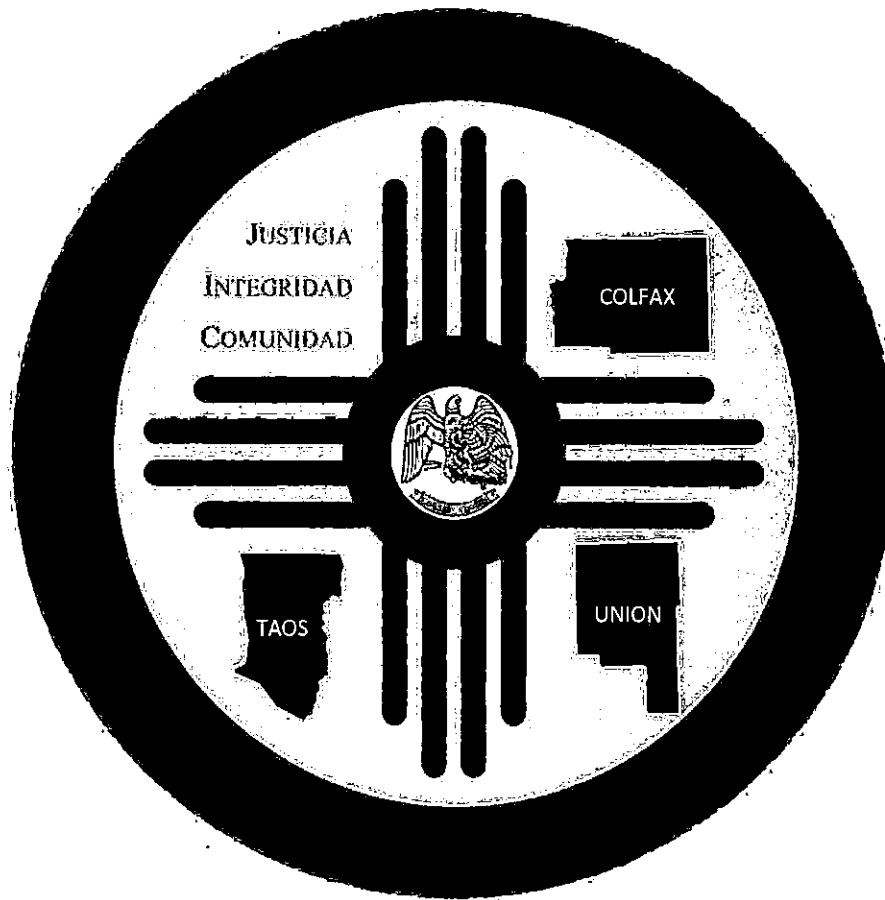
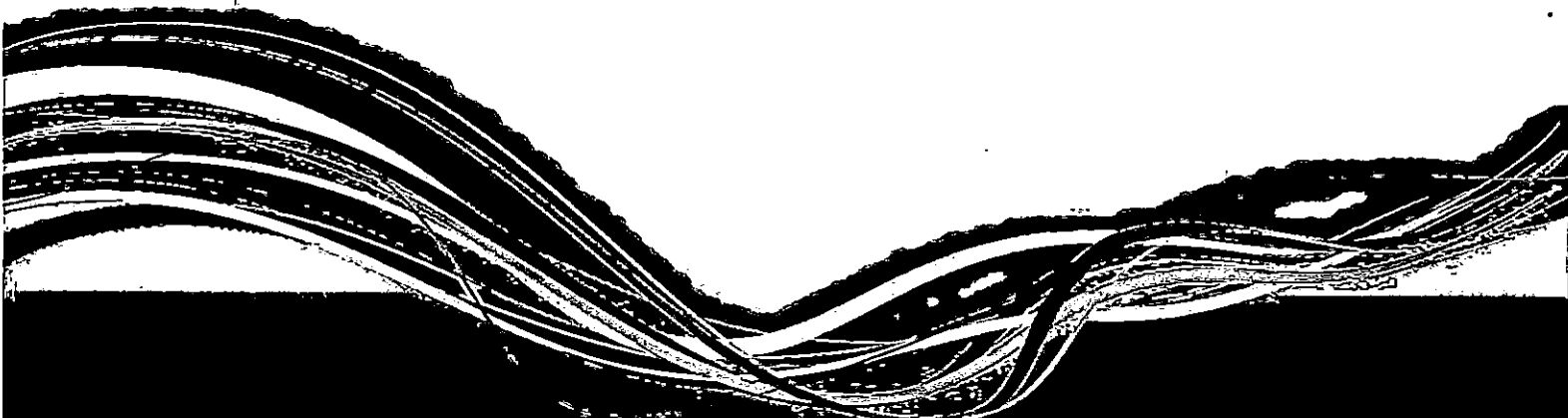


8th Judicial District Attorney Office

Marcus J. Montoya



<https://www.8thda.com>





The most beloved worker at the Taos County Courthouse isn't a judge, an attorney or a bailiff. In fact, he isn't even bipedal.

