



## Homeless Coordinating Council(HCC)

Virtual Meeting Via Zoom Video Conference Tuesday, February 11, 2025

10:00 am-11:30am

Chair, Matthew McGahran, NM Veterans Affairs Health Care System  
Vice Chair, Councilor Nichole Rogers, City of Albuquerque

Commissioner Frank A. Baca - Bernalillo County; Commissioner Adriann Barboa - Bernalillo County;  
County Manager Cindy Chavez - Bernalillo County; Alternate Designee Dr. Wayne Lindstrom – Bernalillo  
County; Mayor Tim Keller - City of Albuquerque; Councilor Renee Grout - City of Albuquerque;  
Maria Wolfe, City of Albuquerque; President Garnett S. Stokes - The University of New Mexico;  
Dr. Mike Richards - The University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center

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## Minutes

- 1. Call to Order** –Chair Matthew McGahran called the meeting to order at 10:04.
- 2. Review & Approve Agenda for February 11, 2025, and to Review and Approve January 11, 2025, Meeting Minutes**  
**Passed Unanimously**
- 3. Introductions and Announcements**
  - Nichole Rogers, Councilor, City of Albuquerque, District 6**
  - Adriann Barboa, County Commissioner District 3**
  - Cindy Chavez, Bernalillo County Manager**
  - Maria Wolfe, Homeless Innovations Officer, City of Albuquerque**
  - Dr. Wayne Lindstrom, Deputy County Mgr. Behavior Health, Bernalillo County**
  - Gina Urias-Sandoval, Chief of Staff, UNM Health Sciences**
  - Rodney McNease, UNMH Senior Executive Director of Governmental Affair**
  - Dr. Terry Babbitt, Chief of Staff, University of New Mexico**  
Acting as proxy for UNM President Garnet Stokes.

**Camila Lopez, NM Veterans Affairs Health Care System**

**Jasmin Moreno, System Improvement Lead, Built for Zero**

**Zoe Robb, Planning Analyst, Built for Zero**

**Priscilla Williams, Data Manager, Built for Zero**

**Dawn Begay, member of the SW Indigenous Housing Justice Collective**

**Julie Baca, Chief Operating Officer, Bernalillo County**

**Ziarra Kirksey, Policy Analyst for Vice-Chair Nichole Rogers, City of Albuquerque**

**New Member (not in attendance): Frank Baca**

#### **4. Public Comment:**

None.

#### **5. Veteran Homelessness Update**

Presented by Camila Lopez. First partnership with the VA, City of Albuquerque, and Roadrunner Food Bank to bring a mobile food bank to the NM Veterans Memorial at Gibson and Louisiana occurred end of January. Next event will be February 27, 2025. Would love to see volunteers come and help then. There were a lot of veterans who volunteered as well as 377<sup>th</sup> Medical Group personnel. Flyers have been posted and distributed within the neighborhood for about 2 weeks, in addition to some outreach by the City of Albuquerque.

Also, we have a great partnership with our Veterans Justice Programs, the social workers working with incarcerated veterans or those involved in the criminal courts. They have a partnership with the Young Lawyers Division of the NM State Bar. Our upcoming Veterans Legal Clinic is March 11, 2025. Veterans are welcome to call and register to see a volunteer attorney to discuss anything not a criminal justice concern, i.e. family law, landlord/tenant concerns, bankruptcy, etc.

Thank you to Maria Wolfe for helping us to make connection with Gateway West. It has helped us to work on identifying veterans there and get them connected to services with the VA or our community partners such as Goodwill, the Veterans Integration Center (VIC), and others.

Also, the Disabled Veterans of America hosted a stand-down event January 17<sup>th</sup> at the Rock at Noonday and saw approximately 30 veterans there. Most of these were already connected to services. New partnerships with community partners were built.

Matt McGahran concurred regarding the collaboration with Maria, and for feeling free to contact the VA regarding a homeless veteran who needed services, citing the episode as a great example of the collaboration fostered by the HCC. Maria Wolfe responded by thanking Mr. McGahran for getting the veteran and his dog into a good spot.

Commissioner Barboa asked, regarding the tenant/Landlord concerns, if anyone in the HCC is documenting when or where these issues are occurring in order to assess the scope of the problem and what the most common concerns are. Camila Lopez responded that the biggest concern in the past 6-8 months has been the increase in rent, causing older veterans, 70 and older, to be priced out and become homeless as a result, which is a new trend. Prior to this, in the past decade of the partnership, most of the concerns centered around things like repairs not being done, which continues to be one of the concerns. However, recently the greater concern has been these older veterans becoming homeless because their rent has increased to now more than their monthly income.

