



# Gateway Center at Gibson Health Hub Operations Plan

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## Executive Summary

In April 2021, the City of Albuquerque acquired Gibson Health Hub, a 572,000 square foot facility located in the International District. The City's vision for Gibson Health Hub is to provide services to the surrounding community that promote health, healing and recovery, including but not limited to primary care services, inpatient treatment, behavioral health services, and shelter and services for people without homes.

One component of the Gibson Health Hub will be a Gateway Center, that will provide an Engagement Center and Shelter for families, women and men experiencing homelessness. This document serves as the operations plan for the Gateway Center at Gibson Health Hub.

This Operations Plan has been developed with extensive public input from neighborhood residents and service providers, including:

- Two community meetings (one virtual and one in-person) with over 60 people at each meeting and co-hosted by the District 6 Coalition
- A facilitated meeting that was held as part of the City's Conditional Use request
- Meetings with Parkland Hills, Trumbull, South San Pedro, Elder Homestead and Siesta Hill Neighborhood Associations
- Meetings with District 6 neighborhood members, service providers, and other local homeless service providers
- Domestic Violence Task Force
- Homeless Advisory Council meetings
- Homeless Coordinating Council (HCC) and HCC Homeless Services System Committee meetings

This Operations Plan has also been informed by the City of Albuquerque's own experience operating the Westside Emergency Housing Center and three "Wellness Motels" that have provided non-congregate shelter to vulnerable people during the COVID pandemic. The City has partnered with a local nonprofit to expand operations at the WEHC to a year-round shelter since April 2018, and began operating the Wellness Motels in June 2020. Finally, this operation plan has been informed by the expertise of the team at Barbara Poppe Associates; Ms. Poppe is the former director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness under President Obama.

The City recognizes that while a system of care to help people without homes already exists in our community, including an existing network of emergency shelters, there are not enough of the right type of shelter beds to meet the needs of our City. That is, while there is shelter capacity in Albuquerque on any given night, the available beds do not meet the needs of the community for a number of reasons, including the far travel distance to the WEHC. The Gateway Center will expand and strengthen that system of care. This plan addresses how services will be provided at the Gateway Center, while ensuring the safety and quality of life for guests and those who live and work in the surrounding neighborhoods.

## Gateway Health Hub Vision

The Gibson Health Hub (GHH) will be an anchor facility to fill healthcare and social service gaps. The Gateway Center will comprise a portion of the GHH to provide shelter and services for our unhoused neighbors.

### **Clarifying Terms**

The Gibson Health Hub (GHH) refers to the entire 572,000 square foot facility and will include both current and new health providers that serve the community for Gateway Center and non-Gateway Center populations. There are currently ten tenants at Gibson Health Hub (occupying approximately 140,000 square feet), of whom seven provide medical or behavioral health services. These tenants are AMG, Fresenius Medical Care, Haven Behavioral Health, NM Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Optum, Turquoise Lodge, and Zia Community Health. In addition, new services will be added to Gibson Health Hub to address gaps in the community such as medical respite and medical sobering.

The Gateway Center will occupy a portion of the Gibson Health Hub facility to serve unhoused populations with temporary living areas and support services.

The Gateway Center will be comprised of an Engagement Center and Shelter. All portions of the Gibson Health Hub will incorporate design and operations that provide a safe and secure environment for different populations with different needs. The renovation design will use the advantages provided by the building size and layout of the facility so people with different needs can use separate entrances.

24/7 security operations will maintain safety for the wide variety of customers served at the facility.

## Gateway Center Overview

### **Gateway Center Mission**

The mission of the Gateway Center is to provide a safe and welcoming place that provides a low-barrier, trauma-informed shelter along with services to meet people where they are at, using a client-centered approach to support individual paths to housing stability.

### **Gateway Center Principles**

The design of the Gateway Center will be trauma-informed to reinforce a safe and welcoming atmosphere and be ADA compliant.

