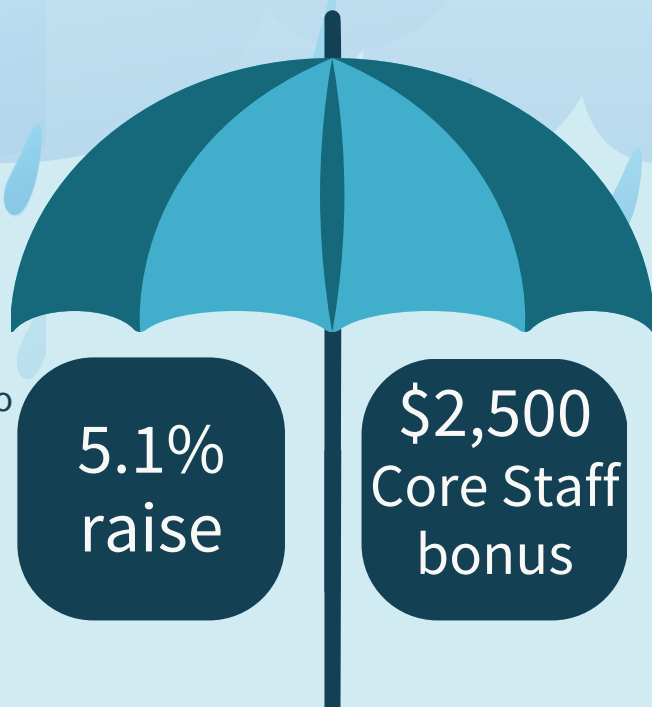




## Chief's message

Our work as public defenders is about other people and their often very urgent needs. We all know the stress of this. And we all know that their needs don't stop with our lawyers in the courtroom.

Last month was **National Social Worker Month**. We have so many excellent social workers and case managers. More and more our department is moving toward the holistic defense our clients need. In this newsletter, you can read about Aztec Case Manager Sonnie Rodriguez going beyond her daily responsibilities to truly make a difference for her community. Thank you Sonnie and all our social work team, and to Social Work Director KC Quirk for all the heart you bring to LOPD and to helping us work toward our holistic defense goals. [More](#) ↓



## Come rain or fire

Crisis and safety planning underway for all offices



Fire Drill



Do you know where your office fire extinguisher is? How about where to run when a fire breaks out?

"You should walk not run," says Richard Pacheco, LOPD's first Safety and Loss Control Coordinator.

To ensure everyone knows what to do in the event of an office fire or other emergency, including finding the fire extinguisher, Richard is launching a statewide Crisis Management Plan. The plan includes Emergency Evacuation Plans for fire, active shooter, and other crises, individualized for each office.

"I'm not here to just check off boxes. I sincerely care for the well-being of our employees.," Richard said.

Fire drills have taken place in Albuquerque and Santa Fe and are coming next to Clovis and then the rest of the state. The drills have helped identify logistic issues.



# Chief's message cont.

While I want us always to be client centered, our needs at our offices and in our own lives matter, too. That's why we have asked Safety and Loss Prevention Coordinator Richard Pacheco to improve office safety across the state. And it's why LOPD Administration worked to get a department-wide 2% raise for everyone before the state's 3% raise goes into effect, and to get a special bonus out to our core staff.

I wish these raises could be more, but I'm happy we are able to get these salary improvements out to you. I, our leadership team, and our Commission truly do appreciate each one of you.

-- Ben



## LOPD Vacancy Rate

The vacancy rate at LOPD is a snapshot of how many of our total positions are unfilled. It can help alert to staffing challenges, and, when put in context of other state agencies, it gives us a sense of how LOPD is faring in the broader job market.

A lower vacancy rate indicates more employees on board. A higher rate means more vacant positions.

During COVID lockdowns, our rate was higher than in many previous years despite hovering slightly lower than other state agencies. It has begun to drop over the last few months.

