



Mayor Timothy M. Keller

EC-25-319
CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE
Albuquerque, New Mexico
Office of the Mayor

INTER-OFFICE MEMORANDUM

01/24/2025

TO: Brook Bassan, President, City Council

FROM: Timothy M. Keller, Mayor



SUBJECT: Implementation of a Pilot Program to Provide Comprehensive Employment and Support Program for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

Homelessness remains a persistent challenge in Albuquerque, with many individuals facing significant barriers to stable employment. Previous day labor programs, like “There’s a Better Way”, previously provided dignified employment for homeless individuals and contributed to beautification of the city.

Building on the successes and lessons learned from “There’s a Better Way” program, we are proposing, “A Better Way Forward” program, an innovative initiative designed to build on the success of previous efforts and add additional tools to tackle the ongoing challenge of homelessness in Albuquerque. This program aims to provide meaningful employment opportunities and comprehensive support services to individuals currently residing at the Gateway Center and Gateway West.

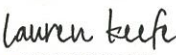
TITLE/SUBJECT OF LITIGATION*** *Same as subject line on last page*)

Approved:

Approved as to Legal Form:

 1/28/25

Samantha Sengel, EdD Date
Chief Administrative Officer

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 1/27/2025 | 5:15 PM MST
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Date
City Attorney

Recommended:

DS
PP

DocuSigned by:
 1/27/2025 | 4:01 PM MST
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Date
Director

Cover Analysis

1. **What is it?** This is a proposal in response to Resolution Enactment: R-2024-043. A proposal for “A Better Way Forward” Employment and Support Pilot Program to Address Homelessness.
2. **What will this piece of legislation do?** Provide funding and implementation of a pilot program to provide comprehensive employment and support program for individuals experiencing homelessness.
3. **Why is this project needed?** Homelessness remains a persistent challenge in Albuquerque, with many individuals facing significant barriers to stable employment. Previous day labor programs, like “There’s a Better Way”, previously provided dignified employment for homeless individuals and contributed to beautification of the city.

“A Better Way Forward” program is a holistic approach designed to enhance participant stability and self-sufficiency, aiming to make a meaningful impact on homelessness.
4. **How much will it cost and what is the funding source?** To fully implement the ‘A Better Way Forward’ program, we estimate a total cost of \$650,000. The Solid Waste Department has allocated \$650,000 for FY 2025 towards this initiative.
5. **Is there a revenue source associated with this contract? If so, what level of income is projected?** No, this is a plan and budget proposal.
6. **What will happen if the project is not approved?** Efforts to make meaningful impacts on homelessness will be hindered.
7. **Is this service already provided by another entity?** No.

FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

TITLE: Comprehensive Employment and Support Program for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

R:

O:

FUND:

DEPT:

☒ No measurable fiscal impact is anticipated, i.e., no impact on fund balance over and above existing appropriations.

☐ (If Applicable) The estimated fiscal impact (defined as impact over and above existing appropriations) of this legislation is as follows:

	2025	Fiscal Years 2026	2027	Total
Base Salary/Wages				-
Fringe Benefits at				-
Subtotal Personnel	-	-	-	-
Operating Expenses		-		-
Property		-	-	-
Indirect Costs	-	-	-	-
Total Expenses	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
☒ Estimated revenues not affected				
☐ Estimated revenue impact				
Revenue from program				0
Amount of Grant		-	-	
City Cash Match				
City Inkind Match				
City IDOH	-	-	-	-
Total Revenue	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

These estimates do not include any adjustment for inflation.

* Range if not easily quantifiable.

Number of Positions created

COMMENTS:

COMMENTS ON NON-MONETARY IMPACTS TO COMMUNITY/CITY GOVERNMENT:

PREPARED BY:

DocuSigned by:

Anna M Lujan

1/27/2025 | 3:56 PM MST

FISCAL ANALYST

APPROVED:

DocuSigned by:

Gilbert Ramirez

DIRECTOR

REVIEWED BY:

DocuSigned by:

Haiyan Zhao

1/27/2025 | 4:58 PM MST

EXECUTIVE BUDGET ANALYST

DocuSigned by:

Phawenna Davis

1/27/2025 | 5:09 PM MST

BUDGET OFFICER

Signed by:

Christine Bomer

1/27/2025 | 5:10 PM MST

CITY ECONOMIST

Proposal for “A Better Way Forward”

