



**Report of the  
2008 Housing First  
Task Force**

A Report in Response to Senate Memorial 2  
October 2008







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Bill Richardson, Governor • Diane Denish, Lt. Governor



## INTRODUCTION

Every year, as many as 17,000 New Mexicans find themselves homeless for at least part of the year; even more find themselves at risk of homelessness. Approximately 42% of New Mexico renters pay more than a third of their income on rent, while 21% pay more than half<sup>1</sup>. Such expenditures place these individuals and their families at increased risk of homelessness in the event of an emergency. This rent burden and income disparity is even more pronounced among people receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI); on average in New Mexico, 88% of SSI support funding is required to pay rent on a one-bedroom apartment, leaving no margin for daily necessities (food, clothing, energy, heat, health care, child care), savings, or emergencies<sup>2</sup>.

Several recent case and professional studies have demonstrated the cost effectiveness of the Housing First model for individuals and families who are homeless. These studies, conducted in Portland, ME, Denver, CO, and Seattle, WA, demonstrate that permanent supportive housing programs can significantly reduce emergency room costs by anywhere from 34%<sup>3</sup> to 74%<sup>4</sup>; reduce police contact costs by up to 66%; reduce incarceration time and costs by 18%<sup>5</sup> to 76%<sup>6</sup>; and reduce shelter and outpatient treatment visits by up to 98%<sup>7</sup>. Overall, Housing First model programs produced a net cost savings in Denver of \$4,745 per person, with 64% of program study participants reporting an improved quality of life<sup>8</sup>. Quantitative review demonstrated that half of the program study participants showed improved physical health (50%), almost half showed improved mental health (43%), and 15% showed decreased substance use<sup>9</sup>. For additional findings from these studies, please see the Appendix.

To better address homelessness in New Mexico, Senate Memorial 2 (passed during the 2008 legislative session and located in the Appendix), created the Housing First Task Force - a task force that includes representation from the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD), the Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA), the Human Services Department (HSD), the Public Education Department (PED), the Statewide Entity (SE), Bernalillo County, the Governor's Commission on Disability, the New Mexico Health Policy Commission, the Department of Health (DOH), the Aging and Long Term Services Division (ALTSD), Indian Affairs Department (IAD), homeless service providers, community-based organizations, and affordable housing developers. In addition, representation included members of the Housing Leadership Group of the New Mexico Behavioral Health Collaborative – a group whose mission is to support the expansion of permanent supportive housing opportunities in order for persons to participate fully in their communities. The Housing First Task Force used the Housing First model as the guiding philosophy behind the development of a comprehensive housing plan for New Mexico. The comprehensive housing first plan detailed in this report identifies components and recommends actions necessary to ameliorate homelessness in communities throughout New Mexico.

1 New Mexico 2008 Legislature Senate Memorial 2, "Create Housing First Task Force."

2 "Priced Out in 2006: The Housing Crisis for People with Disabilities." Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc., and the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities. 2007; "A New Measure of Housing Affordability: Estimates and Analytical Results," NK Kutty, Housing Policy Debate 16:1, Fannie Mae Foundation, 2005.

3 Jennifer Perlman, PsyD and John Parvensky, Denver Housing First Collaborative, Cost Benefit Analysis and Program Outcomes Report, December 2006.

4 Debra Srebnik, Ph.D, King County Mental Health and Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division, One Year Outcomes Report for Plymouth on Stewart "Begin at Home" Program, Seattle, WA, Oct. 15, 2007.

5 Ibid.

6 Jennifer Perlman, PsyD and John Parvensky, Denver Housing First Collaborative, Cost Benefit Analysis and Program Outcomes Report, December 2006.

7 Cost of Homelessness: Cost Analysis of Permanent Supportive Housing, Maine Department of Health and Human Services, September 2007; Debra Srebnik, Ph.D, King County Mental Health and Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division, One Year Outcomes Report for Plymouth on Stewart "Begin at Home" Program, Seattle, WA, Oct. 15, 2007.

8 Jennifer Perlman, PsyD and John Parvensky, Denver Housing First Collaborative, Cost Benefit Analysis and Program Outcomes Report, December 2006.

9 Ibid.



## WHAT IS HOUSING FIRST?

Housing First is a solution to homelessness. The Housing First model is a supportive housing approach, designed to assist vulnerable people in accessing and maintaining affordable, safe housing. Implemented in several areas nationwide, officials believe that the model is responsible for a 30% decrease in the homeless population in America from 2005 to 2007<sup>10</sup>. Studies indicate that the Housing First model has provided stability and increased functioning for the chronically homeless, defined as “disabled individuals who have been homeless for more than a year, or who have experienced four or more episodes of homelessness over three years.”<sup>11</sup> Such stability promotes well-being and reduces movement to emergency rooms, detention facilities, and psychiatric hospitals.

The Housing First model recognizes that housing—permanent, affordable, accessible<sup>12</sup>, and sustainable<sup>13</sup>—is the core requirement for resolving the homelessness crisis. Housing First also recognizes that some individuals and families need access to supportive services in order to remain in permanent housing, and that accessing these services should not have any bearing on an individual's access to permanent housing. For adaptation to New Mexico's particular needs, the target population for Housing First will also include those at risk for homelessness, and those who pay one-third or more of their monthly income in rent.

### **Housing First versus Housing Ready**

The adoption and acceptance of the Housing First model relies on a huge philosophical shift in both the public and private arenas. Currently, much of the funding available for affordable, sustainable, accessible, and supportive housing treats housing as an end goal—a reward—rather than a first step, or a tool. This position, known as “housing ready,” places onerous burdens of proof on people whose capacity for meeting such requirements is diminished precisely because they have no stable housing. The result is a circular trap—in order to get stable, permanent housing, one must prove one's “readiness”; in order to participate in the activities that prove one “ready” for housing, one needs a stable, permanent home.

In contrast, the Housing First model recognizes that housing is a basic human right, and that access to housing should not be contingent on service program participation or success. Its immediate focus is on finding permanent housing for people who are homeless, with a subsequent focus on providing access to appropriate services that will keep these individuals from returning to homeless status.

10 “The Third Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress.” US Department of Housing and Urban Development. July 2008.

11 “U.S. Reports Drop in Homeless Population.” RL Swarns, *The New York Times*, July 30, 2008.

12 Accessible: at a minimum, there should be one no-step entry, 32" clear space doors, and a bathroom usable by a disabled individual, including support bracing that allow for later installation of grab/support bars as necessary. By including these design elements as part of the construction, the possible need for later, and more costly, retrofitting is avoided.

13 Sustainable: energy bills can often be as crippling to a household with a income/rent disparity as a medical emergency. By including eco-conscious design elements as part of the construction, this can ameliorate the effect of rising energy costs.

## **Housing First Works**

Data indicates that the majority of individuals and families who participate in Housing First programs achieve and maintain sobriety, attend work or school, successfully manage their budgets, permanently end relationships with abusers, and keep their housing long-term. Social services are more effective when people are living in their own housing, and the Housing First model decreases the burden on social systems, as people who have housing are less likely to use emergency rooms, psychiatric facilities, or emergency shelters, and less likely to become involved with the criminal justice system. Housing First models have demonstrated a cost savings for these social systems of as much as \$30,000 per person in some communities<sup>14</sup>.

The Housing First model is not only beneficial for those who are chronically homeless, but it can also be helpful for vulnerable populations such as youth who exit both the foster care and juvenile justice systems; individuals with behavioral health issues; disabled individuals; persons being discharged from institutions including psychiatric hospitals, medical hospitals, and correctional facilities; and those who spend more than one-third of their income on rent. Other populations that can benefit include people with serious mental illness, those already homeless, those without life skills, and those at risk of homelessness for other reasons.

