



**Independent Salary Commission  
Clifford M. Rees, Chair**

December 1, 2025

Santa Fe County Board of County Commissioners  
c/o Gregory S. Shaffer, County Manager  
102 Grant Avenue  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
Via email

**Subject: December 2025 Report and Recommendations of the Santa Fe County  
Independent Salary Commission Per Santa Fe County Resolution No. 2025-054**

The Santa Fe County Independent Salary Commission (hereafter, “the ISC”) was created by the Santa Fe County Board of County Commissioners (hereafter, “the County Commissioners”) by Santa Fe County Resolution No. 2025-054 on May 13, 2025 (hereafter, “the Resolution”). It memorialized the responsibility of the County Commissioners to implement the provisions of Senate Joint Resolution 16 (2024 Regular NM Legislative Session), an amendment to Article X, Section 1 of the New Mexico Constitution passed by both Houses of the NM Legislature and approved by the voters at the November, 2024 General Election.

This amendment repeals the responsibility of the New Mexico Legislature to fix the salaries of County Elected Officials and transfers that responsibility to the Board of County Commissioners of each New Mexico County. At its regularly scheduled meeting on October 28, 2025, the County Commissioners unanimously appointed the five members of the ISC, all current residents of Santa Fe County. They are:

- Clifford M. Rees, Chair (retired NM attorney)
- Christopher Graeser, Vice Chair (current NM attorney)
- Anna Hamilton (former Santa Fe County Commissioner)
- Laura Liswood (former member of the NM State Personnel Board) and
- Gus Martinez (former Santa Fe County Assessor)

Pursuant to public notices issued in accordance with the NM Open Meetings Act and Santa Fe County Resolution No. 2024-155, dated November 26, 2024, the ISC Commission met on November 7, 2025, November 14, 2025, and November 21, 2025, to organize as a Commission, request pertinent data from the Director of the Santa Fe County Human Resources Division and to discuss the issues relevant to the Commission’s duty to make recommendations to the County

Commissioners concerning the annual salaries of the County’s “Elected Officials,” defined in Resolution No. 2025-054 as the County Commissioners, the County Clerk, the County Treasurer, the County Sheriff, the County Assessor, and the County Probate Judge.

According to the NM Legislative Council Service, prior to statehood, New Mexico’s Territorial government paid its officials using a fee system “in which a flat rate was paid for the execution of each official act.” Examples of this include a County Sheriff being paid a fee for each warrant served or a County Clerk being paid a fee for each oath of office administered. This system ended when New Mexico became a state in 1912 and Article X, Section 1 of the State Constitution required the Legislature to classify Counties and establish the salaries for all County officers. [Source: “Summary of and Arguments for & Against the Constitutional Amendments Proposed by the Legislature in 2023 and 2024” concerning SJR 16, 2024 Legislative Session, page 21.]

**SUMMARY OF CURRENT AND RECOMMENDED SALARIES OF ELECTED OFFICIALS DIVIDED INTO TWO CATEGORIES: COMMISSIONERS ELECTED BY DISTRICT AND COUNTY-WIDE ELECTED NON-COMMISSIONERS**

- The ISC, in its deliberations concerning the appropriate recommended annual salary for each position, applied the personnel philosophy of placing value on the job itself and not on the individuals currently occupying those positions or who may in the future be elected to those positions.
- It was suggested by Ms. Park that the ISC consider an additional philosophy of “behind-market, with-market or ahead-of-market” in terms of compensation.
- The ISC reviewed salaries from other Counties outside New Mexico and the May, 2023 Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates for “Legislators” as calculated by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics ([https://www.bls.gov/oes/2023/may/oes\\_nm.htm#00-0000](https://www.bls.gov/oes/2023/may/oes_nm.htm#00-0000)).
- Santa Fe County Commissioners’ salaries and Non-Commissioner Elected-Officials’ salaries were compared to the salaries paid to the other New Mexico Class A Counties (i.e., Bernalillo, Dona Ana, Sandoval and San Juan counties). (See Exhibit A.)
- Also considered were the perceived difficulties of each job, the salaries of County Department Heads, and the relative pay differentials of comparative government jobs. (See Exhibit B.)
- Recommended salaries for the Non-Commissioner Elected Officials were generally based on the number of employees supervised but to also not be significantly higher than the Non-Commissioner Elected Officials’ salary grade for the officials’ highest-ranking Deputy. This is not to suggest that former Deputies not be elected as Department Heads or not be allowed to work in County Departments. Rather, the ISC’s concern is that former Elected Officials may become Deputy Department Heads at a substantially higher salary than the Elected Officials who supervise them.

The current annual salaries were derived from Santa Fe County's Employee Positions and Salaries listed on the County's Sunshine Portal. The anticipated fiscal impact on the County budget if some or all of these Recommendations are adopted by the County Commissioners is listed below.

