

Citizens' Independent Salary Commission

City of Albuquerque

P.O. Box 1293 Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103

Final Memorandum

December 31, 2025

TO: Ethan Watson, City Clerk, Office of the City Clerk
FROM: Kent Hickman, Chairman, Citizens' Independent Salary Commission
SUBJECT: 2025 Evaluations of the Salaries for the Mayor and City Councilors

Amendment Notice

This report has been amended to correct the mayoral salary amount originally published on March 7, 2025. The Citizens' Independent Salary Commission identified an error in the originally reported salary figure and approved a correction on November 25, 2025. The correction reflects the inclusion of the 2025 cost of living adjustment, which was omitted from the March 7, 2025 publication. No other content or analyses in the report have been changed.

Executive Summary

City of Albuquerque voters approved the Citizens' Independent Salary Commission (Commission) as an amendment to the City Charter (Article XVIII) in the election of October 6, 2009. At least one year prior to each regular municipal election, the Commission is tasked with studying, evaluating, and (if warranted) recommending specific changes to the compensation levels of the Mayor and City Councilors. Should the Commission determine that the salary should be increased or decreased, the Commission shall file a written salary schedule with the City Clerk indicating the proposed salary. Any changes to salaries shall not be effective for the incumbent Mayor or Councilors but shall be effective at the beginning of the next term.

The Commission considered a variety of data, including historical compensation received by the Mayor and City Councilors, comparative pay and forms of government among similar cities, the managerial complexity of elected officials' labor, changes in cost of living and median household income, as well as changes in City revenue. Information from these analyses contributed to the Commission's decision. This is the eighth review conducted by the Commission since its inception.¹

¹ The Commission's first evaluation of salaries report was issued on February 26, 2013. Source: Citizens' Independent Salary Commission, "Citizens' Independent Salary Commission Report and Recommendations," <https://www.cabq.gov/audit/documents/2013_02_26_10_34_36.pdf>, accessed February 4, 2025.

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The decision of the Commission is that the salary of the Mayor and City Councilors will be:

- Mayor salary – from \$146,081.00 to \$154,217.71
- City Councilor salary – from \$62,843.00 to \$67,907.00
- Council President salary – from \$66,927.80 to \$72,321.00

The Commission thanks the Mayor and City Councilors for their dedicated service to the City of Albuquerque and its citizens. We appreciate that the Commission's independence was respected by their neither seeking to influence nor directing our deliberations in any way. The complete report is available at <https://www.cabq.gov/audit/citizens-independent-salary-commission>. If you have additional questions, contact Dr. Kent Hickman, Chairman, at (505) 768-3150.

Commission Charter Amendment

Through the charter amendment, the Commission was given the authority to evaluate the annual salaries of the Mayor and Councilors and determine whether they should be increased or decreased. The Commission has the authority to consider all factors relevant to the salaries. Parameters given to the Commission are as follows in Article XVIII of the Charter:

- (a) The Commission shall consist of five members selected by the Accountability in Government Oversight Committee (AGO). All members shall be residents of the City of Albuquerque and shall not be an officer, official or employee of the city or an immediate family member of the same. The term of each member shall be for four years, unless a member is selected to fill a vacancy, and no member shall be appointed to more than two terms. The initial terms of members of the newly established Commission shall be staggered; the initial term for two members shall be two years and the initial term of three members shall be four years.
- (b) At least one year prior to each regular municipal election, the Commission shall review the salaries paid by the city to the Mayor and Councilors. If after such review the Commission determines that the salary should be increased or decreased, the Commission shall file a written salary schedule with the City Clerk indicating the proposed salary.
- (c) Changes to the salaries shall not be effective for the incumbent Mayor and Councilors, but shall be effective at the beginning of the next term.

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- (d) Any change to salaries recommended by the Commission shall be subject to the referendum procedures as provided for in Article III, Section 2 of the Charter.
- (e) All meetings of the Commission shall be open to the public and subject to the Open Meetings Act, Sections 10-15-1 et seq. NMSA 1978.

Commission Members

As specified in the City Charter (see excerpt above), the Commission was selected through a process administered by AGO. Commissioners have no ties or conflicts with the City of Albuquerque, the Mayor, or City Council. AGO appointed the following individuals to serve on the Commission:

Name	Term End Date
Dr. Kent Hickman, Chairman	2025
Kari Sutton, Vice-Chair	2026
Molly Rogers	2026
Michael Garlid	2026
Vacant	

Methodology

The Commission approached its work with consideration to research with the utmost transparency. The Commission remained steadfast in its mission to look at the positions and not the individuals who currently hold them. The members of the Commission produced this report with the assistance of the exceptional staff within the City's Office of Internal Audit. Methodologies used to conduct this analysis included but are not limited to the following:

- Studied the roles and responsibilities of the City's Mayor and City Councilors.
- Sought input from the Mayor and City Councilors on the estimated hours committed to their duties.
- Sought input from the public, Mayor, City Councilors, Chief Administrative Officer, and Council Services Director regarding the salaries established for elected officials.
- Analyzed historical salaries for the City's Mayor and City Councilors since 2013.
- Measured changes in the City of Albuquerque's revenue.

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- Assessed changes in the cost of living and affordability based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the median household income.
- Researched and analyzed comparable cities based on factors such as city budget, full-time employees, population size, government structure, and median income, to identify and compare the level of responsibility for elected officials versus their salaries and overall compensation.
- Analyzed the hours reported as worked, salaries, and total compensation packages (where feasible) earned by Albuquerque elected officials, as well as their respective roles and responsibilities.
- Assessed the feasibility of changes to salaries based on the City of Albuquerque's current and forecasted budgets.
- Discussed the results of information received in meetings which were open to public comment, in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.
- Considered the facts presented in prior Commission reports and the recommendations included in them.

Albuquerque Government Structure

The City of Albuquerque utilizes a mayor-council system. In this form of municipal government, the city council serves as the city's primary legislative body while the mayor serves as the city's chief executive. Mayor-council governments generally feature an elected executive officer called a mayor and an elected legislative body that is most often known as the city council.

The mayor-council government is one of the five major types of municipal government utilized throughout the United States. The other four are council-manager, commission, open town meetings, and representative town meetings.

In a council-manager government, an elected city council serves as the city's primary legislative body and appoints a chief executive officer called a city manager to oversee day-to-day municipal operations, draft a budget, and implement and enforce the council's policy and legislation initiatives. In most council-manager systems, an elected mayor serves on the city council as a regular voting member with few or no legal privileges that may distinguish the position from the other members of council.

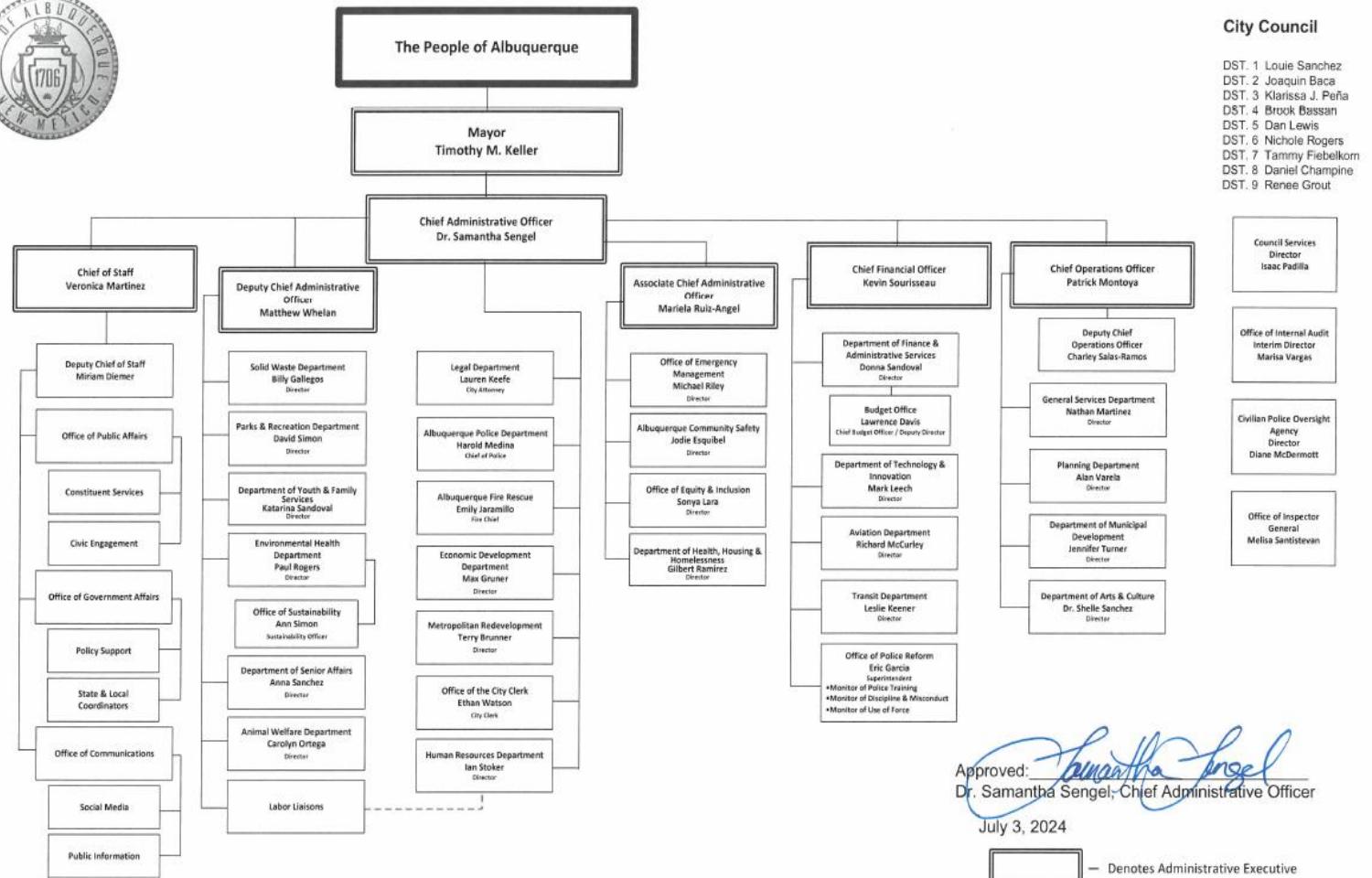
A city commission is a form of municipal government in which individually elected officials serve on a small governing board called a commission. The commission exercises both legislative and executive powers to govern the municipality. Usually, commission members are elected on an at-large basis, rather than from wards or districts.

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An open town meeting government is a form of municipal government in which all qualified voters of the municipality have an opportunity to assemble on a given day to debate and vote on policy decisions. A representative town meeting government is a form of municipal government that is similar to the open town meeting structure because legislative policies for the town are debated and set at an assembly of residents. However, in this form the residents of the town elect a large number of citizens, called town meeting members, to represent them at the town meeting.

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Below is the City of Albuquerque's organizational chart as detailed on page 7 of the City's 2025 approved budget.²



Approved: 
Dr. Samantha Sengel, Chief Administrative Officer

July 3, 2024

 — Denotes Administrative Executive

² City of Albuquerque, "Approved Budget Fiscal Year 2025," <<https://www.cabq.gov/dfa/documents/fy25-approved-budget-final-numbered-hyperlinks-7-31-2024.pdf>>, accessed February 4, 2025.

