The following is the agenda for the City of Las Cruces Housing Policy Review Committee for Wednesday May 18, 2022 at 2:00 p.m., at City Hall, 700 N Main, Las Cruces, New Mexico Conference Room 2007-A. For those that would like to attend virtually, the meeting may be accessed using the following Zoom link: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85070067418?pwd=TWFUTjV5bTBsZ3hLdG9kT3Z2RnZaQT09

1. Call To Order
2. Conflict Of Interest
3. Acceptance Of Agenda
4. Approval Of Minutes
   a. April 20, 2022

Documents:

04-20-22 HOUSING PRC MINUTES.PDF

5. Action Items- None

6. Agency Spotlights
   a. NM Voices for Children

7. General Discussion
   a. Source of Income Discrimination Ordinance
   b. 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness

Documents:

CLC ORDINANCE- SOURCE OF INCOME DISCRIMINATION.PDF
ABQ CITY ORDINANCE- SOURCE OF INCOME DISCRIMINATION.PDF
CITY OF LAS CRUCES 10 YEAR PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS.PDF
ABQ 10 YEAR PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS.PDF

8. Future Items For Review

9. Adjournment
If an accommodation for a person with a disability is required to enable them to fully participate in this event, please contact us 72 hours before the event at 575-528-3043/v or 1-800-659-8331/tty.

The City of Las Cruces does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services.

Date posted: 5/12/22
The following are summary minutes for the meeting of the City of Las Cruces – Housing Policy Review Committee on April 20, 2022. The meeting was held via Zoom and in Room 2007A at City Hall, 700 N. Main Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Members Present:
- Kasandra Gandara, City Council
- Johana Bencomo, City Council
- Yvonne Flores, City Council

Members Absent:
- Benjamin Beard, Las Cruces Home Builders Association
- Sonja Unrau, NM Mortgage Finance Authority
- Juan Olvera, Mesilla Valley Public Housing Authority

Others Present:
- Natalie Green, Housing Neighborhood Service Manager
- Jan Lauterbach, Housing Development Coordinator
- Kevin Wilson, Housing Development Coordinator
- Tim Pitts, Deputy Director Building Development
- Larry Nichols, Community Development Director
- Vanessa King, Senior Office Manager
- Jennifer Vega-Brown, City Attorney
- Rene Romo
- Sergio Ruiz, Policy Analyst
- Gerard Anaya, Police
- Paris Rubio
- Nicole Martinez, Director, Mesilla Valley Community of Hope
- Eric Enriquez, Assistant City Manager
- Greg Shervanick:
- Becky Baum, RC Creations, Transcription

1. **Call to Order:** Councilor Bencomo called the meeting to order at 2:01.

2. **Conflict of Interest:** No conflict of interest was proclaimed. Those present introduced themselves.

3. **Acceptance of the Agenda:** Motion to accept the agenda by Councilor Gandara, seconded by Councilor Flores. Motion passes.

4. **Minutes for Approval:**
   a. **Housing PRC Meeting of March 16, 2022:** Motion to accept the Minutes by Councilor Flores, seconded by Councilor Gandara. Motion passes.
5. Action Items:
   a. **Uniform Housing Code and Nuisance Abatement Ordinance:** Jennifer Vega-Brown gave the presentation. It combines all existing building codes and building requirements into one ordinance as well as creates a mechanism to take action on substandard housing. A building that is in violation of this code is a nuisance per se. Within the code there is a provision that allows for people to be removed from a substandard dwelling unit. The landlord would be required to pay for rehousing the people or the City could potentially pay for that; this provision needs to be determined. Ms. Vega-Brown removed the Planning and Zoning Commission to be replaced by the City Council in the document; administrative action would take place at City Council. If there is an appeal it would go to District Court.

   People should have enough opportunities for due process; especially with people representing themselves. State statute NMSA 3-18-5 allows definition of public nuisance which is what this ordinance is. It typically works in conjunction with the Nuisance Abatement Ordinance. There were still questions on enforcement and how the process goes. The two ordinances work together. This type of nuisance is where state law allows the City to demolish a building pursuant to the home rule authority and the other type of nuisance which is similar to red light cameras. Nuisance Abatement Action is injunctive relief; not trying to take the property but rather be a remedial measure to fix it. It allows for the City to take action and place a lien on the property; still must follow the state law to place the lien and owner must have due process.

   There is a long list of the New Mexico criminal codes. The properties that action can be taken on must have a multitude of issues; tons of calls for service on one thing, etcetera. It is not an easy or short process; could take up to two years. The first step is identifying the building as a nuisance; building must be a structure that is ruined, damaged, and dilapidated or the premises is covered with ruins, rubbish, wreckage, or debris. There must be a lot of documentation on why it is a public nuisance; can’t just be to a few people. This legal process is for the attorney. A program will need to be created meeting regularly with police, fire, and community development to discuss properties; only ones that can have action taken on them.

   Larry Nichols commented that a lot of the responsibility and enforcement on the City Manager or Council. In previous places he’s worked there have been a Code Official who would work with all the various groups to process the ordinances. He believes that the International Property Maintenance Code enables the City to do things in a more effective and efficient way than what there is now. These two Ordinances work together to allow the City to take action of the state law with abatement. There was discussion on the applicability and scope of administration and enforcement, the duties and powers of the code official. Inspections, right
of entry, identification, notices, and orders could fit under the Ordinance. You cannot deprive someone of their property without due process. Councilor Bencomo stated there will be more time for comments prior to this going to City Council; she is interested in the comments from Ben Beard who is not there today.

Councilor Bencomo asked once something is identified where it gets triggers to the next legal level. It’s not in the Ordinance but part of what is already happening; don’t want it in the ordinance. Discussion on the NAT is an administrative level. Councilor Gandara commented that this is something they have wanted for years to help with making sure homes are habitable. She added that there are a lot of vacant properties that aren’t up to code but nothing is being done. She would like to see a yearly fee of some sort to help with encouraging people to do something with the properties. The ordinance is robust and is the same for dilapidated buildings; certain houses fall under this ordinance.

Property rights are the highest level of protection and liberty that individuals have. The government must have an extremely compelling case for taking someone’s property; not permanently but to impose things to the property owner. Unless it’s presenting a danger or otherwise violating another type of ordinance it is only a petty misdemeanor or citation, no injunctive relief in the Municipal Court. If a person wants to leave their house empty they have every right to do so. Some cities have required a house vacancy fee in order to track them; it is low level fees. Mr. Nichols stated that fees should be more for recovering costs of having police and fire respond to calls at those homes. Councilor Gandara commented on the issues with having vacant houses and asked what can be done, break-ins, fires, and etcetera.

When Ms. Vega-Brown started at the City she stopped the process of NAT due to no due process written into the ordinance; it has been resolved. During COVID all Civil Action Suits were stopped as well but now action can be taken. Once the building has been identified as a nuisance then a building inspection must be done. The building is red tagged if appropriate or an inspectorial search order must be done; more like a search warrant from State Court to enter the property based on probable cause of dangerous structure. After those items they can invoke a certificate of occupancy if appropriate; requires proper notice. The next step is to determine who owns the building and who occupies the building; both need notice.

Next a resolution would be drafted which must state the building is ruined, damaged, and dilapidated, a menace to the public health, comfort, peace, or safety, and requires the removal from the municipality. The resolution must include all photos, documentation, calls for service, citations, and etcetera. A deadline for removal must be stated. Then a request for title work will be made for ownership; an appraisal for the building must be
included within the resolution; if demolition is requested there must be contractor’s affidavit to see the cost; ask for asbestos testing; request proper permits, especially for demolition; and place on the agenda for Council. After that, the water and gas must be disconnected for demolition if needed. The next step would provide the owner notice; serve a copy of the resolution to the occupant or agent in charge. If the owner is not on the premises then it must be posted on the building structure; it will also be published in the agenda.

Once the resolution is passed, within 10 days of receipt of the copy of the resolution or posting the owner shall commence to removing the building or the owner needs to file a written objection with the clerk. If the objection is filed then the governing body must fix the date for the hearing at a regular City Council hearing. All evidence must be considered for and against the removal of the structure as well as determine if the resolution is going to be enforced or rescinded. After that process, the owner may appeal to District Court; need to file a petition in the District Court within 20 days after the determination is made. Notice of the appeal must be given to City Council within five days. The District Court will hear the matter in a de novo hearing and enter the judgement. At that point the City would have to issue a civil complaint in the District Court; five count complaint.

Count one would seek to have the property declared a public nuisance under state statute. Count two would seek to have the property declared a public nuisance under the City ordinance. Count three would seek to have the property declared in violation of City code or the Housing and Zoning Code. Count four would ask for injunctive relief to allow the City to enter the property and evict the tenants in order to secure the property; it is civil so the City will not take title or fines but ask for attorney fees if appropriate. If the owner fails to take the action then the resolution goes into effect; go to court asking for the judgements, the District Court would enter the judgment either way, etcetera. At that point the City can pay for the removal of the condemned building and then place a lien on it. There is a process of placing the lien under number 12. Depending on the situation, if people are asked to be moved by landlord/tenant situation the Uniform Housing Code could be used to allow rehousing.

Any time something is filed in District Court there is a 30 day response period; there can be a default judgment if they don’t answer with 30 days to answer that. The City also has 30 days to respond if they receive anything. If a resolution is passed and no one responds then action can be taken; usually people respond. While waiting for responses the City may abate; the building official comes in and can board a building up and red tag it. The injunctive relief from the court could be demolish or doing a few things within a certain amount of time; if the items are not done in the allotted time then the City can go back to court. The longest time Ms. Vega-Brown has seen with this process is roughly two years. Another
thing that extends the process is when they put out a notice and then are reliant on the property owner to give an answer as to what they will do.

There was discussion on what can be done with homes that are uninhabitable but people decided to live in them anyway. They can get an inspectorial search order through Magistrate Court; that gives the building official the ability to go into the house and any structures they see they can condemn if needed. To receive the search order they must show that there is probably cause, all documentation and pictures, etcetera. Ms. Vega-Brown gave an explanation on when they are able to invoke the ordinance; the building must be a public nuisance and a danger to the community. If a person simply wants to board up the house or it’s dilapidated doesn’t mean it has to be removed. There was clarification on what the officers are able to do; COVID changed many things and shut down many things. Ms. Vega-Brown has two cases now that she is working on.

Mr. Wilson asked if they’ve given thought to landlords who won’t take care of things or retaliation when tenants ask for repair. The Uniform Housing Code does have a mechanism to cite the landlord every day for a violation specific in the code; they do have an opportunity to go to Municipal Court to fight the citation. If those citations stack up then the property becomes a nuisance and the City can implement the Ordinance. There was discussion on rentals on West Picacho with landlords who are being difficult; one evicted the tenant after being forced to fix a broken sewer line. The landlord at 1200 W Picacho split 10 apartments into 20 efficiencies and ran his own gas, water, and electric. Both landlords were found guilty and were forced to pay a fine; both paid it immediately. They are also one of the few landlords accepting vouchers from homeless community. There is language in the Ordinance in regards to retaliation and moving people. The state law also has some landlord/tenant language.

Mr. Nichols has stated that what they’ve seen is the landlord agrees to fix the issue, asks the tenants to leave while the repairs are being made, but then increase the rent of the tenants who may not be able to pay it. The City can’t have any say in the contractual relationship; it would take state law. Councilor Gandara mentioned an issue in San Pedro rentals; not much space at all for many people, roughly 375 square feet. There was additional discussions on rentals and landlord issues. The Kilby has improvements to the exterior but there are still issues inside. There is exception to efficiency apartments and tiny homes would also present a different issue; need to be defined and added as an exception to space requirements. Mr. Nichols will work on language for tiny homes; efficiency apartments are in the language.

Councilor Bencomo asked about page 24 and page 25 with the funds for relocation; need to discuss an appropriate number to put into the budget.
She recommended extra staff if Ms. Vega-Brown needs it. There was
question as to make that a question for Council work session or discuss it
now. Ms. Vega-Brown answered the staff question; they are understaffed
currently with two attorney positions open. The salary range would be
from $86,000 to $110,000. They are having difficulty competing with
public offices. It is unknown of what the volume would be. Once she
trains the other attorneys to handle the cases the volume shouldn’t be too
much. The judge may require mediation with the owner; hopefully in those
consversations a middle ground can be found and an agreement will be
signed. The mediation would be informal; simply talking with the owner
with the desire to get the property fixed without going to court.

Councilor Gandara suggested hiring a mediator to do this for the City. Ms.
Vega-Brown stated that that’s what the City Council is for. When she
meets with someone prior to filing any litigation she sits with them to
discuss how they can come into compliance without filing a lawsuit. They
are able to enter into an agreement and can use that in court if needed.
City Council can give extra time for the individual to fix things as well. It is
unknown how many people don’t have an attorney during these cases;
they should always have an attorney in civil rights and litigation. In
Municipal Court a good number may not have an attorney but you can
qualify for a public defender if you need one. The District Court one must
fill out an application and then be assigned an attorney; Municipal Court
may be similar. The civil side at the District Court they aren’t entitled to an
attorney. Ms. Vega-Brown stated that when she was in Albuquerque it
was roughly 85% pro se.

Councilor Gandara is unsure that people could afford attorneys and may
feel unsure. There should be something in place to make sure it is
equitable. There is legal aid in town. Councilor Bencomo stated that if
one has committed to be a landlord then there are certain responsibilities
and rights. If those responsibilities are not being met they have to figure it
out. Councilor Flores added that people without an attorney tend to not
know what their rights are. This is why there are multiple steps of due
process. Attorneys have a legal responsibility to be fair and fairly
represent. Ms. Vega-Brown is unable to give legal advice but can give the
options. District judges give a lot of leeway to pro se individuals.

There was discussion on funding and having language in the Ordinance;
the relocation fund needs to be established with discussion on how much
should be in there and how to keep the funding there. There was one
woman who had to be relocated and it cost just at $6,600 for 11 months of
habitation. This is assuming the clients pay their own utilities; they cover
the rent and a little moving assistance. They did have a special deal on
the house; no way one could have gone out to the open market for what
they’re paying in rent. The current rent is astronomical. Natalie Green
suggested asking for $50,000 and then if more is needed it can be
requested. Relocation is a last ditch effort and rare circumstances. Ms.
Green suggested dedicating $250,000 to the program every year; legal, abatement, and relocation funds but staff would be kept separate. Staff is currently dealing with one right now of abatement cost and pricing out demolition which will help with cost ideas; discuss in a work session.

Motion to accept the Minutes by Councilor Flores, seconded by Councilor Gandara. Motion passes.

6. Agency Spotlights - None:

7. General Discussion - None:

8. Future Items for Review: The next meeting is May 18th and the topic will be Source of Income Discrimination. Albuquerque is considering theirs as well; city of Santa Fe is doing it as well. Ms. Green will send the information to the Board for review. There was a lot of pushback in Albuquerque so there is an extended public input piece added in; unsure it will be ready yet. Another potential topic is reviewing a community plan to address homelessness from Albuquerque; staff is planning on doing an allocation plan for home ARP planning to address homelessness but may be able to tie that to a community component. The Board will be able to look at it next month but a deeper discussion will need to take place another time. The City did a 10 year plan to end homelessness about 10 years ago which was determined by the federal government but wasn’t funded.

Councilor Flores asked if there was anything on the statewide housing strategy review. MFA has been meeting with stakeholders on a statewide housing strategy; three from the Las Cruces area which are Ms. Green, Nicole Martinez, and Jeff Curry. There is an analysis, policies in different areas, and etcetera. The state as a whole is intended to have an affordable housing strategy. There are participation from home builders and League of Women Voters as well. Councilor Flores recommended to have the League of Women Voters participate; the state and Mortgage Finance Authority picks the participants. This has been going on for six months and Ms. Green can give an update to the Board.

9. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn the meeting by Board Member Flores, seconded by Board Member Gandara. The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:37 p.m.

Chairperson

Approved: ____________________
ARTICLE I. FAIR HOUSING *(Proposed Amendments)*

Sec. 13-1. Definitions.

