



2019-20 Annual Report of the LWVSNM Affordable Housing Committee
(3-30-2020)

As the LWVSNM Affordable Housing Study (2012) documented, the City of Las Cruces has a large need for affordable housing. There is a need for more than 5,000 rental units for families earning up to 120% of the area median income (~\$54K for family of 4). There is a need for 2,460 single-family units for families earning 60-120% (~27K to \$54K for a family of 4) of the area median income.

This past year, with LWVSNM support and advocacy, the City of Las Cruces took unprecedented steps to address the local housing shortage. One, the City Council created an Affordable Housing Strategic Planning Committee (chaired by Councilor Kasandra Gandara). Two, the City committed almost \$2 million in city funds in the form of grants and low-interest loans as matching funds for two affordable housing projects by local providers: Tierra Del Sol and Mesilla Valley Public Housing Authority (MVPHA). The city's commitment of funds was contingent on each project obtaining an award of federal low-income tax credits from the NM Mortgage Finance Authority. Three, the City dedicated city property adjacent to Sierra Middle School for the development of affordable housing.

Only the MVPHA Desert Hope Project, with additional LWVSNM support and advocacy, was successful in leveraging the city's funds to secure an award of federal low-income tax credits. The Desert Hope Project will provide 40-efficiency units for homeless individuals and veterans near Solano Drive at a total project cost of \$5.7 million. Mesilla Valley Community of Hope will provide supportive Services including case management, transportation, income support, and medical and mental health referrals.

Finally, the LWVSNM submitted a letter to Governor Lujan-Grisham urging the Governor to appoint a resident from Southern New Mexico to the NM Mortgage Finance Authority Board of Directors, the state's principal agency addressing housing in the state of New Mexico.

—By Beth Bardwell, LWVSNM