Gateway Center programming will incorporate a trauma-informed approach that is equitable, culturally and spiritually accommodating, and supportive of LGBTQ+, people of color and people living with disabilities.

Through the Engagement Center, the Gateway Center will provide person-centered services that “meet people where they are at” in their journey to achieve housing and behavioral health stability. Intake to services will be staged according to client need and interest.

Programs will embody a person-centered approach to support connections to community, and attain housing and behavioral health stability so that homelessness is a brief, rare, one-time experience.

The Gateway Center will provide multiple opportunities for each participant to develop an exit strategy such as to supportive housing, treatment, or another shelter.

The Gateway Center will be a low barrier shelter that follows the Housing First principles to address immediate and long-term housing needs. As a low-barrier and inclusive shelter, the Gateway Center will accept unhoused people who may have complex histories, including a criminal history.

The Gateway Center will leverage existing services and develop partnerships for referrals into the community to foster collaboration and not competition. This includes creating space within the Gateway Center for other community partners to connect with guests and provide services, such as satellite office space.

The Gateway Center will operate with a harm reduction philosophy to address substance use disorders. Guests do not need to be clean and sober to access the Engagement Center or Shelter, but they cannot use drugs on site.

## **Components**

The Gateway Center will have two major components: an Engagement Center and the Shelter.

- a. The Engagement Center will serve as a warm and welcoming access point to services, while also helping to meet the most immediate needs of unhoused people coming to the Shelter.
- b. The Shelter will provide low barrier, trauma-informed shelter that meets people where they are at with a client-centered approach to develop a plan to achieve housing stability.

## **Administration**

The City will have an onsite Gateway Center Administrator to oversee operations. One onsite Community Outreach Coordinator and a Gateways Systems Analyst will report to the Administrator. The Gateway Center Administration will be responsible for overseeing all Gateway Center Operations. The Systems Analyst will be responsible for ensuring systems are place to implement and evaluate effective service delivery, including data systems. The Community Outreach Coordinator will be responsible for coordinating day-to-day operations with the organizations selected to operate the Gateway Center.

The City will issue an RFP to select one or more organizations to operate the Gateway Center Shelter and Engagement Center. The City will work with the organization(s) operating the Gateway Center to develop and implement a Data and Quality Assurance Plan.

## **Transportation**

The Gateway Center will operate a shuttle system. The shuttle system will transport referred guests to the Gateway Center for intake and assessment. The shuttle system will provide transportation to

individuals and families exiting the Gateway Center to their exit destination. There will be clear, safe and well designed, pick up and drop off points at Gateway Center

The Gateway Center will be a stop for the current Community Support Shuttle, operated by the Veterans Integration Center with funding from the City, which provides a regular route to services, primarily for people experiencing homelessness.

Case managers and other services staff will also transport guests as they apply for housing, employment, benefits and other resources.

Case managers and other service staff will help guests obtain transportation for which they are eligible, such as the City Sun Van, Medicaid reimbursed transportation, or transportation to school via APS Title I.

Some Gateway Center guests will also utilize public transportation. The City recognizes that the current bus route closest to Gibson Health Hub, Route 16, is not sufficient to meet the needs of Gateway Center guests and is committed to improving public transportation for guests. The Albuquerque Transit Department is exploring several options, including expanding the frequency of service on the Route 16 line or extending nearby bus lines with more frequent services to the Gateway Center, including the 140, 141 or 157. The City will decide by fall 2021 on which option to implement.

## Gateway Center Shelter

### **Operating Hours**

The Gateway Center Shelter will be open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

In Phase 1, the Gateway Center Shelter will conduct intakes daily between 8:00am – 8:00pm for most community partner referrals. However, the Gateway Center Shelter will conduct intakes 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for referrals from hospitals, first responders and law enforcement.

The dining room will be open daily, with anticipated hours in Phase 1 of 7:00am-9:00am; 11:00am-1:00pm; 5:00pm-7:00pm

In Phase 1, donations may be dropped off daily between 8:00am-5:00pm.