Shane, a standard poodle, has worked with the Eighth Judicial District Attorney's Office since 2019, and he plays one of the more important, if hard-to-see roles in the courthouse.

Victim advocate dogs, as they are called, are a relatively new development in the traditional court system. The Eighth Judicial District got its first victim advocate dog back in 2009 – a black lab named Lincoln. Since then, several others have followed in his place, with this newest K-9 employee replacing the office's previous dog, Sally, who retired after her maximum eight years of service.

When it comes to victim testimonies, especially those by minors and victims of serious sexual, physical or mental abuse, recounting their experiences in front of strangers is extremely difficult. This is where Shane comes in. As a neutral party whose only job is to comfort others, he has made a reputation for himself over the past two years by helping victims get through those painful moments in as well as outside of the courtroom.

In charge of handling, training and directing Shane are Carla Trujillo and Theresa Martinez, both victim's advocates with the district, though Martinez is the one who takes Shane home with her at the end of the work day. "He is so expensive and so well trained, that we needed somewhere that was safe for him to be at," Trujillo said. "I don't have a fenced-in yard so I couldn't keep him."

Shane didn't just get lucky, he was groomed (literally and figuratively) for the job. At the young age of six weeks, he was selected as a prime service dog candidate, and through efforts by Assistance Dogs of the West (who provided the grant funding) and Texas A&M University (where he was trained), Shane was taught to assist people as an emotional support and service dog.

Whether it's a safe room interview right after a traumatic event, or giving a public testimony in front of dozens of strangers, Shane is there to help, and his handlers say his presence produces real results by helping to keep the process moving forward.

Shane currently knows over 100 commands, and most of his training is geared toward providing comfort. "He has this keen sense. He knows when you're not feeling well or when you're not feeling confident, and he'll go and he'll lay his head on your lap," said Martinez.



Taos County is delving into new judicial territory after the county commission agreed to fund a new "domestic violence court" last week with the goal of reducing recidivism.

The new process will offer repeat domestic violence offenders a new alternative to jail by instead putting them in outpatient care and keeping them closely monitored.

After the Taos County Board of Commissioners meeting Aug. 17, Chief Eighth Judicial District Judge Emilio Chavez, Community Against Violence Deputy Director Debbie McCann and District Court Executive Officer Karl Brooks joined the commissioners to formally sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the court and the county, enacting the new "Eighth Judicial District Taos County Family Domestic Violence Court."

The MOU lays out the ground rules and provides \$45,000 in funding for the first two years of the court...

In our last column, we talked about Taos County's new Family Violence Court, which will soon provide alternative treatment and intervention options for people convicted of battering intimate partners or family members. In this column, we will discuss differences between anger management classes, which have proven to be ineffective in changing abusive behaviors, and battering intervention programs (BIPs), which have shown real results.

In New Mexico, everyone who is convicted of a domestic violence (DV) crime is supposed to complete a state-certified BIP. Research shows someone completing a BIP is less likely to re-offend. But, in the past, many DV offenders were mistakenly ordered to anger management classes or so-called “domestic violence classes” that were not state-certified and did not follow the best research.

Anger is an emotion. Abuse, violence, and control are choices. People making those choices have underlying attitudes and beliefs that allow and support their making abusive choices. Abusive partners do an excellent job of managing their anger – when they choose to do so. It is one of many choices they make in order to maintain control over another person.

Source: The Taos News



LEAD NATIONAL SUPPORT BUREAU

The 8th Judicial District Attorney's Office has secured \$1 million from the Department of Justice to initiate a L.E.A.D. program. A program manager has been hired. It is our hope that this effort will reduce recidivism in Taos County and may be expanded to Colfax and Union Counties depending on how well it serves our citizens.

"Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) is a pre-booking diversion pilot program developed with the community to address low-level drug and prostitution crimes ... The program allows law enforcement officers to redirect low-level offenders engaged in drug or prostitution activity to community-based services, instead of jail and prosecution. By diverting eligible individuals to services, LEAD is committed to improving public safety and public order, and reducing the criminal behavior of people who participate in the program." LEAD reduced recidivism by 22%.

The call to dismantle our nation's endemic over-reliance on policing and the legal system has moved from the progressive edge to the center of public policy debates in many communities.

