

Introduction

We can only solve a problem to the extent that we understand it.

If we want to make homelessness rare, short-lived and non-recurring in Fort Collins, then we need actionable data: City-level data that quantifies the problem, measures our impact and highlights the barriers that prevent people from staying housed or escaping homelessness.

This report (to be produced quarterly) seeks to provide just that.

It is the product of Homeless Gear's Housing First Initiative (HFI)—a new program and partnership between Homeward 2020 and the Murphy Center—and it synthesizes data from the Murphy Center, Homeless Gear's other programs and numerous community partners.

Above all, it is a barometer—an attempt to answer the questions: can we move the needle? What more can we do?

Definitions

- Unless otherwise noted, the data in this report pertains only to individuals who have been homeless in Fort Collins for six months or longer. We identified 312 such individuals, and obtained extensive data on more than 200.
- This criterion (six months or longer) is more inclusive than the federal government's definition of chronic homelessness, and should therefore not be compared to annual Point-in-Time counts.
- This report does not represent everyone who is homeless in Fort Collins.
- This report includes data points from Homeless Gear, Catholic Charities, the Fort Collins Rescue Mission, Outreach Fort Collins, the Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement System (CAHPS) group and multiple agencies at the Murphy Center.
- The data in this report reflects the period of July through September, 2017.

Quarter 1 Baseline Data (July through September, 2017)

This is the first HFI quarterly report, so comparative data points (and trends) are not yet available. They will be included in future reports.

RARE: Number of people who are homeless.

312

people have been homeless for six months or longer in Fort Collins and

8

people who had been homeless for at least six months escaped homelessness during the quarter

Median age: 46 years old

Gender

Male _____ 69%

Female _____ 30%

Androgynous _____ 1%

Disability Status

Yes _____ 70%

No _____ 30%

Veteran Status

Veteran _____ 12%

Non-Veteran _____ 88%

the Murphy Center served an additional

400

people (approximately) who identified as homeless in the month of September

Most people escape homelessness in less than six months

SHORT-LIVED: Length of time people experience homelessness.

The median length of time a person was homeless prior to engaging with HFI was

13 months

vs

The median length of time a person was homeless after engaging with HFI was

1 month

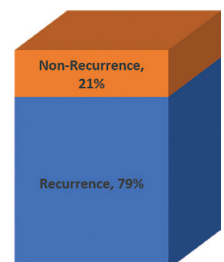
from a sample size of 3 individuals who were housed with HFI support



From 1996 through 2017, Cliff was homeless for a combined 14 years—consecutively for the past nine. HFI identified and prioritized Cliff (based on vulnerability and length-of-time homeless in Fort Collins). Then, HFI, Catholic Charities, Housing Catalyst, the CAHPS group and others provided Cliff with wraparound support. Within two months, Cliff secured housing at Redtail Ponds.

NON-RECURRING: Number of times people experience homelessness.

Future reports will include housing-retention data for the people who we help escape homelessness. This graph represents the 312 individuals who have been homeless for six months or longer: the blue represents those who have been homeless more than once (recurrence), and the orange represents those who are homeless for the first time (non-recurrence).

