



New Mexico Coalition to
End Homelessness

Presentation to the Legislative Finance Committee

Hank Hughes, Executive Director

July 10, 2019

Overview of the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness and its members/partners:

- NMCEH has 80 member agencies, some of them Cities and Counties.
- We coordinated the federal Homeless Assistance Program that brings a little more than \$10 million annually for housing and services. This program funds permanent supportive housing, transitional housing and rapid rehousing.
- We provide training and assistance to community groups that are developing new projects as well as those that are operating current projects.
- We operate a federally mandated database on homelessness and
- we operate a coordinated entry system to help direct homeless people to appropriate housing quickly. This project is fully operational in Las Cruces, Albuquerque and Santa Fe and being expanded to the rural areas this year.

Overview of homelessness in New Mexico:

- In 2018, 12,000 people in New Mexico sought help from government funded programs that assist homeless people.
- Currently there are 1,966 individuals and 363 families waiting for housing on our coordinated entry list. Of them 807 have spent at least one night in jail.
- 868 individuals and 88 families on our coordinated entry list are chronically homeless meaning they have been homeless for a year or more.
- UNM Cost study data on reducing cost to jails: In 2016 UNM did a study of 95 homeless people who were housed through Albuquerque's Heading Home project for highly vulnerable homeless people. They found a net savings to society of \$12,831 per person in the two to three years after they had been housed.
- Part of the cost savings came from a 64% reduction in jail costs for the group after they were housed.
- Ongoing state funding for homelessness is in two places in the budget: \$1.2 million in the state homeless program which is under the Income Support Division at HSD with funding going to MFA (used to fund emergency shelter, rental assistance and as match for federal homeless assistance grants), and \$1.35 million for the state Linkages program administered by the Behavioral Health Services Division of HSD in partnership with MFA. In addition there is \$523,000 in this year's budget to match the federal Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program grants.



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Permanent Supportive Housing Funded by HUD

- We coordinate the distribution of HUD's homeless assistance funding in New Mexico.
- Permanent supportive housing using a housing first model is the best practice model for helping homeless people with disabling conditions including substance abuse
- There are currently 2,274 beds in permanent supportive housing throughout New Mexico and most of these are funded by HUD. Only 150 are through the state Linkages Program.
- An earlier study by HSD estimated a need for 5,000 beds in permanent supportive housing.
- While some of the permanent supportive housing is site based, most of it is in the form of vouchers that can be used in private apartment buildings.
- I expect that many of the people being assisted by this re-entry project will be needing permanent supportive housing, and so coordination among these programs will be very important for success.

Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program

- New Mexico received \$3.37 million from HUD and \$523,000 in state matching funds to address youth homelessness in Northern New Mexico.
- Youth in the Juvenile Justice System who are homeless will be a target group for this project.
- We think we can develop a system to house youth within 30 days of their becoming homeless
- We will apply to expand this program to the whole state: We applied for Albuquerque in 2019 and plan to apply for southern New Mexico in 2020.

Coordination with the Re-entry Project

- Housing assistance will be an important part of the success of this program. We have learned that people cannot turn their lives in a positive direction without safe and stable housing.
- Some, perhaps most participants will need longer term housing such as permanent supportive housing.
- The participating counties should have their clients sign up for our coordinated entry system if they were homeless before entering jail or right after leaving jail.
- Participants should also be considered for the State Linkages program for longer term housing
- If you decide to continue funding this project some of the funds should be used for permanent supportive housing.
- In addition to this program I urge you to increase funding for the state permanent supportive housing program, which is Linkages.

Final Points

- Rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing are the most effective programs for addressing homelessness.
- The total cost to fully address the problem by bringing these programs up to scale is estimated to be about \$35 million per year.