As used in this article:

**Accessible,** when used with respect to the public and common use areas of a building containing covered multifamily dwellings, means that the public or common use areas of the building can be approached, entered, and used by individuals with physical disabilities. The phrase "readily accessible to and usable by" is synonymous with accessibility.

**Accessible route** means a continuous unobstructed path connecting accessible elements and spaces in a building or within a site that can be negotiated by a person with a disability using a wheelchair, and that is also safe for and usable by people with other disabilities. Interior accessible routes may include corridors, floors, ramps, elevators and lifts. Exterior accessible routes may include parking access aisles, curb ramps, walks, ramps and lifts.

**Adaptable dwelling units,** when used with respect to covered multifamily dwellings, means dwelling units that include the features of adaptable design specified in the Fair Housing Act of 1988, 24 CFR 100.205c.

**Aggrieved person** includes any person who:

(1) Claims to have been injured by a discriminatory housing practice; or

(2) Believes that such person will be injured by a discriminatory housing practice that is about to occur.

**Bathroom** means a bathroom which includes a water closet (toilet), lavatory (sink), and bathtub or shower.

**Clear** means unobstructed.

**Common use areas** means rooms, spaces or elements inside or outside of a building that are made available for the use of residents of a building or the guests thereof. These areas include hallways, lounges, laundry rooms, refuse rooms, mail rooms, recreational areas and passageways among and between buildings.

**Covered multifamily dwellings** means:

(1) Buildings consisting of four or more dwelling units if such buildings have one or more elevators; and

(2) Ground floor dwelling units in other buildings consisting of four or more dwelling units. Dwelling units within a single structure separated by firewalls do not constitute separate buildings.

**Disability** means, with respect to a person:

(1) A physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities;

(2) A record of having such an impairment; or

(3) Being regarded as having such an impairment.

But such term does not include current illegal use of or addiction to a controlled substance as defined in 21 U.S.C. § 802. As used in this definition: (a) "physical or mental impairment" includes: (1) any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: Neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genitourinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin, and endocrine; or any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning
disabilities. The term "physical or mental impairment" includes, but is not limited to, such diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, human immunodeficiency virus infection, mental retardation, emotional illness, drug addiction (other than addiction caused by current, illegal use of a controlled substance) and alcoholism.

*Discriminatory housing practice* means an act that is unlawful under section 13-5 of this article.

*Dwelling* means any building, structure or portion thereof which is occupied as, or designed or intended for occupancy as, a residence by one or more families, and any vacant land which is offered for sale or lease for the construction or location thereon of any such building, structure, or portion thereof.

*Entrance* means any exterior access point to a building or portion of a building used by residents for the purpose of entering. An entrance does not include a door to a loading dock or a door used primarily as a service entrance.

*Fair housing accessibility guidelines* means those guidelines set forth in 24 CFR Chapter I, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Part VI.

*Familial status* means one or more individuals (who have not attained the age of 18 years) being domiciled with:

1. A parent or another person having legal custody of such individual or individuals; or
2. The designee of such parent or other persons having such custody, with the written permission of such parent or other person. The protections afforded against discrimination on the basis of familial status shall apply to any person who is pregnant or in the process of securing legal custody of any individual who has not attained the age of 18 years.

*Family* includes a single individual.

*Ground floor* means a floor of a building with a building entrance on an accessible route. A building may have one or more ground floors. Where the first floor containing dwelling units in a building is above grade, all units on that floor must be served by a building entrance on an accessible route. This floor will be considered to be a ground floor.


*Person* includes one or more individuals, corporations, partnerships, associations, labor organizations, legal representatives, mutual companies, joint-stock companies, trusts, unincorporated organizations, trustees, trustees in cases under title 11 of the United States Code ("U.S.C."), receivers and fiduciaries.

*Residential real estate-related transaction* means any of the following:

1. The making or purchasing of loans or providing other financial assistance:
   - a. For purchasing, constructing, improving, repairing, or maintaining a dwelling; or
   - b. Secured by residential real estate.
2. The selling, brokering or appraising of residential real property.

*To rent* includes to lease, to sublease, to let and otherwise to grant for a consideration the right to occupy premises not owned by the occupant.

*Source of income* means any verifiable money, compensation or housing assistance that is lawful in the State of New Mexico and paid to or on behalf of a renter or buyer including, but not limited to money or compensation.
from any occupation or activity, from any contract, agreement, loan or settlement, from any court-ordered
payment such as child support, from any payment received from an annuity or life insurance policy, or from any
federal, state or local payment, including a disability benefit and housing choice voucher, any other rent subsidy or
rent assistance program and related program requirements, or other public assistance.

(Ord. No. 2965, § I(Exh. A), 4-5-21)

Sec. 13-2. Fair Housing Act adopted.

Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended by the Fair Housing Act of 1988, the Fair Housing

(Ord. No. 2965, § I(Exh. A), 4-5-21)

Sec. 13-3. Declaration of policy.

It is the policy of the city to provide, within constitutional limitations, for fair housing throughout the city.
This fair housing ordinance is intended to compliment federal and state fair housing laws and should be
interpreted consistently with such laws, unless otherwise stated.

(Ord. No. 2965, § I(Exh. A), 4-5-21)

Sec. 13-4. Exemptions.

(a) Nothing in section 13-5 of this article shall apply to:

(1) Units in an owner-occupied building containing no more than two units.

(2) The rental of a room or rooms in a single-family dwelling unit if the owner actually maintains and
occupies part of such living quarters as his/her residence.

(b) Nothing in section 13-5 of this article shall prohibit a religious organization, association, or society, or any
nonprofit institution or organization operated, supervised or controlled by or in conjunction with a religious
organization, association, or society, from limiting the sale, rental or occupancy of dwellings which it owns or
operates for other than a commercial purpose to persons of the same religion, or from giving preference to
such persons, unless membership in such religion is restricted on account of race, color or national origin.

(c) Nothing in section 13-5 of this article shall prohibit a private club not in fact open to the public, which as an
incident to its primary purpose or purposes provides lodgings which it owns or operates for other than a
commercial purpose, from limiting the rental or occupancy of such lodgings to its members or from giving
preference to its members.

(d) Nothing in section 13-5 of this article limits the applicability of any reasonable governmental restrictions
regarding the maximum number of occupants permitted to occupy a dwelling.

(e) Nothing in section 13-5 of this article regarding familial status shall apply with respect to housing for older
persons.

Housing for older persons means housing:

(1) Provided under any state or federal program that is specifically designed and operated to assist elderly
persons; or
(2) Intended for, and solely occupied by, persons 62 years of age or older; or

(3) Intended and operated for occupancy by at least one person 55 years of age or older per unit, where at least 80 percent of the units in the housing facility are occupied by at least one person 55 years of age or older (except that newly constructed facilities need not comply with this requirement until 25 percent of the units in the facility are occupied), and where the facility meets other regulations adopted by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development as set forth in 24 C.F.R. 100.304; however

(4) Housing shall not fail to meet the requirements for housing for older persons by reason of persons residing in such housing as of September 13, 1988, who do not meet the age requirements set forth in subsections (e)(2) or (3) above; provided that all new occupants of such housing meet the age requirements of subsections (e)(2) or (3); or unoccupied units; provided that such units are reserved for occupancy by persons who meet the age requirements of subsections (e)(2) or (3) of this section.

(Ord. No. 2965, § I(Exh. A), 4-5-21)

Sec. 13-5. Discrimination in the sale or rental of housing and other prohibited practices.

Except as exempted by section 13-4 of this article, it shall be unlawful:

(1) To refuse to sell or rent after the making of a bona fide offer, or to refuse to negotiate for the sale or rental of, or otherwise make unavailable or deny, a dwelling to any person because of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, or gender identity, disability, source of income, familial status, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation, ancestry, or national origin.

(2) To discriminate against any person in the terms, conditions, or privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling, or in the provision of services or facilities in connection therewith because of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, or gender identity, disability, source of income, familial status, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation, ancestry, or national origin.

(3) To make, print, or publish, or cause to be made, printed, or published any notice, statement or advertisement, with respect to the sale or rental of a dwelling that indicates any preference, limitation, or discrimination based on race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, or gender identity, disability, source of income, familial status, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation, ancestry, or national origin, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.

(4) To represent to any person because of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, or gender identity, disability, source of income, familial status, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation, ancestry, or national origin, that any dwelling is not available for inspection, sale, or rental when such dwelling is in fact so available.

(5) For profit, to induce or attempt to induce any person to sell or rent any dwelling by representations regarding the entry or prospective entry into the neighborhood of a person or persons of a particular race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, or gender identity, disability, source of income, familial status, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation, ancestry, or national origin.

(6) a. To discriminate in the sale or rental, or to otherwise make unavailable or deny, a dwelling to any buyer or renter because of a disability of:

1. That buyer or renter;
2. A person residing in or intending to reside in that dwelling after it is so sold, rented, or made available; or
3. Any person associated with that buyer or renter.
b. To discriminate against any person in the terms, conditions, or privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling, or in the provision of services or facilities in connection with such dwelling, because of a disability of:

1. That person;
2. A person residing in or intending to reside in that dwelling after it is so sold, rented, or made available; or
3. Any person associated with that person.

c. For purposes of this subsection, discrimination includes:

1. A refusal to permit, at the expense of the disabled person, reasonable modifications of existing premises occupied or to be occupied by such person if such modifications are necessary to afford such person full enjoyment of the premises except that, in the case of a rental, the landlord may where it is reasonable to do so, condition permission for a modification on the renter agreeing to restore the interior of the premises to the condition that existed before the modification, reasonable wear and tear excepted;
2. A refusal to make reasonable modifications in rules, policies, practices, or services, when such modifications are necessary to afford such person equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling; or
3. In connection with the design and construction of covered multi-family dwellings for first occupancy, for which a city building permit is issued after adoption of the ordinance from which this article derives, a refusal to design and construct those dwellings in accordance with the 1988 Fair Housing Act, 2003 International Building Code and CABO/ANSI A117.1-1998, and their amendments, as made elsewhere within this Municipal Code.

d. Nothing in subsection (b) requires that a dwelling be made available to an individual whose tenancy would constitute a direct threat to the health or safety of other individuals or whose tenancy would result in substantial physical damage to the property of others.

(7) For any person or other entity whose business includes engaging in residential real estate-related transactions to discriminate against any person in making available such a transaction, or in the terms or conditions of such a transaction, because of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, or gender identity, disability, source of income, familial status, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation, ancestry, or national origin. Nothing in this subsection prohibits a person engaged in the business of furnishing appraisals of real property to take into consideration factors other than race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, or gender identity, disability, familial status, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation, ancestry, or national origin.

(8) Deny any person access to or membership or participation in any multiple-listing service, real estate brokers’ organization or other service, organization, or facility relating to the business of selling or renting dwellings, or to discriminate against him/her in the terms or conditions of such access, membership, or participation, on account of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, or gender identity, disability, source of income, familial status, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation, ancestry, or national origin.

(9) Coerce, intimidate, threaten, or interfere with any person in the exercise or enjoyment of, or on account of his or her having exercised or enjoyed, or on account of his or her having aided or encouraged any other person in the exercise or enjoyment of any right granted or protected under this article.

(10) A landlord shall not terminate a tenancy, fail to renew a tenancy, refuse to enter into a rental agreement, or otherwise retaliate in the rental of a dwelling based substantially on:
a. The tenant, applicant, or a household member’s status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; or

b. The tenant or applicant having terminated a rental agreement under early lease termination clause.

(Ord. No. 2965, § I(Exh. A), 4-5-21)

Sec. 13-6. Early lease termination.

In any lease or rental agreement covering premises occupied for dwelling purposes, a lessee or tenant for whose benefit any order of protection has been issued by a court of competent jurisdiction, shall be permitted to terminate such lease or rental agreement and quit and surrender possession of the leasehold premises, and of the land so leased or occupied pursuant to the provisions of this section and to be released from any liability to pay to the lessor or owner, rent or other payments in lieu of rent for the time subsequent to the date of termination of such lease.

(Ord. No. 2965, § I(Exh. A), 4-5-21)

Sec. 13-7. Administration and enforcement.

(a) The authority and responsibility for administering the fair housing article shall be in the director of the administering department assigned by the city manager’s office.

(b) All city agencies and departments shall administer their programs and activities relating to housing in a manner to affirmatively further the purposes of this article and shall cooperate with the administering department to further such purposes.

(c) The administering department shall review plans and construction of newly constructed covered multifamily dwellings for the purpose of making a determination as to whether the design and construction requirements of subsection 13-5(6)c.3. are met. No building permit shall be issued and no certificate of occupancy shall be issued for covered multifamily dwellings that do not meet those requirements. Notwithstanding the above, no one shall be denied a certificate of occupancy for failure to meet the requirements of subsection 13-5(6)c.3. if a city building permit was issued prior to the adoption of the ordinance from which this article is derived.

(d) The director of the administering department or his or her designee shall be responsible for providing information to and assisting aggrieved persons who request assistance in filing complaints with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and/or in accordance with reporting/complaint filing processes established for the city not inconsistent with this section and this article.

(e) Whenever the director of the administering department or designee has reason to believe that any person has engaged in a discriminatory housing practice in violation of section 13-5, the director or designee may invite the person to discuss the violation and methods of correcting the cause of the violation.

(f) Section 13-5 makes it unlawful to discriminate in the sale or rental of housing and other prohibited practices according to the Fair Housing Act. If a violation has occurred, the municipal court may assess a fine of not more than $500.00 or impose imprisonment for not more than 90 days or both, in addition to any fines and/or other remedies afforded under separate civil remedies and/or state or federal law. Each separate violation shall constitute a separate offense, and in the case of a continuing violation, each day that a violation continues after notice from the city and request for correction shall constitute a separate offense.

(Ord. No. 2965, § I(Exh. A), 4-5-21)
Secs. 13-8—13-49. Reserved.
CITY of ALBUQUERQUE
TWENTY FIFTH COUNCIL

COUNCIL BILL NO. O-22-16 ENACTMENT NO. ____________________

SPONSORED BY: Pat Davis, Brook Bassan

ORDINANCE

AMENDING THE ALBUQUERQUE HUMAN RIGHTS ORDINANCE TO

PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SOURCE OF INCOME; MAKING AN

APPROPRIATION FOR A STUDY AND TO DEVELOP AND DISTRIBUTE

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS.

WHEREAS, “Source of income discrimination” refers to the practice of

refusing to rent to a housing applicant because of that person’s lawful form of

income; and

WHEREAS, A growing number of states and localities have enacted laws,

known as “source of income protection laws” that prohibit discrimination

based on lawful income sources such as social security, pension, alimony,

child support, foster care subsidies, housing vouchers, and others; and

WHEREAS, The New Mexico Human Rights Act, NMSA 1978, Chapter 28,

Article 1, prohibits housing discrimination based on race, religion, color,
national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy,
childbirth or condition related to pregnancy or childbirth, spousal affiliation or
physical or mental handicap; and

WHEREAS, The City of Albuquerque Human Rights Ordinance, Chapter 28,
Article 4 ROA 1994, likewise prohibits discriminatory practices in housing; and

WHEREAS, These protections for applicants seeking housing do not

currently extend to prohibit discrimination related to applicants’ legal sources
of income; and

WHEREAS, Implementing amendments to the Human Rights Ordinance
that prohibit owners from discriminating against tenants based on lawful
sources of income will promote a general welfare of the City and its residents;

and
WHEREAS, The availability of safe and affordable housing is an essential component of individual and community well-being; and
WHEREAS, Because applicants for housing are regularly asked to disclose their source of income in consideration of their ability to meet income requirements, this prohibition would also ensure that applicants with supplemental income are not denied access to housing opportunities; and
WHEREAS, The City of Albuquerque is currently facing a housing crisis and participants of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program are routinely unable to find housing despite eligibility for the program, and;
WHEREAS, Prohibiting source of income discrimination will help expand the housing choices available to voucher holders and increase equitable access to housing opportunities for renters in our City.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL, THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE:

SECTION 1. Section 11-3-3, the “Definitions” Section of the Human Rights Ordinance, is hereby amended as follows:

“§ 11-3-3 DEFINITIONS.

For the purpose of this article, the following definitions shall apply unless the context clearly indicates or requires a different meaning.