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Duties of the Mayor and City Council

According to the City's Charter, "The Mayor shall be the Chief Executive Officer with all executive and administrative powers of the City and shall devote full time and attention to the performance of the duties of the office and shall hold no other paid public or private employment" (Article V, section 3). The Mayor is also the official head of the city for all ceremonial purposes, representing the City on state, national, and international levels. The duties of the Mayor (Article V, section 4) include, among other things, organizing the executive branch of the City, exercising administrative control, supervising over and appointing directors of city departments, administrating and protecting the merit system, and formulating city budgets. Furthermore, with the advice and consent of City Council, the Mayor is responsible for appointing the Chief Administrative Officer; any deputy administrative officers; the Chief of Police; the Fire Chief; and members of city committees, commissions, and boards. The Mayor is also head of the Mayor's Office, which supports the elected chief executive and ceremonial head of the City pursuant to the City Charter. The office is comprised of seven support staff and constituent services. The Mayor is paid a salary of \$146,081 and is eligible for the same benefits eligible to City employees.

The Chief Administrative Office Department supports the Mayor, as well as general city functions. The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is appointed by the Mayor with the consent of the City Council to provide day-to-day management of the City. Together, the Mayor and CAO provide the leadership and direction to execute policies legislated by the City Council. The CAO is currently paid a salary of \$237,141 and is eligible for the same benefits eligible to City employees.

According to the Charter's Historical Postscripts, as a result of a special election held on February 26, 1974, the five-member City Commission (which had governed the City of Albuquerque since 1917) was replaced with a full-time Mayor as the City's chief executive and a nine-member, part-time, districted City Council as the legislative arm of city government. As codified by City Charter (Article IV, section 4), "The terms of the office of a Councilor, unless sooner recalled or removed, shall begin on January 1 following the candidate's election and be four years or until a successor is duly elected and qualified. The councilors may succeed themselves in office. The terms of office of Councilors shall be staggered with four or five districted Councilors elected every two years." Members are paid a salary and are eligible for the same benefits eligible to City employees.

According to the Charter (Article IV, section 8), the City Council has "the power to adopt all ordinances, resolutions or other legislation conducive to the welfare of the people of the City." The duties of the City Council (Article IV, section 10) include, among other things, establishing and adopting five-year goals and one-year objectives for the City

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(these goals and objectives are to be reviewed and revised annually by City Council); reviewing, approving, or amending all city budgets; adopting policies, plans, programs, and legislation consistent with the goals and objectives established by City Council; and hiring personnel necessary to enable City Council to adequately perform its duties.

Council Services provides support services to the City Council. The Council Services Director is responsible for oversight of the office and advising City Councilors on City affairs. In fiscal year 2025, the approved budget for Council Services was \$8.7 million and comprised 45 full-time budgeted positions, including one full-time staff member (a Council Policy Analyst position) that provides professional staff assistance to an assigned City Councilor. The Council Services Director is currently paid a salary of \$179,629 and is eligible for employee benefits.

The City Council President is elected in a vote of all City Council members and has numerous unique responsibilities. The City Council President is responsible for preserving order and decorum; directing City Council meetings; assigning bills; preparing and disseminating meeting agendas with public notice for the meeting; appointing all Committees whether standing, joint, or special, subject to the approval of the City Council except where otherwise indicated; and designating the Chairperson of each Committee subject to the approval of the City Council with the exception of Chair of the Committee-of-the-Whole. The City Council President is currently paid a salary of \$66,928 and, like all City Councilors, is eligible for the same benefits eligible to City employees.

In addition to the duties outlined by the Charter, City Council members also participate in a variety of committees. The table below details the various committees and the number of City Council members appointed to each committee for 2025.³

City Council Committees - 2025

Committee Branch	Committee Name	Number of Appointed Council Members
Standing Committee	Committee-of-the Whole Budget	9
	Finance and Government Operations	5
	Land Use, Planning & Zoning Committee	5
	Public Safety Committee	5

³ City of Albuquerque, "City Council Home-Committees," <<https://www.cabq.gov/council/committees>>, accessed February 4, 2025.

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Committee Branch	Committee Name	Number of Appointed Council Members
Governing Bodies with Council Participation	Local Government Coordinating Commission (LGCC)	4
	Albuquerque-Bernalillo Water Utility Authority	3
	Mid-Region Council of Governments	6
	Metropolitan Transportation Board	6
	Regional Transit District	5
Committees on which Councilors and the Administration Serve to Govern the City	Accountability in Government Oversight Committee	1
	Alvarado Transportation Center Project Task Force	1
	Committee on Guidelines for Negotiations	3
	Intergovernmental Legislative Relations	3
	Economic Development Action Account	2
Committees for Internal Council Matters	Internal Operations Committee	9
Non-City Committees that Include Council Participation	Visit Albuquerque	3
	ABC Community School Partnership	2
	Explora	2
	Hispano Chamber of Commerce	2
	New Mexico Municipal League Representative	1

Mayor Survey Results

A 15-question survey was administered electronically to the Mayor. The questions primarily centered around whether the position's responsibilities have changed, how many hours are needed to fulfill the position's duties, and whether the established salaries for elected officials affect those that would like to run for office. Responses were not received for this current year's evaluation.

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Mayor Survey Responses

Question	Generalized Response
Question #1: In your opinion, what are the essential duties of the Mayor?	No response received
Question #2: In your opinion, what is the minimum number of hours a week the position of Mayor should be able to regularly dedicate to adequately fulfill the responsibilities of the position?	No response received
Question: #3: Approximately how many hours each work week do you typically spend attending and preparing for meetings and functions that are official City-sponsored activities?	No response received
Question #4: Approximately how many hours each work week do you normally spend attending and preparing for meetings and functions that are <u>not</u> official City-sponsored activities? Please provide some examples of these types of meetings and functions.	No response received
Question #5: In your opinion, have the responsibilities required of the Mayor position expanded, contracted, or remained unchanged over the last two years, and if so, in what ways?	No response received
Question #6: In your opinion, how does the salary established for the position of Mayor impact an individual's decision to run for office? If so, in what ways?	No response received
Question #7: In your opinion, does the salary established for the Mayor present any	No response received

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economic barriers to potential candidates considering running for office? If so, in what way?	
Question #8: In your opinion, do you feel that the established salary for the position of Mayor is sufficient to not require additional sources of income?	No response received
Question #9: In your opinion, how important, on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being extremely important, 3 being important, and 1 being unimportant, should the following factors be weighted in determining the salary for the position of Mayor?	No response received
Question #10: In your opinion, are the salaries established for the position of elected City Councilors reflective of their responsibilities and the time necessary to perform them?	No response received
Question #11: In your opinion, have the citizens of Albuquerque benefited from their elected City Councilors being able to dedicate full-time attention to their roles?	No response received
Question #12: In your opinion, do the salaries established for the positions of elected City Councilors impact an individual's decision to run for office? If so, in what ways?	No response received
Question #13: In your opinion, do the salaries established for positions of elected City Councilors present any economic barriers to potential candidates considering running for office? If so, in what way?	No response received

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Question #14: In your opinion, how important, on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being extremely important, 3 being important, and 1 being unimportant, should the following factors be weighted in determining the salary for the positions of elected City Councilors and Council President?	No response received
Question #15: Please list any additional comments you may have.	No response received

City Council Survey Results

An 18-question survey was administered electronically to the City Councilors. The questions primarily centered around whether the positions' responsibilities have changed, how many hours are needed to fulfill their duties, and whether the established salaries for elected officials affect those that would like to run for office. The table below details the City Councilors' generalized responses.

City Council Survey Results

Question ⁴	Number of Responses Received	Generalized Responses
Question #1: When were you most recently elected as City Councilor?	5	Three responses were 2021, one response was 2023, and one response was 2024

⁴ Questions in the report have been renumbered to be sequential, therefore different from the order in which they appeared in the original survey.

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<p>Question #2: In your opinion, what are the essential duties of an elected City Councilor?</p>	5	<p>Assisting constituents with concerns and needs for day to day city related problems that are affecting them; reviewing legislation and the passing of the city budget to reflect the desires of constituents; serving those who elected City Councilors; 24/7 availability to district residents for concerns, ensuring the city is providing necessary services; representing the district on all policies and laws related to city services; holding regular community forums; making policy decisions that affect the entire city; legislative and policy development; analyzing land use issues</p>				
<p>Question #3: In your opinion, what is the minimum number of hours a week an elected City Councilor should be able to regularly dedicate to adequately fulfill the responsibilities of the position?</p>	5	<p>All responses indicated that 40 hours was the minimum hours per week and that Council should be considered full-time, as the role is multifaceted and complex.</p>				
<p>Question: #4: Approximately how many hours each work week do you typically spend attending and preparing for meetings and functions that are official City-sponsored activities?</p>	5	<table> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="975 1262 1090 1368">Range 20-40+ Hours</th> <th data-bbox="1192 1262 1334 1368">Average 32 Hours</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="1122 1417 1237 1480"></td> <td data-bbox="1122 1417 1237 1480">Median 30</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Range 20-40+ Hours	Average 32 Hours		Median 30
Range 20-40+ Hours	Average 32 Hours					
	Median 30					

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<p>Question #5: Approximately how many hours each work week do you typically spend attending and preparing for meetings and functions that are not official City-sponsored activities? Please provide some examples of these types of meetings and functions.</p>	5	<p>Range 0 – 20+ hours</p> <p>Median 20</p> <p>Individual meetings and phone calls with constituents; neighborhood meetings; attending events sponsored by other elected officials; studying policies and procedures that affect district and individuals' issues</p>
<p>Question #6: In your opinion, have the responsibilities required of the position of elected City Councilors expanded, contracted, or remained unchanged over the last two years, and if so, in what ways?</p>	5	<p>Four out of five responses agree that the responsibilities have expanded as constituent service needs, concerns, and requests have increased. Some mentioned that Councilors now represent the equivalent of five state representatives/senators; there have been unprecedented changes in crime and unhoused individuals that did not previously exist; there has been an increase in population</p>
<p>Question #7: Are there issues you want to pursue as an elected City Councilor, but cannot due to time and/or resource constraints? If so, please explain.</p>	5	<p>Four out of five responses said yes; digging into the kinds of policies that would make our city more efficient; studying best practices; seeing how other cities are solving common problems; spending time at the State Legislature during the annual legislative session is difficult while working a job separate from Council duties; more policy development but can't because of working another job to pay bills</p>