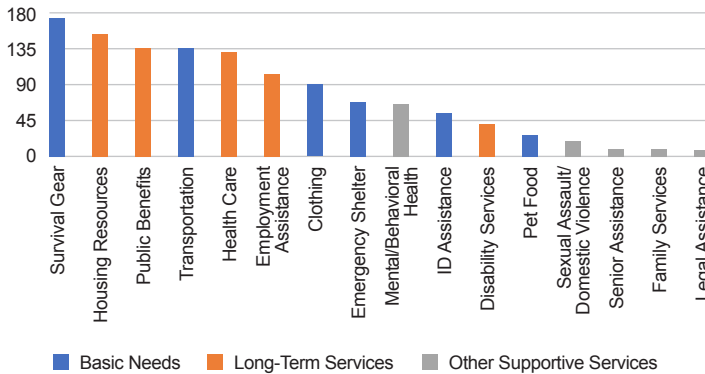


Housing First Initiative (HFI) Quarterly Report: Quarter 1

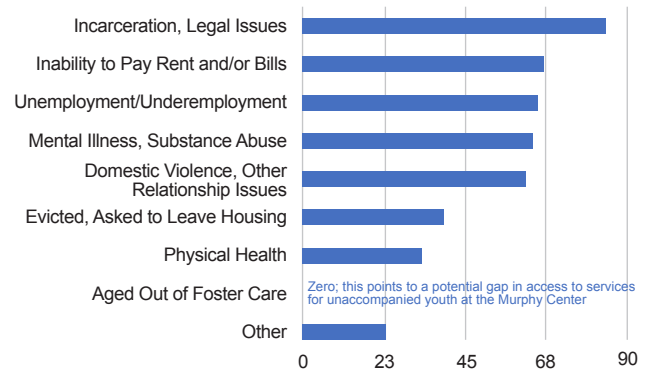
Additional Data

Survey respondents selected one or multiple categories for the graphics below. The results reflect the complexity of the issue and the **balance between the need to survive and the desire to thrive**. They also speak to the **importance of a housing-first approach**—housing reduces the need for survival services.

What Do You Need?
(Identified by People Experiencing Homelessness)



Reasons People Become Homeless
(Identified by People Experiencing Homelessness)



Inside the Numbers

Strengths

- Most of the people we serve escape homelessness in less than six months. The 312 individuals on the HFI list represent about 15 percent of the people who visited the Murphy Center during the first nine months of 2017. Put another way: the existing Murphy Center collaborative—and other community partners—already help many people escape homelessness quickly.

Gaps

Future reports will help us identify and better-quantify gaps, but—based on our baseline data and conversations with key community partners—we plan to explore the following issues in future reports:

- Existing housing inventory (by housing type) and gaps in that inventory
- The difference between median income and median housing costs—are people making enough money to afford housing?
- The impact of healthcare costs and health-related needs on individuals' ability to secure housing
- Collaborative relationships between service providers and whether we can improve or expand those relationships to help more people find and retain housing

Structural Changes

- The Murphy Center expanded and improved its data-collection efforts to accommodate HFI. HFI provides the Murphy Center with an up-to-the-day list of its most-vulnerable guests; that allows the Murphy Center staff to prioritize high-needs individuals and refer lower-needs individuals, as appropriate.
- Homeless Gear adjusted its case-management process to streamline referrals from HFI. HFI refers individuals directly to several Homeless Gear programs.

Collaborations

Part of HFI's mission is to form partnerships (with employers, peer volunteers, landlords, agencies, etc.) that help people obtain and retain housing. Here are a few partnerships from the first quarter:

- Housing Catalyst, Neighbor to Neighbor and Ramblewood Apartments have, collectively, set aside 10 housing units for participants in HFI.
- About 30 volunteers have signed on to support HFI. Some of those volunteers serve as Direct Service Advocates, providing wraparound support to program participants.
- Catholic Charities and Outreach Fort Collins help us identify participants and provide ongoing case management/referrals.
- The Murphy Center's participating agencies (17) provide case consultation and immeasurable support
- The CAHPS group is a cross-county initiative that produces a by-name list of people experiencing homelessness in Larimer and Weld counties. HFI contributes names to that list and, along with several other agencies (e.g. Volunteers of America, Veterans Administration, Outreach Fort Collins, Neighbor to Neighbor and SummitStone Health Partners), provides case management to some of those individuals.

What's Next?

In its first quarter, HFI built its infrastructure, formed partnerships, and set the stage for future growth. Importantly, it helped us begin to identify what we know—and what we don't know.

HFI will continue to identify, quantify and evaluate information surrounding homelessness in Fort Collins, and, in some cases, fill gaps or pilot potential solutions.

In the reports to come, we will continue to provide actionable data about people experiencing homelessness in Fort Collins. What works, and what do we need more of? What prevents people from becoming homeless, what helps people escape homelessness, and what keeps people in their homes?

