Effective Programs to End Homelessness

HOUSING COLORADO CONFERENCE
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2019

CATHY ALDERMAN, VP COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC POLICY, COLORADO COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

RANDLE LOEB, COMMUNITY ACTIVIST

BLAINE PELLICORE, FOUNDER, HOUSING FIRST LAB

STEPHANIE MILLER, CEO, DELORES PROJECT
Defining Homelessness

**CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS**
- Entrenched in the shelter
- Likely to be older
- Often have disabilities and substance use disorders
- Represent small proportion of population vs transitionally homeless

**TRANSITIONAL HOMELESSNESS**
- Generally enter shelter system for short period of time
- Likely to be younger and recently housed
- Often become homeless due to catastrophic event
- Account for the majority of population given higher rate of turnover

**EPISODIC HOMELESSNESS**
- Frequently shuttle in and out of homelessness
- Most likely to be young
- Often are chronically unemployed
- Likely have physical and mental health disabilities and substance use disorders
Homelessness in Colorado

Point-in-Time (HUD)

10,857 individuals
1,073 are veterans
2,738 are chronically homeless
3,250 individuals in families
593 are unaccompanied youth

Students (Dept of Ed)

23,089 Students
2,742 Shelter, transitional, awaiting foster
979 Unsheltered
17,294 Doubled-Up
2,074 Motels/Hotels

Considerations:

Expanded Definition
Over the period of a year
siblings, parents, guardians, etc.
Broken Systems

- Minimum Wage vs Cost of Living
- Access to Healthcare
- Criminal Justice System
- Generational Poverty
- Discrimination
- Job Opportunities
- Affordable Housing Shortage

Generational Poverty
SHORTAGE OF RENTAL UNITS

For every 100 Colorado families living at 80% AMI, there are 93 available and affordable units.

In contrast, for every 100 families living at 30% AMI, there are only 28 units.
Out of Reach in Colorado

- $25.33 wage needed for a 2-bedroom unit
- $1,317 for a Fair Market Rent 2-bedroom unit
- 91 hours at minimum wage for 2-bedroom unit
- $11.10 minimum wage in Colorado
Colorado Renters and Home Owners Severely Cost Burdened by Region

Source: HUD CHAS data, based on 2010-2014 American Community Survey
Homeownership is out of reach for 4 in 10 Coloradans.

In La Plata County 1 in 4 homeowners are cost burdened.

40% homeowners have a household income of $75,000 or more.

Most cost burdened households (90%) have incomes of $20,000 or less.
Personal Barriers

- Mental Illness
- Job Loss
- Physical Disability
- Eviction
- Domestic Violence
- Family Break-up
- Unexpected or Expensive Bills
- Substance Use Disorder
Trauma

Trauma is often the cause, but always the result, of homelessness.
Connect with the Coalition

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@Colorado Coalition for the Homeless

YouTube
@CCHLastingSolutions
A Right and Wrong Way to Respond to the Crisis of Homelessness

RANDLE LOEB
FIRST – The WRONG Response:

The State of Homelessness in America – The Council of Economic Advisers – September 2019 from the Office of the President of the United States

The White House’s Ill-Advised Analysis of Homelessness

CAUSES

- Housing costs due to over-regulation – focused on single-family homes
- Conditions of sleeping outside – are too easy
- Supply of shelter facility – implies that more facilities creates more homelessness
- Personal characteristics – mental health, substance use, not working

SOLUTIONS (??)

- Remove regulations in housing market – create more single-family homes
- Supporting more police activity on streets
- Give HUD more flexibility with federal homelessness assistance funding for communities to utilize services participation requirements and more strongly encouraging self-sufficiency
Responses from Leading National Homelessness Organizations

- National Coalition for the Homeless Response:
  “...on its face absurd, and uses faulty logic, statistics and policy prescriptions to give cover to the President’s recently stated desire to crack down on the homeless by criminalizing and warehousing people experiencing homelessness – not to help end their misery, but to alleviate the impact of street homelessness on real estate investors and businesses.”

- National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty Response:
  “...ignores and directly contradicts the evidence-based consensus of 19 of his own agencies. Last year, those agencies published the Federal Strategic Plan to End Homelessness, stating that housing, low barrier shelter, and decriminalization is the best way to end homelessness.”

- National Low Income Housing Coalition Response:
  “...combines cherry-picked data, faulty analysis and wildly inaccurate diagnosing of both the problem and its solutions. In addition to getting the fundamentals of homelessness wrong, their policy prescriptions completely miss the mark.”

