



Community Services Department

Sundquist Building • 3482 N. Broadway • Boulder, Colorado 80304 • Tel: 303.441.3560 • Fax: 303.441.4550
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 471 • Boulder, Colorado 80306 • www.bouldercountycommunityservices.org



Regional Homeless Executive Board Meeting
March 9th, 8:00 to 9:30
2525 13th Street, Large Conference Room (above Clinica)

- **Updates**
 - Status of implementation to date
 - Data presentation

- **Discussion Items**
 - Continuing discussion on system resource allocation priorities
 - Discussion of short and long term system objectives
 - Exploration of Shelter day services options
 - Discussion of common messaging strategies
 - Leveraging local communication approaches to share countywide successes
 - Formalize agreement on communication strategies?
 - Review outline for first comprehensive report
 - Discussion of structure and content
 - Request of Management Board for co-ownership of the report

- **Other Member Business**

- **Adjourn**

HSBC Executive Board Minutes
March 9, 8:00 to 9:30
2525 13th St. Boulder County
(Large Conference Room)

In Attendance: Robin Bohannon, Frank Alexander, Jennifer Biess, Kristen Lewis, Joni Marsh, Karen Kreuzberg, Karen Roney, Daphne McCabe, Jeff Zayach, Karen Rahn, Wendy Schwartz, Kurt Firnhaber

Absent: Will Connelly, Jim Adams-Berger

Guest: Tajshen Campbell

Status of Implementation

Jennifer Biess, Regional Homeless Systems Manager

Boulder County is applying for SAMHSA grant with MHP to cover housing support services. The SAMHSA grant would enable us to pull down more state vouchers.

Inter-agency “Discovery Day” on Feb 21, 2018, addressed next steps toward engaging supports outside the homeless service system for aging, mentally ill, and medically vulnerable homeless. Attendees reported that the event created an improved sense of connection and info-sharing among agencies.

Karen Rahn made a request to collect current data that supports targeted services for senior elderly, disabled, medically vulnerable.

Discussion Items

1. System resource allocation decisions:

Jennifer Biess created a memo addressing shelter best practices, including case management centered on using housing resources to quickly re-house clients, a comparison of demand for housing resources for Housing-focused Shelter clients, and the respective evidence bases for the effectiveness of day shelter and housing resources toward contributing to housing outcomes. Robin identified that a previous 2-year day shelter pilot did not show improved outcomes.

The group concluded that current housing resources are insufficient to support the “home base” concept in alignment with housing-focused shelter best practices, and with the system goal around housing, there is a tension between funding service delivery versus housing exits.

The Board asked for more information from staff on the effect of different levels of housing resource investment on the length of stay in shelter. Frank noted that once housing resources are more commensurate with the need, day services may be a better approach, and it should be revisited at that time.

The Board also requested that staff explore day services for a small group of elderly, medically vulnerable clients at HFS and conduct a three-year financial plan to show how system costs will shift over that time horizon.

2. Messaging strategies

The City of Boulder Press Release, included in meeting materials, serves as a positive example of collaborative communication, as the City was able to include system-wide information. Channel 9 contacted Mike Stratton, Boulder County Community Services, to do a story on the system success.

There is also a need to put out regular system updates, as elected officials and the public would like to get monthly updates.

The City of Longmont is also hosting a community conversation to discuss homeless services and community needs on March 19, 2018. Press is invited.

3. Outline for midyear report

The communications work group assembled a draft outline of the Midyear Report requested by the Executive Board at the February 2018 meeting (see meeting materials). The goal is to finalize the report by the end of April 2018. The Board approved the draft agenda as provided with the addition of system budget information and agreed that the report should be on behalf of both the Executive and Management boards.

Member Updates

- City of Boulder, City of Longmont, and Boulder County staff met with state legislators on the Right to Rest bill.
- Additional attention is needed around treatment services for vulnerable populations. There are several different efforts locally around treatment that the homeless service system could tap into in order to address this important need (e.g., CJS, state work on Medicaid and PSH, the Regional Accountable Entity, etc.).