The Gateway Center Shelter's secure entrance will be staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to ensure that only enrolled guests (shelter & engagement center), program, staff and volunteers and registered partner agency staff/volunteers enter the facility.

### **Referral to the Gateway Center Shelter**

The Gateway Center Shelter will establish a referral process for community organizations, including other homeless assistance providers and other local service agencies.

The Engagement Center will make referrals to the Gateway Center Shelter.

If the Gateway Center Shelter is at capacity, single adults seeking shelter will be referred to the Westside Emergency Housing Center or other appropriate shelter options. Transportation will be provided if

needed. Emergency overflow for families will be established in the community or through the use of motel vouchers.

The City will coordinate with outreach teams to engage people who are reluctant to access shelter or have high barriers to permanent housing, including those who are living in the International District. This will likely involve seeking to understand the reasons for their reluctance and, if possible, addressing those concerns.

### **Screening & Pre-Admission Process**

Gateway Center staff will conduct an assessment that will address any immediate issues that need to be resolved, including physical/or medical issues that may require a triage to more appropriate options. This may include, but is not limited to, medical respite, detox or recovery programs.

Gateway Center service staff will conduct a general assessment with individuals and families to verify that the Gateway Center is an appropriate option. As part of this assessment, Gateway Center staff will assess whether the presenting individual or family can be safely diverted to a non-shelter alternative.

Diversion is a proven strategy that helps people experiencing a housing crisis quickly identify and access safe alternatives to emergency shelter. This is most effectively implemented at access points to shelter, and will be part of the screening process at the Gateway Center. Diversion may include creative problem-solving conversations; connecting with community resources and family supports; housing search and placement; and flexible financial assistance to help people resolve their immediate housing crisis. Gateway Center staff will have access to a flexible source of funds that can be used to provide short-term, one time help to divert people seeking shelter to other safe housing options if needed.

The City shall comply with all federal, state and local laws that may pertain to its admission policies.

### **Entry and Exit**

A team of intake and front desk staff will be situated at the Gateway Center entry to greet new and existing guests as they enter the Gateway Center. Only enrolled Gateway Center Shelter guests, staff, program staff and volunteers, and registered partner agency staff and volunteers will be allowed to enter the Gateway Center shelter.

Personal visitors will not be allowed at the Gateway Center Shelter, except under limited conditions with express permission. Front desk and security staff will monitor entry into the building to ensure only guests, service providers and permitted individuals enter the Gateway Center shelter.

Residents can come and go as needed while following a curfew policy, with exceptions to include work and personal needs (e.g., family obligations) and unanticipated issues (e.g., transportation, family crisis/urgency, etc.). The City's goal is to establish separate entrances to the shelter for families, women and men.

## Safety and Security at the Gateway Center

### **Physical Design**

The Gateway Center will be designed to promote safety and security, using both Trauma Informed Design and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) design principles. Trauma-informed design principles, such as open, safe and inviting floor plan can support the physical and emotional safety of clients. The design includes an open, safe, and inviting floor plan. The City intends to establish separate entrances to the shelter for families, women, and men, if design permits.

CPTED is a set of design principles used to discourage crime and promote building security. These design principles, which the City has adopted in other projects, will be integrated into the design of the Gateway Center and surrounding area. Key features of the design will include but not be limited to sufficient lighting, fencing, and technology (such as security cameras). These appropriate fencing, landscaping and other design features will be designed to ensure curb appeal and low visual impact.

The City, in partnership with contracted organization(s) operating the Gateway Center will establish appropriate security systems including: metal detection, fire system, an annunciator system, security cameras, and an alarm system. Clear signage will be provided to service providers along with ramps for gurneys and wheelchairs.

The Department of Municipal Development (DMD) completed an assessment of lighting attached to the building and the parking lot lights. Prior to opening, all exterior lighting will be upgraded.