- National Alliance to End Homelessness Response:
  “The White House Council of Economic Advisers’ recent report, “The State of Homelessness in America” reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of homelessness, the programs that end homelessness, and the people who experience it. The authors cast doubts, refute progress, and offer disparate theories, while offering no realistic solutions.”
The RIGHT Response = HOUSING FIRST

- It is built on the principle that having a permanent home can make solving health and social problems much easier.
- The Housing First principle is guided by the notion that having a place to live is both a human right and a basic right.
- A dwelling is not a reward that a homeless person receives once their life is back on track. Instead, a dwelling is the foundation on which the rest of life is put back together.
- There is ample evidence from many countries that shows it is always more cost-effective to aim to end homelessness instead of simply trying to manage it. Investment in ending homelessness always pays back, to say nothing of the human and ethical reasons.
The RIGHT Response: Housing FIRST

1. Housing enables independent lives
   - The person who is homeless can go straight to living in a rental apartment without temporary arrangements. Health and social problems are addressed when housing is permanent and domestic peace is guaranteed.

2. Respect of choice
   - The client has the opportunity to choose from treatments and services. If the client does not want to completely give up intoxicants, they are not forced into doing so.

3. Rehabilitation and empowerment of the resident
   - Staff meet and treat the client as an equal. Interaction with the client aims at building trust and an atmosphere of communality, which help the client to rehabilitate and empower themselves on their own terms.

4. Integration into the community and society
   - A home is a prerequisite for the resident being able to organize their own life and to feel involved in it and their environment.
The RIGHT Response:

HOUSING FIRST

- **Here’s how Finland solved its homelessness problem**
  - The homeless are given permanent housing on a normal lease. That can range from a self-contained apartment to a housing block with round-the-clock support. Tenants pay rent and are entitled to receive housing benefits. Depending on their income, they may contribute to the cost of the support services they receive. The rest is covered by local government.
  - At the same time as being given a home, they receive individually tailored support services.

SYSTEMS APPROACH

- Solving Homelessness from a Complex Systems Perspective: Insights for Prevention Responses
  - Delivery of housing plus supports leverages interorganizational networks composed of governmental and nongovernmental agencies. Formal and informal partnerships work together to screen and respond to individuals and families experiencing housing crises.
Blaine Pellicore
Founder, HousingFirst Lab

Key learnings from Housing First models

Blaine Pellicore
Founder, HousingFirst Lab
Housing First is a proven solution to homelessness

**Housing First**

A homeless assistance approach that prioritizes housing without precondition

1. Immediate access to permanent housing **without precondition**
2. **Consumer choice** and self-determination
3. Individualized, **client-driven supports** and recovery orientation

![Bar chart showing Participants in stable housing after 1 year](#)

- **Housing First***: 100% participants in stable housing after 1 year
- Usual care: 0%

Note: Study of Seattle Downtown Emergency Service Center. N = 182 ***p < .001

Source: “Housing First as an effective model for community stabilization among vulnerable individuals with chronic and nonchronic homelessness histories” (Brown et al, 2016, *Journal of Community Psychology*)
There are two primary models of Housing First interventions.

**Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)**
- Renter pays **no more than 30% of income** in perpetuity.
- **Intensive case management** and support services available.
- Targeted at **most vulnerable** populations.

**Rapid Rehousing (RRH)**
- Rent is **partially subsidized for 6-24 months**.
- **Some case management** and support services available.
- Targeted at populations more **likely to achieve self-sufficiency**.
Innovative Housing First models have demonstrated success outside of Colorado

**Hearth, Inc.**  
Boston, MA  
Congregate living communities for formerly homeless, independent seniors  

- **500 older adults** served annually  
- **188 units** of Hearth housing capacity

**The Infinity Project**  
Boys & Girls Clubs of Calgary (Canada)  
Permanent, scattered-site housing in a community of choice, with financial and transitional supports  

- **85% housing retention** over 2 years  
- **65% achieved stable income** within 6 months (of those over 18 years old)
Multiple examples of innovative Housing First models are taking root within metro Denver

**Tiny Homes**
Colorado Village Collaborative  
Self-governed communities of 10-15 low-cost units  

- **10 of 12 residents** still housed after 9 months  
- **80%+ of neighbors** reported positive or no impact on surrounding neighborhood

