



Colorado Coalition for the Homeless: Denver Housing First Collaborative (DHFC) Denver, Colorado

Overview

In 2003, the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) created the Denver Housing First Collaborative (DHFC).¹ The Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to work towards the creation of lasting solutions for homeless families and individuals by integrating housing, healthcare and support services.² CCH is the lead agency in the DHFC in collaboration with Denver Department of Human Services, Denver Health and Hospitals Association, Arapahoe Housing Substance Treatment, the Mental Health Center of Denver, and the Denver VA Medical Center. As one of 11 programs funded nationally through HUD and the Ending Chronic Homeless Initiative program, DHFC seeks to provide disabled, chronically homeless individuals with permanent supportive housing. With a capacity of 100, DHFC received 622 applications by its sixth month of operation. With a housing first approach, DHFC provides its clients with assertive community treatment (ACT) that includes services in integrated health, mental health, substance abuse and general support. In 2005, CCH established a second Housing First ACT team to serve 80 chronically homeless individuals targeted to those with mental health and substance treatment issues living on the streets in Downtown Denver.

Services

The Coalition's Stout Street Clinic, which treated 13,364 unduplicated homeless individuals in 2010, serves as the primary source of CCH's health care services. This Health Care for the Homeless program provides integrated primary health care, mental health care, and substance treatment services at its main clinic, in two satellite clinics, and through a Mobile Medical Clinic. Services are provided through staff physicians, psychiatrists, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, LCSW's and other professional staff. CCH also is the lead agency in the Denver Street Outreach Collaborative, providing street outreach from 6 am to 10 pm seven days per week. CCH has developed and manages more than 1,500 affordable and supportive housing units throughout Colorado, and administers more than 800 rental assistance vouchers (Section 8, Shelter plus Care and HOME TBRA) for homeless families and individuals. CCH operates a Benefits Acquisition and Retention Team program, utilizing an enhanced SOAR approach, as well as providing employment counseling, and childcare. Housing services include housing referrals, counseling, landlord/tenant advocacy, housing search assistance, life skills training, and on-site housing quality inspections.

¹ Colorado Coalition for the Homeless. "Denver Housing First Collaborative: Cost Benefit Analysis & Program Outcomes Report, Executive Summary": http://www.coloradocoalition.org/userfiles/Housing/Executive_Summary_DHFC_study.pdf

² Colorado Coalition for the Homeless. 2010. What We Do: "Overview".
http://www.coloradocoalition.org/what_we_do/what_we_do_overview.aspx

Outcomes

Twenty-four month period (as compared to the 24 months prior to entry):

- Overall reduction of emergency services costs by 72.95%; average emergency services cost reduction of \$31,545 per person
- 77% of program participants initially housed are still housed in the program
- 50% of participants have improved their health status
- 43% improved mental health status
- 15% decreased substance abuse
- 64% improved overall quality of life
- 34% obtained SSI, SSDI, VA or OAP disability benefits through assistance by the program
- Avg monthly income increased from \$185 at entry to \$431 currently
- Inpatient visits decreased by 66%; inpatient nights decreased by 80%
- 84% reduction in average detox costs
- 76% reduction in days incarcerated and incarceration costs
- Shelter cost savings for 150 participants: \$4.7 million over 2 years
- Average cost change per person (pre-post program entry): \$4,745; projected savings for 150 participants: \$711,734

The DHFC continues to experience significant housing stability for participants (81% in 2009), as well as improvements in health and mental health status.

Major Funding Sources

- HUD funding through Ending Chronic Homelessness Initiative.
- HRSA Health Care for the Homeless Program
- SAMHSA Treatment for Homeless Persons Program
- PATH
- Medicaid
- HUD Continuum of Care Funding
- Denver's Road Home

Engaged Partners

- Denver Department of Human Services
- Denver Health and Hospital Authority
- Arapahoe House
- The Mental Health Center of Denver
- The Denver VA Medical Center
- Denver's Road Home

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