### **Onsite Security Personnel**

Gibson Health Hub currently has, and will continue to have, on site 24/7 professional security, provided by a private security firm and City personnel. Security staff will be adjusted to ensure that the appropriate ratio and balance is achieved. If the number of tenants increases, and the number of people served within Gibson Health Hub increase, the level of security provided will be adjusted accordingly.

Evaluation is an essential component of determining safety and security. Baseline data and continued data collection will be used to determine staffing needs specifically related to the critical incidence responses.

Gateway Center safety team staffing will include supervisors, case managers, peer supporters and navigators-all who are trained in de-escalation.

### **Weapons**

Weapons will not be allowed at the Gateway Center. There will be a weapons policy & procedure to address weapons brought on site. Clients will be required to sign a form acknowledging that they are aware of the weapons policy & procedure.

### **Critical Incidence Response**

The City of Albuquerque will work with the organization(s) operating the Gateway Center to establish procedures for critical incident response. Threats and assaults to staff and clients will not be tolerated. A

policy and procedure addressing threats and assaults to client and staff will be established. Any guest who threatens or assault staff or clients will be exited from the Gateway Center, and will receive transportation to their exit destination.

De-escalation procedures will be established. All Gateway Center staff will receive training in conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques. The procedures will address appropriate use of APD to resolve safety issues at the Gateway Center.

An emergency procedure, emergency evacuation plan, fire procedure, infectious disease and first aid policies and procedures will be established. There will be on-site crisis intervention and de-escalation teams.

## Security and Safety in the Community Surrounding Gateway Center

### **The Role of Albuquerque Police Department (APD)**

APD has a strong presence in southeast Albuquerque. The APD Substation located at Kathryn Avenue and Louisiana Boulevard is within close proximity to the Gateway Center. An expansion of this substation is underway and the next phase is planned for completion in 2022.

The City intends to establish a public safety district around the Gateway Center, which will be a concentrated, coordinated effort between City Departments that address public safety, including Albuquerque Community Safety, APD, Albuquerque Fire and Rescue, Family and Community Services, Parks and Recreation and Solid Waste. The purpose of the Public Safety District will be to better coordinate existing resources and efforts. Community policing will be included.

The APD Problem Response Team (PRT) dedicated to the Southeast Area Command will continue to work within the future Public Safety District to resolve issues in the area. Public Service Assistants will be assigned to the southeast area and serve alongside the Problem Response Team.

APD is dedicated to active community policing and conducting outreach to area residents, businesses, and organizations. Community policing efforts will continue as the Gateway Center is developed. APD will coordinate and communicate with the Nob Hill ECHO team and Street Connect to connect on issues related to Gateway Center in the area and Central Avenue corridor.

APD currently works closely with multiple city departments including Solid Waste, Parks and Recreation, Planning, and Family and Community Services to respond to identify issues which need responses and resources, including encampments and criminal trespassing. APD will work with the Department of Family and Community Services to conduct outreach to unsanctioned encampments and assist residents to seek shelter, resources and stable housing through the Gateway Center. APD will continue work with the Planning Department to investigate and clear out abandoned houses and ensure the safety of nearby residents and properties.

### **Role of Albuquerque Community Safety Department (ACS)**

ACS will provide coordinated street outreach to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness in the vicinity of the Gateway Center Shelter who are not using the shelter. ACS will participate in the efforts of the public safety district. ACS launches the fall of 2021, with staff that will serve all of Albuquerque. ACS will have in 2022, dedicated staff to serve the southeast area of Albuquerque including the International District.

The future site for the ACS Department is centered at Kathryn and San Mateo. This site is within minutes of the Gateway Center. All calls related to ACS are first qualified through 9-1-1. Upon assessment, appropriate calls for assistance will be sent to ACS.

ACS responders may transport people to the Gateway Center upon request. Transport will be voluntary only, people cannot be transported without consent.

