



LOPD Pride



Training & Recruitment Dir. Liz Homes

Deputy Chief Jennifer Barela

Albuquerque



Matthias Swonger

Jonathan Ibarra

KC Quirk

Luz Velarde

Sarah Gallegos

Albuquerque



Kent DeYoung, Fiscal Unit

Santa Fe



Albuquerque

Mitha Nandagopalan



Ashley Smith

James Walker

Karina Rodriguez

Cynthia Cairns

Paola Vega

Dayna Jones

Michael Reeves

Newby Burns

Alamogordo



Pedro Herrera

Ashley Standifer

Louis Nevarez

Las Cruces

Caroline Velarde

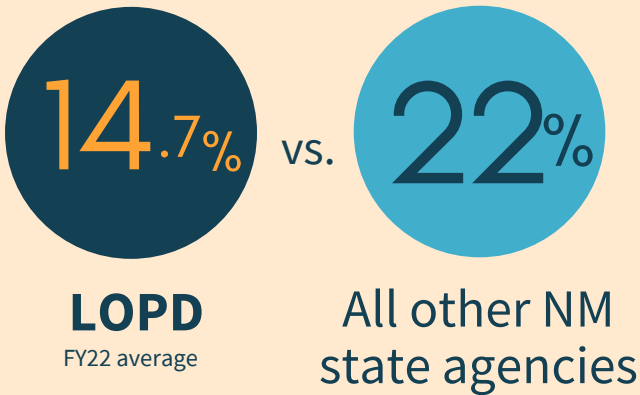
Nancy Garcia

Celeste Barela

Alma Duran

Growing the defender team

Vacancy rate =
% of positions unfilled



Chief's message

The information and photos in this issue of *The Defender* show so much of what is wonderful about the people here at LOPD. But I know that there are always issues that we must face, and ways that we can improve. That is why in this issue we are sharing information on the department's vacancy rate. As if the COVID pandemic didn't create enough challenges, we are now facing a new twist on one of our greatest challenges: recruiting and keeping outstanding people.



Early in the pandemic LOPD achieved the lowest vacancy rate in the known history of the department – close to 6%. Over the last year, as is happening



There's more job openings than there are applicants. So, recruitment is first and foremost of what we do right now. Everything else can wait so we can hire.

— HR Director
Ronald Herrera

Every Monday first thing, Human Resources Director Ronald Herrera and the HR team check the week's application submissions. Herrera says that in his 7 years with LOPD, he can't recall a Monday without a single qualified applicant – until last month.

"I thought maybe we were missing something or the system was malfunctioning," he said. "It's shocking."

Herrera says the HR team hits all the recommended avenues for posting and advertising jobs, including the Bar Bulletin, numerous professional and college job boards, and internal and listserv emails.





HR's Ronald Herrera cont.

In addition, the team supports Training & Recruitment Director Liz Holmes and others who go to hiring fairs and networking events.

"Short of advertising on a billboard, which state agencies don't normally do, what else can we do?"

HR departments across the nation are scrambling to answer this. LOPD's HR team will be attending a conference on recruiting during a turbulent economy and post-COVID.

In the meantime, Herrera and the HR team continue to look for recruits everywhere they can, including top-notch restaurant servers and customer service workers. Herrera asks for help in doing the same.

"Please talk to friends, family, people you run into and encourage people to go to law school and pursue public defense," he said.

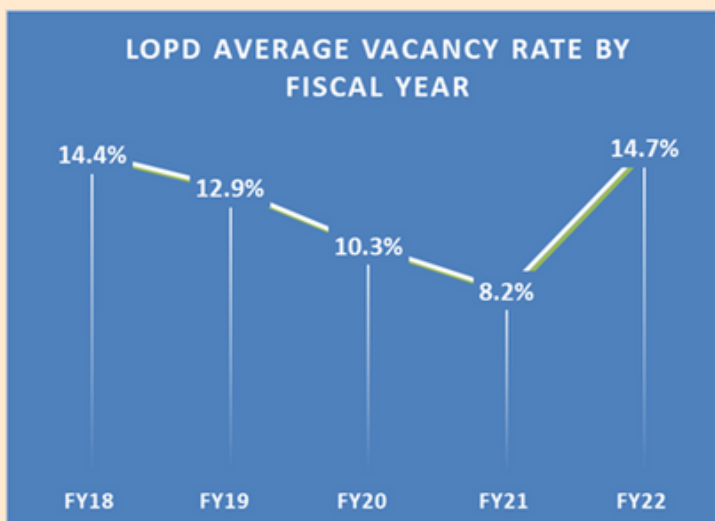
Chief's message cont.