**GROUP A: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ELECTED BY DISTRICT**

**District 1: County Commissioner Justin Greene (Current Term - 2023-2026)**

Current Annual Salary: \$39,106

**Recommended Annual Salary: \$63,316 annually upon re-election or for his successor effective January 1, 2027, per Article IV, Section 27 of the New Mexico Constitution and Section 4-44-12.3, NMSA 1978.**

(An increase of \$24,210 or 61.91%)

**District 2: County Commissioner Lisa Cacari Stone (Current Term - 2025-2028)**

Current Annual Salary: \$46,907.55

**Recommended Annual Salary: \$63,316 annually upon re-election or for her successor effective January 1, 2029, per Article IV, Section of the New Mexico Constitution and Section 4-44-12.3, NMSA 1978.**

(An increase of \$16,408.45 or 34.98%)

**District 3: County Commissioner and Current Commission Chair Camilla Bustamante (Current Term - 2023-2026)**

Current Annual Salary: \$ 39,106

**Recommended Annual Salary: \$63,316 annually upon re-election or for her successor effective January 1, 2027, per Article IV, Section 27 of the NM Constitution and Section 4-44-12.3, NMSA 1978.**

(An increase of \$24,210 or 61.91%)

**District 4: County Commissioner Adam Fulton Johnson (Current Term - 2025-2028)**

Current Annual Salary: \$46,907.55

**Recommended Annual Salary: \$63,316 annually upon re-election or for his successor effective January 1, 2029, per Article IV, Section 27 of the NM Constitution and Section 4-44-12.3, NMSA 1978.**

(An increase of \$16,408.45 or 34.98%)

**District 5: County Commissioner Hank Hughes (2<sup>nd</sup> Term - 2025-2028)**

Current Annual Salary: \$46,907.55

**Recommended Annual Salary: \$63,316 annually for his successor effective January 1, 2029, per Article IV, Section 27 of the NM Constitution and Section 4-44-12.3 NMSA 1978.**

(An increase of \$16,408.45 or 34.98%)

**TOTAL INCREASES FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONER WHEN ALL INCREASES ARE EFFECTIVE**

**= \$97,645.35**

## **GROUP B: COUNTY-WIDE ELECTED NON-COMMISSIONERS**

**County Clerk:** Katherine Clark (Second Term - 2023-2026)

Current Annual Salary: \$142,500

**Recommended Annual Salary: \$142,500 for her successor effective January 1, 2027, per Article IV, Section 27 of the NM Constitution and Section 4-44-12.3 NMSA 1978.**

(No increase)

**County Treasurer:** Jennifer Manzanares (Second Term - 2023-2026)

Current Annual Salary: \$142,500

**Recommended Salary: \$142,500 annually for her successor effective January 1, 2027, per Article IV, Section 27 of the NM Constitution and Section 4-44-12.3 NMSA 1978.**

(No increase)

**County Sheriff:** Adan Mendoza (Second Term - 2023-2026)

Current Annual Salary: \$90,338

**Recommended Annual Salary: \$170,000 annually for his successor effective January 1, 2027, per Article IV, Section 27 of the NM Constitution and Section 4-44-12.3 NMSA 1978.**

(An increase of \$79,662 or 88.18%)

Note that this is the current average mean for all Class A County Sheriffs.

**County Assessor:** Isaiah Romero (Current Term - 2023-2026)

Current Annual Salary: \$90,126 (Base salary of \$86,626 plus incentive pay of \$3,500)

**Recommended Annual Salary: \$142,500 annually with no other incentives if re-elected or for his successor effective January 1, 2027, per Article IV, Section 27 of the NM Constitution and Section 4-44-12.3 NMSA 1978.**

(An increase of \$52,374 or 58.12%)

Note that Section 4-39-4, NMSA 1978 provides that County Assessors *may* receive additional cumulative increments up to the following amounts if they hold Appraiser 1, 2, 3 or 4 certificates.

The additional annual amounts are:

- Appraiser 1-\$750
- Appraiser 2-\$1,750
- Appraiser 3-\$3,000
- Appraiser 4-\$3,500

**Probate Judge (Part-Time):** Cordilia Montoya (Second Term - 2023-2026)

Current Annual Salary: \$38,114

**Recommended Annual Salary: \$42,000 for her successor effective January 1, 2027, per Article IV, Section 27 of the NM Constitution and Section 4-44-12.3 NMSA 1978.**

**The ISC recommends this increase to account for inflation.**

(An increase of \$3,886 or 10.20%)

Note that Section 34-1-10, NMSA 1978 provides that “all expenses of the probate court, *including salary and benefits of the judge*, shall be paid from the county general fund in *accordance with the court budget approved by the board of county commissioners*”. (Italics added)

