

Denver's Homelessness Plan Showing Great Strides at First Milestone

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DENVER – Denver's Commission to End Homelessness announced today the accomplishments for the first six months of **Denver's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness**. The Plan, launched in July 2005, met several important six month benchmarks and is well on its way to achieving the goals set forth for the first year of implementation.

"Denver's Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness is on its way to becoming the success we hoped it would be," said Tami Door, president of the Downtown Denver Partnership and a member of the Denver Commission to End Homelessness. "These first six months demonstrate our community's fresh commitment to long-term solutions that solve the underlying problems of homelessness."

Among The Plan's six-month accomplishments are:

- Created 349 new housing units or rental subsidies for the homeless. (Goal is to create 3,193 permanent and transitional housing opportunities in 10 years.);
- Added 140 new shelter beds, including 90 beds for men, 10 rooms for families (30 beds) and 20 respite beds to help people leave expensive hospital care. (Goal was to provide 135 new shelter beds in the first year). Also, 100 cold weather beds have been added for emergency shelter during extreme weather, and 43 beds for women are under construction;
- Helped 156 families avoid homelessness through eviction assistance and financial counseling. (Goal is to prevent homelessness by giving individuals and families the tools they need to avoid losing their homes.);
- Increased access to vital services including employment, child care, health care, food assistance and substance abuse and mental health treatment. (Goal is to provide better access to supportive services that promote long-term stability and improved functioning for those in need.);
- Increased street outreach and public safety by passing a panhandling ordinance that makes it illegal for people to sit or lie on downtown sidewalks but directs violators to shelters and services rather than jail.

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- Created a program with the faith community to match homeless families and seniors with congregations that will mentor them as they move into housing, helping them to maintain that housing and avoid returning to the streets.
- Increased public awareness of who the homeless are and how they came to live on the streets.
- Raised more than 70 percent of the money needed for the first year of Plan implementation and 29 percent of the funding needed for the first three years.

The Plan is multi-faceted and is intended to end homelessness in Denver as it exists today.

“Ending homelessness sounds like an impossible task,” said Roxane White, manager of the Denver Department of Human Services and chair of the Denver Commission to End Homelessness. “But, judging by the accomplishments at the six-month mark, the cooperative efforts of service providers, the faith-based community, the City, businesses and the community as a whole are providing tools the homeless need to live a life off the streets.”

To find out more about Denver’s Ten year Plan to End Homelessness, please visit <http://www.denvergov.org/Homelessness>. To support the community campaign to end homelessness, visit www.unitedwaydenver.org.

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