

Geospatial & Population Studies

Robert Rhatigan

Director

Fiscal Year 2024 - 2025 Annual Review of Category 3 Research Centers/Institutes | May 1, 2026

Mission

Geospatial and Population Studies supplies trustworthy information that serves communities and government agencies; offers cutting-edge technology and research methods; and provides a fertile training ground at UNM for a new generation of applied researchers and decision makers.

FY 2024-2025 Goals and Status

Goal 1: Publish updated population projections for New Mexico Counties.

Status: Completed

Updated population projections were published in June of 2024. A press release was picked up by a few news outlets around the state and GPS was invited to present at several forums, most notably as a keynote during New Mexico State University's Research and Creativity week.

Goal 2: Execute a \$1.6 million, four-year renewal of the Data Entry contract with the New Mexico Department of Transportation.

Status: Partially Completed

GPS signed a two-year contract for \$977,000 representing a 30% increase from the previous contract. Funding from the sponsor was not available for a four-year agreement but a contract extension is currently being discussed.

Goal 3: Streamline production of annual crash statistics database and reporting.

Status: Complete

Annual crash reports were published earlier than ever due to significant process improvements including greater automation of data quality checks and generation of over 100 reports.

Goal 4 - Expand GPS Partnerships and Collaborations

Status: ongoing

GPS partnered with the UNM Prevention Research Center to research broadband coverage for specific age cohorts throughout New Mexico and partnered with the UNM Department of Internal Medicine to provide geospatial analysis for the Chronic Renal Insufficiency Cohort study.

Membership of Advisory Committee

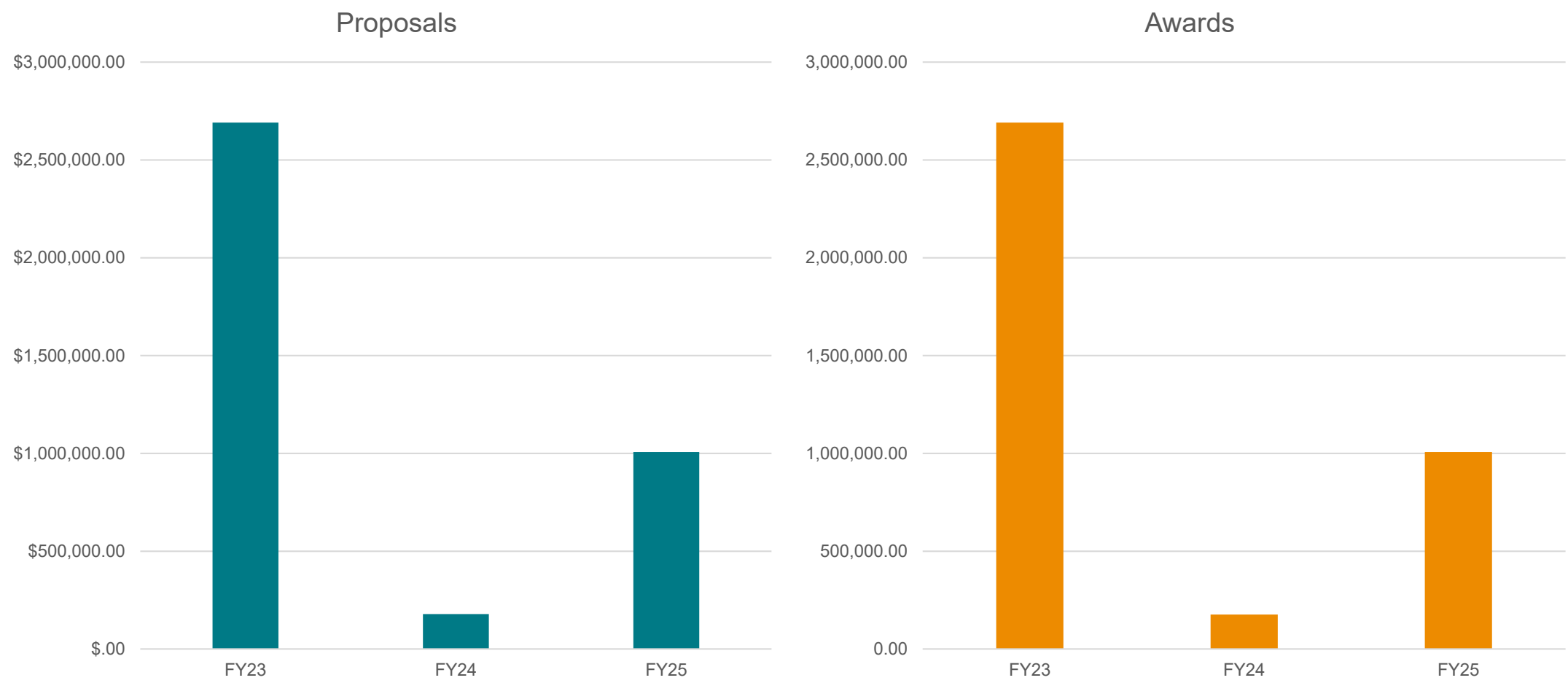
- Membership List
 - Renia Ehrenfeucht, Professor, UNM School of Architecture and Planning
 - Gabriel Sanchez, Professor, UNM Department of Political Science
 - Allan Oliver, Executive Director, Thornburg Foundation
 - David Swanson, Professor Emeritus, University of Washington
 - Jeff Hardcastle, Nevada State Demographer, retired