Employment and Support Pilot Program to Address Homelessness



Date: January 27, 2025

To: Albuquerque City Council

From: Health, Housing, and Homelessness Department / Solid Waste Department

Subject: Implementation of a Pilot Program to Provide Comprehensive Employment and Support Program for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Program Summary	2
Budget Justification	2
Implementation Timeline and Scope of Activities	3
Budget Overview	4
Appendix A:	5
Design Plan	5
Metric Reporting, Analysis, and Evaluation	6
Day Labor Program Literature Review	6
Works Cited	9

INTRODUCTION

We present the “A Better Way Forward” program, an innovative initiative designed to build on the success of previous efforts and add additional tools to tackle the ongoing challenge of homelessness in Albuquerque. This program aims to provide meaningful employment opportunities and comprehensive support services to individuals currently residing at the Gateway Center and Gateway West.

We are confident that “A Better Way Forward” will make a significant impact on our city and look forward to discussing how this program aligns with Albuquerque’s vision for a more inclusive and resilient future. Thank you for your consideration and support.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Homelessness remains a persistent challenge in Albuquerque, with many individuals facing significant barriers to stable employment. Previous day labor programs, like “There’s a Better Way”, previously provided dignified employment for homeless individuals and contributed to beautification of the city.

Building on the successes and lessons learned from “There’s a Better Way” program, we are proposing, “A Better Way Forward” program. The program aims to provide job opportunities to individuals staying at the Gateway Center and Gateway West, focusing on environmental maintenance in our city. Participants will receive transportation to job sites and access to critical support services, including housing, mental health care, and substance abuse treatment. Initially, the program will enhance the services of Ambassadors of the City of Albuquerque, contracted with Block by Block, to perform environmental maintenance, hospitality and safety services for the Solid Waste Department.

The program will start by employing 16 individuals at \$12.00/hour for 40 hours of work per week. As the program develops, we anticipate the opportunity to expand through public/private partnerships to attract additional funding and increase the number of participants. Over 70% of the budget is allocated to wages and benefits, highlighting our commitment to participant stability and self-sufficiency, which we believe will help reduce homelessness.

A Better Way Forward program is a holistic approach designed to enhance participant stability and self-sufficiency, aiming to make a meaningful impact on homelessness.

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

To fully implement the ‘A Better Way Forward’ program, we estimate a total cost of \$650,000. Based on the Clean City designation in the FY25 budget for specific areas of Albuquerque and previously appropriated funding for a work program, the Solid Waste Department has allocated \$650,000 for FY 2025 toward this initiative. This funding is essential for ensuring the comprehensive delivery of employment opportunities, transportation, and critical support services. Without the full amount, the program’s scope and effectiveness could be significantly reduced, impacting our ability to achieve the desired outcomes for participants.

As the Better Way Forward Program grows and additional funding becomes necessary to employ more individuals, we respectfully ask City Councilors to partner with the Administration and consider utilizing specific council district set-asides upon identification of priority service areas confirmed by the respective Councilor.

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES

We are currently completing month 2 of the timeline of activities below. To date four individuals have successfully participated in the program. Notably, two individuals have earned sufficient income to successfully exit the program and utilized their earnings to move back to their originally residences out-of-state. Two individuals are currently employed and ongoing recruitment and hiring will continue as individuals move through the program.

Month	Activity
Month 1	Request quote for professional services, review and renew contract with Block by Block (already complete)
	Establish partnerships with local employers, non-profits, government agencies, and healthcare providers.
Month 2	Begin participant recruitment: outreach, referrals, and direct engagement with the homeless community.
	Conduct initial intake and comprehensive needs assessments for participants
	Provide job readiness training, employment placement, and supportive services: counseling, mental health care, substance abuse treatment
Month 3-6	Monitor participant progress and adjust services as needed
Month 7	Conduct mid-program evaluation: assess progress, gather feedback, identify additional areas for improvement; prepare mid-year report on progress and sustainability
	Implement changes based on evaluation findings to enhance program effectiveness
Month 8-11	Continue comprehensive support services: focus on job retention, skills development, housing stabilization
	Strengthen employer partnerships: create more job opportunities, ensure sustainable employment
	Prepare participants for program transition: ensure stable employment and housing, provide additional training and resources
	Plan for end-of-program evaluation and documentation of outcomes
Month 12	Conduct final evaluation: measure outcomes such as employment rates, housing stability, participant satisfaction
	Prepare detailed report summarizing pilot program successes, challenges, and recommendations for future iterations

Month	Activity
Post-Program Follow-Up (Month 13+)	Provide follow-up support: ensure continued stability, address emerging needs, maintain contact with employers and partners

