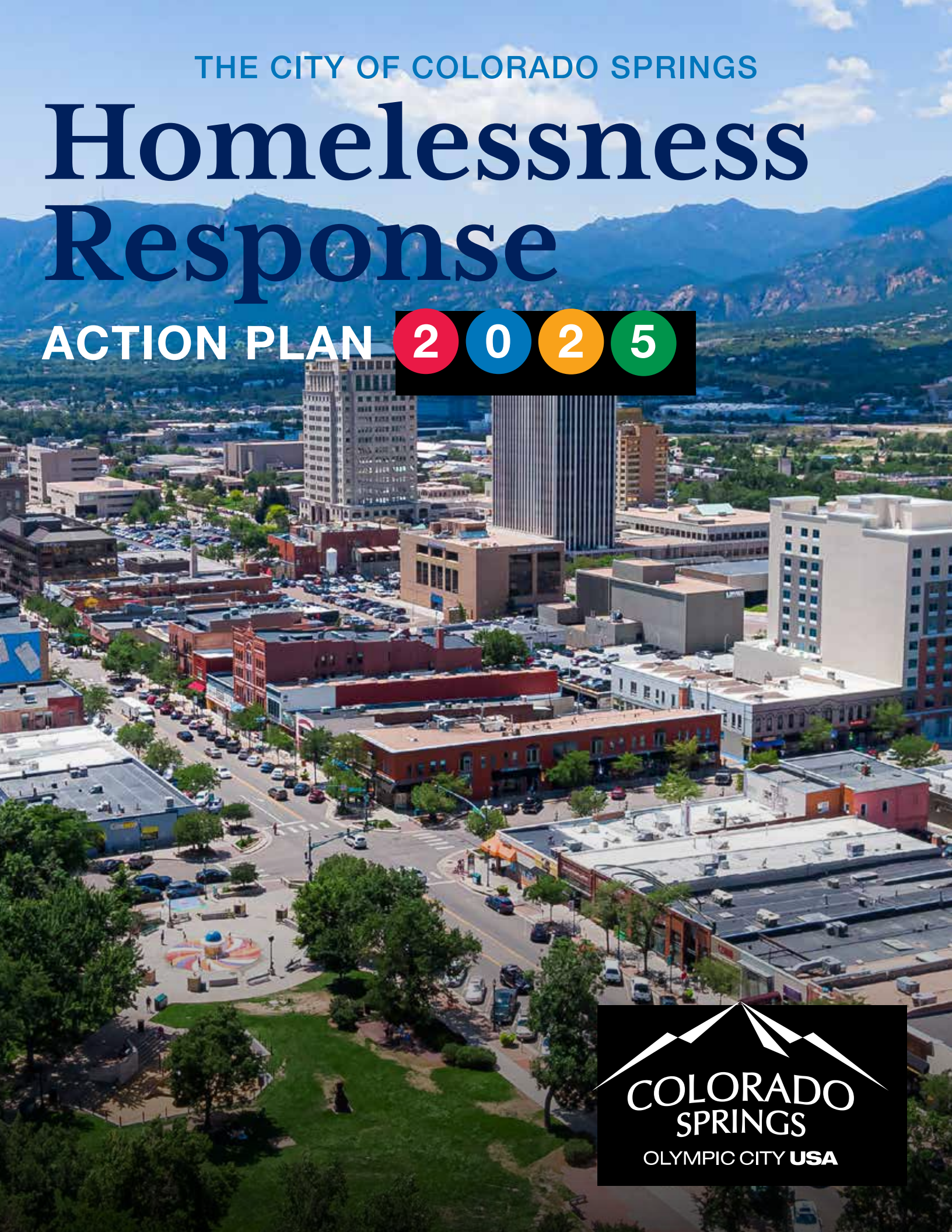
THE CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS

Homelessness Response

ACTION PLAN 2025



COLORADO SPRINGS
OLYMPIC CITY USA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OUR APPROACH.....3

HOW WE WILL SUCCEED.....4

CITY'S ROLE IN HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE.....5

1 STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS & ACTIONS
ENFORCEMENT & CLEANUP.....7

2 STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS & ACTIONS
STREET OUTREACH & SHELTER.....9

3 STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS & ACTIONS
HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION.....11

4 STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS & ACTIONS
EMPLOYMENT.....13

5 STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS & ACTIONS
HOUSING & SUPPORTIVE SERVICES.....15

6 STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS & ACTIONS
COLLABORATE & INFORM.....17

APPENDICES.....19

LETTER FROM MAYOR YEMI

Dear residents of Colorado Springs,

It is with a deep sense of purpose and commitment that I present to you the City's 2025-2030 Homelessness Response Action Plan. This is a shared vision for an actionable and comprehensive approach to addressing one of our community's most pressing issues.

Implementing a human-centered design process, this strategic plan intentionally reflects the voices, insights, and expertise of community members, service providers, local businesses, and those with lived experience. Through these partnerships, we have crafted a plan that prioritizes enforcement and cleanup, street outreach and shelter, homelessness prevention, employment, housing and supportive services, collaboration and public information.

Building upon the successes of key City programs and using data-driven decisions to guide our response, this plan presents clear roles and funding priorities for the City in the community-wide effort to keep homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Homelessness is an issue that impacts all of us. Whether I'm speaking with residents, hearing from businesses, or speaking with service providers, the concern is clear — homelessness weighs heavily on our community. As Mayor, I want to ensure we are striking a balance between compassion and public safety. It is imperative we care for our residents who are experiencing homelessness, while continuing to meet the public safety needs of our community.

Colorado Springs has become an example across the state and country for our approach in addressing homelessness. And while other cities are seeing a rise in those experiencing homelessness, thanks to our coordinated strategies, over the last several years we have made strides in reducing the total number of people experiencing homelessness. But there is still much more we can and need to do. This plan expands on our current successes and allows us to explore new and innovative solutions.

Government cannot solve this issue alone. Tackling homelessness demands a multifaceted approach and it takes a village. Our city is blessed to have a strong network of dedicated partners—including nonprofit organizations, faith-based groups, businesses, and community members—working together to address homelessness in Colorado Springs. Strengthening these partnerships is essential to meeting our shared goals.

To our community partners, I SEE YOU and I THANK YOU for your partnership in this important work! Our city is stronger because of you, and I am committed to working alongside you as we continue to build a city where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. A city of great neighbors and neighborhoods. A safe, economically prosperous, culturally rich, welcoming, and vibrant world-class city on a hill that shines brightly.

Together, WE are Colorado Springs.