In addition to being a basic human right, safe, decent, and affordable housing provides a foundation for personal success in school and work, and is therefore a fundamental prerequisite for the economic success of New Mexico. When households spend a reasonable amount of their income on housing costs, they have more money to spend on other basic necessities.

## **Housing First Challenges**

Although the Housing First model has been identified as playing a key role in the 30% decrease in the number of chronically homeless people in America between 2005 and 2007, the fact remains that implementing a Housing First model faces numerous barriers. Such barriers include, but are not limited to, limited supportive service capacity; limited affordable, sustainable, and accessible housing; and limited resources needed to generate housing capacity. In addition, other issues that can prevent implementation of a Housing First model may include housing ordinances, operational and funding requirements, and a negative public perception of people who are homeless that can often and communities that don't want people who are homeless in their area. As well, this negative public perception may also prevent people who are homeless from accessing assistance. These barriers are often further exacerbated in rural areas, where access to supportive services is often curtailed, and costs tend to be higher than in urban sectors.

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<sup>14</sup> Costs of Serving Homeless Individuals in Nine Cities, Chart Book Report, The Lewin Group, November 19, 2004.

# COST BENEFITS OF HOUSING FIRST

**Several case studies and professional studies have been conducted within the last couple of years that demonstrate the cost effectiveness of the Housing First approach for homeless individuals and families, including those cited below regarding Seattle WA, Portland ME, and Denver CO.**

## Portland, ME

In a study of two permanent supportive housing programs for the homeless in Portland, Maine, in cooperation with the local criminal justice system, hospital facilities, police department, psychiatric services, and others, the Portland permanent supportive housing program was able to cut more than half emergency room costs (52% reduction), health care costs (59% reduction), ambulance transportation costs (66% reduction), police contact costs (66% reduction), incarceration (62% reduction), and shelter visits (98% reduction).

*Source:* Cost of Homelessness: Cost Analysis of Permanent Supportive Housing, Maine Department of Health and Human Services, September 2007

## Denver, CO

In a cost benefit analysis study by the Denver Housing First Collaborative (DHFC) in 2006 that examined the actual health and emergency service records of participants of the DHFC for the 24 month period prior to entering the program and the 24 month period after entering the program. The following impact was documented:

Total emergency related costs for the sample group declined by 72.95 percent,

Emergency room visits and costs were reduced by an average of 34.3 percent.

Inpatient visits were reduced by 40 percent, while inpatient nights were reduced by 80 percent.

Incarceration days and costs were reduced by 76 percent, and emergency shelter costs were reduced by an average of \$13,600 per person.

When the investment costs of providing comprehensive supportive housing and services through the Housing First Program are factored in, there is a net cost savings of \$4,745 per person.

Fifty percent of participants have documented improvements in their health status, 43% have improved mental health status, 15% have decreased their substance use, and 64% have improved their overall quality of life.

*Source:* Jennifer Perlman, PsyD and John Parvensky, Denver Housing First Collaborative, Cost Benefit Analysis and Program Outcomes Report, December 2006

## Seattle, WA

Additionally the chart below shows the direct benefit to and reduction in the public services provided including inpatient hospital days, emergency room, detox and the local jail system in Seattle, Washington.

### PLYMOUTH ON STEWART, HOUSING FIRST PROGRAM, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Client Use of Services	One Year Prior to Admission	One Year Post-Admission	% Change
Medical Respite Days	1,107 days	0 days	-100%
Harborview Medical Center Inpatient	329 days	56 days	-83%
Harborview Emergency Department	191 incidents	50 incidents	-74%
County jail bookings	5 bookings	7 bookings	40%
County jail days	123 days	101 days	-18%
Sobering Center admissions	349 visits	11 visits	-97%

*Source:* Debra Srebnik, Ph.D, King County Mental Health and Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division, One Year Outcomes Report for Plymouth on Stewart "Begin at Home" Program, Seattle, WA, Oct. 15, 2007.



## NEW MEXICO HOUSING FIRST PROGRAMS

Programs based on the Housing First model began operating in New Mexico in 2005. There are three programs in direct receipt of local and state general funding to help support their programs at this time. They are as follows: the *Housing First Program of Albuquerque*, which serves chronically homeless persons with behavioral health diagnoses in the Albuquerque Area; *Linkages* for adults with co-occurring disorders of severe mental illness and substance abuse who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness; and *Transitions* for youth aging out of foster care and/or exiting the juvenile justice system. A fourth Housing First program, the *Hope Housing First Program*, has been established in Las Cruces. Additional programs that use the Housing First model and approach are listed in the appendix.

The *Housing First Program of Albuquerque* was established through an appropriation in the City of Albuquerque's FY05 budget that provided permanent housing in conjunction with treatment and other services to individuals with diagnoses of serious mental illness, substance abuse, or co-occurring disorders. Since the program's establishment, 282 chronically homeless people with behavioral health diagnoses have been served. Eighty percent of those served have remained in the program for more than a year, and/or transition to other forms of permanent housing, including Section 8. This program is administered by the Supportive Housing Coalition of New Mexico with an annual budget of \$1.2 million, and provides 175 housing vouchers to clients referred by the University of New Mexico's Psychiatric Outpatient Case Management, Forensics Case Management, ACT team, and ASAP program; Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless; St. Martin's; Veterans Homeless Outreach; CPI; New Mexico Solutions; and the Bernalillo County Public Defenders Office.

*Linkages* is the permanent supportive housing program begun by the New Mexico Interagency Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative (the Collaborative) in January 2008. A state-funded pilot program, *Linkages* provides rental subsidies for affordable, quality housing paired with community-based individualized support services in two urban areas (Albuquerque, Santa Fe) and one rural site in southwestern New Mexico (Silver City). *Linkages* targets consumers with demonstrated housing needs, prioritizes individuals with serious mental illnesses, and targets 10% of the available units to Native Americans living off-reservation. Program participants pay 30% of their adjusted income toward rent, and *Linkages* subsidizes the remainder. Participants are able to choose their own living units in the three pilot areas. Currently, there are 30 available vouchers statewide, divided evenly among the three pilot program areas.

*Transitions* is the permanent supportive housing program for youth begun by the Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD) with support from the Collaborative in November 2007. Also a state-funded pilot program, *Transitions* provides rental subsidies and supportive services to youth in transition with behavioral health needs, who are either aging out of foster care, or who are being released from juvenile justice facilities on parole. Using recurring state general funds, 20 vouchers are available through CYFD to transitional youth in the Albuquerque area. Participants are offered an apartment or house of their own, along with consumer and community centered services that support their transition to independence. The cornerstone of the program is consumer choice, both in housing and support services. With stable housing and effective support, transitioning youth are able to achieve other important life goals, including improved physical and behavioral health, education, job

training, and employment. The emphasis of the program is on helping the participant to become a good tenant in his/her community, thus having the real opportunity to become a valuable, and valued, part of society.

In Las Cruces, the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope and Adobe Inc. opened a 15-unit Housing First program in October 2008. Funding to acquire two eight-bedroom homes for the *Hope Housing First Program* have been secured from HUD's Supportive Housing program, ValueOptions New Mexico, and the City of Las Cruces. The program provides rent subsidies to 15 chronically homeless people with disabilities through HUD's project-based Section 8 program.

All these housing programs share the following goals: development of local community support and receptivity for Housing First programs; identification of available state and federal resources needed for rental and development subsidies; identification of and access to resources needed for support services; and promotion of system changes—policy, practice, and operational—necessary to support this service delivery system. To provide guidance for these programs, the Collaborative has developed a Supportive Housing Plan incorporating a Housing First model that can be used as a basis for a Housing First plan that will address the shelter and services needs of all those homeless or at risk of homelessness in New Mexico.



## SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

As part of developing this plan, three subcommittees were developed within the Housing First Task Force to identify the barriers to, and resources needed for, development of the comprehensive plan. The subcommittees addressed the following topic areas: 1) Promotion and Implementation of Housing First Model; 2) Pre- and Post-Housing Services; and 3) Availability and Sustainability of Affordable Housing. Following a discussion of the barriers identified and recommendations made by each subcommittee is a comprehensive plan, including timeline of activities, responsible parties and resource requirements for successfully implementing the plan.

### **Promotion of Housing First Philosophy**

As discussed, moving from a "housing ready" philosophy to one of "housing first" is a significant shift that must be embraced by providers both in the housing and supportive services arenas in order to ensure success. As New Mexico moves toward the statewide adoption of this model, this philosophical shift must receive significant attention, as attitudes and beliefs about Housing First, and the vulnerable population the model services, can either help or hinder implementation efforts. Promoting Housing First requires developing knowledge, awareness, and support among key stakeholders, using outreach, education, policy changes, and technical assistance as strategies for implementing this philosophical shift.

Education and outreach activities must target:

- Policy makers, including elected and appointed officials, legislators, congressional delegates, and local governmental officials;
- Funders of housing and supportive services, including the Interagency Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative (the Collaborative), the Continuum of Care, the Mortgage Finance Authority, the United Way, local, state, and federal government, and public and private foundations;
- Providers, including the leadership and staff of housing providers, housing authorities, and supportive services providers; and
- Local communities, including the general public, businesses, charities, landlords, realtors, and public service providers, including emergency medical services, hospitals, law enforcement, and correctional agencies.

### **Outreach, Education, and Technical Assistance Recommendations**

These audiences can be addressed through multiple initiatives. The Housing First Task Force recommends the following outreach, education, and technical assistance strategies:

- Build stakeholder coalitions at the state and local levels to promote and adopt Housing First principles.
- Provide training in the Housing First model to providers, both through funders and through mentorship relationships with existing Housing First providers.
- Host roundtable discussions among providers to create networking opportunities, assess Housing First capacity, knowledge, and barriers, and identify training needs.

- Create new partnerships between shelters and local behavioral health agencies to expand options for consumers with behavioral health concerns. Include training for shelter staff on behavioral health issues.
- Develop a public relations and marketing campaign that demonstrates the benefits of Housing First for a community, such as improved economic climate and tourism, and decreased burden on public infrastructure. Said campaign should provide community leadership training and participation in community roundtables and assist in the design of local Housing First programs, as well as provides technical assistance that teaches property owners and managers to access available Housing First incentives..
- Establish a Housing First grant program that provides resources, such as staff, technical assistance, and capacity building. Grant recipients, mainly existing service providers, would work with policy makers, providers, and communities to shift from the "housing ready" mind set toward the Housing First mind set. The recipients would also receive training and technical assistance.

## Policy Recommendations

Promotion of the Housing First philosophy is only the first step to adopting this approach across the state. The outreach, education, and technical assistance efforts outlined above lay the groundwork for the policy changes needed to fully adopt Housing First in every area of housing and service delivery funding.

The Housing First Task Force supports the following policy recommendations:

- Develop and implement a New Mexico legislative and executive strategy aimed at the official state-wide adoption of Housing First principles and policies; such strategy shall include the formal adoption of the Long Range Supportive Housing Plan put forth by the Collaborative.
- Transform funding policies for all major public and private funders in New Mexico to encourage adoption and implementation Housing First principles where appropriate, thus achieving service delivery and systems change.
- Provide incentives for developers who incorporate supportive housing and who work in collaboration with others in their communities to develop a Housing First program.
- Encourage local policy makers to embrace Housing First through local resolutions, and use Community Development Block Grant and other local funding streams to support Housing First programs.

For additional details on these recommendations, please see the Promotion of Housing First matrix in the Appendix.

## Pre- and Post-Housing Services

One of the main barriers to the successful implementation of a Housing First model in New Mexico is inadequate funding and availability of appropriate supportive services. Many people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless need support to access and remain in housing. *Pre-housing* services are those services designed to help an individual obtain and move in to housing; *Post-housing* services are those necessary to assist an individual in remaining in his/her home once housed. Pre and post-housing services are key components to the successful implementation of a Housing First model, and must be available to assist those who are homeless or who may be at risk of becoming homeless.

Services for identifying and obtaining housing include:

- Identification of community-based permanent affordable housing suitable to their needs;
- Navigation of the bureaucratic complexities of affordable housing systems;
- Facilitation of access to assisted housing systems that traditionally sidestep persons with complex service needs or no housing histories;
- Development of increased housing access through strategies such as landlord recruitment, credit repair, reasonable accommodation requests and criminal record corrections; and

- Assistance in overcoming obstacles to obtaining permanent housing, such as lack of income, identification, a means to receive important communications from potential landlords, or lack of knowledge about housing options (this includes outreach services to people who are currently unconnected to services).

Services that assist with moving into housing include:

- Obtaining needed furniture and household supplies;
- Providing orientation into the community, its amenities and services; and
- Facilitating enrollment in utilities and other essential services.

Finally, services that assist in maintaining housing include:

- Teaching coping skills for fulfilling responsibilities of tenancy and guarding against eviction, including conflict resolution, personal financial management, bill paying, "good neighbor" skills and upholding lease agreements;
- Helping to triage and problem solve threats to permanent housing stability;
- Consolidating the work of multiple service providers/systems to one approach and set of strategies;
- Applying and leveraging housing and civil rights laws and regulations;
- Responding immediately to crises, which may include the need to access or directly provide behavioral health, medical or treatment interventions and resources;
- Providing assistance with home modifications and/or personal care needs, for people with chronic health conditions or physical disabilities;
- Helping clients become economically stable through obtaining and maintaining mainstream benefits and accessing employment, educational and job training opportunities; and
- Providing mediation through a client advocate if conflict arises between service provider and client.

Currently, many of these services are often limited in scope, have very narrow eligibility criteria, and rarely scale with a person's income (services too often are cut off before an individual reaches the point of true self-sufficiency). Furthermore, many New Mexicans in institutions, including nursing homes, prisons, detention centers, and psychiatric facilities, are delayed in discharge back to their communities because they cannot access the services they need for a successful transition. In other words, although individuals are theoretically free to leave, in reality they have often have nowhere to go. To address these barriers, the Housing Task Force makes the following recommendations:

- Require the Statewide Entity for behavioral health services to allocate 25% of its community reinvestment funds to pre- and post-housing services
- Include requirements to address the full continuum of pre- and post-housing services in the Statewide Entity contract
- Expand the Collaborative's service definition for comprehensive community support services (CCSS) to include a full continuum of pre- and post-housing services, which includes, but is not limited to, outreach for individuals who may qualify for Housing First services.
- Create a Housing Stability Services fund with recurring funding, which would fund pre- and post-housing services.
- Develop case management services for people experiencing homelessness who do not meet the CCSS criteria, but still require assistance in obtaining and maintaining housing.
- Extend the length of time for which a person can continue to receive post-housing services following his or her attainment of program income limits.
- Develop and implement strategies for making full and effective use of Medicaid and state general fund dollars to support moving-related costs in order to assist individuals in residential programs or other secure facilities who are preparing to transition back to their communities.
- Remove the prior authorization requirements for additional hours of service provided to Medicaid recipients in out-of-home placement so that they can receive support finding and accessing housing prior to discharge

- Identify a recurring funding stream to support homeless persons in long-term care or state facilities when exiting into appropriate housing with moving-related costs.

By increasing funding and improving flexibility, more people will be able to access pre- and post-housing services, and consequently be able to obtain and maintain housing.

