

ADAMS COUNTY

HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

On behalf of the Adams County Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Department, we would like to thank the work of our community partners. We could not have created this plan and continue to address homelessness in Adams County without your partnership. We would also like to extend our thanks to the Burnes Center on Poverty and Homelessness for paving the way to identifying and addressing the county's needs and opportunities.

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MISSION

Our mission is to create housing options that are safe, stable, healthy, and accessible for everyone so that homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time.

VALUES

We believe everyone has inherent worth, dignity, strengths, and power. The way we solve homelessness is to focus on the strengths of people with lived experience and to center the power with them.

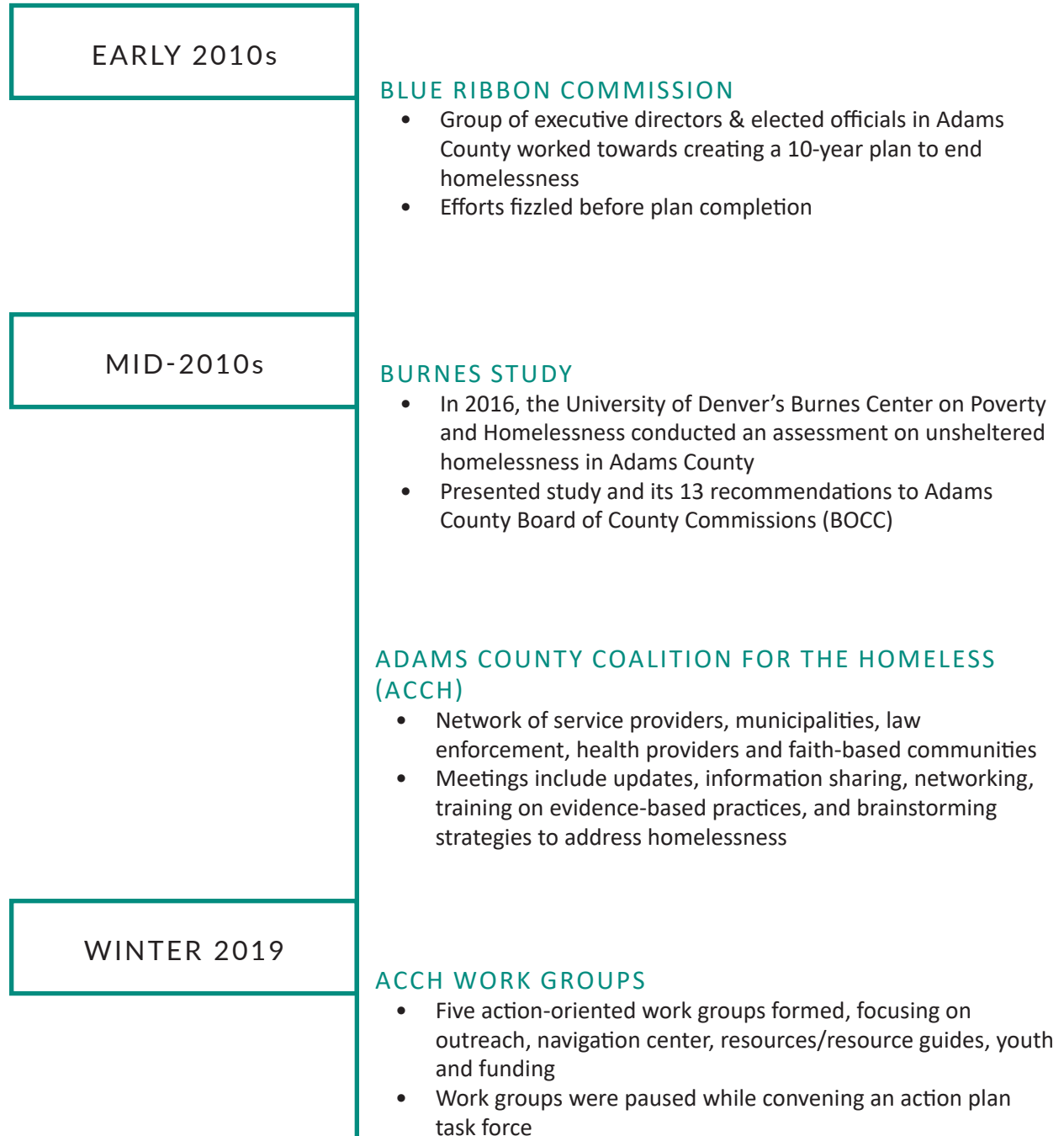
We believe people living in community is an antidote to homelessness. The power of relationships and social connection is the vehicle for change.

We believe institutions, structures, and systems cause social and racial inequities in poverty and housing. This is the cause of homelessness, not the people who are experiencing homelessness.

We believe the resources exist to solve homelessness. There are choices the community must make in order to access and align these resources.

INTRODUCTION

Addressing homelessness is not a new call-to-action in Adams County. Adams County needs direction and a road map to address and end homelessness. This plan provides the foundation of homelessness efforts in Adams County. It captures the current work being done in the County to address homelessness. It is also based on best practices of trauma-informed, harm reduction, and housing first models.¹ If followed, Adams County and its community partners will become closer to ensuring that homelessness is rare, brief and one-time. As seen below, previous efforts paved the way to where Adams County and its planning process is today.



SUMMER 2019

ACTION PLAN TASK FORCE

- Key community partners were recruited and began the process of the Homelessness Action Plan
- Task force met monthly, determined priority areas, mission statement and values, and collected crucial data and anecdotal information to support objectives.
- Monthly meetings were paused in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic

SUMMER 2020

HOMELESSNESS ACTION PLAN

- Adams County Community Safety & Well-Being took lead to drafting of the Homelessness Action Plan and requested feedback from task force and key community partners.
- Completion and presentation of the plan with the BOCC is anticipated for fall 2020.

EARLY 2020s

ACTION PLAN WORK GROUPS

- Adams County Community Safety & Well-Being (CSWB) and ACCH will develop
 - Strategies in reference to the information provided in this document
 - Bylaws for ACCH, including meeting frequency and scope, size, and evaluation of work group progress

1 Note: Descriptions of evidence-based practices can be found in the appendix

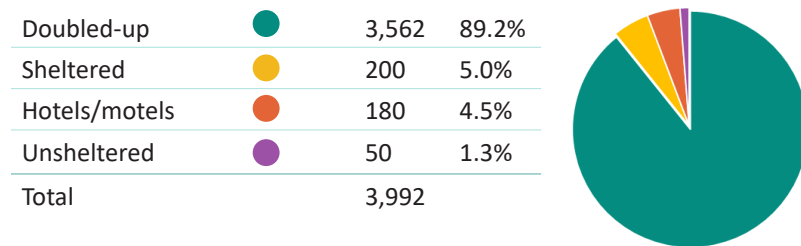
Building from previous work, particularly the 2016 Burnes Study, this document outlines the following:

- Goals: broad primary outcomes that, together, move us closer to forming a continuum of housing solutions.
- Strategies: the 'how' to achieve goals. Within each strategy, the following will be listed: lead/work group/partners, action steps (with timelines when applicable), as well as outcomes and resources when possible.
 - For strategies missing any component, further plan implementation is needed to define the details.
 - Strategies and action steps will be based on data-driven evaluation.
 - Note: The default lead is CSWB until a work group or partner is identified to spearhead the initiative. The current state of the CSWB does not have capacity to fulfill all of the strategies listed here. Developing this plan has been a collaborative effort, its implementation must continue its collaborative roots.
- Timeline: Each strategy will have an estimated time frame, including start and end date when possible. The timing is subject to change, especially during times of COVID-19.
 - As noted above, due to capacity of county staff and community partners, more experienced and/or trained staff will be required in order for strategies and action steps to start soon and with less time to complete the tasks.
- While this plan is missing desired outcomes and evaluation components, each strategy will undergo an evaluation as needed. This plan will undergo an annual review to ensure strategies and partnerships continue to be aligned and efficient.

HOMELESSNESS IN ADAMS COUNTY

The two main data sources that describe homelessness in Adams County include the McKinney-Vento definition and literal homelessness definition from the Point-in-Time Count. According to McKinney-Vento and Point-in-Time (PIT) data, families with children and unaccompanied youth are more likely to be in some type of temporary housing, such as being doubled-up due to economic hardships and shelter.

MCKINNEY-VENTO BY LIVING SITUATION



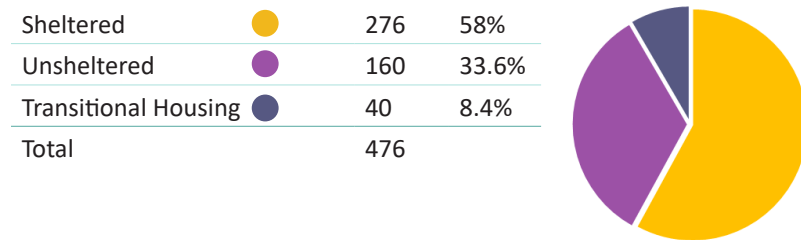
MCKINNEY-VENTO

Children in public school who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate residence; collected throughout the school-year.

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT (PIT)

The PIT occurs every January across the country. PIT data describes a community's literal homelessness and is considered a severe undercount of people experiencing homelessness.