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<p>Question #8: In your opinion, how does the salary established for the position of elected City Councilors impact an individual's decision to run for office?</p>	5	<p>Four out of five responses stated that it has a large impact on an individual's decision to run for office; to effectively represent approximately 63,000 constituents and deal with the needs and challenges is difficult while simultaneously needing to maintain a separate job in order to maintain a basic cost of living; what began as a role where one can maintain a full-time job, it is incredibly difficult to balance another job and personal responsibilities while still properly dedicating the correct amount of time to being a City Councilor; keeps middle and low income people from running. One response stated that it is seen as a volunteer position, however one would have to have another source of income and the ability to work outside that job.</p>
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<p>Question #9: In your opinion, do the salaries established for the positions of elected City Councilors present any economic barriers to potential candidates considering running for office? If so, in what way?</p>	5	<p>Four out of five responses said yes; it is impossible to hold another full-time job while spending most of the week on City Council responsibilities; most individuals would have to be self-employed, retired, or have passive income; it is rare for City Councilors to not have a separate full-time job unless they are retired; most Councilors work more than part-time hours, which include nights and weekends; it is extremely difficult to manage two full-time jobs and a family, which would create barriers to potential candidates; middle and low-income individuals can't afford to serve. One response stated it is much more possible now since the salaries were raised after the last review.</p>
<p>Question #10: In your opinion, would the citizens of Albuquerque benefit from their elected City Councilors being able to dedicate full-time attention to their roles?</p>	5	<p>All responses stated yes; each district is approximately 63,000 residents and all come with challenges and needs that are required to effectively govern; a salaried position would benefit the citizens</p>
<p>Question #11: In your opinion, do you feel that the established salaries for City Councilors are sufficient to not require additional sources of income?</p>	5	<p>Four out of five responses stated no; I don't know of a Councilor past or present that did not have a second income. One response stated yes, but may still be a challenge for some.</p>
<p>Question #12: As an elected City Councilor, do you rely on any other forms of compensation, such as investment, retirement, or outside employment?</p>	5	<p>Four out of five responses stated yes; all of the above; outside employment. One response stated that they do not.</p>

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Question #13: In your opinion, is the salary established for the position of Mayor reflective of the position's responsibilities and the time necessary to perform them?	5	Four out of five responses said yes and one response said no.
Question #14: In your opinion, does the salary established for the position of Mayor impact an individual's decision to run for office? If so, in what ways?	5	Three out of five responses said yes; the role is a 24/7 job and requires time away from home and incredible flexibility; it is a full-time salary; for reasons listed above. Two responses said no.
Question #15: In your opinion, does the salary established for the position of Mayor present any economic barriers to potential candidates considering running for office? If so, in what way?	5	Four out of five responses said no; one response said yes, for reasons listed above.
Question #16 Please list any additional comments you may have.	1	Each District in the City of Albuquerque would on its own be in the top five largest cities in the State of New Mexico. The challenges and needs are increasing, and full-time Councilors are necessary at this point in the City's growth and change.

Question #17: In your opinion, how important, on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being extremely important, 3 being important, and 1 being unimportant, should the following factors be weighted in determining the salary for the positions of City Councilors and Council President?⁵

⁵ This question is a repeated question from question #18 and asked about the factors in determining the salary for the positions of City Councilors and Council President in error.

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Responses	1 - Unimportant	3 - Important	5 - Extremely Important	Weighted Score	Total Responses
Median income in Albuquerque	0 0%	3 60%	2 40%	4	5
Living wage analysis for Albuquerque	1 20%	1 20%	3 60%	4	5
Salary for councilors in other comparable cities	0 0%	1 20%	4 80%	5	5
Salaries and cost-of-living adjustments for CABQ employees	1 20%	2 40%	2 40%	3	5
Competitiveness with salaries for roles with comparable responsibilities in the private sector	1 20%	1 20%	3 60%	4	5
Managerial complexity of elected officials' labor	0 0%	2 40%	3 60%	4	5
Assessing the feasibility of changes to salary based on the City of Albuquerque's current and forecasted budgets	0 0%	4 80%	1 20%	3	5
Researching and analyzing comparable cities based on factors such as city budget, full-time employees, population size, government structure, and median income, to identify and compare the level of responsibility... for mayors versus their salaries and overall compensation	0 0%	3 60%	2 40%	4	5
Analyzing the hours reported as worked, salaries total compensation package (where feasible) earned by Albuquerque elected officials, as well as their respective roles and responsibilities	0 0%	2 40%	3 60%	4	5
Weighted Score: 3.89					

Question #18: In your opinion, how important, on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being extremely important, 3 being important, and 1 being unimportant, should the following factors be weighted in determining the salary for the positions of elected City Councilors and Council President?

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Responses	1 - Unimportant	3 - Important	5 - Extremely Important	Weighted Score	Total Responses
Median income in Albuquerque	0 0%	3 60%	2 40%	4	5
Living wage analysis for Albuquerque	1 20%	1 20%	3 60%	4	5
Salary for mayors in other comparable cities	0 0%	2 40%	3 60%	4	5
Salaries and cost-of-living adjustments for CABQ employees	2 40%	2 40%	1 20%	3	5
Competitiveness with salaries for roles with comparable responsibilities in the private sector	1 20%	3 60%	1 20%	3	5
Managerial complexity of elected officials' labor	1 20%	2 40%	2 40%	3	5
Assessing the feasibility of changes to salary based on the City of Albuquerque's current and forecasted budgets	0 0%	4 80%	1 20%	3	5
Researching and analyzing comparable cities based on factors such as city budget, full-time employees, population size, government structure, and median income, to identify and compare the level of responsibility... for mayors versus their salaries and overall compensation	0 0%	4 80%	1 20%	3	5
Analyzing the hours reported as worked, salaries total compensation package (where feasible) earned by Albuquerque elected officials, as well as their respective roles and responsibilities	0 0%	4 80%	1 20%	3	5
Weighted Score: 3.44					

Chief Administrative Officer and Council Services Director Survey Results

A 19-question survey was administered electronically to the Chief Administrative Officer and Director of Council Services. The questions primarily centered around whether the responsibilities of elected positions have changed and whether the established salaries for elected officials affect those that would like to run for office.

Question ⁶	Responses ⁷
Question #1: In your opinion, what are the essential duties of the Mayor?	The Mayor of Albuquerque serves as the chief executive; manages city departments; proposes and administers a \$1.4 billion budget; works closely with the City Council to shape policy. Key priorities include public safety, economic development, addressing homelessness and housing, and economic development. The Mayor's work directly

⁶ Questions in the report have been renumbered to be sequential, therefore different from the order they appeared in the original survey.

⁷ Multiple responses received to the same questions are not reflected in a particular or consistent order.

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	<p>impacts the quality of life for all Albuquerque residents.</p>
	<p>The Mayor manages operations, budget, and policy: Leadership - Oversees departments, appoints leaders, sets priorities; Budget—Prepares, allocates, ensures fiscal responsibility; Policy—Proposes, implements, executes laws; Public Safety – Oversees police/fire, manages crises; Economy—Attracts business, funds projects; Community—Engages, promotes inclusion; Intergovernmental—Works with Council, state, and local entities; Capital—Improves infrastructure Workforce—Manages labor. Crime—Shapes safety policy</p>
<p>Question #2: In your opinion, what is the minimum number of hours a week the position of Mayor should be able to regularly dedicate to adequately fulfill the responsibilities of the position?</p>	<p>The Mayor must be available 24 hours, 7 days a week. Emergencies can happen at any time and the Mayor needs to respond. It takes 70 to 80 hours a week.</p>
<p>Question #3: In your opinion, have the responsibilities required of the Mayor position expanded, contracted, or remained unchanged over the last two years, and if so, in what ways?</p>	<p>The amount of money available in Santa Fe for capital and operations has expanded. Current revenue projections indicate this positive trend will continue for the next 20 years. Consequently, the Mayor must dedicate more time to advocating for Albuquerque in Santa Fe to secure the City's share of these increased state funds. Simultaneously, the ongoing challenge of homelessness continues to exert significant pressure on the Mayor and is expected to remain a key concern for the foreseeable future.</p>

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	<p>The responsibilities of this position are consistently significant. The responsibilities are influenced by the issues of most significance, which in the case of crime, homelessness, addiction, lack of housing and the intersection of all of these and their impact on the city. These issues have increased the intensity of the role and the impact of the role.</p>
<p>Question #4: In your opinion, how does the salary established for the position of Mayor impact an individual's decision to run for office? If so, in what ways?</p>	<p>To attract qualified candidates, the Mayor's compensation must be competitive. The demanding role requires long hours, intense pressure, and significant public scrutiny. A higher salary is essential to recruit top talent.</p>
	<p>Yes, the role requires a highly qualified individual in government, accountability, management, and operations who can engage with the community and represent voters. The current salary, given the time and responsibilities, undercompensates the position, likely limiting interest. Realistically, the pay is so low that a candidate must have other financial means if they support dependents or family members, making it inaccessible for many qualified individuals.</p>
<p>Question #5: In your opinion, does the salary established for the Mayor present any economic barriers to potential candidates considering running for office? If so, in what way?</p>	<p>Yes, a lower mayoral salary can create economic barriers. If the pay is significantly less than comparable roles, qualified candidates may be discouraged from running. This limits the pool to those independently wealthy, willing to take a pay cut, or retired, potentially excluding highly qualified individuals who can't afford the sacrifice. Competitive compensation is crucial for attracting top talent.</p>

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	<p>Yes, the current mayoral salary may create economic barriers for potential candidates. The demands of the role are significant, yet the compensation may limit interest from qualified individuals who need additional financial resources to support dependents or family responsibilities. This could narrow the pool of candidates to those with independent financial means, rather than reflecting the broadest range of individuals who may be well-suited for the position.</p>
<p>Question #6: In your opinion, do you feel that the established salary for the position of Mayor is sufficient to not require additional sources of income?</p>	<p>Absolutely not. The salary for the Mayor needs to be substantially increased.</p>
	<p>No, the current salary is likely insufficient without additional household income, especially for those supporting a family. The role demands full-time commitment and obviously limits outside employment. Given the cost of living, housing, childcare, and other essential expenses, the salary may not provide financial stability for individuals with dependents. This could discourage highly qualified candidates who cannot afford the financial sacrifice, narrowing the field of potential leaders.</p>
<p>Question #7: The position of Mayor of Albuquerque is a full-time position and the position's established annual salary is currently \$146,081. In your opinion, should the salary for the position of the next Mayor be increased, decreased, or unchanged?</p>	<p>Increased</p>
<p>Question #8: In your opinion, what are the essential duties of an elected City Councilor?</p>	<p>Albuquerque City Councilors legislate, approve the budget, and represent constituents. They oversee land use, economic development, and public safety, holding the mayor and departments accountable. Councilors engage with residents, address concerns, and advocate</p>

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	<p>for equitable resources. They collaborate to improve infrastructure, housing, and quality of life.</p>
	<p>City Councilors legislate, approve budgets, and set policy. They represent constituents, address district concerns, and ensure compliance with law. They appoint board members, oversee city goals, and collaborate with the mayor. They engage the public with hearings and events while working with other governments to advance city interests. Although they do not manage daily operations, except for Council Services, Councilors focus on lawmaking, fiscal oversight, and advocating for community needs.</p>
<p>Question #9: In your opinion, what is the minimum number of hours a week an elected City Councilor should be able to regularly dedicate to adequately fulfill the responsibilities of the position?</p>	<p>City Councilors work a demanding schedule, often 7 days a week. Required board, commission, and council meetings consume 30-40 hours monthly. This does not include neighborhood association meetings and meetings with other elected officials. The minimum to be effective is 50 to 60 hours a week.</p>
	<p>15</p>
<p>Question #10: In your opinion, have the responsibilities required of the position of elected City Councilors expanded, contracted, or remained unchanged over the last two years, and if so, in what ways?</p>	<p>City Councilors work long hours. Funding for capital projects and operations in Santa Fe has grown, with projections showing this trend will continue for 20 years. As a result, Councilors must spend more time advocating for Albuquerque to secure its share of State funds. At the same time, homelessness remains a major challenge, placing significant pressure on Councilors and is expected to persist. The constituent calls have substantially increased to address crime, homelessness and other issues.</p>
	<p>They have not changed</p>

