



Executive Summary

Denver's Road Home (www.denversroadhome.org) began in October 2003 in response to an increasing rise in homeless persons in the City & County of Denver and a mounting increase in public safety concerns. At that time, Mayor Hickenlooper convened a commission to develop and recommend a comprehensive plan seeking to address the root causes of homelessness and bring an end to homelessness for the Denver community. This plan is unique in its approach to not just serve the chronically homeless, but to offer opportunities and hope to all persons living on the street, in shelters or doubled up with friends and family in Denver, with a singular emphasis on persons and families whose incomes are at or below 30% area median income (those most in need and hardest to serve).

Forty-one commissioners and 350 community volunteers conducted a comprehensive research and planning process over the course of 18 months to develop a plan with eight primary goals focused on:

- Permanent and transitional housing
- Emergency shelter systems
- Prevention
- Services
- Public Safety and Outreach
- Education, Training & Employment
- Community Awareness & Coordinated Responses
- Zoning, Urban Design & Land Use

The plan was approved by Denver City Council and Mayor Hickenlooper in 2005 and was implemented in July 2005. For this plan to be successful, it is imperative that the community (public and private sectors, the foundation community, faith-based organizations, service delivery providers, community members and service recipients) own this initiative and continue to mobilize resources in order to achieve the ambitious goals affect systemic change.

From the beginning the citizens of Denver were promised a plan with achievable and sustainable goals with measurable action steps, as well as a plan that emphasizes collaborative efforts and accountability from all people of the Denver community. To this end, national evaluators specializing in research and assessment in the field of homeless issues have agreed to oversee the evaluation. Moreover, Denver is now part of a Model Cities program funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness to study best practices across the nation.

We believe the end result has both compassion and accountability. We worked to create a balance of service delivery such as housing, treatment services and job training with the expectation of responsibility and self-reliance from those who receive services (for example, participants must participate in social service programs and pay 30% of their income for housing).

Just two years into the initiative, there is evidence that Denver's Road Home is responding with an **11% reduction in overall homelessness and a 36% decrease in chronic homelessness**. During our first two years, in collaboration with the extraordinary leadership of our homeless providers, we have accomplished the following:

- 789 new units of housing have been developed.
- 2,455 homeless people have been assisted in finding work.
- 2,003 individuals accessed public benefits and treatment services.
- 563 families received eviction assistance.
- 132 homeless persons entered housing through the Denver Street Outreach Collaboration.
- 233 families have been partnered with our faith-based mentoring teams.

While we are encouraged by this process, the 2007 MDHI Point in Time Data for the City and County of Denver tells us that there is much more work to be done.

- **In Denver County, almost 40% of homeless respondents reported that they had received money from work in the past month.**
In 2005, 23% of homeless respondents indicated that they had a part time or full time job in the past year, and 19% indicated that they had worked in day labor. [A direct comparison cannot be made between 2005 and 2007 because the question is different (2007 asks for income whereas 2005 asks about employment and type of job) and the time frame is different (comparing last month to last year).]
- **There were over 600 homeless households with children, totaling 1,563 individual people. Of these households, 465 were single parent families. Twenty-nine percent of homeless respondents in Denver were women.**
In 2005, there were 505 homeless households with children- of those, 396 were single parent families. In 2005, 38% of respondents were women.
- **The most commonly reported reason for homelessness reported in Denver was loss of a job (28%), followed by relationship or family break up (20%) and substance abuse (19%).**
In 2005, loss of a job was the most commonly reported reason for homelessness (40%) followed by relationship or family break up (19%) and substance abuse (19%).
- **In 2007 there were 638 newly homeless respondents**. Including accompanying family members, 1,025 total people were newly homeless. Of these, 57% were in households with children.**
In 2005, there were 485 newly homeless respondents.

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