challenges across public safety disciplines

DPS supports HB-255 because it could strengthen operations by investing in workforce capacity, including

recruitment, retention, training, and professional development. By allowing incentives to attract experienced professionals, especially from outside New Mexico government, the bill may shorten hiring timelines and improve readiness in key areas like investigations, response, and case management. While limits on permanent staffing and base salaries may affect outcomes, the program's flexibility gives DPS options to design initiatives with lasting impact. Bringing workforce funding into a single program and using a fair, county-based approach may also encourage collaboration with partner agencies and help DPS plan more focused, competitive workforce initiatives aligned with the bill's priorities.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

HB-255 would arise primarily if DPS chooses to apply for and receives competitive grant awards. Participation would require application development, alignment with DFA rules, and post-award fiscal and program reporting.

Once awarded, DPS will implement standard grant management practices, including expenditure tracking, procurement compliance, and periodic reporting. These requirements are consistent with other state-administered grant programs and support transparency and legislative oversight.

The bill's structure encourages careful planning and coordination to ensure timely execution and alignment with sustainability expectations for initiatives with ongoing cost implications.

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

HB-255 repeals Sections 9-6-17 through 9-6-19 NMSA 1978, which established the law enforcement, public attorney, and detention and corrections workforce capacity building funds. Section 9-6-17 currently provides DPS with equal voting representation on the law enforcement capacity building fund committee that controls grant disbursements. HB-255 consolidates all three funds into a single non-reverting fund and replaces the committee governance model with sole DFA administrative authority, eliminating DPS's direct governance role in law enforcement workforce funding decisions.

Any references to the repealed sections in other statutes would need to be changed to reflect the new law in this bill.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

The bill uses "public safety professional" throughout Section 1 but does not define the term in the definition's subsection (Sub. K), which defines only "department," "eligible entity," and "fund." While Subsection A describes the covered professions (law enforcement, firefighting, detention or corrections, and licensed attorneys in DA or PD offices), the absence of a formal definition could create ambiguity regarding the eligibility of civilian support personnel, dispatchers, or forensic staff.

Additionally, the county-based allocation framework in Subsection E does not clearly address how a statewide agency such as DPS, whose primary jurisdiction is not within any single county, would be classified for funding purposes. Section 3(C) references "detentions and corrections" while the enacted statute name and Section 1(A) use "detention and corrections" (without the "s"), a minor drafting inconsistency.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

DPS is unsure how it could apply for the funding in this bill since Page 4, Section E, Sub-Sections 1, 2 and 3 breaks the money into pools based on county size. It is unclear how a statewide agency such as the New Mexico State Police could access this funding, since it operates in counties of all three sizes. Also, its operations are not usually confined to only one county. A possible solution would be to set aside a percentage for state agencies,

such as 10 percent of the fund

ALTERNATIVES

No alternative to DPS.

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

Status Quo will remain.

AMENDMENTS

HB-255 establishes a strong foundation for improving public safety workforce capacity. Targeted amendments could further strengthen the bill's effectiveness for DPS and other state agencies without altering its core intent.

Potential refinements include clarifying DPS's eligibility to submit statewide initiatives without fragmentation across county allocation caps. Once possible solution would be to set aside a certain percentage of funding for state level agencies.