For additional details on these recommendations, please see the Pre- and Post-Housing Services matrix in the Appendix.

## **Availability and Sustainability of Affordable Housing**

Issues facing the implementation of Housing First models are the same issues that face any program seeking to provide affordable housing: the rising costs of housing, construction, and operations and the corresponding steady decline in the production of affordable housing; the decrease in subsidy funding; and the fact that public benefits too often cut off at a point below where true housing stability can be achieved.

There are four significant barriers to making affordable, accessible, sustainable housing available and sustainable to all who need it:

1. excessive housing costs (where more than one-third of monthly income goes to rent);
2. insufficient supply of affordable housing to meet demand;
3. insufficient services that will provide the support people need to remain in their home; and
4. insufficient infrastructure to deliver affordable housing, particularly in rural areas.

To address these four issues, the following recommendations are made:

First, to address the housing cost burden for vulnerable individuals and families, the Task Force recommends that tenant-based and program-based vouchers and subsidies, such as the Transitions and Linkages pilot programs, be increased. In addition, to provide access for individuals who may not currently be eligible for such programs, it is recommended that changes regarding criminal background checks and/or criminal history be made within local laws and ordinances.

Second, to address the fact that the supply of affordable housing does not meet the demand for affordable housing, the Task Force recommends that a dedicated, permanent source of funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund be made available to help support the housing initiatives. This funding should be attached to income targets in order to ensure that persons with low incomes (at or below 30% average median income) are served, and should encourage affordable housing developed with these funds be both sustainable and universally designed. To further encourage development of affordable, sustainable, and accessible housing, programs that provide housing for individuals and families with low incomes as defined should be eligible for forgivable loans.

Third, it is necessary to expand the availability of supportive services that assist individuals in maintaining their homes once permanent housing has been secured. As such, it is essential to create new, and expand existing, formal linkages between housing providers and service agencies in order to provide more robust and effective delivery of services to clients.

Finally, to improve the infrastructure, including materials, organization, and capacity, necessary to deliver affordable housing (particularly in rural areas), it is essential that policy makers and housing stakeholders encourage the development of new organizations, and/or the expansion and improvement of existing organizational capacity to develop or preserve affordable housing, such as housing authorities and non-profits. Three key groups must be involved in this initiative: housing program providers, social service agencies, and both non- and for-profit developers.

For additional details on these recommendations, please see the Availability and Sustainability matrix in the Appendix.



## COMPREHENSIVE HOUSING FIRST PLAN:

### TIMELINE OF RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES, RESPONSIBLE PARTIES AND REQUIRED RESOURCES

#### 2008:

- Members of the Housing First Task Force will continue to solicit public and consumer input on the comprehensive Housing First plan.
- Members of the Housing First Task Force will advocate for the establishment of a dedicated source of funding of at least \$20 million for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, to support affordable housing that is sustainable and universally designed, and that has mandated income targets ensuring that the low income population is properly served. To further promote housing that is affordable to New Mexicans in the lowest income bracket, funding for affordable, sustainable, accessible housing programs that serve individuals or families with income at or below 30% of average median income will be eligible for forgivable loans.
- Members of the Housing First Task Force will prepare to secure permanent funding for housing services during the 2009 legislative session.
- Members of the Housing First Task Force will advocate for the expansion of existing Linkages and Transitions programs, including the addition of new state staff positions to develop and manage a plan for allocation of service dollars.
- Members of the Housing First Task Force, specifically the Coalition, will investigate the expansion of the current fund that supports move-in costs and eviction prevention for homeless and at-risk persons. These efforts will aim to increase funding and expand the eligible target population to include those transitioning out of long-term care or state facilities.

#### 2009:

- Members of the Housing First Task Force will work with the Interagency Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative (the Collaborative), the Housing Leadership Group, service providers, and consumers, will work to expand the Transitions and Linkages programs by increasing tenant-based and program-based vouchers and subsidies by at least \$2 million by the 2010 legislative session in order to serve up to 70 new clients.
- Members of the Housing First Task Force will work with the Collaborative to include requirements to address the full continuum of pre- and post-housing services in the Single Entity contract, with support from the Housing Leadership Group.
- Members of the Housing First Task Force will work with the Collaborative, the Housing Leadership Group, service providers, and consumers, will expand service definitions to include the full continuum of pre- and post-housing services, including outreach.
- Members of the Housing First Task Force will work with the Collaborative and the Housing Leadership Group to develop case management services for the population of people who are homeless though do not meet comprehensive community support services (CCSS) eligibility criteria.
- Members of the Housing First Task Force will work with the Collaborative and the Housing Leadership Group,

service providers, and consumers, to extend the length of time that a person can continue to receive post-housing services after reaching program income limits.

- Members of the Housing First Task Force will work with the Collaborative to determine the most effective way to use Medicaid funds for move-in and eviction prevention assistance related costs.
- Members of the Housing First Task Force will work with the Collaborative, the Housing Leadership Group, service providers, and consumers, to explore ways to designate Medicaid-eligible individuals in the housing pilot programs as a “special population” that would not require prior authorization in order to receive additional units (outside the standard allocation) of CCSS.

### **2010 through 2015:**

- The Housing Leadership Group will work with local lawmakers and other policy makers to identify laws and ordinances that adversely affect eligibility for housing, and work to change them.
- The Collaborative, the Coalition, and the Housing Leadership Group will work with the major public and private funders in New Mexico to adopt and implement Housing First principles where appropriate. The adoption of the model will lead to all funders providing incentives for, and training and technical assistance on, Housing First models by 2010, as well as giving priority to funding recipients that implement those models following 2015, where appropriate. Support for this initiative will be sought from the Collaborative, the MFA, the Coalition, the New Mexico Communities Foundations, Municipal League, New Mexico Association of Counties, and the United Way Center for Non-Profit Excellence.
- The Collaborative, the Coalition and the Housing Leadership Group will continue to develop stakeholder coalitions, including hospitals, jails and correctional facilities, law enforcement, first responders, the faith communities, tribes, service providers, and local collaboratives, to promote adoption of Housing First principles within communities. Support for this initiative will be sought from the New Mexico Municipal League and New Mexico Association of Counties, the Coalition, the police and firefighter professional associations, local collaboratives, and the United Way.
- The Collaborative, the Coalition, and the Housing Leadership Group will advocate for development and implementation of New Mexico legislative and executive strategies to officially adopt Housing First principles and policies, as well as the Long-Range Supportive Housing Plan.
- The Collaborative, the Coalition, and the Housing Leadership Group will connect national, regional, and local spokespersons with key policy makers to champion the Housing First model and identify existing events that can be used to present and discuss Housing First.
- The Collaborative, the Coalition, HUD, and the Statewide Entity (SE) will provide local non-profits with technical assistance on identifying and accessing existing funds available for Housing First models; support advocacy efforts to expand the funds available for these models; and encourage flexibility for imperfect tenants, both through education and promotion, and through fiscal supports such as increased damage and security deposits. Partners in this initiative should include the NAHRO, the New Mexico Apartment Association, and service providers.
- The Collaborative, the Coalition, the Housing Leadership Group, and HUD will work to increase support for Housing First among housing and supportive services providers through roundtable discussions that identify barriers and biases, as well as training needs; by supporting existing agencies to mentor new agencies; and by providing training and technical assistance on Housing First's benefits.
- The Collaborative and the SE will create working partnerships between shelters and local behavioral health treatment centers to expand shelter options and create permanent supportive housing for people with behavioral health issues
- The SE and the Collaborative will provide training for shelter staff on Housing First principles, and will continue to administer funding for shelters to hire case management and counseling staff.
- The Housing Leadership Group will track the development of the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund, provide input to HUD on program rules as appropriate, and prepare the implementation structure at the state level to ensure maximum participation in and access to the fund.