**TOTAL INCREASES FOR COUNTY-WIDE NON-COMMISSIONER OFFICIALS WHEN ALL INCREASES ARE EFFECTIVE**  
**=\$135,922**

**TOTAL BOTH GROUP A & B INCREASES WHEN ALL INCREASES ARE EFFECTIVE**  
**=\$233,567.35**

**FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

- Job qualifications for each Non-Commissioner Elected Official
- Job accountability for each Non-Commissioner Elected Official
- Future audits to justify the recommended salaries for each Non-Commissioner Elected Official
- Should the Commissioner Chair receive an extra compensation of \$2,000 annually while serving as Chair?
- Addressing the issue of the “revolving door” of Department Deputies supervised by the Elected Non-Commissioners trading positions with Elected Non-Commissioners upon expiration of their term of office.

The ISC wishes to thank the excellent staff support from Santa Fe County employees: Walker Boyd, Valerie Aghaei Park, Sara Smith, and Gabriel Bustos.

Respectfully submitted:



s/Clifford M. Rees

Clifford M. Rees, Chair

Santa Fe County Independent Salary Commission

**EXHIBITS:**

- Exhibit A – New Mexico Class A County Salaries
- Exhibit B – Santa Fe County Departments and Elected Offices

**Exhibit A**

<b>County</b>	<b>Comm</b>	<b>Probate</b>	<b>Assessor</b>		<b>Sheriff</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>FTE</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Bernalillo	\$ 44,970.00	\$ 38,144.00	\$ 86,626.00	\$ 99,627.00	\$ 90,338.00	\$ 99,627.00	2950	1.03B
Sandoval	\$ 39,100.00	\$ 38,113.92	\$ 86,625.97	\$ 75,326.00	\$ 91,799.79	\$ 75,326.89	450	74.5M
San Juan	\$ 139,214.00	NA	\$ 155,401.11	\$ 155,401.11	\$ 192,289.19	\$ 155,401.11	615	60.5M
Dona Ana	\$ 49,548.00	\$ 49,548.00	\$ 112,613.00	\$ 112,613.00	\$ 117,439.00	\$ 112,613.00	1000	1.75B
<b>Santa Fe</b>	<b>\$ 46,908.00</b>	<b>\$ 38,114.00</b>	<b>\$ 86,626.00</b>	<b>\$ 142,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 90,338.00</b>	<b>\$ 142,500.00</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>305M</b>

<b>County</b>	<b>Comm</b>	<b>Probate</b>	<b>Assessor</b>	<b>Clerk</b>	<b>Sheriff</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>FTE</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Bernalillo	\$ 44,970.00	\$ 38,144.00	\$ 86,626.00	\$ 99,627.00	\$ 90,338.00	\$ 99,627.00	2950	1.03B
Deputy			\$ 130,831.00	\$ 130,831.00	\$ 163,783.00	\$ 130,831.00		
Sandoval	\$ 39,100.00	\$ 38,113.92	\$ 86,625.97	\$ 75,326.00	\$ 91,799.79	\$ 75,326.89	450	74.5M
Deputy			\$ 84,760.00	\$ 79,768.00	\$ 90,338.00	\$ 79,768.00		
San Juan	\$ 139,214.00	NA	\$ 155,401.11	\$ 155,401.11	\$ 192,289.19	\$ 155,401.11	615	60.5M
Dona Ana	\$ 49,548.00	\$ 49,548.00	\$ 112,613.00	\$ 112,613.00	\$ 117,439.00	\$ 112,613.00	1000	1.75B
<b>Santa Fe</b>	<b>\$ 46,908.00</b>	<b>\$ 38,114.00</b>	<b>\$ 86,626.00</b>	<b>\$ 142,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 90,338.00</b>	<b>\$ 142,500.00</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>305M</b>
Deputy			\$ 121,174.00	\$ 100,131.00	\$ 145,267.00	\$ 112,174.00		

**Santa Fe Department Directors**

N13 = \$125,632 - smaller departments

N14 = \$140,733 - most departments (HR Finance, CSD, CDD, Growth Mgt...)

N15 = \$161,844 - only IT , Public Works & Ct Atty

N16 = Deputy Directors

N17 = County Manager

<b>Department</b>	<b>Director</b>	<b>Deputy</b>	<b>Employees</b>
County Manager	1	2	10
Communications	1		2
Emergency Mgt	1		4
HR & Risk	1	1	16
Finance	1	1	35
IT	1		24
Legal	1	1	11
Community Services	1	1	61
Community Development	1	1	33
Growth Mgt	1	1	48
Fire	1	1	152
Corrections	1	1	161
Dispatch	1	1	34
Public Works	1	5	183
<b>Clerk</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Assessor</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Sheriff</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>135</b>

Includes Housing Authority