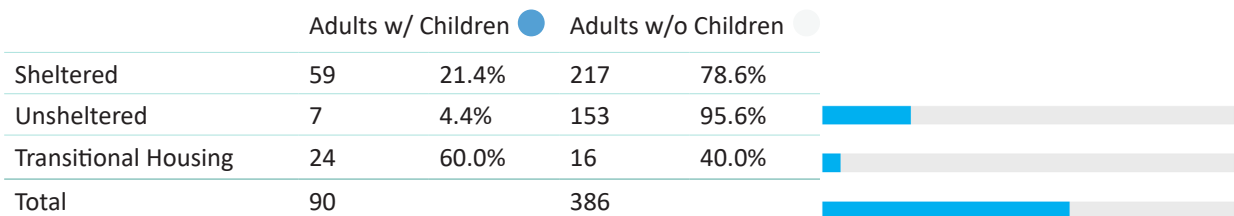
POINT-IN-TIME COUNT BY LIVING SITUATION



LITERAL HOMELESSNESS

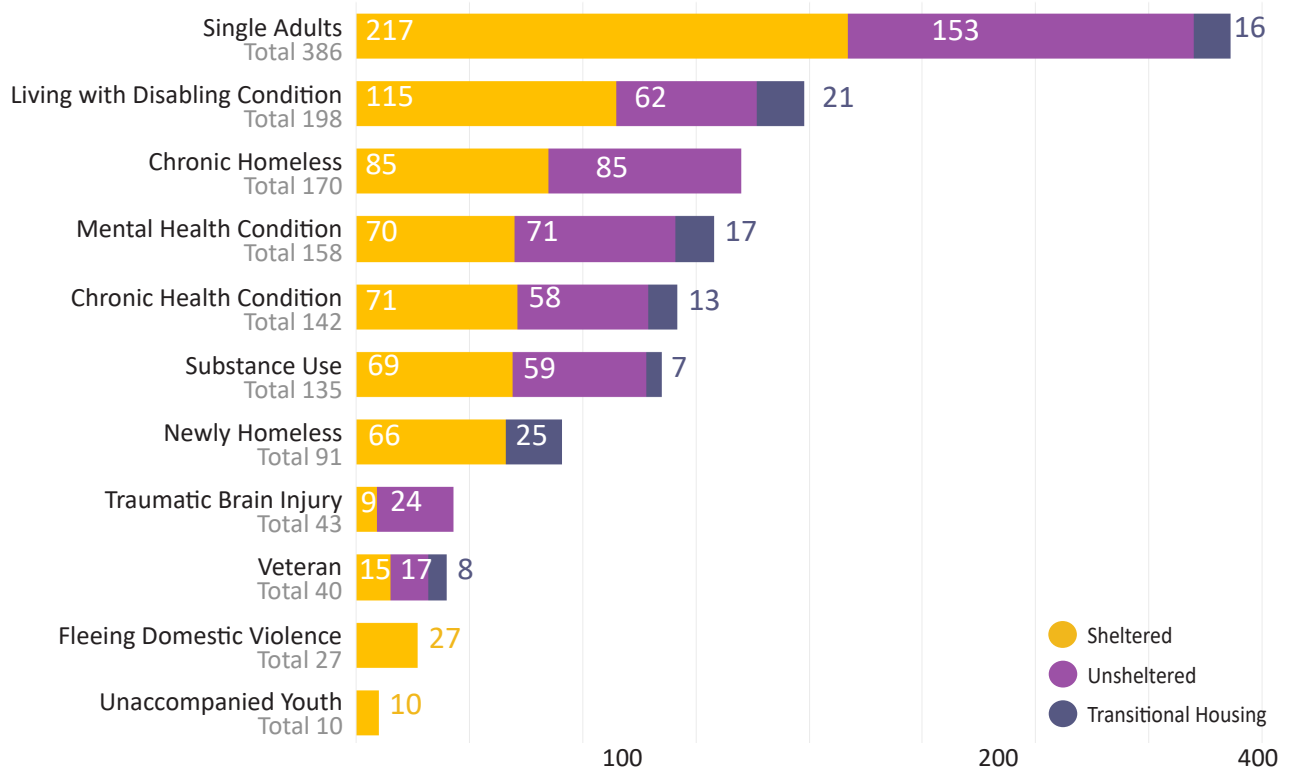
The US Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) defines chronic homelessness "as an individual living with a disability who is homeless and lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and has been homeless or living in conditions not meant for human habitation continuously for 1 year or on at least four separate occasions in the last 3 year".

LIVING SITUATION & HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE



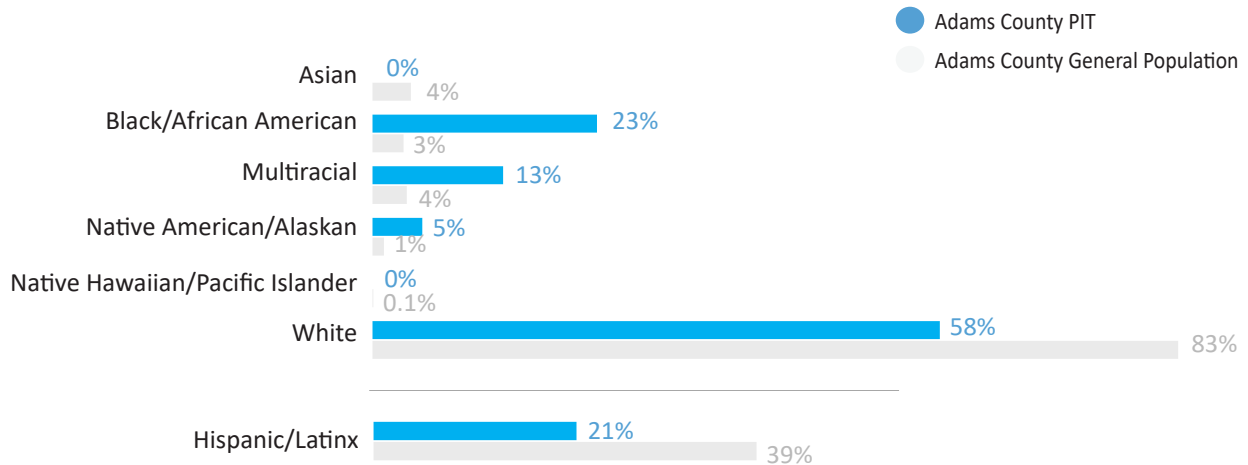
Sources: 2017-2018 USDE Data Submission for McKinney-Vento Education of Children & Youth Program; 2020 Point-in-Time Count Data, Metro Denver Homeless Initiative, For more information, visit the HUD Exchange: <https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-chronic-homelessness/>.

POINT-IN-TIME COUNT: POPULATIONS



POINT-IN-TIME COUNT: RACE & ETHNICITY

Compared to the overall demographics of Adams County, Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) are overrepresented in the homeless population. The 2020 PIT data shows racial disparities among people experiencing homelessness, especially among people who identify as Black, multiracial, and Native American.



HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN ADAMS COUNTY

Affordable housing is when a household doesn't exceed 30% of their income towards housing costs. If housing costs exceed 30%, it is considered cost burdened.

35%
renter-occupied units

\$1,270
median rent

\$66,517
median household income

\$46,025
median household income of renter-occupied units

\$12
minimum wage

\$624
rent affordable at minimum wage

30%
of Adams County households living with housing costs more than 30% of their income.

In Adams County, people working at a minimum wage of \$12 an hour has to work 81 hours a week to afford a 1-bedroom rental home at fair market rent.

To afford a 2-bedroom apartment, a renter would need to make \$30.12 an hour, or earn an annual salary of \$62,540, compared to the state with \$26.45 an hour and an annual salary of \$55,016.

4.4%
eviction rate
2.75% in Colorado

7.44
evictions per day

Renters who previously experienced involuntary displacement are 25% more likely to face long-term rental housing challenges than renters who did not. Forced relocation can also lead to renters staying in an unsafe living situation or becoming homeless.

SHELTER AVAILABILITY IN ADAMS COUNTY

There are currently four homeless shelters in Adams County: ACCESS Housing in Commerce City, Almost Home in Brighton, Cold Weather Care in Brighton and Thornton, and Comitis Crisis Center in Aurora. ACCESS Housing and Almost Home serves families with children experiencing homelessness, and Cold Weather Care and Comitis offers shelter to single adults experiencing homelessness.

85.5%
utilization rate
282 out of 330 shelter beds

72%
utilization rate, excluding Comitis
59 out of 82 shelter beds

Sources: American Community Survey Tables: 2014 -- 2018 (5-Year Estimates) (ACS18_5yr), ACS 2018 (5-Year Estimates), U.S. Census Bureau, Social Explorer; U.S. Census Bureau; The Eviction Lab, Princeton University; Out of Reach 2020: Colorado, National Low Income Housing Coalition; Matthew Desmond, Carl Gershenson, Barbara Kiviat, Forced Relocation and Residential Instability Among Urban Renters ;2019 HIC Report, HUD

THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19

A new report from Aspen Institute estimates 190,000 to 259,000 households (436,000 to 596,000 people) are at risk of eviction.² In Adams County, about 40,000 tenants are at high eviction risk.

In a recent report by Community Solutions, there is a projected 40% to 45% increase in homelessness.³ In Denver, an informal count found an increase in unsheltered homelessness, citing 665 tents (about 1,000 people one day).⁴

While this action plan does not explicitly plan for COVID-19 response, the goals, strategies, and action steps are flexible to attend to the greatest current need.

14.7%
US Unemployment Rate

UNMET NEEDS IN ADAMS COUNTY

Sources shown in the table below suggest the major unmet needs include affordable housing, transportation, food, and shelter services.

2017 ADAMS COUNTY COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT	2019 SURVEY OF SERVICE PROVIDERS ⁵	INTERVIEWS WITH PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE ⁶
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable & accessible housing Food assistance Accessible & affordable public transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable & accessible housing Shelter: day, severe weather, and overnight; especially low barrier Housing vouchers Hotel vouchers Rental assistance Access to mental and substance use services Food assistance Accessible & affordable public transportation Services for adults without children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low barrier services Services to support economic and health factors that play a role in becoming and experiencing homelessness

The 2017 Adams County Community Needs Assessment suggested high levels of uninsured individuals in Adams County, meaning many do not have access to routine medical care and are one health crisis away from heavy financial burden. According to lived experience interviews and a service provider survey, there is rarely one cause of homelessness, so services are needed that address multiple needs.

