

# Senior Support Services

## Annual Report -- Year 2023

Senior Support Services — Denver’s only nonprofit specializing in services for hungry and homeless elders — has been in business since 1976, helping an ever-increasing number of clients aged 60 and over lead more self-sufficient and fulfilling lives. We offer a myriad of services including hot meals, clothing, transportation, and help obtaining government benefits and affordable housing.

Pre-COVID-19, up to 250 clients per day were free to shelter and socialize — from 7am to 7pm — at our 4,000-square-foot center. With the arrival of the pandemic, we struggled to find a way to continue to serve our clients but also keep them and our staff healthy and safe. As clients were literally rubbing elbows, we made the difficult decision in March 2020 to no longer allow congregating inside our facility. Instead, clients cued up outside and were able to get services and case management through open windows.

Clients got one hot meal and one sack lunch passed through a window between 11am and 1pm every weekday. At another window, clients got hygiene items, clothing, mail and other necessities. At additional stations, clients were able to obtain our individualized comprehensive case management services. On cold days, they were able to come inside one at a time to meet with a case manager.

To the relief of all, we were able to open and allow congregating in our facility in June of 2021. Our trademark services were once again available inside making them a lot more accessible. Face-to-face interactions improved client/case manager relations and trust-building, and increased completion of tasks due to client ability to be inside. Though some still wear them, the mask requirement in homeless shelters was lifted in August 2022.

### Mission

Our mission is to make each day better and safer for Denver’s low-income and homeless seniors by providing the resources and support they need to lead more self-sufficient and fulfilling lives.

### Programs

We operate the only day center catering to the needs of the hungry and homeless seniors of the Denver area. Clients get meals, emergency food and clothing, individualized case management, medical care, housing, government benefits, socialization, and activities. We provided:

- Three meals served each weekday for up to 150 seniors
- Emergency food and clothing banks
- Access to medical care, health screenings, counseling and health insurance
- Individualized case management and advocacy including:
  - Obtaining and retaining government benefits
  - Obtaining and retaining affordable housing
  - Paying rent and utilities on behalf of clients
  - Mediating tenant-landlord disputes
  - Preventing homelessness through financial management counseling
  - Connecting clients to healthcare providers and health-related services
  - Leading Care Coordination in complex client situations.

# 2023 Accomplishments

## Overall

Provided access to a full range of services for 1,550 seniors<sup>1</sup> who benefitted from 6,650 case management sessions.

## Nutrition

Served 41,500 individual meals<sup>2</sup>

Distributed 415 emergency food items<sup>3</sup>

## Other Basic Needs

Distributed 515 new boxer briefs<sup>4</sup>, 625 hats, gloves and glasses, 3,210 clothing items<sup>5</sup>, 3,500 pairs of socks, 16,000 hygiene items, and \$5,000 in ARC dollars<sup>6</sup>

Distributed U.S. Mail and packages to 350 clients on 3,086 occasions<sup>7</sup>

Made direct payments for birth certificates, prescriptions, language translation, healthcare-related items, moves, background checks, etc, for 47 seniors

## Housing

Obtained or retained shelter or housing on 2,645 occasions<sup>8</sup>

Made direct rent payments to landlords on behalf of 27 seniors<sup>9</sup>

Provided Starter Kits<sup>10</sup> or furniture for 35 households

Moved the belongings of 7 seniors

Provided long-term, onsite storage for 103 homeless seniors

## Government Benefits

Obtained or retained government benefits (or financial stability) on 2,950 occasions<sup>11</sup>

## Legal

Obtained legal aid for 314 seniors<sup>12</sup>

## Transportation

Distributed, free of charge, 680 roundtrip bus tickets

Distributed, free of charge, 1,200 free monthly bus passes

## Health

Connected seniors with primary/specialty healthcare, health insurance, dental, optical, mental health or substance use referrals, prescriptions, or emergency medical care on 2,200 occasions<sup>13</sup>

DHS outreach worker had 237 sessions with clients regarding SNAP, Old Age Pension, AND, Medicaid issues, rent or deposit assistance, and other financial matters.

Licensed Professional Counselors provided 1,164 individual mental health or substance use counseling sessions for 411 seniors.

# Demographics of Our Clients

(Clients are at least 60 years old)

## Physical Condition and Health

85% -- mental health challenges

75% -- alcohol or drug use challenges

75% -- physically frail or disabled

25% -- Veterans

## Housing

74% -- homeless

85% -- homeless or at risk of homelessness

90% -- live alone or are homeless alone

## Gender

76% -- men

24% -- women

.1% -- transgender

## Ethnicity

43% -- African-American

26% -- White (non-Latino)

20% -- Latino

7% -- American Indian

4% -- Asian

## Income Level

90% -- living below the federal poverty level<sup>14</sup>

\$831 per month is the average income of each client

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<sup>1</sup> These are unduplicated individuals.

<sup>2</sup> Meals were served to 900 unduplicated clients.

<sup>3</sup> 53 clients benefitted.

<sup>4</sup> 182 clients benefitted.

<sup>5</sup> 300 clients benefitted.

<sup>6</sup> The ARC-\$ benefitted 154 clients who redeemed them at ARC stores.

<sup>7</sup> Many of our clients, especially those who are homeless, use our address as their only mailing address.

<sup>8</sup> Here our efforts were critical to the obtaining or retaining of housing thanks to a direct rent payment, tenant-landlord mediation, or persistent advocacy on behalf of the client. 594 unduplicated clients benefitted. Each session lasted an average of 35 minutes.

<sup>9</sup> The average rent payment was \$830.

<sup>10</sup> Each Starter Kit includes bowls, plates, cups, glasses, cooking utensils, cutlery, pots and pans, linens, etc

<sup>11</sup> It can take an enormous amount of staff time and persistence to obtain government benefits sometimes because the initial application is denied requiring the filing of one or more appeals. Monthly government payments including Aid to the Needy & Disabled, Old Age Pension, Supplemental Security Income, Social Security, Veterans' benefits, food stamps, and one-time payments including LEAP or rent & utility rebates are all included here. 667 unduplicated clients benefitted. The average length of each session was 34 minutes.

<sup>12</sup> This includes investigating open warrants, background check related issues, and working with Colorado Legal Services regarding tenant eviction, replacement ID's, name change issues, etc.

<sup>13</sup> 696 unduplicated clients benefitted.

<sup>14</sup> The federal Poverty Guidelines are used to determine the federal poverty level here. The 2022 Federal Poverty Guidelines for a one-person household is \$1,416 per month.