

# MAKING HOMELESSNESS HISTORY IN COLORADO



COLORADO



**Zac Schaffner, Supportive Housing Services Manager**  
**Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Division of Housing**  
*Transitions Stakeholder Advisory Council - 1/13/2022*

Whether it's due to getting sick, losing a job, or family break-up, we know homelessness can happen to anyone. Colorado is working to create a future where everyone in Colorado has a safe, stable, and affordable place to live.

[The Making Homelessness History Playbook](#) outlines a series guiding principles, key goals, crosscutting approaches, and proven solutions created to support communities in their efforts to create robust homeless response systems designed to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness.



We may not be able to prevent everyone from experiencing a housing crisis, but we can build systems to ensure that homelessness is rare and quickly resolved when it occurs.

## KEY GOALS

STOP  
HOMELESSNESS  
BEFORE IT  
STARTS

IDENTIFY  
THOSE AT  
RISK &  
ENSURE  
THEY ARE  
SAFE

CONNECT  
WITH  
SUPPORTS  
NEEDED TO  
QUICKLY EXIT  
HOMELESSNESS

CREATE  
ACCESS TO  
LONG-TERM  
STRUCTURAL  
SOLUTIONS

## CROSS- CUTTING APPROACHES

### LEADING WITH EQUITY

*Tackling homelessness through anti-racist practices and community-driven solutions is critical to eliminating racial disparities and inequitable outcomes.*

### REAL-TIME, PERSON-SPECIFIC DATA

*A real-time list of people experiencing homelessness by name can provide a shared understanding of who needs support, whether efforts are working, and how to best target resources.*

### HOUSING FOCUSED

*Helping those experiencing homelessness find stable, secure, and affordable housing as soon as possible provides a foundation to effectively tackle other challenges and opportunities they face.*

### CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

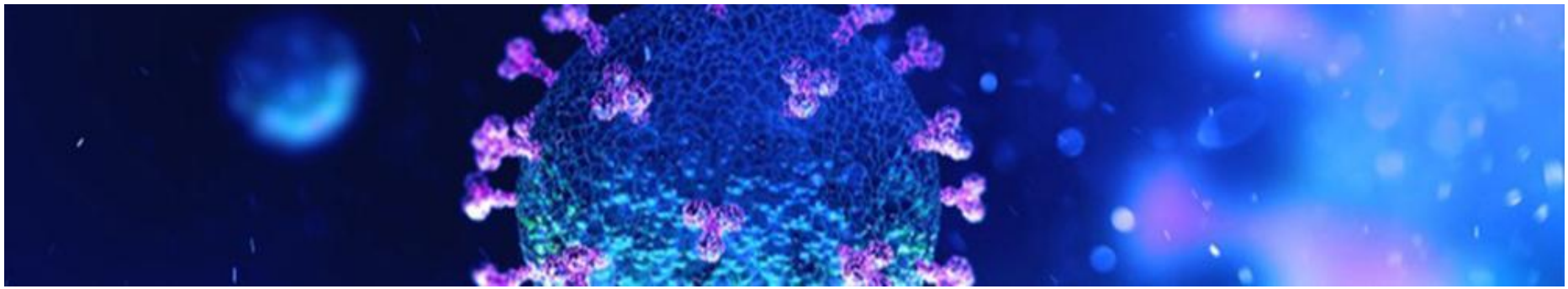
*Screening for social determinants of health across benefit programs, educational systems, healthcare providers, and reentry planning improves care navigation, reduces emergency system utilization, and increases stability.*

# The Urgency of Now

Homelessness is a big problem, but not one too big to be solved when an entire community comes together.

- **2X** first time homeless experience in Denver shelters in the past year.
- **9,846** Coloradans reported experiencing sheltered or unsheltered literal homelessness on a single night in January during the 2020 Federal Point-In-Time Count snapshot.
- **21,400+** students identified as experiencing homelessness, doubled up, or unstably housed by school-based McKinney-Vento liaisons during the 2019-2020 school year.
- **53,000+** individuals covered by Colorado's Medicaid system in 2019 were without stable housing.

The discrepancies between these data sources are part of what motivates us to encourage every community working to end homelessness in Colorado to collaboratively develop a multi-sector, real-time, by-name list of people experiencing homelessness in their communities and use that list to rapidly test and implement strategies to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness.



The COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying economic fallout is hitting low- and extremely low-income individuals and families who were already severely cost-burdened especially hard.

