



Governor Bill Richardson Announces Four New Mexico Communities to Share \$927,000 Grant to Fight Underage Drinking

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SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson today announced New Mexico has been awarded a \$927,000 federal grant to be used to fight underage drinking. The grant will be implemented through the New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Department, and split among four communities- Santa Rosa, Taos, Clayton, and Ruidoso.

“Making the choice to drink and drive, or to sell alcohol to an intoxicated adult is bad enough, but selling or serving alcohol to a minor is unconscionable, it is child abuse, and I will not rest until it is no longer a problem in New Mexico,” said Governor Richardson.

New Mexico is one of only four states to receive this grant (the others are Nevada, Illinois, and Pennsylvania). The funding comes from the U-S Department of Justice, through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Each of the selected communities demonstrated the capacity and community commitment required for participation in this program, which is called the New Mexico Rural Communities Initiative. The commitment and support was obtained from key community leaders including chiefs of police, magistrate judges, district attorneys, educators, and health professionals.

Underage drinking is a crisis that touches everyone in New Mexico:

- Recent studies by the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation indicate underage drinkers consume more than 30% of all alcohol sold in New Mexico.
- 18% of the people arrested for DWI in New Mexico are under 21.
- Underage drinking often leads to more serious physical, social, and criminal problems, and contributes to the breakup of families.

Communities will use the funding to conduct research-based prevention planning using practices that have been proven to reduce underage drinking, and will then implement the best or most promising initiatives that increase the enforcement of underage drinking laws and enhance prevention efforts.

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