#### **6. Built 4 Zero Update**

Jazmin Moreno presented the update, reminding the HCC that they will only be presenting every other month because Built 4 Zero is currently in the groundwork phase and monthly updates

would not offer much information.

A planning session was held in January and about 75% of individuals who registered attended, including participation by 30+ agencies and 40+ different roles. The focus of the planning session was next steps towards the different strategies often discussed to get some action started. A summary is currently being finalized and will be shared along with the slides that were presented, as well as outcomes.

The Built 4 Zero team is also working with their improvement team to navigate where the quality improvement cycles will occur, basically smaller projects that will produce outputs at a quicker rate to be able to assess what is and isn't working.

The goal for 2025 has been adjusted. Initially set before the team was established, it was to reach functional zero or to reduce family homelessness by 50% by August 2025. The experiences of the past year have clarified the need to focus on creating a comprehensive By Name list to complete the initial goal. The initial goal is not being dismissed, simply pushed out. The new goal is 90% project participation in building the By Name list from the current 30% by August 2025. Once it is determined how long the By Name list actually is, then an appropriate timeline to functional zero can be decided.

Another adjustment that has been made is regarding case conferencing. A second session will be held next week, ensuring engagement with as many agencies as needed while touching on specific forms of families with varying statuses. Numerous agencies are interested in participating, however don't have the capacity to attend every two weeks. Advance planning and notification of the types of family cases that will be discussed during specific case conferences allows not only for attendance by interested agencies, it also provides time for gathering of information regarding the appropriate resources for those families, increasing the efficiency of the case conferences.

Zoe Robb shared that Built 4 Zero does produce a monthly report with information similar to that which has been shared in previous HCC meetings regarding the number of individuals on the By Name List, families that have been addressed in case conferencing. If interested in that information, HCC members are requested to email them to be added to an email list receiving these monthly reports.

She also addressed the question posed in the December 2024 HCC meeting regarding vouchers and how vouchers work with a Coordinated Entry System Overview document (see attached), which explains that vouchers that come through the Continuum of Care (COC), as required by the Housing and Urban Development (HUD), are for specific funds that are then distributed to agencies throughout New Mexico, including Albuquerque. These include Rapid Rehousing, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Transitional Housing vouchers. It is important to remember that there are vouchers funded by HUD via the COC, funded by the City of Albuquerque General Fund, by ESG money that goes to the city through MFA, as well as vouchers funded by the VA, like the HUD-VASH, SSVF, Grand Per Diem, and other programs.

If the HCC wants a presentation regarding the vouchers that go through the Built for Zero organization, she can request someone from the Coordinated Entry team present regarding the administrative process. However, regarding vouchers for the Albuquerque area overall, there are a variety of vouchers from different funding sources, which can cause confusion and overlap with different programs and differing eligibility requirements.

Displaying the Coordinated Entry System overview document, Ms. Robb explained a grid addressing the prioritization for each housing program based on the vulnerability rating or VI SPIDAT (vulnerability index assessment). The assessments are given at various access points, entered into the Homelessness Management Information System as required by HUD, and prioritized on various waitlists depending on the assessment score and which voucher eligibility requirements their situation best meets. This system is HUD mandated to ensure those who are experiencing the highest level of vulnerability get to the top of the list.

Cindy Chavez queried when the last time the assessment tool (VI SPIDAT) was updated and Jazmin Moreno replied that she is not sure, however it has been quite some time. This is a tool

required for use by HUD, and they often put out reports on discussions they are holding with different workshops to consider other ways of conducting assessments, however this tool is the requirement at this time. Ms. Chavez stated her understanding is that each community can update this tool based on, for instance, their Point In Time (PIT) data, and wanted to know what plans there were to update it locally.

Ms. Chavez also queried if all the places on the listing of who can do the assessment, were all those organizations funded in some way by the City of Albuquerque. Zoe Robb responded that she does not have information regarding each organization's funding sources and it is not a requirement that they be funded by the City of Albuquerque to be placed on the listing. She clarified that the VI assessments ask very personal questions, therefore it is best if the assessment is completed by a case manager or someone with a relationship with the individual answering the questions. The Coalition to End Homelessness does provide training on completing those assessments for interested agencies, and annual training is a requirement for those conducting the assessments.

Ms. Chavez then asked the total number of people who have been assessed that are still awaiting housing. Priscilla Williams responded that, on the CES waitlist, there are over 2,000 individuals with the caveat that it is difficult to track as they receive housing or move into shelters.

