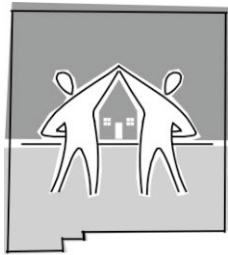


**REPORTS & PLANS ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING &
HOMELESSNESS IN NEW MEXICO:
SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

February 2008



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End Homelessness

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INTRODUCTION

This report aims to consolidate the data that currently exists on homelessness and affordable housing in New Mexico and to provide an analysis of where additional research is needed.

In the first section of this report, we provide a brief summary of all relevant reports and plans, organized by geographic areas. Links to all the reports and plans summarized in this report can be found on the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness website at www.nmceh.org.

There are numerous local and statewide reports and plans related to homelessness and affordable housing in New Mexico. However, much of this information has been scattered and not easily accessible to the individuals and agencies that need them the most. Consolidating this information into a single report makes it readily available to local advocacy groups, policy makers, and interested members of the public. This will hopefully enable all parties involved to better understand the issues surrounding homelessness and facilitate the development of better strategies and more effective programs aimed at ending homelessness in New Mexico. For example, with the current development of several local plans to end homelessness in New Mexico, accurate data is needed to both understand the issues and challenges surrounding homelessness and to develop focused plans that will have maximum impact on the problem of homelessness.

In the second section of this report, we provide recommendation on what the priorities should be for additional research, based on the gaps in currently available data. Since resources to conduct additional research are limited, both in terms of time and funding, we hope that these recommendations help target future research efforts on homelessness and affordable housing where they are most needed.

This report was made possible by the McCune Charitable Foundation. The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness is grateful to the McCune Charitable Foundation for their financial support in the development of this report as well as for their ongoing support of efforts to end homelessness in New Mexico.

SUMMARY OF REPORTS

Albuquerque Reports

Results of a Survey Conducted of People Experiencing Homelessness in Albuquerque (September 2007)

This report presents the results of a survey of homeless individuals in Albuquerque in January 2007. A total of 210 randomly selected individuals participated in this survey. The key findings of the survey are as follows: 1) Affordable housing is crucial to preventing and exiting homelessness; 2) Many people who experience homelessness are employed or seeking employment; 3) About half of those surveyed reported losing their housing as a result of a crisis; 4) Participants in the study reported that some specific services are not readily accessible; 5) A significant portion of the homeless population is comprised of families; 6) Nearly half of the people surveyed had never been

homeless before, indicating that for many homelessness is a one time and not a recurring event; 7) Many homeless people in Albuquerque reported that they have been homeless for less than a year.

City of Albuquerque Affordable Housing Needs Assessment 2008-2012 (July 2007)

This report provides a picture of Albuquerque's affordable housing needs based on community planning areas. It identifies which neighborhoods are prone to disinvestment, which neighborhoods are prone to gentrification and which neighborhoods are stable. The report also examines housing affordability at a city-wide level by examining household income trends, residential resale activity, multi-family rental and vacancy rates, current trends in housing affordability and the impact of current housing market conditions on low-income persons. The data collected is summarized in a series of graphs, table and maps.

City of Albuquerque 2007 Point in Time Count Report (April 2007)

The point in time count was conducted in Albuquerque on the night of January 24, 2007. The count was done to get an idea of how many individuals are homeless on a given night. The count included both the homeless sheltered population (which was composed of people in emergency or transitional housing) and the homeless unsheltered population (which was composed of people who slept in a car, movie theater, park, public space, street or alley, tent, abandoned building, under a bridge, the foothills/mountains or the Bosque).

Albuquerque Homeless Women Survey (2007)

This survey was conducted by the City of Albuquerque to gather data about the female homeless population in Albuquerque, with the purpose of developing plans geared towards meeting the needs of this population. The report includes statistics on the demographics of homeless women which seem to indicate that women make up the largest portion of the homeless population, with growing numbers. The report offers some possible reasons for this trend and highlights some ways that the situation can be improved.

Planning the End of Homelessness in Albuquerque; findings from community focus groups (power point presentation) (April 2006)

This PowerPoint presentation summarizes the findings of five focus groups formed in Albuquerque, which were designed to collect information and identify goals for developing a Plan to End Homelessness in Albuquerque. The emphasis of each of the focus groups are as follows: 1)Supportive Services for the Homeless; 2) Affordable Housing for the Very-Low Income; 3) Community Perspectives on Homelessness; 4)Homeless Perspectives; 5)Improving Access to Mainstream Resources.

