

## 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 1 Report 2019



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.

## Q1 2019 Data (January through March)

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

**68** people entered chronic homelessness

**27** people were “discovered” (local individuals who were already experiencing long-term homelessness)

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

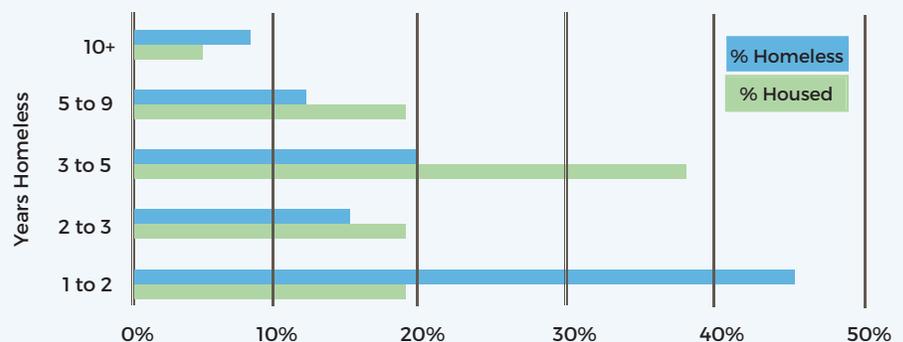
**23** people secured housing

## Stopping the Flow into Long-Term Homelessness

A significant plurality (45%) of people experiencing long-term homelessness in Fort Collins have been homeless for less than two years. However, the vast majority (81%) of people who have escaped long-term homelessness--since HFI began tracking in mid-2017--have been homeless for two years or longer.

### Length of Time Homeless\* among HFI Participants: Housed vs. Unhoused

\* For housed participants, refers to the length of time homeless prior to securing housing



**Analysis:** Fort Collins has made significant strides in helping to secure housing for individuals who had been homeless for three years or longer. Unfortunately, in the context of limited resources, hundreds of individuals slip into long-term homelessness each year.

HFI data helps us target interventions (housing, case management, mental-health services, employment, etc.) to these individuals, but clearly, we need to do more as a community. We must intervene earlier--with the prevention and housing solutions that we know work--to end the cycle of homelessness, once and for all.

## “We Know What to Do. We Know How to Do It.” Homeward 2020 Hosts Former USICH Director for Speaking Series and Strategy Sessions

Philip Mangano, former Executive Director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (2002 through 2009)--and a key participant in the creation of Homeward 2020 and Fort Collins' plan to make homelessness rare, short-lived and non-recurring--returned to Fort Collins in April with a rousing series of presentations and stakeholder meetings.

Homelessness in America, Mangano argued, is not only a tragedy for the individuals who experience it; it is also the inevitable consequence of poor or poorly-executed public policies. In that context, according to Mangano, we--as a society--have a moral, spiritual and humanitarian obligation to solve the problem... to fix the system that we created.

Citing the economic case for ending homelessness and the interventions that we know work (specifically, the cost savings associated with housing-first interventions), Mangano expressed optimism that society can solve the problem:

When it comes to individual homelessness, “We know what to do [and] we know how to do it,” he said, adding: “There is only one issue: scale.”



Philip Mangano, former USICH Director and current President and CEO of American Round Table to Abolish Homelessness. Photo courtesy of Associated Press.

### Spotlight: Murphy Center Evenings New Hours Lead to Increased Service Access, Improved Outcomes among Most Vulnerable

In December 2018, thanks to funding from the City of Fort Collins, the Murphy Center launched expanded evening hours: moving forward, from November through April, the Murphy Center will remain open until 10 PM on weekdays (instead of 5 PM).

The expanded hours filled a dangerous community gap: the lack of warming centers on weekday evenings during the most-brutal months of the year. But they also allowed programs--and HFI specifically--to access, build relationships with and provide meaningful services to people experiencing long-term homelessness.

Homeward Alliance plans to produce a report with more information on the expanded hours. Below are some key, preliminary results, reflecting data from December 2018 through April 2019:

**724** individuals recorded **8,258** check-ins

**535** hours of additional service access

**510** volunteer hours contributed

**11** Housing First Initiative participants accessed evening services and **escaped homelessness**

### Finding a Home... and Keeping it



John, a disabled veteran, became homeless in 2012. He was 63 years old.

He first visited the Murphy Center in November 2013, but he engaged in services only sporadically, slipping on and off the radar for years. In mid-2018, John began visiting the Murphy Center regularly, accessing health-related services and connecting with numerous onsite agencies.

When the weather turned cold, John began visiting the Murphy Center even more frequently, including 13 times during expanded evening hours. He began working with HFI's evening Case Manager regularly, working to obtain personal documents, budgeting his veterans' compensation and disability income, searching for housing and more.

In March 2019, after nearly seven years on the streets, John moved into a place of his own. The work, however, is not done:

HFI's Case Manager continues to engage regularly with John--at least 36 times since February--helping him obtain household items and manage day-to-day living, mediating landlord or tenant conflicts and more. That ongoing support is the cornerstone of long-term success for many people escaping chronic homelessness.