

DETENTION IN YOUR DISTRICT

STATE: New Mexico **CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:** 2

FACILITIES: Cibola County Correctional Center; Otero County Processing Center; Otero County Prison Facility

COMBINED CAPACITY: 1400 (approx.)

Overview & Planned Expansion

Torrance County Commission signed contract with ICE in May 2019 to [re-open](#) the 714-bed capacity county detention center for the purpose of housing immigrants

Cibola County Correctional Center

This facility is owned by Cibola County and operated by private prison company CoreCivic (formerly Corrections Corporations of America, CCA). CoreCivic previously operated the facility as a federal prison under a contract with the Bureau of Prisons (BOP). The BOP [cancelled this contract](#) in July 2016 due to repeated instances of medical neglect, in some cases leading to death. In [October 2016](#), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) awarded a \$150 million five-year contract to CoreCivic via an Intergovernmental Service Agreement (IGSA) with Otero County. As of June 2019, the facility houses approximately [400 immigrants](#).

Until January 2020, Cibola operated a unit specifically for transgender individuals with a capacity for up to 60 beds. Since early 2018, Cibola has detained more than 180 women in its “transgender pod.” In July 2019, 29 women currently incarcerated in Cibola’s transgender unit sent an open letter alleging medical neglect/insufficient medical care for people with disabilities and HIV-positive individuals, verbal and psychological from facility staff, and fear of retaliation for registering complaints about mistreatment. In May 2018, Roxsana Hernandez, a transgender woman asylum seeker from Honduras, died of dehydration and complications from HIV after 16 days in custody in Cibola. Individuals detained with Hernandez allege that staff failed to provide her with medical care, despite evident symptoms of dehydration. An independent autopsy also indicated signs of physical abuse prior to her death.

In [January 2020](#), ICE abruptly transferred all 21 transgender women detained at Cibola to ICE jails in Aurora, Colorado and Takoma, Washington. In a press statement, an ICE spokesperson said that the agency was working to “assess and improve the quality of long-term health care management at the Cibola County Correctional Center.” As of February 2020, it is unclear if the women transferred from Cibola will remain detained in Aurora and Takoma or eventually transferred back to Cibola. Lawmakers and advocates continue to call for ICE to [immediately release](#) all transgender individuals in its custody, due to the agency’s failure to comply with a 2015 ICE directive regarding detention standards for facilities housing transgender persons.

In April 2019, advocates sent a letter to the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties outlining documented abuses, including medical neglect, prolonged use of solitary confinement, failure to use interpreters, an inadequate grievance process, inadequate meals, wage violations, and inadequate recreation space.



Credit: US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

Key Areas of Concern

- Retaliatory and inappropriate use of solitary confinement
- Medical Neglect
- Abuse of LGBT population
- Lack of transparency in contracting.

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Otero County Processing Center

This facility is owned by the county and operated by private prison company Management and Training Corporation (MTC). In 2008, MTC entered into an [IGSA](#) with ICE and Otero County. According to this contract, which expired in 2013, MTC receives \$96.99 per day per person detained. Despite FOIA requests from advocates, ICE has not released an updated contract. Using publicly available information regarding per diem rates at Otero and other facilities, advocates estimate that MTC receives over \$30 million in taxpayer dollars each year for the contract. As of [June 2019](#), the facility houses approximately 1,000 adult male individuals.

In 2017, a DHS [OIG report](#) found that Otero had violated federal detention standards in its use of solitary confinement. Additionally the [OIG](#) observed a lack of working phones and poor facility conditions, including unclean and moldy bathroom and shower facilities. Advocates have also [documented](#) inappropriate use of solitary confinement, lack of adequate food, and barriers to visitor access, including legal services providers.

In [June 2019](#), a group of Indian asylum seekers initiated a hunger strike at the facility in protest of prolonged detention and alleged due process violations. All of the men had been in detention in Otero for more than a year when they began the strike. They hunger strikers have been subsequently transferred to ICE detention centers in El Paso and Miami, and subjected to force-feeding.

Otero County Prison Facility

This facility is owned by the county and operated by Management and Training Corporation (MTC), which entered into an IGSA with Otero County and the U.S. Marshalls Service in 2010. MTC receives \$61.81 per day per person detained. The facility houses individuals detained under both criminal and civil charges. Immigrants are typically housed in the facility for a short period of time en route to longer-term facilities.



Credit: US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

Visitation Groups

- [CIVIC Albuquerque \(Cibola\)](#)
- [AVID in the Chihuahuan Desert \(Otero County\)](#)

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