BOARD. The Human Rights Board.

COMMERCIAL SPACE. Any space in a building, structure, or portion thereof, which is used or occupied or intended to be occupied for the manufacture, sale, resale, processing, reprocessing, displaying, storing, handling, garaging, or distribution of personal property; and any space which is used or occupied as a separate business or professional unit or office in any building, structure, or portion thereof.

CULTURAL HEADDRESS. Includes, but is not limited to, burkas, hijabs, head wraps, head scarves, or other headdresses used as part of an individual's personal cultural or religious beliefs.

EMPLOYEE. Any person in the employ of an employer.

EMPLOYER. Any person employing one or more persons acting for an employer.
EMPLOYMENT AGENCY. Any person regularly undertaking with or without compensation to procure opportunities to work or to procure, recruit, or refer employees.

HOUSING ACCOMMODATION. Any building or portion of a building which is constructed or to be constructed, which is used or intended for use as the residence or sleeping place of any individual.

LABOR ORGANIZATION. Any organization which exists for the purpose in whole or in part of collective bargaining or of dealing with employers concerning grievances, terms or conditions of employment or of other mutual aid or protection in connection with employment.

[MINIMUM INCOME REQUIREMENT. A requirement set by an owner relating to the amount of income a prospective tenant must receive in a prescribed period of time and used to determine the prospective tenant’s ability to pay rent.]

PERSON. One or more individuals, a partnership, association, [company,] organization, corporation, joint venture, legal representative, trustee, receiver, cooperative, or the city and any governmental unit created and/or sponsored by the city. Where any reference to the masculine is present, he or she, her or him, his or her or person (as in chairperson vs. chairman) should be in its place.

PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED. Any person who, because of accident, illness, congenital condition or other condition of health, experiences any impairment in sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell, motor skills or appearance.

PUBLIC ACCOMMODATION. Any establishment that provides or offers its services, facilities, accommodations or goods to the public, but does not include a bona fide private club or other place or establishment which is by its nature and use distinctly private.

RACE. Includes, but is not limited to, traits historically and commonly associated with race or ethnicity, including hair types, hair texture, volume of hair, length of hair, protective hairstyles, or cultural headdresses.

RACE RELATED HAIRSTYLE. Includes, but is not limited to, those hairstyles necessitated by, or resulting from, the characteristics of a hair
texture associated with race, such as braids, locs, afros, tight coils or curls, bantu knots, and twists.

REAL PROPERTY. Lands, leaseholds and tenements.

[SOURCE OF INCOME. Any lawful and verifiable source of money and program requirements of such funding, paid directly to or on behalf of a renter or buyer of housing, including, but not limited to:

(1) Income from a lawful profession, occupation, or job;
(2) Income derived from social security or any form of federal, state, or local public assistance or housing assistance, including a housing choice voucher issued pursuant to Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937, or any other form of housing assistance payment or credit, whether or not such income or credit is paid or attributed directly to a landlord and even if such income includes additional federal, state, or local requirements including but not limited to required inspections and contracting with the agency administering the public assistance program; or
(3) A gift, inheritance, pension, annuity, alimony, child support, foster care subsidies, or any other consideration or benefit.]

UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICE. Those unlawful practices and acts as specified in § 11-3-7.”

SECTION 2. Section 11-3-7, the “Unlawful Discriminatory Practice” Section of the Human Rights Ordinance, is hereby amended as follows:

“§ 11-3-7 UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICE.

It is unlawful discriminatory practice and a violation of this article for:

(A) An employer, unless based on a bona fide occupational qualification, to refuse to hire, to discharge, to promote or demote or to discriminate in compensation or terms and conditions of employment, against any person otherwise qualified, because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or ancestry, age, race related hairstyle, the use of a cultural headdress, or physical handicap.

(B) A labor organization to exclude an individual or to expel or otherwise discriminate against any of its members or against any employer or employee because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin or ancestry,
age, race related hairstyle, the use of a cultural headdress, or physical
handicap.

(C) Any employer, labor organization, or any other person to
refuse to admit or employ any individual in any program established to
provide an apprenticeship or other training or retraining because of race,
color, religion, sex, national origin or ancestry, age, race related hairstyle, the
use of a cultural headdress, or physical handicap.

(D) Any employer, labor organization, or any other person to print
or circulate or cause to be printed or circulated any statement, advertisement,
or publication or to use any form of application for employment or
membership, or to make any inquiry regarding prospective employment or
membership which expresses, directly or indirectly, any limitation,
specification, or discrimination as to race, color, religion, sex, national origin
or ancestry, age, race related hairstyle, the use of a cultural headdress, or
physical handicap, unless based on a bona fide occupational qualification.

(E) An employment agency to refuse to list and properly classify
for employment or to refer an individual for employment in a known available
job for which the individual is otherwise qualified because of race, religion,
color, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, race related hairstyle, the use of a
cultural headdress, or any physical or mental handicap unless based on a
bona fide occupational qualification; or to comply with a request from an
employer for referral of applicants for employment if the request indicates
either directly or indirectly that the employer discriminates in employment on
the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, race related
hairstyle, the use of a cultural headdress, or physical or mental handicap
unless based on a bona fide occupational qualification.

(F) Any person who provides any public accommodation to make
a distinction, directly or indirectly, in offering or refusing to offer its services,
facilities, accommodations or goods to any individual because of race, color,
religion, sex, race related hairstyle, the use of a cultural headdress, national
origin or ancestry, or physical handicap.

(G) Any person to:
(1) Refuse to sell, rent, assign, lease or sublease, or offer for sale, rental, lease or sublease, or assignment, any housing accommodation, commercial space or real property to any individual, or [discriminate against any person in the terms, conditions, or privileges of the sale, rental, lease or sublease, or assignment of any housing accommodation, commercial space, or real property, or] to refuse to negotiate for the sale, rental, lease, assignment or sublease of any housing accommodation, commercial space or real property, or in the provision of facilities or services in connection therewith, because of race, color, religion, sex, race related hairstyle, the use of a cultural headdress, national origin or ancestry, [source of income or the requirements of any program providing the source of income,] or physical handicap.

(2) Print, circulate, display or mail, or cause to be printed, circulated, displayed or mailed, any statement, advertisement, publication or sign or use any form of application for the purchase, rental, lease, assignment or sublease of any housing accommodation, commercial space or real property, or to make any record or inquiry regarding the prospective purchase, rental, lease, assignment or sublease of any housing accommodation, commercial space or real property which expresses any preference, limitation or discrimination as to race, color, religion, sex, race related hairstyle, the use of a cultural headdress, national origin or ancestry, [source of income,] or physical handicap.

(3) Represent to any person, because of race, color, religion, sex, race related hairstyle, the use of a cultural headdress, national origin or ancestry, source of income or because of the requirements of any program providing the source of income, or physical handicap, that any dwelling is not available for inspection, sale, or rental when the dwelling is available;

(4) In determining whether the prospective tenant meets minimum income requirements, exclude from the calculation any lawful and verifiable source of income received by the applicant; or

(5) Impose additional requirements on a tenant or a prospective tenant whose rent is to be subsidized by a third party not imposed
on other tenants, such as, but not limited to, additional security deposits or
requirements to maintain renter's insurance; provided that nothing in this
section shall be construed as a prohibition against a property owner or
manager conducting an income or credit inquiry on a prospective tenant.]

(H) Any person to whom application is made for financial
assistance for the acquisition, construction, rehabilitation, repair or
maintenance of any housing accommodation, commercial space or real
property, to:

(1) Consider race, color, religion, sex, race related hairstyle, the use of a cultural headdress, national origin or ancestry or physical
handicap in the granting, withholding, extending, modifying or renewing, or in
the fixing of the rates, terms, conditions or provisions of any financial
assistance, or in the extension of services in connection with the request for
financial assistance; and

(2) Use any form of application for financial assistance or to
make any record or inquiry in connection with applications for financial
assistance which expresses, directly or indirectly, any limitation, specification
or discrimination as to race, color, religion, sex, race related hairstyle, the use
of a cultural headdress, national origin or ancestry or physical handicap.

(I) Any person or employer to:

(1) Aid, abet, incite, compel or coerce the doing of any
unlawful discriminatory practice or to attempt to do so.

(2) Engage in any form of threats, reprisals or
discrimination against any person who has opposed unlawful discriminatory
practices or has filed a complaint, testified or participated in any proceeding
under this article.

(3) Willfully obstruct or prevent any person from complying
with the provisions of this article or to resist, prevent, impede or interface with
the Board or any of its members, staff or representatives in the performance of
their duties under this article.”

SECTION 3. SEVERABILITY. If any section, paragraph, sentence,
clause, word or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason held to be invalid or
unenforceable by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not
affect the validity of the remaining provisions of this Ordinance. The Council hereby declares that it would have passed this Ordinance and each section, paragraph, sentence, clause, word or phrase thereof irrespective of any provision being declared unconstitutional or otherwise invalid.

SECTION 4. COMPILATION. Sections 1 and 2 of this Ordinance shall amend, be incorporated in and complied as part of the Revised Ordinances of Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1994.

SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE. This ordinance will become effective five days after publication by title and general summary.

SECTION 6.

1. It is the intent of the Council to complete a study and develop a process geared at establishing a landlord incentive program aimed at encouraging acceptance of housing vouchers, assisting to bring properties into compliance with housing standards, and other incentives as may be appropriate at the completion of a study and development process. Upon completion, the study and its recommendations shall be submitted as an Other Communication to the Council for its receipt.

2. The Administration is directed to develop educational materials for residents and landlords and distribute this information.

SECTION 7. The following appropriation is made from available fund balance program from Fiscal Year 2022:

GENERAL FUND – 110
Council Services
Landlord Incentive Program Development & Housing Discrimination Study 150,000
Legal Department
Develop and distribute educational materials 50,000
10-Year Plan to End Homelessness
2008-2018
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When we end homelessness...
...in Las Cruces, children who sleep in cars, or in buildings not fit for human habitation will go to bed in a place they can call home; parents and single adults who are focused on daily survival will have the stability they need to lead productive and healthy lives.

When we end homelessness...
...in Las Cruces, men and women who have served our country in the military will not have to suffer the indignity of living on the street.

When we end homelessness...
...in Las Cruces people with severe mental illness will receive treatment and medicine and will live in a place where they have a chance to recover.

When we end homelessness...
...in Las Cruces, hundreds of individuals and families will never become homeless because they will have access to crisis intervention and emergency assistance.

When we end homelessness...
...in Las Cruces, public institutions will discharge individuals into safe, decent and affordable permanent housing.

When we end homelessness...
...in Las Cruces, it will be because of the efforts of people who care about the entire community.
Executive Summary

In 2007, the Southern New Mexico Homeless Task Force, a group comprised of social service and housing providers, veterans groups, governmental entities, began the planning process to develop and implement a 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

The Task Force developed a plan based upon the central principles, which have become the centerpiece of regional and state plans to end homelessness throughout the country:

- **Plan for Outcomes** – Develop plans to end, rather than manage, homelessness.
- **Close the front door** -- developing systems and interventions to keep individuals and families from becoming homeless in the first place;
- **Open the back door** -- a commitment to re-housing as quickly as possible those who become homeless;
- **Build the Infrastructure** – Address the systemic problems that lead to poverty and homelessness.

The primary goal of the task force was to think in terms of ending homelessness in Las Cruces over the next 10 years. The focus was not merely managing the homelessness problem but developing a strategic plan to end homelessness was the ultimate objective. The members of the task force developed long term goals and action steps for each priority. Each goal was matched with definable tasks and realistic timelines for those tasks. The recommendations of this plan follow the guidelines of the National Alliance to End Homelessness’ plan, the national model for plans to end homelessness.

A series of meetings and focus groups were held with housing and service providers as well as homeless and formerly homeless individuals. Additional data was collected through existing Continuum of Care data and other planning documents. To implement a change and to make a positive impact on homelessness in Las Cruces, many feel that it is vital to put a “face on homelessness”. At the core of the focus group sessions was the need for educating the public on homelessness - specifically, who the homeless are, why people become homeless, what can be done to end homelessness.

The Plan was presented to the Mayor and City Council on_________ with subsequent submissions to the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness.

The success of the Las Cruces 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness depends on sufficient resources, effective collaborations between non-profit organizations, the faith-based community, the private business sector and local government as well as community support and a commitment to ending homelessness.
City of Las Cruces 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness

Vision Statement

By 2018, all persons facing homelessness in Las Cruces will have access to safe, decent, affordable housing and the resources and supports needed to sustain it.

More than 600,000 Americans a night are homeless and over 40% are women with their children. The average age of a homeless person in the United States is 9 years old.

Every night, over 200,000 veterans are living on the streets or in emergency shelters.

The actual extent of rural homelessness is unknown due to the difficulty in locating homeless encampments. A national count found that 9% of homeless people live in rural areas.

Chronic homelessness is long-term or repeated homelessness of an individual with a disability. Of the 600,000 homeless Americans, between 150,000 - 200,000 individuals have periods of long-term or repeated homelessness.¹

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, we are now experiencing a period when worst-case housing needs are at an all-time high. While some communities are beginning to see reductions in chronic homelessness, in many communities family homelessness is exploding and families with children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population. Many experts attribute the increase in the number of homeless families to a combination of welfare reform; high rates of domestic violence; declining purchasing power of low-wage jobs; and a decrease in the availability of affordable housing.

Defining Homelessness

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines homeless as persons living in:

- places not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, and abandoned buildings;
- an emergency shelter; or
- transitional housing for homeless persons and who originally came from the streets or emergency shelter.

Homeless in Las Cruces

Homelessness in New Mexico is different in some ways from homelessness in other parts of the United States. One difference is that in urban areas homeless people who are not in shelters sleep in cars, abandoned buildings, and empty lots. In New Mexico homeless people use all of these places but they also camp out in the wide open spaces. This use

of open space means that homeless people are somewhat less visible in New Mexico than in a more urban state. In Southern New Mexico many of the homeless are immigrants and migrant workers².

Each year about 17,000 New Mexicans are homeless for at least part of the year. This includes single adults as well as families with children and unaccompanied youth. Without homes, these people also lose access to education, regular health care, employment and most of the things that many of us take for granted as part of our every day lives. Extended homelessness has been shown to lead to early death at an average age of between 42 and 52, due to many untreated chronic health conditions as well as the hardship of living outdoors³.

In Las Cruces, it is estimated that 2,000-3,000 unduplicated people become or remain homeless over the span of a year. During the past year, the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope day resource center served 3,028 unduplicated individuals with services ranging from a hot shower to case management and housing placement.

The 2007 point-in-time count conducted by the Southern New Mexico Homeless Providers Coalition and the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness identified a total of 380 homeless persons in Las Cruces on one night. Of that number, 210 were in emergency shelters and 170 were unsheltered and living on the streets or in encampments. On any given night, up to 25% of the homeless population is known to sleep outdoors. Based upon Census income data, the City also believes that an additional 2,000+ people (not currently being served) are “at risk” of becoming homeless at any time.

In October 2008, the City of Las Cruces and the agencies located on the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope campus conducted a week long survey of of 1,154 clients that received services from one or more of the campus agencies. The survey was designed to ensure representative sampling and to provide a basis for calculating numbers and

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percentages of clients that met the “presumed benefit” categories of homeless and severely disabled; provide statistics on the number of people who have been homeless at least once during the past three years; and the number of people who consider themselves to be low income. In order to prevent duplication, survey administrators asked each person if they have previously been interviewed. The agencies involved in the survey were El Caldito Soup Kitchen, St. Luke’s Health Care Clinic; Jardín de los Niños, Mesilla Valley Community of Hope; and Casa de Peregrinos.

Families and Youth, Inc. provides emergency shelter, transitional housing and supportive services for runaway and homeless youth. In 2007, Families and Youth, Inc. provided emergency shelter to 185 youth and transitional housing to 18 males and 9 females. Three of the females were parenting teens.

La Casa’s services include emergency shelter, non-resident counseling to victims/survivors, children's services, case management, advocacy, civil legal services, community outreach and education, parenting, transitional housing, and a counseling
program for court- and self-referred domestic violence offenders. La Casa provided emergency shelter to 574 victims of domestic violence during 2007. Of the 574 served, 189 were adults and 385 were children. Victims of domestic violence are considered homeless if they must leave their residence due to violence.