² Benfer, Emily, et al. The Aspen Institute. *The COVID-10 Eviction Crisis...* August 7, 2020; ³ Community Solutions. *Analysis on Unemployment Projects 40-45% Increase in Homelessness this Year* May 11, 2020; ⁴ Bryson, Donna. *Denverite. Denver Homeless Out Loud's count of people living in encampments...* July 20, 2020; ⁵ A survey monkey was created and distributed to ACCH and Adams County Human Services. Survey questions are listed in the appendices; ⁶ Lived Experience interviews were conducted by shelter provider staff from November to December 2019. Twenty-four program participants, who were currently living in a shelter, were interviewed, and received a gift card. Interview questions are included in the appendices

GOALS & STRATEGIES

The following goals and strategies were conceived from discussions and brainstorming sessions with the Adams County Coalition for the Homeless (ACCH) and the homelessness action plan task force. The goals and strategies are intended to begin the process of providing a continuum of housing solutions in order to address and end homelessness in Adams County, as well as align with broader anti-poverty framework throughout the county.

GOAL 1

ORGANIZE COUNTYWIDE STREET OUTREACH EFFORTS

- Strategy 1: Establish the Adams County Street Outreach Network
- Strategy 2: Expand resource and housing navigation

GOAL 2

INCREASE ACCESS TO LOW-BARRIER SERVICES

- Strategy 1: Provide low-barrier employment opportunities
- Strategy 2: Establish navigation centers in Adams County

GOAL 3

INCREASE CAPACITY FOR ALTERNATIVE HOUSING SOLUTIONS

- Strategy 1: Provide hotel stays during inclement weather
- Strategy 2: Investigate models and establish a sanctioned encampment
- Strategy 3: Support regional work regarding safe parking programs
- Strategy 4: Develop network of tiny homes villages

GOAL 4

DEVELOP AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

- Strategy 1: Increase capacity of Rapid Re-Housing Programs
- Strategy 2: Develop Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)
- Strategy 3: Strengthen partnerships with local shelter and housing providers
- Strategy 4: Optimize Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

GOAL 5

CREATE AND RETAIN PROGRAMS THAT KEEP PEOPLE IN THEIR HOMES

- Strategy 1: Prevent displacement of mobile home residents
- Strategy 2: Increase coordination and funding of rapid resolution, rental, and utility assistance programs
- Strategy 3: Provide legal aid to residents facing eviction
- Strategy 4: Develop a landlord recruitment program

GOAL 1

ORGANIZE COUNTYWIDE STREET OUTREACH EFFORTS

STRATEGY 1: ESTABLISH THE ADAMS COUNTY STREET OUTREACH NETWORK

Lead: CSWB

Partners: Municipal partners, street outreach workers, TCHD Syringe Access Program (SAP), ACCH

Action Steps:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Convene the Adams County Street Outreach Network<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine frequency of meetings, meeting structure, and processes for case conferencing, volunteers, and in-kind donations2. Diversify funding to support outreach efforts3. Investigate a crisis response system⁷ | <p>Fall 2020 - Ongoing</p> <p>Fall 2020 - Ongoing
Spring 2021- Ongoing</p> |
|--|--|

Street outreach is an art and science that focuses on where a person experiencing homelessness is currently, on the trails, working to identify needs and referring to resources as needed. Street outreach through the lens of harm reduction and trauma-informed care means that outreach workers work on whatever is at hand, whether that is providing food and bottled water, connecting folks to syringe access programs, or providing bus tickets.

Homeless street outreach is a fairly new phenomenon in Adams County. Outreach efforts increase during the annual Point-in-Time Count, but tapers off into small scale and limited scope the rest of the year. As CSWB continues to conduct street outreach, CSWB is also looking to coordinate with community partners to expand its outreach efforts to people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

The Adams County Street Outreach Network will work collectively with people experiencing unsheltered homelessness and help to meet

basic needs, are safe and healthy, and are working with navigators to identify needs, resources, and housing solutions. The Network will consist of community partners providing street outreach on a regular basis, including case conferencing support and coordinated schedules. For service providers not involved in street outreach, there is opportunity to partner with resource navigation, including connecting people to food, shelter, and housing.

⁷ Explore mobile models like ACOT (Aurora CO) and CAHOOTS (Eugene OR)

STRATEGY 2: EXPAND RESOURCE & NAVIGATION WORK

Lead: CSWB

Partners: Municipal partners, Adams County Street Outreach Network, TCHD, law enforcements, ACCH, community partners

Action Steps:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Hire full-time Street Outreach Coordinator at the County2. Partner with municipalities to hire a resource navigator at the municipal level within each municipality<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite municipal navigators to participate in Adams County Street Outreach Network | <p>Fall 2020 - Spring 2021
Summer 2020 - Spring 2021</p> |
|---|--|

To ensure the Adams County Street Outreach Network is a sustainable resource for community partners and people experiencing homelessness for years to come, it is recommended that Adams County creates a full-time position and hires a Street Outreach Coordinator who is Spanish-speaking, has experience working with people experiencing homelessness, and experience conducting outreach.

The county will also support municipalities who are interested in hiring a navigator in order to provide support for people experiencing homelessness. A few municipalities have already made progress:

- City of Westminster, working with Jefferson County and their network of navigators, hired a Homeless Navigator in spring 2020
- City of Northglenn hired a Community Navigator in summer 2020 through CARES Act funding
- City of Thornton's Community Connections division are looking to hire a full-time homeless navigator and part-time street outreach worker

- City of Commerce City has shown interest in creating a homeless navigator position.

It is recommended that navigators become part of the Adams County Street Outreach Network.

For municipalities exploring the option of having a dedicated staff for homelessness navigation, an alternative is to financially support the navigators' salary and base the position within a local shelter provider. Creating positions and hiring throughout major jurisdictions can greatly assist the sustainability of the Network across the county.

GOAL 2

INCREASE ACCESS TO LOW-BARRIER SERVICES

STRATEGY 1: OFFER BASIC NEEDS ON REGULAR BASIS

Lead: CSWB

Partners: Municipal partners, food banks, shelter providers, Adams County Human Services, Adams County Street Outreach, TCHD SAP, Community Reach Center, FQHCs, Bayaud Enterprises

Action Steps:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide showers and laundry services to people experiencing homelessness2. Provide education and training on low-barrier services to Adams County community partners3. Coordinate incentives and in-kind donations<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with faith-based communities to organize donation drives throughout the year | <p>Summer 2020- Summer 2021
(No services during winter)</p> <p>Spring 2021- Ongoing</p> <p>Spring 2021 - Ongoing</p> |
|--|--|

Each fall, community partners begin meeting and planning for the Point-in-Time Count (PIT). The planning committee commits extensive time and energy from partners to coordinate magnet events, recruit volunteers, organize donations, and schedule outreach shifts for months leading up to the 24-hour event. While the magnet events and donated items are well-received during PIT, services and goods should be available and accessible year-round, including, but not limited to, laundry, showers, dental care, vaccines, and pet care.

Additional education and training resources will be created for community partners to ensure best practices are implemented throughout the county. CSWB will coordinate the preparation of these trainings with experts from the Street Outreach Network, TCHD, and behavioral health providers.

For sustainability reasons for street outreach, PIT and other low-barrier services and events, it is recommended to create a year-round process

and procedure for collecting supplies, incentives and in-kind donations.

Bayaud Enterprises Inc. launched their mobile showers and mobile laundry services in June 2020. Shower and laundry services are currently available for people experiencing homelessness and will be deployed during the summer months. The services are located at the Irving Street Library in Westminster on Thursdays from 9:00am to 2:00pm (last load of laundry is at 1:40pm). With CARES Act funding, Bayaud intends to expand their shower and laundry services to an additional day at the Irving Street Library and an additional day at a second location. Services will be provided throughout the summer and end in the fall, weather permitting.

STRATEGY 2: EXPAND RESOURCE & NAVIGATION WORK

Lead: CSWB

Partners: Bayaud Enterprises, Adams County Parks, Open Space, and Cultural Arts Department, municipal partners

Action Steps:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Launch Adams County Day Works pilot program <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect Bayaud with community partners and convene check-in meetings• Create marketing materials and coordinate with outreach efforts• Evaluation will be conducted through CSWB | Summer 2020- Summer 2021 |
| 2. Explore options for programming beyond the pilot period | Spring 2021 - Ongoing |

Unemployment was cited as one of the top three reasons why people experience homelessness in Adams County⁸. In summer 2020, the Adams County Day Works pilot program launched, a no-to low-barrier employment program for people experiencing homelessness. In partnership with and operated by Bayaud Enterprises, the purpose of this program is to provide day labor opportunities for participants while working towards permanent employment. Additional services and opportunities include to following:

- Same-day payment
- Lunch
- On-site support
- Resource navigation
- Network with the Adams County Workforce Business Center (WBC) to explore career and permanent employment opportunities.

Adams County Day Works partners with the Adams County Parks, Open Space, and Cultural Arts Department to identify work sites along the trails and throughout the parks system. For the

pilot, Day Works is focusing on Unincorporated Adams; however, municipal partners have expressed great interest in partnering and providing worksites throughout their communities. With the potential to continue the program beyond the pilot (after June 2021), CSWB will work with partners to expand the program throughout the county.