Onward and upward,

Yemi Mobolade
Mayor, Colorado Springs

OUR APPROACH

The City of Colorado Springs Homelessness Response Action Plan builds on past community efforts that expanded facilities and programs. It aims to establish a coordinated, responsive system that urgently supports people experiencing homelessness in finding a pathway to permanent housing. Informed by feedback from thousands of community members, the plan **balances compassion with public safety** – connecting unsheltered individuals to shelter, housing, and essential services, while also addressing criminal behavior to create a safer, more supportive environment for all. The plan's priorities guide a comprehensive strategy focused on both immediate needs and long-term solutions.

HOW WE WILL SUCCEED

Unified Vision and Collaboration
Foster strong partnerships across local governments, nonprofits, and community organizations to create a cohesive and coordinated response to challenges with shared goals, shared resources, and shared measures.

Data-Driven Decisions and Accountability
Improve data collection and use reliable, timely data and best practices to guide our strategies, regularly measuring progress, and adjusting our approach based on outcomes. Transparent reporting will keep our team and stakeholders accountable to outcomes and build public trust.

Sustainable Resource Allocation
Prioritize resources for long-term impact, investing in initiatives that address root causes, support resilience, and deliver lasting results.

CITY VISION
Colorado Springs will be a safe, economically prosperous, culturally rich, welcoming, and vibrant world-class American City on a hill that shines brightly.

CITY MISSON
To provide exceptional service, respond to evolving needs, and plan for the future to promote a flourishing community.

In our efforts to prevent and end homelessness, this means:

- A community where homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring
- A community that fosters opportunity and supports livability.
- A community where services are effective, well-coordinated and if people experience homelessness, there is a clear path back to health, housing and work.

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES
Transparent - Build trust with residents. Foster accountability, promote open and good governance.

Proactive - Act with a forward-thinking mindset and engage in strategic doing to address challenges, opportunities, and needs before they become urgent or critical.

Approachable - Be accessible, open, and welcoming to all, regardless of education level, status, or background, ensuring information is easily accessible to all residents.

THE CITY'S ROLE IN HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE

The City doesn't directly provide homelessness or housing services, but we are committed to actively addressing this complex issue and its profound impact on our community.

FUND

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE DEPARTMENT

Manage and allocate City general fund and federal funds to support local nonprofits, construction, housing, facilities, or programs related to homelessness prevention and response.

ENFORCE & PROTECT

POLICE DEPARTMENT: HOMELESS OUTREACH TEAM (HOT)

Enforce City ordinances and State statutes with care and compassion while providing resources to those experiencing homelessness.

MUNICIPAL COURT: HOMELESS OUTREACH COURT

An alternative justice program that focuses on sanctions related to the resolution of homeless status and, in collaboration with community navigators, offer resources to defendants who are unhoused.

PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT: URBAN TRAILS PARK RANGERS

Patrol, maintain, and coordinate cleanups of City trails to mitigate environmental concerns.

FIRE DEPARTMENT: OPERATIONS DIVISION

Provides fire and emergency medical service (EMS) response.

FIRE DEPARTMENT: DIVISION OF FIRE MARSHAL

Conduct fire investigations, mitigate fire hazards, and provide community fire safety education.

PIKES PEAK REGIONAL OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (PPROEM)

Coordinate with partners to help ensure community resources are effectively mobilized to support emergency warming shelter operations before and during extreme cold events.

CLEAN

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

Enforce City ordinances related to blight, working in collaboration with the Colorado Springs Police Department, and clean campsites to reduce fire hazards and prevent waterway pollution.

EMPLOYMENT

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT: WORKCOS

Employ individuals residing at local shelters or in transitional housing programs, who are participating in case management, to maintain City medians and right-of-ways.

COLLABORATE & INFORM

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE DEPARTMENT

Bring together community organizations, policy makers, service providers, and affected individuals to collaboratively develop and implement effective solutions.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

Provide transparent, proactive, and accessible communication to foster community engagement in addressing homelessness.

STREET OUTREACH

FIRE DEPARTMENT: HOMELESS OUTREACH PROGRAM (HOP)

Provide targeted, intensive outreach, and navigation of services to very-high needs individuals experiencing homelessness.

FIRE DEPARTMENT: TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAP)

Provide intensive community navigation services for defendants and inmates who are at risk of being homeless or are experiencing homelessness.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS & ACTIONS
ENFORCEMENT & CLEANUP

1

By expanding effective response models and working with business districts and neighborhoods most impacted by homelessness, we will keep public spaces clean, welcoming, and conducive to the well-being of everyone in the community.

Enhance community safety to ensure all residents are protected.

- Increase the Police Department's Homeless Outreach Team from six to eight officers.
- Provide a toolkit to business owners on how to access resources available for trespassing, vandalism, waste cleanup, etc.
- Implement fire prevention strategies to reduce encampment related fire hazards.
- Review and amend Ordinance #9.2.112, regarding sit/lie boundaries, enforcement capabilities, and consequences.
- Continue Urban Park and Trail Ranger program to increase public safety on trails.
- Assess criminal activities perpetrated on and by the unhoused community, including the distribution of illegal substances, and create strategies to address patterns.

Continue to improve clean-up response and property retrieval processes to keep the environment inviting and safe for all.

- Expand right-of-way cleaning in business districts in high-traffic pedestrian areas.
- Address accumulation of debris from encampments by granting authority to Urban Trails Park Rangers to post camps on Parks property and assist with cleanup.
- Implement a "Handouts Don't Help" campaign to discourage giving money to panhandlers and to reduce the negative impact of handouts such as food and clothing, that often end up as litter and in our waterways.
- Monitor trash receptacles the City provides near high traffic and service areas to ensure they are being used appropriately and to prevent illegal dumping.
- Establish a system for unsheltered individuals to store and reclaim their belongings to reduce litter and prevent the loss of essential items like identification, medication, and medical equipment.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS & ACTIONS
STREET OUTREACH & SHELTER

2

By expanding outreach services and ensuring that outreach teams can swiftly link unsheltered individuals to safe shelter and ongoing navigation support, we can help people experiencing homelessness access both short-term relief and stable housing.

Expand street outreach services to provide consistent and compassionate engagement with people experiencing homelessness.

- Collaborate with the Pikes Peak Continuum of Care and street outreach providers to develop street outreach standards that outline service expectations.
- Encourage coordination with health and behavioral health services in street outreach.
- Partner with shelters and housing providers to ensure outreach teams can swiftly connect individuals to safe shelter, housing options, and wraparound services.
- Explore the use of technology to map where street outreach is occurring and the location of encampments to help the community better plan for and measure street outreach efforts.
- Identify new funding to continue supporting the Fire Department's Homeless Outreach Program to expand street outreach to vulnerable and very high needs individuals experiencing homelessness and exhibiting high-acuity behaviors.