To meet this transformative moment, the flagship LEAD program in Seattle is now known as Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion/ Let Everyone Advance with Dignity, and we have developed a new option for LEAD operations that decenters law enforcement as gatekeepers to LEAD services (while retaining traditional LEAD for jurisdictions where that itself represents a meaningful paradigm shift).

In the coming months, we will be updating our website to reflect our latest work and to provide new resources in response to the real prospect of radical reductions in the scale and mission of American police departments. For now, please direct inquiries to info@leadbureau.org.

Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) is a pre-arrest and pre-booking diversion program developed by community members, criminal justice system stakeholders and reformers, public health and social service experts, and elected officials to address non-violent law violations by utilizing non-coercive and non-punitive public health

Veterans Treatment Courts: A Second Chance for Vets Who Have Lost Their Way

"This white paper is based on a series of interviews, buttressed by personal observations, of key players in half a dozen jurisdictions where Veterans Treatment Courts have been operating with marked success. Neither graphs nor charts nor a plethora of statistics are employed to illustrate the protocols and practices of these therapeutic courts. Instead, proponents and practitioners intimately involved in the founding and operation of these courts relate how they are "the right thing to do" for combat veterans who commit certain crimes that are associated with the lingering legacy of their wartime experiences. They describe, in often exquisite detail, what their roles are and how they have come to embrace the concept that these courts, which use a carrot-and-stick approach to rehabilitate rather than overtly punish veteran defendants, represent what one of the individuals responsible for the introduction of the first of these diversionary courts has called "the most profound change in the attitude of our criminal justice system towards veterans in the history of this country" (p. iii).

This publication is comprised of fifteen chapters: so, you're (thinking of) starting a veterans treatment court; nobody returns from a combat zone unaffected, unscathed, unchanged; PTSD by any other name ... can still wreck lives; a brief history of veterans treatment courts; Judge Robert Russell—"godfather" of the veterans treatment court movement; Buffalo Veterans Court—they're number one; the "top ten" components of a veterans treatment court; the mentor program—helping vets through the labyrinth; in the beginning—first set up your game plan; role of the players; Judge Marc Carter—what justice is; elements of the process; Michelle Slaterry—maven for research; success stories—in their own words; and questions and answers.

Source: US Department of Justice

based intensive case management. LEAD enables law enforcement officers to redirect individuals engaged in law violations arising primarily from behavioral health conditions such as substance use or mental health issues to community-based services instead of using legal sanctions like arrest and jail.

LEAD was a direct response to two issues of importance to community members and key stakeholders. The first issue was extreme racial disparity in the criminal justice system (especially in terms of arrest and prosecution for low-level drug offenses). The second was increasing dissatisfaction with open-air drug sales and consumption and a sense that criminal justice system-driven responses were inadequate. Based on mutual agreement that the status quo was clearly unacceptable and unsustainable, LEAD was launched on a pilot basis in Seattle's Belltown neighborhood in October 2011.

LEAD expanded to cover all of downtown Seattle (including Pioneer Square and Chinatown-International District) in 2015 and began operating in the Seattle Police Department's East Precinct (covering Capital Hill and the Central District) in 2017. It expanded to the SPD North Precinct in late 2018 and will expand to Burien and at least one other city within King County in 2019. Additionally, LEAD has been replicated in over 35 jurisdictions from Maine to Hawai'i ranging in size from under 15,000 to over four million.

Independent evaluations found that LEAD reduced the criminal justice system involvement (arrests and convictions on new offenses) of program participants, is less costly than approaches relying on the criminal justice system, and is well accepted and regarded by participants. LEAD is identified as a "promising practice" by the Bureau of Justice Assistance and harm reduction based pre-arrest and or pre-bookings diversion programs were highlighted as a key recommendation of President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. LEAD was funded at the federal level as part of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) in the 2018 Omnibus funding bill and was refunded in the federal 2019 budget, and has been funded at the state level in California, Colorado, North Carolina, and Hawai'i.