The GPS advisory committee has not had a formal convening in the last two years though individual members were consulted on several occasions and a meeting is planned for 2026.

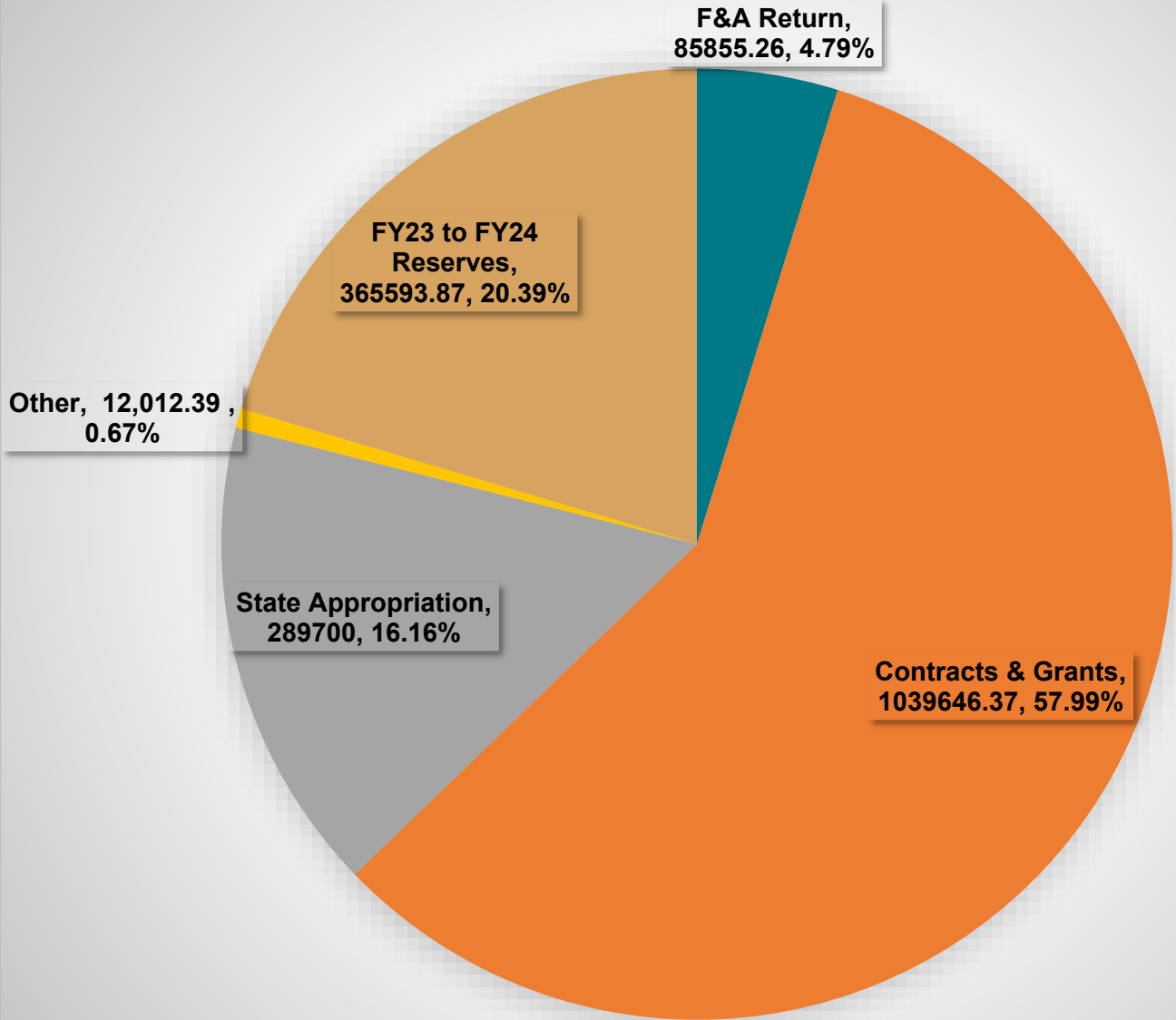
FY 2024-2025 Highlights

- Entered a two-year, \$977,000 Data Entry contract with the New Mexico Department of Transportation—a 32% annual increase from previous agreement
- Renewed agreement with the US Census Bureau to serve as New Mexico’s liaison to the Federal State Cooperative for Population Estimates
 - Director Robert Rhatigan re-elected as a member of the FSCPE Steering Committee
- Publicity
 - Population Projections released in June of 2024 were covered by the media around the state including the Santa Fe New Mexican, Albuquerque Journal, Las Cruces Sun ,The Business Journal, KRQE, and KOB
 - Director Robert Rhatigan and Sr. Research Scientist Jacqueline Miller gave a keynote presentation at the New Mexico State University’s Research and Creativity week
 - Pedestrian and Bicycle Dashboard were featured by KUNM
- Provided practical training and employment for 30 undergraduate students and 8 graduate students
- Led UNM’s effort to join the Rocky Mountain Research Data Center—a Federal Statistical Research Data Center that allows UNM researchers to access secure federal data for research purposes
- Director Robert Rhatigan was active in a Local Update of Census Addresses working group and contributed to a [Resource Guide](#) being widely circulated
- Published Pedestrian, Cyclists and DWI dashboards marking a critical transition from pdf data dissemination.