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<p>Question #11: In your opinion how does the salaries established for the positions of elected City Councilors impact an individual's decision to run for office?</p>	<p>If a person is not independently wealthy, retired, self-employed, or working for an organization that offers flexible hours, they cannot afford to run for or hold office. The time commitment is demanding, with meetings scheduled a year in advance. These meetings take place during the workday, after hours, and on weekends. A competitive salary would attract talented individuals who currently cannot make the financial sacrifice, thereby increasing the diversity of candidates.</p>
	<p>The salary for Albuquerque City Councilors reflects the part-time nature of the role, requiring a reasonable commitment of time and attention. This allows individuals to run for office while maintaining employment in their field, ensuring they bring relevant qualifications and real-world experience. It makes the position accessible to a broader range of people, enhancing community representation and allowing councilors to stay connected to the everyday needs of their constituents.</p>
<p>Question #12: In your opinion, do the salaries established for positions of elected City Councilors present any economic barriers to potential candidates considering running for office? If so, in what way?</p>	<p>Yes, the current City Councilor salaries are absolutely an economic barrier. The demanding 50–60-hour work weeks, including nights and weekends, make the position untenable for many. Unless they have outside income and flexibility with their job, the low pay compared to the time commitment discourages qualified professionals who can't afford the significant income reduction, limiting the candidate pool.</p>

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	<p>The salaries for Albuquerque City Councilors do not present significant economic barriers, as the position is part-time. The compensation is reasonable for the time commitment required, allowing individuals to maintain outside employment. This structure ensures that people from various professional backgrounds can consider running for office, without having to give up their careers or financial stability, broadening the pool of potential candidates and promoting diverse representation.</p>
<p>Question #13: In your opinion, would the citizens of Albuquerque benefit from their elected City Councilors being able to dedicate full-time attention to their roles?</p>	<p>Albuquerque City Councilors already dedicate well over 40 hours a week to their roles, effectively working full-time. However, the current compensation creates an economic barrier, restricting who can realistically serve. Improved pay would attract a more diverse pool of candidates, not just those who are independently wealthy, business owners, retired, or have unusually flexible work schedules. This would open the door for more people and better represent the community.</p>
	<p>Making City Councilor roles full-time could limit diverse representation in Albuquerque. The current part-time structure allows people with different backgrounds—such as business owners and workers—to serve, offering real-life experience and a genuine understanding of community needs. This reduces career politicians and increases the likelihood of councilors who balance responsibilities like the average citizen, fostering stronger connections with those they represent.</p>

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<p>Question #14:</p> <p>In your opinion, do you feel that the established salaries for City Councilors are sufficient to not require additional sources of income?</p>	<p>No, based on the time commitment and the need to attract a more diverse pool of candidates, the current salaries for City Councilors are not sufficient. The demanding, effectively full-time workload makes it difficult for most people to run. Therefore, the current compensation necessitates those councilors be independently wealthy, a business owner, retired with a pension, or having a very flexible job or make significant financial sacrifices to serve. This limits who can afford to run and serve.</p>
	<p>The salary for Albuquerque City Councilors is appropriate for a part-time position, which is supported by full-time staff. This structure allows councilors to manage their duties while also having the flexibility to engage in outside employment. It ensures they can effectively represent their community without the need for full-time commitment, while still being compensated fairly for their part-time responsibilities and having time to balance other professional or personal obligations.</p>
<p>Question #15:</p> <p>The positions of elected City Councilors of Albuquerque are considered part-time positions and the established annual salary for Councilors is \$62,843. Do you believe the salaries for the positions of the next elected City Councilors should be increased, decreased, or unchanged?</p>	<p>Increased</p>
	<p>Unchanged</p>
<p>Question #16:</p> <p>The position of City Council President is considered a part-time position and the established annual salary for the position of Council President is</p>	<p>Increased</p>

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<p>\$66,928. Do you believe the salary for the position of the next elected Council President should be increased, decreased, or unchanged?</p>	<p>Unchanged</p>
<p>Question #17: Please list any additional comments you may have.</p>	<p>No, the established City Councilor salaries are not sufficient to avoid requiring additional income. If, as suggested, Councilors should earn at least half of the Mayor's salary (and the Mayor's salary itself needs increasing due to the job's complexity and time commitment), then the current Councilor pay is clearly inadequate. The significant time demands of the position, combined with insufficient compensation, make it difficult for individuals without other income sources to serve effectively. This limits the pool of potential candidates.</p>
	<p>When setting salaries for these positions, it is crucial to recognize the distinct nature of each role. The Mayor, as CEO of the city, holds responsibilities that far exceed those of a City Councilor, that is not to say the City Councilor position is not important. Therefore, it is unreasonable for City Councilors to be paid nearly 50% of the Mayor's salary, again that is not to say the City Councilors' pay should be reduced. This comparison does not reflect the duties of the positions nor the differing scales of responsibility. The Mayor's role involves broader oversight, operations, and leadership, while the City Councilor's role focuses on leadership in legislative functions. Evaluating these positions solely based on full-time versus part-time status would be an oversimplification. Each role carries significant value and should be compensated accordingly, reflecting the scope and impact of the responsibilities attached to it.</p>

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Question #18: In your opinion, how important on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being extremely important, 3 being important, and 1 being unimportant, should the following factors be weighted in determining the salary for the position of Mayor?

Responses	1 - Unimportant	3 - Important	5 - Extremely Important	Weighted Score	Total Responses
Median income in Albuquerque	2 100%	0 0%	0 0%	1	2
Living wage analysis for Albuquerque	2 100%	0 0%	0 0%	1	2
Salary for mayors in other comparable cities	0 0%	0 0%	2 100%	5	2
Salaries and cost-of-living adjustments for CABQ employees	1 50%	1 50%	0 0%	2	2
Competitiveness with salaries for roles with comparable responsibilities in the private sector	0 0%	0 0%	2 100%	5	2
Managerial complexity of elected officials' labor	0 0%	0 0%	2 100%	5	2
Assessing the feasibility of changes to salary based on the City of Albuquerque's current and forecasted budgets	0 0%	2 100%	0 0%	3	2
Researching and analyzing comparable cities based on factors such as city budget, full-time employees, population size, government structure, and median income, to identify and compare the level of responsibility... for mayors versus their salaries and overall compensation	0 0%	0 0%	2 100%	5	2
Analyzing the hours reported as worked, salaries total compensation package (where feasible) earned by Albuquerque elected officials, as well as their respective roles and responsibilities	1 50%	1 50%	0 0%	2	2
Weighted Score: 3.22					

Question #19: In your opinion, how important on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being extremely important, 3 being important, and 1 being unimportant, should the following factors be weighted in determining the salary for the positions of elected City Councilors and Council President?

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Responses	1 - Unimportant	3 - Important	5 - Extremely Important	Weighted Score	Total Responses
Median income in Albuquerque	1 50%	1 50%	0 0%	2	2
Living wage analysis for Albuquerque	1 50%	1 50%	0 0%	2	2
Salary for councilors in other comparable cities	0 0%	1 50%	1 50%	4	2
Salaries and cost-of-living adjustments for CABQ employees	2 100%	0 0%	0 0%	1	2
Competitiveness with salaries for roles with comparable responsibilities in the private sector	1 50%	0 0%	1 50%	3	2
Managerial complexity of elected officials' labor	0 0%	0 0%	2 100%	5	2
Assessing the feasibility of changes to salary based on the City of Albuquerque's current and forecasted budgets	0 0%	2 100%	0 0%	3	2
Researching and analyzing comparable cities based on factors such as city budget, full-time employees, population size, government structure, and median income, to identify and compare the level of responsibility... for mayors versus their salaries and overall compensation	1 50%	0 0%	1 50%	3	2
Analyzing the hours reported as worked, salaries total compensation package (where feasible) earned by Albuquerque elected officials, as well as their respective roles and responsibilities	0 0%	1 50%	1 50%	4	2
Weighted Score: 3.00					

Public Survey Results

A 13-question survey was made available to the public through an online survey which was promoted via local news stations, the City's website, and the City's One Albuquerque Media. The survey questions primarily centered around whether the responsibilities of elected positions have changed, whether the established salaries for elected officials affect those that would like to run for office, what factors should be considered in evaluating the salaries of elected officials, and whether the salaries should be adjusted.

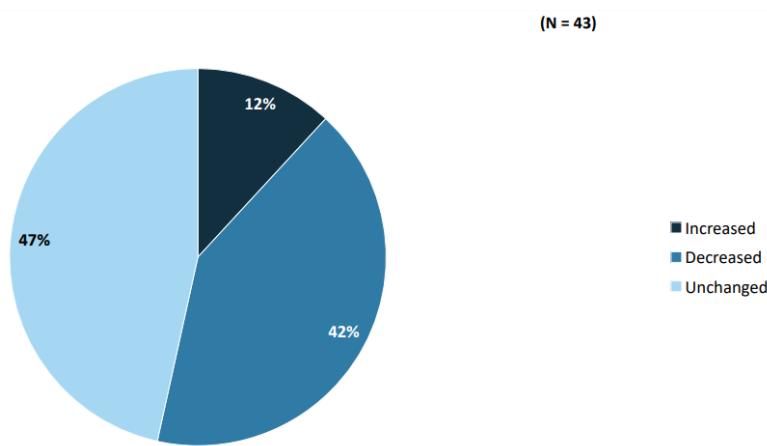
35 responses to each question of the survey were received. While the graphs below reflect respondents' views on adjusting the salaries of Albuquerque elected officials, the entirety of the responses can be found on the Commission's website located at <https://www.cabq.gov/audit/citizens-independent-salary-commission>.

Question #1: In your opinion, how important on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being extremely important, 3 being important, and 1 being unimportant, should the following factors be weighted in determining the salary for the position of Mayor?

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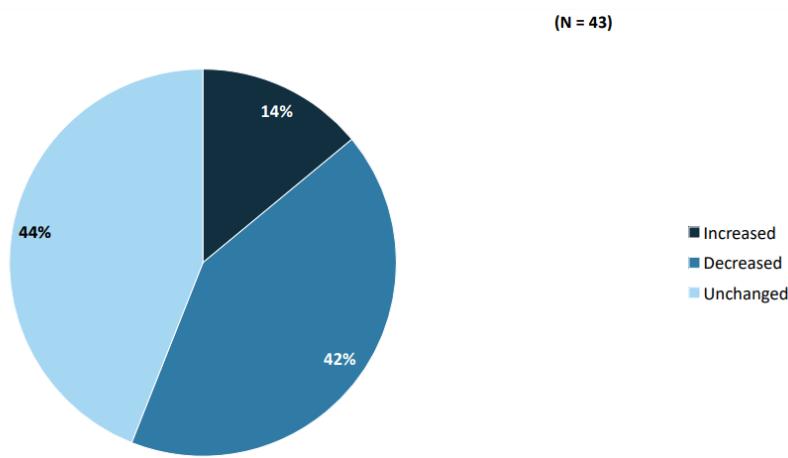
Responses	1 - Unimportant	3 - Important	5 - Extremely Important	Weighted Score	Total Responses
Median income in Albuquerque	4 9%	18 42%	21 49%	4	43
Living wage analysis for Albuquerque	6 14%	16 37%	21 49%	4	43
Salary for mayors in other comparable cities	12 29%	19 45%	11 26%	3	42
Salaries and cost-of-living adjustments for CABQ employees	4 9%	10 23%	29 67%	4	43
Competitiveness with salaries for roles with comparable responsibilities in the private sector	19 44%	12 28%	12 28%	3	43
Managerial complexity of elected officials' labor	7 16%	23 53%	13 30%	3	43
Assessing the feasibility of changes to salary based on the City of Albuquerque's current and forecasted budgets	5 12%	11 26%	27 63%	4	43
Researching and analyzing comparable cities based on factors such as city budget, full-time employees, population size, government structure, and median income, to identify and compare the level of responsibility... for mayors versus their salaries and overall compensation	5 12%	18 42%	20 47%	4	43
Analyzing the hours reported as worked, salaries total compensation package (where feasible) earned by Albuquerque elected officials, as well as their respective roles and responsibilities	8 19%	18 43%	16 38%	3	42
Weighted Score: 3.52					

Question #2: The positions of elected City Councilors of Albuquerque are considered part-time positions and the established annual salary for Councilors is \$62,843. Do you believe the salaries for the positions of the next elected City Councilors should be increased, decreased, or unchanged?