⁸ An Assessment of Adams County's Efforts to Address Homelessness, The Burnes Center on Poverty and Homelessness (now the Center on Housing and Homelessness Research) from the University of Denver's Graduate School of Social, 2016

STRATEGY 3: ESTABLISH NAVIGATION CENTERS IN ADAMS COUNTY

Lead: CSWB

Partners: Municipal partners, local shelter providers, McKinney Vento/school liaisons, health & mental health providers, Adams County Human Services, MDHI, community partners

Action Steps:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reconvene navigation center work group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key partners and locations for a navigation center • Consider a mobile navigation center | Spring 2021 - Ongoing |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Collaborate with tiny home village efforts as a potential location for a brick and mortar navigation center | TBD |

Day center. Resource center. Community Center. Day shelter. There are many names and models to providing daytime services and shelter for people experiencing homelessness. The goal of establishing a navigation center (and eventually a network of navigation centers) is to provide a space for people experiencing homelessness to rest, recharge, reconnect, and receive services. As a one-stop-shop, an individual or family experiencing homelessness can go to one location and receive services including, but not limited to:

- Food and clean water
- Showers and laundry
- Access to storage
- Access to computers to check email, search for employment, and connect with their social networks
- Access to charging stations
- Access to care: medical coverage, mental health resources, etc.
- Access to a resource navigator to connect with additional services and resources
- Access to probation and legal resource

groups for people who are justice involved

- ID assistance
- Access to mail
- Quiet areas to rest and work on their homework for school/study
- Additional programs

Navigation centers may include overnight shelter and targeted services for families, women and children, transgender women, single adult men, and so on. The services and resources provided at the navigation center can be simple, yet comprehensive, for specific sub-populations of people experiencing homelessness.

GOAL 3

INCREASE CAPACITY FOR ALTERNATIVE HOUSING SOLUTIONS

STRATEGY 1: PROVIDE HOTEL STAYS DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER

Leads: CSWB, ACCESS Housing, Almost Home

Partners: ACCH, municipal partners, Adams County Street Outreach Network, law enforcement departments

Action Steps:

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. Evaluate the 2020 pilot program, finalize report stating outcomes and recommendations for seasons to come | Summer 2020 |
| 2. Strategize for 2020-2021 winter season | Summer - Fall 2020 |
| 3. Expand to year-round hotel stays with increased outreach and navigation services | Fall 2020 - Ongoing |

The Adams County Severe Weather Activation Plan (SWAP) is a severe weather response pilot program in collaboration with Adams County CSWB, ACCESS Housing, and Almost Home. SWAP provides hotel/motel stays when the weather poses a threat to the well-being and/or lives of people sleeping or living outdoors during the months of October through April. SWAP activates when conditions reach 32°F and below and wet, as well as 20°F and below and dry.

The pilot program activated 33 nights from February to April 2020, administered 88 hotel stays, and served a total of 70 households (67% of which reported last permanent residency in Adams County).

In addition to SWAP, CSWB is looking to expand the hotel/motel stay model to ensure people have a safe place to rest. In summer 2020, CSWB, ACCESS Housing, and Almost Home partnered and supported the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) proposal that would include the following:

Mobile Outreach

- Meeting people in the community and in their environments
- Building relationships
- Implementing nonjudgmental and motivational interviewing, trauma informed, and harm reduction approaches

Respite

- Providing hotel/motel stays for inclement weather, acute crisis relief, and bridge housing

Navigation

- Targeting housing resources
- Advocating for housing need

The combination of these activities would form the ACORN program: Adams County Outreach, Respite, and Navigation.

STRATEGY 2: INVESTIGATE MODELS TO ESTABLISH A SANCTIONED ENCAMPMENT

Lead: CSWB

Partners: Local shelter providers, municipal partners, Adams County Street Outreach Network, TCHD SAP, law enforcement and parks departments

Action Steps:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct case study research on models of sanctioned encampments, including locations, rules, program structure, landscape/layout of tents | <p>Fall 2020 - Spring 2021</p> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Convene a work group to support the development process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure zoning of potential locations are suitable and legal | <p>Spring 2021- Ongoing</p> |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Identify key community partners (through RFP) to manage day-to-day operations | <p>Spring/Summer 2021- Fall 2021</p> |

Concerns regarding encampments are generally coupled with concerns regarding the environment, public health, and safety. Encampments along the trails systems and parks are more likely located in floodplains. With limited access to clean, running water and a structured restroom, it is difficult to maintain health and hygiene, especially in light of COVID-19, Hep-A outbreaks, and other infectious diseases. Recently, there is reason to believe that people experiencing homelessness are greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic⁹ and communities in the Denver metro will experience an increase of people experiencing housing instability and homelessness.¹⁰

According to interviews, it has been found that people living in encampments feel safer living in a camp than entering a shelter in downtown Denver. The Burnes Study found that shelters are simply not a solution for the following populations:

- Couples
- People with a companion animal
- People experiencing mental health

conditions

- People currently using substances
- People who have had a traumatic and unsafe experience in shelters.
- People with 2nd or 3rd shift jobs

Sanctioned encampments provide a safe, secure, dignified, and legal space for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to live and rest. Additionally, sanctioned encampments offer a space for wrap-around services, including mobile showers, mobile laundry, syringe disposal and access to syringe exchange, resource navigation, and housing navigation, and amenities such as dumpsters, trash receptacles and restrooms.

There are many models nationally, including hiring 1 or 2 campers to monitor the camp and liaise between the agency lead and campers. Locally, Denver has recently announced allowing a sanctioned encampment and is in the process of finalizing a location.¹¹

⁹ Kenney, Andrew, *Coronavirus Homelessness Has Already Hit Colorado*. She was One of the First. CPR News, July 13, 2020

¹⁰ Bryson, July 20, 2020

¹¹ McCormick-Cavanagh, Conor, *Denver Service Providers Pitching 'Safe Outdoor Space' for Homeless*, Westword, April 25, 2020 *Safe Outdoor Space*, Colorado Village Collaborative; Bryson, *How does Sanctioned Camping for the Homeless Differ from Unsanctioned camping?* The Denverite, July 14, 2020

STRATEGY 3: SUPPORT REGIONAL WORK AROUND SAFE PARKING PROGRAMS

Lead: CSWB

Partners: Colorado Safe Parking Initiative, community partners, municipal partners, faith-based communities, neighboring counties

Action Steps:

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1. Attend monthly meetings led by the Colorado Safe Parking Initiative | Ongoing |
| 2. Participate and assist in meetings in Adams County with community partners interested in implementing a safe parking program | Ongoing |
| 3. Define the role of the County (funder, land owner, etc) as safe parking programs are investigated by partners | TBD |

Safe parking allows people experiencing homelessness to park their car at night and rest in a safe and legal spot. Safe parking programs have emerged in communities nationwide, especially on the west coast.¹² Safe parking program models vary with wrap-around services, self-governing security, and community meals, and most have found success in parking with a local faith-based partners.

The Colorado Safe Parking Initiative is a citizen-led coalition working to encourage safe, legal parking locations for individuals and families experiencing homelessness who are living in vehicles in Colorado communities. The Initiative is currently identifying interested partners to pilot a safe parking program in their community, including a few in Adams County.

¹² New Beginnings in Santa Barbara, CA; Los Angeles, CA; Dreams for Change in San Diego, CA; Portland, OR

STRATEGY 4: DEVELOP A NETWORK OF TINY HOME VILLAGES

Lead: CSWB

Partners: Adams County CED, Adams County Facilities, Municipal Partners, Community Partners

Action Steps:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Seek approval from BOCC to pursue tiny home villages for people experiencing homelessness in Adams County | Summer 2020 - Fall 2020 |
| 2. Determine parameters of scope, model, programming, etc; create RFP to identify partners | Summer 2020- Summer 2021 |
| 3. Explore opportunity to pair THV with a navigation center | TBD |

Tiny homes are not a new phenomenon, but they are getting more intentional. While many people have used them for the idea of downsizing and simplifying their lives, tiny home villages are becoming a response to the increase of homelessness. Tiny home villages provide a safe, dignified and community-enriched place for people experiencing homelessness to navigate services and resources, whether it is securing permanent housing, employment, and/or pursuing their education. There are many models of tiny home villages across the nation, varying in populations served and self-governing models.¹³

In Adams County, there could be opportunities to work with local community partners to develop long-term sheltering for people experiencing homelessness through the utilization of tiny homes. County departments, including as CSWB, CED, and Facilities, began brainstorming and proposing a vision for a network of tiny home villages throughout the county.

¹³ Xle, Jenny, Curbed *10 Tiny Home Villages for Homeless Residents Across the US*, <https://www.curbed.com/maps/tiny-houses-for-the-homeless-villages> July 18, 2017

GOAL 4

DEVELOP AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

STRATEGY 1: INCREASE CAPACITY OF RAPID RE-HOUSING PROGRAMS

Lead: CSWB

Partners: Community partners, ACCH, MDHI

Action Steps:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Identify scope of current RRH programs in Adams County, including costs and outcomes | Spring 2021 - Ongoing |
| 2. Work with community partners to identify service gap, needs of service providers and funding required to fill gap | Spring 2021- Ongoing |
| 3. Engage partners from local government, state government and MDHI to explore funding opportunities | Summer 2021- Ongoing |

Research shows that providing housing and services up front in communities is less expensive than moving somebody out of homelessness in both the short and long term.¹⁴ Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) is an evidence-based practice to quickly house individuals and families experiencing homelessness by providing short-term rental assistance.¹⁵

Most local shelter providers, and some community partners, offer RRH to ensure individuals and families experiencing homelessness and/or live in their shelter are able to find permanent housing. CSWB should work closely with community partners that offer RRH services and recommend that Adams County and the Adams County Foundation financially and equitably support services that follow housing-focused processes and continually work to house individuals and families experiencing homelessness as quickly as possible.