Proposals and Awards



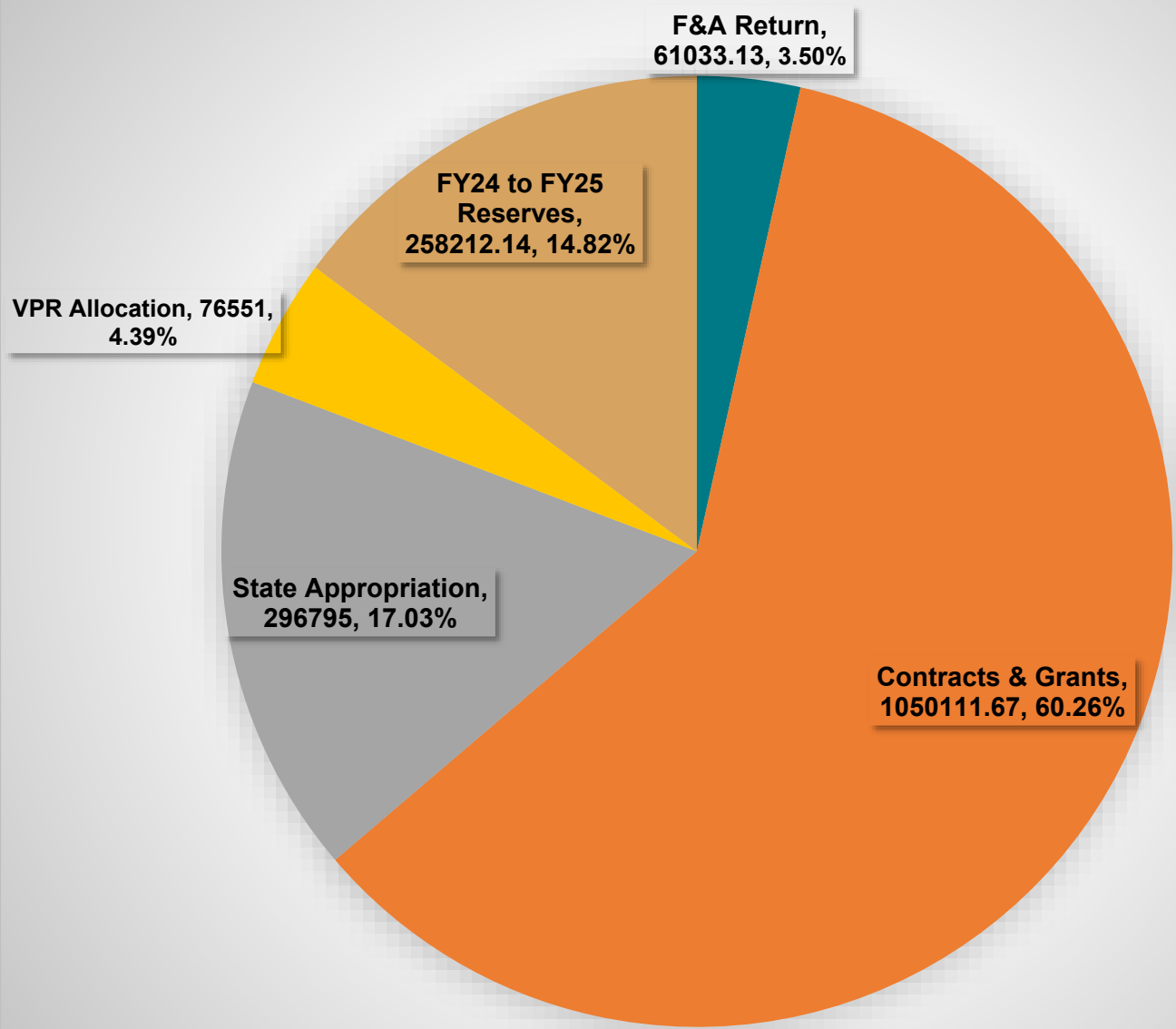
GPS Revenue Details FY24



FY24 Sources of Revenue

F&A Return	85,855.26
Contracts & Grants	1,039,646.37
State Appropriation	289,700.00
Other	12,012.39
FY23 to FY24 Reserves	365,593.87
Total	1,792,807.89