Explore partnerships to provide safe shelter for populations with special needs including seniors, adults with chronic medical conditions, and families with children.

- Continue convening medical and homeless service providers to improve access to shelter and services for those who cannot consistently and independently complete activities of daily living.
- Convene with the Family Services Collaborative and McKinney-Vento liaisons to assess and create solutions for family shelter and service needs.
- Assist with acquisition or development of non-congregate shelter and commit funds toward capacity building or supportive services.

Continue regional collaboration to provide emergency sheltering for extreme cold weather response to keep unsheltered residents safe.

- Continue to refine the plan for providing temporary shelter and services during extreme cold weather events and assess the need for additional extreme weather event coordination.
- Partner with service providers to create a pool of trained volunteers to staff temporary extreme cold weather shelters.
- Identify funding to expand temporary extreme cold weather shelter partner capabilities.
- Inform public entities and service agencies on extreme cold weather protocols.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS & ACTIONS
HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

3

Establishing effective behavioral health care and basic needs support services for our community's residents experiencing homelessness will support efforts to both prevent homelessness and help people secure permanent housing.

Enhance collaboration between behavioral health programs and housing providers to ensure individuals can access mental health services or substance use treatment, supporting their ability to maintain stable housing or quickly secure new housing.

- Convene a mental health and housing summit to increase awareness of mental health issues and assist mental health practitioners in understanding pathways to housing.
- Create channels of cross-sector communication between mental health and service providers to encourage formal collaborations and regular communications.
- Encourage partner agencies to collaborate on the creation of a "response team" that can assist households when a crisis occurs that jeopardizes their housing.

Support access to basic needs services to help people bridge gaps during a financial crisis.

- Prioritize the support of nutritional assistance programs, such as food pantries, with federal funds.
- Expand outreach efforts with nonprofit partners to ensure individuals at risk of homelessness are aware of utility assistance programs.
- Provide federal funding to agencies offering affordable childcare options and encourage the development of community facilities, including childcare centers, through the scoring of private activity bond applications.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS & ACTIONS
EMPLOYMENT

4

Strengthening pathways to employment for people experiencing homelessness will help support the financial stability needed to secure and maintain housing.

Explore opportunities to expand the City's WorkCOS program to increase employment opportunities within the City and in other industries.

- Engage and formalize partnerships with additional service providers to recommend people to the program.
- Increase access to job readiness programs and vocational training tailored to the needs of people exiting homelessness.
- Evaluate opportunities to train people with lived experience of homelessness as peer support specialists to assist others facing similar challenges.
- Collaborate with private employers and staffing agencies to create job placement opportunities specifically for individuals transitioning out of homelessness.
- Identify and connect WorkCOS program participants with transportation options or housing located near public transit to ensure reliable and timely attendance at their employment.
- Identify a partner organization to provide case management services for WorkCOS participants, ensuring they receive the appropriate support and check-ins as they transition out of homelessness.

COLORADO
SPRINGS
OLYMPIC CITY USA
PUBLIC WORKS

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS & ACTIONS
HOUSING & SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

5

By expanding access to affordable and supportive housing, we can more effectively reduce the risk of homelessness and support long-term stability and well-being.

Support permanent supportive housing and very low-income affordable housing development to increase options for our most vulnerable residents.

- Continue incentivizing permanent supportive and affordable housing through the City's Fee Rebate Program, private activity bonds, and Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) federal funding allocation.
- Complete a comprehensive housing needs assessment and create additional incentives, tools, and resources targeting very low-income households based on findings.
- Work with the Pikes Peak Continuum of Care (PPoC) to identify the units best suited for households in the coordinated entry system and work with developers to connect homeless households to units.
- Work with affordable housing developers to offer bus passes to tenants in high traffic areas.
- Continue to build local housing capacity by connecting community partners interested in developing affordable housing to financial and technical assistance.
- Provide letters of support for Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and Proposition 123 applications.

Expand capacity and leverage resources to help low- and extremely low-income households remain housed, especially seniors.

- Strengthen relationships and build organizational capacity with agencies serving communities most impacted by housing instability to increase applications for HUD funding.
- Continue to provide letters of support to partner agencies seeking non-City funding to establish or extend housing stability, diversion, or mental/behavioral health support programs.
- Develop a displacement mitigation plan focusing on the involuntary relocation of low-income residents.
- Identify and promote replication of programs that successfully reduce barriers to housing and housing assistance.

· Collaborate with senior services providers to expand supports to keep seniors housed.

· Continue to support housing rehabilitation services for low-income seniors to assist residents who want to age in place.

Increase landlord participation in rental assistance programs to help housing voucher holders find housing.

· Identify challenges related to the acceptance of vouchers in properties and address concerns of voucher holders.

· Collaborate with housing provider partner agencies to mitigate landlord concerns with the housing voucher process and rental programs.

· Recognize landlords participating in housing choice voucher and other rental assistance programs.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS & ACTIONS
COLLABORATE & INFORM

6

The City is committed to a regional approach to homelessness that emphasizes collaboration across sectors and jurisdictional boundaries. Working closely with partners, we aim to unify resources, collect and share comprehensive data, use evidence-based practices to improve our response, and keep the public informed about progress.

Establish a regional homelessness response team to implement a comprehensive, aligned response to homelessness.

- Build a task force of regional community and business partners to work collectively on homelessness response solutions.
- Identify shared measures for homelessness response.
- Improve data collection. Require HUD-funded partners to use the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
- Continue to collaborate with business associations to evaluate additional opportunities to ensure districts continue to thrive.

Monitor State Legislative activities to advise and report on how they impact the City's homelessness response.

- Work with Colorado municipalities to engage the State Legislature and Governor's Office to address gaps in the criminal justice system.
- Convene internal and external stakeholders to identify opportunities for legislative reform to increase public safety.

Enhance communication strategies to foster community engagement and transparency in addressing homelessness

- Publish an annual report on plan progress.
- Deliver quarterly updates at City Council meetings.
- Provide opportunities for community projects.
- Create "Behind the Springs" City's homelessness response.
- Collaborate with the Pikes Peak public-facing data related to

APPENDIX A: **Community Engagement Methodology and Results**

The plan incorporates feedback from thousands of community members. City staff spent over a year and a half listening to and working with public stakeholders – shelter workers, emergency responders, business owners, housing advocates, medical professionals, and people experiencing homelessness.

