



September 12, 2017

To: Fort Collins Mayor Troxel and City Council

From: Holly LeMasurier, Homeward 2020 Director

Re: Launch of new partnership program addressing chronic homelessness in Fort Collins

Homeward 2020

Homeward 2020 facilitates implementation of Fort Collins' Ten Year Plan to make homelessness rare, short-lived and non-recurring by serving distinct roles in the community – catalyst, convener, advocate and data-driver. Homeward 2020 maintains a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Fort Collins, affirming Homeward 2020's roles and service to the community guiding implementation of the community's Ten Year Plan. The ongoing work of Homeward 2020 strives to create a sustainable model of solutions to homelessness that are effective, efficient and responsive to our community, now and for the future.

Housing First Initiative

One aspect of Homeward 2020's current work is the Housing First Initiative (HFI), a partnership between Homeward Alliance and Homeward 2020. Homeward Alliance and Homeward 2020 developed a new staff position at Murphy Center for Hope, the HFI Program Director, to lead the partnership's program. The program serves people experiencing homelessness who are, and seek to be, residents of Fort Collins (eligible individuals are those who have resided in Fort Collins, while homeless, for a minimum period of six months). The HFI Director, Marla Cleary, and Homeward 2020 Director, Holly LeMasurier, work closely together to achieve shared goals:

- (a) Help an increased number of individuals and families in the City escape homelessness and, as a result, contribute to Homeward 2020's plan to make homelessness rare, short-lived and non-recurring; and
- (b) Leverage Murphy Center's existing infrastructure—and associated infrastructure of service providers—into providing better and more-proportionate services to people experiencing homelessness; and
- (c) Generate data that provides a clearer understanding of the state of homelessness in the City, and communicate that data to community stakeholders.

Key Data Points

The program will produce an accessible, up-to-date dashboard of data points to monitor our city's homeless response system, and housing solutions successes, by Homeward 2020's benchmark measures related to homelessness: rare, short-lived and non-recurring. The dashboard's desired data points include:

Rare

- Rates of entry into homelessness and effective diversion/preventions
- Reasons for becoming homeless

Short-Lived

- Length of time homeless
- Interventions/programs applied and impact

Non-Recurring

- Re-entries into homelessness
- Retention and factors

Reporting Deliverables

- Quarterly reports—written and oral—on program progress, lessons learned and key metrics (the first report will be available in October, following completion of the first quarter data, July-September).

- Real-time data dashboard on the state of homelessness in the City, including but not limited to: the number of individuals experiencing homelessness at any point in time and the number of individuals who have escaped homelessness since program inception (or from any point requested).
- A comprehensive, annual report describing and/or identifying program progress, the state of homelessness in the City and trends, strengths and gaps in the City's system of housing and homeless services.

Strategic Segmentation: A data-informed, client-based approach

The shared vision for Fort Collins is housing all of our community members experiencing homelessness, and the Housing First Initiative is piloting a new approach. It starts with a goal of identifying everyone who is experiencing long-term homelessness. Fort Collins outreach, shelters, police, service providers and community-at-large are helping to get qualifying community members in to the Murphy Center to be enrolled in the project. Stemming from the project's initial data collection and reporting process described above, the project will develop a profile of real-time clients and their housing support needs, currently estimated at 380 people. Intake and interview data will inform specific housing and support services needed to successfully house people experiencing homelessness in Fort Collins today. From this initial participant profile of hundreds of individuals in our community, the pilot group will be strategically segmented based upon their level and intensity of support and services needed in their housing placement and retention (low intensity, medium, high intensity).

After the group is segmented based on duration and intensity of needed resources (i.e. low, medium, high), 'pipelines' of appropriate, available, and housing-focused services will be aligned to each segment to streamline and accelerate housing success based on current assets and strategic injections of new resources. This client-centered approach will strive to align people with solutions to serve them rapidly, effectively and in scale and scope appropriate for their needs. Service providers will know accurate and real-time numbers of Housing First Initiative participants accessing, or waiting for, specific services. Meanwhile, real-time needs and gaps will become evident in the process, so appropriate resourcing can be evaluated and aligned. Services and supports demonstrating results can be bolstered and targeted for increased temporary or permanent investment.

Housing First Initiative Activities

Current project accomplishments include:

- Follow up interviews with initial participants to establish current status, housing and support needs
- Initial drafts of data-informed, user-centric segmentation, and associated key resources
- Documenting gaps and developing resource proposals (FTE, funding, volunteers, housing, etc.)
- Data entry to create Q1 project data baseline and anticipated ongoing dashboard tracking progress
- Outreach to property managers and landlords to increase 'low-barrier' and risk-mitigated housing 'pipelines'
- Outreach to shelters to collaboratively support participants moving toward housing placement
- Recruitment and training of Housing First Advocate volunteers to provide participant support
- Outreach to potential employers to hire participants seeking employment
- Developing a diverse 'menu' of ways to become involved in HFI and clearly and quickly invest in solutions

Conclusions

The goal of Housing First Initiative is to catalyze a durable, systemic transformation. Targeted injections of niche resources will strengthen capacity in the entire system and include both building on existing, effective assets and development of new partnerships and investments to fill gaps throughout the spectrum. Following the initial intense efforts and resources focused on housing the existing hundreds of people experiencing homelessness in this pilot, the system can be rescaled and maintained at right-sized levels to sustain long-term community resiliency and ensure ongoing, effective support is ready when needed. We will always need to work to make homelessness rare, short-lived and non-recurring, and new approaches, involving the broadest community participation, will succeed. When we are successful, Council and community can join the ranks of nationally renowned cities that effectively faced homelessness, and overcame our greatest local and national challenge together.

Contact

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