

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Gary Sanford, Zoe LeBeau, Katie Symons, Jennifer Lopez, Vanessa Fenley,
Margay Witzdam - Burnes Center on Poverty and Homelessness

DATE: November 27, 2018

RE: Development of a Homeless Strategic plan for the City of Loveland

The Burnes Center on Poverty and Homelessness provides assistance in research, policy analysis, program evaluation, technical assistance, and data dissemination. We help those committed to addressing the issue of homelessness by reviewing policies, assessing and measuring impact, determining the best use of resources, and using evidence and data to enhance existing programs as well as inform future policies, services, and efforts. Colorado faces many challenges as it works to respond to the needs of large numbers of homeless individuals and families. At the Burnes Center, we offer information to assist service providers, practitioners, organizations, local and state government, and foundations to make an impact in their communities and transform the lives of people experiencing homelessness.

HOMELESS STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CITY OF LOVLEAND

Homelessness in Colorado is a critical community issue statewide. The most recent Annual Homelessness Assessment Report from HUD found that homelessness has increased in Colorado by 4% percent over the past year (currently estimated at 10,940 persons statewide). There are many reasons for this increase in our state, but at the forefront of the issue is limited access to resources along the housing continuum that prevent and address homelessness. The Colorado front range has been grappling with high housing costs since the 1980s. Our team will look carefully at access to housing as well as services critical to stabilizing those who are experiencing homelessness or are unstably housed. The path to individual or family homelessness varies. The primary cause of homelessness is the lack of available affordable housing, which is exacerbated by lower paying jobs and the lack of adequate public support to enable households to afford living in a community.

Additional factors that can complicate homelessness for individuals and families includes the lack of health insurance and accessible medical care, a recent discharge from jail and other institutions, poor credit or rental history, lack of mental health and addiction treatment services, and family violence and relationship problems. According to the 2018 Point in Time (PIT), the City of Loveland reported 53 individuals in local shelters and transitional housing programs while Larimer County reported a total of 273 persons and Weld County reported 199 persons in local similar settings. It is important to note that the 2018 PIT assessment was focused on sheltered persons which does not include those who slept outside on the PIT count night. The 2017 PIT effort reported 136 persons in Larimer County who were unsheltered. Although it is a significant number across the region, it is not an insurmountable one. Loveland and the region has a number of experienced providers that have been providing services for years.

What this planning process provides is an opportunity to assess the community from a broader perspective and systematically increase awareness and support to address this growing issue in Loveland and surrounding communities. It is important for communities to understand the various underlying causes of homelessness. This information not only contributes to community education to dispel myths and stereotypes but more importantly, communities need to “go upstream” in order to effectively prevent homelessness. Various public policies and practices can lead to homelessness. It is critical to assess the need and circumstances leading to homelessness if we are going to begin to decrease homelessness countywide.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVE

Develop a strategic and actionable plan to address homelessness in Loveland, Colorado.

GOAL

The goal of the Strategic Plan is to develop a strategy that includes the following:

- Systems -level evaluation of current efforts to address homelessness across subpopulations in the city and the larger region, identifying gaps and providing creative strategies to bring effective homeless interventions through community collaboration with existing partners.
- Create and clarify community actions and goals in the short, medium, and long term to address homelessness, including rapid rehousing, supportive housing and other supportive services.
- A well-defined implementation plan describing current partners and resources, and potential partners and resources is required.

PHASE 1: Systems-level evaluation of current efforts

The team will work with local leaders, nonprofit agencies, government representatives, persons with lived experience, faith communities, local businesses, funders and other stakeholders to conduct a systems-level evaluation of current efforts to address homelessness in the City of Loveland as well as the two-county region (Weld and Larimer).

The team will begin by reviewing all existing documents related to the issue of homelessness that are currently available from work completed locally over the past decade. Next, the team will develop surveys and interview key stakeholders in the community to finalize a gaps analysis as well as identify ideas for bridging gaps and scaling existing programs and resources.

PHASE 2: Develop an actionable management plan

Actions will be organized by short, medium, and long-term goals and organized as part of the larger strategic planning document. All recommendations will emphasize collaborative efforts, promote efficiencies, reduce duplication of services when possible, streamline communications and data sharing between providers, increase access to services including mobile services, prioritize existing resources, and identify strategies to increase available resources.

