NMCEH Releases Report that Shows Housing Affordability is a Problem in Every State Legislative District

by Lisa Huval, Policy and Advocacy Director

On September 29th the NMCEH released Locked Out: NM Housing Crisis Impacts All State Legislative Districts. Locked Out ranks legislative district from best to worst on the extent to which homeowners and renters in each district – including low-income working families, senior citizens and people with disability – have or can find housing they can afford.

A score of a 100 – which no district came close to receiving - would have indicated all people in that district could obtain affordable housing. The least affordable house and senate districts were in Santa Fe County. The second-least affordable house and senate districts were in Bernalillo County. The most affordable districts were in the southeast corner of New Mexico, but even those districts only scored a 61 out of a possible 100 points. Locked Out shows that housing affordability is a problem across New Mexico, and that while it may be more of a problem in urban areas, renters and homeowners struggle to afford housing in rural districts as well.

The Coalition released Locked Out at a press conference at the Albuquerque Public Schools Title 1 Homelessness Project. The speakers, who included State Senators Eric Griego, Tim Keller and Jerry Ortiz y Pino and State Representative Bill O’Neill, made the point that New Mexicans need a safe, stable home in order to thrive and succeed, and that New Mexico needs to invest in affordable housing. Several of our speakers focused on how not having a safe, stable place to live impacts children and makes it hard for them to succeed in school.

Reception at the Governor’s Mansion

by Stephanie Jacquot, Office Manager

Long time NMCEH Supporter and Board Member, Patricia Head-Ferguson organized the reception that took place at the Governor’s Mansion in Santa Fe on Friday October 1, 2010. The Mansion and its Staff welcomed 50 diverse guests including homeless advocates, coalition members, benefactors and supporters who gathered to discuss the accomplishments of the Coalition and the work ahead to end homelessness in New Mexico.

In her follow-up letter to the New Mexican, two days later, Patricia Head-Ferguson wrote about Governor Richardson and First Lady Barbara’s “total support for the Coalition to End Homelessness, headed by Hank Hughes” and about the Coalition “raising funds to build homes—not shelters— for those single parents to raise their children and have them attend school.”

Our Sincere Gratitude Goes Out to These Organizations & Individuals

**OUR ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORTERS:**
- New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority
- St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church
- The Cities of Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Las Cruces
- The Frost Foundation
- The McCune Foundation
- The US Department of Housing and Urban Development
- United Church of Santa Fe

**MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS:**
- Adelante Development Center, Inc.
- Albuquerque Healthcare for the Homeless
- Archdiocese of Santa Fe
- Barrett Foundation
- Battered Families Services, Inc.
- Border Area Mental Health Services CARE 66
- Casas de Vida Nuevo Catholic Charities
- Community Against Violence
- Church of the One God
- Crossroads for Women
- Cuidando Los Niños
- Desert View
- Dream Tree Project
- Eastern Plains Housing Development Corporation
- El Refugio
- Esperanza Shelter for Battered Families
- Families and Youth, Inc.
- Family Crises Center
- First Nations Community Health Source
- Foundation for New Life Homes
- Good Shepherd Center
- Haven House
- Jill Dougherty Associates
- Kids in Need of Supportive Services in Silver City
- La Casa, Inc.
- La Familia Medical Center-Healthcare for the Homeless
- Life Link
- Lutheran Advocacy Ministry-NM
- Lutheran Office of Government Ministry
- Mesilla Valley Community of Hope
- Metropolitan Homelessness Project
- Navajo United Methodist Center
- New Mexico Conference of Churches
- New Mexico Mortgage Finance
- New Mexico Veterans Integration Center
- PATH
- S.A.F.E. House
- Samaritan House in Las Vegas
- San Juan County Partnerships, Inc.
- Santa Fe Habitat for Humanity
- Santa Fe Community Housing Trust
- Santa Fe Community Services
- Santa Fe Public Schools, Adelante Program
- St. Elizabeth Shelter
- St. Martin’s Hospitality Center
- Supportive Housing Coalition of New Mexico
- Youth Shelters & Family Services

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- Stephanie Jacquot, Office Manager

Welcome Stephanie!
NMCEH is pleased to welcome Stephanie Jacquot to the staff as our new office manager. Stephanie worked for many years as a paralegal and looks forward to making a contribution to our work ending homelessness.