Why End Homelessness?

There are moral reasons to end homelessness that are fairly obvious but the economic reasons are also compelling. In October 2006, the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness conducted a study to compare the nightly cost of supportive housing with that of local hospitals, jails and shelters. The cost per bed, per night, at New Mexico facilities was as follows: $716 at the University of New Mexico Hospital, $550 at St. Vincent's Hospital, $82 at the Santa Fe County Detention Center, $77 at the state penitentiary, $33 for supportive housing and $30 for emergency shelters4.

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4 New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness. October 2006. [www.nmceh.org](http://www.nmceh.org)
For many communities, it often seems that the cost of placing homeless people in emergency shelter is the most inexpensive way of meeting basic housing needs. This thinking is deceptive and the actual cost of providing more emergency shelter beds can be quite high when dealing with individuals with chronic illnesses. Since they have no where to stay, homeless people use a variety of public systems in an inefficient and costly way. The cost of an emergency shelter bed is about the same as a supportive housing bed. However, paying for a supportive housing bed is more cost-effective because a person in supportive housing is much less likely to utilize the hospital or criminal justice systems. Supportive housing is a more affordable option, and although shelter costs are comparable, emergency shelters do not provide the stable environment that comes with being housed.

Life on the streets is costly for all public systems in a community:

- In King County, Seattle, a 2003 study of 24 homeless persons found they cost the County $1,187,746 or $49,489/person in just one year.
- 227 chronically homeless adults were followed throughout San Diego’s public systems for 18 months. They accounted for: 2,358 hospital visits, 1,745 trips by ambulance, numerous police pick-ups and detox transports, and $6 million in health care costs alone, or $26,431 per person.
- A five year study of 119 homeless “high utilizers” in Boston found that this group made 18,384 E.R. visits, had 871 medical hospitalizations, and 836 respite admissions, costing $25,000 per person in Medicaid alone.
- According to a University of Texas two-year survey of homeless individuals, each person cost the taxpayers $14,480 per year, primarily for overnight jail. A typical cost of a prison bed in a state or federal prison if $20,000 per year.

The fiscal and social wisdom of homelessness prevention is even more clear-cut. When a person or family is evicted, everyone pays: shelters, who take the evicted parties in; the evicted, in the increased costs associated with their poor rental record; families, and especially children, from the destabilizing and potentially dangerous effects of shelter life; and landlords, for whom the eviction process is also quite expensive. These costs can be avoided by catching individuals and families before they fall into the shelter system. One survey, for instance, found that while cash assistance programs, which prevent families from becoming homeless, provided an average of $440; this was less than 15% of the cost of placing them in a homeless shelter.

Continuum of Care Model

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care plan is a community-based, strategic plan to reduce homelessness. The Continuum of Care plan requires participation of a broad cross section of community representatives, data collection and analysis of homeless needs, and collaborative, consensus-based decision-making around local priorities. The Continuum of Care model recognizes that all homeless persons are not at the same level of stability and addresses a variety of needs. Continuum of Care components included Outreach/Assessment; Prevention;

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Emergency Shelter; Supportive Services; Transitional Housing; Permanent Supportive Housing and Permanent Affordable Housing. Originally it was thought that persons experiencing homelessness would enter the system during outreach and move in a linear path from emergency shelter to transitional housing to some type of permanent housing. Experience has shown that people can enter and exit the Continuum of Care system at any point.

Las Cruces homeless providers have developed a planning process using the Continuum of Care model in conjunction with participation in the New Mexico Balance of State Continuum of Care. Communities in the Balance of State counties can apply for funds through the Balance of State Continuum of Care on an annual basis. These funds are released by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Funding categories include supportive housing programs, transitional housing, supportive services only and safe havens.

Housing First or Rapid Re-Housing is a change from the Continuum of Care model that is being successfully implemented in other communities, including Albuquerque. Housing First is an approach that centers on providing homeless individuals and families with housing quickly and then providing services as needed. What differentiates a Housing First approach from traditional emergency shelter or transitional housing approaches is that it is “housing-based,” with an immediate and primary focus on helping individuals and families quickly access and sustain permanent housing. This approach has the benefit of being consistent with what most people experiencing homelessness want and seek help to achieve.

Housing First and Rapid Re-Housing programs contain these elements:

- There is a focus on helping individuals and families access and sustain permanent rental housing as quickly as possible and the housing is not time-limited;
- A variety of services are delivered primarily following a housing placement to promote housing stability and individual well-being;
- Such services are time-limited or long-term depending upon individual need; and
• Housing is not contingent on compliance with services – instead, participants must comply with a standard lease agreement and are provided with the services and supports that are necessary to help them do so successfully.

**Homeless Prevention & Housing Programs in Las Cruces**

- **Homeless Prevention**
  - MV Community of Hope

- **Emergency Shelter**
  - Families & Youth, Inc.
  - La Casa
  - Gospel Rescue Mission

- **Transitional Housing**
  - MV Community of Hope
  - Families & Youth, Inc.
  - La Casa

- **Permanent Supportive Housing**
  - ABODE, Inc.
  - Veterans Program?

- **Permanent Affordable Housing**
  - City of Las Cruces
  - Housing Authority – City Las Cruces
  - Tierra del Sol

**The Planning Process**

Homelessness is a community issue. In developing a plan to end homelessness, the Task Force realized that they cannot take homelessness out of the larger context of poverty, lack of affordable housing, low wages, low educational attainment, racial and ethnic discrimination and other factors that drive poverty, inequality, and housing instability. It is also known that housing without services will not address the complex root causes of homelessness, and that constructing buildings to warehouse the homeless is not the solution to the problem. Instead current funding must be leveraged, seeking greater efficiency, finding innovative ways to confront challenges, improve coordination, continue to link housing with supportive services, build on existing resources and generate greater private sector support.

The Southern New Mexico Homeless Task Force began working on the Las Cruces 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in __________. In 2008, the City of Las Cruces hired Community Solutions, a consulting firm, to assist the Task Force in completing the plan. The Southern New Mexico Homeless Task Force included representatives of non-profit organizations as well as homeless and formerly homeless individuals with oversight and support from the City of Las Cruces’ Community Development department. Participation was open to entire SNM Homeless Providers Coalition, homeless and formerly homeless persons and the community. The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness also provided data and support in the development of the plan.

All task force members contributed their expertise, ideas, experiences and time to this effort. To ensure effective project management, the meeting agendas were outlined in advance. Each meeting was designated with specific purposes and desired
City of Las Cruces 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness

outcomes. The Task Force reviewed data, identified issues, gaps in service and housing and created strategies in two key areas: Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness and Strengthening Collaborative Efforts. The Task Force continued to meet and develop the strategies identified in the Action Plan with input from a group of homeless individuals and consumers of social service programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members of the Southern New Mexico Homeless Task Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jardín de los Niños</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Authority for the City of Las Cruces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mesilla Valley Community of Hope</td>
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<tr>
<td>La Casa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Families &amp; Youth, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern New Mexico Criminal Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Las Cruces Public School District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advisory Member</td>
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<td>City of Las Cruces</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In developing the plan, the Task Force found that whether they were talking with service and housing providers or homeless individuals, there were some common themes that were discussed.

- A need for affordable housing options
- A need for employment that pays a “living wage”
- A discharge plan for the community
- Access to mainstream resources
- Need for centralized information and services
- Community awareness and education

While a percentage of homeless men and women living in the Las Cruces area are unable to work due to disability, the number one need identified by persons that are currently experiencing homelessness was a job. For many homeless adults finding and keeping a job is complicated by barriers such as mental illness, substance use, lack of education, and a spotty or non-existent work history. For all, the uncertainty and instability created by homelessness itself further exacerbates the situation. Traditional employment and vocational rehabilitation programs are not geared toward job seekers with complex social service needs and often operate apart from homeless and other social service providers. In some cases, mainstream employment programs are performance driven with federal funding tied to projections for job placement, retention, and wages. Ambitious outcome measures often predispose employment providers to screen out job seekers with multiple barriers to employment and/or avoid integrating services to assist homeless adults and youth with ready access to services.
Priority One: Break the Cycle of Homelessness

Strategy 1.1 - Community Education
Public perceptions related to homelessness are often inaccurate. Typically, the average citizen believes that all homeless individuals are those seen on street corners. While these individuals are the face of homelessness in many communities, they are not representative of the majority of homeless individuals. It is estimated that 40% of the homeless population in the United States are women and children. The negative perceptions of the homeless population are an obstacle to public support for homeless initiatives including funding by governments and private sources and developing affordable housing. The Task Force will work to develop a public information campaign in various forms, including developing a speaker's bureau, print campaigns and public service announcements. A community education program would begin the process of dispelling many of the myths concerning homelessness and change the public perceptions of who homeless individuals are and building public support for government initiatives and private donations.

Strategy 1.2 – Develop and Implement Discharge Plans
Various public and private institutions contribute to homelessness by discharging individuals to the streets or shelters. Ending such practices is an important tactic in the struggle to end homelessness. Discharge planning is a primary component of facilitating a successful transition from a public system care into the community. It is not unusual for individuals to be released from hospitals due to the loss of insurance or because the maximum limit for service delivery has been reached. Discharge planning should occur prior to the release of a patient/client from services. Too often, staff providing these services are directed to facilitate a release into the community before the appropriate discharge planning can occur and the appropriate referrals and resources can be established. The Task Force will assess the current system of discharge planning from public institutions and develop a plan to prevent discharge into homelessness.

Strategy 1.3 – Develop a Community Plan for Homeless Prevention
Homeless prevention is a sensible and cost-effective way of addressing homelessness. In addition to saving the cost of shelter and related social services, prevention efforts can also reduce the human and social costs of homelessness. Homeless prevention helps people to maintain steady employment and self-sufficiency. The Task Force recommends developing a comprehensive homeless prevention plan that incorporates emergency and short-term rent and utility payments; security deposits to assist with obtaining permanent housing; payments to prevent foreclosure; mediation programs for tenant-landlord disputes; and legal services to assist in eviction proceedings.

Strategy 1.4 – Increase Emergency Shelter Beds
Emergency shelter should provide immediate and short-term housing to both individuals and families experiencing homelessness. In Las Cruces, Gospel Rescue Mission is the only emergency shelter open to the general homeless population. La Casa provides emergency shelter to victims of domestic violence and their children and Families and Youth, Inc. provides shelter to homeless and runaway youth. Hacienda del Sol, an
emergency shelter located on the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope campus, has been closed since November 2005. The Task Force recommends that Hacienda del Sol be reopened as a family shelter or a transitional assessment center for families. A survey of homeless and support service providers conducted in October 2008 indicated that developing a family emergency shelter in the space formerly occupied by Hacienda del Sol was a high priority.

**Strategy 1.5 - Increase Housing Opportunities**

Inadequate income is a primary factor for persons experiencing homelessness. According to the 2008 National Low Income Housing Coalition report, a household in the Las Cruces area must earn $10.13/hour or $21,070 annually to afford a market-rate two bedroom apartment.\(^6\)

Transitional housing exists to provide a bridge between temporary emergency shelter and permanent housing. A variety of non-profit agencies provide transitional housing and related support services. However, the current inventory of available transitional housing is insufficient to meet the current demands of the homeless population. Based on estimates of the Las Cruces homeless providers, an additional 200 beds are needed. Homeless individuals that are provided with transitional housing are also in need of supportive services to progress into permanent housing.

Permanent supportive housing provides a rental subsidy and the necessary support services to enable homeless persons with special needs to live independently. Persons with disabilities need additional support to prevent them from recycling through the system. Special challenges facing this population include HIV/AIDS, mental health disabilities and chronic substance abuse issues. The current inventory of permanent supportive housing units is insufficient to meet current needs. It is estimated that an additional 140 units of permanent supportive housing will be needed over the next ten years. Transitional and permanent supportive housing programs should be closely linked with the service provider such as counseling and case management, child care, transportation services, life skills training, affordable rental and home ownership programs, employment training and placement and other educational programs.

Rental and homeownership programs for low-income households are offered by several governmental and non-profit agencies in Las Cruces. All housing providers have waiting lists for assistance and the need far exceed the available unit. Additional permanent affordable housing opportunities, rental and homeownership, would allow individuals and families to exit homelessness into the most appropriate housing option.

**Strategy 1.6 - Increase Supportive Services**

Supportive services should be accessible, flexible and target residential stability. Support services should help ensure stability and maximize each person’s ability to be self-sufficient. The integration of comprehensive service provision is crucial to reducing barriers, coordinating and improving existing services, and developing new programs to improve the availability, quality, and comprehensiveness of services. A seamless system of care needs to be developed that provides a system-wide policy that makes any

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\(^6\) National Low Income Housing Coalition. Out of Reach 2008. [www.nlhco.org](http://www.nlhco.org)
door “the right door” to receive needed treatment and services. Individuals benefit from client-centered services that place the burden of coordination on the systems that are service them.\(^7\) The provision of supportive services in Las Cruces will prevent and reduce homelessness (close the front door and open the back door), should focus on improving the current continuum of care and actively developing approaches that will further integrate the systems which assist the homeless population and those at-risk of homelessness. The Task Force identified the following areas as critical needs: legal services; substance abuse detox and treatment; employment training programs; ESL/GED programs; life skills training; and increased access to quality health and dental care. Additionally, the Task Force recognizes that the space on Mesilla Valley Community of Hope campus occupied by El Caldito and St. Luke’s Health Clinic is underutilized and recommends that a plan be developed to expand medical services and the provision of hot meals on campus.

**Strategy 1.7 – Increase Transportation Opportunities**

The Task Force feels that the development of an expanded system of public transportation is crucial for homeless persons to be able to access supportive services, medical services and to locate and maintain employment. The Task Force recommends expanded hours of service; low income bus passes and developing a public bicycle exchange program.

**Priority Two: Collaborative Efforts**

**Strategy 2.1 – Develop Community and Political Will**

The success of the 10 Year Plan will depend on strong community support for programs and funding that can provide needed housing and services. As discussed in Strategy 1.1, it is necessary to provide a comprehensive community-wide education program on the issues surrounding homelessness in Las Cruces. In addition, political and business leaders must become involved in the planning and implementation process since changes must also occur at both the local and state levels. The Task Force recommends that the Mayor formalize and appoint members to a Ending Homelessness Task Force.

**Implementation**

The efforts of collaboration and coordination of the Task Force, the City and other homeless service providers are significant and extremely important in reaching the goals and objectives set forth in the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

As a result of increased awareness and knowledge among local businesses, community leaders and the general public, there will be an increase in tangible support from these groups as measured by an increase in committed partnerships, financial support, volunteer time, integration of initiatives, as well as changes in programs, policies, and practices that have an impact on homeless persons and those at high-risk for homelessness.

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Evaluation
A regular assessment of the needs of homeless persons and services will improve the ability of service providers to impact homelessness in Las Cruces. The overall goal of the Continuum of Care is to move people toward greater self-sufficiency and permanent/stable/independent housing. While the homeless and near homeless populations are often difficult to assist due to the severity of their problems, the goal of the Continuum and Task Force is to coordinate efforts, services and expand housing opportunities for the homeless population.