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:30



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To: Homeless Solutions for Boulder County Executive Board
From: Jennifer Biess, Homeless Services System Manager, Boulder County Community Services
Date: March 8, 2018
Re: Homeless Solutions for Boulder County – Daytime hours at Boulder Shelter for the Homeless

Overview

The Homeless Solutions for Boulder County (HSBC) Executive Board considers resource allocation and reallocation priorities for components of the system. As part of HSBC, Boulder Shelter for the Homeless (BSH) is charged with helping our community members with the highest acuity of need exit homelessness into permanent housing. In an environment of limited resources, it is important to examine the various trade-offs associated with differing investments strategies. A current issue for the Executive Board’s consideration is examining how to prioritize additional resources in relation to day shelter services at BSH or toward housing solutions. Some of the implications and research related to these options are provided below for consideration.

1. Examining Opportunities to Invest in the Shelter System

Rationale for allocating additional resources for daytime hours at BSH

One option for the use of additional resources is funding daytime hours at BSH, so clients do not have to leave the shelter during the day. This could allow BSH to serve as a “home base” where clients are able to receive services until they are housed. This concept was central to community thinking about how to serve single adults experiencing homelessness in the working group process facilitated by the Corporation for Supportive Housing. The National Alliance to End Homelessness, a leading homelessness advocacy organization, recommends 24/7 service at emergency shelters in order to support working with clients immediately and often on exits to housing.ⁱ

Where the Shelter is Helping to satisfy this Need

The value of additional day service at BSH and potential impacts on other services in the County may be mitigated by daytime services already available at BSH. BSH offers the following services (see Table 1) between 8a.m.-11a.m. and between 4p.m.-9p.m. Clients can be at BSH at these times to take advantage of these services.

In addition to these day services, BSH has taken additional steps to make their services more attractive to clients. This aligns with national best practices around removing barriers to shelter, so shelter staff can better support clients in their housing goals.ⁱⁱ For example, BSH has eliminated limits on length of stay, created a reserved bed option, eliminated summer sobriety requirements, and is in the process of adding 50 new lockers so clients do not have to carry belongings with them. Boulder County and the Cities of Boulder and Longmont have also resourced BSH to provide daytime hours during severe weather (approximately 20 days per year).

Table 1. Current BSH Day Service Schedule	
Service	Days/Hours
Case Management	Mon., Thurs./8:00-11:00 AM and 4:00-7:00 PM Tues./8:00-9:00 AM and 4:00-7:00 PM Wed./4:00-7:00 PM
Clinica Nurse	Mon., Wed., Fri./8:00-10:00 AM
Clinica Physician	Wed./8:00-10:00 AM
Mental Health Partners	Mon.-Fri./6:30-9:00 PM
Veteran’s Administration Social Worker	Wed./8:00-10:00 AM
Women’s Mondays (different topics, activities)	Mon./7:00-9:00 PM
Art Class	Wed./7:30-9:00 PM
Boulder County AIDS Project	Wed./6:00-8:00 PM
Legal Aid	Wed./7:00-8:00 PM
Meals	Daily/breakfast and dinner – option to pack sack lunch during breakfast

Limitations of the “home base” approach absent housing resources

The “home base” concept assumes that daytime hours will be used productively to work with clients on housing plans. However, in order for these hours to be used effectively to forward housing goals, housing resources are needed, given that BSH services clients with significant barriers to housing. As outlined by national models, case management in this context focuses on connecting clients with appropriate housing resources and working with them to overcome barriers to tenancy and navigate the housing search process.ⁱⁱⁱ Without readily accessible housing resources, however, this process is hindered.

Funding daytime hours without housing resources will constitute funding day shelter services. Research has not demonstrated that day shelter helps contributes to housing exits; it also suggests that clients adopt coping strategies to deal with extensive time in shelter environments and become habituated to shelter life.^{iv} The National Alliance to End Homelessness also recognizes the risk of institutionalizing clients to the shelter environment. While they advocate for shelters to operate on a 24/7 basis, they note that rapidly exiting people from shelter (i.e., within 30 days) is needed to prevent this negative impact.^v Further, BSH has tested day shelter services through the Resource Center pilot with Bridge House. They found that few clients took advantage of these services and, as a result, discontinued the program.

