

HOUSING FOR ALL!!!

NEWS FROM THE NEW MEXICO COALITION

Housing Transforms Lives of a Young Mother and her Children

by Shelly Felt, Executive Director at
Youth Shelters & Family Services, Santa Fe, NM
NMCEH partners with Youth Shelters on the Youth Homelessness Demonstration

During the first cold spell, a young mother arrived at the Youth Shelters and Family Services with her two young children. She had heard that Youth Shelters might have housing. She arrived late in the afternoon and let us know she had slept in her car the night before because the place she was living had no heat and no electricity and it had become too cold. Based on the vulnerability of the family we were able to arrange crisis housing for her that evening. Because of some initial obstacles to housing her, we then went on to provide her with crisis housing for a full month. (A new private funder is underwriting crisis housing - or "bridge" housing - for our young clients, partly because of the time it takes to identify housing.) Complicating the apartment search was that this young mother came to us with past due amounts on a prior apartment which she shared with the abusive father. Landlords refused to rent to her with that past due amount. Working with local government flexible funds, we were able to clear the amount due on past rent. Both children are now enrolled in preschool and she is now in her own apartment. With funds from the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP), we will be able to house her for up to two years while she gains employment. She is also in the midst of reestablishing relationships with supportive members of her extended family. There are still challenges facing her as she transitions out of crisis and extreme poverty, but we believe that she is on the way to self-sufficiency. Assistance for young families makes a transformative difference not only in the lives of our young parents but also in the lives of their children.

Successes at the 2020 State Legislature

by Hank Hughes, Executive Director

It was a very good legislative session for homeless programs in New Mexico. The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness was successful in getting more funding for homeless programs in several areas:

\$4 million for new supportive housing through the state Linkages program and other state programs
\$413,000 to match the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program for Northern New Mexico
\$200,000 in new funding for the SOAR initiative to help homeless people access disability benefits
\$1.2 million was added to the New Mexico Housing Trust Fund for loans to develop affordable housing

Several local initiatives were also funded including capital outlay funding for new permanent supportive housing in Santa Fe, and funding for shelters in Espanola, Santa Fe, Gallup and Valencia County.



2020 Lobby Day

by Brie Sillery, Communication Strategist

This year's Lobby Day was a huge success, with nearly 100 advocates from across the state gathering on a brisk Tuesday morning in early January. After breakfast at La Fonda on the Plaza, advocates listened to a presentation on what the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness's priorities were for the 2020 legislative session.

One of the top priorities focused on House Bill 98, which aimed to provide \$750,000 to the SOAR Program (SOAR = SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery), which would provide help for New Mexicans that are homeless or at risk of homelessness apply for the social security disability benefits that they are entitled to. The SOAR Program provides a trained SOAR Representative who aids the applicant in applying for their benefits in an expedited manner, which improves the approval rate from a mere 23% approval to a nearly 75% approval rate for New Mexico!

The other top priority that advocates discussed with the legislators in the north was about receiving match funds for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP), which serves 13 counties in northern New Mexico. This \$413,000 was needed as match money for the \$3.17 million grant.

After a morning of mobilization, advocates reported back on their level of contact with their assigned legislators. This information was used to inform conversations between NMCEH staff and legislators to move the momentum forward on the various priorities, and significantly contributed to the successes of NMCEH at the 2020 legislative session.

Our Sincere Gratitude Goes Out to These Individuals & Organizations

Thank You to Our Individual and Business Supporters (since previous newsletter)

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Special Thanks To:

Representatives Joseph Sanchez, Patty Lundstrom, Melanie Stansbury, Christine Trujillo and Speaker Brian Egolf for helping to put more money for homeless programs in the State budget.

Senators Nancy Rodriguez, Bobby Gonzales, Steve Neville, Liz Stephanics and Pete Campos, for supporting the additional funding.

Other Senators and Representatives who supported funding for homeless programs without our knowing about it.

Secretary Bill McCamley and the Department of Workforce Solutions for setting up clinics to help people experiencing homelessness get State IDs.

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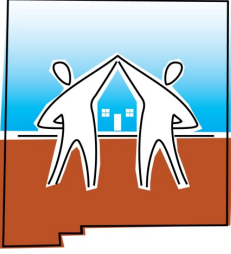
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Roman Seaburgh, Director of Strategic Initiatives
Brie Sillery, Communication Strategist

Member Organizations and Individuals: For a list of our 80 members, please go to www.nmceh.org

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The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness

- *Creating more housing for homeless people*
- *Quickly connecting homeless people to housing*
- *Holding governments accountable*

Corona Virus Stresses Shelter System by Hank Hughes, Executive Director



As of this writing no homeless person in New Mexico has tested positive for COVID-19, but the potential threat of the virus has caused a massive disruption to the systems of care for people experiencing homelessness. Many shelters in New Mexico are small and have no practical way to separate sick people from others staying in the shelter. Some of these shelters are closing while others are reducing the numbers served and turning sick people away. The state's largest shelter, the Westside Emergency Shelter in Albuquerque is setting aside separate areas for those with COVID-19 and for those with respiratory symptoms awaiting test results.

To address this crisis in the emergency shelter system, the state and several local governments are planning to rent motel rooms for homeless people who are sick and for those who are at highest risk of serious illness. NMCEH is working with the government entities to put this plan into action as quickly as possible.