Sources: United States Department of Justice and leadkingcounty.org

New Mexico Fair Market Rent for
2021

County	0 BR	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR	4 BR
<u>Bernalillo CountyMetro</u>	\$621	\$770	\$940	\$1,345	\$1,617
<u>Catron County</u>	\$574	\$583	\$734	\$999	\$1,235
<u>Chaves County</u>	\$681	\$686	\$904	\$1,167	\$1,298
<u>Cibola County</u>	\$640	\$655	\$747	\$942	\$1,013
<u>Colfax County</u>	\$583	\$587	\$772	\$960	\$1,092
<u>Curry County</u>	\$611	\$703	\$926	\$1,244	\$1,497
<u>De Baca County</u>	\$653	\$664	\$835	\$1,136	\$1,405
<u>Dona Ana CountyMetro</u>	\$571	\$603	\$734	\$1,050	\$1,262
<u>Eddy County</u>	\$842	\$847	\$1,026	\$1,468	\$1,776
<u>Grant County</u>	\$630	\$668	\$806	\$1,071	\$1,324
<u>Guadalupe County</u>	\$574	\$627	\$734	\$1,050	\$1,235
<u>Harding County</u>	\$574	\$583	\$734	\$1,050	\$1,235
<u>Hidalgo County</u>	\$574	\$576	\$734	\$913	\$1,215
<u>Lea County</u>	\$749	\$779	\$1,026	\$1,327	\$1,507
<u>Lincoln County</u>	\$677	\$696	\$865	\$1,104	\$1,456
<u>Los Alamos County</u>	\$859	\$944	\$1,182	\$1,583	\$2,046
<u>Luna County</u>	\$484	\$557	\$734	\$1,032	\$1,271
<u>McKinley County</u>	\$636	\$645	\$742	\$966	\$1,006
<u>Mora County</u>	\$653	\$664	\$835	\$1,136	\$1,405
<u>Otero County</u>	\$601	\$664	\$757	\$1,083	\$1,311
<u>Quay County</u>	\$574	\$586	\$734	\$981	\$1,235
<u>Rio Arriba County</u>	\$663	\$678	\$773	\$961	\$1,048
<u>Roosevelt County</u>	\$648	\$653	\$860	\$1,164	\$1,295
<u>San Juan CountyMetro</u>	\$687	\$695	\$802	\$1,055	\$1,224
<u>San Miguel County</u>	\$673	\$677	\$800	\$1,054	\$1,085
<u>Sandoval CountyMetro</u>	\$621	\$770	\$940	\$1,345	\$1,617
<u>Santa Fe CountyMetro</u>	\$804	\$940	\$1,071	\$1,363	\$1,571
<u>Sierra County</u>	\$496	\$571	\$752	\$1,016	\$1,023
<u>Socorro County</u>	\$592	\$596	\$757	\$1,083	\$1,311
<u>Trinity County</u>	\$756	\$760	\$920	\$1,144	\$1,593
<u>Torrance CountyMetro</u>	\$621	\$770	\$940	\$1,345	\$1,617
<u>Union County</u>	\$553	\$557	\$734	\$1,050	\$1,157
<u>Valencia CountyMetro</u>	\$621	\$770	\$940	\$1,345	\$1,617

Cost of Living in Taos, New Mexico

Our cost of living indices are based on a US average of 100. An amount below 100 means Taos is cheaper than the US average. A cost of living index above 100 means Taos, New Mexico is more expensive.

Taos cost of living is 104.3

	Taos	New Mexico	USA
<u>Overall</u>	104.3	88.4	100
<u>Grocery</u>	99.1	93.3	100
<u>Health</u>	82.5	82.6	100
<u>Housing</u>	139.1	83.6	100
<u>Median Home Cost</u>	\$334,400	\$246,000	\$291,700
<u>Utilities</u>	105.7	100.4	100
<u>Transportation</u>	73.8	84.6	100
<u>Miscellaneous</u>	94.4	94.8	100

100=National Average

COVID

During the COVID pandemic our office diligently worked together to keep the office running efficiently with only a brief time where we had to have employees work from home. We were able to purchase equipment and necessary equipment necessary to have employees work from home and worked with the courts and defense counsel to ensure timely case dispositions. Upon return to the office, safety precautions were taken and daily wipe down of offices and temperature checks were in place.

FY 23 REQUEST

The Eighth Judicial District Attorney office is requesting a 5.9% increase in our overall budget. To recruit and retain prosecutors our budget includes a 5% compensation increase for every prosecutor position. Our overall increase is mainly due to the increase in our Contractual and Other services. The \$108,000 increase our contractual services is contributed to our Colfax County Attorney (\$57,000) and for professional services to assist while we attempt to fill vacant attorney positions. We also contract for janitorial services for our Colfax County office and for interns to assist in special projects as needed. Fuel costs, increased costs in our communications, increase in postage, as well as the necessity expert witness fees are some of the contributing factors to the twenty-two thousand five hundred dollar increase in our Other(400) services.

Attorney Retention

The Eighth Judicial District Attorney's office currently has nine (9) full-time attorney positions.

FY 22

We began the fiscal year with two vacant positions, and one remains vacant. We unfortunately lost one of our contract attorneys in a tragic accident. We are actively advertising for this position or another contract attorney and have not had any interest in the last two months. Cost of living in the Taos area is a big factor in attorney retention as well as attorney salary.

FY 21

For fiscal year 2021, we had three (3) full-time attorney positions that were vacant for a majority of the fiscal year. In order to keep with our mission, our office contracted with two retired attorney's to assist in handling the case load.