All LOPD

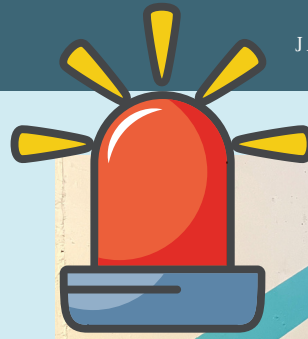
11.95%

Attorneys

18.11%

Core Staff

5.56%



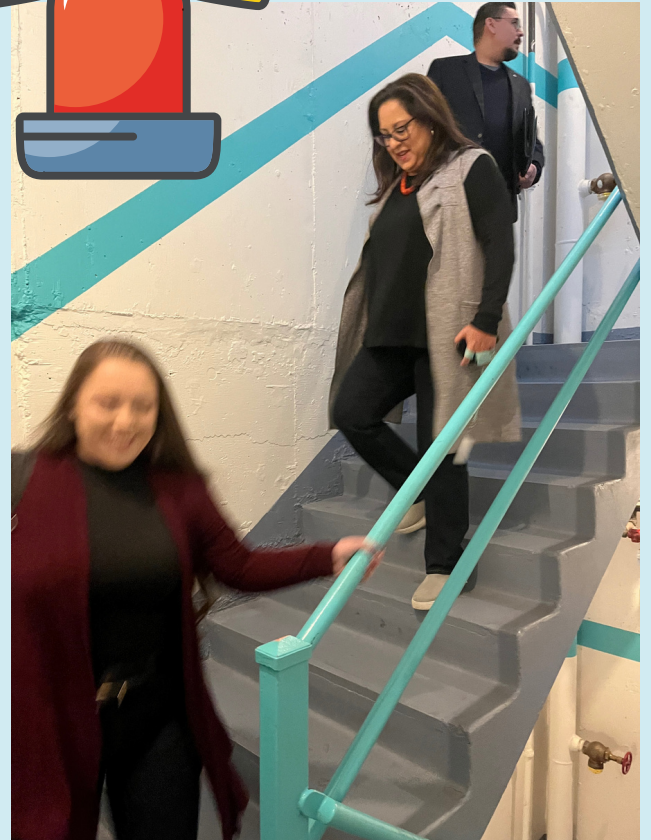
“We found several employees who need support getting down stairwells, so we’ve purchased specialized evacuation chairs,” Richard said. They roll on tank-like track wheels that can roll down stairs to help those with mobility challenges or injuries.

The drills have also allowed the office Emergency Evacuation Plan team leaders to practice knocking on office doors, taking attendance at the meeting point and signaling safe to return. The team leads will soon receive a packet of safety and visibility gear.

In addition to evacuation drills, Richard is also considering office alert systems, including alarms and possibly a text messaging alert system.

“And we are assessing the safety of the facilities and working with building managers to make sure we are as safe as we can be,” Richard said.

Richard said other ideas or concerns can be brought to him or the HR Safety Team, which includes HR Dir. Ronald Herrera, Zach Olivas and Tiffani Lopez.



## Fire drills in Albuquerque



Safety and  
Loss Prevention Coordinator  
Richard Pacheco



# Office Safety Teams

## Incident Commander

Responsible for all aspects of the Evacuation Process  
Point person for first responders and LOPD safety teams



## Safety Officer

Monitors safety conditions  
May administer Basic First Aid and set up triage

## Area Warden


Manages the Staging Area Head counts  
Keeps current employee lists to monitor evacuations





## Floor Warden









Ensures employees have evacuated the building and communicating to the Area Warden(s) if issues arise within the building

### Alamogordo


Michelle Haley 

### Albuquerque

Veronica Rosales  Stephanie La-Paz Johnson  
Matt Bevington  Calvin Martinez  
Juanita Maldonado  
Melissa Denetadlae  
Liz Homes

Cindy Vasquez  Christina Gutierrez-Baca  
Maria Lopez  Fanicela Ayala  
Ron Day  Rose Holguin-Parra  
Juanita Maldonado  Sabrina Tafoya  
Jacinda Parker  Mercedes Hyder  
Gabriel Brownlee  Estrella Maestas  
Angelica Gutierrez  Monica Gautreaux  
Abby Adamo  Sharon Valdez  
Cristal Gonzales  
Vanessa Zamora

### Abq CCLS

Monica Cruz  Antonia Herrera  
 Richel Tapia

### Aztec

James DeRossitt  Matthew Cockman  
Susan Crook  James DeRossitt

### Carlsbad

Susan Hernandez  Carolyn Phillips



### Clovis

Tiffani Lopez  Brian Encinias

### Gallup

Deanne Silva  Ramsey Younis  
David Waters  Sam Wilson  
Victoria Gonzales

### Hobbs

Mayra Gallardo  Boris Smith  Boris Smith


### Las Cruces

Jana Padilla  Rosa Macias

### Portales

Melisa Fondrick  Brian Encinias




### Roswell

Ana Cantu-Mata 

### Ruidoso

Katina Slaughter  Ryan Parsons

### Santa Fe Trial and Fiscal

Julie Ball  Rashan Lawrence  
Robert Cardon  Joey Fernandez  
Zach Olivas  
Liliana Ornelas  
Jose Villegas  Luke Griffin  
Avalita Williams  America Morales

### Santa Fe Appellate

Michelle Romero  Vanessa Griego

### Taos

MariaElena Gallegos  Mabel Pacheco



# Social Worker Shoutouts

March was Social Worker Month



At left is Kathy Apodaca and at right is Lisa Jenkins.

