

Tuesday, May 27, 2025

## First ABQ Mayoral Candidate Qualifies For November Ballot; Daniel Chavez Puts Up \$100,000 Personal Loan To Finance Petition Drive; Parking Lot Owner Is Heavy On Cash But Light On Platform, Plus: How His Emergence Could Impact Race



Daniel Chavez

[Daniel Chavez](#) is the first of 11 ABQ mayoral hopefuls to qualify for the November 3 ballot by submitting 3,424 valid signatures of registered city voters to the [City Clerk](#), surpassing the 3,000 required and handily beating a June 21 deadline.

It could be said the political newcomer bought his way on the ballot by donating \$100,000 in personal funds to launch a petition drive that got the job done.

Still, the accomplishment shows a can do spirit that drew the attention of his rivals who are still collecting qualifying signatures.

Several of those rivals are also seeking to qualify for \$756,000 in public campaign funds by gathering \$5 donations from 3,780 voters along with those 3,000 signatures. So far Mayor Tim Keller is the only candidate clearly positioned to qualify for the public money, with Republican Darren White in second.

Chavez, 55, will privately finance his campaign. He [said](#) of his first place showing in gathering qualifying signatures:

*I'm feeling great. That was our goal, and we did it. When I announced my candidacy, we really weren't getting very much attention. So, I figured if we could really work hard with volunteers and friends to get enough signatures to get on the ballot before Tim, we might get noticed. And we were able to do it.*

Chavez, whose family made a fortune managing parking lots here and nationally, is the president of [Parking Company of America](#) with offices downtown.

(More on Chavez's background and his native New Mexican family that started the successful firm in 1963 is [here](#).)

It will take much more cash for Chavez to effectively compete and the question dangling is how much more of his personal funds will he commit.

Getting substantial outside donations might be a longshot. He is running as a conservative independent with no previous political base and little public profile.

Chavez's campaign is being aided by the well-known GOP consulting group [Axiom Strategies](#) and their Texas state director Lyndsey Blagrove.



APD Chief Medina & Keller

## HEAVY AND LIGHT

While he is heavy on cash, Chavez's initial platform is lightweight. On the most pressing issue--crime--he says:

*Crime is out of control, and it's killing our city. We can't fix anything until people feel safe. . .As Mayor, I'll fully support the Albuquerque Police Department, the State Police, and the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Department to bring order back to our communities. That means resources, coordination, and backing the badge — not second-guessing the people trying to protect us. We've studied the problem long enough. Now, we need leadership with the backbone to act.*

While "backing the badge" may be what some voters need to hear, Chavez is going to have to come with more nuance and complexity to convince a wider swath of the electorate that he has the chops to better manage the long-troubled APD and make a bigger dent in crime.

On homelessness he could also be said to be taking the easy street:

*Homelessness in Albuquerque has spiraled into a crisis, and the current leadership has looked the other way. We can't ignore it, and we can't let it take over our city. As Mayor, I'll push for real solutions: job opportunities, treatment programs, and pathways off the street. But compassion doesn't mean letting tents take over our sidewalks. We'll help the people who want help, and we'll restore order for everyone else. It's time to fix the problem and clean up the streets for good.*

But the current administration has done anything but "look the other way" and has enacted a wide range of spending programs to arrest homelessness, programs that demand scrutiny and critical thinking. Chavez doesn't go there but he does have five months to dig deeper.

Politically, the emergence of Chavez presents a challenge to the only Republican in the field--Darren White--as well as conservative Democrats Louie Sanchez and Mayling Armijo.

The three of them and Chavez are going to be singing the same tune as they gang up on Mayor Keller--who is seeking a third consecutive term--and potentially splitting the anti-Keller vote.

No matter. One of them appears destined to finish in the top two and join Keller in a run-off election if no candidate captures 50 percent of the vote in the first round in November.

Chavez not only surprised the field with his petition push but he crushed the hopes of progressive Dem candidate Alex Uballez from making an early splash and who is perhaps best equipped to damage fellow progressive Keller.

The former US attorney boasted early in the campaign that he was on track to get the 3,000 petition signatures faster than Keller and the others. But his campaign has faltered as he lags Keller in both petition signatures and more crucially in the race to qualify for public financing. The Uballez campaign has been afflicted with management turnover.

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