Public Feedback Sessions

DATE	EVENT	PARTICIPANTS	CONVENINGS
08.09.23	MAYOR'S LISTENING SESSIONS	656	7
01.05.24	MAYOR'S STRATEGIC PLAN DEV. WORKING GROUP	46	11
07.24	HOMELESS SERVICE PROVIDERS	38	1
01.24 PRES.	MEDICAL ACUITY WORK GROUP	73	13
01.03.24	2024 ACTION PLAN CONSULTS	75	1
06.24	MAYOR'S PUBLIC SAFETY TOWN HALL	3,388	1
11.23 PRES.	CITY HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE TEAM	47	7
08.24	STAKEHOLDER MTG: BUSINESSES	65	1
08.24	STAKEHOLDER MTG: GENERAL PUBLIC	180	2
09.24	STAKEHOLDER MTG: PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS	18	1
TOTALS		**4,586**	**45**

Once the plan priorities were drafted, the City solicited additional feedback at four stakeholder meetings where attendees ranked the priorities and identified missing strategies. Feedback was received via text poll and through dialogue and Q&A exchanges. We asked two questions:

"Which goal is most important to you?"
"Is there a tool or strategy you feel is missing from the plan?"

Comments from the meetings and emails were recorded. For anyone who could not attend the in-person meetings, a recording of the meeting was posted on the Housing and Homelessness Response Department website, along with the presentation slide deck and a link to an online survey with the same two questions asked via text poll at the live meetings.

Participants prioritized enforcement and cleanup to protect community safety and vitality, and recognized the need to provide shelter, affordable housings, and employment opportunities that can effectively and permanently help people experiencing homelessness return to stability.

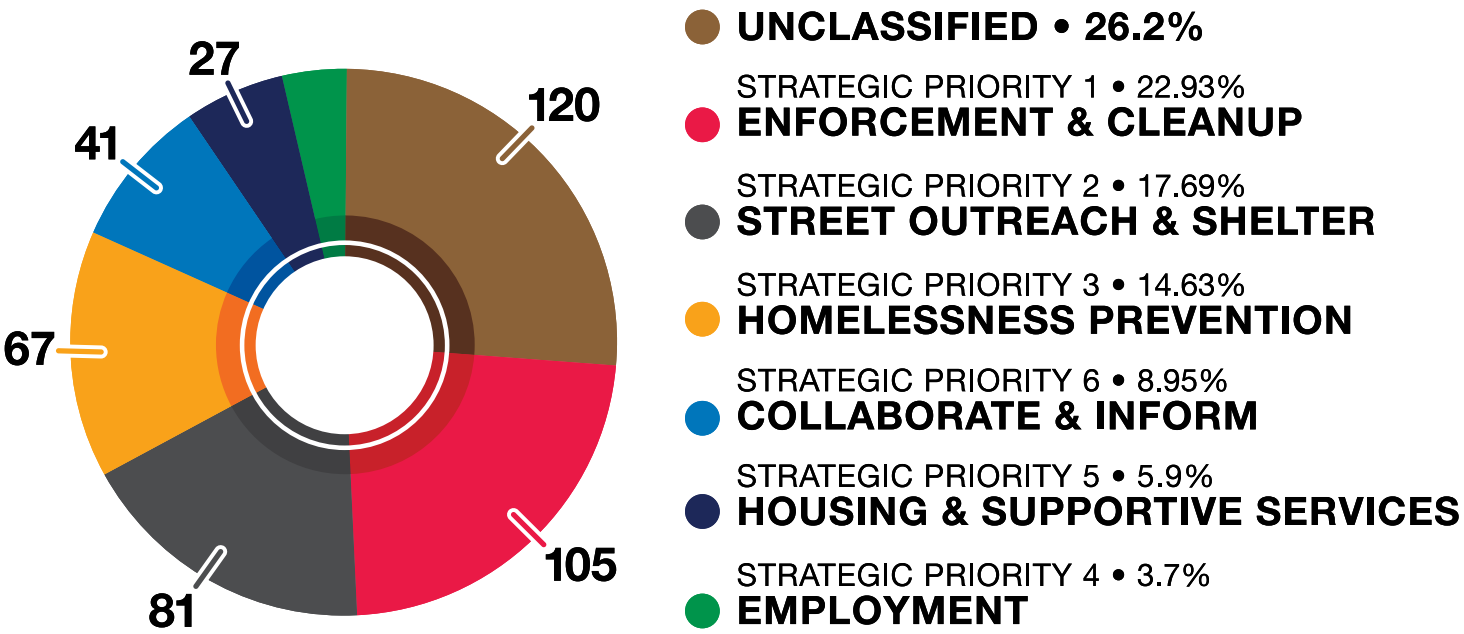
Text Poll Results "Which goal is most important to you?"

Participants were asked to choose which of the six main goals of the plan was most important to them as individuals. 154 people, or 43%, of all poll participants chose Enforcement and Cleanup as their top priority. The next highest priority was Affordable Housing and Supportive Services, chosen by nearly a quarter of participants, or 82 people.

RESPONSE	BUSINESS	GENERAL PUBLIC	GENERAL PUBLIC (virtual)	PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS	ONLINE POLL	TOTAL
Enforcement & Cleanup	30	23	7	0	94	154
Homelessness Prevention	16	16	9	3	25	69
Street Outreach & Shelter	10	16	1	1	8	36
Employment Opportunities	3	5	0	0	4	12
Affordable Housing & Supportive Services	2	20	15	9	36	82
Communications	0	3	1	0	4	8
TOTAL	**61**	**83**	**33**	**13**	**171**	**361**

Open-Ended Feedback "Is there a tool or strategy you feel is missing from the plan?"

Participants provided input on what tool or strategy they felt was missing from the plan. 120 people (26%) provided feedback outside of the six strategies listed in the plan. Comments included sentiment such as "Compassion. More Public awareness of the struggle that unhoused people experience every day. So many people are ready to give up, the city needs to see that", or "Seeing people as people". 105 people (23%) provided comments for Enforcement and cleanup. Comments in this category included "You have good laws on the books …enforce them." Shelter and Street Outreach received comments from 81 people (18%). Comments included "More emphasis on extreme weather shelters - hot and cold."



APPENDIX B: **Definitions of Homelessness**

The City adheres to two primary federal definitions of homelessness, each established to determine eligibility for various federal programs:

- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Definition** – Used for programs funded by HUD entitlement programs (CDBG, HOME, ESG), the City, and our subgrantees (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 2012).

