

## Need Statement

According to the *U.S. Census*, approximately two million people living in the state of New Mexico, and **about one in five lives in poverty. It is the third poorest state in the country.** Poverty leads to homelessness.

Across the country, every community is facing the effects of homelessness. Though significant progress has been made in reducing the number of families and veterans who are experiencing homelessness, the number of chronically homeless individuals is increasing (*HUD, Annual Homeless Assessment Report, 2018*). This points to the need for targeted, critical services for this population, which is why **the majority of HopeWorks' programming is focused on individuals who are chronically homeless.**

There are an estimated 2,551 people experiencing homelessness in New Mexico on any given day (*United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2018*), the majority of whom are experiencing their homelessness episode in Albuquerque. **Actual numbers are estimated to be in the tens of thousands.**

There are an estimated 1,524 people experiencing homelessness in Albuquerque on any given day (*New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness, Point in Time Count, 2019*).

### **In New Mexico, There Just Isn't Enough Affordable Housing.**

**Only 41 affordable and available homes exist for every 100 low-income households in New Mexico** (*National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2019*), which means that the remaining individuals and families will likely experience homelessness in their lifetime.

Though affordable housing is important, communities like ours also need a network of wrap-around care to ensure that the most chronically homeless remain housed, despite challenges and barriers to their self-sufficiency. We also need tailored referral services, to get clients to the resources they need as quickly as possible, as well as partnerships with local landlords who understand the complexities people experiencing homelessness face and are willing to rent to them anyway.

**HopeWorks continues to work toward these goals.** Our breadth and depth of services, combined with our partnerships with the community and property owners, have enabled us to successfully house hundreds of people every year.

### **Homelessness Is Expensive.**

In addition to poor quality of life and health among the homeless, there is also a long-term economic impact—a responsibility we all share.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, between shelters, emergency rooms, and jails, it costs on average approximately \$40,000 per year for a person experiencing homelessness to remain on the streets. **In comparison, it costs our day shelter approximately \$67 per person to provide our clients with access to food, clothing, mental health, employment and housing for one whole year** - all necessary and critical components of self-sufficiency.

In fact, according to a UNM study conducted in 2014, providing housing and wraparound services to those who are chronically homeless saved Albuquerque approximately \$13,000 per homeless individual (about 1/3 less) in the study, as compared to the year prior, when the individual was not housed. It's nearly 32% more expensive to do nothing at all.

After one year of being housed, clients in the program they studied found that:

- Emergency room visits decreased by 36.2 percent after being housed.
- **Emergency room costs declined by 13%.**
- **Jail costs declined by 64%!**

Obtaining housing for those experiencing homelessness has a profound impact on the well-being of the city's financial health. **If we were able to house every homeless individual in Albuquerque, likely the cost savings would be in the millions.**

### **Why Is the Problem So Complex?**

Because rapid growth, coupled with a system of policies that systemically discriminate against minorities, the poor, and those with disabilities, have led us to where we are now. Rising rents, incarceration for the mentally ill, wage stagnation, lack of livable wages, fewer education/economic opportunities for those facing mental/behavioral health challenges, and more are countless barriers that will take years to dismantle.

In the meantime, **HopeWorks ensures that individuals and families who strive to exit homelessness are given the services they need—with respect, and most importantly, with hope, and we work to find affordable housing solutions for all those who walk through our doors.**

Every individual has a right to a home, as well as the right to live.

### **How Can We End Homelessness Together?**

There is only one solution to ending homelessness—housing (*National Alliance to End Homelessness*, 2018). In addition, systems of coordinated care must be in place in order to ensure that our clients, especially those suffering from mental illness, have the support they need to stay housed.

**For over twenty years, HopeWorks has been housing individuals experiencing homelessness, as well as providing them with the wraparound care they need to stay healthy, happy, and housed.**

In addition, we work with other service providers (Albuquerque Healthcare for the Homeless (AHCH), Heading Home, Joy Junction, The Rock, Steelbridge, and others) in order to improve best practice and program delivery, avoid duplication of services, and ensure that clients in crisis are appropriately linked to the programs and services they need right now.

For example, we:

- Provide meals daily to the men living at Heading Home's shelter and provide case management to their clients
- Partner with AHCH in outreach as well as refer clients to them for medical care
- Receive families from Joy Junction who need help in obtaining permanent housing
- Coordinate housing vouchers across agencies to ensure the most vulnerable are housed first

### **Hope Village: The First of Its Kind in New Mexico**

We are always searching for innovative, creative solutions to end homelessness. To this end, we will be building a 42-unit permanent supportive housing structure directly on our campus.

This project—the first of its kind in New Mexico—will house the most chronically homeless: those individuals you see living on the streets, who may have lost hope and a sense of future.

**This is a pivotal first step.** Housing is the only real solution.