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New Report Finds CoreCivic Detention Center Costing Rural New Mexico County Millions

The county covered up losses with a \$2.75 million transfer of taxpayer dollars

A new report by the Institute for Policy Studies, [*the Detention Drain: How immigration detention hurts New Mexico's economy*](#), found that a federally contracted private immigration detention center in rural New Mexico offers no economic benefits to the county, and instead is costing taxpayers millions annually.

In 2016, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) contracted with Cibola County to house “administrative detainees” at a detention center run by the for-profit corporation CoreCivic. The cost was \$30 million a year for five years, for a total of \$150 million, with the county counting on the facility as a job-builder and taxpayer.

However, our analysis of New Mexico’s Cibola County Detention Facility run by CoreCivic found:

Cibola County is losing considerable money on the detention facility as it pays operational costs not covered by the federal contract

- The county incurs an operating loss of more than \$2.8 million because of expenses not reimbursed by ICE. To offset this loss the county transferred more than \$2.75 million from other governmental activities
- The county’s detention center expenses are more than double its income from taxes, service charges, and licenses and fees

CoreCivic has made huge profits off its detention centers and private prisons around the country while paying almost no federal income taxes

- Corecivic pays its CEO Damon Hininger 112 times more than its median workers
- CoreCivic paid a combined federal and state tax rate of less than 5% in 2018

With the \$150 million in federal taxpayer dollars that goes to CoreCivic in Cibola County, they could be creating better jobs and healthier communities

- In a county where 29% of people live in poverty and just 3.5 percent of the labor force is part of the detention industry, the \$2.75 million being transferred to cover the losses of the center could pay for:
 - 34 elementary school teacher jobs
 - 37 clean energy jobs

- 49 infrastructure jobs
- 309 Head Start slots for children
- 78 scholarships for university students for four years
- The \$30 million a year given in contracts to CoreCivic every year could pay for:
 - 371 elementary school teacher jobs
 - 404 clean energy jobs
 - 539 infrastructure jobs

The Department of Homeland Security allocates \$2.8 billion for detention centers across the country

“As cities across the country are rejecting private detention contracts on a moral basis, this report exemplifies the economic case to reject private detention funding. Cibola County can no longer stand on the economic myths they’ve spun around detention centers. They’re a drain on the local economy and the very existence of them poses a threat to the state’s diverse population,” **report author Karla Molinar Arvizo said.**

“The stability and financial well-being of New Mexico residents must not, and does not, depend on detention facilities like Cibola, which use this excuse as a cover for the abuse and mistreatment of the immigrant communities detained. Make no mistake — CoreCivic is profiting off of human suffering and they are lying to our state. New Mexico must halt contracts with corporations that harm our communities and push New Mexicans to work dehumanizing jobs that profit from the bodies and suffering of immigrant families,” **advocacy fellow for the New Mexico Dream Team Fernanda Banda said.**

The full report, published in collaboration with the New Mexico Dream Team, will be available on Thursday, Aug 22 at <https://ips-dc.org/report-detention-drain-new-mexico/>

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