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## Plan Provides Homeless With Roofs, Not Fences

It's based on programs that have worked in Denver, Seattle, Portland, San Diego, Los Angeles, New York City and Philadelphia. It is voluntary. It provides the stability of a safe place to stay so some of the city's most vulnerable residents can tackle life's other problems. It is being pitched as "the smart way to do the right thing." It's proposed by a Republican, Albuquerque Mayor Richard Berry, but has garnered support from myriad social-services advocacy groups, from the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness to the Supportive Housing Coalition of New Mexico.

It is not in any way, shape or form a roundup.

The city's pilot "Albuquerque Heading Home" program will help 75 homeless individuals and cost taxpayers almost \$500,000. It is designed to not only mitigate the \$644,000 spent annually on "down and out" rescue calls but also the risk of people dying on city streets.

Critics — specifically Joy Junction founder Jeremy Reynolds — call it a roundup of the homeless, a tourism scheme to get the poor out of Downtown. Albuquerque has an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 homeless individuals. There are plenty of folks in need to go around.

The program gives someone at risk of dying of exposure or violence the safety of four walls and a roof, is graduated to require a financial contribution from participants at some point and contains a mechanism to measure success and cost-effectiveness. That doesn't sound like roping anyone in.

It does sound like extending a fiscally responsible lifeline, along with the encouragement to climb up.

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