



Albuquerque Affordable Housing Coalition



2021 Annual Report



A Year in Review

Increasing affordable housing has never been so important.

As we enter the third year of the global COVID-19 pandemic, many people continue to face housing precarity and lost work due to illness, quarantines and the need to care for family. In January 2021, the Economic Roundtable, a California think-tank, found in "if projections of unemployment through 2022 are accurate, the Pandemic Recession is projected to cause roughly twice as much homelessness as the 2008 Great Recession." Homelessness among working-age adults caused by the current recession might not peak until 2023 (January 11, 2021, "Locked Out").

Prior to the pandemic, the 2020 Urban Institute report found that Albuquerque has a gap of 15,500 units of housing for households with extremely low incomes (only enough for about 28% of households) and a bigger gap when including people with higher incomes and the need for permanent supportive housing. The number of affordable units has been decreasing in Albuquerque. At the same time, Albuquerque housing prices have skyrocketed, and rents are rising. According to Justin Schatz of *The Paper*, reporting of figures from Dwellsy, from Jan 2021 to September 2021, Albuquerque rents increased on average 18%. This is double the national rate of 9.6% in the same period. Two-bedroom units increased by 28%, or an extra \$251 per month.

Now, with pending evictions, pandemic effects on costs of daily living, and rent increases that are not only unsustainable but devastating to people living in poverty, resulting in greater chances of poor physical, behavioral, social, educational, and economic outcomes. These housing and living vulnerabilities will result in greater and more entrenched illnesses that can lead to early mortality, growth in desperation and violence, etc.

Black, Brown and Indigenous people are more likely to be adversely affected—considering both finances and health—by the pandemic. They are more likely to be working in jobs that pay wages too low for stable and secure housing. And they face housing discrimination. Housing has been and continues to be fundamental to racial justice.

Lack of housing is not a personal issue it's a community issue. Its and ongoing investment in our figures and a shared prosperity for our communities.

Through this all, we see promising practices, such as Albuquerque's wellness hotels (one of which still operates) that provided unhoused families and individuals with their own space to live during the pandemic. The City with agreement of our neighbors committed 10 million to affordable housing through the G.O. bond and other one-time Covid and CARES funds. A commitment to working on the issue at the local government levels in the Homeless Coordinating Council's Housing Committee and other ad-hoc community efforts.

The housing crisis is not new but now is a time we can change our city's trajectory! We can end our housing crisis. At the Albuquerque Affordable Housing Coalition, our vision is an affordable, stable, culturally relevant housing system for all people as the underpinning of a prosperous society. We take action now to solve immediate challenges with an eye towards a future where emergency measures are just that, those needed in emergencies rather than for daily survival.

- Anita Córdova, Board President, Albuquerque Affordable Housing Coalition

Our Mission and Priorities

The Albuquerque Affordable Housing Coalition (AAHC) is dedicated to preserving, increasing, and diversifying affordable housing in Albuquerque to promote community wellbeing and prosperity by raising awareness about opportunities and innovation in housing funding, policy and production. As a volunteer, member-based grassroots advocacy organization, we have four major goals: raise awareness about the role affordable housing plays in community prosperity and well-being; advocate for innovative programs and policies to increase affordable housing; end active and tacit discrimination in the housing market; and mobilize individuals, organizations, and AAHC's membership around opportunities to strengthen existing affordable housing programs and establish new initiatives and partnerships that promote affordable housing.

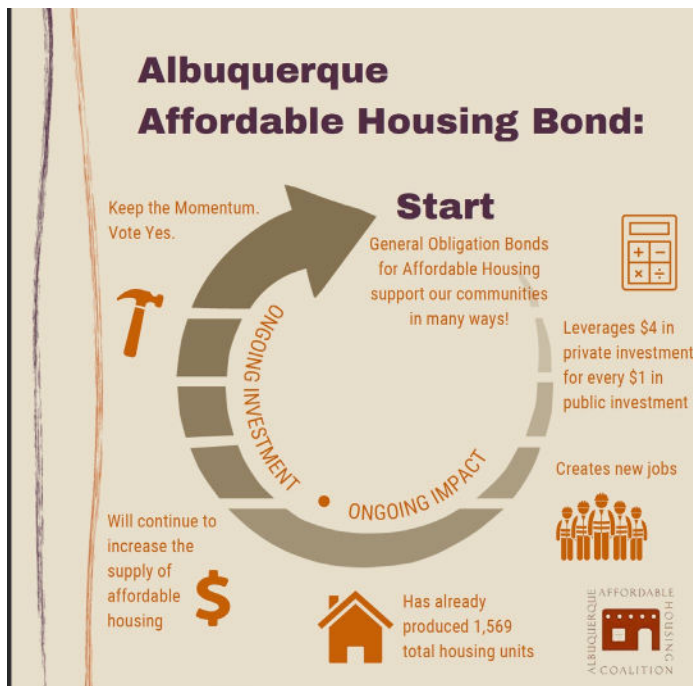
What We Accomplished in 2021

We have had some important successes and steps to accomplishing our vision.