¹⁴ Burnes, 2016

¹⁵ Rapid ReHousing, National Alliance to End Homelessness, <https://endhomelessness.org/ending-homelessness/solutions/rapid-re-housing/>

STRATEGY 2: DEVELOP PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (PSH)

Lead: CSWB

Partners: Shelter/service providers, health providers and behavioral health providers, municipal partners, local housing authorities, housing developers, property management companies, Code for America

Action Steps:

1. Participate in the PSH toolkit with ACCESS Housing ¹⁶	Summer 2020- Fall 2020
2. Identify service gaps for PSH in Adams County; work with Code for America and community partners	Fall 2020- Spring 2021
3. Work with interested partners by identifying locations, assisting with convening stakeholder meetings	Fall 2020 - Ongoing
4. Work with CED and local housing authorities to explore financially supporting PSH	Fall 2020 - Ongoing

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is an evidence-based housing solution that provides permanent, affordable housing, as well as wraparound voluntary services for people experiencing homelessness. PSH is a long-term solution for people experiencing homelessness as well as any of the following scenarios:

- Chronic homelessness
- Substance use
- Mental illness
- Involvement in the justice system.

PSH normally involves a developer, a property management company and service provider coming together to create and maintain a PSH project. It is often costly on-the front-end; however, it is a proven solution to provide housing for whom who living independently might be too overwhelming or drastically different from their previous experience of homelessness. PSH is also a proven solution to keep people experiencing homelessness for a long period of time housed.

¹⁶ Permanent Supportive Housing Toolkit <http://www.beauxsimone.com/toolkit/>

STRATEGY 3: STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL SHELTER AND HOUSING PROVIDERS

Lead: CSWB

Partners: CED, Adams County Housing Policy Group, Adams County Human Services, shelter/service providers, health providers, municipal partners, local housing authorities, housing developers, such as Habitat for Humanity

Action Steps:

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. Identify barriers to service among shelter providers and provide technical assistance to work through policies and program delivery | Fall 2020 - Ongoing |
| 2. Reconvene the Adams County Housing Policy Group to further strategize approaches to increase and advocate for affordable housing | Fall 2020 - Ongoing |

This strategy is two-fold. First, providing technical assistance would focus on maximizing current capacity of the local shelter providers. Support may also include, but not limited to:

- Participate in an agency-led project (e.g. Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH), a navigation center, safe parking, etc.)
- Provide data analysis and evaluation support
- Convene meetings to increase communication and collaboration
- Prepare for presentations with elected officials
- Connect shelter providers with key stakeholder
- Liaise between MDHI/HMIS and agencies

Specific technologies include:

- Universal use of HMIS
- Create anti-oppressive assessment paperwork and procedure
- Use of OneHome Coordinated Entry System, or creating a countywide coordinated entry system like Boulder County¹⁷

- The regional Built for Zero Campaign¹⁸

Second, it is highly recommended that CSWB, along with CED, strengthen partnerships with local housing authorities and affordable housing developers to increase the supply of affordable housing. This can be addressed locally by reconvening the Adams County Housing Policy Group to focus on an advocacy strategy to combat NIMBYism (Not In My Back Yard) and explore how housing authorities can implement and increase homelessness preference for voucher programs. This action step can also include engaging agencies housing developers that are not currently active in Adams County to address barriers to serving in the Adams County area.

17 Boulder County Coordinated Entry <https://www.bouldercounty.org/departments/community-services/homeless/>

18 Community Solutions, Built for Zero <https://community.solutions/our-solutions/built-for-zero/>

STRATEGY 4: OPTIMIZE ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADUs)

Lead: CSWB

Partners: CED, CSWB, Adams County Housing Policy Group, municipal partners

Action Steps:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Identify current utilization of ADUs in Unincorporated Adams and municipalities | Summer 2021- Winter 2022 |
| 2. Identify methods to increase use of ADUs, including subsidies, technical assistance, and design support ¹⁹ | Summer 2021- Ongoing |
| 3. Explore policy level interventions to prevent homelessness (i.e. allowing housing that includes supportive care in more zone districts, policies to remove barriers to affordable housing) | Fall 2021- Ongoing |

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), also known as granny flats or in-law units, are a second small residential unit on the same property of single-family house. ADUs can take shape as an apartment over the garage, a small home or cottage in the backyard or a basement apartment. While ideally marketed at an affordable rate, an occupied ADUs can provide additional income for the homeowner. ADUs also allow for people to remain close to their caregivers while living independently in their own unit. With specific ADU regulations, ADUs may also address the need for accessible, healthy, and safe affordable housing.

ADUs are currently permitted in Unincorporated Adams, as well as a few municipalities including City of Brighton and City of Thornton.

¹⁹ Example model: The West Denver Renaissance Collaborative Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Pilot Program <https://www.mywdrc.org/adu-pilot-program>

GOAL 5

CULTIVATE AND RETAIN PROGRAMS THAT KEEP PEOPLE IN THEIR HOMES

STRATEGY 1: PREVENT DISPLACEMENT OF MOBILE HOME RESIDENTS

Lead: CSWB

Partners: CED, local housing authorities, housing advocates, housing developers

Action Steps:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Explore revisions to local county policies and ordinances | Summer 2020- Ongoing |
| 2. Support partners' programming related to advocacy and mediation | Summer 2020 - Ongoing |
| 3. Support DOLA's new dispute resolution process | Summer 2020- Ongoing |

Mobile homes have become a source of affordable housing and a low-income home ownership option, but the decreasing number of mobile home parks and units have put this housing option at risk. The number of parks has declined, as smaller operations have sold their parks to larger investors, leading to redevelopment and displacement. Mobile home residents' challenges include owning the home but not the land it sits on, which has often created a contentious relationship with park owners and mobile homeowners. With conflicts left in the hands of the court system, park owners were heavily favored due to the cost of legal representation for already-cost-burdened residents. Recent legislation (Colorado's HB 19-1309 and HB 20-1196) were passed to provide additional protection for mobile home residents.

STRATEGY 2: INCREASE COORDINATION AND FUNDING OF RAPID RESOLUTION, RENTAL AND UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Lead: CSWB

Partners: Code for America Fellows, Community Partners, Service Providers, Adams County Street Outreach Network

Action Steps:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Identify scope of current homelessness prevention and rapid resolution programs in Adams County, including costs and outcomes | Winter 2021- Ongoing |
| 2. Work with community partners to identify service gap, needs of service providers and funding required to fill gap ²⁰ | Spring 2021 - Ongoing |
| 3. Engage partners from local government, state government and MDHI to explore funding opportunities | Spring 2021- Ongoing |

One way to reduce homelessness is to increase prevention assistance. Rapid Resolution and rental/utility assistance programs provide an opportunity for people experiencing housing instability avoid entering the homelessness systems and secure a housing option instead. Rapid Resolution, also known as diversion, is a quick response intervention to find housing through reuniting with friends or family, and/or providing transportation to their home or origin of their network of support systems. The main goal of Rapid Resolution is to prevent or divert people from entering into a shelter and HMIS. It has been found that providing financial assistance quickly is more cost effective compared to entering the shelter and homelessness system.²¹

Rental and utility assistance programs are another successful preventative measure to keep people housed and prevent homelessness all together. Similar to RRH, program procedures may vary, however, the programs are geared to pay for the months' rent and/or utilities to prevent a household from facing an eviction.

²⁰ Explore funding options, including City of Aurora's Marijuana Tax for homelessness prevention programs

²¹ National Alliance to End Homelessness, Creating a Successful Diversion Program for Families <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/closing-the-front-door-creating-a-successful-diversion-program-for-homeless/>

STRATEGY 3: PROVIDE LEGAL AID TO RESIDENTS WHO ARE FACING EVICTIONS

Lead: CSWB

Partners: CED, Human Services, Municipal Partners, Colorado Legal Services

Action Steps:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Engage partners for ongoing support and funding of the legal aid program | Summer 2020- Ongoing |
| 2. Evaluate effectiveness of program outcomes and referral processes | Summer 2020 - Ongoing |
| 3. Increase outreach and communication regarding legal aid program | Summer 2020- Ongoing |

Evictions affect families and communities. When facing eviction, many renters can't afford legal help. According to a 2017 study by the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) and the Colorado Center on Law and Policy (CCLP), less than 1% of tenants in Denver County were represented by an attorney during an eviction, while nearly 90% of landlords were represented.²² The very few tenants able to access an attorney were significantly more likely to remain in their homes.

In December 2018, CSWB and its partnering municipalities began its two-year pilot for a Legal Services Pilot Program with Colorado Legal Services. This provided legal assistance to low income households to “help prevent or mitigate the adverse familial and societal impacts of involuntary displacement and/or homelessness within the contributing jurisdictions.” Though still in the pilot phase, early reports indicate success in the program.

²² Colorado Coalition for the Homeless and Colorado Center for Law and Policy, Facing Eviction Alone 2017
Additional resource: Clark, Moe, Colorado Newline, At least 25% of Colorado Renters are at Risk of Eviction in the coming months, August 2020

STRATEGY 4: DEVELOP A LANDLORD RECRUITMENT PROGRAM

Lead: CSWB

Partners: CED, local shelter providers, community partners, local housing authorities, landlords, TCHD

Action Steps:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Research best practices and case studies, including healthy housing frameworks2. Identify funding for a countywide housing mediation and navigation program3. Align with community partners doing or interested in doing this work | <p>Summer 2021- Ongoing
Summer 2021 - Ongoing</p> <p>Summer 2021- Ongoing</p> |
|---|---|

Many Adams County residents are at risk of experiencing housing instability. The staggering fact is that households under the federal poverty level are spending 87% of their annual household incomes on housing, leaving them about \$1,000 per year for everything else.²³ Once an individual loses their home, it becomes more challenging to find a new home. As those instances occur, it becomes more important to develop a pool of landlords that are willing to work with individuals and families with poor rental history.