The Las Cruces office celebrated Social Worker Month with a special wall decoration. Paralegal Alma Duran sent in this pic and gratitude:

“These ladies are our Awesome duo who do not skip a beat. I told them they are like the big sisters to clients and their families. They maintain the peace between family members, keep everyone focused to get our clients to the doctor. They do jail visits and handle constant phone calls incoming and outgoing. They keep our office up to speed on the many changes happening in the social work environment and how it will impact our defense and our clients. We are very proud to have these Ladies on our Team.”

# Sonnie's Corner



Clients leaving jail in Aztec now have access to a charging station and two education centers, including a looping video explaining how to plug into probation and community resources.

Aztec Case Manager Sonnie Rodriguez said she led the project to create the jail lobby resource station after hearing from clients about the hurdles of leaving jail without knowing a next step.

One client told her, “I just need more help out in the world. Not just supervision and enforcement but help navigating the resources, I want to succeed but I’m lost half the time.”

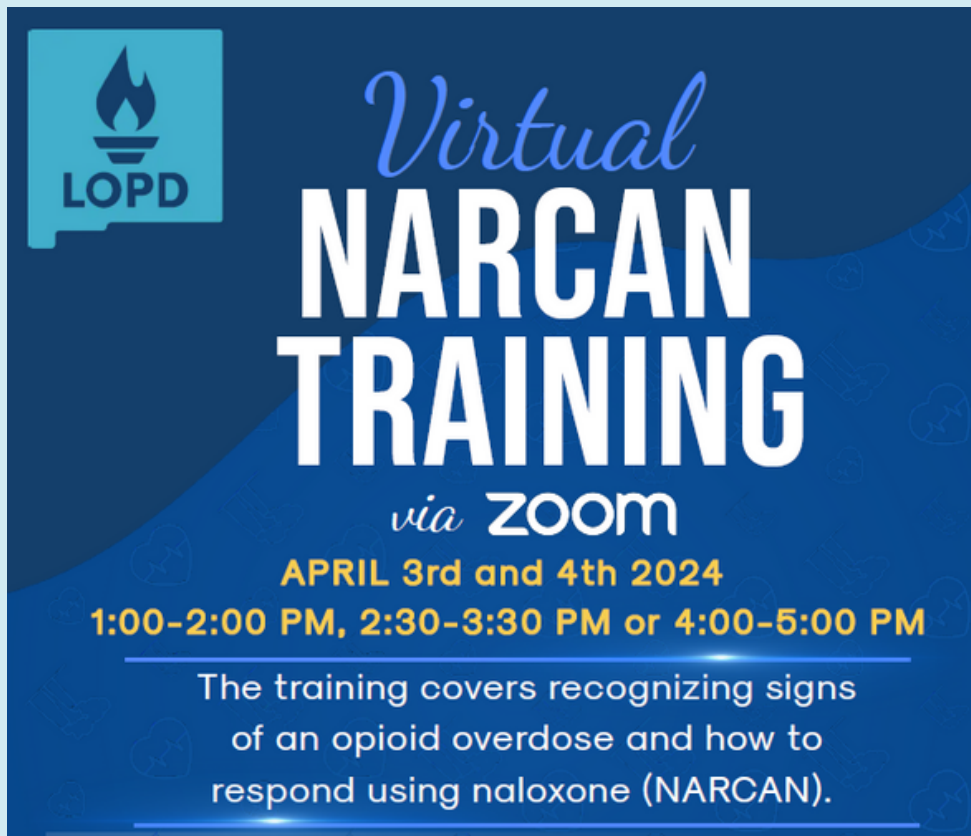
So with Sonnie’s leadership, a team from Leadership San Juan decided to use the jail exit lobby to bridge the gap between incarceration and community reintegration.

They created and gathered brochures explaining criminal court programs and procedures specific to what a person might see on their conditions of release and community resources, such as food banks and housing help. They also installed a phone charging station paid for by a formerly incarcerated client who knows the struggle of leaving the jail without a working phone. The pamphlets and charging station are near a mounted television, donated by Best Buy and a local church, that will play a looping video that describes the different types of probation, the different courts and locations with maps. The film has been put together by the local community college.

“This is what strengthening a community looks like,” said LOPD Social Work Dir. KC Quirk.

Sonnie says the station has been well-received and has been named “Charging Forward.”



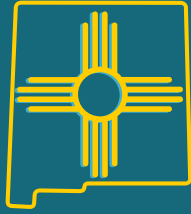


The training covered essential topics such as identifying opioid overdoses, administering Naloxone, and emergency response procedures. Every member of our team who takes the NARCAN training is prepared to handle such situations confidently and effectively.

Additional trainings pending

Email Richard Pacheco at [richard.pacheco@lopdnm.us](mailto:richard.pacheco@lopdnm.us) for the Zoom links.





# Judicial Trailblazer Woman of the Year

New Mexico Office of African American Affairs



**Ibukun Adepoju**  
District Defender  
- Hobbs



From left, Deputy Chief Jennifer Barela and District Defenders Ibukun Adepoju in Hobbs and Julie Ball in Santa Fe.