GPS Revenue Details FY25



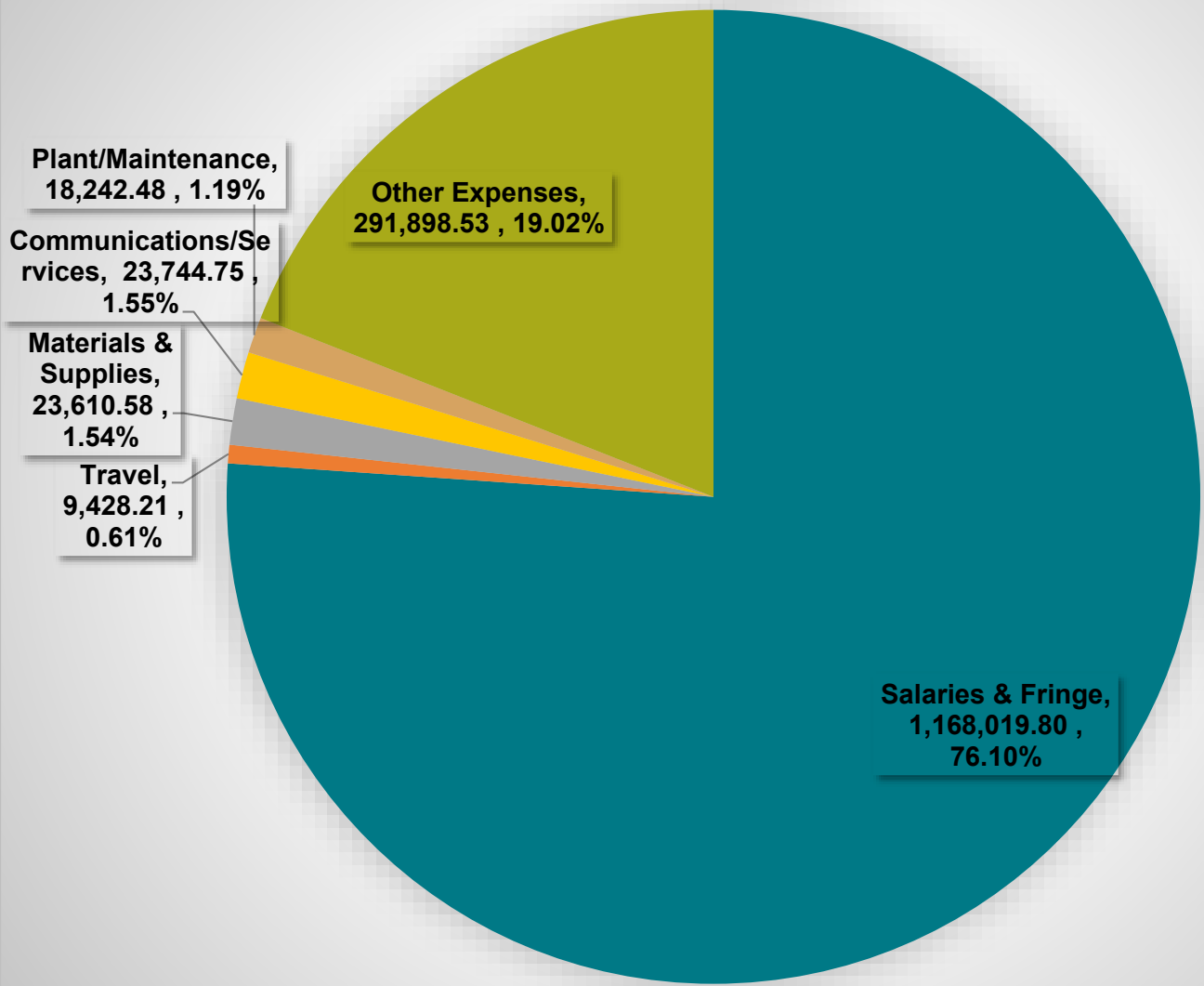
FY25 Sources of Revenue

F&A Return	61,033.13
Contracts & Grants	1,050,111.67
State Appropriation	296,795.00
VPR Allocation	76,551.00
FY24 to FY25 Reserves	258,212.14
Total	1,742,702.94

Research Expenditures and F&A



GPS Expenditure Details FY24



FY24 Expenditures:

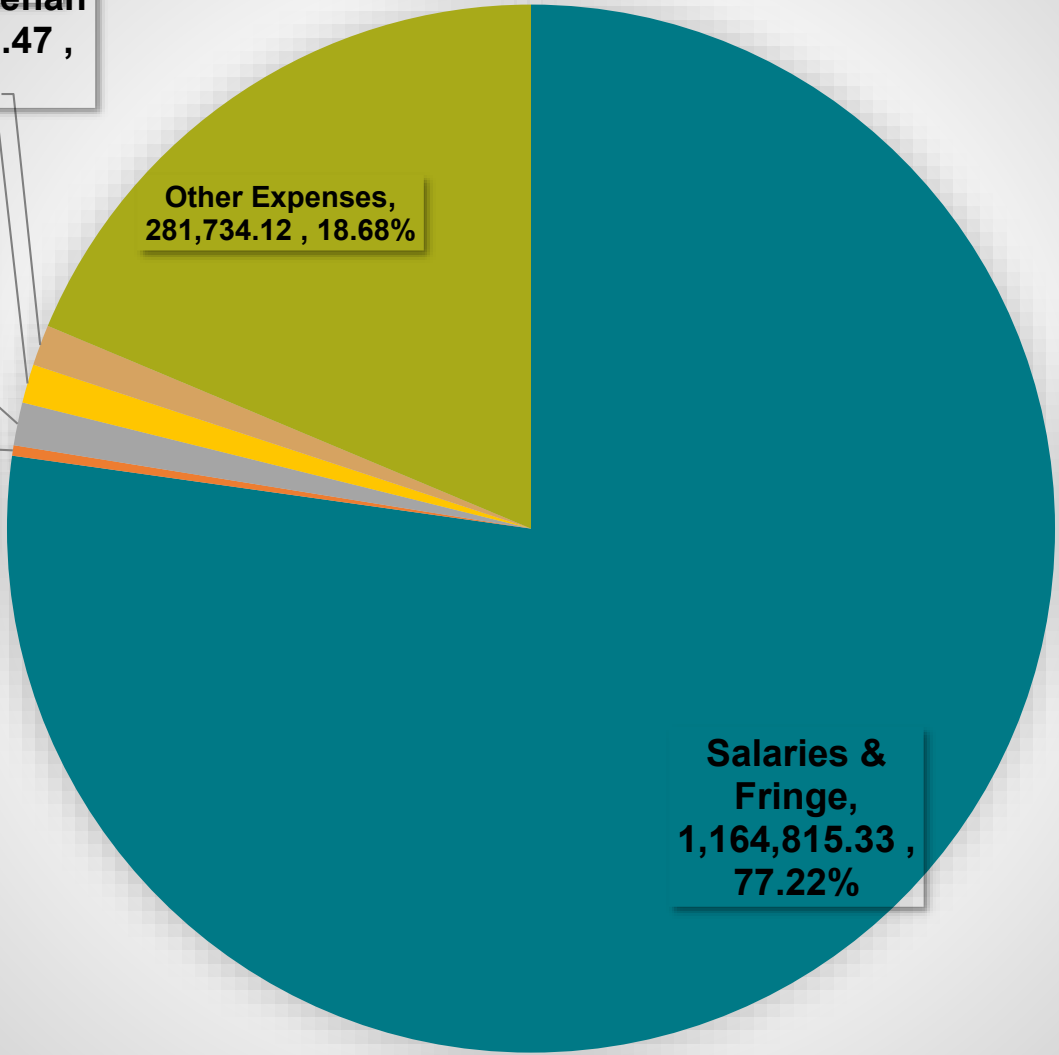
Salaries & Fringe	1,168,019.80
Travel	9,428.21
Materials & Supplies	23,610.58
Communications/Services	23,744.75
Plant/Maintenance	18,242.48
Other Expenses	291,898.53
Total	1,534,944.35

GPS Expenditure Details FY25

Communication
s/Services,
18,032.98 ,
1.20%
Plant/Maintenan
ce, 18,971.47 ,
1.26%

Materials &
Supplies,
19,983.67 ,
1.32%

Travel,
4,842.45 ,
0.32%



FY25 Expenditures:

Salaries & Fringe	1,164,815.33
Travel	4,842.45
Materials & Supplies	19,983.67
Communications/Services	18,032.98
Plant/Maintenance	18,971.47
Other Expenses	281,734.12
Total	1,508,380.02

Research Center Impacts

Resources provided for the campus

- Provides data and consultation to students and faculty conducting population research.
- Provides employment experience and training for students on GIS, database management, programming, and applied demography.
- Offers demographic research guidance, data access and data processing to researchers on main campus and health sciences campus.
- Offers guest lectures on demography and census topics.