As a preventative measure, service providers and housing authorities can work to identify landlords that are welcoming to vouchers and people experiencing homelessness. In some cases, the community partner can liaise between the individual or family who is newly housed and their landlord if any issue comes up. Follow-up case management can also reassure landlords that staff is involved and supporting the individual or family who is newly housed.

²³ Burnes, Donald & Dileo, David, pg. 3 *Ending Homelessness: Why Haven't We, How We Can*, 2016

TIMELINE

KEY

Start and end:

Start and ongoing:

TBD: Blank

GOAL 1 STREET OUTREACH

	SUMMER 2020	FALL 2020	WINTER 2021	SPRING 2021	SUMMER 2021	FALL 2021	WINTER 2022	SPRING 2022	SUMMER 2022	FALL 2022	WINTER 2023	SPRING 2023	SUMMER 2023	FALL 2023
ESTABLISH THE ADAMS COUNTY STREET OUTREACH NETWORK														
Convene Adams County Street Outreach Network														
Diversify funding to support outreach efforts														
Investigate a crisis response system														
EXPAND RESOURCE AND HOUSING NAVIGATION WORK														
Hire full-time Street Outreach Coordinator at the County														
Establish navigator positions countywide														

GOAL 2 LOW-BARRIER SERVICES

OFFER BASIC NEEDS ON A REGULAR BASIS														
Provide showers and laundry services														
Provide education and training to AC partners														
Coordinate incentives and in-kind donations														
PROVIDE LOW-BARRIER EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES														
Launch Adams County Day Works pilot program														
Explore options for programming beyond the pilot period														
ESTABLISH NAVIGATION CENTERS IN ADAMS COUNTY														
Reconvene navigation center work group														
Collaborate with tiny home village efforts														

GOAL 3 TEMPORARY HOUSING

PROVIDE HOTEL STAYS DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER														
Evaluate the 2020 pilot program														
Strategize for 2020-2021 winter season														
Expand to year-round hotel stays														
ESTABLISH A SANCTIONED ENCAMPMENT														
Case study research														
Convene a sanctioned encampment work group														
Identify community partners to manage														
SUPPORT SAFE PARKING PROGRAMS														
Attend Colorado Safe Parking Initiative meetings														
Assist in meetings with AC partners														
Define role of the County														
DEVELOP A NETWORK OF TINY HOME VILLAGES														
BOCC approval to pursue THVs														
Determine scope, model, etc.														
Pair with navigation center														

GOAL 4
PERMANENT HOUSING

	SUMMER 2020	FALL 2020	WINTER 2021	SPRING 2021	SUMMER 2021	FALL 2021	WINTER 2022	SPRING 2022	SUMMER 2022	FALL 2022	WINTER 2023	SPRING 2023	SUMMER 2023	FALL 2023
INCREASE CAPACITY OF RAPID RE-HOUSING PROGRAMS														
Identify scope of RRH programs														
Identify service gaps														
Explore funding opportunities														
DEVELOP PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING														
Participate in the PSH toolkit														
Identify service gap for PSH														
Work with interested AC partners														
Explore financial support opportunities														
STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS														
Identify barriers and provide tech assistance														
Reconvene housing policy group														
OPTIMIZE ADUS														
Identify utilization of ADUs														
Identify methods to increase use														
Explore policy level interventions														

GOAL 5
PREVENTION

PREVENT DISPLACEMENT OF MOBILE HOME RESIDENTS														
Explore revisions to local county policies and ordinances														
Support partners' advocacy programming														
Support DOLA's new dispute resolution process														
INCREASE COORDINATION AND FUNDING														
Identify scope of current programs														
Identify service gaps														
Explore funding opportunities														
PROVIDE LEGAL AID														
Ongoing funding of the legal aid program														
Evaluate effectiveness of program outcomes and referrals														
Increase outreach and communication														
DEVELOP A LANDLORD RECRUITMENT PROGRAM														
Research best practices and case studies														
Identify funding for a countywide program														
Align with AC partners doing or interested														

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The guiding principles have been synthesized through collaborative work in reference to reaching goals around homelessness with our community partners and are meant to provide specific indication as to the type of projects in which we engage. The guiding principles are as follows:

INCREASED COORDINATION

Streamline services; reduce duplicated efforts; comprehensively partner with shelter providers, housing providers, public health providers, law enforcement, municipalities, faith-based communities, mental health providers, criminal justice system, neighborhood cities and counties, and so on; structure Adams County Coalition for the Homeless (ACCH) to increase opportunities to mobilize and advocate.

INCREASED ACCESS TO SERVICES AND RESOURCES

Provide services that are accessible, near to bus routes, in proximity to other services and goods; ensure services are accessible on-site (ADA); implement a racially equitable approach to service conceptualization and implementation; ensure services are low barrier and trauma-informed; expand services to meet the demand.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Create consistent messaging and communication for internal use, as well as community partners, people experiencing homelessness, and residents; strive towards changing the narrative around homelessness through storytelling and data; work with partnering advocates to debunk myths.

RAISING AWARENESS

Changing the narrative of what homelessness looks like in Adams County (the causes, the barriers to housing, etc); participate in advocacy groups; provide stories and data to inform decisions and policy; educate internal partners, community partners, and general public of the need and options to address the need of people experiencing homelessness.

SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

Pilot new programs; identify internal funds and appropriate staffing to support programs long-term; create equitable approach for agencies to request funding from the County.

DATA-DRIVEN EVALUATION

Ensure programs utilize HMIS and OneHome; conduct and provide evaluation for service outcomes and pilot programs for improvement; set countywide standard that is trauma-informed care and anti-oppressive to track, report and evaluate program outcomes.

OVERVIEW EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES

HOUSING FIRST MODEL

Housing First programs focus on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into permanent housing and then providing the additional support and services each person

needs and wants to stabilize in that housing. Services are never mandatory and cannot be a condition of obtaining housing intervention. The basic underlying principle is that people are better able to move forward with their lives once the crisis of homelessness is over and housing is secured. Supportive services focus on the income, resources, skills and tools needed to: pay rent, comply with a lease, take reasonable care of a housing unit, and avoid serious conflict with other tenants, the landlord, and/or the police.

LOW BARRIER SERVICES

The Housing First Model does not require persons to prove “housing readiness.” There are no preconditions. People experiencing homelessness do not have to: demonstrate sobriety, engage in treatment, have employment, or have income to obtain program entry or for continued assistance. Rules should not be imposed on people experiencing homelessness in order to access services.

Stable housing is critically important for people’s health, education, employment, and other related quality of life determinants. The basic underlying principle is that access to housing is the primary need for its program participants, and as such, there should be minimal barriers to assist persons to end their homelessness. Eligibility and criteria for continued assistance does not include requirements for service participation.

TRAUMA INFORMED CARE

Cancer, addiction, incarceration, and homelessness are just a few of the problems facing people with unresolved traumatic histories.²⁴ Trauma Informed Care (TIC) is “an overarching structure and treatment attitude that emphasizes understanding, compassion, and responding to the effects of all types of trauma.”²⁵ Becoming “trauma-informed” means looking at physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both clients and providers, recognizing that people have many different traumatic experiences which often intersect in their lives, and working with clients to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

Some services may unintentionally re-traumatize program participants who need understanding, support, and individually conscious care. Trauma Informed Care/Trauma Informed Design considers an understanding of trauma in all aspects of service delivery and places priority on the trauma survivor’s safety, choice, and control. Trauma Informed Services create a culture of nonviolence, learning, and collaboration.

HARM REDUCTION

In many agencies and nonprofits that emphasize low-barrier access to services and trauma-informed care, the harm reduction approach is most likely included in program design and delivery. Harm reduction programs do not require treatment or sobriety, but rather, seek to work with participants to reduce the negative consequences of the person’s continued use of drugs and/or alcohol. Harm Reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people with substance use.²⁶

²⁴ Bennett, Matthew <http://connectingparadigms.org/>

²⁵ Trauma-Informed Care, National Coalition for the Homeless, <https://nationalhomeless.org/trauma-informed-care/>

²⁶ The Principles of Harm Reduction, The Harm Reduction Coalition, <https://harmreduction.org/about-us/principles-of-harm-reduction/>

Although most people relate harm reduction to substance use, the practice also translates to ensuring people experiencing unsheltered homelessness have cold weather gear during winter weather or fresh water and sunscreen during the summertime. In daily lives, people wear a seatbelt when they get into a car, floss and brush their teeth, and use protection during sex. By working with people experiencing homelessness and meeting ‘where they’re at’, harm reduction in homelessness services includes all possible approaches to assist the person to reduce or minimize their risky behaviors, while at the same time assisting them to move into, and stabilize in, permanent housing.

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

Motivational Interviewing is a collaborative, person-centered approach to elicit and strengthen motivation to change. It is designed to strengthen personal motivation for and commitment to a specific goal by eliciting and exploring one’s own reasons for change within an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion.²⁷ Motivational Interviewing offers providers a useful framework for interacting with people experiencing homelessness and is rooted in an understanding of how hard it is to change learned behaviors, many of which have been essential to survival on the streets.²⁸ The basic principles or techniques of motivational interviewing include open questions, affirmation, reflective listening, and summary reflections (OARS).²⁹

COLLABORATIVE & COORDINATED SERVICES

In 2016, The Burnes Center on Poverty and Homelessness at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work conducted research and produced a study called An Assessment of Adams County’s Efforts to Address Homelessness.³⁰ While the Burnes Study was produced a few years ago and granular data may have shifted since then, the recommendations are relevant and are referenced throughout the Adams County Homelessness Action Plan.

