

The State of Homelessness

July 2021

Fact Sheet

Homelessness Is Growing, and Targeted Action Is Needed

There are an estimated **3,241** people experiencing homelessness in New Mexico on any given day (United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2019), and the majority are experiencing their homelessness episode in Albuquerque. There are an estimated **1,567** people experiencing homelessness in Albuquerque on any given day (New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness, Point in Time Count, 2021). **Actual numbers are estimated to be in the high thousands.**

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, 2019). **This points to the need for targeted, critical services for this population, which is why most of HopeWorks' programming is focused on individuals who are chronically homeless.**

Homelessness Is Both Simple – and Complex

Simply put, in New Mexico, there just isn't enough affordable housing.

One in five New Mexicans lives in poverty (U.S. Census), and only 53 affordable and available homes exist for every 100 renter households with extremely low incomes in the state (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2021). Additionally, a May 2020 report from the Urban Institute indicates that Albuquerque needs an additional 15,500 rental units affordable to households with extremely low incomes, as well as 2,200 units of supportive housing and 800 units of rapid rehousing for people experiencing homelessness.

Rapid growth, coupled with a system of policies that systemically discriminate against Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), the poor, and those with disabilities are some of the complexities that led 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.

There is only one solution to ending homelessness—housing (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2019). In addition, systems of coordinated care must be in place to ensure that our clients, especially those suffering from mental illness, have the support they need to stay housed.

With over 35 years of experience, HopeWorks has been housing individuals experiencing homelessness as well as providing the wraparound care necessary to stay healthy, happy, and housed.

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

Doing Nothing Is Not Only Wrong – But Also Expensive

Housing is a right, not a privilege. Doing nothing tacitly implies that it is okay for some people to have homes and some people to not have homes. It is also expensive. **While it costs approximately \$40,000/year for a person experiencing homelessness to remain on the streets, it costs our Day Shelter only ~\$118/person to provide access to food, clothing, mental health, employment, and housing for one whole year** – all necessary and critical components of self-sufficiency. According to a UNM study conducted in 2016, providing housing and wraparound services to those who are chronically homeless saved Albuquerque approximately \$14,000 per homeless individual (about 1/3 less), as compared to the year prior when the individual was not housed. It is nearly 32% more expensive to do nothing at all.