New Mexico Housing Trust Fund Feasibility Study (November 2002)

As a result of the increasing need for affordable housing in New Mexico and the growing awareness of the insufficient funds available to meet the need, the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) and other organizations in the state began to investigate other potential sources of funding. One source was the Land Title Trust Fund which exists in the state to aid in the provision of affordable housing. However limited funding and inflexibility in the use of its funds render it an ineffective tool by itself for affordable housing development. The New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA), the New Mexico Housing Advisory Committee and its legislative advocates collaborated on the development of Senate Joint Memorial 15 aimed at looking into the viability of creating a state Housing Trust Fund. The Memorial was passed during the 2002 Legislative Session. The ensuing study's findings indicate that with some improvements, there is great potential for the

current Land Title Trust Fund as a source of funding and furthermore, given sufficient revenue sources, it is also possible to create a housing trust fund in the state.

SUMMARY OF PLANS

Albuquerque Plans

A Community Response to Homelessness in Albuquerque (Fall 2007)

As the title suggests, this plan adopts a community based approach to homelessness. The plan begins with a brief overview of homelessness and the challenges currently faced by both homeless individuals and the agencies that work with them. It stresses the need for collaboration between local agencies that work with homeless people and members of the community, in order for efforts to end homelessness in Albuquerque to succeed. Five areas are highlighted as vital to making an impact: 1) Affordable Housing, 2) Prevention, 3) Services, 4) Income, and 5) Community and Political Will. For each point, a list of goals is identified. The plan is based on the premise that homelessness affects the entire community not just the homeless individuals themselves and as a result the time to take action is now.

Albuquerque Consolidated Plan (July 2007)

The Consolidated Plan is Albuquerque's five-year strategy for how it will invest federal community development, housing and homelessness program dollars. The Albuquerque Consolidated Plan includes the Workforce Housing Plan, which is summarized below. The Consolidated Plan establishes specific goals and recommends specific investments in the areas of community development, housing and homelessness. Development of the Albuquerque Consolidated Plan involved the formation of twelve focus groups representing populations in the following categories: public housing/section 8 residents, people on public housing/section 8 waiting lists, seniors living in subsidized housing, people with disabilities, at risk youth, immigrants, homeowners and planners from five different city agencies. Other focus groups focused on the issues of homelessness and barriers to affordable housing. The findings of these focus groups are summarized in the Consolidated Plan.

Workforce Housing plan (July 2007)

The Albuquerque Workforce Housing Plan consists of eleven sections: 1) the Workforce Housing Plan development process; 2) Workforce Housing Opportunity Act directives; 3) Workforce Housing needs; 4) Assisted and affordable housing inventory; 5) Neighborhood characteristics 6) Workforce Housing opportunities priorities; 7) Resources available to address Workforce Housing; 8) Workforce Housing goals and objectives; 9) Continuing affordability; 10) Strategies for implementation; 11) Standards for monitoring and evaluation. Each section is explained in detail in the body of the document.

Santa Fe Plans

The Santa Fe 5 Year Plan to End Homelessness (June 2007)

The Santa Fe 5 year plan to end homelessness calls for a shift in thinking from managing the problem of homelessness to ending homelessness by adopting a Housing First approach. Under this model, homeless persons are provided access to permanently affordable rental housing and receive supportive services to help them maintain housing as they need. Implementing this plan in no way

negates the need for emergency shelters and transitional housing. These would still serve as temporary solutions with the goal of moving people into permanent housing as quickly as possible. The plan includes a summary of expenses, available resources and funding sources and current statistics of homeless persons

Statewide Plans

NM Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative Long Range Supportive Housing Plan (December 2007)

The New Mexico Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative, The Technical Assistance Collaborative and The Supportive Housing Coalition of New Mexico collaborated on the development of this plan. The main emphasis of the plan is the development of permanent affordable supportive housing for homeless and low income people. Several studies conducted in other states are cited as examples where the development of permanent affordable rental housing has proven successful in alleviating homelessness. The plan is divided into six chapters which detail the specifics of the plan. Chapter one provides a basic overview of the impetus for the development of the plan. Chapter two emphasizes the need for permanent supportive housing in New Mexico. Chapter three examines the available sources of funding that are earmarked for affordable housing. Chapter four discusses strategies for collaboration and capacity-building so that local communities can develop supportive housing. Chapter five focuses on the supportive services system currently in place in the state and ways to improve on it. This would involve incorporating a Housing First approach in addition to supportive services which individuals can access as needed and for as long they need them. Chapter six is split into a guide for managing and implementing the initiatives proposed in the plan and a template for ongoing evaluation of the efficacy of the plan.

NM Consolidated Plan (November 2005)

This New Mexico Consolidated plan was developed to identify the state's housing and community development needs, develop a strategic plan which specifies how the funds allocated will be used to meet the needs in the state and to assist local areas in understanding their housing and community development needs. The plan spans a 5 year period from 2006 through 2010. The plan is divided in six sections: 1) Introduction 2) Socioeconomic analysis 3) Housing market analysis 4) Citizen input and needs identification 5) Impediments to fair housing choice 6) Strategic plan and action plan.