- The Collaborative will request additional funding to expand the Linkages and Transitions programs. To serve 200 new clients, and provide services and supports to 240 non-Medicaid clients, a total of \$4.4 million will be needed annually.
- The Collaborative, the SE, and the Housing Leadership Group will seek funding to assess and identify the readiness and capacity of specific agencies for Housing First, including identification of existing successful programs, and agencies or geographic areas requiring further technical assistance. This assessment will also allow for identification of what agencies require to achieve readiness; which agencies have the capacity to expand into underserved areas; and what structure will be needed for expanding agency capacity. This initiative must include housing program providers, social service agencies, and both for- and non-profit developers.
- The Collaborative and Housing Leadership Group will seek funding to expand the organizational capacity of housing developers at a rate of four per year through 2015, for which \$50,000 per organization per year will be needed.
- The Collaborative and the Coalition will work to expand program-based operating assistance by securing an investment of \$270 per unit per month; to support 1000 new units, a total of \$3,420,000 will be needed.
- The Collaborative and the Housing Leadership Group will develop a public relations marketing plan, and presentation covering the benefits of Housing First for target audiences in local communities. This plan will include working with local media, identifying and propagating success stories, and identifying possible biases/barriers as related to the promotion and acceptance of the Housing First model.
- The Collaborative, the SE, the Coalition, and the Housing Leadership Group will engage consumers in Housing First model development and implementation in their communities through round-table discussions and public forums for input.



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# HOUSING TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP

**Chair: Marisol Atkins, CYFD Deputy Secretary**

**Senate Memorial 2**

**Sponsor: Senator Jerry Ortiz y Pino**

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PROMOTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF HOUSING FIRST SUBCOMMITTEE

Statement of the issue	Strategy for addressing the issue	Resources needed to address the issue	Expected outcomes
<p>There are three primary audiences who need to be educated about Housing First (HF): Policy makers, Providers and Local Communities. We need to identify who they are, what their issues are, and what we want to convey to them.</p>	<p>We need to influence the attitudes, beliefs and knowledge of these audiences about HF.</p> <p>We should focus our efforts on Policy Makers (top down) and Service Providers (bottom up).</p> <p>Clients/consumers should be part of the process of reaching each of these audiences.</p>	<p>Establish a Housing First grant program that provides resources (staff, etc.) for communication and capacity building to promote Housing First systems change.</p>	<p>The subcommittee's goal is to shift the mind set from "housing ready" to "housing first."</p>
<p><b>Policy makers</b> need information about cost-savings, effectiveness, and community support for HF.</p> <p><b>Policy Makers</b> are Elected and Appointed Officials, Legislators, Congressional Delegates, and Local Government Officials.</p> <p><b>Funders</b> include the Behavioral Health Collaborative, Albuquerque and Balance of State Continuums of Care, Local, State and Federal governments, Mortgage Finance Authority, United Ways, and private and public foundations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Transform funding policies for all major public and private funders in New Mexico to adopt and implement Housing First principles and achieve service delivery and systems change.</b> Ex: design any Housing-Related Support Services Fund to provide funds only for HF-type programs. [BH Collaborative, MFA, NMCEH as CoC contractor; NM Communities Foundations, NM Municipal League, NM Association of Counties, United Way Center for Non-Profit Excellence]</li> <li>• <b>Build stakeholder coalitions (networking and relationships) that promote and adopt Housing First principles with all community partners, particularly hospitals, jail/corrections, law enforcement, first ER responders, faith community, tribes, service providers and Local Collaboratives.</b> [NM Municipal League, NM Association of Counties, NMCEH as CoC contractor, Police / Firefighter Prof Associations, Local Collaboratives, United Way Center for Non-Profit Excellence]</li> <li>• <b>Develop and implement a New Mexico legislative and executive strategy to officially adopt Housing First principles and policies and the Long Range Supportive Housing Plan.</b> [NMCEH as CoC contractor; BH Collaborative, NM Municipal League, NM Association of Counties.]</li> <li>• Identify national, regional and local spokespersons and connect them with key policy makers to champion Housing First.</li> <li>• All funders provide training in the HF model to Housing and Support Services providers.</li> <li>• Identify existing events and use them as a springboard to present and discuss HF.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HF Presentation (PowerPoint)</li> <li>• Ongoing, focused task force to coordinate and direct efforts.</li> <li>• Coalitions</li> <li>• Studies demonstrating success</li> <li>• Key personal stories</li> <li>• Consumers willing and empowered to present their stories</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Events</li> <li>• Publicity to increase awareness</li> <li>• Flexible funding to provide HF training to Housing and Supportive Service Providers</li> </ul>	<p><b>A. Policy makers and funders adopt HF as the policy standard for supportive/affordable housing funding and require contractors to adopt and report on HF in contracts.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage all funders and providers to implement HF by 2015 where appropriate.</li> <li>• Encourage all funders to provide incentives for HF by 2010 where appropriate.</li> <li>• Encourage all funders to provide training on HF implementation to providers where appropriate.</li> </ul> <p><b>B. Policy Makers will create a funding structure to provide incentives for developers who incorporate supportive housing of all types.</b></p> <p><b>C. Policy Makers will set aside ___% of any new affordable housing for supportive housing/HF.</b></p> <p><b>D. Policy makers (local, state, and congressional) should advocate for changing and expanding the federal HUD definition of homelessness, and advocate for HF at the national level.</b></p>
<p><b>Policy Makers</b> Local Government</p> <p>Many of the strategies listed above can also be utilized in the promotion of HF to local government and local policy makers. However, we can emphasize the following points and also expect the following outcomes.</p> <p>Local Government Policy Makers also need information about cost savings, effectiveness, and community support for HF. They would also value information about the cost savings gained in public services, such as fire, police, emergency room, and indigent care, after implementation of HF.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar strategies as above.</li> <li>• Ensure that local non-profits access all existing funds available for HF and make the case that state and local government consider providing additional funds.</li> </ul>		<p><b>A. Local policy makers will pass resolutions in favor of HF as the standard.</b></p> <p><b>B. Local policy makers will use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and other local funding resources to reinforce HF in their community.</b></p> <p><b>C. Local policy makers will expand existing housing and support services to include permanent supportive housing/HF.</b></p>