- **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Definition** – Used by state and local educational agencies, this act provides a broader definition of homelessness, primarily for the purposes of ensuring that children and youth experiencing homelessness can enroll in and attend school without barriers. When conducting the annual Point-in-Time count, the CoC also counts families defined as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (National Center for Homeless Education, n.d.).

Both definitions recognize individuals without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as homeless, however, differences in federal statutes lead to variations in these definitions. By acknowledging and applying both definitions, the City aims to gain a more comprehensive understanding of homelessness in Colorado Springs.

	HUD Definition of Homelessness	McKinney-Vento Definition of Homelessness
General Definition	Individuals of families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.	Individuals or families who do not have a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
Living Situations Included	1. People living in places not meant for human habitation (e.g., cars, parks, abandoned buildings.) 2. People living in emergency shelters or transitional housing.	1. People living in shelters, motels, or campgrounds. 2. People living in places not meant for human habitation (e.g., cars, parks, abandoned buildings). 3. Includes families or individuals living with others temporarily due to loss of housing or economic hardship (”doubled up/couch surfing”).

APPENDIX C: **Measuring Homelessness**

There is not a system in place to accurately capture the total number of people experiencing homelessness in our community. The most significant barriers to accurately counting the number of individuals and households experiencing homelessness are:

- Many households rely on family and friends to help them regain housing.
- Not all service providers use the same information management system or enter into the Homeless Management Information System.
- McKinney Vento numbers identify children in school and do not include the number of family members in their household.
- Some unsheltered people live in areas uncanvassed by homeless census takers.
- The reports of counts are published months and sometimes over a year from the initial counts.

To offer a more comprehensive understanding of homelessness in Colorado Springs and El Paso County, this plan uses HUD Point in Time count data and McKinney Vento count data from the following school districts: Calhan RJ1, Harrison D2, Widefield D3, Fountain D8, Colorado Springs D11, Cheyenne Mountain 12, Manitou Springs D14, Academy D20, Ellicott D22, Peyton D23 JT, Hanover D28, Lewis-Palmer D38, District 49, Edison 54 JT, and Miami/Yoder D60 JT. (Community Health Partnership) (Colorado Department of Education) The City is also working to expand our use of data provided through the Homeless Management Information System.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

HMIS is a local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to individuals and families at risk of and experiencing homelessness. Each CoC is responsible for selecting an HMIS software solution that complies with HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards.

HMIS offers the most information regarding individuals and households experiencing homelessness in our community. HMIS provides three reports CoCs submit to HUD each year. The PPCOC publishes this data on their website.

- **System Performance Measures (SPM)** help communities gauge their progress toward the goal of ending homelessness. Each CoC is expected to use these measures to evaluate how well homeless systems are functioning and where improvements are necessary.
- **Longitudinal Systems Analysis (LSA)** includes demographic characteristics of homeless persons, service use patterns, and the capacity to house homeless persons. HUD uses this information to report to the U.S. Congress regarding nationwide estimates of homelessness, including demographic characteristics of homeless persons, service use patterns, and the capacity to house homeless persons.

- **Housing Inventory Count (HIC)** is a point-in-time inventory of programs that provide beds and units dedicated to serve people experiencing homelessness (and, for permanent housing projects, where homeless at entry, per the HUD homeless definition), categorized by five program types: Emergency Shelter; Transitional Housing; Rapid Re-housing; Safe Haven; and Permanent Supportive Housing.

- **Point In Time Count (PIT)** is an annual count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons on a single night in January. This will be addressed in more detail below (Community Health Partnership).

Point in Time Count

The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count is an annual survey required by HUD that provides a snapshot of homelessness in communities across the U.S. Conducted by local Continuums of Care (CoCs) each January, it records the number of people experiencing homelessness on a single night.

The PIT count categorizes individuals and families as either:

- **Unsheltered:** Living in places not meant for habitation (e.g., streets, cars).

- **Sheltered:** Staying in emergency shelters or transitional housing.

HUD requires CoCs to conduct an annual count of households in shelters and transitional housing, and a biennial survey of individuals likely living unsheltered. The PPCoC performs both sheltered and unsheltered counts annually. Shelters report data on residents, while staff and volunteers survey individuals living outside, collaborating with City officials and outreach teams to build trust and encourage participation.

The data collected aids HUD and local agencies in understanding homelessness, allocating funding, and tracking progress. However, the PIT count provides only a partial view, potentially missing those in hidden or unstable housing situations.

On the night of **January 21, 2024, 1,146 total individuals experiencing homelessness were counted** (Community Health Partnership).

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Count

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, school districts must annually identify and count students experiencing homelessness (not entire families), with ongoing identification throughout the year. This data is reported to state educational agencies and the U.S. Department of Education to monitor student homelessness, and determine funding.

The Act requires schools to actively support homeless children and youth, ensuring equal access to public education, immediate enrollment without identification or previous records, and transportation assistance to attend school.

School districts in El Paso County during 2022-2023 School Year identified **1,181 students experiencing homelessness** (Colorado Department of Education, n.d.).

APPENDIX D: **Regional Data**

Snapshot of Homelessness in the Region

The following data is from the 2023 and 2024 Point in Time (PIT) Counts reported by the Pikes Peak Continuum of Care.

	Sheltered			Unsheltered			Totals		
YEARS	**2023**	**2024**	**+/-**	**2023**	**2024**	**+/-**	**2023**	**2024**	**+/-**
Total Individuals	928	887	-4%	374	259	-31%	1,302	1,146	-12%
Families with children	400	451	+12%	3	0	-100%	403	451	+12%
Youth (18-24)*	90	92	+2%	13	21	+61%	103	113	+10%
Chronically Homeless	158	130	-17%	312	152	-51%	470	282	-40%
Veterans	76	67	-12%	39	22	-43%	115	89	-22%
Seniors (55+)	192	129	-32%	95	77	-19%	287	206	-28%

*While this category typically includes youth ages 16-24, data for individuals ages 16-17 is currently unavailable.

Adults experiencing homelessness self-reported the following:

- 254 individuals reported living with a serious mental illness.
- 165 individuals reported having a substance use disorder.
- 4 individuals reported living with HIV/AIDS.
- 61 individuals identified as survivors of domestic violence.

Racial and Ethnic Disparities:

- 2.8% of people counted identified as American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous—twice the percentage reported in the most recent US Census data for the general population. According to the 2022 El Paso County Census, only 1.4% of the county's population identifies as American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous.
- 12.7% of people counted identified as Black or African American, nearly double the 6.9% reported in the most recent US Census data for the general population of El Paso County.

- 47.3% of individuals counted identified as White, non-Hispanic. According to the 2022 US Census, 67% of the County's population identifies as White, non-Hispanic (Community Health Partnership).

