



## HOMELESSNESS FACTS

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### WHO IS HOMELESS?

- Two trends are largely responsible for the rise in homelessness over the past 20-25 years: *a growing shortage of affordable rental housing and a simultaneous increase in poverty*. Persons living in poverty are most at-risk of becoming homeless, and demographic groups who are more likely to experience poverty are also more likely to experience homelessness.
- Homelessness in the United States is disturbingly common. *Approximately 1.6 million Americans were in emergency shelter or transitional housing sometime between October 2007 and September 2008.*
- *14 percent of single homeless adults were discharged into homelessness from jail or a mental health facility.*
- On a single night in January 2008, 664,000 individuals were homeless in the United States. *One in every 190 people in the United States accessed the shelter system over the course of a year.*
- *67 percent of all homeless people are alone, 33 percent are homeless in families.* 62 percent of the homeless are minorities, 12 percent are veterans, 42 percent of homeless adults have a physical or mental disability.
- Between 2007 and 2008, *the number of homeless families seeking shelter nationwide increased by nine percent overall, and by nearly 56 percent in suburban and rural areas.*

### HOMELESSNESS AND HEALTH CARE

- Many people who are homeless are *more concerned with meeting immediate needs for shelter, food, clothing, and safety than with seeking health care*. For some, the symptoms of their illnesses or the cost of health care cause them to actually avoid seeking attention.
- More than half of people experiencing homelessness nationwide have no health insurance and are typically unable to access the health care they need to stabilize and resolve their health concerns, which prolongs their homelessness. *At least 90 percent of all homeless patients that come to the Coalition for health care are uninsured.*
- *The life expectancy of homeless persons is 30 years less than for other Americans*, and their rates of illnesses of all kinds are far greater than for housed individuals.
- *Children experiencing homelessness become sick more frequently than their housed peers*. In addition, homeless children suffer from numerous chronic health conditions.

### HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

- Currently, there is *not a single county anywhere in the U.S. where a person working full-time at minimum wage can afford the Fair Market Rent* for a one-bedroom apartment.
- The increase in home foreclosures has resulted in evictions of both homeowners and renters. *Approximately 40% of households losing their homes to foreclosures are renters*. The majority of these are low-income families who do not have the resources for first and last month's rent plus a security deposit required to rent a new apartment. *These families are now becoming homeless.*

- At the state level, *Colorado continues to be one of the only states in the nation that provides no dedicated State funding to address homelessness.* In addition, the state spends only \$2 million of its general fund on affordable housing development – significantly below what is needed to meet the housing needs of low-income and homeless families and individuals.

#### HOMELESS FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

- The number of homeless families with children has increased significantly over the past decade. Families with children are among the fastest growing segments of the homeless population. *The Coalition has seen a 20% rise in homeless families seeking assistance due to foreclosure on their property or their rental property, evictions due to job loss, medical problems, legal fees and the rise in the cost of living.*
- A majority of homeless families have 2 or 3 members. *Half of all children in families are five years old or younger.*
- According to the Colorado Children's Campaign, *Colorado has the highest number of children living in poverty in the nation.* The study shows that 180,000 children – 15.7 percent of the state total — were living in poverty in Colorado in 2006, a 73 percent increase since 2000.

#### WHO IS HOMELESS IN COLORADO?

- More than 16,000 men, women and children are homeless in Colorado on any given night. More than 60 percent of homeless persons are in households with children, and many of them are homeless for the first time. *As many as 42,000 families or individuals will experience homelessness in Colorado this year.*
- 31.7 percent of newly homeless individuals in Colorado list the *inability to pay rent or mortgage as the primary reason for their homelessness*, while 23 percent list the loss of a job as the primary contributing factor.
- *In Denver, officials note that the three main causes for homelessness in households with children are domestic violence, family disputes, and unemployment.* The main causes for homelessness among singles and unaccompanied youth are family disputes, substance abuse and lack of needed services, and emancipation from foster care.

#### HOMELESS VETERANS

- *Between 150,000 and 200,000 veterans of the US Armed Forces are homeless on any given night, and one-third of homeless men are veterans*, including combat veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Nearly 400,000 veterans will experience homelessness during the course of a year.
- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs says the nation's homeless veterans are mostly males (four percent are females). *The vast majority are single, most come from poor, disadvantaged communities, 45 percent suffer from mental illness, and half have substance abuse problems.*

*For more information, please visit our website at [www.coloradocoalition.org](http://www.coloradocoalition.org) or contact BJ Iacino, Director of Education and Advocacy, 303-285-5223 or [biacino@coloradocoalition.org](mailto:biacino@coloradocoalition.org)*



## COLORADO COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

*Summary of Services*  
[www.coloradocoalition.org](http://www.coloradocoalition.org)

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The Colorado Coalition for the Homeless is recognized as a national leader in the integration of housing, healthcare and support services for persons experiencing homelessness – serving more than 16,000 men, women and children each year. The mission of the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless is to work collaboratively toward the prevention of homelessness and the creation of lasting solutions for homeless and at-risk families, children and individuals throughout Colorado. CCH advocates for and provides a continuum of housing and a variety of services to improve the health, well-being and stability of those it serves.