Statement of the issue	Strategy for addressing the issue	Resources needed to address the issue	Expected outcomes
<p><b>Providers</b></p> <p>Providers need information about consumer success in Housing First and how they can take the first steps towards implementation.</p> <p>Providers include housing providers, housing authorities and supportive services providers, both leadership and staff.</p>	<p><b>Increase support for HF among Providers by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Holding roundtable discussions (housing organizations, supportive service providers and consumers) to discover barriers and biases about HF and to identify training needs.</b></li> <li>• <b>Use existing agencies to mentor new agencies—both housing and supportive service providers.</b></li> <li>• <b>Identify existing events and use them as a springboard to present HF.</b> [NMCEH, MFA, CYFD and Single Entity/ValueOptions]</li> <li>• Develop PowerPoint presentation for providers on HF that includes research and best practices and identifies incentives for doing HF—i.e. ready access to provide services to clients that are housed (particularly homeless), capacity funding available (possible), etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing First Coordinator at the BH Collaborative</li> <li>• Consumer input into program design and implementation</li> <li>• Consumer success stories</li> <li>• HF Presentation (PowerPoint)</li> <li>• Mentor agencies</li> <li>• Flexible funding to provide HF training to Housing and Supportive Service Providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of existing support service providers are aware of and understand HF principles.</li> <li>• 100% of providers that receive Federal and State funds adopt HF principles.</li> <li>• 100% of agencies implementing HF can access training as needed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Provider Issues</b></p> <p>Many existing housing agencies, particularly shelters, have narrow eligibility and admissions criteria. Moving to a Housing First model will require the need to broaden the expertise of the shelter staff related to HF.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Create working partnerships between shelters and local behavioral health treatment centers to expand shelter options and create permanent supportive housing for people with behavioral health issues.</b> [MFA, SE/VONM, service providers and the Collaborative]</li> <li>• <b>Expand training for lay staff on behavioral health issues.</b></li> <li>• <b>Provide funding to existing shelters to hire case management and counseling staff.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training materials and staff</li> <li>• Funding for staff with expertise</li> <li>• Funding for "wet housing" options around the state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff of existing shelters will feel more equipped to provide housing first services.</li> <li>• Shelters will have resources—either on site or by referral to partner agencies—to assist consumers.</li> <li>• Shelters will not be the only option for people who are homeless or in need of long-term housing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Local Communities</b></p> <p>Local Communities need information about Housing First and its benefits to communities.</p> <p>Local Communities include the general public, businesses, charities, landlords and realtors, and Housing First stakeholders (emergency services (hospitals), public safety, community corrections, consumers).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Develop a public relations and marketing plan that uses a cost benefit analysis and a HF presentation that demonstrates the benefits of HF for all target audiences within local communities.</b> [NMCEH, BHC, and HUD]</li> <li>• Communicate the greater benefits of HF when homeless are housed. For example, less homelessness is good for business and tourism; and reduces costs/use of hospital emergency rooms, ambulance services and jails.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HF presentation (PowerPoint)</li> <li>• Ongoing local meetings</li> <li>• Local BH Collaboratives</li> <li>• Housing First Coordinator</li> <li>• Success stories</li> <li>• Case studies</li> <li>• Data from community needs assessment</li> <li>• Providers</li> <li>• Spokespersons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential NIMBY reactions are anticipated, counterbalanced, and prevented.</li> <li>• Local communities experience benefits of HF.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Local Communities</b> General Public</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with local media for education efforts.</li> <li>• Educate about HF success stories, such as CYFD Youth pilot.</li> <li>• Educate to counterbalance / prevent potential NIMBY reactions.</li> </ul>		

Statement of the issue	Strategy for addressing the issue	Resources needed to address the issue	Expected outcomes
<p><b>Local Communities</b> Landlords, Property Managers, Owners and Realtors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate them about accessing available HF incentives such as: secure rental funding stream; having SSA as partner for supportive services and emergency situations; and tax credit opportunities for HF development. [NAHRO, NM Apartment Association, Service Providers]</li> <li>• Provide/guarantee increased damage deposits and security deposits.</li> <li>• Educate landlords and property managers on being more flexible with various issues including: criminal background checks, rental history, employment/other income, credit references/reports</li> <li>• Promote offer of 'second chance' to prospective HF consumers</li> </ul>	<p>Develop "Reasonable Accommodation" form for client and case manager to sign that asks for equal housing opportunity accommodation based upon disability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit ___ # or ___ % of landlords to accept vouchers.</li> <li>• More people will be given a chance to secure housing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Local Communities</b> Consumers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HF Consumers are empowered—"It's OK to ask for Housing First."</li> <li>• HF Consumers participate in roundtable discussions and have input into the design of HF programs.</li> <li>• HF Consumers are trained and provided leadership development to empower them.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumers are spokespersons for Housing First.</li> <li>• Consumers ask for Housing First.</li> <li>• Every Housing First program will incorporate consumer input into its policies and procedures.</li> </ul>

PRE- AND POST-HOUSING SERVICES

Statement of the issue	Strategy for addressing the issue	Resources needed to address the issue	Expected outcomes
<p><b>#1 Priority Issue</b></p> <p>Limited funds available for pre- and post-housing services. These services include services that help people who are homeless identify and access permanent housing, obtain needed furniture and household supplies, become oriented to the community, obtain utilities and other essential services, adopt and learn skills required for fulfilling responsibilities of tenancy, problem-solve threats to housing stability, coordinate work of multiple providers/systems, respond immediately to crisis and access education and vocation assistance.</p>	<p>Strategy #1: Single Entity allocate 25% of its community reinvestment funds for pre- and post-housing services</p> <p>Strategy #2: Requirements to address full continuum of pre- and post-housing services will be included in Single Entity contract.</p> <p>Strategy #3: Expand Behavioral Health Collaborative's service definition to include full continuum of pre- and-post housing services, including outreach.</p> <p>Strategy #4: Expand Linkages and Transitions programs to assist other populations in need and to fund pre- and post-housing services.</p>	<p>Support of the Behavioral Health Collaborative, Housing Leadership Group, the Single Entity. Buy-in from and technical assistance to provider community.</p> <p>Support of Behavioral Health Collaborative, Housing Leadership Group.</p> <p>Support of the Behavioral Health Collaborative, BHC Services Definition Committee, Housing Leadership Group, service providers, Medicaid, HSD. Will require additional funding initially, but over time will reduce costs in other areas.</p> <p>State funding (including possibly a large one-time appropriation from severance tax funds). Personnel to manage allocation of funds. Plan for allocating funds, including geographic priority areas, criteria.</p>	<p>Increase funding for and availability of pre- and post-housing services.</p> <p>Provide pre- and post-housing services and other supports to 240 non-Medicaid clients (see also Priority 1 under Availability and Sustainability).</p>
<p><b>#2 Priority Issue</b></p> <p>Funds that are available are not very flexible or adaptable because they usually have very narrow eligibility criteria.</p>	<p>Strategy #1: Expand Behavioral Health Collaborative's service definition to include full continuum of housing support services, including outreach.</p> <p>Strategy #2: Develop case management services for homeless population that does not meet CCSS criteria but still need help obtaining and maintaining housing.</p>	<p>Support of the Behavioral Health Collaborative, BHC Services Definition Committee, Housing Leadership Group, service providers, Medicaid, HSD. Will require additional funding initially, but over time will reduce costs in other areas.</p>	<p>More people experiencing homelessness will be able to access pre- and post-housing services.</p>
<p><b>#3 Priority Issue</b></p> <p>As a person's income increases he/she may no longer be eligible for housing support services, even though he/she may still need.</p>	<p>Strategy #1: Extend the length of time that a person can continue to receive post-housing services after he/she has exceeded program income limits.</p>	<p>Support of the Behavioral Health Collaborative, BHC Services Definition Committee, Housing Leadership Group, service providers, Medicaid, HSD.</p>	
<p><b>#4 Priority Issue</b></p> <p>There are many New Mexicans who are in institutions, including nursing homes, prison, juvenile detention centers and psychiatric facilities who are unable to leave because they do not have the resources to obtain or move into their own housing.</p>	<p>Strategy #1: Make effective use of Medicaid dollars that can be used to pay for moving related costs, including deposit, first month's rent and purchasing household goods.</p> <p>Strategy #2: Work to remove prior authorization requirements for CCSS for people who are in out-of-home placements so that these individuals can receive support finding and accessing housing before discharge.</p> <p>Strategy #3: Create a "moving assistance" fund with state funding for people who are homeless, who are in long-term care facilities, or who are in state facilities, possibly with NM Housing Trust Fund dollars.</p>	<p>Support of the Behavioral Health Collaborative, BHC Services Definition Committee, Housing Leadership Group, service providers, Medicaid, HSD.</p>	<p>More people experiencing homelessness will be able to access post-housing services.</p>

AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUB-COMMITTEE

Statement of the issue	Strategy for addressing the issue	Resources needed to address the issue	Expected outcomes
<p><b>#1 Priority Issue</b></p> <p>Low income households experience an excessive housing cost burden (i.e., housing costs above 30% of the household's income).</p>	<p><b>#1 Priority Strategies</b></p> <p>Expand <b>Linkages</b> and <b>Transitions</b> programs by increasing tenant- and program-based vouchers/subsidies, supporting additional populations in need, and funding pre- and post-housing services.</p> <p>Help prevent evictions through changes in local laws and ordinances related to conducting criminal background checks that adversely affects eligibility for housing.</p> <p><u>Timeline:</u> FY2010 <u>Responsible parties:</u> HSD, CYFD, MFA</p> <p>Program Based Operating Assistance (PBOA) - Provide subsidy funds to developers in a one lump sum during the development phase of a housing program to ensure long term housing unit affordability.</p> <p><u>Timeline:</u> FY2010 <u>Responsible parties:</u> The Collaborative, the Coalition, HSD, MFA</p>	<p><b>#1 Priority Resources</b></p> <p>\$3.2 million annually for vouchers</p> <p>\$1.2 million annually for services and supports</p> <p><u>Program Based Operating Assistance (PBOA)</u> \$ 3,240,000 (annually)</p>	<p><b>#1 Priority Outcomes</b></p> <p>200 new clients served receive vouchers</p> <p>240 non-Medicaid clients receive services and supports</p> <p>Prevent passage of ordinances that create barriers to housing.</p> <p><u>Program Based Operating Assistance (PBOA)</u> for 1,000 new units @ \$270 per unit, per month</p>
<p><b>#2 Priority Issue</b></p> <p>The need for affordable, universally designed and supportive housing outstrips supply.</p>	<p><b>#2 Priority Strategies</b></p> <p>Have a dedicated source of funding through the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF).</p> <p>Develop affordable housing that is sustainable, green and universally designed. The funding should establish targets to ensure that persons with the lowest incomes are served.</p> <p><u>Timeline:</u> FY2010 <u>Responsible parties:</u> The Collaborative, the Coalition, HSD, MFA</p>	<p><b>#2 Priority Resources</b></p> <p>\$20 million - (Scalable request of the total amount needed of \$100 million)</p>	<p><b>#2 Priority Outcomes</b></p> <p>1,000 new housing units are developed (\$36,400 per unit)</p>
<p><b>#3 Priority Issue</b></p> <p>The lack of available and accessible supportive services that allows people to remain in their home.</p>	<p><b>#3 Priority Strategies</b></p> <p>Create formal partnerships between housing providers and social services agencies to ensure stronger delivery of support services to clients.</p> <p><u>Timeline:</u> FY2010 <u>Responsible parties:</u> The Collaborative, the Coalition, HSD, CYFD, MFA</p>	<p><b>#3 Priority Resources</b></p> <p>\$1.2 million (annually)</p>	<p><b>#3 Priority Outcomes</b></p> <p>240 non-Medicaid clients receiving supportive services</p> <p>12 new formal partnerships between housing and social services agencies</p>
<p><b>#4 Priority Issue</b></p> <p>The lack of infrastructure, materials, organizations and organizational capacity to deliver affordable housing especially in rural areas.</p>	<p><b>#4 Priority Strategies</b></p> <p>Encourage the development of new organizations or expand/improve the capacity of existing organizations that develop or preserve affordable housing such as housing authorities and non-profits. Three key groups must be included: housing program providers, social service agencies and developers (non-profit and for-profit).</p> <p><u>Timeline:</u> FY2010 <u>Responsible parties:</u> The Collaborative, the Coalition, HSD, CYFD, MFA</p>	<p><b>#4 Priority Resources</b></p> <p><u>Organizational Capacity</u> \$1 million (over a five-year period)</p>	<p><b>#4 Priority Outcomes</b></p> <p><u>Organizational Capacity</u> 20 organizations (four per year over five-year period at \$50,000 each)</p>

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A MEMORIAL  
REQUESTING THE CREATION OF A STATEWIDE HOUSING FIRST TASK  
FORCE TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF HOMELESSNESS.

WHEREAS, forty-two percent of New Mexico renters pay  
more than thirty percent of their income toward rent; and

WHEREAS, twenty-one percent of New Mexico renters pay  
more than one-half of their income toward rent, leaving them  
vulnerable to homelessness if a crisis occurs; and

WHEREAS, a housing first approach to avoiding and  
addressing homelessness has been found effective in reducing  
homelessness; and

WHEREAS, a housing first approach gives immediate focus  
to finding permanent housing for homeless persons and then  
focuses on providing services that keep families from  
returning to the streets; and

WHEREAS, a housing first approach recognizes that  
permanent, affordable housing is fundamental in resolving the  
homelessness crisis and that some persons need supportive  
services to stay in housing; and

WHEREAS, the majority of individuals and families who  
participate in housing first programs maintain sobriety,  
attend work or school, successfully manage their budgets,  
permanently end relationships with abusers and keep their  
housing long-term; and

1           WHEREAS, social services are more effective when people  
2 are living in their own housing, and investments in  
3 supportive services for vulnerable families and individuals  
4 are, therefore, more sustainable; and

5           WHEREAS, a housing first approach is more cost-effective  
6 than letting people remain homeless, because people who have  
7 housing are less likely to use emergency rooms; psychiatric  
8 facilities; emergency shelters; and prisons, jails and other  
9 criminal justice agencies; and

10          WHEREAS, effective discharge planning from institutions,  
11 including psychiatric hospitals, hospitals, foster care and  
12 correctional facilities, depends on an adequate supply of  
13 appropriate housing options in New Mexico communities; and

14          WHEREAS, a housing first approach can lead to a cost  
15 savings of thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000) per person in  
16 some communities; and

17          WHEREAS, an increase in investment in housing is  
18 associated with a decrease in incarceration rates; and

19          WHEREAS, a significant percentage of people experiencing  
20 homelessness have been incarcerated; and

21          WHEREAS, many hard-working families cannot afford to pay  
22 for housing and basic necessities, putting them at risk of  
23 homelessness due to rapidly rising land prices, slow wage  
24 growth, declining real wages and increasing construction  
25 costs; and

1           WHEREAS, safe, decent and affordably priced housing  
2 provides a foundation for personal success in school and work  
3 and is, therefore, a prerequisite for the economic success of  
4 New Mexico; and

5           WHEREAS, adopting a housing first approach in New Mexico  
6 requires a shift in resources from an emergency system that  
7 merely manages the problem of homelessness to a system that  
8 helps vulnerable people gain access to and maintain housing;  
9 and

10          WHEREAS, the behavioral health purchasing collaborative  
11 will soon complete a supportive housing plan that will  
12 incorporate a housing first approach and that can serve as a  
13 basis for a broader housing first plan; and

14          WHEREAS, coordinating existing resources and plans can  
15 help to shift the state's focus to a housing first approach;

16          NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE  
17 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that a housing first task force be  
18 created and charged with the development of a comprehensive  
19 housing first plan for the state of New Mexico; and

20          BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a housing first task force  
21 be chaired and convened by the secretary of children, youth  
22 and families and that it address ways state agencies may  
23 better target and coordinate existing resources and  
24 strategies and collaborate on strategic plans to support a  
25 housing first approach for all people in New Mexico who need

1 housing; and

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the housing first plan  
3 include persons with disabilities and with addictions;  
4 persons discharged from prison or other institutions; and  
5 youth and low-income working families in its housing first  
6 focus; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the housing first task force  
8 identify specific goals and an implementation time line,  
9 identify responsible agencies and agents for each  
10 implementation goal and propose relevant action steps and  
11 performance measurements to evaluate progress for each goal;  
12 and