Additionally, the Health, Housing, and Homelessness Department will convene a collaborative group that will meet bi-monthly to review the progress of the program and will include at a minimum:

1. A representative from Health, Housing and Homelessness;
2. A representative from each City department and any outside employers utilizing working from the program;
3. A representative from the Albuquerque City Council; and
4. A representative for any contractors utilized to operate the program.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

The "A Better Way Forward" program proposed budget incorporates labor, operational costs, and capital expenses to support the program. The following table outlines the proposed budget:

Category	Cost per Unit	Total Cost
Labor		\$440,960.00
- Cleaning Ambassadors (16 FTEs at \$12/hour)	640 weekly hours @ \$12/hour	Included
- Operations Supervisor (1 FTE at \$20/hour)	40 weekly hours @ \$20/hour	Included
Benefits		\$28,128.99
Labor Related	Background checks, recruiting, etc.	\$9,032.40
Uniforms		\$17,252.87
Cell Phones		\$2,360.00
Case Management		\$76,500.00
Janitorial Supplies		\$23,119.25
Start-up Cost (Amortized over 3 years)		\$6,152.50
Taxes & Miscellaneous		\$2,000.00
Administrative Support	Management, travel, postage, etc.	\$29,750.83
Capital Equipment		\$11,809.42
Total One-Year Budget		\$647,066.26

APPENDIX A

Design Plan

The proposed program will focus on providing comprehensive employment support to individuals experiencing homelessness in Albuquerque. The structure will include an integrated approach combining employment services with housing support, mental health care, and substance abuse treatment. The program will be based on successful models such as the Ready to Work program in Boulder, Colorado, and the Work Works model, which have shown significant success in breaking cycles of homelessness, addiction, and unemployment (McDevitt).

The program will be divided into three main phases to ensure comprehensive support for participants. In the first phase, Intake and Assessment, participants will undergo a thorough needs assessment to tailor services to their specific requirements. This phase includes evaluating their mental health, substance use, job readiness, and housing situation to create a personalized plan. If feasible the city will provide 30 housing vouchers identified for participants of the program. The second phase, Employment and Support Services, provides participants with job readiness training, employment placement, and supportive services such as counseling and case management. These services are designed to be trauma-informed, addressing the specific needs and experiences of the homeless population, as recommended by the National Alliance to End Homelessness. The final phase, Follow-Up and Retention, ensures continuous support to maintain job retention and address any challenges that arise. This phase also includes re-employment activities and additional training as needed to support participants' long-term success.

To implement the program effectively, a Case Manager will provide one-on-one support to participants, helping them navigate the services offered, develop individualized plans, and stay on track with their employment and housing goals. The focus will be on job readiness training, job placement, and building relationships with local employers to facilitate sustainable employment opportunities.

The program will incorporate several key design elements to ensure its effectiveness:

- **Trauma-Informed Care:** All services will be designed to address the trauma experienced by participants, promoting safety, cultural competence, and empowerment (National Alliance to End Homelessness).
- **Integrated Support Services:** Combine employment services with housing, healthcare, and substance abuse treatment to address the multifaceted needs of participants (Henwood et al.).
- **Flexible and Person-Centered:** Services will be tailored to the individual needs of participants, offering a range of employment options and ongoing support (LAHSA).

By incorporating these elements, the program aims to provide comprehensive support to individuals experiencing homelessness, helping them achieve stable employment and housing, and ultimately improving their overall well-being and self-sufficiency. This holistic approach will not only benefit the

participants but also contribute to the broader community by reducing homelessness and its associated costs.

Metric Reporting, Analysis, and Evaluation

To ensure the program's success and measure its impact, the following metrics will be tracked and reported regularly:

1. **Participant Demographics:** Track the number of participants, including age, gender, race, and previous employment history.
2. **Intake and Assessment Completion:** Measure the number of participants who complete the intake and needs assessment process.
3. **Employment Rates:** Monitor the percentage of participants who secure employment, the types of jobs obtained, and the duration of employment.
4. **Housing Stability:** Track the number of participants who secure stable housing and maintain it throughout the program.
5. **Service Utilization:** Record the utilization rates of support services, such as mental health counseling, substance use treatment, and job readiness training.
6. **Participant Satisfaction:** Conduct regular surveys to gauge participant satisfaction with the program and services provided.
7. **Retention Rates:** Measure the retention rates of participants in both employment and housing over time.