Expressing her gratitude for the clear explanation around vouchers, Commissioner Barboa queried who has the authority to change the priorities identified by the VI SPIDAT. For instance, according to the latest PIT count, Native American men are the largest category among the homeless population, as well as a significant increase in elder homelessness. Is there a body who authorizes prioritization of those populations?

Monet Silva clarified that the prioritization list on the document provided by Zoe Robb came from the governing bodies of the COC and the Coordinated Entry. The priority of families came from the community, such as individuals on the HCC, agency executive directors, and other relevant parties, and not from one particular entity. She also clarified that Ms. Chavez was correct in stating that other cities or states use different assessment tools than the VI SPIDAT, and there are various options currently being researched regarding using an alternate tool, such as creating our own, or a similar tool to what has already been created by other areas and tweaking it to fit New Mexico's needs. In the meantime, attempts have been made by the COC to tweak the VI SPIDAT to increase the equity lens, optimizing its usage until another tool is decided upon.

Commissioner Barboa clarified that her question was more whether she could go back to Bernalillo County and recommend that Native American men be increased in priority, along with families, based on the PIT data or is utilizing the HUD prioritization chart a requirement. Monet Silva stated that state, county, or city housing funds can be prioritized as those entities determine.

Maria Wolfe interjected clarification that Built 4 Zero is a specific project just to target a specific group, figure out that population's specific barriers, find solutions, and try to get that population to functional zero homelessness within a specified amount of time. Then, while maintaining the functional zero status of that group, target a different specific group and work on getting them to functional zero homelessness within a specified amount of time, by working on their unique barriers and solutions. She also clarified that there are two different types of vouchers, those federally funded through HUD that have continuum of care requirements and VI SPIDAT prioritization; and those that are locally funded and can have city, county, or state determined prioritization.

Jazmin Moreno interjected at this point with the reassurance that, although their focus is currently on homeless families, many of the barriers they are working on in that area will improve the system as a whole, thereby benefiting all categories of homelessness, not just families and will continue to do so as the focus changes to a new group.

Chair McGahran suggested a type of SharePoint be created so the data from the PIT and By Name List, such as how many families, or how many Native American males, etc. could be shared publicly on the HCC website, acknowledging this data is fluid and not static. Priscilla Williams responded that this is being worked on, that there are a number of disclaimers regarding the sharing of

date on the By Name List right now which obstruct this goal, however they are working toward the goal of sharing data.

Jazmin Moreno did share that, although HUD's requirement is that the PIT be done only in odd years, the coalition has come to a consensus that it will be done in the even years to include qualitative data that the HUD PIT does not address.

Maria Wolfe asked how adjusting the Built 4 Zero goals occurred, who adjusts the goals, and what is the process. Jazmin Moreno responded it was a decision made by the improvement team with input from their case conferencing agencies, looking at what it was going to take to reach that goal. Without all of the information needed, measuring progress towards the goal or whether the goal was reached would not be possible. We cannot reach 100% if we don't even know what that means. We took our concerns to our case conferencing agencies and received their input and agreement. We are also working on creating a leadership outside of these spaces so that we have different teams we can refer to when making these changes and decisions.

## **7. Subcommittee Update- Native American Homelessness**

Presented by Dawn Begay. The Southwest Indigenous Housing Justice Collaborative, which is not an official body but a collective of Service providers, advocates, and individuals across Arizona and New Mexico, just completed a strategic planning process, most of which has changed due to funding. Keeping people housed has become the top concern for the year. As housing prices have increased and changes have occurred in federal funding, there is uncertainty whether tribal housing vouchers and tribal housing programs will continue and how that will impact individuals who utilize those services in rural and urban areas, as well as tribal land. Tribal housing entities go through HUD and quite a few of them utilize the vouchers here in Albuquerque. In discussing the federal funding uncertainty with the New Mexico State Indian Affairs Department regarding the possibility of increased funding for tribal members that live in urban areas, it was disclosed that their procurement process caps non-tribal entities at \$60,000, inclusive of housing, behavioral health, community health, and more. Right now, they have grants out for capital outlay or capital improvement projects and anyone in Albuquerque or Bernalillo County that serves tribal members is capped at the \$60,000 limit. Therefore, we are looking at other emergency avenues to try to get funding to tribal members who live off reservation.

