

Taos County OKs \$500K to help restart local detox

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After three years without a treatment center in this part of Northern New Mexico for people dealing with substance dependency, the Taos County government is pushing ahead with a still-in-flux plan to get detox services operational again.

The Taos County Board of Commissioners voted in early February to award an RFP, or request for proposal, to Río Grande Alcohol Treatment Program, a Taos-based substance abuse treatment organization.

The detox facility will have 8 to 10 beds at the beginning, but could eventually double to 16 beds, according to information provided to commissioners during the February meeting.

The roughly \$500,000 being fronted by the county is essentially start-up money. It will be up to the provider to secure other funding sources for long-term and sustainable operations of the facility.

The details of the contract — including location for the facility and total amount of money the county will contribute — still have to be negotiated between the county and the provider.

“There’s still a lot of heavy lifting to do in our contract negotiations,” said Leandro Cordova, former Taos County manager, soon after the commission voted to make the allocation.

As of March 6, the contract is still be negotiated and both the county and provider are looking for an appropriate location.

A lack of funding from the state has been one of the biggest impediments to opening a new detox center.

Lawrence Medina, who runs Río Grande ATP, said his organization couldn’t step up to help with detox services when the center closed three years ago because the money wasn’t there at the time. Now it is, he said.

The county has discussed and formally solicited a provider for reestablishing detox services in Taos several times, but those efforts weren’t successful due to a lack of responses or inadequate responses.

A Colorado company, ComCor, also responded to the recent RFP, but a committee tasked with reviewing their proposals favored the local organization in every category.

It was Nov. 2015 when the detox center in Taos, then operated by Tri-County Community Services, unexpectedly closed down. Tri-County, which faced years of financial troubles, folded in Aug. 2018. The former detox building is owned by the town of Taos.