

Santa Fe County
DWI Planning Council Meeting Minutes
Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Date: September 21, 2026

Time: 10:00 a.m. – approximately 11:15 a.m.

Location: Virtual Meeting

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Roll Call

Sylvia Barela welcomed attendees and conducted roll call.

Planning Council Members Present:

- Esteban Trujillo, Chair – New Mexico Department of Transportation
- Jonathan Fernandez, Vice Chair – New Mexico Department of Transportation
- Mary Stramel – Friendship Club
- Ginger McGuire – Santa Fe Family Health Center

Four of nine Council members were present. Because a quorum was not established, the meeting proceeded as an informational meeting. No votes or formal actions were taken. Approval of the agenda and the June 15, 2026 meeting minutes was deferred.

County staff, program partners, law enforcement representatives, evaluators, community members, and other guests introduced themselves.

2. New Mexico State Police DWI Enforcement Presentation

Presenter: Sergeant Justin Maese, New Mexico State Police, District 1 – Santa Fe

Sergeant Maese provided an overview of New Mexico State Police DWI enforcement efforts in the Santa Fe area. He discussed his experience conducting DWI investigations and the Department's ongoing efforts to strengthen impaired-driving enforcement.

Sergeant Maese reviewed data identifying areas where DWI arrests are concentrated. The Cerrillos Road corridor continues to be a significant enforcement area. He also identified NM 599 and other routes around Santa Fe as areas warranting continued attention because drivers may use those routes to bypass the city.

Current enforcement strategies include:

- DWI saturation patrols;
- DWI checkpoints;

- Routine patrol and identification of driving behaviors associated with possible impairment;
- Use of the State Police Able 7 helicopter to support enforcement operations and safely monitor drivers who fail to stop or drive dangerously; and
- Continued officer training regarding DWI investigations, case law, investigative practices, and court preparation.

Sergeant Maese emphasized that checkpoints serve both an enforcement and prevention function. Public awareness that checkpoints and increased enforcement are occurring may deter individuals from driving while impaired.

New Mexico State Police District 1 reported 146 DWI arrests during 2025 and 142 arrests as of the date of the September 2026 meeting. Sergeant Maese noted that these figures represent New Mexico State Police District 1 arrests only and do not include arrests by other law enforcement agencies.

Sergeant Maese also highlighted Officer Jose Rodriguez's DWI enforcement work. Officer Rodriguez had completed 86 DWI arrests in 2026 at the time of the meeting and had established a personal goal of reaching 100 arrests by year-end.

Discussion following the presentation included:

Tribal collaboration: Esteban Trujillo asked about State Police coordination with Tribal law enforcement, particularly given NMDOT's increased focus on Pueblo and reservation communities. Sergeant Maese reported that State Police has established communication and collaborative relationships with Tribal law enforcement agencies and can provide resources, enforcement support, and assistance with investigations when appropriate.

Year-end enforcement: Sergeant Maese indicated that State Police does not have a specific numerical year-end arrest target. Enforcement efforts will continue, particularly during the holiday season, when DWI investigations traditionally increase.

Complex DWI cases: Tyler Riemann asked for examples of complex DWI investigations. Sergeant Maese explained that DWI cases involving crashes can require multiple investigative components, including crash reconstruction, investigation of where alcohol was obtained or served, and coordination among multiple officers and agencies.

3. FY26 DWI Program Evaluation

Presenters: Natalie Skogerboe and Tina Ruiz, Aspen Solutions

Aspen Solutions presented highlights from the FY26 evaluation of the Santa Fe County DWI Program and reviewed progress toward the goals contained in the current DWI Strategic Plan.

Key findings and accomplishments included:

- Youth alcohol use and several other youth risk behaviors continue to decline.
- More than 900 DWI arrests were reported across participating law enforcement agencies during the July 2025–June 2026 period.
- Community survey results indicate relatively high perceptions of alcohol-law enforcement and the likelihood of being caught for impaired driving or providing alcohol to minors.
- Hundreds of youth have been reached through evidence-based prevention, diversion, and restorative programming.
- Hundreds of community members have received screening, assessment, treatment, referral, and related intervention services.
- Santa Fe County's alcohol-involved fatality rate remains below the statewide rate.
- Partnerships among prevention, enforcement, treatment, recovery, and community organizations remain an important strength of the DWI Program.

The evaluators reported that Santa Fe County's alcohol-related death rate remains below the New Mexico rate, although alcohol-related mortality continues to be a significant concern. Alcohol-involved crash fatalities in Santa Fe County decreased slightly in 2025 and remain toward the lower end of the range observed during the past decade.

Community survey data indicate that approximately half of respondents reported current alcohol use in 2024, and approximately 20% of current drinkers reported binge drinking. Although some alcohol-consumption indicators have declined, drinking and driving among current drinkers increased in 2024.