Also due to funding cuts to the New Mexico Legal Aid, we are seeing implications in the area of eviction prevention. Over 16 attorneys who were helping with eviction prevention have been laid off within the past week in the Albuquerque and Gallup areas, which is a huge concern regarding legal advocacy and keeping people housed. The need is still there as we continue to see eviction filings.

Another development is the closure of the Albuquerque Indian Center, which occurred on January 20, 2025, due to a cutoff of funding. The Native Leaders Collective of Albuquerque, a collective of over 30 native owned, native serving organizations that operate within Albuquerque, met with the director last week to determine what the center needs to reopen its doors. The Albuquerque Indian Center served as a mailing center for many Native Americans, where many received their checks, funding, IDs, and legal updates so this is a huge concern. The latest update is that all of the mail is being held at the post office, however it is unclear how it will be distributed. To get the Center reopened, their utilities need to be paid and funding procured to pay personnel.

There have been increased reports of Native Americans being detained due to immigration enforcement. Tribal leaders are instructing their members to keep their Certificate of Indian Blood and tribal enrollment cards on them at all times, therefore increasing the need for additional service areas within Albuquerque to get this documentation without going back to their tribal communities. Yesterday, the Navajo Nation Human Rights Board, in collaboration with several partners, created a "Know Your Rights," providing instruction on what to do if stopped by ICE and asked for identification or documentation. There have been reports of ICE agents in between the borders crossing into tribal lands

conducting these stops.

There was some discussion previously regarding providing these types of mailing and tribal document processing services at the Gateway and it is something we need to consider, especially now that tribal citizenship and American citizenship is now being questioned.

There have also been some questions regarding first responder drop offs. Before the Gateway Center opened, tribal emergency services first responders were part of those initial conversations regarding inclusion as an entity able to participate as first responders dropping off. This is a need for tribal law enforcement, especially, however current reports show tribal emergency services are not able to refer to the Gateway Center, and only Albuquerque entities can do so. We would like to look into whether it is true that Sandia, Isleta, and Laguna Emergency Services are excluded from being able to do so and, if so, the decisions and reasoning for this.

Finally, there is a lot of interest in tribes being a part of the COC but there is a question regarding waiving tribal sovereignty to be a part of this, and having a tribal government have the same weight as an organization in terms of the decision-making processes. The tribes want to be a part of it, they want to learn best practices on how to count their members experiencing housing instability, are unsheltered, and are experiencing domestic violence on the streets and have better data to be able to streamline tribal housing services into the statewide COC funds. However, they have these questions regarding how this would work if we integrate tribes into this process and what that would look like.

We know there is a disproportionate representation of Native Americans who are unsheltered on the streets. The concern is not only them to resources within the city, but also connecting them to resources from their tribal lands or to funding from tribes to be used in urban areas, which hasn't happened yet. There are questions revolving around data sharing agreements, how can tribes be part of the continuum, can they be their own COC, if the VI SPDAT is updated what kinds of questions need to be added to include services for tribal members, etc.

Monet Silva expressed enthusiasm regarding the pueblos and tribes joining the COC, or to have their own COC, however expressed that there are some intricacies that need to be discussed offline. She stated she would send Ms. Begay an email and get the conversation going.

Maria Wolfe then stated that the Gateway Center was absolutely intended to be a place to serve and welcome everyone. If tribal officials have been told that they are not welcome as first responders, she would like to discuss that and try to come to a resolution. She did express that one of the concerns in general is that the City of Albuquerque is serving so many people from throughout the state, and figuring out how to create more balance and looking at different funding options to support this is an important part of the picture. There are more than 600 people a night right now at Gateway West and not all of them are from Albuquerque and Bernalillo, many are from statewide.

## **8. Subcommittee Update- African American Homelessness**

Vice Chair Rogers updated that they have reached out to anyone who submitted requests to be on the subcommittee. The first meeting of the subcommittee will be held during February, Black History Month, to discuss priorities for the community. One of the highest priorities is to gather data showing the ethnicity of the homeless population and ensure that it accurately reflects the large numbers of black individuals. Tackling racism and addressing ways in which to do so will be another high priority for this subcommittee, as well as working on how culturally competent care is offered and creating pathways for economic empowerment.

The suggestion was made that the HCC members consider taking the Survival and Beyond People's Institute training, as an intense, eye-opening training that changes perspectives regarding why we should care about Black and Native homelessness.

