

## Mexican president-elect slashes his own salary

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MEXICO CITY –



Mexican President-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said Sunday he plans to earn less than half of what his predecessor makes when he takes office in December as part of an austerity push in government.

"What we want is for the budget to reach everybody," he told reporters in front of his campaign headquarters.

Glancing at a piece of paper with numbers on it, Lopez Obrador said he will take home 108,000 pesos a month, which is \$5,707 at current exchange rates, and that no public official will be able to earn more than the president during his six-year term. The transition team calculates that current Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto makes 270,000 pesos a month.

Lopez Obrador said he'd like to reduce his salary even further, but that he doesn't want to cause resentment among future Cabinet members who are in some cases leaving private sector positions and academic posts that pay more than the new ceiling for public officials.

He reiterated campaign promises to cut back on taxpayer funded perks for high-level government officials, such as chauffeurs, bodyguards and private medical insurance. The official presidential residence will become a cultural center and ex-presidents will no longer receive pensions, he said.

At the same time, he doubled down on pledges to stem corruption. Mexico ranks 135 out of 180 countries in Transparency International's 2017 Corruption Perception Index, with higher numbers indicating higher levels of corruption.

Public officials will have to disclose their assets, he said, and corruption will be considered a serious offense.

Supporters gathered beyond the gates cheered the proposals.

"This is what we need," said Josefina Arciniega, 57, who earns 12,000 pesos a month as an administrative assistant. "We are fed up."

Arciniega said she's tired of low-level public servants asking for bribes and of watching high-ranking officials living in luxury while people like her struggle to pay the bills.

Orlando Alvarado, a chemical engineer standing next to Arciniega, called Lopez Obrador's proposed presidential salary a dignified wage.

"A lot of Mexican professionals don't even make 6,000 pesos a month. I'm talking about accountants and doctors," he said.