2. Examining Opportunities to Invest in Housing Resources

Scarcity of housing resources for our most vulnerable residents

As described above, in order for added day service hours to support housing outcomes, most BSH clients will require housing resources. However, a review of data collected through Coordinated Entry screening and preliminary housing resource mapping by the housing exits working group show that housing resources for our most vulnerable adults experiencing homelessness fall short of the need.

To date, 586 of our community’s most vulnerable residents have been referred to BSH for help getting into permanent, stable housing. These clients have ties to Boulder County (60 percent of clients have been in Boulder County at least two years) and face significant barriers to regaining housing on their own: they have been homeless at least 6 months out of the past three years and have a disabling condition that makes it difficult to live independently. Of BSH’s current clients, 370

have been homeless a year or longer, and 263 meet the technical definition of chronic homelessness. Though some may resolve their homelessness themselves or choose to leave Boulder County, new individuals eligible for BSH services will also seek services as the system continues.

The research base supports two primary resources can help clients obtain and maintain stable housing. Individuals experiencing chronic homelessness can benefit from permanent supportive housing (PSH), a long-term subsidy with voluntary supportive services to help clients improve their wellbeing. Other clients can benefit from rapid rehousing (RRH), a shorter-term rental subsidy with case management to facilitate housing stability.

Currently, the pace of housing resource availability for single adults experiencing homelessness in Boulder County is insufficient to exit clients from homelessness within a reasonable time frame. National benchmarks for functional zero require communities to have an average length of time homeless of 90 days or less; current estimates suggest clients currently referred to BSH could be homeless up to 9 years.^{vi}

- **Permanent Supportive Housing:** Because turnover in PSH units is low, only seven PSH resources have become available in the past two months through the regional OneHome system, which are spread throughout the metro Denver region. This equates to 42 spaces per year. At this rate, it would take nine years to house the 370 clients who have been homeless a year or a more.
- **Rapid Rehousing:** Boulder County currently funds rapid rehousing for 20 clients per year through its Emergency Solutions Grant program. If we assume that a share of these high acuity of need clients (i.e., 20 percent) will self-resolve, it would take us nine years to rapidly rehouse the remaining 173 clients.

This preliminary analysis does not account for all factors related to demand for housing resources; however, these estimates demonstrate the need to increase investments in housing options for Boulder County's most vulnerable community members.

Proven value of housing investments support system goals

Investments in housing resources for individuals experiencing homelessness have known benefits, backed by a large body of empirical evidence.^{vii} This has led to a paradigm shift in the homeless service field toward Housing First, the philosophy that the first goal of homeless services is to rehouse clients as quickly as possible, and that housing can serve as a platform for improving wellbeing.^{viii} Permanent supportive housing has been shown to improve housing stability for chronically homeless individuals including those with severe mental illness relative to a treatment-first approach.^{ix} Studies have also shown that the costs of PSH are largely or entirely offset by reductions in use of shelter, emergency medical services, and the justice system.^x Further, investments in housing resources reduce length of stay in shelter, and clients who spend less time homeless are more successful at exiting homelessness.^{xi} Lastly, communities who are investing in housing resources are seeing significant decreases in the prevalence of homelessness. For example, Houston, which also uses a coordinated entry system to prioritize resources like Boulder County, has heavily invested in housing, and it has reduced unsheltered homelessness by 3,300 people (or 75 percent) between 2011 and 2016.^{xii}

3. Trade-Offs Related to Investment Strategies

Funding expansive daytime hours at the shelter, would require a significant influx of new resources (see Table 2). Depending on the level, this represents a 19 to 36 percent increase in the current shelter system budget between Boulder County, the City of Boulder, and the City of Longmont. If

these dollars were allocated to housing rather than day shelter, we could support up to 36 vulnerable adults in PSH or rapidly rehouse 120 individuals. Not only should these investments generate cost offsets in other systems, they will help reduce clients' average length of time homeless and demand on the emergency system. Once the system is able to quickly rehouse clients, daytime services may be more beneficial without risk of institutionalizing clients to shelter.

