

# The Colorado Springs Initiative to End Homelessness

## FACT SHEET

### Vision

All citizens of Colorado Springs will have access to safe shelter and a strong safety net of services to help them avoid and end homelessness.

### The Six Primary Goals

1. Increase access to emergency shelter, especially during winter months;
2. Facilitate development of a day center offering comprehensive services and amenities;
3. Expand outreach programs to reduce street homelessness;
4. Increase access to stable and affordable housing;
5. Strengthen the Community's Continuum of Care (CoC) - A CoC program promotes a community-wide commitment to ending homelessness by coordinating housing and service providers on a local level;
6. Develop a 10 Year Plan to end homelessness with strong community buy-in.

### The City's Role

Though not a direct service provider, the City of Colorado Springs is committed to engaging with service providers, business leaders, policy-makers and the public to promote community-wide collaboration and champion and invest in strategies that prevent and end homelessness in our community.

The long term intent is to build a 10 year community plan that enhances the significant work already being done, expedites new strategies to prevent and end homelessness, funnels new dollars to those strategies, and fosters an effective system to manage and deliver services. Over the next two years, the goal is to draw attention to the most pressing needs and invest available dollars immediately to address problems nearing crisis status. Some strategies will be quickly executed, while others may require more time and policy work. A schedule of action items to be completed by the City in 2014 is listed in the full plan.

### Funding

At least \$5 million can be made available over the next two years from existing resources to fund strategies in the plan. Sources of funds include:

- **Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG).** CDBG funds can be used for a wide array of activities including but not limited to: housing rehabilitation, construction or rehabilitation of public facilities and infrastructure, removal of architectural barriers and public services.
- **HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME).** HOME funds can be used for activities including acquisition, construction, rehabilitation, and tenant-based rental assistance.
- **Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG).** ESG funds can be used for street outreach, emergency shelter, homeless prevention and rapid rehousing and HMIS.

In addition, City staff will continue to identify and secure competitive grants. Previously awarded competitive grants include:

- **HUD CoC Program.** Funds support transitional and permanent housing
- **State ESG.** Funds support shelters and transitional housing. Activities include prevention, rapid rehousing, case management, and relocation/stabilization.

Finally, the City's Executive Branch will continue to recommend investment of General Fund revenues for activities that prevent and end homelessness and support affordable housing. Funded activities have included the Homeless Outreach Team Officers (4), program grants, transit passes, and emergency shelter security.

## Leadership and Engagement

Communities effective in addressing homelessness have strong leadership and community buy-in and a program of measuring and reporting on plan outcomes.

- Assign a senior staff person from the City to be the point person in implementing the plan. This staff person will maintain communicate with the Mayor and City Council, and coordinate with the CoC leadership, homeless advocates, service providers, businesses and neighborhoods.
- Establish a Trustee Committee to execute the planning and implementation process. The council shall include members from diverse segments of the community, including a member who has personally experienced homelessness.
- The leadership team will provide an annual update to the community on the City's performance in achieving the goals in the plan.

### Trustee Committee Members

- Suzi Bach
- Lance Bolton, Pikes Peak Community College
- Benjamin Broadbent, First Congregational Church
- Carol Bruce-Fritz, Community Health Partnership
- Mike DeGrant, HBA Cares
- Nechie Hall, Fine Arts Center
- Deborah Hendrix, CD Global Training
- Kathy Hybl
- Councilwoman Jan Martin
- Chris Melcher
- Greg Papineau, Biggs Kofford
- Eric Phillips, Community Partnership Project
- Chris Riley, Fire Chief
- Andre Spencer, Harrison School District #2
- Jason Wood, Pikes Peak United Way

## Facts on Homelessness in Colorado Springs

Homelessness rates continue to persist at unacceptable levels in our community. The costs of homelessness are significant in both actual dollars and public perceptions about the safety and vitality of our community.

- In 2010, 80.8% of female headed households with children lived below the poverty level.<sup>1</sup>
- Over 1,350 families are on the Colorado Springs Housing Authority waiting list for 705 public housing units. Families with a disabled member comprise 33% of the waiting list and families with children comprise 47%. At current turnover rates, it would take more than 10 years to accommodate the current waiting list.
- The estimated cost to serve a single chronically homeless person in Colorado Springs is \$57,760 per year.<sup>2</sup> That number includes medical treatment, incarceration, police intervention and emergency response. Research suggests that costs drop significantly – by as much as \$30,000 annually according to one study – when a person is placed in permanent supportive housing.<sup>3</sup>
- Of the 1,171 homeless persons surveyed in the El Paso County point in time survey conducted by the Pikes Peak United Way in January 2013, 33% were families with children, 31% identified as chronic drug abusers, 26% were experiencing severe mental illness, 14% were veterans and 14% were victims of domestic violence.
- The chronically homeless, who impact downtown commerce the most, are disproportionately impacted by substance abuse and mental illness.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> City of Colorado Springs. (2012). *Analysis of impediments to fair housing choice*.

<sup>2</sup> Hanson, J., Phd. (2013). *Cost to care for homeless in Colorado Springs*.

<sup>3</sup> Larimer, M., Malone, D., Garner, M., Atkins, D., Burlingham, B., Lonczak, H.; & Tanzer, K. (2009). Health care and public service use and costs before and after provision of housing for chronically homeless persons with severe alcohol problems. *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 301(13) pp. 1349, 1357. doi 10.1001/jama.209.414. Retrieved from [www.jama.jamanetwork.com](http://www.jama.jamanetwork.com).

<sup>4</sup> Pikes Peak United Way. Point in time count conducted January 2013.