In an effort to evaluate our strategies and how successful we are at achieving the outcomes in the Action Plan, the City, Continuum and Task Force will evaluate the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness to determine if goals outlined have been achieved. The Continuum and Task Force will review an evaluation of the goals set forth in this plan annually. The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) will be used as a tool to gather the information necessary to measure the progress made towards the goals and objectives set forth in this 10-year plan.
Appendix
## Priority One: Break the Cycle of Homelessness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy(-ies)</th>
<th>Action(s)</th>
<th>Manager¹</th>
<th>Implementers</th>
<th>Expected Outcomes</th>
<th>Benchmarks</th>
<th>Completion Date (Estimated)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.1 Community Education.</td>
<td>Action 1.1.1 Develop Speaker’s Bureau and presentation.</td>
<td>La Casa - Ryan Steinmetz</td>
<td>Pamela Angell Shirley Jaquez Dana Malone Ryan Steinmetz Nancy Sanders</td>
<td>Increased community awareness of homelessness.</td>
<td>1. Recruit speakers. 2. Develop power point and handouts. 3. Develop talking points. 4. Develop a wish list for agency needs.</td>
<td>12/31/08 / 1/31/09</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Action 1.1.2 Schedule and present speaking engagements.</td>
<td>La Casa - Ryan Steinmetz</td>
<td>Pamela Angell Shirley Jaquez Dana Malone Ryan Steinmetz Nancy Sanders</td>
<td>Increased community awareness of homelessness.</td>
<td>1. Presentations scheduled and documented. 2. 5 presentations per quarter. 3. Development of presentation tracking form.</td>
<td>Starting 1/09 and on-going</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Strategy 1.2 Develop and Implement Discharge Plans. | Action 1.2.1 Identify institutions that are discharging people into homelessness. | MVCH - Sue Campbell | Molly Wilkinson TBD                  | • A list of institutions that discharge people to homelessness.  
• List of contact information for each institution. | 1. Local coalition members are assigned to contact and work with specific institutions. | 12/31/08                                 |
<p>|                                        | Action 1.2.2 Formulate a discharge plan with each discharging institution for their particular subpopulation. | Dept of Corrections – Molly Wilkinson | Sue Campbell TBD  | A comprehensive discharge plan for all affected subpopulations. | 1. Meet with institutions individually. 2. Meet with institutions as a group. 3. Develop a written mutually agreed upon discharge plan. | 6/30/10                        |
|                                        | Action 1.2.3 Implement discharge plan .                                    | MVCH – Pamela Angell | Molly Wilkinson Sue Campbell | Persons will not be discharged into homelessness. | 1. Develop a system to track effectiveness of discharge plan. | 12/31/10                                |</p>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 1.3</strong>&lt;br&gt;Develop a community plan for homeless prevention.</td>
<td>Action 1.3.1&lt;br&gt;Develop a homeless prevention plan with defined prevention activities.</td>
<td>Chair &amp; Co-Chair–Southern New Mexico Homeless Providers Coalition</td>
<td>Southern New Mexico Homeless Providers Coalition members</td>
<td>Comprehensive community-wide homeless prevention plan.</td>
<td>1. Conduct meeting to define activities.&lt;br&gt;2. Outline of the plan.</td>
<td>12/31/08&lt;br&gt;3/31/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action 1.3.2</strong>&lt;br&gt;Research and apply for non-MFA funding for homeless prevention.</td>
<td>Shirley Jaquez</td>
<td>SNM Homeless Providers Coalition Prevention Committee</td>
<td>Persons are able to remain housed.</td>
<td>1. Develop a comprehensive list of potential funding sources.&lt;br&gt;2. Apply to identified funding sources.</td>
<td>12/31/08&lt;br&gt;3/31/09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action 1.3.3</strong>&lt;br&gt;Implement a homeless prevention plan.</td>
<td>Chair &amp; Co-Chair–Southern New Mexico Homeless Providers Coalition</td>
<td>Southern New Mexico Homeless Providers Coalition members</td>
<td>Persons are able to remain housed.</td>
<td>1. Funding received.&lt;br&gt;2. Homelessness Prevention Assistance begins.</td>
<td>12/31/08&lt;br&gt;3/31/09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 1.4</strong>&lt;br&gt;Increase Emergency Shelter.</td>
<td>Action 1.4.1&lt;br&gt;Develop emergency shelter with 10 family units and 50 individual beds.</td>
<td>Families &amp; Youth, Inc. - Dana Malone</td>
<td>FYI staff</td>
<td>10 families and 50 individuals will have shelter.</td>
<td>1. Identify site.&lt;br&gt;2. Secure funding.&lt;br&gt;3. Build or rehab facility.&lt;br&gt;4. Hire staff.&lt;br&gt;5. Open shelter.</td>
<td>7/1/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Action 1.4.2</strong>&lt;br&gt;Develop Emergency Shelter in Anthony.</td>
<td>La Casa – Ryan Steinmetz Families &amp; Youth, Inc. – Dana Malone</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>10 homeless families are sheltered.</td>
<td>1. Identify site.&lt;br&gt;2. Secure funding.&lt;br&gt;3. Build or rehab facility.&lt;br&gt;4. Hire staff.&lt;br&gt;5. Open shelter.</td>
<td>12/31/13</td>
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</table>
# Priority One: Break the Cycle of Homelessness

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.5 Increase Housing Opportunities.</td>
<td>Action 1.5.1 Develop transitional housing for 200 families and individuals. (Transitional housing includes housing development and rental assistance.)</td>
<td>MVCH - Pamela Angell</td>
<td>MVCH</td>
<td>Families and individuals that need assistance for up to 24 months are housed in transitional housing.</td>
<td>1. 24 transitional units for veterans. 2. Apply for funding for 30 units. 3. Receive funding and implement housing program. 4. Apply for additional funding on yearly basis until target is reached.</td>
<td>8/1/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action 1.5.2 Develop permanent housing and permanent supportive housing for 140 families and individuals.</td>
<td>MVCH - Pamela Angell</td>
<td>MVCH staff</td>
<td>Families and individuals are permanently housed.</td>
<td>1. Apply for funding on a yearly basis until target is reached.</td>
<td>7/1/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Action 1.5.3 Develop a Rapid Re-housing Program for 10 chronically homeless families.</td>
<td>MVCH - Pamela Angell</td>
<td>MVCH staff</td>
<td>Chronically homeless families will spend less time unsheltered or in emergency shelters and receive the services needed to maintain housing.</td>
<td>2. Establish a central intake phone number and common application form. 3. Partner with the NWCEH to develop program for Rapid Re-Housing program. 4. Implement program.</td>
<td>7/1/2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.6 Increase Supportive Services.</td>
<td>Action 1.6.1 Hire lawyers to handle case load of protective orders and divorce cases.</td>
<td>La Casa – Ryan Steinmetz</td>
<td>La Casa staff</td>
<td>Homeless persons receive free legal assistance.</td>
<td>1. Identify funding source. 2. Implement program.</td>
<td>8/13/08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<tr>
<td>Action 1.6.2</td>
<td>Streamline intake and case management.</td>
<td>Jardin – Shirley Jaquez</td>
<td>MVCH staff&lt;br&gt;La Casa staff&lt;br&gt;Southwest Counseling Center staff&lt;br&gt;Jardin staff&lt;br&gt;Dept. of Workforce Solutions staff&lt;br&gt;FYI staff</td>
<td>Increase case management effectiveness by improving communication among providers.</td>
<td>1. Develop a common intake form.&lt;br&gt;2. Develop confidentiality/ROI forms and structure for CRCG.&lt;br&gt;3. Develop, train and implement a Community Resources Coordinating Group for homeless persons.</td>
<td>3/31/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 1.6.3</td>
<td>Create access to 6 detox beds and 24 treatment beds.</td>
<td>Doña Ana County</td>
<td>Doña Ana County SWCC staff&lt;br&gt;NAVA staff&lt;br&gt;Local Behavioral Health Collaborative&lt;br&gt;Jardin staff&lt;br&gt;Dept. of Workforce Solutions staff&lt;br&gt;FYI staff</td>
<td>Homeless persons who receive detox and substance use services will be able to remain housed.</td>
<td>1. Identify agency to develop and manage program&lt;br&gt;2. Develop and secure funding sources&lt;br&gt;3. Implement program</td>
<td>7/1/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 1.6.4</td>
<td>Expand Workforce Training Center to 20 people.</td>
<td>Dept. of Workforce Solutions – Gilbert Olivas</td>
<td>MVCH staff</td>
<td>Homeless persons will be job ready or employed.</td>
<td>1. Identify location.&lt;br&gt;2. Increase outreach efforts.</td>
<td>8/1/08 &amp; On-going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 1.6.5</td>
<td>Increase number of persons receiving ESL/GED/literacy services and basic life skills.</td>
<td>Dept. of Corrections - Molly Wilkinson</td>
<td>Doña Ana County Community College ABE Program&lt;br&gt;Nancy Cahill</td>
<td>Homeless persons will increase literacy and English language skills and basic life skills.</td>
<td>1. Establish 5 classes.</td>
<td>1/1/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 1.6.6</td>
<td>Establish Career Pathways program.</td>
<td>LCPS - Nancy Sanders</td>
<td>Nancy Cahill&lt;br&gt;Gilbert Olivas</td>
<td>Homeless persons will be job ready or employed.</td>
<td>1. Begin weekly classes at MVCH.</td>
<td>7/1/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 1.6.7</td>
<td>Classes in money management and fair housing.</td>
<td>Jardin – Shirley Jaquez</td>
<td>Shirley Jaquez&lt;br&gt;Border Fair Housing</td>
<td>Homeless person will be able to maintain housing due to increased life skills.</td>
<td>1. Classes offered at MVCH and Jardin.</td>
<td>8/1/08 &amp; On-going</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action 1.6.8</td>
<td>Increase access to quality health and dental care.</td>
<td>St. Luke’s health Care Center – Marty Miller &amp; Bert Garrett</td>
<td>Memorial Medical Center staff NM Dept. of Public Health staff Shirley Jaquez La Clinica - Ben Archer</td>
<td>Homeless persons in need of medical and dental care will receive needed services.</td>
<td>1. Establish Health Care task force. 2. Identify additional funding sources. 3. Expand existing clinic services.</td>
<td>6/1/09 12/31/09 7/1/10 &amp; on-going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 1.6.9</td>
<td>Increase access to quality mental health services and treatment.</td>
<td>Sue Campbell, CoChair of Local LC3</td>
<td>Local Collaborative 3 – All Agencies in LC3</td>
<td>Homeless persons in need of mental health services and/or treatment will receive needed services.</td>
<td>1. Develop needs assessment for community. 2. Increase access to programming connecting uninsured individuals to insurance 3. Provide services to uninsured individuals</td>
<td>1/1/09 3/1/09 7/1/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1.7</td>
<td>Increase Transportation Opportunities.</td>
<td>Action 1.7.1 Develop and implement a comprehensive transportation plan for homeless persons.</td>
<td>SNM Homeless Providers Coalition City of Las Cruces – David Dollahon</td>
<td>Homesless persons will have adequate transportation to jobs, appointments and recreational activities.</td>
<td>1. Advocate for longer bus hours, public transport improvements and low-income bus passes. 2. Secure 5 public bicycles each year for bicycle exchange program.</td>
<td>7/1/09 3/1/09 &amp; on-going</td>
</tr>
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¹ The Manager is the individual responsible for coordinating each action.
² The Implementer is the individual (or entity) responsible for carrying-out each action.
## Priority Two: Collaborative Efforts

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<th>Strategy(-ies)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 2.1</strong> Develop Community and Political Will.</td>
<td>Action 2.1.1 Advocate for Increased funding for family units and individual beds; supportive services; operating expenses.</td>
<td>Chair – Southern New Mexico Homeless Providers Coalition</td>
<td>Adequate funding to develop and maintain the types of housing and programs that will end homelessness.</td>
<td>1. Collaborate with Ryan Steinmeitz and Speakers Bureau to develop Public Awareness Events. 2. Develop Campaign for Funding Sources</td>
<td>1/31/09 (12/31/09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Hire consultants to work with Homeless Task Force to develop a 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness.</td>
<td>City of Las Cruces – David Dollahon Homeless Task Force</td>
<td>The City of Las Cruces will have a 10 Year Plan to End Homeless.</td>
<td>1. Hire consultants. 2. Work begins with Homeless Task Force, City staff and consultants. 3. Develop and finalize 10-year plan. 4. Plan approved by City Council. 5. Begin implementing plan.</td>
<td>4/08 – 12/08</td>
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¹ Manager
### Priority Two: Collaborative Efforts

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</table>
| Action 2.1.3  | Involve local faith communities in homelessness issues. | Chair – Southern New Mexico Homeless Providers Coalition, Ryan Steinmeitz, Chair – Interfaith Council, | Catholic Diocese, Interfaith Council, and Individual Churches, El Caldito Soup Kitchen Board, Dream Center | Faith communities become more involved in ending homelessness resulting in increased funding, services and housing opportunities. | 1. Speakers Bureau identifies leaders in faith community.  
2. Invite identified leaders to become involved in efforts to end homelessness.  
3. Develop presentation including specific needs that can be fulfilled by faith community.  
4. Schedule and conduct presentations.  
5. Develop Interfaith Hospitality Network to shelter homeless families. | 3/1/09  
4/1/09  
4/1/09  
4/1/09  
12/31/09 |
| Action 2.1.4  | Host Community Events (Homeless Health Fair, Stand Down, Housing Fair). | Gilbert Olivas, Chair – SNM Homeless Providers Coalition | SNM Homeless Providers Coalition | Effective outreach to homeless persons. | 1. Organize committee.  
2. Select date and location.  
3. Conduct event. | 3/1/09  
5/31/09  
9/1/10 |
## Priority Two: Collaborative Efforts

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<td>Action 2.1.5 Police CIT training.</td>
<td></td>
<td>City of Las Cruces – David Dollahon</td>
<td>City of Las Cruces, Sheriff’s Office, State Police, Detention Center, Jail Diversion Program</td>
<td>Homeless persons are diverted into programs/housing instead of jail.</td>
<td>1. Continue providing CIT training 2. Increase number of trained officers in both City and County</td>
<td>8/1/08 &amp; On-going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 2.1.6 Advocate for policy change at the State level for discharge planning.</td>
<td></td>
<td>City of Las Cruces - David Dollahon &amp; Vera Zamora</td>
<td>City of Las Cruces Staff with Consultants, Mental Health Providers</td>
<td>State mandates for discharge planning.</td>
<td>1. Meet with state legislators 2. Collaborate with Mental Health Providers 3. City and County resolutions 4. Implement the Discharge Plan</td>
<td>1/15/09 4/30/09 10/31/09 On-going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 2.1.7 Formalize &amp; transition the Planning Group as on-going Task Force including business &amp; political leaders in the planning process (Mayor and/or County Commissioners appoints people to Ending Homelessness Task Force).</td>
<td></td>
<td>City of Las Cruces - David Dollahon &amp; Vera Zamora</td>
<td>Southern New Mexico Homeless Providers Task Force with appointed business and political leaders</td>
<td>Community works together to end homelessness, Diverse planning task force with more resources with the ability and power to implement change.</td>
<td>1. Mayor and County will formalize the group and appoint members 2. Continued implementation of the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness</td>
<td>3/31/09 On-going</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action 2.1.8 Assign coalition members to participate in the statewide planning process.</td>
<td></td>
<td>City of Las Cruces – Vera Zamora La Casa – Monica FYI - Dana Malone MVCH – Pamela Angel</td>
<td>City of Las Cruces, La Casa Shelter Manager, FYI, MVCH</td>
<td>Southern New Mexico is represented on a state level.</td>
<td>1. Participation in the Statewide Planning Process 2. Increased access to funding, training and housing opportunities</td>
<td>On-going On-going</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Manager and Implementers may change depending on the specific action or task.
The 10 Essentials to End Homelessness in Your Community

Step 1: Plan
Your community has a set of strategies focused on ending homelessness. A wide range of players have made funding and implementation commitments to these strategies.

Step 2: Data
Your community has a homeless management information system that can be analyzed to assess how long people are homeless, what their needs are, what the causes of homelessness are, how people interact with mainstream systems of care, the effectiveness of interventions, and the number of homeless people.

Step 3: Emergency Prevention
Your community has in place an emergency homelessness prevention program that includes rent, mortgage and utility assistance, case management, landlord or lender intervention and other strategies to prevent eviction and homelessness.

Step 4: Systems Prevention
Mainstream programs that provide care and services to low-income people consistently assess and respond to their housing needs. Ensuring that public institutions are discharging people into housing is equally important.

Step 5: Outreach
Your community has an outreach and engagement system designed to reduce barriers and encourage homeless people to enter appropriate housing linked with appropriate services.

Step 6: Shorten Homelessness
The shelter and transitional housing system in your community is organized to minimize the length of time people remain homeless and the number of times they become homeless. Outcome measures are a key component of this effort.

Step 7: Rapid Re-Housing
Your community has housing search and housing placement services available to rapidly re-house all people losing their housing or who are homeless and want permanent housing.

