

*Common Bond
New Mexico Foundation*

Annual Report 2020



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1 Message from the President

The mission of the Common Bond New Mexico Foundation is:

To strengthen the LGBTQ community of New Mexico through programs and partnerships that serve at-risk sectors of the LGBTQ population.

In 2020 Common Bond actively pursued this mission through two programs:

- **HIV Emergency Project**, which provided “last-resort” financial assistance to low-income New Mexicans living with HIV/AIDS;
- **U-21**, a program that provides a safe, sober, and affirming environment for the LGBTQ youth of Albuquerque.

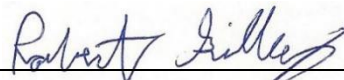
2020 was a tough year. Due to COVID-19, our U-21 Youth Program was prevented from meeting in-person and the Emergency Project received a steep uptick in requests from people in dire financial need.

However, our organization responded admirably. Our volunteer youth facilitators acted swiftly, not only preparing and distributing direct food assistance to children and families we work with but also establishing U-21 Online. Within a matter of days, they succeeded in establishing a series of connections through online meeting and game service providers to organize activities, play games, and most importantly provide check-ins as our community’s youth struggled over the past year.

The HIV Emergency Project confronted the challenges of the pandemic by not only providing more direct client assistance in a single year than ever before, but by also introducing new pro bono legal services for referred clients.

2020 *was* a tough year, but I cannot express enough how proud I am of the work Common Bond did in spite of the challenges we faced. And I know that 2021 (our organization’s 40th anniversary) will be even better.

Thank you,



Robert Grilley, President

Common Bond New Mexico Foundation

2 Officers and Board of Directors

The bylaws of Common Bond state, “The Board will consist of three to thirteen Directors elected at each annual meeting by a majority of the Board.”¹ There are currently five board members as listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Current Board Members and Officers of Common Bond.

Name	Position
Robert Grilley	Board Member, President
Elizabeth Trujillo	Board Member, Treasurer
Dylan Lutey	Board Member, Secretary
Steve Ridlon	Board Member
Benjamin Gerstner	Board Member

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¹ Common Bond New Mexico Foundation bylaws approved December 13, 2018, §IV.1

3 Financial Statement for 2020

Income:

Grants	\$62,548
Fundraising Events	\$0
Individual Donations	\$36,308
Total Income:	\$98,856

Expenses:

Insurance	\$3,054
Contract Services	\$0
Program Expenses ²	\$70,136
Fundraising/Marketing	\$371
Facilities/Business/Misc.	\$2,386
Total Expenses:	\$75,947

Net Gain in 2020: \$22,909

² Program Expenses include all costs associated with Common Bond's programs such as providing financial assistance to people with HIV/AIDS through the Emergency Project (\$61,912) and facilitating social activities and direct assistance for our youth in the U-21 program (\$8,224).

4 Annual Review of Programs

4.1 U-21 Program

Over the past year, the U-21 program faced multiple challenges due to COVID-19. However, our volunteers and supporters rose to the challenge in an extraordinary way, and because of this we were able to continue our important work in the community.

To observe state health guidelines like social distancing, and to keep the youth participants safe, we immediately switched our previously in-person meetings to a digital platform. We now continue supporting our youth with U-21 Online. This digital safe space uses several social media, gaming, and video conferencing tools to continue to support our youth participants with check-ins and online social activities. In a year where the at-risk children of our community have felt especially isolated, depressed, and anxious, we worked hard to help remind them they are part of a community that encourages and cares for them.

Using funds not expended for in-person meetings, we have assisted children and their families with over \$3,000 in direct aid in the form of food bags and grocery store gift cards. Our staff even was able to supply and prepare Thanksgiving dinners. The response to these efforts has been both incredible and overwhelming. Many of our youth participants live on their own or have families that rely on them. The pandemic has brought many challenges to this community, unemployment particularly has led to additional concerns of housing and food security when these families are at their most vulnerable. We look forward to 2021 with hope and anticipation at resuming in-person meetings while continuing to maintain our new invigorated online presence.

