

**SANTA FE COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

RESOLUTION NO. 2026 - 084

**A RESOLUTION AMENDING SECTION 6.18 OF THE SANTA FE COUNTY HUMAN
RESOURCES HANDBOOK TO ADD NEW SUBSECTIONS CONCERNING MEDIA
COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES AND COUNTY COMMISSIONER
NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

WHEREAS, on December 11, 2012, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) of Santa Fe County (County) adopted Resolution No. 2012-164, a Resolution Adopting the 2012 Santa Fe County Human Resources Handbook to Replace the 2008 Santa Fe County Human Resources Handbook (the Handbook); and

WHEREAS, Section 6.18 of the Handbook established that the Media Production and Public Relations Specialist or other designated County employee would manage media inquiries and prohibited employees from making comments to the media on behalf of the County; and

WHEREAS, the County recognizes the importance of establishing clear expectations, timelines, and standards for communication on behalf of the County; and

WHEREAS, the County also recognizes the importance of establishing guidelines for notifications to County Commissioners regarding matters within their districts and to elected officials regarding matters impacting the elected official's office.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Santa Fe County Board of County Commissioners hereby repeals and replaces **Section 6.18, PRESS CONTACT** of the Santa Fe County Human Resources Handbook with the following:

6.18 MEDIA OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION REQUESTS

The County will benefit from consistent procedures for addressing media outreach, responding to communication requests from employees and elected officials, and disseminating relevant information to County Commissioners. Therefore, the following subsections establish expectations, timelines, and standards for media outreach and communication requests from employees and elected officials, including the following:

- A. Employees submitting communication requests to the Communications Team, a group of employees designated by the County Manager;
- B. Managing information requests and outreach other than requests pursuant to the Inspection of Public Records Act;
- C. The Communication Team supporting County-wide communications activities; and
- D. Establishing notification procedures for media inquiries, press releases, and events that may give rise to media coverage.

6.18.1. MEDIA INQUIRIES

Inquiries from the news media requesting the County's position or comment on a forthcoming news story are given a high priority by the County and should be responded

SEC CLERK RECORDED 07/02/2026

to as quickly and efficiently as possible. In order to ensure the dissemination of consistent, accurate and timely information, the Communications Coordinator or other person designated by the County Manager shall be responsible for County media relations. County employees shall immediately notify the Communications Coordinator, or the designated person about media inquiries. Employees other than the Communications Coordinator or designee shall not make comments to the Media on behalf of the County. This Section 6.18.1 does not apply to requests under the Inspection of Public Records Act, the employees of certain elected officials whose job duties include addressing media inquiries on behalf of the elected official's office, or statements by County employees purely in their individual capacity.

6.18.2. COMMENCEMENT OF COMMUNICATION REQUESTS AND MEDIA INQUIRIES

- A. All communications requests from employees and elected officials shall be submitted through the designated communications intake process, which will be established and revised from time to time by the Communications Team. Requests will be reviewed by the designated member of the Communications Team and assigned to Communications Team members based on subject matter expertise, workload, and current capacity.
- B. If any County employee receives a media inquiry, the employee receiving the request shall direct the requestor to the Communications Coordinator or their designee for coordination and response.

6.18.3. STANDARD TIMELINE FOR NOTIFYING THE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM OF MATTERS REQUIRING COMMUNICATIONS TO THE PUBLIC

- A. Routine communications requests shall be submitted to the Communications Team at least three (3) business days before materials are needed for release.
- B. Larger or more complex communication requests requiring coordination meetings, multiple communication channels, coordination across departments, or strategic planning shall be submitted to the Communications Team at least two (2) weeks in advance whenever feasible.
- C. Public meetings will be publicly announced with a minimum of seven (7) days' notice whenever possible.
- D. Because the Communications Team also requires preparation time, departments must submit meeting information at least ten (10) days prior to the event whenever possible.
- E. Communications related to road work, utility work, service interruptions, or other major public impacts must be submitted to the Communications Team at least two weeks prior to the commencement of work, to allow for two (2) weeks of public notice whenever possible.
- F. Priority Requests: Media inquiries are considered high priority and often benefit from same-day turnaround, extensive staff coordination and various levels of review. Accordingly, media inquiries are often prioritized above other requests.
- G. The Communications Team will consider department timelines and operational needs and will work collaboratively to meet communication deadlines whenever possible.
- H. Crisis and emergency communications will be addressed by the Communications Team outside of the time parameters set forth above.

- I. These timelines set forth above shall be administered consistently with the Open Meetings Act, NMSA 1978, Section 10-15-1 to -4 (1974, as amended through 2013) and other applicable statutory provisions.