Subpopulations

Families with Children Experiencing Homelessness

Data on family homelessness is often incomplete due to various factors. Many families avoid shelters, opting instead to stay with friends, relatives, or in vehicles, making them harder to track. Fear of child protective services involvement further deters families from seeking help, while limited shelter options and frequent moves between temporary housing contribute to an inconsistent picture across agencies.

Both McKinney-Vento and PIT counts showed a significant local decrease in reported family homelessness from 2020 to 2023, likely due to COVID-19-related school closures disrupting identification efforts rather than an actual decline (Colorado Department of Education). However, the 2024 PIT count revealed a 12% rise (48 individuals) in family homelessness (Community Health Partnership).

McKinney-Vento data indicates most homeless families in El Paso County are "doubled up," living temporarily with friends or family, often in overcrowded conditions. Many of these families never enter the formal "homeless system." This arrangement is especially risky for hosts who rent, as leases typically prohibit additional, long-term guests, putting both families at risk of eviction (Colorado Department of Education).

Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness are individuals aged 16 to 24 who lack parental or familial support, facing not only housing instability but also the absence of adult guidance. According to the 2022-2023 McKinney-Vento Count, 157 unaccompanied youth in this situation continued to pursue their education despite these challenges (Colorado Department of Education, n.d.).

In the January 21, 2024, PIT count, 74 unaccompanied youth were identified in El Paso County. Family disruptions—such as death, divorce, substance abuse, or neglect leading to foster care placement—often contribute to their homelessness. (Community Health Partnership) A Colorado state report shows that 30% of these youths identify as LGBTQ+, with the national figure at 40%; many face family rejection due to their sexual orientation or gender identity (Colorado Department of Education, n.d.).

Youth involved in the justice system are also at greater risk of homelessness, making them especially vulnerable to human trafficking and abuse. This underscores the urgent need for targeted support and intervention (National Network for Youth, n.d.).

Veterans Experiencing Homelessness

Veteran homelessness remains a persistent issue due to a combination of complex, interrelated factors. Many veterans experience mental health conditions, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, and substance use disorders, which can make stable employment and housing difficult to maintain. Physical disabilities from service-related injuries further complicate their ability to secure consistent work and affordable housing. Additionally, veterans may face limited social support

networks and encounter barriers within public assistance systems that are not always tailored to meet their unique needs. The shortage of affordable housing and the inconsistent availability of comprehensive, veteran-specific resources only exacerbate the situation, creating a cycle that is difficult for many veterans to break without sustained and targeted intervention.

The 2021 PIT count revealed a sharp decline in the number of veterans experiencing homelessness, followed by an increase in 2022, likely due to the expiration of emergency COVID-19 funding. Since then, veteran homelessness has steadily decreased, with the 2024 PIT count identifying 89 homeless veterans, 22 of whom were unsheltered (Community Health Partnership).

In 2020, the Pikes Peak Continuum of Care adopted the Built for Zero model, implementing a monthly tracking system for unhoused youth and veterans using the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). This model measures inflows and outflows of homelessness, tracking transitions into housing or inactive status to evaluate the community's response to veteran homelessness. The goal is to achieve "Functional Zero," where the number of people entering homelessness is equal to or lower than those moving to housing or no longer needing services (Community Health Partnership, n.d.).

Seniors

Senior homelessness is rising sharply in the United States. According to Governing, the share of homeless single adults aged 50 or older has increased from 11% in the 1990s to nearly 50% in the 2020s, with the number of homeless individuals aged 65 and older expected to more than double by 2030. (Hutton, 2024) The aging baby boomer generation (born between 1946 and 1964) is a significant driver of this trend, as they now make up a large portion of the senior population facing unique financial pressures. Many boomers experienced economic instability over their lifetimes, leaving them with insufficient retirement savings, while high housing costs strain fixed incomes like Social Security or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which provides a maximum of $943 monthly—an amount that nearly 40% of recipients rely on as their sole income (U.S. Goverment Social Security Administration, n.d.).

Health issues common in older age, such as physical disabilities, cognitive decline, and mental health challenges, can further complicate their financial and housing stability. (American Psychologial Association, 2021)There is also a shortage of affordable, senior-friendly housing, and many older adults lack robust social support networks, increasing their vulnerability to homelessness. (Kushel) The 2024 Point-in-Time count recorded 287 seniors experiencing homelessness, marking a reduction of 81 individuals from 2023, yet local data reflects continued demand: in May 2024, the Springs Rescue Mission reported that around 33% of the people they served were aged 55 and older (J. Cook, email to C.Karr, 5/22/2024).

APPENDIX E: **Priority Areas and Actions Data**

Enforcement & Cleanup

- In 2023, residents requested cleanup of 2,421 camps, a 72% increase in requests from 2022 (Cope, 2024).

- The majority of citations involving people experiencing homelessness are for trespassing. In 2023, there were 1,679 citations for trespassing and 708 citations for camping (Colorado Springs Police Department).

- In 2023 Neighborhood Services removed 1,921,000 pounds of waste and debris (Cope, 2024).

Street Outreach and Shelter

- In 2023, UCHealth's Colorado Springs area hospitals discharged 939 patients who reported they were unhoused. Of these patients, 190 received additional support from hospital care management to coordinate post-hospital needs such as medical equipment (M. Baker, email to C.Karr, 5/31/2024).

- During the period of July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023, 31 unhoused patients remained in UCHealth Colorado Springs' hospitals longer than medically necessary due to a lack of community resources to support their care needs after their hospital stay (M. Baker, email to C.Karr, 5/31/2024).

- The current shelter capacity in Colorado Springs can accommodate 450 single adults, 31 families, and 20 unaccompanied youth ages 15-24. Often, shelters are not staffed to support people with medical needs or support with activities of daily living.

- According to the coroner's office, deaths of people experiencing homelessness have been on the rise since 2019 but dropped by 6% in 2023. In 2023, the coroner recorded 114 deaths of people experiencing homelessness, 28% were fentanyl related (El Paso County Colorado Coroner Office, n.d.).

Preventive Services

- 27% of uninsured and 12% of insured El Paso County residents report not getting needed mental health care in the past year (El Paso County Public Health Department, 2024).

Employment Opportunities

In 2019, the City of Colorado Springs launched WorkCOS to help individuals experiencing homelessness gain employment as they work toward housing stability. The program operates with five teams, totaling eight participants, who work alongside the City of Colorado Springs Public Works Department on maintenance projects for the Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Authority. Participants are referred from Springs Rescue Mission, Hire Heroes, The Place, Homeward Pikes Peak, and Project Diakonia.