Funding the Workforce Housing Trust Fund

Our advocacy helped lead to a \$10 million commitment to the Workforce Housing Trust Fund. \$3.333 million was dedicated to support the Workforce Housing Act through the general obligation bonds. Of this, \$3.3 million is for affordable housing and 1% is dedicated to public art. The remaining will come for different funding sources. AAHC members met with all city council members and city staff to discuss the importance of dedicating the maximum \$10 million to the Work Force Housing Trust Fund.

Rental vacancies in Albuquerque are low, and rents continue to rise. This reduces the number of naturally occurring affordable housing units. As rents increase, dedicating more housing units to long-term affordability is our most reliable mechanism to increase and maintain affordable housing. The Workforce Housing Trust Fund is a necessary mechanism to provide gap funding for building houses affordable to people with very low incomes. When the Workforce Housing Trust Fund was established, there was a set aside of 8% or up to \$10 million per cycle, to guarantee affordable housing funding. Subsequently the set aside has been removed, and each funding cycle requires new discussions about the amount commitment to affordable housing. AAHC's position is that we need to *renew our commitment* and dedicate the maximum \$10 million each funding cycle. We are grateful that \$10 million was dedicated this year. Ongoing general obligation bond funds commitment continues to be a priority for AAHC, along with identifying additional, regular funding for affordable housing. (See appendix A for a graphical information packet we built)



Building Knowledge and Dismantling Misconceptions about Affordable Housing

Our advocacy has demonstrated the need for more information about affordable housing. Many people have misconceptions about affordable housing projects, including what they look like (such as they are always high-rise apartments), or that they lead to property value declines in surrounding areas. In addition, there are information gaps about what we can do, and what has been shown to be effective in similar circumstances elsewhere to address the housing crisis. To build knowledge and dismantle misconceptions, we partnered with City of Albuquerque staff members Jeffrey Hertz and Shawn Watson to develop a series of Frequently Asked Questions. [These were used to raise awareness during the G.O. Bond election.](#) A goal for 2022 is to circulate them in different formats.

Increasing Awareness about the Community Benefits of Affordable Housing

We recognize the need to increase our community's awareness about how affordable housing affects us all. It is equally important that people know where to go to get information about housing assistance, housing rights, and assistance during an eviction process—if necessary. The need for an awareness campaign developed in AAHC's strategic planning sessions in 2019. One of AAHC goals for the next five years is to develop a campaign through social media and public space to raise awareness about how we all benefit from having affordable housing in our community. To this end, in November 2021, we submitted a grant to develop the first phase of this awareness campaign. A goal for 2022 is to launch this awareness campaign.

Building Coalition Strength and Influence

Executive committee members met with additional organizations to continue to connect across issues throughout the year. We met with the Affordable Housing Collaborative of El Paso County (Colo Springs), Santa Fe Housing Action Coalition, a Las Cruces based housing trust fund group, and the CABQ Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs. We were active at the state legislature advocating for the Omnibus Housing Modernization Act, HB 111. We were integrally involved with the Albuquerque Comprehensive Plan updates known as the Community Planning Area assessments (CPA) in the Near Heights and International District, helping organize panels and provide insight.

Our bimonthly meetings have had presentations from the following organizations and individuals, creating a forum for each of us to learn what the others are doing.

January

- **Lisa Huval, Deputy Director of Community and Family Services**
Information about the CABQ Homeless Coordinating Committee (HCC)
- **Shawn Watson, City of Albuquerque Planning Department**

Spoke about the Comprehensive Plan Community Planning Area (CPA) Reassessments and how AAHC members can be involved [Community Planning Areas ABC-Zone](#)

- **Brooke Schipporeit, National Low Income Housing Coalition**

Spoke about housing advocacy at the national level, how we can be involved, and lessons learned for housing education, outreach, and advocacy at local levels of community and governance [National Low Income Housing Coalition \(nlihc.org\)](#)

March

- **Cathryn McGill and Kindra Hill, New Mexico Black Leadership Council (NMBLC)**

Spoke about the recent and upcoming work of their organization, as well as North Star Goals for Community Vibrancy, and coalition building