4.2 Emergency Project

The New Mexico Department of Health estimates that 3,400 people in the state are infected with HIV. The Emergency Project plays a unique role within the state's HIV healthcare network. It helps meet the basic living needs of some 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 32 years, the Emergency Project has helped prevent homelessness for low-income New Mexicans living with HIV/AIDS. Our program provides "last resort" financial assistance with the flexibility to meet a wide range of needs. Our assistance payments are primarily for rent, utilities, eyeglasses and medical bills.

We also assist clients with health insurance, medicines, auto repair, and other necessities of life. Many government-funded agencies are slow to make decisions, or there are seasonable caps on funds that are available. We step in when no other assistance program can help relieve the stress on people dealing with the multiple issues of living with HIV/AIDS.

During 2020, the Emergency Project disbursed \$61,912 to 282 male, female and transgender clients who are Hispanic, White, Native American, Black and Native Hawaiian. That was an increase of 75 clients and 63% more funds than in 2019. In 2020, we mailed 388 checks to meet critical financial needs. Checks go out within 24 hours; often on the same day an assistance request is received.

The Emergency Project serves not only metro areas such as Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Las Cruces, but also smaller New Mexico cities and rural communities. During 2020 we helped clients in Abiquiu, Alamogordo, Alto, Anthony, Anton Chico, Artesia, Aztec, Belen, Bloomfield, Buena Vista, Carlsbad, Chili, Clovis, Cuarteles, Deming, Edgewood, Elephant Butte, El Prado, Espanola, Eunice, Farmington, Gallup, Glorieta, Grants, Hatch, Hobbs, Jemez Pueblo, Kirkland, Laguna, Lamy, Las Vegas, Los Lunas, Mesilla Park, Mesquite, Nogal, Pecos, Penasco, Pie Town, Placitas, Portales, Questa, Raton, Rio Rancho, Roswell, San Juan Pueblo, Santa Cruz, Santa Teresa, Serafina, Silver City, Sunland Park, Taos, Tijeras, Tucumcari, Tularosa and Veguita.

We respond to case manager requests from five affiliated public health agencies: Southwest Care Center, University of New Mexico Truman Health Services, Community Collaborative Care, Alianza of New Mexico, and First Nations Community HealthSource.

The Emergency Project was established during the “plague years” of the early AIDS crisis, when an HIV diagnosis invariably led to premature death. Thirty-two 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 2020, our clients ranged in age from 21 to 81. We have never discriminated on the basis of race, gender or sexual orientation.

In the Fall of 2020, Common Bond board member Dylan Lutey, an estate planning attorney with Hedrich Law, P.A. in Albuquerque, began offering *pro bono* legal services (New Mexico Power of Attorney and Advance Medical Directive) to referred clients.

Picture yourself facing challenges like these that were experienced by some of our clients during 2020:

- You are a medically fragile 68-year-old man who has incurred many out of pocket co-pays due to numerous health issues. You live on a low fixed income and need assistance with a medical bill in order to continue medical treatments necessary to maintain your health.
- You are a 68-year-old man who has had an urgent, unexpected utility maintenance expense that hasn't left enough funds to cover your rent in a mobile home park.
- You are a 58-year-old woman who currently has zero income. You are waiting for your VA and SSA benefits to be reinstated following the death of your husband. You need assistance in paying your next month's rent in order to maintain stable housing.
- You are a 58-year-old man who has been using his funds to care for an ill sibling who lives out of state. You have been traveling back and forth and now need assistance for paying your rent.
- You are a rurally-located and medically fragile 38-year-old woman who needs access to a phone for safety. You have zero income. A family member helps with rent, food and other basic utilities.
- You are a 68-year-old man who is filing for bankruptcy. You are unable to regularly afford your basic necessities and now require extensive unplanned dental care for your health. You need immediate assistance with your utility bills.

The Emergency Project operates in a low-key, direct, individual manner with a minimum of bureaucratic detail. For its first 20 years, equal rights activist Liz Canfield managed the project as a volunteer out of her home. A new volunteer, Steve Ridlon, became Director in October 2008. Because he donates the cost of the Project's limited operating expenses, **100% of private donations and grant funds are disbursed to people in critical financial need.**

During 2020, the Emergency Project received \$22,500 from the New Mexico Department of Health, \$8,186 from the Albuquerque Pride 2019 HIV Walk, \$2,500 from Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, \$1,500 from the Santa Fe Community Foundation, plus \$25,812 in private donations largely in memory of Liz Canfield.