Table 2. Budget Impacts and Tradeoffs				
Day Utilization Winter	Day Utilization Summer	Cost	Equivalent Number of PSH Clients Supported Annually	Equivalent Number of RRH Clients Supported Annually
160 people	160 people	\$719,496	36	120
120 people	60 people	\$450,000	23	75
80 people	30 people	\$380,000	19	63

Further, current allocation of resources between navigation services and housing-focused shelter do not represent long-run resource allocation patterns. Navigation as separate services outside BSH is intended to be short-term (approximately 2 years) as the system right-sizes; after that time, services would be concentrated at BSH. However, doing this relies on reducing demand for emergency services by exiting clients to housing, which make these investments even more critical. Lastly, staff from Boulder County, City of Boulder, and City of Longmont can review service plans and budgets for all components of the system and explore whether reallocating existing resources can remedy disparities in services.

4. Summary of Key Points

This memo provides context for resource allocation decisions related to daytime hours at BSH and investments in housing resources. In summary, key points include:

- The CSH plan called for day services at BSH to create a “home base” for clients with a high acuity of need to work on getting into housing.
- National models for housing focused case management rely on connecting clients with housing resources (i.e., PSH, rapid rehousing programs, housing choice vouchers, etc.) and working with them to utilize those resources so they can get back into housing quickly (i.e., helping with housing search, overcoming barriers to tenancy).
- BSH currently provides services outside of their 5p.m. to 8a.m. hours to support clients in engaging with management, health services, etc.
- Preliminary estimates of demand for housing resources and the availability of current housing resources suggest are insufficient for Boulder County to achieve an average length of time homeless of 90 days or less in line with national benchmarks.
- An extensive body of research shows that housing investments resolve client homelessness. Further, these investments should create cost offsets by reducing emergency shelter, jail, and hospitalization costs.
- Daytime hours at BSH would require a large amount of new resources for the system, which could be support up to 36 clients in permanent supportive housing units or 120 clients in rapid rehousing each year.
- In the long-run, system resources are intended to be more concentrated at BSH as the system right-sizes and navigation programming at separate locations is no longer needed.

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- ⁱ National Alliance to End Homelessness. 2017. "Emergency Shelter Learning Series." Accessed: March 4, 2018. <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/emergency-shelter/>.
- ⁱⁱ National Alliance to End Homelessness 2017.
- ⁱⁱⁱ National Alliance to End Homelessness. 2017.
- ^{iv} Gunberg, Jeffrey, and Paula F. Eagle. 1990. "Shelterization: How the Homeless Adapt to Shelter Living." *Psychiatric Services* 41(5), pg. 521-525.
- ^v National Alliance to End Homelessness 2017.
- ^{vi} U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. 2016. "Criteria and Benchmark for Achieving the Goal of Ending Chronic Homelessness." Accessed: March 5, 2018. <https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/criteria-and-benchmark-for-ending-chronic-homelessness/>.
- ^{vii} Cunningham, Mary. 2009. *Preventing and Ending Homelessness—Next Steps*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute. Accessed: March 4, 2018. <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/30126/411837-Preventing-and-Ending-Homelessness-Next-Steps.PDF>.
- ^{viii} Cho, Richard. 2014. "Four Clarifications about Housing First." U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. Accessed: March 5, 2018. <https://www.usich.gov/news/four-clarifications-about-housing-first>.
- ^{ix} Aubry, Tim; Geoffrey Nelson, and Sam Tsemberis. 2015. "Housing First for People with Severe Mental Illness Who are Homeless: A Review of the research and Findings from the At Home-Chez Soi Demonstration Project." *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 60(11), pg. 467-474.
- ^x Culhane, Dennis; Stephen Metraux; and Trevor R. Hadley. 2002. "The Impact of Supportive Housing for Homeless People with Severe Mental Illness on the Utilization of the Public Health, Corrections, and Emergency Shelter Systems: The New York-New York Initiative." *Housing Policy Debate* 13(1), pg. 107-163.
- ^{xi} U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development & Research. 2015. *Assessment Tools for Allocating Homelessness Assistance: State of the Evidence*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Policy and Urban Development. Accessed: March 4, 2018. https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/pdf/assessment_tools_Convening_Report2015.pdf.
- ^{xii} Beekman, Daniel. 2016. "Houston's solution to the homeless crisis: Housing – and lots of it." *The Seattle Times*. Accessed: March 4, 2018. <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/houstons-solution-to-the-homeless-crisis-housing-and-lots-of-it/>.