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Question #3: The position of City Council President is considered a part-time position and the established annual salary for the position of Council President is \$66,928. Do you believe the salary for the position of the next elected Council President Should be increased, decreased, or unchanged?



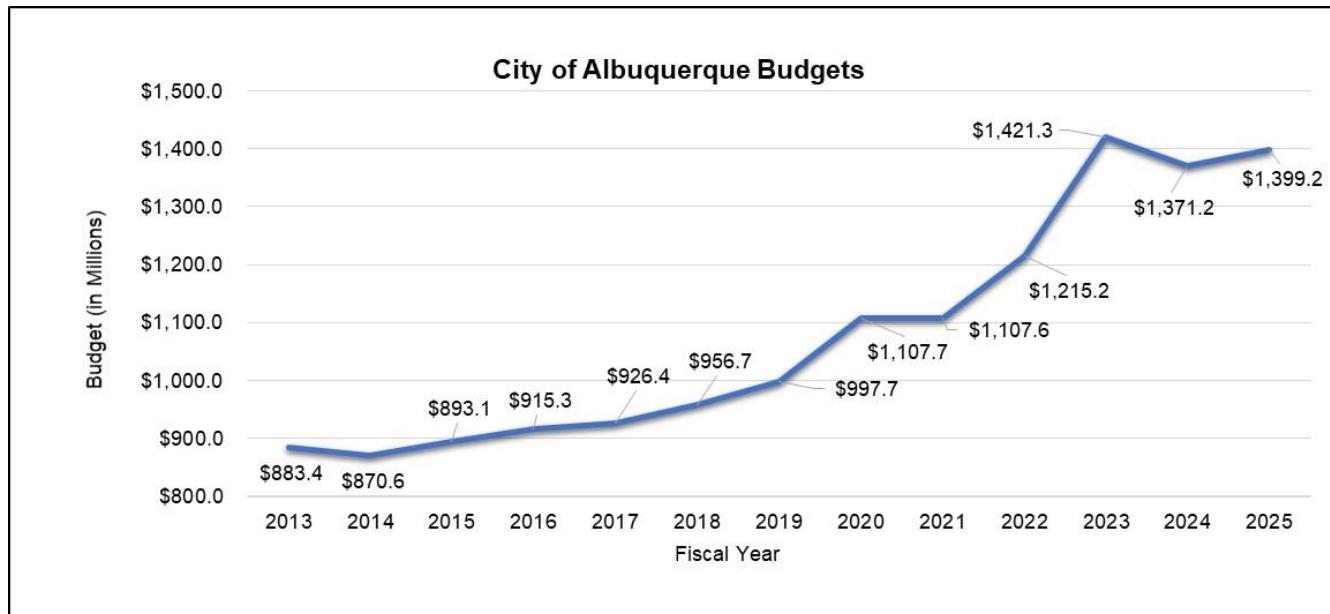
Question #4: In your opinion, how important on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being extremely important, 3 being important, and 1 being unimportant, should the following factors be weighted in determining the salary for the positions of elected City Councilors and Council President?

Responses	1 - Unimportant	3 - Important	5 - Extremely Important	Weighted Score	Total Responses
Median income in Albuquerque	7 16%	16 37%	20 47%	4	43
Living wage analysis for Albuquerque	9 21%	16 37%	18 42%	3	43
Salary for councilors in other comparable cities	17 40%	18 42%	8 19%	3	43
Salaries and cost-of-living adjustments for CABQ employees	6 14%	15 35%	22 51%	4	43
Competitiveness with salaries for roles with comparable responsibilities in the private sector	20 47%	15 35%	8 19%	2	43
Managerial complexity of elected officials' labor	13 30%	19 44%	11 26%	3	43
Assessing the feasibility of changes to salary based on the City of Albuquerque's current and forecasted budgets	6 14%	17 40%	20 47%	4	43
Researching and analyzing comparable cities based on factors such as city budget, full-time employees, population size, government structure, and median income, to identify and compare the level of responsibility... for mayors versus their salaries and overall compensation	10 23%	21 49%	12 28%	3	43
Analyzing the hours reported as worked, salaries total compensation package (where feasible) earned by Albuquerque elected officials, as well as their respective roles and responsibilities	10 23%	19 44%	14 33%	3	43
Weighted Score: 3.18					

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Changes within the City of Albuquerque

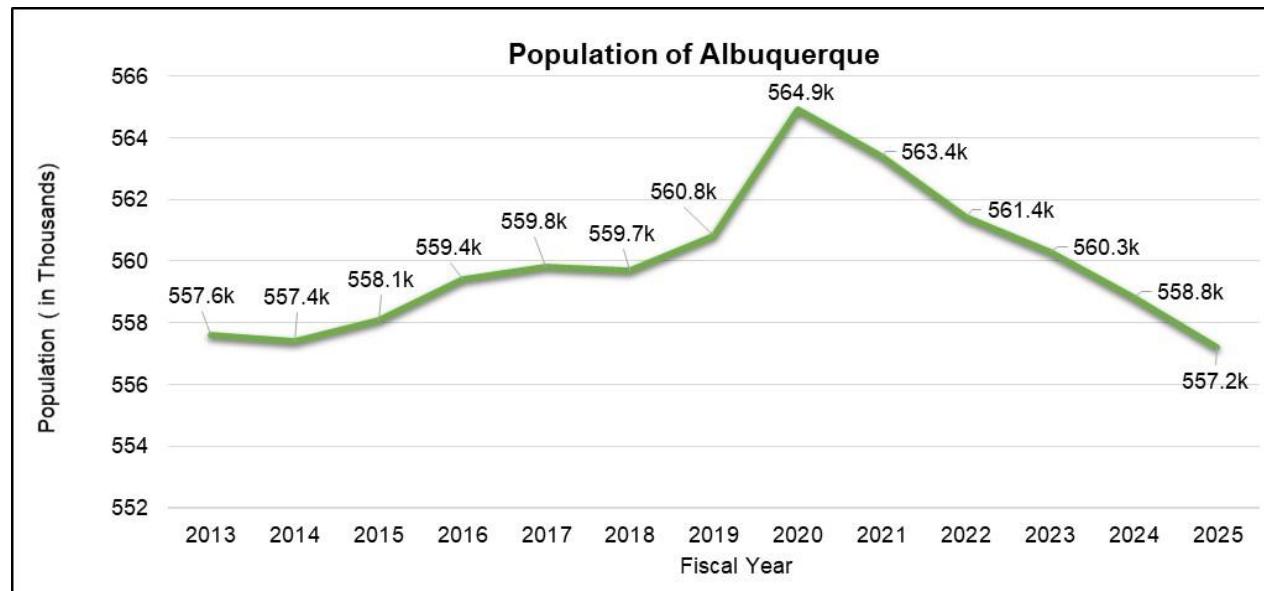
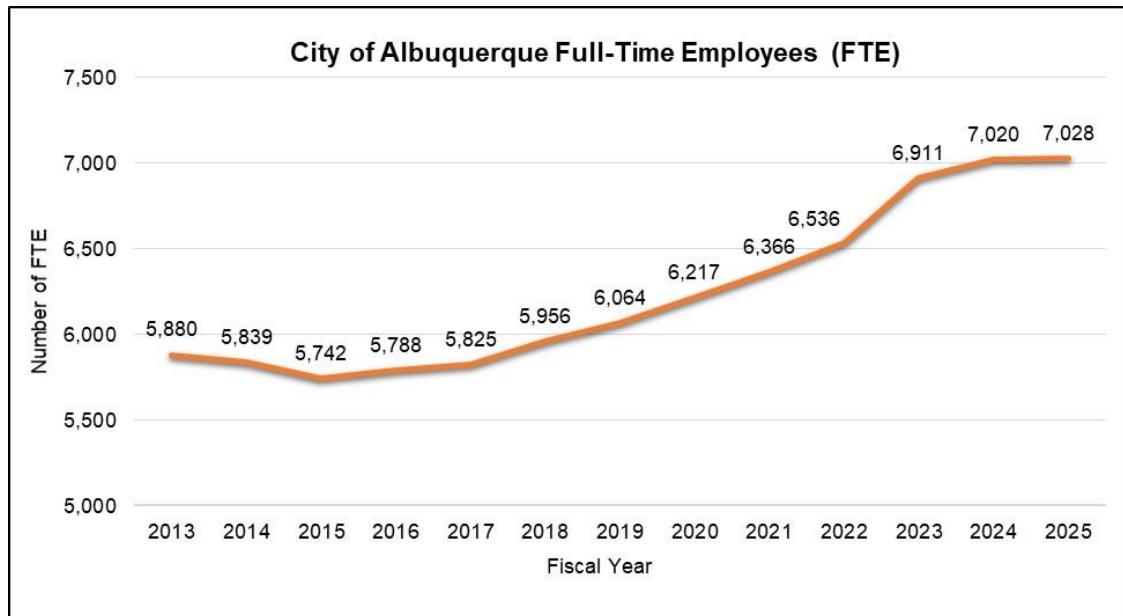
Assessing the managerial complexities of the Mayor and City Councilors is difficult, as many factors suggesting increased complexity may be intrinsically linked with factors such as the city budget, the number of people the City employs, and population size. To this point, since fiscal year 2013 the City's budget has increased 58 percent from \$883 million to \$1.4 billion, the number of budgeted full-time employees has increased 20 percent from 5,880 to 7,028,⁸ and the overall city population of Albuquerque has decreased .04 percent from 557,600 to 557,200. The below graphs detail this information.⁹ In comparison, since fiscal year 2013 the salary established for the Mayor has increased 34 percent from \$109,325 to \$146,081, the salary of the City Council President has increased 243 percent from \$19,500 to \$66,928, and the salaries of City Councilors have increased 259 percent from \$17,500 to \$62,843.



⁸ The majority of the increase in full-time employee positions was within the Albuquerque Police and Fire Departments, the Department of Technology and Innovation, the Albuquerque Community Safety Department, and various General Fund positions that have been created throughout various departments. See City of Albuquerque, "Approved Budget Fiscal Year 2025," p. 41, <<https://www.cabq.gov/dfa/documents/fy25-approved-budget-final-numbered-hyperlinks-7-31-2024.pdf>>, accessed February 4, 2025.

