

City of Santa Fe – Department of Community Health & Safety

Written Plan for Relocation of the Agape Shelter

Submitted to: Secretary Sarita Nair, New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions

Date: October 31, 2025

I. Purpose

The City of Santa Fe is submitting this written plan in compliance with the State's request for an updated strategy to relocate the existing shelter operations currently housed at 2801 Cerrillos Road. The goal of this transition is to identify and secure a more suitable facility that meets the City's long-term operational needs and supports improved service delivery, safety, and dignity for residents experiencing homelessness.

II. Background and Current Context

The current shelter site at 2801 Cerrillos Road, known as the Agape Shelter, has served as an interim solution while the City worked to stabilize services and build operational consistency. Over the past four months (since 7/31/2025), significant improvements have been made to building systems, security, and habitability, ensuring that the facility can operate safely through this transition period. However, the physical limitations of the building and property prevent long-term sustainability and the expansion required to meet the community's needs.

The City is committed to identifying a permanent location capable of safely and effectively accommodating at least 150 residents in a primarily non-congregate setting. The current site's configuration and neighborhood context are not well suited to this model, particularly given the need to separate individuals with acute behavioral health, medical, or recovery needs.

III. Site Search and Market Conditions

The City has been actively engaged in identifying alternative locations for the shelter, working closely with real estate professionals, internal staff, and state partners. Multiple properties have been reviewed, including one site that the DWS Secretary and City leadership have toured together.

The Santa Fe real estate market presents significant challenges. Available properties are limited, industrial and commercial spaces are costly to retrofit for residential use, and zoning or neighborhood compatibility constraints further narrow options. Despite these challenges, the City continues to evaluate all feasible opportunities, balancing suitability, cost, and timeline.

In addition to continuing to actively search for viable facilities, the City is working to convene philanthropic partners (Anchorum Foundation, Santa Fe Community Center, and the Thornburg

Foundation), and intergovernmental partners (State, City County, Santa Fe Public School District) to join in the effort to identify and procure facilities.

IV. Facility and Program Design Objectives

The City intends to increase overall shelter capacity to a minimum of 150 beds, with a focus on non-congregate or semi-private accommodations. This design reflects lessons learned from both the COVID-19 pandemic and the current operational experience at Agape, where high-density congregate spaces have proven difficult to manage and counterproductive for guests with acute medical or behavioral health needs.

The preferred facility model includes:

- Individual or small shared sleeping units with integrated HVAC and ventilation systems.
- Dedicated space for case management, behavioral health, and medical support.
- Safe and controlled access with adequate separation of populations based on need.
- On-site food service capacity, storage, and security infrastructure.

V. Transition and Procurement Plan

To support a responsible and transparent transition, the City has established the following plan:

1. **Property Disposition:** The current facility at 2801 Cerrillos Road will be listed for sale or lease by March 2026. This process will allow potential buyers or tenants—including nonprofit or mission-aligned organizations—to submit proposals for reuse.
2. **Operator Procurement:** The City will release a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) to identify a long-term operator for the new facility. The RFP will emphasize experience with low-barrier shelter models, trauma-informed care, and integration with local service systems.
3. **Site Acquisition:** The City will continue evaluating potential properties, with the goal of selecting a viable site for acquisition or long-term lease as soon as practical.
4. **Continuity of Operations:** Shelter operations at the current Agape site will continue through this transition period to ensure uninterrupted service to vulnerable residents.

VI. Alternative Uses for the Current Property

If the City retains ownership of the existing Agape building, alternative uses under consideration include:

- **City Employee Childcare or Daycare Facility:** Conversion of the building to support working families and recruitment efforts for essential City staff.
- **Community Service Facility:** Adaptation for other pro-social uses such as senior programming, workforce training, or youth and family services.

These potential reuses align with the City's broader mission to strengthen community health and safety through adaptive use of public assets.

VII. Financial Considerations

While the City appreciates the \$1.6 million in state funding provided to support the shelter program, the cost of identifying, acquiring, and rehabilitating a suitable new facility will far exceed that amount. Preliminary estimates suggest that total project costs will likely range between \$5–6 million on the low end, depending on building availability and retrofit requirements.

In addition to capital costs, the City anticipates the need for ongoing operational funding to sustain shelter services, staffing, and facility maintenance at an expanded 150-bed capacity. The City will continue to explore a combination of state, federal, and local funding sources to support this effort, but partnership with the State will be essential to ensure both the capital project and its long-term sustainability.

VIII. Conclusion

The City of Santa Fe remains committed to developing a modern, humane, and sustainable shelter system that reflects national best practices and the community's needs. While the search for a new facility continues to be challenged by market constraints, the City is advancing a realistic, responsible plan to expand capacity, improve conditions, and maintain continuity of care.

The City looks forward to continued partnership with the Department of Workforce Solutions and other state agencies to realize this shared goal.