Step 8: Services
Once households are re-housed, they have rapid access to services. Mainstream programs – TANF, SSI, Medicaid and others – provide the bulk of these services.

Step 9: Permanent Housing
Your community has a sufficient supply of affordable housing and permanent supportive housing to meet the needs of extremely low-income households and chronically homeless people.

Step 10: Income
When it is necessary in order to obtain housing, your community assists homeless people to secure enough income to afford rent by rapidly linking them with employment and/or benefits. It also connects them to opportunities for increasing their incomes after housing placement.

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8 National Alliance to End Homelessness. [www.endhomelessness.org](http://www.endhomelessness.org)
Glossary

**Affordable Housing** - Housing that costs no more than 30% of a household’s adjusted gross income.

**Chronic Homelessness** - Defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as ‘an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more OR has had at least four (4) episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years.

**Continuum of Care** - A network of services designed to help homeless persons make the transition to maximum independence and self-sufficiency. The Continuum of Care is the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s proposed model for addressing homelessness.

**Continuum of Care Grant** - A nationally competitive grant that provides funding for certain components of the Continuum of Care. The grant is issued by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and requires that communities conduct a comprehensive needs assessment and reach consensus agreement regarding priorities for funding.

**Discharge Planning** - A process that prepares a homeless person in an institution to return to the community and links that individual to essential housing and services, including enhancing and expanding their treatment options and effectiveness.

**Emergency Shelter** - A facility that provides temporary shelter for the homeless or for specific populations of homeless.

**Homeless (HUD)** - (1) an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and (2) an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is supervised public or private shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations or a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

**Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)** - An integrated computerized information system that collects data on homeless persons, their needs and characteristics and the services they use. HUD requires that communities receiving funds under the Continuum of Care grant have an HMIS in place by 2004.

**Housing Wage**: The hourly wage necessary to pay for the fair market rent for an apartment while spending no more than 30 percent of income on housing cost.

**Mainstream Services** - Publicly funded programs providing services, housing and/or financial assistance to poor persons, regardless of whether they are homeless. Examples include “welfare” (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, or TANF), Medicaid (health care), Food Stamps and Veterans’ Assistance. Because of a variety of barriers, homeless persons generally do not take full advantage of these programs.
In addition, many of these programs do not comprehensively address the needs of homeless persons.

**Permanent Supportive Housing** – Affordable housing with supportive services, designed for persons with disabilities. This housing has no time limits and is intended to be a home as long as a person chooses to live there. Supportive services help residents live as independently as possible and may be provided on site, or by visiting staff.

**Rapid Re-Housing** – A program in which trained staff help locate and secure housing for homeless persons in order to prevent or reduce their stay in emergency shelter. Staff works with private and public property owners to overcome homeless persons’ barriers to housing, i.e. substance abuse addiction, criminal histories, prior evictions, bad credit, etc. The program also ensures that supportive services and assistance are in place so that individuals achieve housing stability.

**System of Care** – A coordinated network of services organized to address an individual’s needs. The emphasis is on a system of different complementary parts that have integrated decision making in key areas such as assessment, referral, placement, tracking and monitoring, service planning, transitioning into another level of care, appropriate service mixes, and discharge.

**Transitional Housing** – One type of supportive housing used to facilitate movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing. Housing in which homeless persons can live in for up to 24 months and receive supportive services that enable them to live more independently and to transition to some type of permanent housing.
City of Las Cruces 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness

References

National Alliance to End Homelessness - www.endhomelessness.org
National Low Income Housing Coalition - www.nlihc.org
New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness - www.nmceh.org
National Center for Children in Poverty - www.nccp.org


A Community Response to Homelessness in Albuquerque

2013 – 2017
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Executive Summary

For over two decades, communities all over the United States have struggled with homelessness. Yet, we are confident that we now know what it takes to end homelessness and that now is the time to take advantage of promising new research and emerging models that show us how we can do so.

*A Community Response to Homelessness* was first developed and released in 2007. The Plan established a five year strategy for launching this new approach. *A Community Response to Homelessness* was based on the fact that Albuquerque leaders and voters had put forth policies, resources and a will (ingness) that demonstrated the potential to implement an integrated, focused, multi-sectoral, and effective response to homelessness.

Our original Plan recognized that more traditional attempts to address homelessness had largely been piecemeal, focused on emergency responses and designed to manage the problem, rather than solve it. With the number of people experiencing homelessness as great today as ever, many of us felt an erosion of hope. Yet promising approaches both in Albuquerque and throughout the country provided a solid reason to have renewed hope that ending homelessness *is possible*.

In 2012, the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness convened a group of stakeholders to update *A Community Response to Homelessness*. This happened through a series of monthly meetings during 2012, a day-long planning meeting in March 2013 and a Community Forum in May 2013. The result, *A Community Response to Homelessness 2013-2017*, builds from the success of our original plan.

In our updated Plan, we commit to a **shared vision to make homelessness in Albuquerque rare, short-lived and non-recurring**. We continue to believe that Albuquerque has the opportunity to be at the forefront in the effort to end homelessness. This is our call to action to end homelessness in our community. It invites broad participation from citizens, businesses, policy-makers, service providers, law enforcement, government officials, neighborhoods, and community leaders. It calls for better investment of more resources. And it integrates what is already working with what can work and is working in other communities.

The solutions identified in this Plan rest on a few key principles:

- We can **eliminate homelessness**.
- Homelessness **harms all of us**.
- Inaction **costs our community**.
- Ending homelessness **takes all of us**.
- **Albuquerque can be a leader** in ending homelessness, leading the way at a local level.
- Yet, a **strong federal commitment** is also critical.
- We can view homelessness from different perspectives and still build a **shared vision** toward ending it.
- **Now’s the time!**
A Community Response to Homelessness in Albuquerque 2013-2017  
(Updated September 2014)

There are also a few key beliefs underlying this Plan:

- The root cause of homelessness is **poverty**.
- People who experience homelessness are **diverse**.
- Homelessness is the combined result of structural inadequacies and personal characteristics or circumstances that make some people more vulnerable than others.
- During the last twenty-five years, we have learned valuable lessons that can be applied to what works locally.
- Albuquerque has the talented leaders/people, resources, and compassion to make this happen.

There are five critical broad goals we must achieve if we are to have a significant impact on homelessness in our community. These are: 1) Increase access to safe, high quality and affordable housing; 2) Improve health and stability; 3) Increase economic security; 4) Rebuild the homeless crisis response system; 5) Create the community and political will needed to end homelessness. These goals are in alignment with the Opening Doors, the federal plan to end homelessness that was released in 2010.

**Goal 1: Increase Access to Safe, High Quality and Affordable Housing**

The elimination of homelessness requires an adequate supply of safe, affordable and decent housing. Currently in Albuquerque, loss of affordable housing stock, combined with limited capacity among nonprofit organizations to develop housing, few resources for affordable housing development, and barriers to housing access for low-income residents all create significant obstacles to increasing the availability of affordable housing.

We recommend that Albuquerque adopt a “Housing First” approach, where the first priority in helping homeless individuals and families is helping them find safe, affordable housing. We know from local experience that a Housing First approach is an effective approach to helping homeless families and individuals obtain and remain in permanent housing. We hope to build on this commitment to a Housing First approach and extend it to all people who experience homelessness.

**Objective 1: Increase access to safe, high quality and affordable housing**

- **Strategy 1**: Support efforts to create stronger, healthier neighborhoods, particularly those neighborhoods where much of the affordable housing stock is located.
- **Strategy 2**: Develop relationships with landlords to increase their willingness to rent to people who have experienced homelessness.

**Objective 2: Develop a balanced housing and services approach for all people experiencing homelessness**

- **Strategy 1**: Develop a network of wrap-around services for those who have obtained housing so they can stay housed
- **Strategy 2**: Develop system-wide indicators for measuring housing success and stability
Objective 3: Increase the supply of safe, high quality, affordable housing
- **Strategy 1:** Increase local, state and federal funding for affordable housing
- **Strategy 2:** Increase local, state and federal funding for eviction prevention assistance
- **Strategy 3:** Engage the private sector, including the private housing sector, in increasing the supply of affordable housing

Goal 2: Improve Health and Stability
For people to obtain and remain in housing requires a wide range of services, medical care and resources. Many people manage just fine with little external support most of the time, but some may need additional help through short-term, emergency crises. Other people need long-term, ongoing support. Existing supports in Albuquerque are highly fragmented and long-term services are under-funded. Moreover, homeless services and more community-based services designed for housed populations are not well connected, making it difficult for people to navigate multiple services. Most people experiencing homelessness do not have access to affordable medical care.

The good news is that we know what types of services and supports help people stay housed, and we have many strong programs in Albuquerque. In addition, the expansion of Medicaid to all adults under 133% of the federal poverty level in 2014 will create new opportunities to connect homeless individuals and families to the supportive services, behavioral health care and medical care they need to obtain and remain in housing.

Objective 1: Improve access to medical and behavioral health care
- **Strategy 1:** As Medicaid is expanded to all adults living in poverty, ensure that people who experience homelessness obtain Medicaid
- **Strategy 2:** Strengthen the network of medical and behavioral health providers through coordination and collaboration
- **Strategy 3:** Train medical and behavioral health providers in the needs of people experiencing homelessness
- **Strategy 4:** Identify gaps and needs in existing medical and behavioral health services

Objective 2: Strengthen and sustain access to comprehensive supportive services
- **Strategy 1:** Improve existing supportive services resources through training in effective recovery-based practices and services
- **Strategy 2:** Prioritize resources for supportive services that can help people gain and remain in housing

Goal 3: Improve Economic Security
Inadequate household income is a primary factor in the growing number of people who experience homelessness. Many working people in Albuquerque, even those who work 40 hours a week or more, do not earn enough money to afford safe and adequate housing. People receiving disability benefits because they cannot work often cannot afford even the lowest market rentals, because disability benefits are so low. For those qualified for disability or other financial assistance, enrolling in public programs is often complex. Completing a successful application requires access to a certain
level of skills and resources and can take years, keeping people from receiving the income they need to maintain their housing or exit homelessness.

Our success with the SOAR initiative, which is a model for helping homeless people with disabilities quickly obtain federal disability benefits, shows we can help people obtain needed benefits when we are strategic and targeted. The fact that voters increased the minimum wage in fall 2012 shows that Albuquerque residents recognize that low-income working families need to earn a decent wage. We believe we can build off these successes to improve economic security for those experiencing homelessness.

Objective 1: Increase Albuquerque’s minimum wage so that it is equal to or greater than the housing wage

- **Strategy 1:** Partner with groups working to increase the minimum wage in Albuquerque
- **Strategy 2:** Develop business champions

Objective 2: Increase access to high wage/high skill jobs

- **Strategy 1:** Increase the capacity of homeless services agencies to provide job skills and training
- **Strategy 2:** Advocate to change the state’s child care subsidy policy so that the child care subsidy slowly phases out as parents’ increase their income
- **Strategy 3:** Improve the public transportation system in Albuquerque (i.e. more comprehensive holiday/weekend schedule, extended hours, bus stops near services locations)
- **Strategy 4:** Advocate to allow GED classes to count towards TANF work/education requirements
- **Strategy 5:** Collaborate with existing economic development initiatives to assist with employment

Objective 3: Increase access to mainstream resources

- **Strategy 1:** Improve relationships with the Social Security Administration and Human Services Department Income Supportive Division.
- **Strategy 2:** Increase resources for SOAR, particularly funding for SOAR representatives
- **Strategy 3:** Eliminate barriers in entitlement programs that make it difficult for people to access or keep these benefits

**Goal 4: Rebuild the Homeless Crisis Response System**

In order to end homelessness in Albuquerque, those experiencing homelessness and those who are at high risk of becoming homeless must be able to quickly access the help they need. Currently it can be difficult and frustrating for people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness to access the help they need to quickly exit or avoid homelessness.

Objective 1: Increase Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Resources

- **Strategy 1:** Increase local, state and federal funding for prevention and rapid rehousing

Objective 2: Develop a centralized or coordinated assessment system

- **Strategy 1:** Identify funding resources
A Community Response to Homelessness in Albuquerque 2013-2017
(Updated September 2014)

- **Strategy 2**: Increase and maximize utilization of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), particularly as a tool for identifying when and where there are open beds
- **Strategy 3**: Engage in system mapping so we know what housing resources are available and how people access them
- **Strategy 4**: Strengthen collaboration between agencies
- **Strategy 5**: Develop a standardized vulnerability index and assessment tool in order to help target and prioritize the right resources to the right person. These tools should account for the needs of different subpopulations.

**Objective 3: Ensure that people experiencing homelessness have a safe place to stay until they obtain permanent housing.**
- **Strategy 1**: Ensure the long-term sustainability of current emergency shelter programs that provide a safe place for people to stay and that are effective at moving clients into permanent housing.
- **Strategy 2**: Research and invest in additional appropriate, cost-effective options that provide safe, temporary housing and that link clients to permanent housing as quickly as possible. This could include, but is not limited to, emergency shelters.

**Goal 5: Build the Community & Political Will Needed to End Homelessness**

We must build strong community support for policies and programs that can end homelessness. A strong committed community mobilized to end homelessness will provide our leaders with the support they need to take bold steps forward. Without this show of community support, homelessness may not be considered a serious enough problem to necessitate an urgent, coordinated response and the number of people experiencing homelessness will continue to grow. Our goals are designed to tap into the caring, creative energy of our community so that we can continue to implement solutions to end homelessness.

Albuquerque Heading Home is a public-private initiative to identify and house the most medically vulnerable chronically homeless people in Albuquerque. Albuquerque Heading Home has been successful largely due to the ongoing support of Mayor Richard Berry, who has served as a champion for the initiative. Albuquerque Heading Home shows what is possible when a diverse set of stakeholders, with the leadership of a strong champion, come together to address homelessness.

**Objective 1: Educate key stakeholders and elected officials about homelessness**
- **Strategy 1**: Develop ongoing relationships with elected officials and other key stakeholders
- **Strategy 2**: Engage Albuquerque’s Mayor as a champion in ending homelessness

**Objective 2: Develop a public information campaign to educate the general public about homelessness**
- **Strategy 1**: Create a growing network from the public and private sector that support the mission
- **Strategy 2**: Engage professional support in public education and media efforts
- **Strategy 3**: Develop a “motto” or catchy phrase for public information about homelessness
- **Strategy 4**: Engage Point-in-Time count volunteers
- **Strategy 5**: Provide pragmatic, concrete info on the public impact of homelessness
Implementation
The Albuquerque Strategic Collaborative to End Homelessness will provide leadership in implementing *A Community Response to Homelessness*. The mission of the Albuquerque Strategic Collaborative to End Homelessness is to improve the system of care that exists in Albuquerque for people experiencing homelessness through collaborative, proactive planning. The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness coordinates the Collaborative. *A Community Response to Homelessness* establishes several system-wide metrics to measure our progress in implementing the Plan.
Overview of Homelessness

Homelessness in Albuquerque is a community problem that cannot be solved without a community-wide response; this document outlines a plan for formulating that response. This section provides a brief overview of the scope of homelessness in Albuquerque.

Who is affected by homelessness?
Homelessness affects each of us whether through personal experience, interaction with those who are homeless, or through the costs that are born by the community as a whole. People from all facets of our community, with varying racial, ethnic, educational backgrounds and of varying ages, can and do experience homelessness. Increasingly families with children experience homelessness. Poverty is the most common factor among people who cannot afford safe shelter. Limited affordable housing, low wages, limited access to health care and an inadequate social safety net create precarious conditions for thousands of people in our community.

How is homelessness defined?
Homelessness is a condition – not a class of people. It is the condition of people living outside of homes. When people do not have housing they live in shelters, on the streets, in their cars, in substandard motels, in tents, in abandoned buildings and doubled-up with friends and family.

How many Albuquerque residents do not have housing?
In January 2013, we counted 1,170 people who were homeless on one night; this is called a Point-in-Time (PIT) count. This number gives us a baseline estimate of the minimum number of people who were sleeping outside, in shelter or in transitional housing the night of our PIT count. It does not tell us how many people were staying in motels or doubled up with family or friends. Because we know many people, especially families and unaccompanied youth, are in this situation we know our PIT count is a significant undercount and the number of people experiencing homelessness in Albuquerque is actually much higher.