⁹ These graphs were created by auditors based on the U.S Census Bureau (for Albuquerque population data) and the City of Albuquerque's approved budgets for fiscal years 2013 through 2025 (for all other data). For population data, see the United States Census Bureau, <<https://data.census.gov>>, accessed February 28, 2025. For historical budgets, see the City of Albuquerque, <<https://www.cabq.gov/dfa/budget/annual-budget>>, accessed February 28, 2025.

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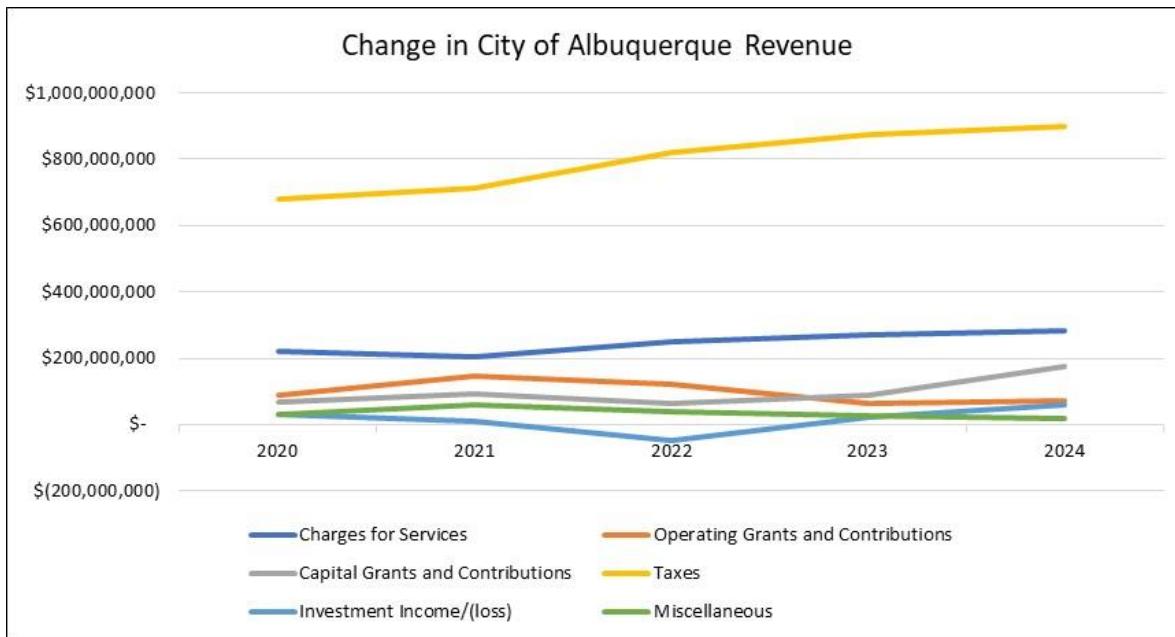


City of Albuquerque Revenue Changes

An analysis of the relationship between the salaries of the Mayor and City Councilors and the overall revenue of the City of Albuquerque could offer valuable insights into how local governance compensation aligns with municipal financial health for the City. By examining potential correlations between these variables, we can explore how changes in city revenue might influence salary structures and whether such compensation adjustments reflect the economic priorities or constraints faced by the City. From fiscal

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year 2020 to 2024, total revenue has increased by 34 percent from \$1.1 billion to \$1.5 billion. From fiscal year 2023 (which was the last year that Mayor and Council Salaries were increased) to 2024, total revenue has increased by 12 percent from \$1.4 billion to \$1.5 billion. The below graph details this information from the last 5 years, from 2020 to 2024, by revenue category.¹⁰ In fiscal year 2023, the Commission increased the Mayor's salary by 10 percent, the City Councilors salary by 86.7 percent, and the Council President's salary by 86.6 percent, as discussed in the following section.



Mayor and Councilors Salary Information

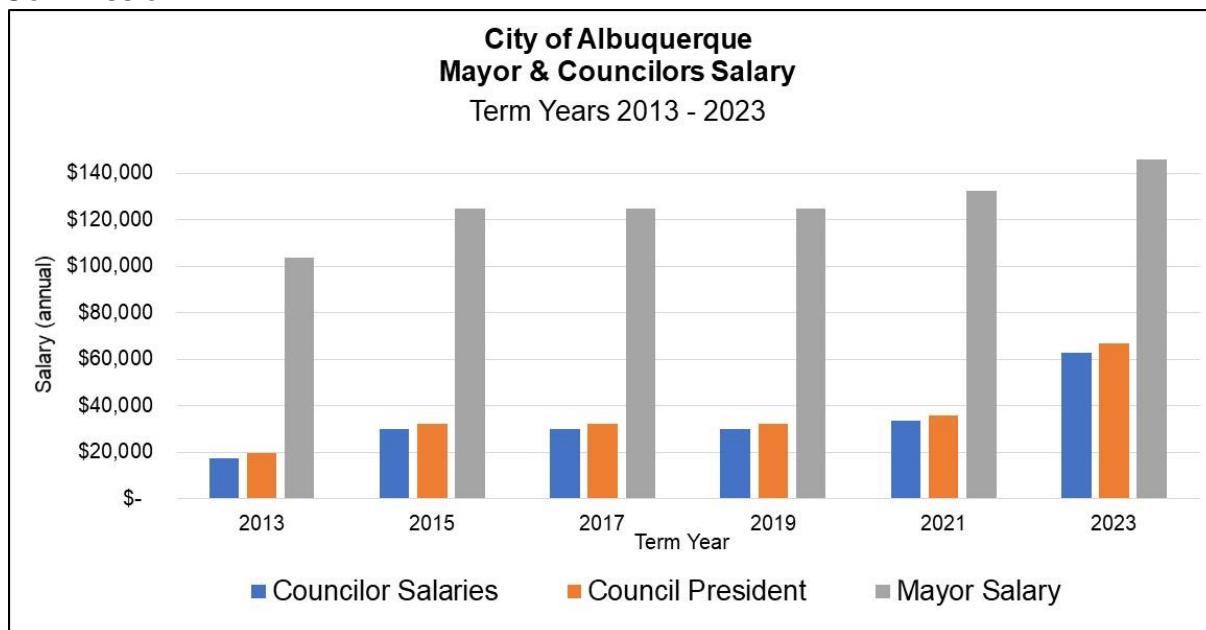
While most city employees received annual cost of living salary increases of at least 2 percent from fiscal years 2015 through 2022, elected officials have not. In fiscal year 2023, the equivalent of a 5 percent cost of living adjustment was appropriated for employees. In fiscal year 2024, the equivalent of a 3.5 percent cost of living adjustment was appropriated for all employees. In fiscal year 2025, a tiered cost of living adjustment was appropriated for non-union employees. This included 5 percent for those earning less than \$50,000 a year, 4 percent for those earning less than \$75,000 a year, 3 percent for those earning less than \$100,000 a year, and 2 percent for those earning more than \$100,000 a year. Since the Commission's inception, the Mayor has received three salary increases and City Councilors have received four salary increases. These salary increases are detailed below.

¹⁰ These graphs were created by the auditors based on the Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports produced by the City of Albuquerque. For historical reports, see City of Albuquerque, <<https://www.cabq.gov/dfa/treasury/investor-information/annual-comprehensive-financial-reports>>, accessed February 28, 2025.

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- In 2015, the following salary increases were given:
 - Mayor's salary increased 14 percent from \$109,325 to \$125,000
 - Council President's salary increased 64 percent from \$19,500 to \$32,000
 - Councilors' salaries increased 71 percent from \$17,500 to \$30,000
- In 2019, the following salary increases were given:
 - Council President's salary increased 1 percent from \$32,000 to \$32,600
 - Councilors' salaries increased 2 percent from \$30,000 to \$30,600
- In 2021, the following salary increases were given:
 - Mayor's salary increased 6 percent from \$125,000 to \$132,500
 - Council President's salary increased 10 percent from \$32,600 to \$35,860
 - Councilors' salaries increased 10 percent from \$30,600 to \$33,660
- In 2023, the following salary increases were given:
 - Mayor's salary increased 10 percent from \$132,500 to \$146,081
 - Council President's salary increased 87 percent from \$35,860 to \$66,928
 - Councilor's salaries increased 87 percent from \$33,660 to \$62,843

The graph below details the Mayor and City Councilor's salaries since the inception of the Commission.¹¹



While the City Charter is silent on the matter, City Council members are considered part-time City employees. Although their salaries, first set in 1974, are reflective of service in a part-time capacity, many of them reported working 40 hours a week or more. In contrast,

¹¹ This graph was created by auditors based on the Commission's issued reports from 2013 to 2015. To view the reports, see City of Albuquerque, <<https://www.cabq.gov/audit/reports>>, accessed February 28, 2025.

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City Charter explicitly states that the Mayor is required to devote full-time attention to the performance of the duties of the office and not hold other paid employment.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP AND DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR SALARIES

According to the City's 2025 approved budget, there are 29 departments. The table below includes the salaries established for each department director, as well as for the Mayor and his executive leadership, as of January 2025.¹²

Title	Annual Salary
Chief Administrative Officer	\$ 237,141
Chief of Police	\$ 228,115
Fire Chief	\$ 193,939
Chief Financial Officer	\$ 191,443
Superintendent of Police Reform	\$ 190,902
City Attorney	\$ 188,074
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer	\$ 184,954
Chief Operations Officer	\$ 184,621
Chief of Staff	\$ 180,024
Associate Chief Administrative Officer	\$ 180,024
Deputy Chief of Staff	\$ 180,024
Council Services Director	\$ 179,629
Department of Technology and Innovation Director	\$ 176,800
Planning Department Director	\$ 176,800
City Clerk	\$ 176,800
Arts and Culture Director	\$ 176,800
Department of Municipal Development Director	\$ 176,800
Department of Youth and Family Services Director	\$ 176,800
Parks and Recreation Director	\$ 176,800
Senior Affairs Director	\$ 176,800
Albuquerque Community Safety Department Director	\$ 171,267
Department of Economic Development Director	\$ 171,267
Environmental Health Department Director	\$ 171,267
Department of Health, Housing, & Homelessness Director	\$ 171,267
General Services Department Director	\$ 171,267
Human Resources Department Director	\$ 171,267
Solid Waste Director	\$ 171,267
Transit Director	\$ 171,267
Animal Welfare Services Director	\$ 171,267
Aviation Director	\$ 171,267