Proposed Strategy for Ending Homelessness in New Mexico (June 2005)

This document summarizes the recommendations from the Lt. Gov's Strategy Group on Homelessness and key components of the NM Plan to End Homelessness. The document highlights key reasons to end homelessness as well as practical next steps to take in order to achieve this goal.

New Mexico Plan to End Homelessness (July - August 2004)

This plan outlines a strategy for ending homelessness in New Mexico in 10 years. The Plan was developed by the Interagency Task Force, which was comprised of representatives from government agencies, nonprofit organizations, housing agencies, homeless and formerly homeless persons. The plan is structured into three priority goal areas: 1) Increase affordable housing resources 2) Improve incomes 3) Improve support system infrastructure and preventive services. The plan identifies specific strategies for each one of these areas.

New Mexico Plan to End Homelessness – Priority Matrix (July - August 2004)

This matrix lists specific action steps, managers, implementers, expected outcomes and benchmarks/dates for each of the strategies identified in the New Mexico Plan to End Homelessness.

The Governor’s Invest New Mexico Plan (December 2003)

Although this plan does not go into great detail on the issue of affordable housing, a section of it underscores the need for it as well as the difficulty in obtaining such housing for residents. The document highlights current housing issues in the state and follows up with proposed goals and strategies for rectifying the situation.

CHARTS & OTHER DATA

Albuquerque

2007 Albuquerque Continuum of Care Application (May 2007)

This application covers the city of Albuquerque only. Some key points to note in the body of the document are as follows: Section I contains the bed inventory of emergency shelter, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing programs. Sections J and L provide more detailed information on methods of data collection for the point in time count. The results of the PIT follow in Section K and are broken down into different populations and sub-populations. Section M gives a detailed look at the HMIS system and its usefulness for data storage on homeless populations as well as agencies that provide service to the homeless. This section also identifies challenges faced while implementing HMIS. Section N outlines the strategies and goals of the 10 yr plan of the Continuum of Care as well as possible action steps to take.

Statewide

2007 Balance of State Continuum of Care Application (May 2007)

This application covers the city of Santa Fe and other cities in New Mexico with the exception of Albuquerque. Some key points to note in the document are as follows: Section I contains the bed inventory of emergency shelter, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing programs. Sections J and L provide more detailed information on methods of data collection for the point in time count. The results of the PIT follow in Section K and are broken down into different populations and sub-populations. Section M gives a detailed look at the HMIS system and its usefulness for data storage on homeless populations as well as agencies that provide service to the homeless. This section also identifies challenges faced while implementing HMIS. Section N outlines the strategies and goals of the 10 yr plan of the Continuum of Care as well as possible action steps to take.

Cost of Homelessness Chart (October 2006)

This chart provides a concise picture of the current cost of homelessness in New Mexico as opposed to the cost of providing supportive housing by showing the nightly cost of an emergency room, prison, emergency shelter and supportive housing bed.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH & PLANNING

As this report shows, there are numerous local and statewide plans and reports relating to homelessness and affordable housing in New Mexico. Yet, there are also critical gaps. These gaps, along with recommendations for future research and planning efforts, are discussed below.

Statewide affordable housing study

Much of the current reports and studies provide different pieces of the affordable housing picture in New Mexico. We need a study that provides a broad overview of the affordable housing picture in New Mexico. Such a study should include information on specific affordable housing needs in New Mexico (including both rural and urban areas), which local, state and federal resources are currently available to meet those needs, and what the gaps and barriers are to developing, preserving and managing affordable housing. The study would need to include all types of affordable housing, including supportive housing, rental housing and homeownership units. This type of study could be conducted largely by pulling together information from already existing plans, reports and studies. The document could provide concise, clear information to policy-makers, funders and advocates on where an investment of new dollars is most needed and what kind of impact that investment would have.

Evaluation of best practices

Many states and local communities have produced empirical research on the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of using best practices in helping homeless individuals and families. In particular, research has focused on the effectiveness of supportive housing and a “Housing First” approach. Yet, we have not conducted any evaluations on supportive housing or a “Housing First” approach in New Mexico. Such evaluations would be a powerful tool for helping policy-makers and funders understand the effectiveness of these approaches.

Cost of homelessness studies

Many states and local communities have documented the hidden costs of homelessness by studying the impact of homelessness on hospitals, jails/prisons, psychiatric facilities and detox centers. Many states and local communities have also documented the cost-effectiveness of providing housing and supportive services to people experiencing homelessness. A study on the cost of homelessness at the local level would be another powerful tool in helping policy-makers understand the true impact of homelessness and to weight the relative advantages of investing in best practices such as supportive housing and “Housing First.”