It's estimated that persons experiencing homelessness infected with COVID-19 are twice as likely to be hospitalized, two to four times as likely to require critical care, and two to three times as likely to die from the illness as the general population.

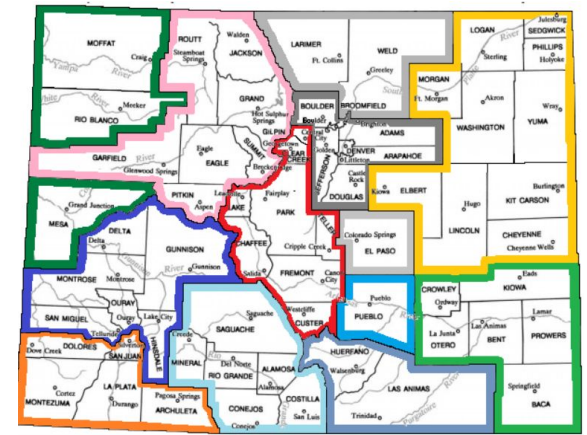
The playbook, with its focus on **stopping homelessness before it starts, cross-sector partnerships, and creating access to long-term structural solutions** continues to inform the State's pandemic response and ongoing efforts to make homelessness rare and brief.



We know those experiencing homelessness are focused on meeting their basic needs, and not which municipality or county they're in.

Across Colorado, we've seen that developing an effective regional approach requires building a common understanding of the need, the housing resources available, and where there are gaps.

Once communities have this information they can work together to make strategic investments and implement proven solutions to addressing homelessness.



## Colorado's Continuum of Care (CoC) Regions

Metro Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI)

Pikes Peak CoC

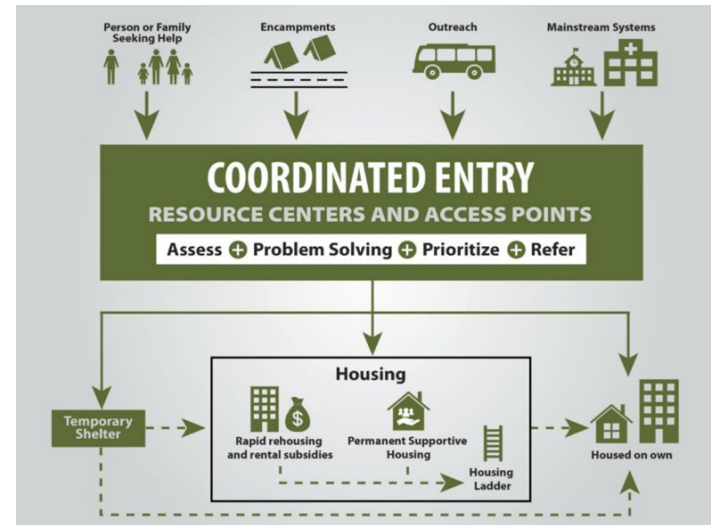
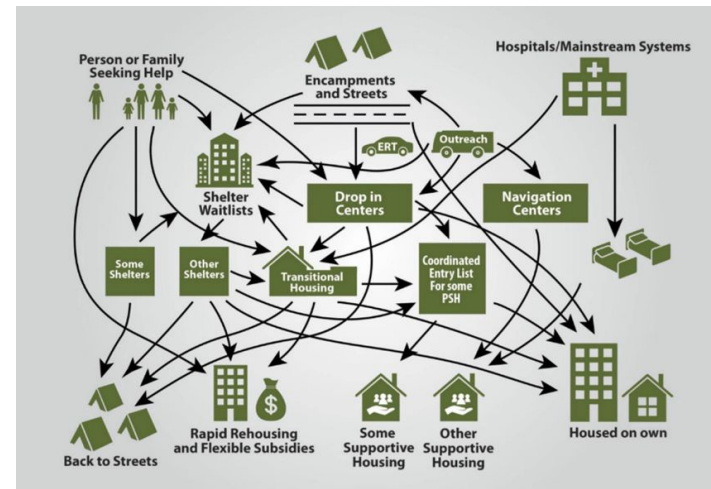
Balance of State CoC

Northern Colorado CoC (NoCo)

# DESIGNING AN EFFECTIVE HOMELESS RESPONSE SYSTEM

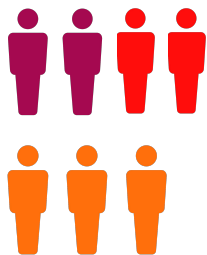
Homelessness is not homogeneous. Systems must be designed to meet the diverse needs of those experiencing homelessness including veterans, families, youth, seniors, those fleeing domestic violence, individuals with complex physical and behavioral health needs, or those exiting incarceration.