Is the number of people in Albuquerque experiencing homelessness increasing?
We used a very similar methodology for our 2013 and 2011 PIT Counts. It is valid, therefore, to compare the two counts. Our 2013 PIT count counted 469 fewer people than our 2011 PIT count.

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1 2013 Albuquerque Point-in-Time Count
This decrease suggests that our efforts to address homelessness over the last several years are having an impact. However, it is important to consider other factors as well. As discussed above, we know that homeless youth and homeless families with children are often doubled-up with family or friends, often in unsafe, overcrowded and unstable living situations. We also know that homeless families often stay in substandard motels. But people in these two situations were not included in our count; therefore we did not capture changes in homelessness rates among those living in motels or doubled-up. Finally, while we used very similar methodologies in our 2011 and 2013, our methodology was not exactly the same. The differences in methodology may have led to less people taking the survey in 2013, which would mean less people would be counted. It is impossible to know for sure which factor or factors contributed to the decrease in homelessness and is therefore important to keep all factors in mind when comparing the 2011 and 2013 results.

How much does homelessness cost us in terms of dollars?
In Albuquerque, we spend an excess of $20 million dollars annually to provide homeless services to individuals and families\(^2\). Homelessness also places a significant financial burden on hospitals and psychiatric facilities because we often must provide acute services for preventable conditions and situations which are exacerbated by the circumstances of homelessness. In addition, people experiencing homelessness often spend time in jail for minor violations and for performing activities in public, such as sleeping, that are not considered criminal when performed in private.

It is also important to remember that in addition to monetary costs there are significant social costs to homelessness. We are all affected when members of our community, including single adults, children, parents, teenagers and the elderly, do not have a place to live.

\(^2\) Based on federal Continuum of Care grant funds and leveraged resources. This figure is significantly underestimated because it does not include expenditures by churches, privately funded programs or emergency shelter services.
Goal 1 – Increase Access to Safe, High Quality and Affordable Housing

In order to end homelessness Albuquerque needs an adequate supply of affordable housing.

Decent, safe, affordable housing is the number one need of persons who are homeless. Homelessness is on the rise in large part because the availability of affordable housing is declining. The best way to reduce homelessness in Albuquerque is by creating new affordable housing.

This nationwide realization in recent years that housing must be “first” represents a paradigm shift in addressing homelessness. For many years, Albuquerque, like other communities, had been developing a homeless service network based on the “Continuum of Care” model promoted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This model suggests that an individual must move through a continuum of services (outreach/intake/assessment, emergency shelter, transitional housing and services and permanent housing) in order to be successful in exiting homelessness. Unfortunately, this service model has done little to reduce the number of people who experience homelessness in Albuquerque.

In response, a new model to address homelessness has emerged. This new model, called Housing First, seeks to first and foremost place homeless individuals and families in decent, safe, affordable housing. Once the basic need of shelter has been met, individuals and families can then focus on addressing issues that led to their loss of housing. Often they may need additional supportive services to remain in housing. However, evidence from across the country and in Albuquerque has shown that these services are more effective once individuals are living in stable, safe housing.

The City of Albuquerque created a Housing First program in 2005, which has been very successful in helping people who are chronically homeless obtain and remain in permanent housing. The success of this model in Albuquerque creates a basis for expanding the Housing First approach to include all people experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless. Expanding the Housing First approach requires a firm commitment from funders, service providers, policy-makers and elected officials to housing as the first priority in helping people who experience homelessness.

While a Housing First approach should guide future homelessness policy in Albuquerque, several issues related to affordable housing will need to be addressed in order for such an approach to be successful. Private sector developers, contractors, landlords, investors, and foundations can play a key role in addressing the affordable housing issue. Creating an adequate amount of affordable housing for all Albuquerque residents involves a two-pronged approach. One approach is to
increase the amount of tenant based rental assistance available to low-income families and individuals. The other approach is to increase the physical stock of affordable housing for low-income families and individuals. The issues and challenges associated with both approaches in Albuquerque are discussed in more detail below.

**Issue #1: There is a shortage of housing that is affordable to low-income and very low-income Albuquerque households.**

In particular, there is a significant need for more housing units that are affordable to households earning less than 30 percent of area median income. People with very low incomes are particularly vulnerable to high housing costs and, as a result, are much more likely to become homeless. Sixty-four percent of renters that make less than $10,000 per year and 80 percent of renters that make $10,000 to $20,000 per year paid more than 35% of their income towards housing costs.\(^3\)

**Issue #2: There are limited local, state and federal resources available to address the affordable housing shortage.**

There are several local, state and federal programs that create affordable housing for very low-income households who are either homeless or at high risk of homelessness. These include the Albuquerque Workforce Housing Trust Fund, the New Mexico Housing Trust Fund, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grants, HOME, Low Income Housing Tax Credit, Housing Choice Voucher Program, Public Housing, and Continuum of Care programs.

However, these programs have never been funded at a sufficient level to fully meet the need for safe, affordable rental housing in Albuquerque. More recently, funding for most of these programs has actually been reduced. HOME has been cut by 40% and Community Development Block Grants have been cut by 21%. The Continuum of Care program, which provides transitional and permanent supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness, will probably have to absorb a four to eight percent cut in 2013. The NM Housing Trust Fund has only received $3.5 million in new funding since 2010. And in 2013, the City of Albuquerque reduced its investment in the Workforce Housing Trust Fund by 75% from 2011.

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\(^3\) U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey, Table B25074
Public housing and House Choice Voucher Section 8 waiting lists are severe. As of April 2013, there were 5,000 qualified applicants on these waiting lists at the Albuquerque Housing Authority and the average wait time is 3 years to get into these units for those households that meet one of Albuquerque Housing Authority’s preference criteria. For those who don’t fit one of the preference criteria, the wait can be even longer.

**Issue #3: Many low-income residents face barriers to accessing available public and private affordable housing.**

In the private rental market, landlords have a responsibility to ensure a safe living environment for their tenants and their neighborhoods. Private landlords are subject to various rules and regulations (including the Fair Housing Act, Nuisance Abatement Ordinance, zoning regulations and requirements imposed by investors) that have led them to adopt strict standards for screening of potential tenants. Consequently, such standards and procedures often pose a barrier for residents with criminal backgrounds, poor rental histories, and poor credit histories. Other barriers may exist for many low-income residents, including an inability to come up with the required damage deposit or first and last month’s rent. In a 2007 survey of people experiencing homelessness in Albuquerque, 27 percent of respondents reported that not having enough money for a security deposit posed a major obstacle to exiting homelessness. People with disabilities may have trouble finding available accessible housing due to a shortage of supply and in some cases, because of subtle discrimination that prohibits them from finding appropriate affordable housing.

Based on the issues identified above, this Plan establishes the following objectives and strategies to increase access to safe, affordable housing.

**Objective 1: Increase access to safe, high quality and affordable housing**

- **Strategy 1:** Support efforts to create stronger, healthier neighborhoods, particularly those neighborhoods where much of the affordable housing stock is located.

- **Strategy 2:** Develop relationships with landlords to increase their willingness to rent to people who have experienced homelessness.

**Objective 2: Develop a balanced housing and services approach for all people experiencing homelessness**

- **Strategy 1:** Develop a network of wrap-around services for those who have obtained housing so they can stay housed

- **Strategy 2:** Develop system-wide indicators for measuring housing success and stability

**Objective 3: Increase the supply of safe, high quality affordable housing**

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4 Results of a Survey Conducted of People Experiencing Homelessness in Albuquerque, NM Coalition to End Homelessness, September 2007
- **Strategy 1:** Increase local, state and federal funding for affordable housing
- **Strategy 2:** Increase local, state and federal funding for eviction prevention assistance
- **Strategy 3:** Engage the private sector, including the private housing sector, in increasing the supply of affordable housing
Goal 2: Improve Health and Stability

People need supports and services in order to obtain and remain in housing.

People who experience homelessness need affordable housing. Many, although not all, also need some level of supportive services. The combination of affordable housing and supportive services can be the critical element in helping people experiencing homelessness find a place to live and in helping those who have a place to live remain in housing.

The degree to which people need to use services varies. Many individuals and families experience homelessness simply because they cannot afford housing and, for that reason, may primarily need assistance with accessing housing they can afford. Once housed in affordable housing, many may only need services in the case of a short-term, emergency crisis. Others, however, such as those with a disability or recurrent illness, may also need long-term case management support or wrap-around intensive services to help them maintain their housing. Across the country, research has shown that the combination of housing and services – often called supportive housing - keeps people housed, particularly for people who have been homeless for a long time and who have a disability.

Access to affordable medical care – including both physical health care and behavioral health care – is also critical to people’s health and stability. This can prevent an illness or injury from becoming a crisis that leads to loss of housing. Many also need access to affordable medical care in order to address a chronic illness or disability that contributed to their homelessness.

Creating such a system of supportive services and medical care will be one of the most challenging aspects of this plan. Existing services are fragmented and are driven by different forces, especially different missions and different means of allocating resources. To overcome the existing fragmentation of services will require a collaborative effort among all service providers, funding agencies, policy makers and community members to align existing services with a common mission of preventing and ending homelessness.

Issue #1: Albuquerque service agencies differ in how housing fits into their overall mission and how they define success.

As discussed in the Housing section, we must adopt a Housing First approach in order to end homelessness in Albuquerque. To successfully implement a Housing First approach, we must have an adequate supply of affordable housing. But there is another piece to the puzzle. In order to implement a Housing First approach, agencies that serve people who experience homelessness and those who are vulnerable to homelessness must see connecting people to housing as a critical part of their mission. This means that service agencies themselves must adopt a housing first approach and place top priority on helping people access housing.

Many service agencies in Albuquerque provide excellent service for families and individuals who experience homelessness and are at risk of becoming homelessness. However, they do not always see connecting people to housing and helping them stay in housing as a core part of their mission. Instead, their focus is on providing high quality services in their area, such as mental health...
counseling, emergency shelter or job training. Adopting a Housing First approach does not mean that agencies stop focusing on doing what they do best. Instead, it means that agencies take steps to help clients find and stay in housing and that they define their success in part by clients’ housing success, because agencies recognize that their clients will be better able to utilize their services and move forward with their lives when they have housing.

**Issue #2: Some individuals and families need more intensive long-term support and assistance in order to be able to successfully regain and maintain housing.**

In addition to affordable housing, a portion of people who experience homelessness need long-term case management support and intensive wrap-around services to both find and maintain their housing. For this portion of the population, long-term, intensive, wrap-around services are critical. Without these services, some individuals and families may not be able to maintain their housing. Intensive services include substance abuse treatment, physical and mental health services, help in obtaining public assistance or benefits, and or job training and placement. Yet funding for both case management and intensive wrap-around services is limited, meaning that it can be difficult for people experiencing homelessness to access these types of resources.

**Issue #3: Access to affordable, high quality medical care is very limited**

Most people who experience homelessness do not have health care. Most adults do not qualify for Medicaid, and even those that do qualify are not necessarily receiving it. Low-income working people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness may not have the option of purchasing health insurance through their employer or are unlikely to be able to afford it.

In 2014, this picture will change. In 2014, Medicaid will be expanded to all adults who earn less than 133% of the federal poverty level. This has the potential to increase homeless adults’ ability to obtain the behavioral health care (including case management services) and medical care they need to be healthy. However, there are still many obstacles. First, being eligible for Medicaid does not mean that people will automatically have Medicaid – they still need to enroll and enrollment in public benefits has always been challenging for people without homes. Even once a person has Medicaid, there might still not be an adequate supply of medical or behavioral health services available. And behavioral health and medical care providers may not know how to meet the special needs of families and individuals who have experienced homelessness.

**Issue #4: Existing social services in Albuquerque are extremely fragmented. Collaboration among multiple organizations and sectors of the community are needed in order to address the issue of homelessness.**
Homelessness is a complex problem. People experience homelessness for different reasons and need different types of assistance to move out of homelessness. The majority of supportive services that low-income individuals need to gain and remain in housing are provided by entities not specifically focused on assisting people who have lost their homes. This includes services such as housing counseling, credit counseling, financial literacy, substance abuse treatment, mental and behavioral health services, job training, and income support.

However, people often have difficulty accessing the services they need because the service system in Albuquerque is highly fragmented. In particular, services between homeless service providers and other types of service providers are not well coordinated. As a result, the complex needs of very low-income people are often not met effectively by the social service network.

Albuquerque needs a well connected services network, consisting of a broad spectrum of services – not just homelessness services. This requires collaboration among many diverse organizations and community members including public institutions, public systems of support, the city, the county, police, neighborhood associations, businesses, citizens, and non-profit organizations. These services need to be coordinated such that an individual is able to access a spectrum of services to meet their needs. A critical component of this strong network is an adequate public transportation system, by which people can get to where they need to go.

Based on the issues identified above, this Plan establishes the following objectives and strategies to improve health and stability.

**Objective 1: Improve access to medical and behavioral health care**

- **Strategy 1:** As Medicaid is expanded to all adults living in poverty, ensure that people who experience homelessness obtain Medicaid.
- **Strategy 2:** Strengthen the network of medical and behavioral health providers through coordination and collaboration.
- **Strategy 3:** Train medical and behavioral health providers in the needs of people experiencing homelessness.
- **Strategy 4:** Identify gaps and needs in existing medical and behavioral health services.

**Objective 2: Strengthen and sustain access to comprehensive supportive services**

- **Strategy 1:** Improve existing supportive services resources through training in effective recovery-based practices and services.
- **Strategy 2:** Prioritize resources for supportive services that can help people gain and remain in housing.
Goal 3: Increase Economic Security

Poverty is a defining factor in the growing number of people who experience homelessness.

Poverty is the most common denominator among people who do not have a place to live. Many people who work full-time, and who work more than 40 hours a week, do not earn enough money to afford safe housing. Some people have a disability that prohibits them from working and are unable to obtain disability benefits. Even for those who are able to obtain disability benefits, the income provided by these benefits is insufficient to pay for housing at the fair market rent. Many elderly people who receive social security income after a lifetime of working also have low incomes.

Issue #1: For a large segment of the population, earnings from work are not enough to cover the cost of housing and other basic living expenses.

Many people who experience homelessness or who are at risk of becoming homeless are employed. In a survey of people experiencing homelessness in Albuquerque, 26 percent of respondents reported that they were employed⁵.

Wages are often insufficient to cover the cost of housing and other basic living expenses, including utilities. As a result, many Albuquerque households pay more than 30 percent of their income towards housing. In part, this situation is created by the declining value of wages. Today, the federal minimum wage is worth 26 percent less than it was in 1970⁶.

Even a person working full-time and earning the new minimum wage in Albuquerque ($8.50/hr) will only make $17,680 a year. If this person was a single parent supporting two children, she would still be living in poverty.⁷

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⁵ Results of a Survey Conducted of People Experiencing Homelessness in Albuquerque, NM Coalition to End Homelessness, September 2007
⁷ According to the 2006 Federal Poverty Guidelines, a household of 3 with an income below $16,600 is considered to be living in poverty
This full-time, minimum wage earner would not be able to afford a two bedroom apartment at the 2013 fair market rent of $780. She would be paying 53% of her income towards the cost of rent. To afford a two bedroom apartment in Albuquerque at the 2013 fair market rent of $780, a household needs to earn a housing wage of $31,200 a year or $15 per hour.

As we discussed in the Housing section, the housing cost burden is highest for very low-income households, including those making minimum wage. The majority of very low income households pay more than 30 percent of their income towards housing costs. To end homelessness we must ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing but we must also ensure that workers earn a housing wage – that is, their wages can cover the cost of housing and other basic necessities.

Poverty is not a minor issue in our community. Tackling poverty to end homelessness in our community will not be easy. Yet we cannot truly attempt to address homelessness without directly acknowledging that poverty and homelessness are inextricably linked. To end homelessness in Albuquerque we must create more economic opportunities for our very low-income residents.