Youth Prevention and Uplift Youth Program

Aspen Solutions reviewed Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey trends showing continued decreases in youth alcohol use, marijuana use, e-cigarette use, binge drinking, and several risky driving behaviors.

Driving under the influence of marijuana was identified as a continuing area of concern among youth.

The Uplift Youth Program was highlighted as an important component of the County's prevention strategy. The program works at the individual, family, school, and community levels to strengthen protective factors and reduce youth substance use and other risk behaviors.

Approximately 450 youth were reached during the school year. Program evaluation results showed improvements in areas including:

- Family communication;
- Emotional healing;
- Accountability;
- Relationship building;
- Personal boundaries and healthy relationships;
- Emotional wellness;
- Healthy masculinity;
- Emotional expression; and
- Nonviolence.

Youth Violence and Firearm Safety Discussion

Esteban Trujillo asked whether youth programming also addresses firearm safety and youth violence.

Tyler Riemann explained that the Youth and Family Services Division operates programs addressing violence and higher-acuity behavioral health needs, including the Youth Arise Program and youth behavioral health case management. These programs can work with both youth and their families and address factors such as family dynamics and trauma.

The County also supports community activities related to gun-safety awareness and violence prevention when allowable within DWI funding requirements.

Aspen Solutions noted that many risk and protective factors associated with youth substance use also relate to violence. Strategies that strengthen family relationships, establish boundaries, reduce access to substances and firearms, and increase youth resiliency can therefore affect multiple risk behaviors.

FY26 Evaluation Recommendations

Aspen Solutions identified several recommended areas for continued work:

- Continue evidence-based youth prevention programming.
- Continue strong DWI enforcement activities and coordinate enforcement with public-awareness efforts.

- Expand outreach and prevention efforts targeting parents and caregivers, particularly regarding youth access to alcohol and other substances.
- Increase public education regarding the risks associated with early initiation of substance use.
- Improve data collection related to treatment participation and completion.
- Better understand barriers to accessing and continuing treatment.
- Explore strategies to reduce delays between DWI arrest, sentencing, assessment, and treatment.

The evaluators noted that the period between arrest and sentencing can average approximately one year. Once an individual is referred to the Santa Fe County DWI Program following sentencing, assessment and initiation of treatment generally occur quickly, often within less than one month. The longer delay between arrest and sentencing was identified as an important gap because it delays access to intervention for individuals who may need services.

4. DWI Strategic Plan Update

Sylvia Barela provided an update on the process to revise the Santa Fe County DWI Strategic Plan.

County staff, Council members, Aspen Solutions, and other participants have been meeting over the past several months to review the existing three-year strategic plan and recommend updates.

The revisions are not intended to substantially change the overall direction of the plan. Instead, the work is focused on:

- Updating information to ensure accuracy;
- Clarifying goals and measures;
- Refining the logic model;
- Aligning the evaluation plan with the strategic plan; and
- Making it easier to identify how data will be collected and how progress will be measured and reported.

The committee will meet one additional time to finalize the proposed amendments. The revised Strategic Plan will then be distributed for review and feedback.

The amended plan is expected to be presented at the **December 14, 2026 Planning Council meeting**, at which time the Council anticipates considering formal approval if a quorum is present.

5. Public Comment

Council Chair Esteban Trujillo thanked Council members, law enforcement representatives, County staff, partners, and members of the public for their participation. He encouraged continued Council and community involvement in the DWI planning process.

Community member Chris Mechels provided public comment regarding Planning Council administrative practices and public access to information. He raised concerns regarding the availability of meeting minutes and supporting documents on the County website, use of the County's meeting-management system, meeting procedures, and compliance with the New Mexico Open Meetings Act. He encouraged the County and Planning Council to review these practices and improve public access to meeting information.

Sylvia Barela thanked Mr. Mechels for his feedback.

6. Community Announcements

Mary Stramel announced that the Friendship Club would hold Recovery Day on Saturday, September 26, from 2:00–5:00 p.m. at the Friendship Club, 1316 Apache Avenue. Approximately 12–14 community organizations were expected to participate, and organizations were invited to attend and provide information.

Tyler Riemann announced another recovery-focused community event scheduled for September 26 at the Cities of Gold Casino in Pojoaque. The event was described as an all-day event open to youth, families, and other community members.

7. Adjournment and Next Meeting

Because a quorum was not present, no formal motion to adjourn was required and no formal actions were taken during the meeting.

The next Santa Fe County DWI Planning Council meeting is scheduled for:

Monday, December 14, 2026

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

The agenda will be posted on the Santa Fe County website.

The informational meeting concluded at approximately 11:15 a.m.

Minutes Approved by:

Esteban Trujillo, Chair

DWI Planning Council