## **9. Subcommittee Update- Re-Entry**

Commissioner Barboa updated that the subcommittee met for the first time yesterday (February 10, 2025). The subcommittee includes representation from Fathers Building Futures, State of the Heart Recovery, the New Mexico Reentry Center, Women in Leadership, the NMVAHCS, and Sarah Silva of the Bernalillo County Resource Reentry Center. Commissioner Barboa learned at yesterday's meeting that the Bernalillo County Resource Reentry Center recently worked to compile information regarding all the entities that partner with them. Sarah Silva is going to assist this subcommittee in creating actionable goals that can be completed within six months with clearly defined outcomes to close gaps and address needs within the system.

There are still some individuals who have expressed an interest in serving on the subcommittee who need to be reached out to before the next meeting. The subcommittee has decided to meet twice monthly for the next six months.

## **10. Subcommittee Update- Data Sharing and System Barriers**

Chair McGahran updated that he has received names of individuals interested in joining the subcommittee and is working on setting up a meeting to create a framework for what will be accomplished. He will be reaching out to Zoe, Jazmin, and Priscilla regarding some barriers they are experiencing for the subcommittee to address.

## **11. Subcommittee Update- Homelessness Prevention**

Dr. Lindstrom was not in attendance; therefore, the update was deferred to the March meeting.

## **12. New Items**

### **a. Federal Funding**

Vice-Chair Rogers requested each member discuss the federal funding they receive, what programs and positions are tied to that funding, opinions on what the implications are going to be for their organizations, so the HCC can begin to think about what we are going to do as a community if that funding is discontinued. As an example, she referenced letters received this week from the Office of Attorney General regarding sanctuary city directive surrounding federal funding directing agencies to end funding to state and local jurisdictions that unlawfully interfere with federal law enforcement operations, identify and evaluate all funding agreements with non-governmental organizations that provide support to illegal aliens, and pursue enforcement actions against jurisdictions that facilitate violations of federal immigration laws and impede lawful federal immigration operations.

Chair McGahran brought up the federal hiring freeze and that has had a significant impact for the NMVAHCS, although he clarified that the Homeless Program has been exempted from that.

County Manager Cindy Chavez stated that Bernalillo County is looking at all federal funding received, both in terms of grant and ongoing funding, and will be setting aside a reserve to be able to continue funding programs and projects because the commission provided direction to continue to follow the Constitution. She stated the county has received orders from various departments with new criteria for funding items such as roads and tying that funding to random rules. For instance, the Department of Transportation stated in order to be competitive for grants, one criterion considered will be whether the city, county, or state has higher-than-average marriage or birth rates.

UNMH's Terry Babbitt shared that NIH has been ordered to cut their indirect funding in half or more, which will impact UNMH by approximately \$20 million per year, which would reduce the viability of several important research projects.

## **b. Update on Conversation with Dr. Richards**

Vice-Chair Rogers updated that she and Chair McGahran met with Dr. Mike Richards regarding UNMH's position surrounding the proposed legislation regarding Medicaid waivers and now have an understanding of the reasoning behind their position. She encouraged each HCC member to advocate individually or within their various institutions, however the HCC, as a whole, would not be doing so. She did share Dr. Richard's willingness and encouragement rely on him for advice on how to best advocate for solutions to some of the systemic barriers within Medicaid, the Health Authority, and others.

## **c. Update on Gateway West Operations in January**

Maria Wolfe shared that, during the cold snap in January 2025, Gateway West did fill, serving over 700 individuals overnight, as well as opened overflow shelters averaging between 50-80 people per night. Over 800 bed-nights were provided during that time. The City of Albuquerque is committed to providing a shelter bed to anyone who seeks shelter, and to ensure space is available as needed.

Also, she gave a shout-out to the coalition for partnering on the Point-In-Time count, to establish zones and discontinue encampment enforcement in those zones during that time. She expressed interest to see how the very cold days occurring during the PIT count, and the high numbers utilizing the shelters during that time, will affect the end results of the PIT count.

## **Next HCC Meeting -**

- March 11, 2024, 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

## **14. Adjourn Meeting –**

**Motion: Nicole Rogers**

**2nd: Adriann Barboa**

**Passed Unanimously**

**Meeting was adjourned at 11:29 am**

## **Meeting Recorded Video Link:**

[https://cabq.zoom.us/rec/share/4jty0ldomRY\\_qCUcgZO6LcpmSNUfKNv9\\_syqoPTqKgCHDiVUZC2O6Kgnn06LH4JX.rJP2ES50D4nTX4eE](https://cabq.zoom.us/rec/share/4jty0ldomRY_qCUcgZO6LcpmSNUfKNv9_syqoPTqKgCHDiVUZC2O6Kgnn06LH4JX.rJP2ES50D4nTX4eE)



