



New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness

Albuquerque Continuum of Care Fact Sheet April 2011

What is the Continuum of Care?

In the 1990's, the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) created the Continuum of Care (CoC) program, which funds certain types of programs for people experiencing homelessness. Under the CoC program, geographic communities organize themselves into a CoC and each CoC annually submits an application to HUD to fund projects within the CoC. In New Mexico, there is an Albuquerque CoC and a Balance of State CoC, which covers all parts of New Mexico except for Albuquerque. **This fact sheet pertains to the Albuquerque CoC.**

HUD's concept for the Continuum of Care is that each CoC should have a continuum of services available to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness, including prevention, street outreach, emergency shelter, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing. The HUD CoC program does not actually fund all those activities (see below for more info on eligible activities), but HUD's expectation is that each CoC will engage in ongoing planning to ensure all these components are in place. Our CoC's ability to continue receiving CoC funding, especially new CoC funding, is partially dependent on the extent to which we have these components in place.

Under HUD's CoC program, each local CoC has the autonomy to decide each year which projects should be funded with CoC dollars. HUD expects CoCs to determine this by analyzing local needs and gaps in services, and prioritizing projects based on this analysis. HUD expects this analysis and prioritization to be done via a process that is open and transparent and that engages a wide variety of stakeholders.

How much CoC funds does Albuquerque receive each year?

In a nutshell, HUD allocates enough funds to the Albuquerque CoC each year to cover the cost of renewing all of the existing projects that are up for renewal. This is about \$4.7 million annually. For the past several years, HUD has also allowed the Albuquerque CoC to apply for approximately \$225,000 for a new permanent supportive housing bonus project.

What projects are funded through the Albuquerque Continuum of Care?

Traditionally, the Albuquerque CoC has used its allocated CoC funding (except the permanent supportive housing bonus funds) to fund the renewal of existing projects. There are currently 22 existing projects in the Albuquerque Continuum of Care which are administered by 10 different organizations. These 22 projects include permanent supportive housing, transitional housing and supportive services only projects. Almost all of these projects must apply for renewal funding annually. Each year, a local Independent Review Committee (IRC) evaluates each CoC renewal project and determines whether it should be renewed. When the IRC decides to renew a project, that means the grantee submits a renewal application to HUD as part of that year's Albuquerque CoC application. HUD has always funded the renewal projects that are included in the Albuquerque CoC application.

Is there any money available for new CoC projects?

For the past several years, HUD has allowed the Albuquerque CoC to apply for approximately \$225,000 for a new permanent supportive housing bonus project, and these funds must be used over a 2 or 3 year grant term. Using a RFP process, the IRC selects a permanent supportive housing bonus project to be included in the annual CoC application to HUD. HUD decides whether to fund the project based on how we are doing as community in addressing homelessness. If a project is funded, it can annually apply for renewal funding (provided the IRC approves it) once the initial 2 or 3 year grant term ends.

Funding for a new project would also be available if a decision were made not to renew funding for an existing project. This has not happened in Albuquerque. This would only happen if the IRC had serious concerns about a project and felt that the grantee was not able or willing to address those concerns.

What types of projects can be funded with CoC dollars?

Technically, the three types of projects that CoC funds can be used for are: transitional housing projects, permanent supportive housing projects, and supportive services only projects. All projects must serve people who are homeless according to HUD's definition of homelessness. Permanent supportive housing projects must serve people who are homeless and who have a disability, which can include a physical disability or mental health disability. However, in Albuquerque, the only new projects we are able to fund are permanent supportive housing projects. HUD limits the bonus funding to permanent supportive housing. And, if the Albuquerque CoC were ever to relocate funds from an existing project to a new project, HUD rules limit us to using those reallocated funds for permanent housing. Eligible activities for a permanent supportive housing project include leasing, operating, new construction, acquisition/rehab and supportive services (supportive services are limited to 20% of the grant amount).

What should I do if I'm interested in applying for a new Albuquerque CoC project or being involved in Albuquerque CoC planning?

Please contact Lisa Huval at the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness for more information. Lisa can be reached at (505) 217-9570 or Lisa-H@nmceh.org.