Special Thanks to:
**Supportive Housing Coalition of NM** for extra special support of our advocacy work.
**Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless, HUD, McCune Foundation, and St. John’s Episcopal Cathedral** for free meeting space.
**Pinion Fast Print** for discount printing services.
**Dick Wagner** for discount webmaster services.
**Families and Youth Inc. in Las Cruces** for providing administrative support and office space for the HMIS Project Manager.
**Patty Ferguson** for organizing a reception at the Governor’s Mansion held October 1.
**Staff at Governor’s Mansion** for welcoming our guests at the reception of October 1.

Agnes McCollum
Executive Director

Page 2
The NMCEH Board enthusiastically met for an intense two day retreat on September 21 and 22, 2010. Celeste Trujillo and Taos Community Against Violence hosted the event which brought 17 Board and staff members together to brainstorm, mix ideas and strategize on the future of the NMCEH Board. Private Consultant, Carl Moore and his assistant Jessie Lawrence facilitated the retreat and helped the group define its roles and vision, choose its goals and decide on an action plan for the upcoming five years. Included on this page are the NMCEH Board new Action Plan and Vision Statement.

NMCEH Board Action Plan 2010-2015:
- Strengthen NMCEH Board organizational infrastructure and means to ensure its strength.
- Achieve financial self-efficiency for NMCEH and Member Agencies.
- Develop capacity to measure progress on desired outcomes.
- Mobilize ourselves to achieve our advocacy goals.
- Identify statewide needs and coordinate service resources.

NMCEH 2010-2015 Vision Statement:
In 2015, we, the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness and our partners have established a clear and seamless path out of homelessness throughout New Mexico.
- We are known as an organization that effectively advocates for affordable and supportive housing, homeless prevention, supportive services, and other solutions to homelessness.
- We achieve our mission to end homelessness through active alliances and partnerships.
- We have the legislative and political power to effect change on the local, state, and national level.
- We have clearly defined board, staff, and membership roles, clear communication, and financial independence.
- We can measure progress and demonstrate success with benchmarks.
- We are recognized as a model nationwide.

The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness values transparency, accountability, integrity, and the ability to adapt to the challenges of those without homes or at risk of losing homes in New Mexico.
New HEARTH Act Offers Opportunities for New Mexico
By Hank Hughes, Executive Director

In 2009 President Obama signed the HEARTH Act into law and in 2011 the new opportunities for programs that assist the homeless will become available. One provision of the new law creates opportunities for rural communities, particularly those with less than 10,000 people, to use federal funding for activities that are more in line with the needs of smaller communities. Under the rural option, communities can access federal funding for rent assistance to prevent homelessness as well as for rehabilitation of substandard housing and short term motel stays. The rural options was developed in recognition that even though homelessness is prevalent in rural areas, the projects traditionally funded by the federal government for homeless people, such as housing construction were better suited to the needs of larger urban communities.

But, the urban parts of New Mexico will also see some changes with the HEARTH Act. The HEARTH Act combines two federal programs, the Supportive Housing Program and the Shelter Plus Care Program into one more flexible program that allows for all the activities funded in the old programs including acquisition, new construction or rehabilitation of supportive housing as well as leasing of buildings or scattered site apartments and some funding of supportive services. The new program has a uniform 25% match requirement (for all but the leasing component which has no match requirement) replacing the old system of varying match requirements for each activity.

A third change contained in the HEARTH Act is the formal definition of the Continuum of Care concept, which has been encouraged through the regulations up until now but was not officially part of the laws.

A Continuum of Care under the HEARTH Act is a geographic region that has defined itself for the purpose of applying for federal homeless funding. Each Continuum of Care region is responsible for planning and implementing the housing and services necessary in the region for ending homelessness. Currently in New Mexico there are two Continuum of Care regions, the City of Albuquerque is one, and the balance of the state is the other. Under the HEARTH Act it may become desirable to divide the balance of state into two regions so that the more rural areas can take advantage of the new rural option.

The HEARTH Act builds on what has been learned over the past 20 years about what works and what doesn't work for ending homelessness, and the Obama Administration has proposed increased funding to help implement the various new aspects of the act. While even more funding will be needed in future years to reach to goal of ending homelessness, the HEARTH Act would seem to be a big step in the right direction.