### **Role of Albuquerque Fire and Rescue (AFR)**

AFR has two stations within close proximity to the Gibson Health Hub and can respond to calls as designated through the 9-1-1 system. Station 11 on Kathryn Avenue SE is under one mile of distance. Station 5, located on Dallas NE is located within 2.5 miles to the Gateway Center. AFR will take service calls through 9-1-1 and provide basic medical screening to determine if transport to Gateway Center is appropriate. If so, AFR can provide transport. AFR will work closely with APD and ACS as members of the public safety district to evaluate and determine needs and resources for response systems.

### **Role of Solid Waste Department (SWD)**

SWD will clean and remove trash daily from areas surrounding the Gateway Center. Priority locations include sidewalks, bus stops, store fronts and area parks. SWD also oversees median plantings and maintenance and will work with Department of Municipal Development for any improvements or changes needed to Gibson Blvd. medians. SWD will be a member of the public safety district team.

### **Role of Department of Municipal Development (DMD)**

Investment in public safety infrastructure in the areas close to the Gibson Health Hub will be prioritized by DMD. DMD will review conditions that affect pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists to ensure that lighting, street and sidewalk design prioritize safety. DMD will conduct a road audit of Gibson Blvd and collector streets to assess the best design and potential interventions for ultimate street safety. DMD will conduct a speed study on Gibson Blvd. to assess current conditions and create interventions that ensure the proper speed limit is set and enforced.

As part of the road audit, DMD will address pedestrian safety which includes the examination of crash data within the vicinity. Resulting improvements could include pedestrian crosswalks to promote safe use and ease of crossing. Road medians will be designed to prevent jay-walking and promote the use of crosswalks for pedestrian safety.

### **Role of Transit Department**

The Transit Department (Transit) will conduct a study evaluating current transit route/bus systems. Transit will consider modifications to routes connecting passengers to the Gateway Center and around Albuquerque to needed resources. Shuttle buses connecting clients to the Gateway Center from

providers and designated locations will be part of the transit evaluation, but will not necessarily be operated by the City's Transit Department.

### **Encampments**

Encampments will not be allowed on the Gibson Health Hub property. The Department of Family and Community Services (DFCS) public outreach team is responsible for addressing encampments on all public property. Two of the public outreach team members will be based at the Gibson Health Hub. The DFCS public outreach team will monitor the ¼-mile radius from Gibson Health Hub daily for encampments on public or private property.

For encampments on public property, DFCS will post notice the same day the encampment is observed. The DFCS outreach team will refer any encampments located on private property to the Planning Department Code Enforcement Division. ACS will provide outreach to encampment residents to assist them with obtaining safe, stable shelter arrangements.

### **Evaluation**

The City of Albuquerque will conduct ongoing evaluation of safety and security of Gibson Health Hub and surrounding neighborhoods.

## **Accountability to & Coordination with Neighborhoods**

### **Good Neighbor Agreement**

The City of Albuquerque intends to enter into a Good Neighbor Agreement with the Elder Homestead, Parkland Hills, Siesta Hills, South San Pedro and Trumbull Neighborhood Associations. All five neighborhood associations are adjacent to or very close to the Gibson Health Hub facility.

The City intends for the Good Neighbor Agreement to establish:

- A phone number where residents can report any issues related to the Gateway Center.
- A community dispute resolution process
- A Neighborhood Advisory Committee. The Agreement will set the membership of the Committee, which will include neighborhood representatives, City representatives from the organization(s) operating the Gateway Center, and current or former guests of the Gateway Center.
- The Committee will meet at least quarterly and will issue an annual survey to community members.
- The Neighborhood Advisory Committee will review community baseline data and information to provide feedback on the safety of the community.

**Community Impact**

The University of New Mexico will conduct a study and issue a report that includes recommendations for emergency shelters programming, and infrastructure, and strategies to anticipate and address community concerns. The report will be issued by February 2022.

The City will explore options for supporting businesses in the vicinity of the Gateway Center, including the strategies identified in the Homeless Coordinating Council's Community Coordinated Framework on Homelessness.