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the housing first task force  
14 be composed of representatives from the governor's and  
15 lieutenant governor's offices, the children, youth and  
16 families department, the human services department, the  
17 public education department, the aging and long-term services  
18 department, the corrections department, the New Mexico  
19 mortgage finance authority, the behavioral health purchasing  
20 collaborative, ValueOptions as the single entity for  
21 behavioral health services, the New Mexico coalition to end  
22 homelessness, the supportive housing coalition of New Mexico,  
23 the drug policy alliance, the women's justice project and  
24 three service providers; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the housing first task force

1 present a comprehensive plan for implementing a housing first  
2 approach to homelessness to the interim welfare reform  
3 oversight committee by November 1, 2008; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
5 transmitted to the secretary of children, youth and families  
6 and to the secretary or director of each of the organizations  
7 named to participate in the task force. \_\_\_\_\_

SM 2  
Page 5

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# LETTER TO POVERTY REDUCTION TASK FORCE



## Housing Task Force

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July 31, 2008

Governor Richardson's Poverty Reduction Task Force  
Rick Homans, Secretary Taxation and Revenue Department, Co-Chair  
Susan Tiano, Professor of Sociology, University of New Mexico, Co-Chair

Dear Mr. Homans and Ms. Tiano:

I am writing on behalf of the Housing Task Force (HTF), which was established by the passage of SM2 during the 2008 legislative session. The Housing Task Force would like to provide comment and recommendations on the subject of housing for consideration by the members of Governor Richardson's Poverty Reduction Task Force (PRTF).

The Housing Task Force is comprised of representatives from the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority, ValueOptions New Mexico, Bernalillo County, the Governor's Commission on Disability, homeless service providers, affordable housing developers, and the Departments of Health, Children Youth & Families, Aging and Long Term Services, Public Education and Human Services. The Housing Task Force is specifically charged with developing a plan to implement a statewide "housing first" approach for households experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness in New Mexico.

The Housing Task Force has been meeting since mid-May and has organized within three sub-committees: 1) availability and sustainability of affordable housing; 2) pre and post housing services; and 3) promotion of a "housing first" model.

In an effort to increase the availability and sustainability of affordable housing that is universally designed, the HTF recommends the following:

- Expansion of the Linkages and Transitions Programs by increasing tenant-based and project-based vouchers/subsidies.
- Support of changes in laws and ordinances in order to reduce processes and criteria that adversely affect eligibility for housing (e.g. specifics of criminal background checks).
- Establishment of a dedicated housing funding source through an Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF). (Such funding should be used for operations, capital development, subsidy and capacity building.)
- Expansion and further development of formal collaborations between housing providers and social service agencies in an effort to strengthen the service delivery systems to individuals and families in need of both supports.
- Development of new organizations and capacity expansion in of existing organizations that develop and/or preserve affordable housing (e.g. housing program providers, social services agencies, and both non and for profit developers).

In order to maintain individuals and families in adequate housing, the HTF recommends the enhancement and further development of pre and post housing services. Specific strategies include the following:

- Establishment of a Housing Stability Services Fund with recurring state funding. Such a fund would ensure the existence and expansion of both pre and post housing services.
- Require that a percentage of the Statewide Entity's community reinvestment funds be targeted at pre and post housing support services.
- Extension of the length of time for which an individual or family can receive post housing services after income eligibility requirements for services have been exceeded.

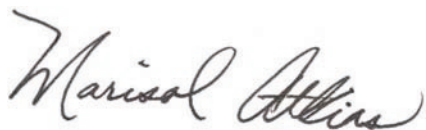
With the aim of ensuring adequate housing for *all* individuals and families in need of permanent homes, the HTF recommends the statewide promotion of a "housing first" model. Specific strategies for the promotion of this model include the following:

- Identification of national, regional and local experts to work with key policy makers to provide information and data related to the cost-savings and effectiveness of the "housing first" model.
- Development and implementation of new legislation to help support a statewide "housing first" culture.
- Creation of statewide housing stakeholder coalitions with representation from diverse populations including, but not limited to, faith-based communities, tribes, social service providers, housing developers and private funders.
- Development of incentive programs for housing providers, developers and stakeholders who embrace and implement "housing first" principles.

In sum, it is the belief of the Housing Task Force that poverty in New Mexico will be reduced through the creation, strengthening and funding of statewide housing services and supports. As such, the Housing Task Force respectfully urges Governor Richardson's Poverty Reduction Task Force to consider and support the recommendations put forth.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions and/or concerns.

Sincerely,



Marisol Atkins, Chair, Housing Task Force

Cc: Dorian Dodson, CYFD Cabinet Secretary  
Housing Task Force Members

# LETTER TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PURCHASING COLLABORATIVE



## Housing Task Force

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June 30, 2008

Linda Roebuck, CEO  
NM Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative  
PO Box 2348  
Santa Fe, NM 87504

Dear Ms. Roebuck:

The Housing Task Force established by SM2 would like to provide comment on the draft RFP for the next behavioral health Statewide Entity. The Housing Task Force strongly recommends that the final RFP include language that asks applicants to address how they will support implementation of the *New Mexico Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative Long Range Supportive Housing Plan, December 20, 2007* through the creation, strengthening and funding of housing support services.

The Housing Task Force is comprised of representatives from the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority, ValueOptions New Mexico, Bernalillo County, the Governor's Commission on Disability, homeless service providers, affordable housing developers and the Departments of Health, Children Youth & Family, Aging and Long Term Services, Public Education and Human Services. The Housing Task Force is charged with developing a plan to implement a statewide housing first approach for households experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness in New Mexico.

The Housing Task Force strongly supports the recently completed *Long Range Supportive Housing Plan*. The Housing Task Force supports the housing first approach that has been adopted in this Plan, which recognizes that people with significant mental illness and transitioning youth need both safe, affordable rental housing and supportive services that can help them to obtain and remain in housing.

The *Long Range Supportive Housing Plan* clearly identifies the need for housing support services that are critical in helping people with serious mental illness and transitioning youth obtain and remain in housing. The *Long Range Supportive Housing Plan* states that "people excel in permanent supportive housing when specific housing support services or interventions are made available."

Clearly, whichever organization receives the statewide contract will have a leading and critical role to play in the development and funding of housing support services that are essential in helping people with serious mental illness and transitioning youth obtain and remain in housing.

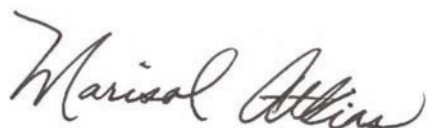
The Housing Task Force urges the Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative to include language in the final RFP that asks applicants to address how they will support implementation of the *Long Range Support Supportive Housing Plan* through the creation, strengthening and funding of housing support services.

Specifically, the House Task Force recommends that the RFP ask applicants to:

1. Describe how the applicant will assist consumers in accessing housing support services to obtain and maintain housing.
2. Describe how the applicant will educate and assist its providers regarding housing support services that help consumers obtain and maintain housing.
3. Describe how the applicant will, in the delivery of covered services, take into account the need for the development and provision of a continuum of housing support services.
4. Describe how the applicant will, in the delivery of covered services, develop partnerships with homeless service providers, statewide housing authorities, affordable housing developers, New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority, the Governor's Commission on Disability and the Departments of Health, Children Youth & Family, Aging and Long-Term Services, Public Education and Human Services, to develop and provide a continuum of housing support services.
5. Describe how the applicant will, in the delivery of covered services, take into account coordination of housing support services to obtain and maintain permanent supportive housing.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions and/or concerns.

Sincerely,



Marisol Atkins, Chair, Housing Task Force  
(*on behalf of the Housing Task Force Members*)

Cc: Dorian Dodson, Co-Chair Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative  
Pamela Hyde, Co-Chair Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative  
Housing Task Force Members







New Mexico Children, Youth & Families Department  
P.O. Drawer 5160  
Santa Fe, NM 87502-5160

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