- **Brie Sillery, New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness, and Rachel Biggs, Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless, Policy Director**

Gave an update on three housing bills that introduced in Santa Fe during the 2021 60-day session, HB 111, SB 27, and SB 28 and how to support them

- **Aaron Moore, Albuquerque Affordable Housing Coalition**

Workforce Housing Trust Fund Advocacy update and check in on budget advocacy for 2021 GO Bonds CIP program. The Albuquerque Journal covered our efforts in January; and we saw strong public support from the Council on Feb 25

May

- **Julian Trujillo, Renter's Coalition of Albuquerque (RCA)**

Spoke on how [RCA](#) got started, what they are focusing on, and how AAHC members can work with them

- **Lan Sena, District 1 City Councilor**

Spoke about some programs and policies she is working on, including the development of a rental deposit fund

- **Rebecca Velarde, Senior Director of Policy and Planning, Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA)**

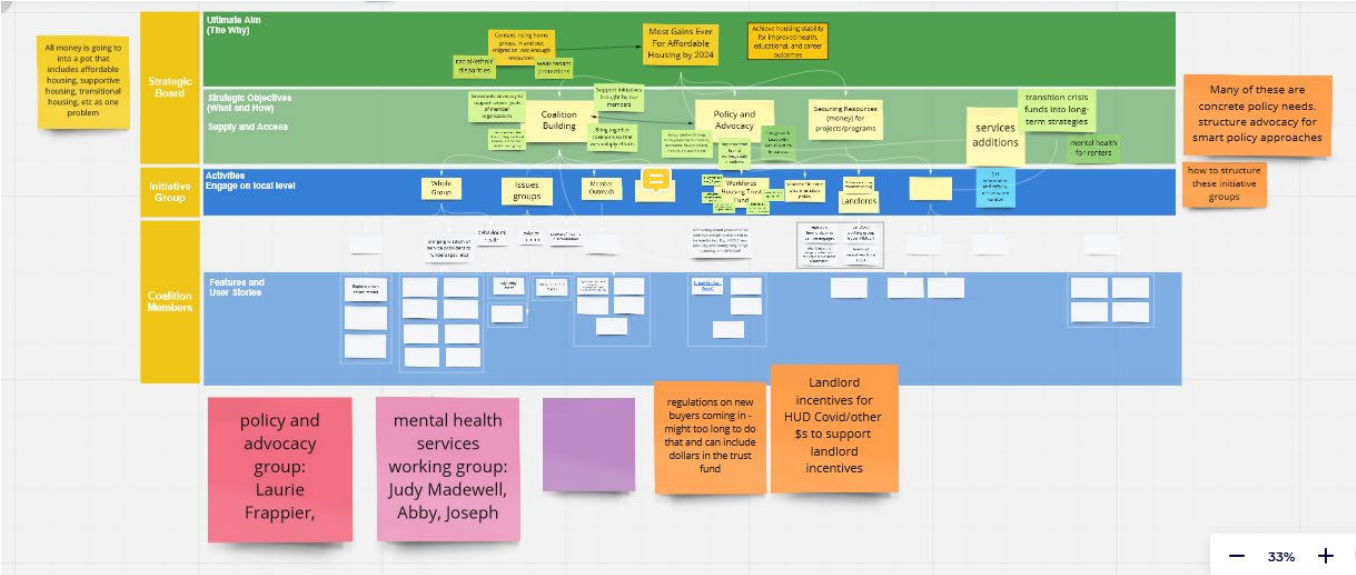
Spoke on State funding for rental assistance and housing funds that has come in response to Covid

- **Miriam Hicks, Director of Housing Development, Greater Albuquerque Housing Partnership (GAHP)**

Spoke about the [Luminaria Senior Community](#); it’s design process and the challenges to its development. She then joined in a conversation with the AAHC executive committee talking about the CABQ “CPA Comp Plan Reassessment” process and the importance of Long-Range Planning and inclusionary zoning practices that promote affordable housing development

July

- 2021 – 2024 Strategic Planning
- [Miro Board Tool](#) for Participatory Planning
- See Appendix B for Mental Health Services Working group factsheet. Participants in the Ad Hoc Group: Matthew Archuleta, Abby Long, Judy Madewell, Joseph Moya, Crystal Velarde, Jordan Velasquez, and Kate Hildebrand (facilitator) came together to develop the talking points based on what their individual and organizational expertise brought to the table.
- See Screen Shot Below:



September

- **Rick Giron, Community Services Projects Manager, CABQ DFCS**
Update on WFHTF projects development and overview on Fund administration [Housing Services & Programs — City of Albuquerque \(cabq.gov\)](#)