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Homeless Solutions for Boulder County Midyear Report: Draft Outline

- Foreword letter(s) from Executive Board and Management Board or one jointly
- Introduction
- Overview of the systems approach
 - Values of the system
 - Focus on housing solutions – why?
 - Effectiveness of housing interventions
 - Economic considerations/cost effectiveness
 - System Components
 - Role of Coordinated Entry screening
 - Description of Navigation services
 - Intent
 - Target population
 - Services provided currently
 - Description of housing-focused shelter services
 - Intent
 - Target population
 - Services provided currently
- Data to date
 - Description of our population (differentiate between Boulder and Longmont)
 - Number screened by city, number referred to each program, characteristics of population (age, connection to Boulder County, experience with homelessness, presence of disabling condition)
 - Outcomes
 - Summary data and client anecdotes
- Emerging issues and obstacles
 - Need for more housing resources
 - Need to partner with non-homeless service providers to support clients with high acuity of need (e.g., medically vulnerable adults in need of higher level of care)
- Where does the system go from here: forecasting future vision
 - 3 year outlook
 - Right sizing the system
 - Investment in housing opportunities key to reducing demand on emergency services
 - Include updates on anticipated service changes if any



NEWS

Friday, March 2, 2018

Media Contacts:

Wendy Schwartz, Human Services, 303-441-1818

Zach McGee, Media Relations, 303-441-2339

More Than 100 Individuals Exit the Homeless Services System Through New Programs

On Oct. 1, 2018, the City of Boulder, Boulder County, and the City of Longmont launched a new county-wide system of services to help adults experiencing homelessness access housing and services, with a focus on permanent housing solutions. This system includes the Bridge House Path to Home Navigation (PTHN) program, which serves individuals in the City of Boulder, and Boulder Shelter for the Homeless Housing-Focused Shelter (HFS) Program, which serves clients from across the county.

Early Program Results: During the first four months of the program (Oct. 1, 2017-Jan. 31, 2018), 104 people have successfully exited from these two programs within the City of Boulder.

In addition, 25 people have successfully exited from navigation services in the City of Longmont, resulting in 129 exits countywide from the new homeless services system.

Boulder Shelter for the Homeless HFS Program

- 21 people housed

Bridge House PTHN Program

- 83 people housed or returned to a support system:
 - 21 housed
 - 13 moved into the Bridge House Ready to Work program, which provides employment training opportunities and transitional housing
 - 1 entered substance use treatment
 - 2 reunified with family members in Boulder
 - 46 reunified with support systems outside Boulder

Longmont Navigation Services through OUR Center and Hope for Longmont

- 25 people housed or returned to a support system:
 - 10 housed
 - 7 reunified with support systems outside Boulder County
 - 8 referred to longer-term support programs such as Agape Safe Haven

HFS generally works with higher need people with more housing barriers, and housing placements are expected to happen more quickly in navigation programs. HFS and PTHN began Oct. 1, 2017, and Longmont navigation programs began Nov. 1, 2017.

Background: The new adult homeless services system is part of the City of Boulder Homelessness Strategy, and a countywide partnership with Boulder County, the City of Longmont and community partners. It includes:

- A coordinated entry system, where people seeking services are assessed and matched with the right program according to their needs;
- Housing-Focused Shelter at Boulder Shelter for the Homeless for longer-term services;
- Navigation Services through Bridge House Path to Home program (PTHN) for shorter-term services; and
- Navigation Services in the City of Longmont through OUR Center and HOPE for Longmont.

City of Boulder Homelessness Resources Website: <https://bouldercolorado.gov/homelessness>.
Boulder County Regional Homeless Systems Collaborative website:
<https://www.bouldercounty.org/government/boards-and-commissions/boulder-county-regional-homeless-systems-management/>

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