Continuum of Care New Programs Will House 127 New Mexican Who Are Experiencing Homelessness

by Lisa Huval, Policy and Advocacy Director

In the last round of the federal Continuum of Care applications, New Mexico was fortunate to obtain funding for six new projects that will provide housing for people experiencing homelessness. Most of these projects will begin helping people this summer and they are:

- Youth Shelters in Santa Fe will provide transitional housing for 6 more homeless youth in 3 apartments.

- The Housing Trust in Santa Fe will provide permanent supportive housing for 15 people in 12 units located within their Village Sage and Stage Coach apartment developments. Village Sage is open and Stage Coach is still under construction.

- New Life Homes in Albuquerque will provide permanent supportive housing for 18 chronically homeless individuals and families in their new Sundowner apartment project, which will begin construction soon.

- Catholic Charities will provide transitional housing for 14 families in Sandoval County.

- St. Elizabeth Shelter in Santa Fe will provide permanent supportive housing for 4 people in their Siringo Apartments.

- Interfaith Leap and Santa Fe Civic Housing Authority will provide permanent supportive housing for 18 people in 11 scattered site units in Española.

These are six excellent projects that together will house 127 homeless people at a time, adding a significant amount of new housing to our New Mexico stock. NMCEH staff coordinated the successful application process. Congratulations again to the agencies for receiving these grants for a total of $1,673,652!

With the Continuum of Care funds, Village Sage will provide more subsidized units for people experiencing homelessness.

Voter Registration for All

by Stephanie Lefebvre, Office Manager

Individuals and families who are struggling with financial situations and life crisis often rely on affordable housing, healthcare, and social services to achieve stability. The continuity of these services mostly depends on political decisions decided by electoral votes. Yet, the people who most need these services often encounter challenges when trying to participate in the democratic process and don’t make it to the polls. These challenges include logistical obstacles as well as the mistaken belief that they do not have the right to vote.

As part of its advocacy mission, the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness wants to insure the voices of homeless people are heard, so that people experiencing homelessness can be involved in promoting policies that end homelessness. In the coming weeks, the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness is planning on hosting three short training sessions across New Mexico, to help service providers inform their clients on how to register to vote and why it is important to do so. Stay posted for upcoming training dates in August!
Our Sincere Gratitude Goes Out to These Individuals & Organizations

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- Nikki Wiesner, our Intern, for all her help over the last few months with our Housing For All In Changing Times Conference and with SOAR.
- United Church of Santa Fe for their generous donation.

**OUR MAJOR ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORTERS:**
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- The City of Albuquerque
- The Daniels Fund
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- The McCune Foundation
- The US Department of Housing and Urban Development

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- New Mexico Veterans Integration Centers
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**More MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS & INDIVIDUALS:**
- Supportive Housing Coalition of New Mexico
- Taos Coalition to End Homelessness
- Taos Community Against Violence
- The Amity Foundation
- The Life Link
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*The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness is on Facebook! "Like Us" on Facebook so you can follow our progress in ending homelessness!*
**Programs for Veterans and Families benefit from Mini-Grants**

*by Hank Hughes, Executive Director*

When a female veteran with children finds herself homeless she can go to the YWCA in Albuquerque for transitional housing and a homeless youth in Taos can find help at the DreamTree project. DreamTree and the YWCA are just two of the 26 agencies that received funding through the NM Coalition to End Homelessness mini-grant program.

This year the NM Coalition to End Homelessness awarded $26,763.25 in mini-grants to agencies that are doing a good job providing direct services to homeless people in New Mexico. The Coalition grants 2/3 of the money raised by its volunteer fundraising committees in this way and uses the remaining third to fund advocacy at federal, state and local government levels. The recipients of the mini-grants are selected by the same volunteers who raised the money.

The $26,763.25 is the most money we have ever granted in one year, and the increase is due mostly to the establishment this past year of Veterans Helping Homeless Veterans, a group that collects and distributes money through NMCEH for projects that help homeless veterans. Our Advisory Board, the other fundraising group, also raised more money this year than in previous years. To inquire about joining our Advisory Board or Veterans Helping Homeless Veterans call Hank at 505-982-9000.

**NMCEH First Annual Conference Is A Success**

*by Stephanie Lefebvre, Office Manager*

The first NMCEH Annual Conference took place on April 26, 2012, at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, in Albuquerque. Over 150 people from across New Mexico gathered for our first annual conference, called Housing for All in Changing Times.

Walter Moreau, the director of Foundation Communities in Austin, Texas, opened the conference talking about his experience and success building housing for homeless people in Austin. The conference featured keynote speaker, Laura Zellinger from the leadership of the Interagency Council on Homelessness in Washington, D.C. Laura Zellinger spoke about the Federal Plan to End Homelessness and how states and communities could support the federal plan at the local level.

Experienced speakers from inside and outside New Mexico offered nine different workshops about direct services, administration and advocacy. The conference included a lunch buffet at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, punctuated by ongoing cultural and musical native Indian events.

The Housing for All in Changing Times Conference was such a success, that the NMCEH has already started planning for its Second Annual Conference in April 2013.
SOAR, Training Will Help Homeless People with Disabilities Obtain Benefits
by Lisa Huval, Policy and Advocacy Director

In June, we trained 25 new SOAR specialists from across NM, including Las Cruces, Silver City, Farmington, Santa Fe, Clovis and Albuquerque. SOAR is a nationally-used model for helping homeless people with disabilities successfully apply for federal disability benefits - a crucial step towards housing and recovery.

In 2009, the NMCEH partnered with NM Human Services Department, Social Security Administration, Disability Determination Services and several of our member agencies to bring SOAR to New Mexico. In August 2011, we took the lead in coordinating SOAR implementation, building off the strong foundation that the NM Human Services department had developed over the previous two years.

Since we began tracking our outcomes in October 2011, 65% of all SOAR applications for federal disability benefits have been approved within an average of 88 days. Typically, only 10-15% of homeless people who apply for these benefits are approved the first time they apply, and the appeals process can take years.

SOAR has been successful due to the amazing collaborative spirit between so many different people and agencies. Our recent training reflects this high level of collaboration – we had trainers from St. Martin’s, Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless, OptumHealth, University of NM Hospital, Metropolitan Homelessness Project, Social Security and Disability Determination Services.

Over the next few months, we will continue to work together to help these newly-trained direct service workers successfully complete their first SOAR application.

Karen Navarro trains 25 new SOAR specialists from across NM so that they will be better prepared to help homeless people with disabilities successfully apply for federal disability benefits.