## UNM School of Law tableing



Attorneys, from left, Rose Osborne, Julpa Dave, Magdalena Kephart and Anna Nassiff staffed the LOPD table at a recent Public Law expo at the UNM School of Law.



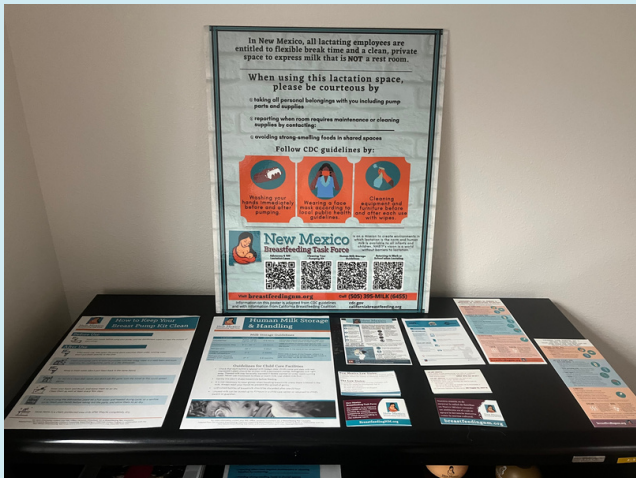
# Lactation Room in Albuquerque



The Albuquerque office has created a lactation room for LOPD mamas.

It is on the 11th floor and marked with a plaque that carries the lovely names of two LOPD moms we've lost: Laura Hanish and Tashina Schultz.

The room includes a rocking chair, a refrigerator for milk storage, a book and activity shelf and resources for new parents and nursing mothers. A corkboard will go up soon to share pictures of cute babies and other encouraging material.



Paralegal Sharon Valdez adjusts decorations on the room's wall.

# Grins from LOPD-IT



## New IT team member



Please welcome

**Nina Rougemont.**

Nina joins IT as an IS Administrator.

She is University of New Mexico alumna. Nina has been working in IT for 11 years, most recently at Sandia National Laboratories.

## New Spam Filter for the LOPD

The best cloud spam filtering service available has been deployed and with it: less junk for your inbox.

This new system will be turned on over the next couple weeks.

If you think an email hasn't come thru that you're expecting, please let us know so we may check the list and see if it was flagged.

Enjoy a cleaner and safer inbox!!! 😊

# Welcome to the LOPD team!

Okarise Jaquez	Senior Secretary
Victoria Gonzales	Secretary 1
Michael Tarleton	Public Defender 4
Deidre Olguin	Senior Secretary
Celeste Barela	Senior Secretary
Crista Candelaria	Senior Secretary
Jonathan Duecker	Public Defender 2
Richard Gould	Public Defender 5
Josephine Cathcart	Secretary 1
Matthew Rutherford	Secretary 1
Victoria Mueller	HR Data Specialist
Adolfo Olvera	Legal Associate
Fanny Ayala Rocha	Secretary 1
Andrew Ash	Law Clerk
Joel Beesley	Legal Associate
Nina Rougemont	IS Administrator
Dana Oviedo	Public Defender 2
Raul Mijares	Public Defender 2
Collete Lucero	Financial Coordinator-A
Danielle Dowis	Legal Associate
Sadie Stidstone	Paralegal 1

# LOPD Anniversaries

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

FEBRUARY  
MARCH  
APRIL  
PART OF MAY

## 15 years

Steven Forsberg  
attorney

## 10 years

Doug Wilber  
Rose Holguin  
Ibukun Adepoju  
Judi Caruso

## 5 years

Ira Shiflett  
Maria Navarro  
Adrianne Turner  
Justin Young  
Branda Franco  
Jonathan Nyce

## 1 year

Alondra Paz-Melgar  
Debbie O'Dell  
Deirdre Ewing  
Francisco Hernandez  
Kathryn Franchini  
Randall Towns  
Charles Stoll  
Valeria Sanchez -  
Guevara  
Yvette Feay-Cazier

Amy Florez  
Bianca Ybarra  
Brittany Hudson  
Mary McCleary  
Tanya Chavez  
Vanessa Zamora-Strader  
Isamar Acosta  
Maribel Barajas  
Sophia Santillan



# In memory of Olga Shroyer



LOPD grieves the passing of Maria “Olga” Shroyer, whose death was reported last month.

Olga, 67, retired from LOPD in 2022, having served 25 years with the department.

Attorneys and staff in Albuquerque remember Olga for her smile and enthusiasm. She is remembered as the “queen of the archives,” which was a large role when we had paper archives in boxes. Olga “WAS LOPD ABQ.”

Because of the tragic nature of Olga’s death, District Defender Dennica Torres reminds employees that grief counseling is available through our EAP, details of which can be found through HR.