



## **Albuquerque Indian Center Inc.**

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### **ALBUQUERQUE INDIAN CENTER REACHES OUT TO BERNALILLO COUNTY TO OFFER SITE FOR FIRST TINY HOME VILLAGE**

**ALBUQUERQUE—10/3/18**—The Albuquerque Indian Center (AIC), which has been providing wraparound services to promote wellness, education and self-sufficiency to homeless individuals of all ethnicities and genders since 1990, has reached out to Bernalillo County to offer the 1.38-acre property it owns at 105 Texas SE as the site for the County's first Tiny Home Village.

"We had been searching for a way to include housing for about five years," explained Mary Garcia, AIC executive director. She said when she heard about the Tiny Home Village project, she realized it would be a "perfect fit" because the AIC has more than an acre of vacant land and its existing building already has a commercial kitchen and could be renovated to provide communal restrooms and a laundry. So, she proposed it to the AIC board of directors and they were supportive.

"We view this as a way to help more people," explained Kiutus "Ki" Tecumseh, President of the AIC Board of Directors. "We are already providing mailing addresses for about 600 individuals and serving breakfast and lunch Monday through Friday to about 200 folks daily. We also offer behavioral health counseling and support, DWI and substance abuse counseling, and employment assistance, so it just makes sense to join forces and expand what we do."

Bernalillo County Commissioners Debbie O'Malley and James Smith, who have taken the lead in moving the Tiny Home Village project forward on behalf of the County, said the County is now exploring a partnership with AIC because the site fits the criteria. "This option has the potential to be very cost effective because the AIC could provide land for the project. With proper due diligence we could partner a long-term agreement, save land acquisition costs and create Tiny Home Village housing."

"This is a unique opportunity," said Albuquerque City Councilor Diane Gibson, who has been a strong proponent of the project since its inception.

The proposal to place the Tiny Home Village at the AIC is also supported by Albuquerque City Councilor Pat Davis, Bernalillo County Commissioner Maggie Hart Stebbins, and New Mexico State legislators Mimi Stewart and Debra M. Sariñana, all of whom represent the area.

"Homelessness is a big concern across Albuquerque and nowhere more than here in the International District. The neighborhoods and businesses here face that challenge every day and I'm grateful to our community leaders who step up to offer their time, talent, and resources to serve people in need," said Hart Stebbins, who represents District 3. "The Albuquerque Indian Center has been stepping up for many years and I look forward to the partnership with them on the development of the first tiny home village in Albuquerque."

"The Tiny Home Village is a good solution; however, I believe it can be successful only if the counseling and support these individuals need to become self-sufficient is integrated into Village and provided on-site. The Albuquerque Indian Center has the experience to provide these services, so I believe it is the best choice for a partner for this important project," Davis said.

Garcia said the AIC also owns a small building across the street from its main site that could be used for a microenterprise or other activities. She and Tecumseh said the AIC has reached out to some nearby neighbors and communities of faith in the neighborhood, and so far, reaction has been positive.

Trumbull Village Neighborhood Association President and pastor of Interfaith Bible Church Joann Landry recently organized a meeting of faith leaders with Councilor Davis in attendance. "We are excited that Trumbull neighborhood will have the first Tiny Home Village in Albuquerque. We are all committed to doing Gods' work in reaching out to those who need our help. We know this is going to be a quality development in which we can all be proud," Landry said.

Next steps in moving the project forward would be:

- To work out governmental review and possible agreement between Bernalillo County, City of Albuquerque and the Albuquerque Indian Center and if approved;
- To apply for a zone change for the property. The requested zone for the vacant parcel next to AIC's building would be one that allows for an RV park similar to a Kampground of America (KOA) site.
- To develop a site plan based on the property; and
- To determine what renovation would need to be made to the existing building(s) and what new buildings would need to be constructed.

"The Albuquerque Indian Center has always been committed to being a good neighbor, and we will work with everyone to make sure the Tiny Home Village is an asset for this area. We believe it will help some of the people we already serve and many other homeless adults who need this type of transitional housing," Tecumseh said.

Voters approved \$2 million in bond funding for planning and construction of a Tiny Home Village in 2016. A group of concerned citizens and government staff began meeting in 2017 and held two public meetings that year to gather public input. In August 2018, the County announced it had gathered input on more than 30 potential sites, had focused on six potential sites, and began seeking public input. Three public meetings were held and comments were solicited at a project website, [www.tinyhomes4bc.com](http://www.tinyhomes4bc.com). The County said it would consider other sites if they met the criteria and/or were donated.

The concept for the Bernalillo County Tiny Home village is to provide safe, stable, dignified transitional housing for homeless adults on the path to self-sufficiency. About 25-30 small homes built on chassis for portability and cost-efficiency will be located on a fully-fenced and gated site that is at least one acre. Each home will have heating and cooling, electricity, storage, a double bed, a desk and a chair. Communal buildings will house restrooms, a kitchen, a laundry and meeting/training spaces.

The Village is designed for single adults, couples and veterans, with most residents expected to live there for about two years. Residents will be carefully screened, and required to follow strict rules as well as contribute monetarily and through assigned duties. The Village will provide life and work skills, support for employment and possibly a microenterprise.

More information about the Bernalillo County Tiny Home Village is available at [www.tinyhomes4bc.com](http://www.tinyhomes4bc.com).

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