Across these populations and regardless of the precipitating event or circumstance, homelessness ends in a home. Ending homelessness requires the availability of diverse, proven solutions that meet a variety of needs.



# Seven Key Data Points: Shifting from Static Data to Dynamic Data

INFLOW



ACTIVELY  
HOMELESS



OUTFLOW



INFLOW:  
Newly  
identified



INFLOW:  
Returned from  
housing



INFLOW:  
Returned from  
inactive



OUTFLOW:  
Housing  
placements



OUTFLOW:  
Moved to  
inactive



OUTFLOW:  
No longer meets  
population  
criteria

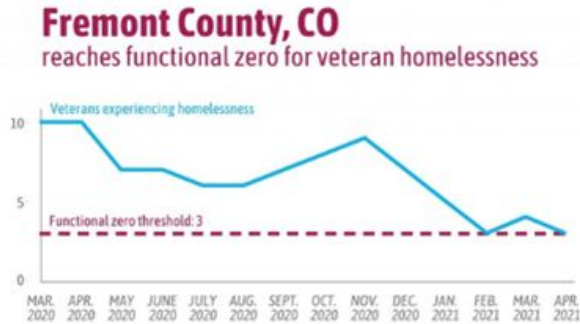




## Making Homelessness History: Functional Zero in Fremont

Fremont is the first community in the State of Colorado to reach the Built for Zero milestone of “Functional Zero” for veteran homelessness.

Fremont has created a homeless response system able to quickly identify veterans experiencing homelessness, assess their housing needs, and match them with the appropriate intervention.



Fremont knows exactly how many veterans are experiencing homelessness at any given time and has demonstrated the ability to consistently house more veterans each month than the number of veterans in their community who are currently experiencing homelessness.

# Transforming Statewide Data

## BUILT FOR ZERO COLORADO | STATE COHORT



COLORADO  
Department of Local Affairs

**Built For Zero.**  
COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Cohort-level metrics help us understand the **dynamics of the data** and **highlight the progress** that Colorado communities are making towards ending homelessness.

Single Adults Subpopulation

Veteran

Time Period

Previous year

Jan 2021	Feb 2021	Mar 2021	Apr 2021	May 2021	Jun 2021	Jul 2021	Aug 2021	Sep 2021	Oct 2021	Nov 2021	Dec 2021
2/6 QBNL	3/6 QBNL	3/6 QBNL	3/6 QBNL	3/7 QBNL	4/7 QBNL	4/6 QBNL	4/7 QBNL	5/7 QBNL	5/8 QBNL	5/8 QBNL	1/3 QBNL

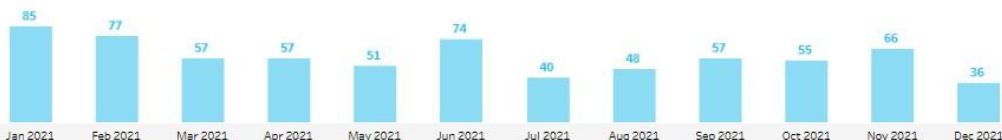
### CO Cohort Actively Homeless Number



### CO Cohort Inflow / Outflow



### CO Cohort Outflow: Housing Placements



### Total Veteran Housing Placements

since the cohort started and YTD

1,735 total

**Built For Zero.**



COLORADO

# Homeless Management Information System

A Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness.

Each Continuum of Care (CoC) is responsible for selecting an HMIS software solution that complies with HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards.

All four of Colorado's Continuum of Care utilize Bitfocus' Clarity as the Statewide HMIS implementation. Clarity is HUD certified as a HMIS product for HUD housing counseling agency use.

This secure, web-based system is used to record and store HUD required client information about the characteristics and service needs of persons experiencing homelessness.



**CLARITY**  
HUMAN SERVICES



The purpose of COHMIS is to improve coordination of services that support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

To further ensure and navigate this coordination, data is shared statewide between the four Continuum of Care (CoC) bodies: MDHI (Metro Denver), Pikes Peak (El Paso County) Northern Colorado (Larimer and Weld Counties), and Balance of State (Remaining 54 Counties).