

Introduction and Overview of the Program

Rio Arriba County is a non-profit governmental agency providing services to senior citizens of Rio Arriba County. In 1982 Rio Arriba County took over Senior Program operations from the non-profit organization called Los Ciudadanos Mayores del Condado de Rio Arriba. The County Board of Commissioners serves as a Program's Governing Board. Program operations are, overseen by [Maria K. Montoya, Program Director](#)

For the past twenty years the County together with Area Agency on Aging has moved into the 21st Century by taking a program that only served; Congregate Meals, to a program that is now providing an array of other essential Senior Services.

The Senior Citizens Program operates within the entire County of Rio Arriba. Rio Arriba is located in North Central New Mexico and encompasses approximately 5,800 square miles and ranges in elevation from 13,064 feet at Truchas Peak in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to 5,000 feet at the Rio Grande Valley south of the village of La Mesilla.

It is a quiet apparent that the cultural influences composing customs in Rio Arriba County come from an array of backgrounds, the most influencing are Pueblo Indians, Navajos, Mexicans, Spanish, Anglo settlers and the French influence introduced by Bishop Lamy, in the 1940's. The Catholic Church is mentioned because of its pre-Lamy era when the Franciscans ministered to the Indian and Mexican cultures. The Spanish influence predominated culture development for over 200 years. The Spanish culture now practiced in Rio Arriba County has been affected by many other lifestyles which have touched upon the development of this so-called sleeping giant. It is truly a configuration of cultural pluralism with Spanish and Indian cultural forerunners. The collision of these two worlds has emerged into a historical melting pot community. The commonality of all cultures was a love for the extended family and the family's relationship to the land. Similar family values are still practiced by residents of Rio Arriba today. Through the 200+ years of Spanish European influence, culturally and economically, century old traditions and strong family and community customs continue to this day.

The county is comprised of rural towns, and villages. Our closest urban area is the city of Santa Fe. We have and will continue to transport seniors to Santa Fe for medical and other needed services. The only township that is close to been considered urban is Espanola with a population of approximately 6,000, which is located on the southern most edge of the County.