- **Alan Ramis, League of Women Voters**

Presentation on voter outreach and engagement [LWV New Mexico \(lwvnm.org\)](http://lwvnm.org)

November

- **Alex Horton, International District Economic Development**

Alex Horton started the [ID Economic Development](#) organization 2019 and is already involved in multiple high impact housing related projects, focused on affordable home ownership, the missing middle, and rehab and renovation. The organization focuses on entrepreneurship and is currently helping spearhead a community driven planning process as well

- **Bianca Encinias, El Chante Casa de Cultura**

[El Chante](#) is an arts and culture organization highly integrated with grassroots organizing focused on community based economic development and Chicanx, Indigenous, and Native New Mexican communities

- **Sonja Unrau and Sherry Stephens: Mortgage Finance Board (MFA)**

Consultation and questions with AAHC and member organizations on HOME-ARP funds and any tentative or possible plans. What other localities are doing that we can consider

Our Continuing Commitment

Affordable housing continues to be a dire issue for Albuquerque. AAHC supported Albuquerque residents' vote against funding a new soccer stadium because of the desperate need for more funding to build housing. The campaign highlighted the greater need for affordable housing (an image of the campaign sign is on the cover of this report), a commitment that we carry forward in our work.

Sometimes it feels like we are always fighting against something when we are fighting for affordable housing. Even when we are fighting for something, like more money, it can feel like we are fighting against something—even if it is the system. That is why the recent organic, grass-roots movement that sprang up, Stop the Stadium, was so refreshing. Although it seems this would also be a campaign against something, the primary message was actually Yes to Housing. "Housing First...Not a Stadium" was the rallying call. This message affirms the net investment in housing as wholly positive. Housing is the base investment from which all community benefits can grow. Albuquerque Affordable Housing Coalition is excited to get behind this message and grow with it.

-Aaron Moore, Business Coordinator for AAHC

Albuquerque Affordable Housing Bond: It's on your ballot!

Albuquerque

Affordable Housing Bond:

- If you plan to vote in the city of Albuquerque on November 2nd, you'll notice a question on your ballot about Affordable Housing.
- A **"yes"** vote supports authorizing the city to issue up to \$3.333 million in general obligation bonds to fund the construction and rehabilitation of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

Albuquerque Affordable Housing Bond:

Keep the Momentum.
Vote Yes.



Start

General Obligation Bonds
for Affordable Housing
support our communities
in many ways!