across the country, more people have left than have come in, and that vacancy rate has increased. The good news is we are still well below the average vacancy rate for state agencies around the New Mexico. We have been able to fill many positions over the last several months, and new hires are joining the team, including 21 LPs starting next week. But there is no easy or quick fix. We may cycle in and out of this hiring struggle as the national economy figures itself out and people adjust their lives in response to the pandemic.

On a happy note, we are thrilled to have been allocated an additional 26 FTE this fiscal year! Eighteen have been designated as core staff positions and 8 as attorney positions. With new positions added in many of our offices around the state this fiscal year, we will eventually see even more coworkers to carry out our mission.

So, thanks to all of you for hanging in there and, as always, for your dedication to our clients and to each other.

— Ben



Speaking of new hires...

Kate Thompson takes Abq Metro MA position



Staff potluck and new hire welcome for Managing Attorney Kate Thompson, returning to LOPD. Staff brought a dish that started with the first letter of their name or a homemade charcuterie board.



Welcome to the LOPD team!

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Candyce Angel | Senior Secretary |
| Angelica Rosales-Pacheco | Paralegal 1 |
| Mason Walker | Public Defender 2 |
| Tess Williams | Public Defender 3 |
| Dora Delgado | Paralegal 1 |
| James Tiu | Public Defender 4 |
| Jennifer Berry | Public Defender 2 |
| Jessica Turner | Investigator 2 |
| Kate Thompson | Managing Attorney |
| Melanie McNett | Public Defender 2 |
| Shawn Wilber | Senior Human Resources Admin |
| Stephanie Guerra | Case Manager |
| Yasmin Martinez | Secretary 1 |
| Amber Ruiz | Senior Secretary |
| Juliann Lente-Abeita | Paralegal1 |
| Katherine Garcia | Senior Secretary |
| Kimberly Rudd | Law Clerk |
| Matthew O'Gorman | Public Defender 4 |
| Paul Tony | Public Defender 4 |
| Steven Trujeque | Paralegal 1 |
| Tashina Schultz | Paralegal 1 |
| Amanda Cain | Clerk 2 |
| Angelina Baca | Public Defender 3 |
| Michelle Johnson | Financial Specialist 2 |
| Sydnee Pollard | Secretary 1 |
| Erin McMullen | Public Defender 3 |
| Stella Leitner | Paralegal1 |
| Angelica Gutierrez | Secretary 1 |
| Arriana Herrera | Secretary 1 |
| Hailey Zock | Public Defender 2 |
| Jack Hancock | Social Worker Supervisor |
| Jenna Purpura | Public Defender 2 |
| Victoria Varela | Paralegal 1 |
| Isabella Bristol | Secretary 1 |
| Candice Carrasco | Senior Secretary |
| Chantell Nelson | Senior Secretary |

APRIL-SEPTEMBER

LOPD Anniversaries

Celebrating 1, 5, 10,
15, 20+ years

25 years



Judy Hale
felony paralegal

Judy Gonzales
Executive Assistant

20 years



Mabel
Pacheco
Taos Office Manager



Monica
Guillen
Abq Metro paralegal

15 years

Maria Rodriguez
Tanya Gonzales

10 years

Adrian Martinez
Doddie Webb
Matthias Swonger
Milton Rodriguez

5 years

Monica Cruz
Bernadette Breitha
Miranda Padilla
Barbara Hodgson
Kristofer Knutson
James Price
Candace Archibeque
Rina Griego
Ivey Hendrix

1 year

Ashley Ventura
Irene Marquez
Anna Nassiff
Estevan Flores
Ted Barney
Karina Rodriguez
Brent Herrera
Laura Chavez
Michael Reeves
Paola Vega
Anna Moser
Vanessa Griego
Valeria Sanchez - Guevara

Retirement

Judy Hale Will O'Connell



Thank you to the HR team for compiling these lists. If your name was somehow left off a list, please know it was not on purpose. Just let Maggie Shepard know and she'll make it right in the next newsletter.