Scaling effective solutions requires broad based community support and a thoughtful communications strategy. Developing an actionable management plan with community stakeholders will generate buy in for the strategic implementation plan. Without community support, many of the recommended actions and goals may not be realized. Community and stakeholder support is critical to the success of the plan and strategies to address homelessness.

PHASE 3: Develop a Strategic Implementation Plan

The team will work with stakeholders in Loveland and across the region to develop a strategic plan which will guide collective efforts toward actionable solutions in preventing and addressing homelessness. Activities will include but are not limited to: work with project advisory committee to develop strategic plan, communicate to local and regional stakeholders project progress and opportunities for input to draft plan, determine implementation strategies such as community engagement, governance committee, involvement of persons with lived experiences, opportunities for scaling successful projects, funding opportunities to support the plan, as well as other tasks key to finalizing and embedding the plan.

The team will provide a number of recommendations regarding how to manage this strategic plan, how to coordinate across agencies, and where the strategic plan implementation should be managed long term. There are numerous models, and each has positives and negatives. By presenting various options, the community can make the best decision for how to manage implementation of the plan and build community capacity long term. Based upon work and progress made in the city since 2011, our vision is to build off of current efforts and provide recommendations for improvements toward more integrated systems for the City of Loveland. The Burnes Center team is excited to assist the City of Loveland in developing strategic

directions to better address homelessness in the region. Through research of best practices and input from community stakeholders, the proposed plan can serve as a transformational tool to strengthen local collaborations, use data to inform decisions and assess investments, and replicate best practices and increase services toward desired outcomes.

The strategic implementation plan will contain recommendations toward system transformation which will include resources and policies, suggestions of alignment of existing resources with plan objectives, service recommendations (including budget and funding sources) for identified subpopulations, as well as strategies to improve data collection and reporting which will include data driven decision making.

PROJECT TEAM

Our team members are passionate about the issue of homelessness and have diverse experiences in the areas of housing, services, homelessness programming and evaluation. We are particularly excited with the opportunity to work in the City of Loveland as well as the two-county region (Larimer and Weld counties). Our team has intimate knowledge of the region with hands on experiences in assessing homelessness, analyzing continuum of service systems, collaborating with the Colorado Balance of State Continuum of Care (BoS CoC) and Northern Colorado Continuum of Care to identify resources in the region, and facilitating trainings and conversations about housing solutions.

Our team approaches this scope of work with a passion for the issue of homelessness and a desire to support the City of Loveland and the region in developing a road map to guide future efforts. The team will be led by Gary Sanford from the Burnes Center with the following partners: Zoe LeBeau and Katie Symons (LeBeau Development), Jenn Lopez (Project Moxie), Vanessa Fenley (former Director of Homeward 2020 and consultant to the Northern Colorado CoC) as well as MSW students from the University of Denver.

PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS

Gary Sanford - Burnes Center Project Lead

- Developed *Pathways Home Colorado* – first state plan addressing homelessness
- Provided strategic plan development for non-profit agencies (FL Network)
- Led community efforts to establish CoC regional goals and priorities

Zoe LeBeau - Consultant

- Co-facilitated Pathways Home Colorado PSH Toolkit
- Developed statewide plans to develop PSH pipelines in Utah, NM and CO.
- Created housing plans for multiple clients across the country
- Established veterans supportive housing plans in Minnesota

Katie Symons - Consultant

- Denver's Road Home - prevention, shelter, outreach goals
- Assessment and evaluation for Boulder County Community Foundation

Jennifer Lopez – Consultant

- Developed housing strategy for La Plata County that leveraged \$20 million
- Managed underwriting initiative for PSH for Colorado
- Realigning resources for PSH projects in the state of New Mexico.

Vanessa Fenley - Consultant

- Updated Homeward 2020's 10 Year Plan
- Led Coordinated Entry planning efforts in Northern Colorado

Margay Witzdam - Research Assistant Burnes Center

- Master of Social Work Student – University of Denver
- Program Director at Flagstaff Shelter Services Inc.
- Developed Coordinated Entry program and system in Flagstaff, Arizona.
- Served a year of Americorps in Alamosa, Colorado – La Puente Homeless Shelter