**Issue #2: People who experience homelessness may have difficulty finding and maintaining employment.**

We must help connect those who are homeless or vulnerable to homelessness to good quality jobs that pay a housing wage. While many people who experience homelessness are employed, many face significant obstacles to obtaining employment or to obtaining better-paying jobs. Twenty-five percent of homeless people in Albuquerque reported that an inability to find employment was a major obstacle to exiting homelessness and 37 percent said job search assistance or job training could help them exit homelessness.

Some of those obstacles are purely logistical. Without a permanent address or phone number, potential employers cannot contact an applicant who is homeless. An applicant may not have a place to take a shower or may not have nice clothes to wear to the interview. He or she may not have any form of transportation to get to an interview.

In many cases, the obstacles run deeper. Many people who experience homelessness may have a limited work history or may have limited skills. This makes it difficult to find good quality employment that could, ultimately, lead to housing. Some people may have ongoing challenges, such as mental illness, substance abuse or domestic violence that make it difficult to look for a job or, once having obtained one, keep their job over the long-term. If people are able to find employment, limited transportation options and unaffordable childcare can also pose major obstacles to keeping their job.

To help people find and maintain their employment we need to help provide solutions to logistical obstacles that stand in their way to even getting an interview. A bus pass, a place to take a shower and a nice interview outfit could make a big difference.

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8Results of a Survey Conducted of People Experiencing Homelessness in Albuquerque, NM Coalition to End Homelessness, September 2007
We also need to help people develop the work experience and skills needed to obtain better paying jobs. We need to provide ongoing support for people who have found employment but need supportive services to work through challenges that may undermine their employment success. We also need to develop transportation and childcare solutions.

This strategy creates unique opportunities to build collaborative relationships with employers. Employers need a skilled, reliable workforce. By working together, job trainers can help individuals build skills for jobs that need workers. By providing ongoing support, service providers can help employees stay on the job, reducing turnover costs for employers.

**Issue #3: The mainstream resources which make up our social safety net often do not reach those people who become homeless or those most at risk of becoming homeless.**

Many low-income households often cannot access the social safety net which could both prevent homelessness and help people exit homelessness. The programs which create the social safety net for very low-income people by providing a source of income include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Welfare-to-Work, Food Stamps, Veteran’s Benefits, General Assistance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), and Medicaid. These programs are referred to as “mainstream resources.” Although they do not specifically target people who are homeless these programs can be an important resource for people who have lost their homes or are at risk of losing their homes. In particular, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) can be a vital resource for some people who experience homelessness. SSI is a federal benefit program that provides benefits to people with disabilities who are not able to work.

The process of applying for benefits is extremely confusing and complex. It often prevents those that qualify from receiving benefits because they lack the ability to navigate the process. Once a person becomes homeless the barriers to these resources increase due to lack of an address or phone. Long waiting times for benefits may cause a person to become homeless and extends the length of time that they remain homeless. Lack of affordable transportation options can also be a barrier to applying.

We need to build a better system of care where people can quickly get to and smoothly access and enter the system of services that make up the social safety net. To build a system of care, we will need to better coordinate existing services and improve access to benefits for eligible households.

It is important to note, however, that even those that are able to obtain mainstream benefits continue to have low incomes. SSI recipients whose sole source of income is SSI live far below the federal poverty level. The maximum SSI payment for an individual in 2013 is $710 per month, which
is $8,520 a year. It is critical that we develop an adequate supply of affordable housing for certain members of our community, such as those who cannot work because of a disability. It is also critical that we continue to help people obtain employment that pays a housing wage even after they have obtained benefits.

Based on the issues identified above, this Plan establishes the following objectives and strategies to increase economic security.

Objective 1: Increase Albuquerque’s minimum wage so that it is equal to or exceeds the housing wage

- **Strategy 1**: Partner with groups working to increase the minimum wage in Albuquerque
- **Strategy 2**: Develop business champions

Objective 2: An increase in access to high wage/high skill jobs

- **Strategy 1**: Increase the capacity of homeless services agencies to provide job skills and training
- **Strategy 2**: Advocate to change the state’s child care subsidy policy so that the child care subsidy slowly phases out as parents’ increase their income
- **Strategy 3**: Improve the public transportation system in Albuquerque (i.e. more comprehensive holiday/weekend schedule, extended hours, bus stops near services locations)
- **Strategy 4**: Advocate to allow GED classes to count towards TANF work/education requirements
- Collaborate with existing economic development initiatives to assist with employment

Objective 3: Increase access to mainstream resources

- **Strategy 1**: Improve relationships with the Social Security Administration and Human Services Department Income Supportive Division
- **Strategy 2**: Increase resources for SOAR, particularly funding for SOAR representatives
- **Strategy 3**: Eliminate barriers in entitlement programs that make it difficult for people to access or keep these benefits

**SOAR**: SOAR stands for SSI/SSDI Outreach Access and Recovery. SSI and SSDI are federal disability benefits. SOAR is a specific model for helping homeless people with disabilities successfully obtain SSI or SSDI the first time they apply.
Goal 4: Rebuild the Homeless Crisis Response System

People experiencing homelessness or who are vulnerable to homelessness in Albuquerque must be able to quickly and smoothly access the assistance they need to move out of homelessness and/or to maintain their housing.

In order to end homelessness in Albuquerque, those experiencing homelessness and those who are at high risk of becoming homeless must be able to quickly access the help they need. In order to stretch our resources as far as possible, this also means targeting the right resources to the right people for the right amount of time.

Issue #1: There is not a coordinated process for accessing help.
There are many programs in Albuquerque that serve people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. However, there is no centralized or coordinated way in which an individual or family in need of help can find out which program is the best fit for their needs. Instead, most individuals and families must call or visit multiple agencies. This can be a frustrating and often futile experience, as households will learn that they do not meet eligibility criteria, are unable to reach the right staff who could tell them more about the program or learn that the program they have contacted is full.

Issue #2: No community-wide system for prioritizing housing and services or for targeting the right resource to the right household
Currently most agencies in Albuquerque that serve people experiencing homelessness conduct their own individualized assessments and intakes to determine who is eligible for those programs. Most also maintain their own individual waiting lists. While there are advantages to this approach, it can also create a more fragmented, difficult-to-assess system for those trying to obtain help. It may also make it more likely that a household obtains housing and services from the first agency that has an opening for them, rather than the agency that is the best fit. While most agencies are operating at capacity nearly all the time, the current system may also mean that sometimes resources are underutilized.

Issue #3: There are limited services available for those who just need short-term rental assistance and services to obtain and remain in housing
Many people who are homeless or at high risk of becoming homeless only need a short-term amount of rental assistance and services in order to obtain or remain in housing. Yet, most of the assistance that is available provides more medium to long term support.

Objective 1: Increase Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Resources

- Strategy 1: Increase local, state and federal funding for prevention and rapid rehousing
Objective 2: Develop a centralized or coordinated assessment system

- **Strategy 1**: Identify funding resources

- **Strategy 2**: Increase and maximize utilization of the **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)**, particularly as a tool for identifying when and where there are open beds

- **Strategy 3**: Engage in system mapping so we know what housing resources are available and how people access them

- **Strategy 4**: Strengthen collaboration between agencies

- **Strategy 5**: Develop a standardized vulnerability index and assessment tool in order to help target and prioritize the right resources to the right person. These tools should account for the needs of different subpopulations.

Objective 3: Ensure that people experiencing homelessness have a safe place to stay until they obtain permanent housing.

- **Strategy 1**: Ensure the long-term sustainability of current emergency shelter programs that provide a safe place for people to stay and that are effective at moving clients into permanent housing.

- **Strategy 2**: Research and invest in additional appropriate, cost-effective options that provide safe, temporary housing and that link clients to permanent housing as quickly as possible. This could include, but is not limited to, emergency shelters.

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**Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)** – The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a web-based software application that records and stores information on the characteristics and service needs of people who are homeless. Homeless service providers generally gather the data from their clients and enter it into the system. The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development requires all programs that receive federal homelessness funding to use HMIS.
Goal 5 – Build the Community and Political Will Needed to End Homelessness

In order to generate the political will and resource investments needed to end homeless in Albuquerque, there must be strong community support for ending homelessness.

We need to build strong community support for policies and programs that can end homelessness. A strong, mobilized community that cares about homelessness will provide community leaders with the support they need to take bold steps forward. Without this strong community support, homelessness will not be considered a serious enough problem to necessitate an urgent, coordinated response.

Issue #1: The average citizen has a negative perception of the homeless population. This negative perception is an obstacle to building public support for solutions that can end homelessness.

The average citizen’s experience with people experiencing homelessness occurs with those that are seen on street corners downtown or at the end of highway exit ramps. Most people perceive these individuals as being “scary and crazy.” As a result, people’s perceptions of what causes homelessness and who experiences homelessness are often skewed and inaccurate. While homeless people are often perceived as dangerous, people experiencing homelessness are much more likely to be the victims of crime than the perpetrators of crime. Many people assume that substance abuse or mental illness is the sole cause of a person’s homelessness. They do not see how a complex web of factors, including poverty, can contribute to a person’s loss of housing. Moreover, many people who experience homelessness are invisible to the public eye; they include people who hold full-time jobs and whose co-workers never suspect that they have no home to go to after work, teenagers who go to school and then sleep under a bridge at night, and parents who may pick up their children from school and then spend the night in their car or in a motel.

We must address the negative perceptions of people experiencing homelessness because these negative perceptions are an obstacle to public support for homeless initiatives, including funding by governments, finding locations to develop housing units and raising private funds to support programs and capital needs.

Issue #2: Homelessness is not a visible problem to most members of our community.

Most people experiencing homelessness are not visible to the public. Many stay in substandard motels, doubled up with family or friends, in camps in the foothills or Bosque or in their car. As a result, we do not know they are homeless. Even those who are visible to the public tend to stay in a few neighborhoods. This reality means that many members of our community do not recognize homelessness as a serious problem. This invisibility leads to inaction, since people are not inclined to take action against a problem they do not witness. To build public support for ending homelessness
we need to help our community understand that thousands of people in Albuquerque become homeless every year and that homelessness has a negative impact on all of us.

**Issue #3: People do not believe it is possible to end homelessness.**

Many do not believe that it is possible to actually end homelessness. The truth is, however, that we know what it takes to end homelessness. The challenge is building the community and political will needed to fully invest and implement those solutions. We need a concise, unified and compelling message that inspires the general public and key decision-makers to believe that ending homelessness is possible.

Based on the issues identified above, this Plan establishes the following objectives and strategies to build the political and community will needed to end homelessness.

**Objective 1: Educate key stakeholders and elected officials about homelessness**

- **Strategy 1**: Develop ongoing relationships with elected officials and other key stakeholders
- **Strategy 2**: Engage the City’s Mayor as a champion in ending homelessness

**Objective 2: Develop a public information campaign to educate the general public about homelessness**

- **Strategy 1**: Create a growing network from the public and private sector that supports the mission
- **Strategy 2**: Engage professional support in public education and media efforts
- **Strategy 3**: Develop a “motto” or catchy phrase for public information about homelessness
- **Strategy 4**: Engage Point-in-Time count volunteers
- **Strategy 5**: Provide pragmatic, concrete info on the public impact of homelessness
Implementation

Leadership
The Albuquerque Strategic Collaborative to End Homelessness will provide leadership in implementing *A Community Response to Homelessness*. The mission of the Albuquerque Strategic Collaborative to End Homelessness is to improve the system of care that exists in Albuquerque for people experiencing homelessness through collaborative, proactive planning. The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness coordinates the Collaborative. Currently, the Collaborative includes representatives from nonprofit homeless services agencies, the City of Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, Albuquerque Housing Authority, Bernalillo County Housing Authority and the New Mexico VA. The Collaborative will engage other stakeholders in implementing specific components of the Plan.

Measuring Our Progress
*A Community Response to Homelessness* establishes several system-wide metrics to measure our progress in implementing the Plan. We decided to use system-wide metrics, rather than goal-specific metrics, for several different reasons. First, we wanted to use metrics that helped us evaluate our progress in meeting the Plan’s vision to make homelessness in Albuquerque rare, short-lived and non-recurring. Second, we know that in order to reduce and prevent homelessness, we must make progress simultaneously across all five goals in this plan. Third, we know that reducing and preventing homelessness will require support and engagement from stakeholders across Albuquerque.

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) will be a powerful tool as we measure our progress in making homelessness rare, short-lived and non-recurring. HMIS is an online database that all HUD-funded homeless service agencies are required to use (some non-HUD funded agencies also participate in HMIS).

We will use the following metrics. The table below shows the outcome we hope to achieve by 2017, our current baseline for that outcome, and what data sources we will use.
### Measurable Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rare</th>
<th>Reduce the number of people who experience homelessness by 50% in 5 years</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1,170 people are homeless on any given night (2013 PIT Count; &quot;homeless&quot; means living in emergency shelter, transitional housing or on the streets). • During the 2011-2012 academic school year, Albuquerque Public Schools Title I Homelessness Program served 6,123 homeless children</td>
<td></td>
<td>Point-in-Time Count, Albuquerque Public Schools data, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short-Lived</td>
<td>Reduce the length of time that people are homeless</td>
<td>To be determined</td>
<td>To be determined, possibly HMIS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Recurring</td>
<td>Increase the number of people who obtain/remain in permanent housing:</td>
<td>• 78% of all Continuum of Care (CoC) funded permanent supportive housing tenants remained housed for at least 7 months</td>
<td>HMIS</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 70% of permanent supportive housing tenants stay housed at least 12 months</td>
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<td>• 80% of permanent supportive housing tenants stay housed at least 7 months</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• 90% of all permanent supportive housing tenants are still in program or have exited to permanent housing annually</td>
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<td>• 75% of transitional housing clients exit to permanent housing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Increase the percentage of people exiting from emergency shelter to transitional or permanent housing (specific percentage to be determined)</td>
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### A Role for Everyone

We hope that as you read this plan you were able to identify a role that you can play to end homelessness in Albuquerque. We further hope that you were able to identify a role that we might not have thought of. Here is a review of some of the roles that we have identified:
Private sector developers, contractors, landlords and foundations can take leadership to increase affordable housing by developing new housing, rehabilitating existing housing, setting aside units within housing developments, donating resources, and developing creative solutions to reducing the costs of housing.

Landlords can improve access to affordable housing by building relationships with supportive housing providers.

Policy-makers can clarify existing rules and regulations that pose potential barriers for people attempting to access affordable housing and create incentives for the development of new affordable housing.

Churches, faith-based organizations, social and fraternal societies, local businesses and neighborhood associations can become knowledgeable about services and reach out to low-income residents in order to link them to the assistance they may need to remain in housing.

Social service providers can work together to create a community-based system of coordinated services. They can build relationships across all types of organizations in order to help individuals access and remain in housing. They can work with institutions to create appropriate discharge planning policies to prevent discharging individuals without shelter.

Social service providers, mainstream resource system agencies, policy-makers, educators and businesses can work to improve real wages in Albuquerque for those who are able and willing to work and increase income from other sources for those unable to work.

Business and community leaders, policy-makers and citizens including those who have experienced a loss of housing can participate in planning and decision-making through the Community Leadership Team.

Elected officials can place the issue on the agenda and begin a discussion about solutions.

You – can help.
Appendix A

The following organizations and people were involved in updating *A Community Response to Homelessness in Albuquerque*:

Albuquerque Community Foundation
Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless
Albuquerque Housing Authority
Albuquerque Rescue Mission
Barrett Foundation
Bernalillo County – Renee’s Project
Bernalillo County Housing Authority
Catholic Charities
Central United Methodist Church
City of Albuquerque, Department of Family and Community Services
Crossroads for Women
CLNkids
Family Promise of Albuquerque
First Nations Community HealthSource
Goodwill Industries
Henrietta C., consumer
Hogares
Metropolitan Homelessness Project
Mortgage Finance Authority
NewLife Homes
New Mexico AIDS Services
New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness
New Mexico Veterans Administration
Paul L., consumer
SAFE House
St. Martin’s Hospitality Center
Supportive Housing Coalition of New Mexico
Transitional Living Services
Transgender Resource Center
Youth Development Incorporated (YDI)
UNMH ACT Team
UNM Health Sciences Center – Pathways Program