Holding court

New 5th District Defender Nate Banks visits with Carlsbad-area teens as part of a Workforce education visit. The teens learned about how various court officials do their jobs, ensuring everyone has a fair trial. They toured the 5th Judicial District Court Eddy County, seeing what an actual court room looks like. They also visited Nate's office to see what PD life looks like.



Community Support



Deputy Chief Jennifer Barela, left, Chief Ben Baur, second from left, and Albuquerque District Defender, taking the picture, gathered in Albuquerque's International District to lend public defense spirit and support to community revitalization. Center is Restorative Justice expert Thom Allena.



National Administrative Professionals Day

Albuquerque Admin Operations Manager Veronica Rosales preps gift bags for staff for national Professional's Day. Attorneys and others pooled funds to get staff thank you gifts for their work on behalf of clients and keeping the office running smoothly.

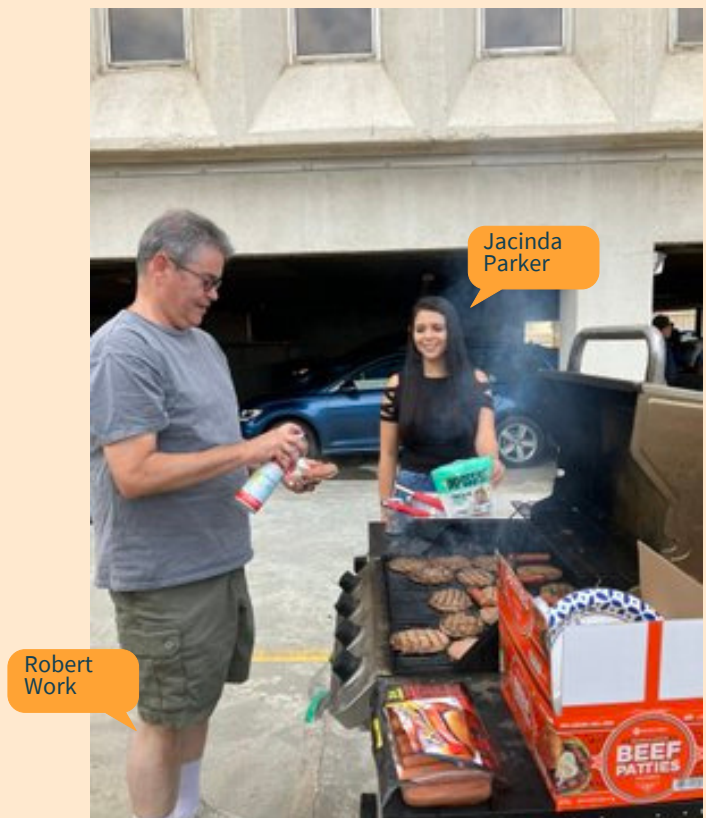
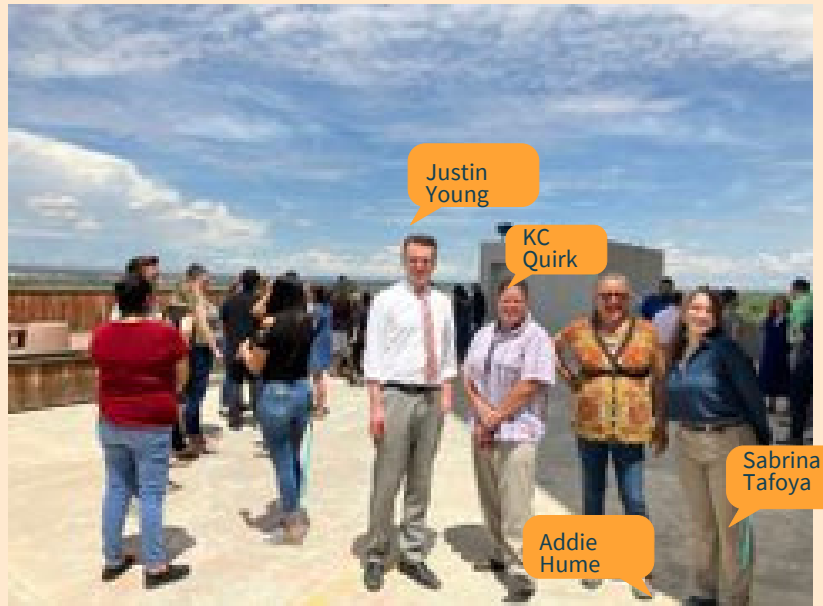
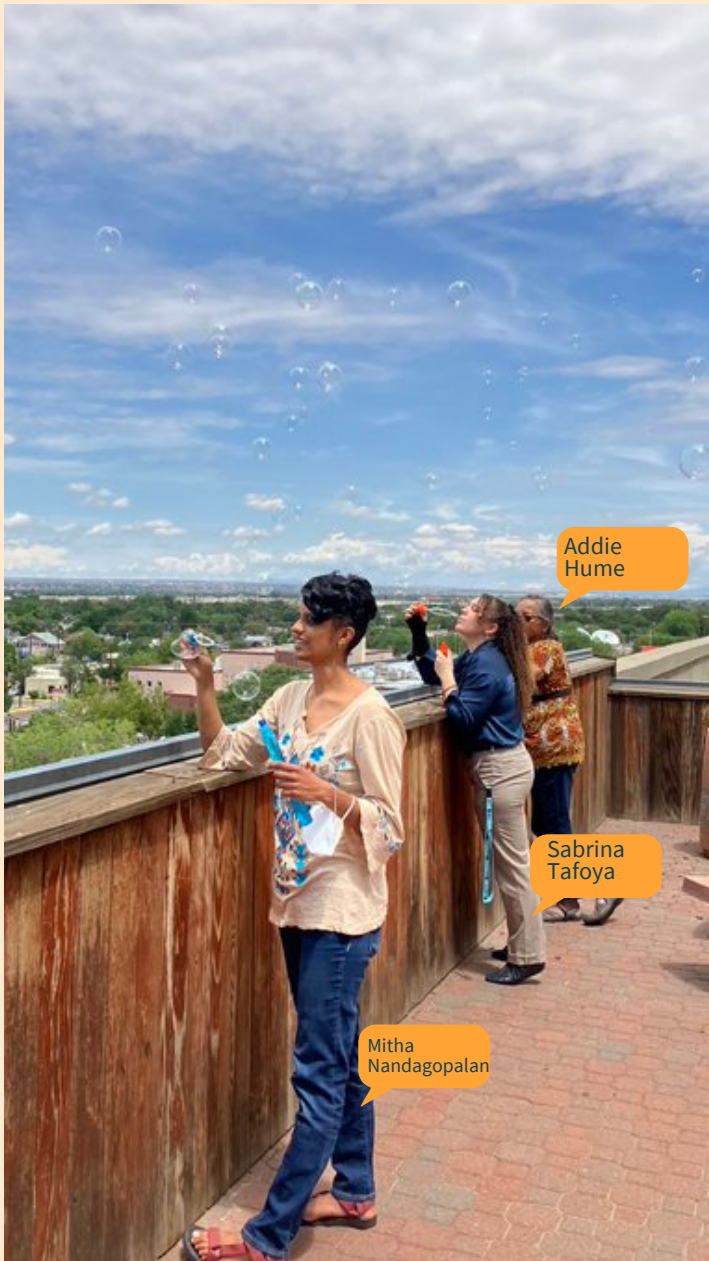
Team Hobbs talking Restorative Justice



Hobbs attorney Joy Applewhite, right, and former Hobbs attorney Yolonda Joiner passed through Albuquerque in July and shared their experience with Restorative Justice and community engagement.



Summer BBQ in Albuquerque



To contribute, correct, compliment or criticize newsletter content or to talk to Communication Director Maggie Shepard, contact her at maggie.shepard@lopdm.us or (505) 690-4529. All newsletter content is compiled by Maggie Shepard and approved by LOPD leadership.