



**Human Services Department  
Behavioral Health Services Division  
Supportive Housing  
Fact Sheet**

**SUPPORTIVE HOUSING**

**OVERVIEW:**

Supportive Housing transforms lives through access to affordable rental housing coupled with individualized, community based support services so persons can make a successful transition to a more productive life. Supportive housing is an intervention that can provide a cost effective, quality living situation for those with precarious housing needs. It is well suited for persons with behavioral health and severe mental health issues; the chronically homeless; persons with disabilities who are being de-institutionalized as well as vulnerable transitional youth ages 18 to 21 who are aging out of foster care or exiting the juvenile justice system. New Mexico's supportive housing initiative is based upon the Housing First model which emphasizes placement into permanent housing and a service approach in which the use of support services is not a condition of occupancy. The housing is permanent with continued occupancy, as long as the consumer pays the rent and complies with applicable landlord/tenant laws. These extremely low income consumers typically pay about 30% of their monthly income for rent. Supportive housing programs consist of a partnership between qualified housing organizations and local services providers; and, strategically assists the consumer in three areas: overcoming obstacles to obtain housing; finding and moving into affordable, permanent housing; and remaining in housing by learning the life skills needed to fulfill responsibilities of tenancy and proactively resolve threats to housing stability.

Housing First is a successful, proven and cost-effective approach that reduces expenses from public services and housing needs (i.e., emergency room visits, homeless services, jail systems, community police and emergency medical response, transitional housing and residential treatment). Implemented in several States and local communities nationwide, officials believe that the model is responsible for a 30% decrease in the homeless population in the United States from 2005 to 2007. The Behavioral Health Collaborative believes that supportive housing is the most effective means to end homelessness among vulnerable populations.

**SUMMARY:**

Supportive housing benefits all New Mexicans, since it is a nationally proven approach to solving homelessness, reducing high cost medical expenditures, incarceration, residential treatment centers, public safety costs, costs for adults adjudicated as abused and/or neglected. Evidence-based practices and national studies indicate that independent, decent, safe and affordable community-based housing linked to flexible client-driven, community-based support is desired by consumers as an essential ingredient to foster and support their own journeys towards recovery, resiliency and self-determination.

**GOVERNOR'S PERFORMANCE MEASURE:**

Percent of individuals with mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders receiving services with decent, safe, affordable housing

**HSD STRATEGIC PLAN:**

Percent of individuals with mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders receiving services with decent, safe and affordable housing.

**COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PLAN:**

- Goal 1: Assist consumers to participate fully in the life of their communities.
1. Adult consumers have housing, employment and/or supports to successfully manage life challenges; live, work, learn and participate fully in the lives of their communities.
    - a. Complete and put into action a statewide behavioral health supportive housing plan to increase supportive housing units, programs and rental or home ownership assistance for all behavioral health consumers for whom affordable, safe housing is an issue

**OTHER PERFORMANCE MEASURES: N/A**

**CURRENT FUNDING:**

\$750,000 recurring general funds secured from the 2007 State Legislature that is distributed thus:

\$400,000	Housing pre-development fund for non-profit housing developers to assist with pre-development costs, market studies and technical assistance to build new permanent supportive housing units
\$ 50,000	Capacity building grants to Linkages providers to provide support services and participate in assessing mainstream service systems to support permanent supportive housing
\$300,000	Linkages Program: provides rental assistance vouchers for 30 adults with severe mental illness in three areas of New Mexico



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### CURRENT PROGRAM STATUS:

The Collaborative's *Long Range Supportive Housing Plan*, approved in December 2007, has five implementation goals:

- Goal 1: Develop 5,000 Units of Supportive Housing
- Goal 2: Create Locally Based Supportive Housing Partnerships
- Goal 3: Create a Production Pipeline of New Supportive Housing Units
- Goal 4: Create Rental Assistance Opportunities
- Goal 5: Develop Best Practices for What Works for Housing and Support Services

This Supportive Housing Initiative has been very successful to date. The 2007 Legislative Allocation has funded efforts to:

- Provide housing pre-development capital to non-profit developers for the creation of 48 units of supportive housing via 2009 Low Income Housing Tax Credit awards.
- House 30 homeless persons with severe mental illness in Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Silver City area via Linkages program with subsidized rental vouchers and wrap around support services.
- Create 25 supportive housing units in (2) projects in Las Vegas and Gallup by providing assistance to local supportive housing non-profit staff.
- Develop a statewide data base New Mexico Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher data base to track target population preferences and waiting lists for all 21 public housing authorities that manage a Section 8 voucher programs.
- Advocate for bonus/incentive points for supportive housing in tax credit projects in 2009 Qualified Action Plan (QAP) and as result received 11 LIHTC applications.
- Advocate for receipt of 215 new Veterans Admin Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers for New Mexico

Status updates are provided below for the State's two permanent supportive housing programs -- Transitions and Linkages -- based upon the Housing First Model housing programs which began in 2007-08.

**Linkages:** This program is in three sites statewide -- Santa Fe, Albuquerque and the Silver City/Deming area.

The program utilizes \$350,000 to support 30 vouchers across the state. The target population is homeless, very low income persons who have been diagnosed with severe mental illness and co-occurring substance abuse issues.

A status update for Linkages as of September 2009 shows that:

- 1) All 30 vouchers are being utilized with high demand for more vouchers
- 2) The program is reaching the 'hardest to serve', i.e. homeless chronic mentally ill consumers who have been living on the streets for many years
- 3) The program has forged successful partnerships between housing authorities and non-profit service providers
- 4) Supportive housing is a cost effective alternative to consumer use of high end public services such as incarceration, institutionalization and hospitalization
- 5) The CCSS (Comprehensive Community Support Services) Medicaid service model works well for supportive housing

**Transitions:** This Youth permanent supportive housing program began in November 2007. The purpose of this 20 voucher program, based in Albuquerque and funded by \$167,000 from CYFD, is to provide housing for youth ages 18 – 21 aging out of foster care or from the juvenile justice system. The program provides an apartment coupled with client and community-centered services that assist youth to make a successful reintegration into society.

A status update for Transitions as of September 2009 reveals that:

- 1) New program guidelines were implemented with input from youth tenants
- 2) Staff has been successful in engaging tenants in CCSS to support stable tenancy
- 3) Staff is participating in NM Coalition to End Homelessness' statewide youth homelessness subcommittee
- 4) The Program has established important connections with clinical homes and other community based agencies/services for the youth

Both of these supportive housing programs are highly successful and the following Local Collaboratives and communities are requesting supportive housing funds to serve persons in their areas: LC1 (Rio Arriba County), LC3 (Dona Ana County), LC5 (Roswell, Carlsbad areas), LC4 (Las Vegas area), and LC11 (San Juan County).

### FACTS/CHALLENGES:

Supportive Housing could be seen as a costly venture by the State, however, the multitude of public costs and human costs are more than offset by this investment in human capital. Studies conducted in Portland, ME, Denver, CO and Seattle, WA demonstrate that permanent supportive housing programs can significantly reduce emergency room costs by anywhere from 34% to 74%; reduce police contact cost by up to 66%; reduce incarceration time and costs by 18% to 76% and reduce shelter and outpatient visits by up to 98%.