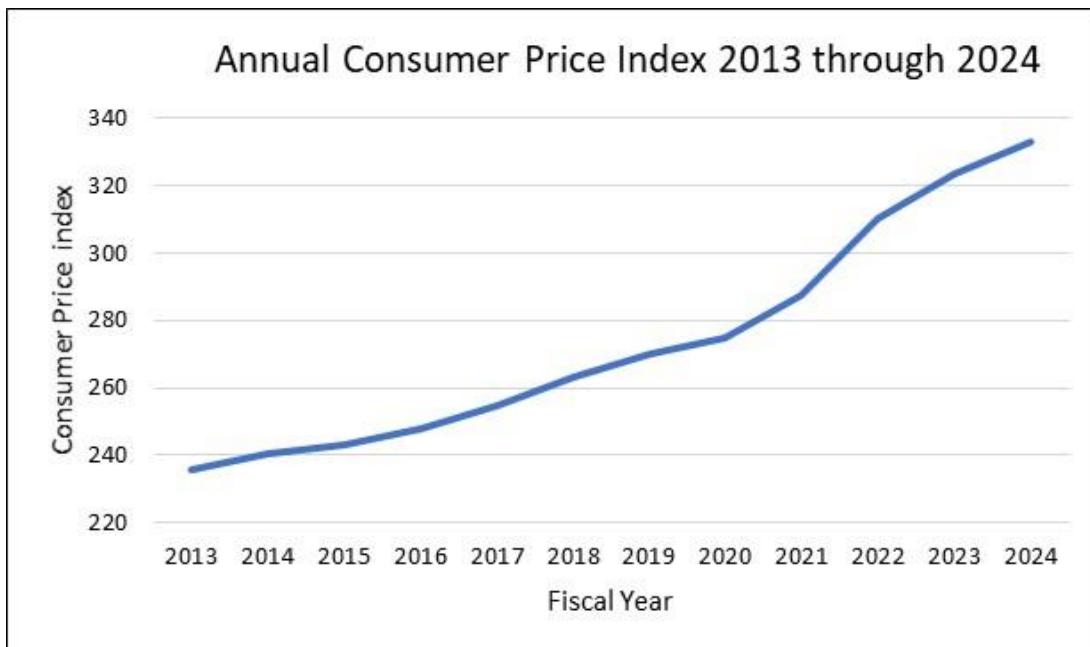
¹² This chart was created by the auditors based on the Graded and Ungraded Employee Earnings Report produced by the City of Albuquerque, which can be accessed through <<https://www.cabq.gov/abq-view/where-do-my-taxes-go>> (last accessed February 28, 2025). The highlighted positions are new positions from the 2023 CISC report, which can be accessed at <<https://www.cabq.gov/audit/reports/citizens-independent-salary-commission-report-2023>> (last accessed February 28, 2025).

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Title	Annual Salary
Department of Finance and Administrative Services Director	\$ 171,267
Office of Equity & Inclusion Director	\$ 163,218
Mayor	\$ 146,081
Deputy Chief Operations Officer	\$ 144,123
Budget Manager	\$ 130,624
Director of Communications and Marketing	\$ 127,462
Deputy Direct of Sustainability	\$ 125,008
Director of Public Affairs	\$ 120,016
Interim City Auditor	\$ 119,746
Inspector General	\$ 116,397
Government Affairs Official	\$ 115,003

Changes in Cost of Living and Inflation

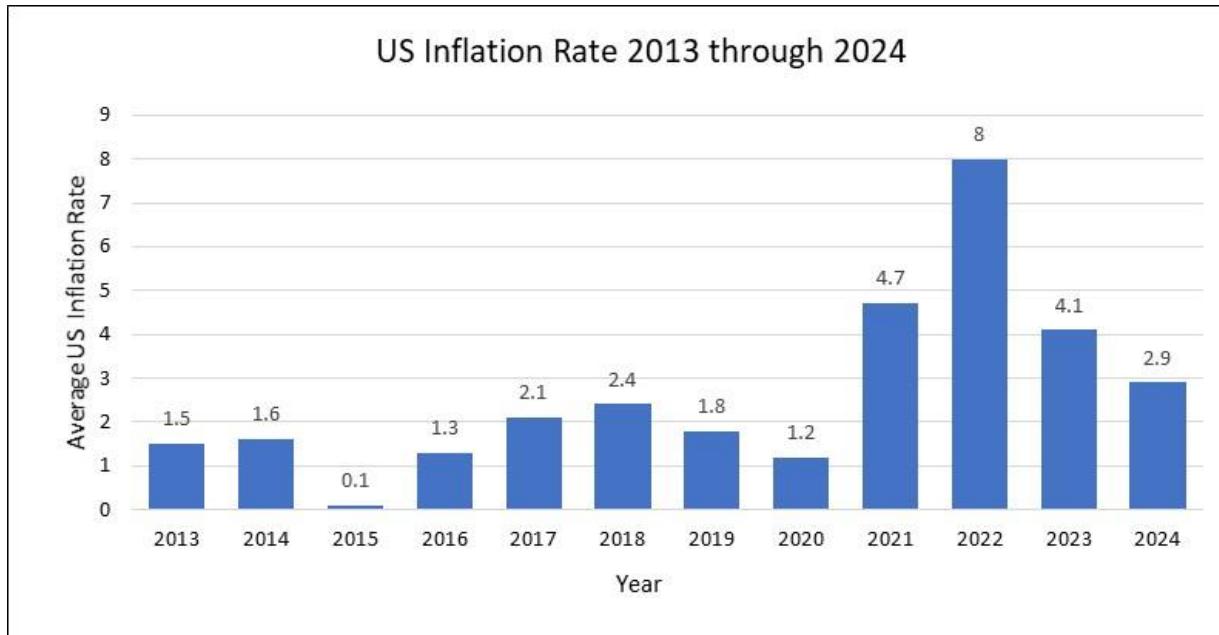
The Commission analyzed the changes in the cost-of-living index for the City of Albuquerque, as defined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the U.S Census Bureau. The Commission utilized the BLS Consumer Price Index (CPI), which measures the average change overtime in the prices paid by urban consumers for a market basket of consumer goods and services. Per examination of the cost analysis index, the cost of living in the Western Region¹³ has increased by 97.12 basis points (41.2 percent) from 2013 to 2024. The table below details this information.



¹³ The western region includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

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The Commission analyzed the changes in the average U.S. inflation rate based on the monthly inflation rate reported by BLS. BLS defines inflation as the overall upward price movement of goods and services in an economy. This is often referred to as the change in the buying power of the dollar. The inflation rate is a measurement of inflation, the rate of increase of a price index. Per examination of the U.S. monthly inflation rates, inflation increased 2.9 percent in 2024. The table below details the U.S. average annual inflation rate from 2013 through 2024.



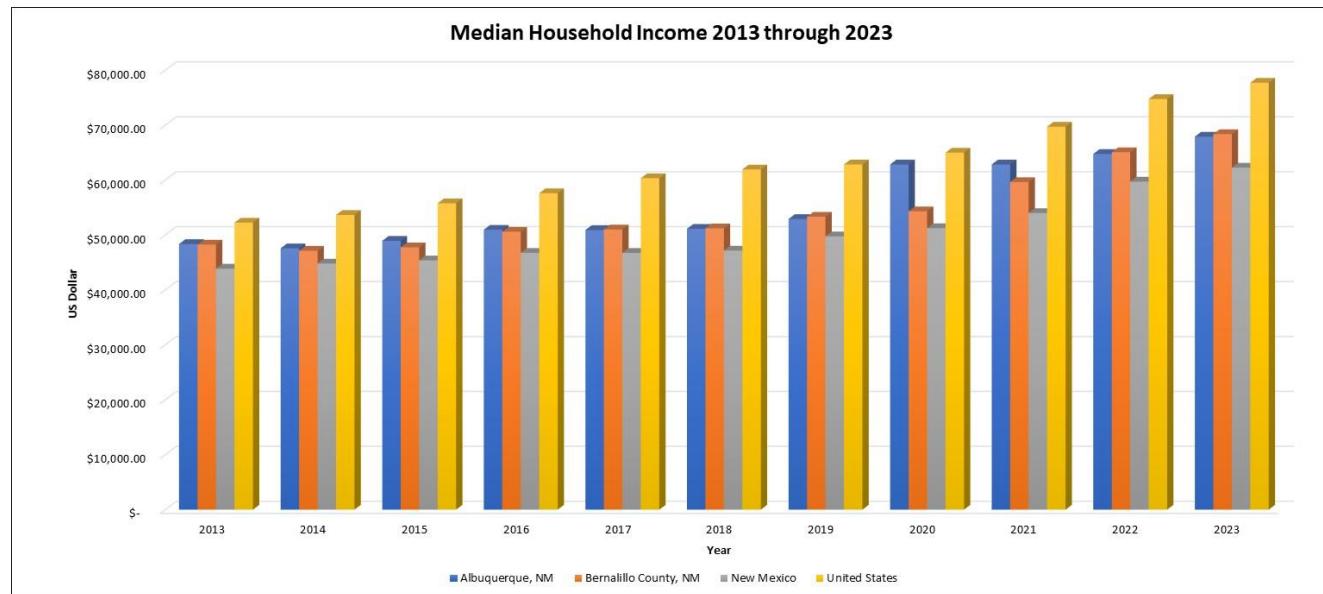
Albuquerque Median Income

The Commission also analyzed changes in the median household income for Albuquerque, as defined by BLS and the U.S Census Bureau. The median household income is a measurement of the income level earned by a given household where half of the homes in the area earn more and half earn less. The CPI for Albuquerque includes all of New Mexico and the rest of the Western Region states (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming). Median household income, on the other hand, is based on the U.S. Census Bureau's Annual Community Survey, includes all regularly received income, and provides a basis for measuring changes in the median Albuquerque household's regularly received income. The table below details the change in the Albuquerque median income from 2013 through 2023.

Taken together, the cost-of-living index (CPI), inflation, and median household income allowed the Commission to better evaluate the salaries of the Mayor and Councilors against these factors. Specifically, the median income for Albuquerque has increased by

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\$19,552, or 40 percent from \$48,355 in 2013 to \$67,907 in 2023.¹⁴ Further, while the current salary established for the Mayor, \$146,081, is 215 percent of the median household income in Albuquerque for 2023, the current Councilors' and Council President's salaries of \$62,843 and \$66,927.80, respectively, are 93 and 99 percent of the median household income of Albuquerque for the same period.



Benchmarking

The Commission looked beyond the City of Albuquerque to understand how other comparable cities compensate their elected officials and examined not only salaries in those cities but also structural differences that may affect municipal officials' compensation levels. Although no single benchmark for comparison was determinative, benchmarking proved a useful tool for analyzing the appropriate range within which to recommend Albuquerque's Mayor and City Councilors should be compensated.

In addition to our broad consideration of factors including affordability, economic well-being, and managerial complexity, the Commission identified ten¹⁵ comparable cities and Las Cruces, NM, and Santa Fe, NM, and for all 12 cities analyzed their mayoral and legislative compensation and employment status. For purposes of the analysis, full-time and part-time employment status were defined as follows:

¹⁴ Complete information for all four factors was not available for 2024 or 2025.

¹⁵ The Commission benchmarked the following ten cities: El Paso, TX; Fresno, CA; Kansas City, MO; Little Rock, AR; Louisville, KY; Mesa, AZ; Milwaukee, WI; Oklahoma City, OK; Portland, OR; and Tucson, AZ. The Commission also included Las Cruces, NM; and Santa Fe, NM for regional comparison.

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Full-Time Employment Status	Part-Time Employment Status
The charter or code explicitly defines the position as full-time.	The charter or code explicitly defines the position as part-time.
The charter or code has a clause that the role ought to be the primary responsibility.	The charter or code is silent on the matter.
A prohibition against outside employment exists.	Pay is on a per-meeting basis.

When the city charter or code is silent on the matter, other factors should be considered when evaluating whether a position's employment status is full-time or part-time, such as the number of weekly hours required of sessions, constituent services, and committee work, whether sessions are held year-round, the size of the support staff provided to the elected official, and whether the established salary was equivalent to the city's living wage. However, information on these factors was not readily available for all the cities identified.