6.18.4. COMMUNICATION STANDARDS

- A. All communication materials shall be developed with attention to the following elements:
- Clarity;
 - Accessibility;
 - Plain language; and
 - Compliance with organizational style guidelines.
- B. Materials shall be fact-checked by the Communications Team in collaboration with the requesting Department or Office prior to release and must comply with the Santa Fe County Code of Conduct.

6.18.5. DEPARTMENT AND OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES

Providing complete and timely information helps ensure accurate, effective, and timely communication with the public. Therefore, the Communications Team may ask Elected Officials and Departments requesting support to provide:

- Advance notice in accordance with this policy whenever possible;
- Early identification of sensitive or high-profile issues;
- Draft language, bullet points, or background information; and
- Dates and times when relevant Elected Officials and employees will be available for follow-up questions from the Communications Team and approval of final drafts of communications.

6.18.6. NOTIFICATION TO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

- A. The County Manager's Office shall notify County Commissioners, by email, telephone call, or other communication method, of the following:
1. All media inquiries which are known to be for an upcoming article, including County provided responses and information, prior to the story running when possible;
 2. Actual and anticipated events, including significant operational decisions and intergovernmental disputes, that are reasonably anticipated to engender media attention, significant County resident interest, or have a material impact on intergovernmental relations or the delivery of services, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Inmate deaths;
 - b. Structure fires with fatalities;
 - c. Facility use and access protocols, and changes to hours of operations; and
 - d. Press releases.
- B. Notification pursuant to subparagraph A above shall be made in advance of the event when possible.
- C. The Communications Team is available to work with other Elected Officials, at the request of the Elected Officials or their designees, to respond to media inquiries concerning their offices.

SEC CLERK RECORDED 07/02/2026

6.18.7. SOLICITATION OF QUOTES

The Communications Team will solicit quotes for press releases and media responses (when the Communications Team determines that an attributed quote is appropriate) from County Commissioners using the following guidelines:

- A. If the subject matter concerns a proposed or adopted ordinance or resolution, the sponsors of the measure;
- B. If the subject matter is a matter on which Commissioners have been designated to work by the Board of County Commissioners, the designated Commissioners;
- C. If the subject matter is a public meeting or initiative of a specific Commissioner, that Commissioner;
- D. If the subject matter is of particular interest to one or more commission districts, such as a ribbon-cutting or ground-breaking for a project, the Commissioner(s) representing the district(s);
- E. If the subject matter is of countywide import, such as an award or designation, the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners;
- F. If the point of the press release is to highlight the County Commissioner's views on an event or subject matter, all County Commissioners; and
- G. The Communications Team will notify County Commissioners of any deadlines associated with the requested quote and shall endeavor to ensure that Commissioners have a reasonable amount of time to respond.

6.18.8. NOTIFICATION OF COMMISSIONERS OF MATERIAL OR CONTROVERSIAL IMPACTS

- A. The County Manager or designee shall notify, as appropriate, all County Commissioners, the Commissioner of the Commission District impacted, or the Chair, of any operational decisions, changes, or activities that are known or reasonably anticipated to have a material or controversial impact on the community at large or a community group.
- B. Nothing in Section 6.18 of the Handbook shall be interpreted to alter existing delegated or statutory authority, administrative authority, or emergency powers otherwise granted by law.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED ON THIS 30th DAY OF JUNE, 2026.

**SANTA FE COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

By: _____

Justin S. Greene, Chair

ATTEST:

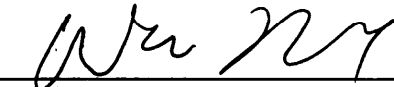
Katharine E. Clark

Santa Fe County Clerk

Date: _____

07/01/2026

Approved as to form:

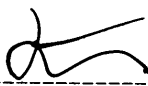


Walker Boyd
Santa Fe County Attorney

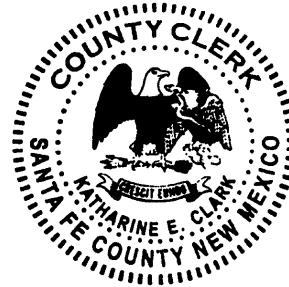
COUNTY OF SANTA FE)
STATE OF NEW MEXICO) ss

BCC RESOLUTIONS
PAGES: 5

I Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for
Record On The 2ND Day Of July, 2026 at 11:33:37 AM
And Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # **2086876**
Of The Records Of Santa Fe County

Deputy  _____
County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM

Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office
Katharine E. Clark



SFC CLERK RECORDED 07/02/2026