

Who We Are

Homeward 2020, now in the final phase of its ten-year plan to make homelessness rare, short-lived and non-recurring in Fort Collins, seeks to produce actionable, community-level data on the issue of homelessness and—equipped with that data—identify and promote solutions that increase housing options, housing placements and housing retention for people experiencing homelessness.

As part of that effort, Homeward 2020 and Homeward Alliance partnered in mid-2017 to create the Housing First Initiative (HFI): a two-year pilot project based at the Murphy Center. HFI collects City-level data on the issue of homelessness, pilots “housing-first” solutions and provides intensive case management to people who are chronically homeless.

HFI reports share local data and learning experiences, highlight new partnerships and identify trends and gaps.

Definitions

- This report does not represent everyone who is homeless in Fort Collins. The Murphy Center alone serves about 3,000 people each year, many of whom have been homeless for less than six months.
- Unless otherwise noted, the data in this report pertains only to individuals who have been homeless in Fort Collins for six months or longer. Sample sizes vary between data points.
- HFI’s definition of chronic homelessness (six months or longer in Fort Collins) is broader than the federal government’s definition of chronic homelessness.
- Reports include data from Homeward Alliance, Catholic Charities, Fort Collins Rescue Mission, Outreach Fort Collins, the Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement system group and other agencies in the community and at the Murphy Center.

Housing First Initiative (HFI)

Quarter 4 Report 2018



We envision a Fort Collins in which homelessness is rare, short-lived and non-recurring. The data in this report reflects the extent to which we are achieving those outcomes for people who have been homeless in Fort Collins for at least six months.

Q4 2018 Data (October through December)

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

40 people entered chronic homelessness

57 people were identified as inactive; they did not have contact with HFI for at least 90 days

22 people secured housing

Who is Escaping Homelessness?

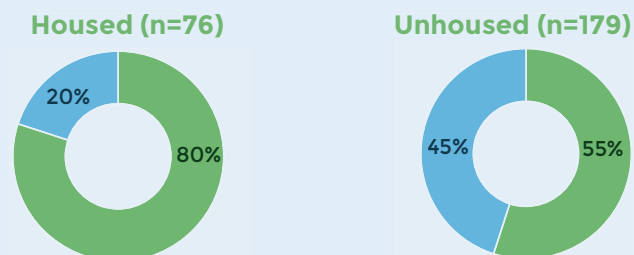
In 2018, 76 HFI participants escaped homelessness. More than 90% remained housed after six months.

Despite those successes, an even larger number of individuals (**179**) were homeless and on the HFI list at the start of 2018... and remained that way, status unchanged, for the year. So who is and is not escaping homelessness? And why?

The chart below shows that, among HFI participants, individuals who identified with at least one of three special populations--families with children, veterans or people with disabilities--were more likely to obtain housing in 2018. One reason: there are more housing subsidies and programs available to them.

Homelessness and Housing among Special Populations* (2018)

*Individuals with children, veterans or people with disabilities



Special Population (Self-Identified)

Not Special Population (Self-Identified)

Analysis: Housing is limited for everyone experiencing homelessness, but more opportunities exist for special populations. Nearly half of the individuals who were homeless for all of 2018--status unchanged on the HFI list--are single adults who do not fit into any of the three identified special populations. Those individuals can fall through the cracks, in many cases, because there are no or limited programs designed to serve them. As a community, we need housing options and supportive services for everyone who needs them.

The Dignity of Housing: John Finds a Home

Just a little over one year ago, John was running out of time. At 54, he was homeless and seriously ill, fighting a battle—terminal cancer—that cannot be prolonged, let alone won, without the stability of housing. John was also ready to start a new life with his partner, Katana, and their chihuahua, Hikaru.

John, Katana and Hikaru engaged for more than a year with staff and services at Catholic Charities, the Murphy Center, and elsewhere—and received a Housing Choice Voucher in late 2017. HFI helped the couple locate a unit, and the family moved into their new home in December 2017.

Now a year later, challenges remain. But the couple remains housed, together, and grateful for the little things. For Katana: the chance to get out of the elements. For John, something simpler: a place to rest.



Above: John and Katana embrace in their kitchen in June 2018. John's hospital visits have significantly decreased since the couple obtained housing.

Fort Collins FUSE!

It is a trend that holds true in both Fort Collins and in communities across the country: when it comes to people experiencing homelessness, a small percentage of the population consumes a large percentage of community resources (jails, hospitals, shelters, etc.). Importantly, that segment of the population is also the most vulnerable--most likely to die on the streets.

Fort Collins is undertaking a strategic project--known as Frequent Users System Engagement, or FUSE--to better serve "frequent utilizers": individuals who are unhoused or unsheltered with poorly-treated and persistent mental health challenges or brain injuries who frequently encounter police, lack housing access and social supports, and regularly utilize hospital emergency rooms, 911 and crisis responders, emergency shelters, jails and courts.

FUSE is a best-practice model, adopted by more than 30 communities nationwide, through which communities (a) identify frequent utilizers and (b) provide those individuals with permanent housing and wraparound support.

The Fort Collins project, already near implementation, will develop our local frequent utilizer response system protocols and provide project participants with coordinated and collaborative care. Many community partners in healthcare, housing, employment, legal assistance, courts, outreach, financial counseling, substance use, faith groups, peers in recovery, and others, will provide client-focused, wraparound supports. Most importantly, the project will create system changes to help address some of the roots of long-term homelessness in Fort Collins.

Homeward Alliance (through HFI) has applied for funding to hire a Clinical Case Manager in support of the project.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the FCFUSE Project Managers:
Holly LeMasurier, holly@homeward2020.org
Jess Fear, jfear@healthdistrict.org

www.homeward2020.org/be-strategic

The FUSE Model (courtesy of Corporation for Supportive Housing)