The third recommendation listed from the Burnes Study states that the County and community partners ought to strategically provide services, allowing for service providers to champion a program rather than service providers with limited capacity striving to provide all services. By collaborating and coordinating services with agencies and municipalities, efforts can become more effective without the risk of duplicating energy throughout the community. In doing so, critical conversations will have to be had regarding data sharing and identifying community champions a particular service or two while another agency focuses on other services.

HOUSING NAVIGATION

The Action Plan highlights the need for resource navigation, conducted by service providers, outreach workers, community navigators, homeless navigators, case workers, and so on. Why call out housing for navigation? Given the evidence-based practices described above, it is crucially important to keep housing as the primary goal to solve homelessness. By calling out housing as part of navigation services (housing navigation), we are reminded that securing housing is the highest priority.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

ADAMS COUNTY COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS (ACCH)

A network of partners representing shelter providers, nonprofits, municipalities, school districts, faith-based communities, police departments, libraries, health providers,

²⁷ Miller & Rollnick, *Motivational Interviewing*, 2nd Edition, 2002

²⁸ Empowering Change: Motivational Interviewing, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, <https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources/hpr-resources/empowering-change>

²⁹ Miller & Rollnick, *Motivational Interviewing*, 2nd Edition, 2002

³⁰ Now The Center on Housing and Homelessness Research at the Colorado Center on Law and Policy

mental and behavioral health providers, and residents of Adams County, Colorado.

ADAMS COUNTY STREET OUTREACH NETWORK

A core team that will consist of community partners who currently conduct street outreach in Adams County. The Outreach Network will coordinate with community partners that are not conducting outreach, but have some connection to people experiencing homelessness, including law enforcement, parks departments, code departments, health and behavioral health providers, school liaison, and so on.

ADAMS COUNTY HOUSING POLICY GROUP

A group of key community partners that focus on affordable housing policy in Adams County. The group consists of representatives from housing authorities, community development departments, shelter providers, and service providers.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

A broad term for agencies, municipalities, faith-based communities, schools, health, mental health, and behavioral health providers.

HOUSING ADVOCATES

Includes ACCH, 9-5, Enterprise Community Partners, Colorado Poverty Law Project, Colorado Center on Law & Policy, among others.

LOCAL SHELTER PROVIDERS

Includes ACCESS Housing, Almost Home, and Cold Weather Care.

LOCAL HOUSING AUTHORITIES

Includes Aurora Housing Authority, Arvada Housing Authority, Brighton Housing Authority, Commerce City Housing Authority, and Maiker Housing Partners.

MUNICIPAL PARTNERS

Includes City of Arvada, City of Aurora, Town of Bennett, City of Brighton, City of Commerce City, City of Federal Heights, Town of Lochbuie, City of Northglenn, City of Thornton, and City of Westminster.

HELPFUL ABBREVIATIONS

ACCH: Adams County Coalition for the Homeless
ACORN: Adams County Outreach, Respite & Navigation
BIPOC: Black, Indigenous and People of Color
BOCC: Adams County Board of County Commissioners
CCH: Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
CCLP: Colorado Center on Law & Policy
CDBG: Community Development Block Grant
CED: Adams County Community & Economic Development
CoC: Continuum of Care
COVID-19: Coronavirus 2019
CSWB: Adams County Community Safety & Well-Being
DHS: Adams County Human Services
DOLA: State of Colorado Division of Local Affairs
ESG: Emergency Solutions Grant
FQHCs: Federally Qualified Health Centers
HMIS: Homeless Management Information System
HUD: US Department of Housing & Urban Development

MDHI: Metro Denver Homeless Initiative
NIMBY: Not In My Back Yard
PIT: Point-in-Time Count
PEH: People Experiencing Homelessness
RFP: Request for Proposal
RRH: Rapid Re-Housing
SAP: Syringe Access Program
TCHD: Tri-County Health Department

BURNES STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

In 2016, the Burnes Center on Poverty and Homelessness (now the Center on Housing and Homelessness Research) from the University of Denver's Graduate School of Social Work completed a study called An Assessment of Adams County's Efforts to Address Homelessness (known here as the 2016 Burnes Study). The assessment interviewed people experiencing unsheltered homelessness along the trails and park system and generated a series of recommendations:

1. Convene a group to develop a 10-year plan to address homelessness.
2. Develop a plan to evaluate the County's efforts to address homelessness.
3. The approach to future efforts to affect change in homelessness should be as a system of services versus individual services and agencies working in silos.
4. There should be a position in the County to serve as a services coordinator for people experiencing homelessness.
5. Communication and coordination should expand among government offices and housing providers in the county.
6. For those people who are not willing to seek housing from shelters, the County should work to provide alternative safe, secure, and dignified space.
7. The County should provide some assistance to the Sheriffs' Deputies who are tasked with patrolling the encampments in the community.
8. The County should provide more available shelter space for families and single adults who are experiencing homelessness.
9. The County should explore the creation of service jobs for those living in encampments or those other people who are experiencing homelessness.
10. The County's focus should be on the prevention of homelessness.
11. The County should develop a means to have services available where people live rather than having people report to a specific location.
12. There is a need for the County to create more affordable and attainable housing for people in the lower (lowest) range of socioeconomic status.
13. The County should be active in forming partnerships with other city and county governments as well as service providers for a regional approach to work on homelessness

CONTINUUM OF HOUSING

Since homelessness is a complex topic, solutions will look different for each subgroup, family, and individual experiencing homelessness. The following charts illustrate the continuum of housing solutions, and then some. The homelessness action plan task force and ACCH supported the crafting of the continuum of housing and key initiatives to consider.

SERVICES	Outreach	<p>Conduct boots on the ground outreach throughout the trails, parking lots, and other locations</p> <p>Build rapport with individuals and families experiencing homelessness</p> <p>Connect individuals and families to available resources</p>
	Housing Navigation	Navigate resources specific to short-term or long-term housing solutions
	Mobile Showers/ Laundry	<p>Provide showers and laundry to people experiencing homelessness</p> <p>Schedule additional mobile services to create a service hub, including day works program, housing navigation, syringe access, DHS public assistance programs, and so on.</p>
	Day Works Program	Provide no- to low-barrier employment for people experiencing homelessness, includes same-day pay, on-site support, resource navigation, and referrals to Adams County Workforce Business Center
ALTERNATIVE HOUSING SOLUTIONS	Rapid Resolution	Divert folks from entering homeless shelter/system, short term in shelter
	Navigation Center	<p>Core components of a navigation center include low- to no-barrier access to showers, laundry, computers, meals, food, and other basic needs, shared office space with service providers, health providers, resource navigators</p> <p>May serve adults or families</p> <p>May have emergency shelter or weather-permitted shelter attached /available</p>
	Sanctioned Encampment	<p>Provide a safe, secure and legal place for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to stay</p> <p>Provide mobile showers and laundry</p> <p>Coordinate resource and housing navigation</p>
	Safe Spot Parking	<p>Provide a safe, secure and legal place for people to sleep in their cars or RVs</p> <p>Provide mobile showers and laundry</p> <p>Coordinate resource (including car repair services) and housing navigation</p>
	Severe Weather Activation	<p>Provide shelter to people experiencing unsheltered and vehicular homelessness when winter weather conditions reach either 32°F and below, wet OR 20°F and below, dry</p> <p>Severe weather sheltering can and should be considered when summer weather conditions reach heat wave standards (3 consecutive days with daytime high temperatures of 90°F)</p>
	Hotel/Motel Voucher	Provide vouchers for individuals and families to stay in a hotel/motel temporarily

PERMANENT HOUSING SOLUTIONS

Emergency Shelter	Provide shelter and services for families, individuals, singles, couples, folks with animal companions, youth, older adults, folks identified with LGBTQ, etc.
Rapid Resolution	Divert folks from entering homeless shelter/system, short term in shelter
Transitional Housing	Provide temporary housing; is set up to transition folks into permanent, affordable housing
Bridge Housing	Transitional housing used as a short-term stay during the process of securing permanent housing
Tiny Home Village	Provide temporary and transitional housing for people experiencing homelessness in modular homes with shared amenities such as a kitchen, bathrooms and community space Coordinate resource and housing navigation
Rapid ReHousing	Work with people experiencing homelessness that may not need intensive and ongoing support and services to quickly exit out of homelessness and return into stable housing
Permanent Supportive Housing	Provide long-term affordable housing with on-site voluntary supportive services to address the needs of people experiencing or previously experienced chronic homelessness
Housing Vouchers	Partner with local housing authorities to administer housing choice vouchers
SROs/Shared Housing/Host Homes	Various interventions that allow people to live in a single room (separate or with roommate) with shared community spaces
Accessory Dwelling Units	Support the code ordinance(s) that allows homeowners to build an additional living unit that has a separate kitchen, bathroom, and sleeping area May be attached or detached on a single-family lot Often referred as granny flats, in-law units, backyard cottages and so on
Affordable Rental Units	Identify rental units in which the rent does not exceed 30% of household's monthly income
Modular Housing	Smaller and more cost-effective (development and rent/ownership) housing options for long-term housing
Affordable Homeownership	Provide programs and services to help low-income individuals and families gain homeownership at an affordable rate Program models include Self-Help Housing, Community Land Trusts, and Habitat for Humanity
Utility & Rental Assistance	Provide financial assistance in paying utility bills, first month's deposit, and/or monthly rental payment for individuals and families experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless
Mobile Homes	Support policies that protect current mobile home residents' communities from evictions
Eviction Prevention	Provide financial assistance to prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless
Discharge Prevention	Plan when people are released from treatment, hospital, jail, existing out of foster care to prevent someone from becoming homeless
Landlord Recruitment	Build partnerships with landlords and advocate for voucher housing and/or housing individuals and families experiencing homelessness