City staff will play a crucial role in overseeing the program to ensure its impact and effectiveness:

1. **Regular Monitoring:**
 - **Monthly Meetings:** Hold weekly oversight meetings with program staff to review progress, address any challenges, and discuss upcoming activities. Meetings will be held weekly during implementation for 6 months and then monthly thereafter.
 - **Metric Monitoring:** Implement a shared tracking tool with the City for real-time tracking of key metrics and performance indicators. City staff will have access to this dashboard to monitor progress continuously.
 - **Quarterly Site Visits:** Conduct quarterly site visits to observe program operations, interact with participants and staff, and provide on-the-spot support and feedback.
 - **Compliance Checks:** Ensure compliance with program protocols and standards through regular site inspections and audits.

By implementing these reporting, analysis, and evaluation measures, and ensuring rigorous oversight by city staff, the program will be well-positioned to achieve its goals and make a meaningful impact on the lives of individuals experiencing homelessness in Albuquerque.

Day Labor Program Literature Review

Day labor programs are increasingly recognized as essential interventions for helping people experiencing homelessness secure employment, which is crucial for achieving stability and self-

sufficiency. Employment provides not only a source of income but also a sense of purpose and routine, which are vital for individuals experiencing homelessness. For instance, the Ready to Work model in Boulder, Colorado, integrates paid work with housing and supportive services, demonstrating significant success in breaking cycles of homelessness, addiction, and unemployment (McDevitt).

Homeless individuals face numerous barriers to employment, including mental health issues, substance abuse, and a lack of job readiness skills. Effective day labor programs address these challenges by incorporating trauma-informed care principles, promoting safety, cultural competence, and empowerment. Programs like Code Tenderloin in San Francisco and Wheels of Change in San Diego have successfully placed many participants in stable, often high-paying jobs, significantly improving their quality of life. These programs offer job readiness training and employment opportunities, providing participants with a pathway to stability and self-sufficiency (Careers in Government).

Research has shown that day labor programs improve the mental health and overall well-being of participants. Employment fosters a sense of purpose and community belonging, which are critical for mental health recovery. Additionally, these programs reduce recidivism among formerly incarcerated individuals experiencing homelessness by providing stable employment and support. By offering employment opportunities, these programs also help reduce public costs associated with homelessness, such as emergency healthcare and law enforcement, and contribute to local economies by increasing participants' purchasing power and reducing dependency on public assistance programs (Culhane et al.).

To maximize the effectiveness of day labor programs, several design elements are recommended. First, programs should incorporate trauma-informed approaches to ensure they are sensitive to participants' past experiences. Second, integrating support services such as housing, healthcare, and substance abuse treatment with employment services addresses the multifaceted needs of homeless individuals. Third, programs should be flexible and person-centered, meeting individuals where they are and adapting to their changing needs. This includes offering a range of employment options that align with participants' skills, interests, and readiness levels, as well as providing ongoing support to help them retain and advance in their jobs (National Alliance to End Homelessness; LAHSA; Careers in Government).

Furthermore, building partnerships with local businesses and community organizations can help reduce stigma and create more employment opportunities for homeless individuals. Educating employers about the benefits of hiring from this population and providing incentives can also enhance job placement success. Overall, day labor programs are a critical component in addressing homelessness, offering both immediate and long-term benefits to individuals and communities (National Alliance to End Homelessness; McDevitt).

To ensure the success and long-term impact of the pilot program, we can draw inspiration from several exemplary day labor programs that go beyond temporary, menial tasks and focus on skill development and sustainable employment. One such program is **Ready, Willing & Able (RWA)** in New York City, which provides homeless men with paid transitional work in fields like building maintenance and food service, coupled with occupational training, housing, and social services. This holistic approach enables participants to build valuable work experience and life skills, facilitating their transition to permanent employment and independent living. Similarly, **Code Tenderloin in San Francisco** offers job readiness training and partners with tech companies to place participants in internships and entry-level positions.

Their training curriculum includes coding, soft skills, and professional development, ensuring that participants acquire industry-relevant skills that lead to long-term career opportunities in the tech sector.

Another innovative model is **Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles**, which operates several social enterprises, including a bakery, cafe, and silkscreen printing business. Participants receive job training in these enterprises alongside wraparound services such as therapy and education, creating a supportive environment where they can develop job skills and work towards permanent employment. By incorporating elements from these programs, our pilot can provide not just immediate employment, but also the skills and support necessary for participants to achieve lasting stability and self-sufficiency.

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