The analysis found that six cities operate under the same Mayor-Council government structure utilized by Albuquerque, one city operates under a Mayor-Common Council government structure, and the other five cities utilize a Council-Manager structure. While the Mayors of eleven of the twelve cities serve in full-time capacities, only the City of Santa Fe's Charter explicitly stipulates that the Mayor shall be a full-time position. While the city charter or code does not prohibit the Mayors of these eleven cities from having outside employment, the Mayoral salaries averaged \$137,211 and ranged from \$67,950 to \$200,000. Further, the Mayors in these cities are entitled to the same employee benefits entitled to all city employees.

Regarding Councilors, the analysis found that two cities prohibit councilors from holding outside-city employment. Councilors received salaries ranging from \$12,000 and \$133,207, averaging \$62,485. However, six cities reported that their councilors serve in a full-time capacity and Councilors in these cities received salaries averaging \$91,195 and ranging from \$55,436 to \$133,207, with council presidents earning between \$55,436 and \$133,207 and on average \$95,198.

Only three of the cities benchmarked provided for additional compensation for the council president. The range of pay for Council Presidents benchmarked is \$66,928 to \$125,235, with the mean being approximately \$95,491 and the median being \$94,311. These cities pay the Council President roughly 6.5 to 12.5 percent more than councilors, while Albuquerque pays the Councilor President 6.5 percent more than Councilors. See Appendix A for further details regarding the complete analysis.

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Summary of Results

The Commission approached its evaluation with the purpose of establishing a fair and reasonable compensation for the elected officials of Albuquerque, while also considering the current financial circumstances of the City. The Commission's intent was to ensure that the Mayor and City Councilors positions are compensated for the time and effort expended on behalf of the citizens of Albuquerque. The Commission's objective was to ensure these positions are compensated at a level that is reasonable when compared to the compensation paid to elected officials of comparable cities; a level that is likely to attract competent and effective candidates to serve in public office and that enhances the opportunity for every eligible citizen to serve, regardless of their financial circumstance.

The major factors contributing to the Commission's determination are as follows:

- The Commission considered the cost of living adjustments provided to City of Albuquerque employees in both fiscal years 2024 and 2025. The Commission recognizes that in fiscal year 2024, the equivalent of a 3.5 percent cost of living adjustment was appropriated for City of Albuquerque employees. Additionally, the Commission recognizes that in fiscal year 2025, a tiered adjustment was provided for employees earning more than \$100,000. For the Mayor, the applicable fiscal year 2025 adjustment was 2 percent. The Commission chose to apply these adjustments in sequence, resulting in a total increase of approximately 5.57 percent¹⁶ and a revised mayoral salary of \$154,217.71.
- The Commission recognizes that the latest median household income for Albuquerque, NM, which was released for 2023, is \$67,907. Considering the increase in median household income from 2021, a decision was made to increase the City Councilor's salaries to agree with the latest median household income.
- The Commission considered the additional duties of the Council President and a decision was made to apply the same 6.5 percent difference between the Council President's and City Councilor's salaries that currently exists.

The Commission carefully reviews the salaries of the Mayor and Council every two years, so it had the ability to react to changing economic conditions and realities, and elects as follows:

- Commission agrees to increase Mayor's salary by \$8,136.71, or 5.57 percent.
- Commission agrees to increase Council salaries by \$5,064, or 8.06 percent.

¹⁶ Two separate cost of living adjustments were considered for fiscal years 2024 (3.5 percent) and 2025 (2 percent). When applied sequentially, these adjustments compound to an effective increase of approximately 5.57 percent.

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- Commission agrees to increase Council President salary by \$5,393, or 8.06 percent.

Approved Salary Information for 2025

Mayor salary – \$154,217.71

City Councilors salary – \$67,907.00

Council President salary – \$72,321.00

Conclusion

The citizens of Albuquerque elected to establish the Citizens' Independent Salary Commission. In compliance with meeting the objectives of the Commission, the decision-making process included the research, analysis, discussion, and application of a wide range of facts concerning the salary structure of the Mayor and City Councilors of Albuquerque. This is an exhaustive process in which rigorous standards and documentation are maintained. Review of data and documents can be obtained by contacting the Office of Internal Audit at (505) 768-3154. In conclusion, the Commission thanks the Mayor and the City Council for their dedicated service to the City of Albuquerque and its residents.

APPENDIX A

COMPARABLE CITIES BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS

City	City Population (July 1, 2023 Estimates)	Median Household Income (Census Bureau 2019-2023 in 2023 dollars)	City Operating Budget FY25	City FTEs FY25	Government Structure	Annual 2025 Minimum Wage	Mayor FT or PT According to Charter	Legislative Body FT or PT According to Charter	Mayor 2024 Salary	Mayor Benefits	Council 2024 Salary	Council Benefits	Council President 2024 Salary	Council President Benefits	Salaries Set By
Albuquerque, NM	560,274	\$65,604	\$1,399,163,000	7,028	Mayor-Council	\$24,960	Required to devote FT attention to the performance of the duties of the office and not hold other paid employment	Charter is silent; serves in a PT capacity	\$146,081	Entitled to all City benefits	\$62,843	Entitled to all City benefits	\$66,928	Entitled to all City benefits	Citizens' Independent Salary Commission
El Paso, TX	678,958	\$58,734	\$1,333,071,917	7,210	Council-Manager	\$15,080	Charter is silent; serves in a FT capacity. No Council member may hold any other compensated public office or public employment	Charter is silent; serves in a FT capacity. No Council member may hold any other compensated public office or public employment	\$67,950	Entitled to all City benefits; City issued cell phone	\$45,300	Entitled to all City benefits	\$45,300	Entitled to all City benefits	Salaries are tied to El Paso County area median household income per HUD
Kansas City, MO	510,704	\$67,449	\$2,273,281,427	7,454	Council-Manager	\$28,600	Charter is silent; serves in a FT capacity. Prohibited from holding any City employment or elected public officer	Charter is silent; serves in a FT capacity. Prohibited from holding any City employment or elected public officer	\$174,000	No information available	\$87,000	No information available	\$87,000	No information available	Salaries are established by Council
Oklahoma City, OK	702,767	\$66,702	\$2,005,292,574	5,117	Council-Manager	\$15,080	Charter is silent; serves in a PT capacity. Prohibited from holding any office or position under the City	Charter is silent; serves in a PT capacity. Prohibited from holding any office or position under the City	\$24,000	Entitled to all City benefits	\$12,000	Entitled to all City benefits	\$12,000	Entitled to all City benefits	Salaries are established by Council

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City	City Population (July 1, 2023 Estimates)	Median Household Income (Census Bureau 2019-2023 in 2023 dollars)	City Operating Budget FY25	City FTEs FY25	Government Structure	Annual 2025 Minimum Wage	Mayor FT or PT According to Charter	Legislative Body FT or PT According to Charter	Mayor 2024 Salary	Mayor Benefits	Council 2024 Salary	Council Benefits	Council President 2024 Salary	Council President Benefits	Salaries Set By
Milwaukee, WI	561,385	\$51,888	\$2,009,768,704	7,633	Mayor-Common Council	\$15,080	Charter is silent; serves in a FT capacity	Charter is silent; serves in a FT capacity. No member of the Common Council shall hold any other City Office.	\$169,436	Entitled to all City benefits; City issued cell phone; monthly transportation allowance recalculated annually	\$84,206	Entitled to all City benefits; City issued cell phone; monthly transportation allowance recalculated annually	\$94,311	Entitled to all City benefits; City issued cell phone; monthly transportation allowance recalculated annually	Common Council
Fresno, CA	545,716	\$66,804	\$1,998,504,800	4,819	Mayor-Council	\$34,320	Charter is silent; serves in a FT capacity	Charter is silent; serves in a FT capacity	\$180,895	Entitled to all City benefits; \$10,200 in expenses; \$12,245 City contribution to Deferred Comp	\$111,320	Entitled to all City benefits; \$9,000 in expenses	\$125,235	Entitled to all City benefits; \$10,125 in expenses	Salaries are established by Council
Tucson, AZ	547,239	\$54,546	\$2,393,941,799	4,814	Council-Manager	\$31,200	Charter is silent; serves in a FT capacity	Charter is silent; serves in a FT capacity	\$95,750	Entitled to all City benefits	\$76,000	Entitled to all City benefits	\$76,000	Entitled to all City benefits	Citizens' Commission on Public Service and Compensation make recommendations. Changes approved only by ballot measure
Little Rock, AR	203,842	\$60,583	\$338,231,579	2,280	Council-Manager	\$22,880	Charter is silent; serves in a FT capacity	Charter is silent; serves in a PT capacity	\$200,000	Entitled to all City benefits; City issued cell phone	\$25,000	Entitled to all City benefits	\$25,000	Entitled to all City benefits	Established in Charter

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Louisville, KY	246,161	\$58,357	\$967,842,600	5,194	Mayor-Council	\$15,080	Charter is silent; serves in a FT capacity	Charter is silent; serves in a FT capacity	\$154,433	Entitled to all City benefits	\$55,436	Entitled to all City benefits	\$55,436	Entitled to all City benefits	Council
Las Cruces, NM	114,892	\$55,176	\$597,154,001	1,653	Council-Manager	\$26,312	The Mayor shall not hold any other elected public office or city employment during the term for which the individual was elected	No councilor shall hold any other elected public office or city employment during the term for which the individual was elected	\$97,765	Entitled to all City benefits	\$39,106	Entitled to all City benefits	\$39,106	Entitled to all City benefits	Council
Portland, OR	630,498	\$88,792	\$6,410,868,319	6,338	Mayor-Council	\$30,576	Charter is silent; serves in a FT capacity. No official shall hold any other office or position for profit, or pursue any other business or vocation, or serve on or under any committee of any political party.	Charter is silent; serves in a FT capacity. No official shall hold any other office or position for profit, or pursue any other business or vocation, or serve on or under any committee of any political party.	\$175,463	Entitled to all benefits offered by the City	\$133,207	Entitled to all benefits offered by the City	\$133,207	Entitled to all benefits offered by the City	Salaries currently set by Council but will be set by the Independent Salary Commission

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Mesa, AZ	511,648	\$78,779	\$2,690,000,000	4,692	Mayor-Council	\$30,576	Prohibited from holding any City employment or elected public officer	Prohibited from holding any City employment or elected public officer	\$74,745	Eligible for medical, dental, vision, EAP, supp Life, \$50,000 in basic group term life insurance and basic AD&D coverage; Not eligible for voluntary short-term disability insurance	\$41,782	Eligible for medical, dental, vision, EAP, supp Life, \$50,000 in basic group term life insurance and basic AD&D coverage ; Not eligible for voluntary short-term disability insurance	\$41,782	Eligible for medical, dental, vision, EAP, supp Life, \$50,000 in basic group term life insurance and basic AD&D coverage; Not eligible for voluntary short-term disability insurance	Independent Commission on Compensation for Elected Officials
Santa Fe, NM	89,167	\$70,110	\$440,065,573	1,647	Mayor-Council	\$30,368	The Mayor is the CEO of the city whose position shall be full-time	Charter is silent; serves in a PT capacity	\$110,011	Entitled to all City benefits except for accrued leave; Receive the option to opt into medical benefits and pay into retirement	\$39,104	Entitled to all City benefits except for accrued leave; Receive the option to opt into medical benefits and pay into retirement	\$39,104	Entitled to all City benefits except for accrued leave; Receive the option to opt into medical benefits and pay into retirement	Independent Salary Commission sets Mayor's salary. Council sets their own salaries