### Integrated Healthcare

The Coalition's Stout Street Clinic has been delivering healthcare for the homeless in downtown Denver for almost 25 years. The Colorado Coalition for the Homeless provides integrated medical and mental healthcare services to more than 12,000 men, women and children each year, ranging in age from infancy to those over 85. Comprehensive primary and preventive care services include medical exams; diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic illnesses; health maintenance; pre- and post-natal care; gynecological services and family planning; immunizations; TB testing; and, health education. Mental health services include psychiatric assessments; crisis intervention; medication management; referrals to community services; and case management. The Coalition also provides comprehensive substance abuse treatment including daily recovery, education, and relapse prevention groups; individual counseling; housing assistance; crisis intervention; medication treatment; intensive care management; and referrals to community programs for individuals with drug and alcohol addictions, and for individuals with co-occurring addiction and mental illness disorders. Patients requiring emergency and specialty care are referred to other appropriate providers in the community.

### Housing

Since 1996, the Coalition and its subsidiary, Renaissance Housing Development Corporation, have constructed more than 1,400 affordable housing units, at fifteen locations, in the Denver metropolitan area. The Coalition's progressive housing development approach, "Renaissance Housing" is based on a mixed-income model where formerly homeless families and individuals are integrated with other low- and moderate-income families and individuals throughout the housing development. This model provides for a better social integration, whereby residents provide support for each other, and better financial integration, such that those who can afford to pay \$500 or \$600 per month in rent help to subsidize those who can only afford to pay \$50 or \$100. The model also reduces the stigma often associated with homeless housing. These properties include: Beacon Place, Forum Apartments, Forest Manor, Renaissance at Loretto Heights, Renaissance at Lowry Boulevard, Renaissance 88, Renaissance Blue Spruce Townhomes, Renaissance at Civic Center, Renaissance at Concord Plaza, Renaissance Riverfront Lofts, Renaissance Off Broadway Lofts, Renaissance at Xenia Village and Renaissance Uptown Lofts.

### Family Services & Child Care

The Coalition's Family Support Services Program provides a wide range of critical services including shelter placement; 24 months of service-enriched transitional housing; children's programs designed to promote healthy physical, emotional, educational and social growth; and Welfare-to-Work programs. And since 1999, the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless' Renaissance Children's Center (RCC) has offered affordable, high quality child development programs for low-income and formerly homeless families, as

well as those who may be more affluent who appreciate the value in the Center's unique and highly successful environment. The Coalition seeks to provide a place where children and their families can feel safe, are supported in their individual needs, and are given tools for academic learning, social interactions, and emotional competence. RCC serves children ranging in age from six weeks to 5 years, with 75 child care slots targeted for homeless and low-income families.

### **Housing First**

The Coalition has adopted an approach designed to help chronically homeless individuals move immediately off the streets or out of the shelter system. Called "Housing First," it includes crisis intervention, rapid access to housing, follow-up case management and therapeutic support services to prevent the recurrence of homelessness. Housing First is designed to respond to the most acute need of chronically homeless individuals with disabilities – housing – and through the provision of housing, to provide the other services necessary to maintain that housing and to improve health. Through this program, the Coalition has been successful in maintaining housing for more than 200 chronically homeless individuals over the past four years.

### **Street Outreach**

The Colorado Coalition for the Homeless has been delivering street outreach to homeless people in Denver since 1986. The Coalition is the lead agency in one of the most effective collaborations serving chronically homeless individuals – the Denver Street Outreach Collaborative. As part of Denver's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness, the Coalition, St. Francis Center, Urban Peak, the Denver Police, the Veterans Administration and the Downtown Denver Partnership work together to engage street homeless persons, connect them to services and find permanent housing.

### **Support Services**

The Coalition provides individualized support services for its clients as needed, in order to create a stable environment and to keep those that were once homeless in housing. This includes rental assistance; help navigating the "red tape" often required to obtain public benefits like Medicaid; connections to jobs, employers or employment resources; dedicated case-managers; and customized mental health and substance treatment approaches.

### **Employment Counseling**

The Coalition helps homeless individuals meet their vocational goals, obtain the income they need to overcome homelessness and regain their places as contributing members of their communities. The Coalition works collaboratively with community agencies and employers to ensure success. Services are highly individualized in order to define meaningful goals, develop effective strategies and action plans, utilize available resources and gain the personalized skills and tools needed to seek and maintain employment.

### **Education and Advocacy**

The Coalition's Education and Advocacy Program seeks to raise awareness of homelessness in local, regional and national communities and to advocate for public policies to prevent and end homelessness. Through web-based outreach and information exchange, statewide educational conferences, local community forums and grass-roots efforts, media relations, speakers' bureau programs and political advocacy, the Coalition works to foster long-term strategies to end homelessness that increase the supply of affordable and supportive housing, livable incomes, and access to health, mental health and substance treatment services for the most vulnerable citizens.

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