- 4 WorkCOS participants are now full time City employees.

- 1 WorkCOS participant bought their first home in 2024.

- 23 WorkCOS participants obtained housing during or immediately after their participation.

- 1 participant left WorkCoS to obtain a college degree (K. Cole, email to C.Karr, 10/29/2024).

Affordable Housing & Supportive Services

- In Colorado Springs, a person working full-time earning Colorado's minimum wage of $14.42 would have to work 77 hours a week to afford a 1-bedroom apartment (CoStar, 2024).

- Research indicates that when housing is provided with optional supportive services, households have higher rates of remaining housed (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2022).

- In 2021, half of all people who received homeless services in the Pikes Peak region qualified for permanent supportive housing (Community Development Division of Colorado Springs, 2022).

- In Colorado Springs, approximately 37% of all households are cost burdened and approximately 17% of households are severely cost burdened. Among the lowest earning households, housing cost burdens are more acute. Approximately 90% of households are cost burdened and 82% are severely cost burdened among households earning less than $27,360 (United States Census Bureau, 2022).

- 44.5% of Colorado residents reported that eviction or foreclosure was very or somewhat likely because they were not current on their rent or mortgage between August 20, 2024 and September 16, 2024 (United States Census Bureau, 2022).

Regional Collaboration & Communication

- The number of inquiries into Accela, the City's Citizen Access portal, regarding homelessness have increased each year since 2020. As of August 13, 2024, there were 24,144 inquiries about homelessness. This is set to surpass the highest number of requests from 2022, 35,366.

APPENDIX F: **Regional Partners**

This plan integrates best practices and resources from local and regional partners and reflects a commitment to working collaboratively to address homelessness holistically and enhance the effectiveness of existing regional efforts.

Key Regional Partners

Pikes Peak Continuum of Care (PPCoC) is the regional group whose purpose and scope is to implement a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness in El Paso County. The CoC Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), provides funding to support efforts by nonprofit providers, states, and local governments to provide housing and supportive services to optimize self-sufficiency among people experiencing homelessness. Community Health Partnership serves as the lead agency for the PPCoC and also operates the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to collect client-level data on individuals and families receiving services.

The PPCoC is made up of service providers, advocates, local government officials, and citizens working to prevent and end homelessness in El Paso County. It is governed by a Board elected by the general members of the PPCoC. The City of Colorado Springs has a representative on the PPCoC Board that serves in an ex officio capacity (they are alongside two County representatives, one from Department of Human Services and one from the Economic Development Department, and multiple service providers).

El Paso County's Department of Human Services supports people experiencing homelessness by administering the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Health First Colorado (Medicaid), cash assistance, early childhood education, and transit programs. They count the number of households that identify as homeless on their assistance applications each January.

El Paso County Economic Development Department provides support to people experiencing homelessness by educating the community on Fair Housing and providing grants and financing support for the creation of affordable housing in El Paso County. This year they published an interactive map (Housing Map, n.d.) of the affordable housing projects they have assisted in building so individuals looking for lower priced housing can more easily find it.

The City also works with a variety of provider partners who deliver direct services to prevent and end homelessness.

FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON OBTAINING SERVICES FROM THE FOLLOWING PROVIDERS VISIT THEIR WEBSITES.

Street Outreach

Street Outreach activities are designed to meet the immediate needs of people experiencing homelessness in unsheltered locations by connecting them with emergency shelter, housing, or critical services, and providing them with urgent, non-facility-based care.

1. Homeward Pikes Peak
2. The Place
3. Hope COS
4. Colorado Springs Fire Department - Homeless Outreach Program (HOP)
5. Serenity Recovery

Healthcare Clinics

A facility that provides outpatient care and services for routine checkups, preventative care, and non-emergencies for low-income households and those experiencing homelessness.

1. SET Family Medical Clinic: Homeless Clinic
2. Peak Vista
3. Open Bible Medical Clinic
4. Peak Vista Community Health Centers

Emergency Homeless Shelters

Emergency shelters are facilities that provide temporary shelter for individuals or families who are currently homeless. They can include congregant and non-congregant facilities and hotels and motels paid by government or charitable programs.

1. Springs Rescue Mission (individual adults)
2. The Place (youth ages 15-20)
3. Salvation Army (families; 31 rooms)
4. Family Promise (families; 4 rooms)
5. Ascending to Health Respite Care (individuals needing care before or after a hospital stay)
6. HopeCOS (individuals, ONLY during extreme cold)

FOOD AND MEALS

These agencies provide meals and/or provide emergency food resources.

1. West Side Cares
2. Marion House
3. Springs Rescue Mission

Transitional Housing Providers

Transitional Housing (TH) provides temporary housing with supportive services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness with the goal of interim stability and support to successfully move to and maintain permanent housing.

1. Mary's Home
2. Partners in Housing
3. Family Life Services
4. Homeward Pikes Peak
5. Springs Rescue Mission
6. Ithaka Housing
7. Catholic Charities

REFERENCES

American Psychologial Association. (2021, September). *Older Adults' Health and Age Related Changes.* Retrieved 2024, from American Psychologial Association: https://www.apa.org/pi/aging/resources/guides/older

Colorado Department of Education. (n.d.). *Homeless Education Data.* Retrieved 2024, from Colorado Department of Education: https://www.cde.state.co.us/studentsupport/homeless_data

Community Development Division of Colorado Springs. (2022, June). *Document Viewer .* Retrieved 2024, from City of Colorado Springs: https://coloradosprings.gov/document/approvedhome-arpplanjun2022.pdf

Community Health Partnership. (n.d.). *About the PPCoC.* Retrieved 2024, from Community Health Partnership: https://www.ppchp.org/homelessness/about-coc/

Community Health Partnership. (n.d.). *Data Dashboard.* Retrieved 2024, from Community Health Partnership: https://www.ppchp.org/homelessness/data/

Community Health Partnership. (n.d.). *Homeless Management Information System.* Retrieved 2024, from Community Health Partnership: https://www.ppchp.org/homelessness/homeless-management-information-system-hmis/

Community Health Partnership. (n.d.). *PPCoC Resources & Reports.* Retrieved from Community Health Partnership: https://www.ppchp.org/homelessness/coc-reports-and-resources/

Cope, S. (2024, October 29). Code Enforcement Supervisor. (K. Sunderlin, Interviewer)

CoStar. (2024, October 30). Retrieved from https://www.costar.com/home/demo?gclid=Cj0KCQiAtJeNBhCVARIsANJUJ2FpDDzxrrOJhVxl0KGTwWToi53uV5vlZfXYjN4fpnckrPljNuY-shMaAmVVEALw_wcB