PREVENTION

POLICY & ADVOCACY

Continuum of Care and Coordinated Entry System (OneHome)	Actively participate in the metro Denver Continuum of Care (CoC) and Coordinated Entry system (OneHome); Increase coordination between Adams County homeless service providers through a network of navigators, a policy and procedure for sharing data, and streamlining services; Actively participate in the metro Denver’s Built for Zero Initiative which prioritizes housing solutions for veteran and chronic homelessness
Homelessness Indicators	Develop a robust and statistically-sound analytic tool to investigate the risk factors for homelessness in Adams County and develop strategies to address high-cost users of public services, including county programs, hospitals and ERs, jails, and shelters; Develop a shared data ecosystem that houses pertinent homelessness data from multiple Adams County agencies to ensure that analysis is as up-to-date as possible
Increase the sales tax to funnel funds to homelessness and housing programs Advocacy & Education	Create a communication strategy plan for staff and elected officials to follow when addressing homelessness issues with Adams County residents Provide education and resource for elected officials and residents in Adams County to better understand and address homelessness Increase lived experience engagement by promoting lived experience positions at the County and creating a lived experience advisory group
Renter’s Rights	Stay informed of local, regional, state, and federal policy regarding housing and renter’s protection; Participate in Denver Metro’s Renter’s Rights meetings
Flex Funds	Provide flexible funds through the County to support rental and utility assistance programs and for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless who are also not eligible for TANF-funded programs
Coordinated Funding	Provide a policy and procedure for equitable, coordinated funding through the County to administer funds to homelessness programs; Partner closely with the Adams County Foundation to align policies and priorities
Benevolence Program	Work with faith-based communities to provide a benevolence fund for people experiencing housing instability and/or in need of basic needs (food, clothes, etc.)
Sales Tax	Increase the sales tax to funnel funds to homelessness and housing programs ³¹

FUNDING

³¹ David, Sachs, The Denverite, *Denver Voters Could Decide to Tax Themselves and Visitors to Raise Money for Homeless Services*, July 1, 2020

ACCH EXERCISE

On February 28, 2019, ACCH went through an exercise to help identify top priorities for the group to focus on. ACCH members were given orange, green, and pink post-its and were asked:

1. What do you want to see accomplished this coming year? (Orange)
2. What topics would you be interested in working on most? What's missing? (Green)
3. What topic or issue do you want to tackle first? (Pink)

Below illustrate the summarized categories with the color code to match the response to the question.

HOUSING

Adequate affordable housing in small communities
Landlord recruitment
Resource (housing/shelter) development (creation)
Housing development
Housing options
Host homes
Transitional housing
Public support for transitional/ affordable housing
Transitional housing
Housing development

SHELTER/SERVICES

Services for families in doubled up/motel situations
Showers
Laundry
Support for IDs and birth certificates
Transportation services
Mobile medical services
Homeless shelter in Adams County
Shelter development
What would it take to open shelter for single adults?
Shelter for couples - folks with animals
Shelter
Emergency shelter/housing options
Safe spot parking
Sanctioned encampments

YOUTH

More affordable housing for youth
Support for McKinney-Vento liaisons in the schools

Youth options/supports

Support for youth experiencing homelessness
More resources for youth/aging out of care youth
Missing services for youth
Youth

ENGAGEMENT

More engagement with people with lived experience/peers
Law enforcement relations
Advocacy to raise awareness/educate
Homeless advocacy as a local public interest concern
Public conversations and education
Faith-based partnership

COLLABORATION

Through collaboration & partnering, address the county with 2 needs: shelter for singles and day center
Would like to see one tangible outcome as result of workgroups, i.e. Safe space, outreach plan, etc.
Collaboration between suburban counties
Year-round pit planning
Improve systems
Create a homeless plan

OUTREACH

Expanded outreach services in Adams County
Outreach x8
Outreach plan
Funding & process
Harm reduction outreach
Street outreach x4

RESOURCES

Effective, coordinated regional referral system, with an outreach component
A plan for coordinated information for the county
Access to resources/networking
Collaborative programming
Communication of services
Referral/service coordination
Resource communication with communities and political organizations
Establishing “first-aid” faith-based severe weather network
Comprehensive list of who’s who with ACCH 2019
Resources
Community resources
Coordinated information system

DROP-IN/DAY CENTER

Navigation center
Public support for permanent day center
Drop-in center
Day center
What would day center look like
“Active” navigating services from churches to agencies
Navigation/drop in center
Day resource drop-in center
Navigation/drop-in center/access point
Day center

NAVIGATION

Well-placed navigation system, includes goal-setting, budgeting, work training, harm reduction, housing navigation
Connect services to housing for people without children
Navigation- gathering volunteers, professionals to assist, MDs, CPAs, etc.
Hire navigators

COORDINATION

Coordinated entry across region 3x
VISPDAT use; making it a relevant tool in Adams County
Coordinated shelter entry

FUNDING

Create/access new funding streams
Flexible housing focused funds
Collaborative funding 4x
Expand diversion/prevention services
Funding sources for things like day center, cold weather care

POLICY/PROGRAMS

Best practices
Program evaluation
Program evaluation
Zoning policies
Moving Adams County towards housing focused work
Review shelter models (housing 1st)

INTERVIEW SCRIPTS & QUESTIONS

Community Partner Focus Group (Adapted for Survey via Survey Monkey)

Opening Script:

Hello everyone, thank you for joining us today. In addition to the 2016 Burnes Assessment to Address Homelessness, the continued collaboration with Adams County Coalition for the Homeless, and hard work across the county, we are creating a homelessness action plan for Adams County to provide direction, coordination, collaboration, political support, and effective interventions to address homelessness.

Part of the plan is that we embrace safe, stable, health and accessible housing for every one so that homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time (mission statement).

Define Homelessness (to finalize with focus group)

In today's session, we want to hear from you, your experience, and what you've seen when encountering people experiencing homelessness. Your feedback will play a vital role in shaping our strategies and action steps. We have just a few questions to ask and want to hear from all of you.

Depending on the group/if the group members are new with one another... lay some ground rules:

- *There are no right or wrong answers*
- *Speak from your own experience*
- *We want to hear from each of you, so please be mindful of giving others a chance to speak*
- *Be respectful of each other*

1. What does the face of homelessness look like in _____ (agency or municipality)?

- Single adults
- Single parent families
- Two parent families
- Youth headed families
- Couples without children
- People living in cars/RVs
- Older adults/seniors
- Youth
- Fleeing Domestic Violence
- Substance Use
- Mental Illness
- Physical Illness
- With disability
- Working/with income
- County/City residents
- Newly
- Chronic
- Loss of Employment
- Family/Relationship Break-Up
- At-Risk

2. What are the needs are you seeing from people experiencing homelessness?
 - Shelter
 - Jobs
 - Professional Development
 - Rental Assistance
 - Utility Assistance
 - Rental Deposits
 - Food
 - Clothing
 - Child Care
 - Transportation Assistance
 - Legal Assistance
 - Eviction Prevention
 - Affordable Housing
 - Accessible Housing
 - Gas Cards
 - Medical Assistance (prescriptions)
 - Dental Assistance
 - Domestic Violence
 - Showers
 - Laundry
 - Mailing Address
 - A place to park car/RV
 - A place to camp
 - ID/Birth Certificates
 - Internet/Computer Access
 - Benefits
 - Storage
 - Low Barrier Shelter/Housing
 - Internet/Computer Access
3. What services are you providing for people experiencing homelessness? Who accesses these services/who is eligible?
 - Answer options same as Q2
4. If so, who are you currently partnering with?
 - Municipality: _____
 - Agency: _____
 - County: _____
 - Faith-Based: _____
5. What gaps in services do you see? Pinpoint what gaps exist in services (i.e. AMI, services for single adults, safe spot parking, etc.)
6. What data do you collect?
 - Tracking people in cars/RVs
 - Demographics
 - Track who they assist
 - What services were provided
 - Track who inquires, who you don't assist
7. How could this action plan support your work?

LIVED EXPERIENCE QUESTIONS

Guidelines:

- *Different formats ask questions:*
 - *In person*
 - *By staff*
 - *By Linda and Sam*
 - *In a group*
 - *Individually*
 - *Paper survey*
 - *Outreach*
- *If at a shelter: questions should not be asked at intake*
 - *We believe that during intake, people are in crisis and needing shelter. We want to be intentional with the timing of when we are asking questions. By waiting until someone has entered into your program, we hope the immediate crisis for shelter has been reduced and question can be thoughtfully answered by program participants*
- *Incentives - Sam to provide partners by request: how many gift cards & hygiene kits are needed?*
 - *\$10 Walmart/King Soopers/McDonalds?*
 - *Hygiene kits*
 - *Socks*
 - *If group setting, pizza or meal provided*
 - *Timeline - during the month of November*

Opening Script:

Community partners in Adams County are creating a homelessness action plan to support people and provide needed services (identified by folks experiencing homelessness and folks interacting and working with people experiencing homelessness).

We are hoping to put in place services that are helpful to people experiencing homelessness. We need your input to direct this plan. Your experience and suggestions are extremely helpful. Thank you for sharing your story.

If in a group setting-- Depending on the group/if the group members are new with one another... lay some ground rules:

- *There are no right or wrong answers*
- *Speak from your own experience*
- *We want to hear from each of you, so please be mindful of giving others a chance to speak*
- *Be respectful of each other*

1. Where was your last permanent residency?
2. What would you say caused you to become homeless?
3. How long have you been experiencing homelessness?
4. What are some barriers to housing?
5. What services have been helpful? (List service and service provider)
6. What services have you not been able to access?