Leverages \$4 in
private investment
for every \$1 in
public investment

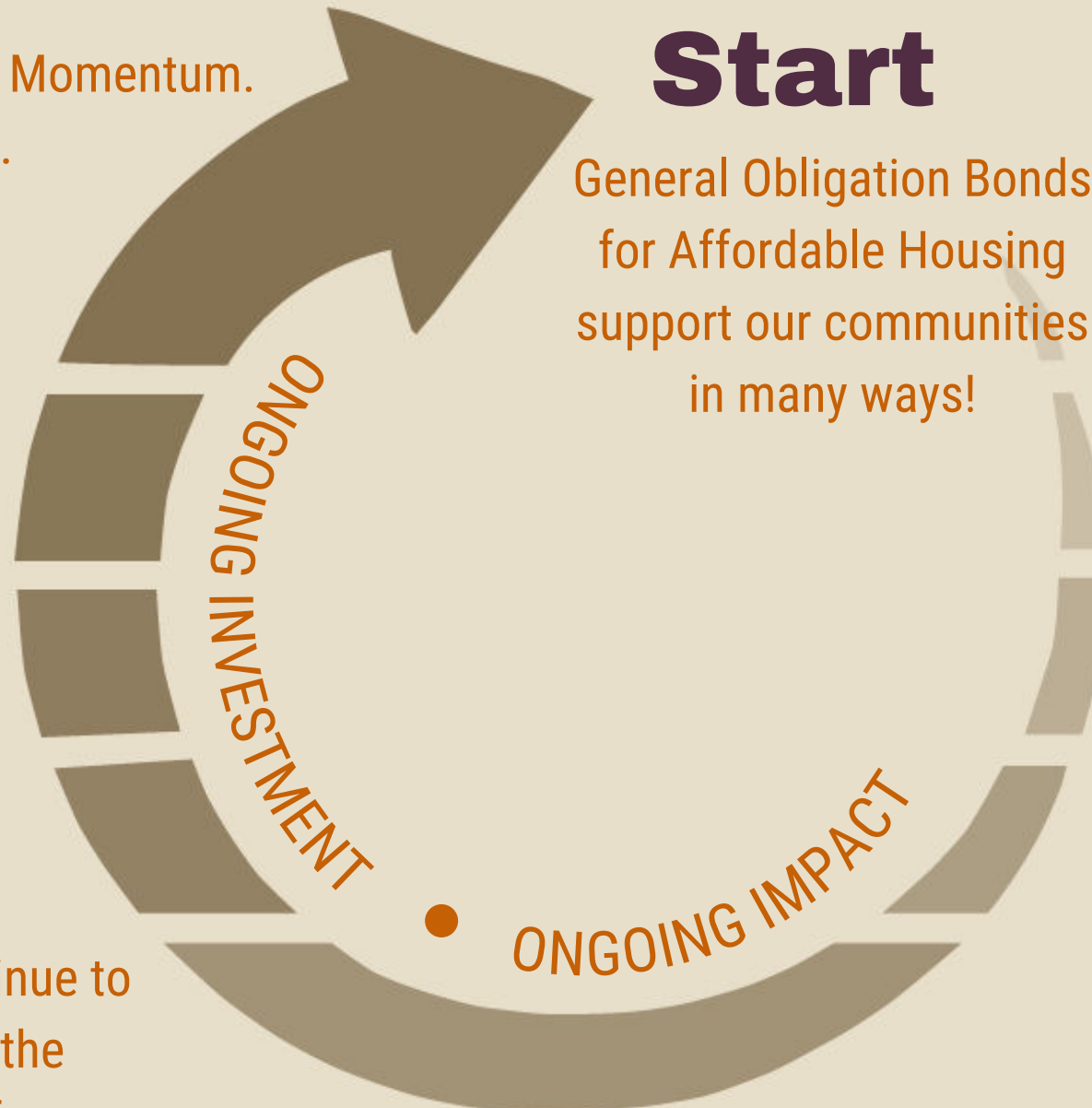
Creates new jobs



Will continue to
increase the
supply of
affordable
housing



Has already
produced 1,569
total housing units



**TALKING POINTS
INTERSECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**ABBY LONG, JUDY MADEWELL, JOSEPH MOYA, CRYSTAL VELARDE, JORDAN
VELASQUEZ, MATTHEW ARCHULETA**

Affordable housing and public health are fundamental community and cultural assets.

*By addressing public health and affordable housing shortfalls, we strengthen our
entire city and all of our communities.*

Behavioral health and physical health are intertwined.

1. The inventory of affordable housing is shrinking. Continuing a long-term trend, new construction mostly adds expensive units to a housing inventory that is skewed toward the high end. There is a shortage of affordable units, and rents are climbing out of reach for many households. Further, some landlords are opting out of rent subsidy programs to take advantage of rising rents, causing additional loss to the city's affordable inventory.

2. Legal protections for evictions are inadequate. With the eviction moratorium no longer in place, we can expect many people to lose their housing. Evictions often create or continue a cycle of acute hardship especially among those with behavioral health challenges. Research in one state shows that for every eviction carried out through the courts, two additional evictions occur without due process outside the courts. Eviction disproportionately affects people of color, women, and households with children.^{1*}

3. Clients are more vulnerable than before the pandemic. When home visits stopped in March 2020, people with behavioral health diagnoses became more vulnerable. Many support group and therapy sessions became inaccessible to those without access to the Internet. With these gaps in their support system, some are self-medicating.

4. A sense of community and belonging is a fundamental human need. When some people gain housing, they soon move back to a tent to be surrounded by the people who make up their community. The challenge for providers is to find ways to nurture community building so that residents develop a sense of belonging and choose to remain in transitional and/or permanent housing.

5. Case management is vitally important to client assistance, and funding for it should be commensurate with the value of the service. To move into housing is a foreign experience for those who haven't been housed for a long time, and they need a case manager to learn how to adapt. Case managers should have reasonable caseloads and

^{1*} Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. 2016. 331-333.

salaries in line with the crucial role that they play in creating an environment in which people with acute challenges can thrive.

6. Members of our community who are unhoused face a stigma because they live in places not designed for human habitation. Many people in Coronado Park and other encampments care for each other, but many of their fellow citizens view their makeshift shelters as eyesores. This stigma is based on the judgment of the broader community that homeless individuals and the places they inhabit are socially unacceptable. In fact, the root causes of homelessness are unmet human needs such as poverty, poor education, behavioral health challenges, absence of social supports and inadequate healthcare.

7. The larger community environment is less stable and supportive than before the pandemic.



Albuquerque Affordable Housing Coalition

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