El Paso County Colorado Coroner Office. (n.d.). *County Cororners Annual Report.* Retrieved 2024, from El Paso County Colorado: https://coroner.elpasoco.com/annual-coroners-report/

El Paso County Department of Human Services. (n.d.). *Assistance Programs.* Retrieved 2024, from El Paso County Colorado: https://humanservices.elpasoco.com/assistance-programs/

El Paso County Economic Development Department. (n.d.). *Economic Development.* Retrieved 2024, from El Paso County Colorado: https://admin.elpasoco.com/economic-development/

El Paso County Public Health Department. (2024, June 18). Community Health Assessment. Retrieved 2024, from El Paso County: https://epc-assets.elpasoco.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2024/06/Community-Health-Assessment-20.pdf

Housing Map. (n.d.). Retrieved 2024, from El Paso County Colorado: https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/a474d5f7ba354655a6d628c47ab4162c/page/Housing-Map/

Hutton, Z. (2024, April 10). *Housing and Urban Issues.* Retrieved 2024, from Governing: https://www.governing.com/urban/the-nations-homeless-population-is-aging-dramatically

Kushel, M. (n.d.). *Homelessness of Older Adults: An Emerging Crisis.* Retrieved from American Society on Aging Generations: https://generations.asaging.org/homelessness-older-adults-poverty-health

National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2022, March 20). *Housing First.* Retrieved from National Alliance to End Homelessness: https://endhomelessness.org/resource/housing-first/

National Center for Homeless Education. (n.d.). *The McKinney-Vento Definition of Homeless.* Retrieved 2024, from National Center for Homeless Education: https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento-definition/

National Network for Youth. (n.d.). Youth Homelessness. Retrieved 2024, from https://nn4youth.org/learn/youth-homelessness/: https://nn4youth.org/learn/youth-homelessness/

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). (2012, January). *Homelssness Definition.* Retrieved 2024, from HUD Exchange: https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/1974/criteria-and-recordkeeping-requirements-for-definition-of-homeless/

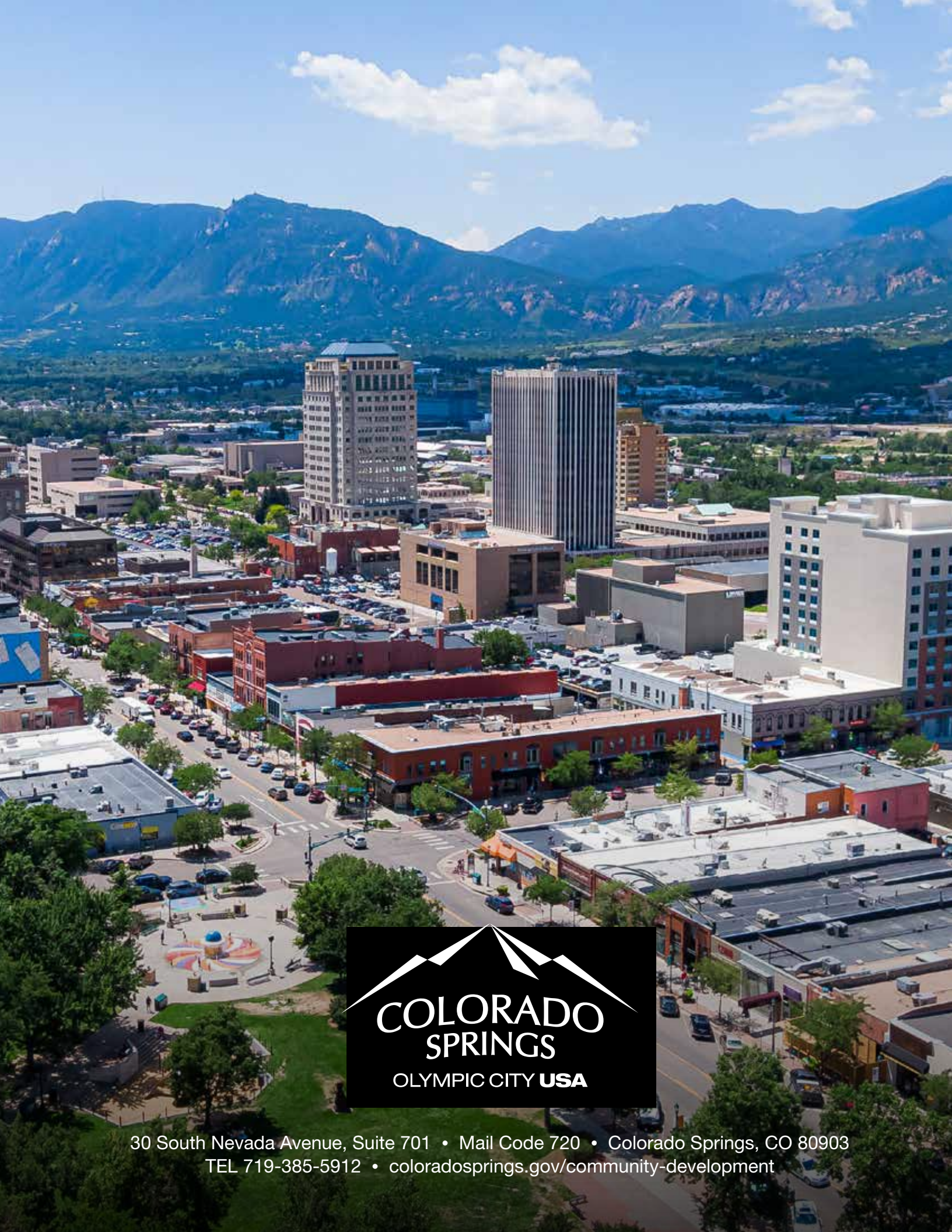
U.S. Goverment Social Security Administration. (n.d.). *Understanding Supplemental Security Income SSI Benefits -- 2024 Edition.* Retrieved 2024, from U.S. Goverment Social Security Administration: https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-benefits-ussi.htm

United States Census Bureau. (2022). *PUMS Data.* Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/microdata/access.2022.html#list-tab-735824205

United States Census Bureau. (2024). *Household Pulse Survey.* Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/hhp/#/?s_state=00008&measures=EVICTFOR

NOTES

NOTES



COLORADO SPRINGS
OLYMPIC CITY **USA**

30 South Nevada Avenue, Suite 701 • Mail Code 720 • Colorado Springs, CO 80903
TEL 719-385-5912 • coloradosprings.gov/community-development