Resource for the state/region

- Sole provider of crash data analysis for the NM Dept. of Transportation, the state legislature, the Highway Safety Plan, and other stakeholders.
- Provides state and county population projections by age and sex.
- Provides small-area population estimates by age, sex, race/ethnicity used by NMDOT and other agencies.
- Serves as New Mexico's liaison to the US Census Bureau Population Division.
- Provides expert opinion and analysis of demographic issues.
- Advises state and local governments on census programs and data.

Return on Investment

- Provided practical training and employment for 30 undergraduate students and 8 graduate students.
- Delivered on five contracts generating over \$2.6M in revenue and bringing in ~\$570,000 in F&A over two years.
- Publications and Presentations
 - 236 Reports
 - 2023 and 2024 New Mexico Small-Area Population Estimates
 - NM Traffic Crash Annual Report, 2023 and 2024
 - NM DWI Report, 2023 and 2024
 - 115 Community crash reports for all 33 counties and 82 communities around New Mexico
 - GPS staff made two presentations to the 2 NM Legislative Committees, 2 presentations to government agencies, and 7 conference presentations.
- GPS was referenced and quoted in numerous press outlets around New Mexico including the ABQ Journal, the Santa Fe New Mexican, the Las Cruces Sun-News, KUNM, and KRQE.

- Sustainable, recurring funding streams
- Recognized expert on New Mexico’s demographics and vehicular crash data
- Experienced working with multiple state agencies and private entities.
- Disparate expertise and retention of staff members
- Long-term records of crash data and population data.
- Only entity in state that produces population projections

STRENGTHS

- Lack of name and brand recognition.
- Almost all of GPS revenue comes from the same source; the State of New Mexico.
- Contract limitations on publishing restricts ability to broaden our research.
- Lack of funding for peer-reviewed research.

WEAKNESSES

- Collaborate with other departments to offer courses in traffic safety and demographics.
- Develop further interactive mapping and data display of demographic and traffic crash data.
- The 2030 Census is approaching, and GPS expects to play a critical and highly visible role in New Mexico’s count.
- Develop applications and automate workflows using artificial intelligence.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Slow reaction time from state agencies to finalize contracts.
- Compensation doesn’t keep pace with inflation, while a competitive job market increases competition that could lead to turnover in key positions.
- IT hardware costs are increasing rapidly.
- Existence of departmental silos restricts collaborative research across UNM.
- Negative perception of applied research.

THREATS

Looking Ahead to Fiscal Year 2026 and 2027

- Renewal of 4-year, \$2.5 million data analysis contract with the New Mexico Department of Transportation as well a new \$500,000 agreement for State Electronic Data Capture improvements.
- Further automation and data quality improvements within our Traffic Research Unit.
- Serve as state lead for the Local Update of Census Addresses program – the first partnership operation of the 2030 Census.
- Publish updated population projections for New Mexico and its counties.
- Expand research partnerships with UNM Health Sciences Center.

Summary

- GPS is well positioned for the future after carving out niche areas of research conducted on behalf of the State of New Mexico.
- GPS maintains stable sources of recurring revenue and long-term staff retention in key positions.
- The 2020 Census cycle is complete and operations for the 2030 Census are beginning. GPS will play a critical role on behalf of New Mexico both within the state and at the national level.
- GPS continues to expand its reach through new partnerships with UNM Health Sciences Center.
- GPS recently executed a two-year \$1 million renewal of our crash data entry contract with the New Mexico Department of Transportation and expects to sign up to four additional contracts totaling up to \$5 million in revenue over the four years.