**Delores Apartments**
The Delores Project & Rocky Mountain Communities  
PSH w/ trauma-informed design  

- **35 units** reserved for individuals experiencing homelessness  
- **95 units** of low-income workforce housing

**Abrigo Apartments**
Community Solutions  
Privately funded mixed-income veteran housing  

- **$2.5M** of $7.5M total cost raised through social impact equity (return capped at 3%)  
- **7 years** to return social impact investment (with 3% IRR)
Despite robust research, some large questions around Housing First models still remain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programmatic</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ PSH for chronically homeless</td>
<td>❑ Implementation fidelity of newer models (e.g. RRH)</td>
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<td>❑ Lighter touch interventions for less vulnerable populations (e.g. RRH)</td>
<td>❑ Landlord participation</td>
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<td>❑ Optimal combination of support services for populations with different needs</td>
<td>❑ Shortage of financing and availability of affordable housing</td>
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<td>❑ Optimal length and amount of rent subsidies</td>
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Scattered-site and project-based housing have similar outcomes, but may be best suited for different populations.

- Scattered site***
  - Housing choice (proximity to family and public transit)
  - Independence

- Project-based***
  - Community atmosphere
  - Centrally located support services

- Treatment as usual
  - Requires landlord participation
  - Isolation
  - Longer case manager travel times
  - Concentration of substance or behavioral health issues
  - Difficulty separating case mgmt and housing mgmt

Note: N = 800 households. ***p < .001
Source: “A Randomized Trial Examining Housing First in Congregate and Scattered Site Formats” (Somers et al, 2017, PLOS ONE); “Identifying Variability in Permanent Supportive Housing: A comparative effectiveness approach to measuring health outcomes” (Dickson-Gomez et al, 2017, AM J Orthopsychiatry)
Social and tangible support services significantly increase likelihood of retaining housing

Indexed likelihood of retaining subsidized housing

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Indexed Likelihood</th>
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<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social capital/companionship services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instrumental/tangible services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informational services</td>
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Note: N = 757 locations across 7 states. **p < .01 (effect of informational services not statistically significant)
Source: “Impact of services on retaining subsidized housing” (Plassmeyer, Brisson, Lechuga-Pena, 2018, *Journal of Urban Affairs*)

“Households who used more of both services [social capital and instrumental] compounded their odds of retaining housing with each additional service they utilized.”
Fidelity to the Housing First model varies across programs

Average program fidelity score (out of 4)
Sample of eight VA medical centers 1 year after Housing First adoption

- No sobriety or treatment preconditions: 3.6
- Rapid placement into permanent housing: 3.3
- Prioritization of the most vulnerable: 3.1
- Sufficient support services available in a community context: 2.5
- Modern recovery philosophy: 2.4

Note: 8 locations sampled, serving over 5,500 veterans (2011-2014).
Source: “Housing First on a Large Scale: Fidelity Strengths and Challenges in the VA’s HUD-VASH Program” (Kertesz et al, 2017, Psychological Services)
THANK YOU
MISSION: Provides dignified shelter, housing, and supportive services in a caring environment where individuals can find the stability to move beyond homelessness to increased self-determination.

Arroyo Village is a partnership between The Delores Project and Rocky Mountain Communities. It is a community encompassing a full housing continuum from emergency shelter, extended stay shelter, supportive housing, and work-force housing under one roof.
Shelter
First brand new, fully trauma–informed care shelter in the Denver area. Harm reduction and low-barrier models of service.
• Week long emergency beds;
• Six-month extended stay, housing-focused shelter program

Supportive Housing
Supportive Housing provides one bedroom apartments and supportive services for formerly chronically homeless individuals with disabilities making below 30% of the area median income. Individualized services will help residents eliminate barriers to maintaining their housing.

Work Force Housing
Rocky Mountain Communities will operate 95 one, two, and three bedroom apartments for individuals and families making 30% to 50% of the area median income.

Arroyo Village allows The Delores Project to continue increasing its success in moving guests from Emergency Shelter to Stabilized Housing.

| 60 | Shelter Beds |
| 35 | Supportive Housing Units |
| 95 | Work-Force Housing Units |

Arroyo Village
Every night in 2019, at least 1,171 Women and 41 Transgender/Gender non-conforming Individuals are experiencing Homelessness in Metro Denver.

The Delores Project serves 30% of that population annually.

From July 2018 to June 2018, The Delores Project served...

- 365 Individuals
- 19,072 Bed Nights
- 61,175 Meals
Faces of Arroyo Village