

Common Bond NM Emergency Project

2018 Annual Report

The Emergency Project plays a unique role within the HIV healthcare network in New Mexico. In early 2018, the New Mexico Department of Health estimated that 3,400 people in the state were infected with HIV. The Emergency Project helps meet the basic living needs of the most vulnerable people within that population so they will be more likely to remain in treatment and reduce the chance of spreading infection.

For 30 years, the Emergency Project has helped prevent homelessness for low income New Mexicans living with HIV/AIDS. Within 24 hours, we provide "last resort" financial assistance with the flexibility to meet a wide range of needs. We provide up to \$200 for rent assistance or to help pay a deposit for a new housing situation when a client is forced to move due to a hostile or dangerous environment. Emergency Project payments also allow clients to maintain utilities without interruption and provide many other necessities of life.

During 2018, the Emergency Project disbursed \$33,106 to 140 male, 35 female and 1 transgender clients who are Hispanic, Anglo, Native American, African-American and South African. This was an increase of over 40% in both monetary support and the number of clients served. Our assistance payments were primarily for rent, utilities and eye glasses. We also assisted clients with medical bills, health insurance and auto repair.

The Emergency Project serves primarily Albuquerque and Santa Fe, but also other New Mexico cities and rural communities. During 2018 we helped clients in Abiquiu, Alamo, Anthony, Bayard, Belen, Chaparral, Chimayo, Columbus, Cuarteles, Edgewood, Farmington, Elephant Butte, Galisteo, Gallup, Grants, Laguna, Las Cruces, Los Lunas, Maxwell, Mountainair, Pecos, Nogal, Rio Communities, Rio Rancho, Socorro, Sunland Park, Taos, Tijeras, Tularosa and Veguita

We responded to case manager requests from these affiliated public health agencies:

- University of New Mexico Truman Health Services, Albuquerque
- Southwest CARE Center, Santa Fe and Albuquerque
- First Nations Community HealthSource, Albuquerque
- Community Collaborative Care, Las Cruces
- Alianza of New Mexico, Roswell

The Emergency Project was established during the "plague years" of the early AIDS crisis, when an HIV diagnosis invariably led to premature death. Thirty years ago, clients were primarily gay and bisexual men living in Albuquerque and Santa Fe. Over the years our client base has evolved along with the changing face of HIV. During 2018, our clients ranged from minors age 6 to seniors age 76.

Picture yourself facing challenges like these experienced by some of our clients in 2018:

- You are 76 years old and living in a very rural community. Propane is the only source of heat in your home and lack of payment could result in a medical emergency.
- You are 67 and have been unable to work since having a heart attack followed by a stroke. You now need assistance to pay the bill for recent cataract surgery.
- You are 65, living on fixed income and unable to afford new eye glasses. You recently broke the frame and cracked one of the lenses of the glasses you've had for more than three years.
- You are 60. Your service animal has cancer and needs a \$400 surgery leaving insufficient funds for utility bills.
- You are 58 and have had your wallet stolen in a store. The costs related to replacing your documents has made it difficult to pay your next month's rent.
- You are 55, living on a fixed income and have fallen prey to a predatory lender. You are struggling to avoid eviction and having your basic utilities cut off.
- At 44, you have had a medical emergency resulting in multiple ER visits and follow-up appointments. You need help with your electricity bill so you'll be able to continue to cook and have heat in your home.
- At 36, you are the sole provider for an extended family of nine and finding it difficult to pay rent.
- You are 28, in your first trimester of pregnancy and living in an extended stay hotel with your young child. You are unable to work and have applied for other benefits, but you need help in obtaining stable housing.

The Emergency Project is operated in a low-key, direct, individual manner with a minimum of bureaucratic detail. For its first 20 years, community activist Liz Canfield operated the project as a volunteer from her home. Today two other volunteers oversee the project: Steve Ridlon, Director since October 2008, plus Common Bond board member Bill Beckelhimer. There is no overhead as both volunteers work from home and there are no paid employees. **One hundred percent of private donations and grant funds are disbursed to people in critical financial need.**

During 2018, the Emergency Project received a \$22,500 grant from the New Mexico Department of Health, a \$5,000 grant from Broadway Cares/ Equity Fights AIDS plus \$8,903 in private donations largely in memory of Liz Canfield.

The Emergency Project is a program of Common Bond New Mexico Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit; therefore, contributions are tax-deductible. **Your donation, payable to "Common Bond NM Emergency Project," can be mailed to P.O. Box 8313, Albuquerque, NM 87198. Thank you!**

For more information, please e-mail EmergencyProjectNM@gmail.com or call (505) 934-7262.

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