

## Frequently Asked Questions: Gateway Center at Gibson Medical Center

### **Why is the City activating Gateway Centers?**

Roughly 5,000 households will experience homelessness in a year. During the pandemic, 900 unhoused people were provided shelter in City shelters, including the Westside Emergency Housing Center and Wellness Hotels. Of those, 200 are youth under the age of 18. On any given night in our City, more than 500 people are sleeping outside. We need to create safe, dignified and centrally located emergency housing that helps people connect to permanent housing and other resources. Although the project at Gibson Medical Center will not solve the problem by itself, building a health hub to serve as the cornerstone of the City's Gateway Centers is a positive step in the right direction. Gibson Medical Center is one piece of a broader system of care to address the needs of our neighbors who are unhoused.

### **How did this location get chosen?**

The City offered multiple community input opportunities in addition to talking with providers and partners in the community. Those opportunities included, the [City's Community Input Session at the Convention Center](#), [online surveys in English and Spanish](#), and [focus groups with people experiencing homelessness](#). There were 149 sites identified through this process and those proposed sites were evaluated through seven layers of screening to determine feasibility. At the end of the screening, Gibson Medical Center was ranked in the top three locations. Details on this process can be found in the [Gateway Center Site Ranking Report](#).

### **How are you involving the community?**

Throughout the life of the project, the City has offered multiple community input opportunities in addition to talking with providers and partners in the community. During the input process, more than 180 people participated in the [City's Community Input Session at the Convention Center](#), more than 3,200 people responded to [online surveys in English and Spanish](#), and 5 [focus groups with 56 people experiencing homelessness were conducted](#). This process helped identify Gibson Medical Center as the location.

In April 2021, within one week of acquiring the building, the City began outreach to neighborhood associations and other key stakeholders in areas surrounding the Gibson Medical Center. The City will continue the community input process by hosting meetings with neighborhood associations, neighborhood coalitions and businesses to talk through each stage of the development process. These community meetings and conversations will help shape the Gateway Center.

### **What is the intended outcome of this project?**

We are working to create a health hub that offers a physically and emotionally safe location which provides centrally located emergency shelter beds in Albuquerque with supports and services to assist individuals into stable housing. We also know there is a need for medical respite beds for those who are recovering from injury or illness and who do not need to stay in the hospital but require a higher level of medical care than an emergency shelter is able to provide.

### **What is medical respite?**

The Respite Care Providers' Network (RCPN) defines medical respite care as "acute and post-acute medical care for patients experiencing homelessness who are too ill or frail to recover from a physical illness or injury while living in shelter or on the streets, but who are not sick enough to be in a hospital." For example, a skin infection is something that would commonly put someone in a medical respite situation because they need ongoing wound care to heal properly. While there are some medical respite beds available in our community, this is an identified gap that needs to be addressed. Medical respite beds will not only help people heal and keep them healthier, they will keep people from multiple return visits to Emergency Rooms for reasons that are easily preventable in the right conditions.

To learn more about the need for this type of support, [watch this webinar](#) with Rachel Biggs, Policy Director from Health Care for the Homeless or read [this Albuquerque Journal article](#).

### **How much did the building cost and how was it paid for?**

The \$15 million acquisition of the Gibson Medical Center was the City's largest ever capital investment to address homelessness. \$13.5 million comes from city funds, including the voter-approved bond, and \$1 million is provided by Bernalillo County. Additional support for the Gateway project comes from state capital outlay allocations -- including \$500,000 from State Senator Katy Duhigg -- and from a consortium of private businesses: Bank of Albuquerque, French Funerals and Cremations, New Mexico Mutual, PNM Resources, and Presbyterian Healthcare Services.

### **How many emergency shelters beds will there be?**

Currently, there are existing tenants in the Gibson Medical Center that provide services to approximately 100 overnight guests without a safety impact on the neighborhood. There have not been any decisions made on how many people this facility will support for emergency shelter. The site selection process is completed but planning to activate new aspects of the site is just beginning. The City will continue to use public input and work with our longstanding providers who serve the unhoused and offer behavioral health services to lend their expertise and perspective on how this facility can operate most effectively.

### **How will you address safety concerns at this location?**

Currently, there are existing tenants in the Gibson Medical Center that provide services to approximately 100 overnight guests without a safety impact on the neighborhood. In addition, we have other shelters in our community that are part of neighborhoods and that operate safely. With neighborhood input and by incorporating best practices from other shelters in the City, we are confident we can create a Gateway Center that will both address the needs of people who are homeless in Albuquerque while also keeping the surrounding communities safe.

### **What is the building currently used for?**

Gibson Medical Center has provided care for Albuquerque for decades and continues to include 10 tenants who quietly provide care to 100 overnight guests per day, ranging from substance abuse treatment to dialysis.

### **What other steps are you taking to address homelessness in Albuquerque?**

Under Mayor Keller's leadership, the City, along with community partners, has strengthened the overall system of care for people who are unhoused. Acquiring the Gibson Medical Center will help us add to that system. The City, in collaboration with community partners has:

- Coordinated street outreach to people living in public spaces
- Converted the Westside Emergency Housing Center from a winter shelter to a year-round shelter, doubling the number of year-round shelter beds available in the community

- Increased annual investment in supportive housing – a proven solution to homeless – by 44% since FY18
- Invested \$10 million in the Workforce Housing Trust Fund to create new, high quality housing for lower and moderate-income Albuquerque residents
- Launched a new \$21.4 million emergency rental assistance program to keep people housed who are in danger of being evicted. Learn more at [cabq.gov/rent](http://cabq.gov/rent).