

Senior Support Services

Annual Report for the Year 2009

Brief History of Organization

Senior Support Services (SSS) was established in 1976 when six churches in downtown Denver came together to assist low-income and homeless seniors who were being displaced by downtown redevelopment. As the need grew, our services expanded. In 1979, we began to provide day shelter, coffee, one hot meal per day and case management services to assist seniors in obtaining benefits and finding affordable housing. In 1995, SSS bought a building at 18th Avenue & Emerson Street where the full range of services – one-stop shopping – are provided for hungry and homeless seniors.

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

Our overall goal each year is to meet the full range of needs of more than 1500 hungry and homeless seniors.

We successfully 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 provide:

- Safe daytime shelter located at 18th Avenue & Emerson Street
Open for 12 hours each weekday and 5 hours on Sundays
- Daily breakfast for an average of 60 seniors
- Daily hot lunch for an average of 101 seniors
- Daily hot dinner for an average of 73 seniors
- Mid-day meal on Sundays for an average of 109 seniors
- Emergency food and clothing banks
- Access to medical care, health screenings and mental health care
- Transportation and escort to medical appointments, shopping, errands
- Access to computers and Internet for word processing, email, etc.
- Individualized case management and advocacy including:
 - Government benefits obtainment
 - Assistance in obtaining and retaining low-income housing
 - Rent and utility payment assistance
 - Tenant-landlord dispute mediation
 - Financial management counseling to prevent homelessness.

2009 Accomplishments

Overall

Provided services to 1,600 low-income and homeless seniors¹

Nutrition

Served 66,600 individual meals

Distributed 1,632 emergency food bags

Other Basic Needs

Distributed 1,847 clothing items

Distributed 1,820 hygiene items

Housing

With a direct rent payment, obtained or retained housing for 135 seniors²

Through tenant-landlord mediation, retained or obtained housing on 1,700 occasions³

Provided direct utility payments on behalf of 164 seniors⁴

Physically moved the belongings of 49 seniors

Provided on-site storage for 110 homeless seniors

Government Benefits

Obtained or retained government benefits on 780 occasions⁵

Transportation

Distributed 12,700 free bus tokens

Sold 384 monthly bus passes at half the market price⁶

Drove and escorted clients on 675 medical appointments, government offices, shopping trips, home, etc.

Health

Weekly visits by a mental health professional who provided counseling

Weekly visits by a health care outreach worker who assisted or enrolled 201 clients in the Colorado Indigent Care Program at Denver Health

Semimonthly visits by the mobile Health Outreach Program (HOP) van of the Stout Street Clinic

2 times/month visits by nurses who provided foot care, health screenings and checkups

Arranged for free eye exams & eyeglasses for 20 seniors

Employment and Life Skills

Clients benefited from 13,500 computer hours (word processing, email, Internet)

Obtained jobs for 20 seniors

Socialization

TV Room

Monthly billiards tournaments and free pool everyday

Annual Holiday Party with a special meal and special gifts distributed.

¹ These are unduplicated individuals.

² To get or keep clients housed, Senior Support made direct rent payments to landlords on behalf of 135 clients.

³ Here we did not provide a direct rent payment but our efforts were critical to the obtaining or retaining of housing. This number is in addition to the 135 seniors helped with housing directly above it.

⁴ The average payment to Xcel on behalf of each household was \$306.

⁵ It takes an enormous amount of staff time and persistence to obtain government benefits for even one senior because the initial application is often denied requiring the filing of one or more appeals. Monthly government payments including Aid to the Needy & Disabled, Old Age Pension, Social Security, veterans' benefits, food stamps, and one-time payments for property tax and utility rebates are all included here.

⁶ Our clients paid half the standard senior rate (or \$17) for each monthly bus pass.

Demographics of clients

(Each client is at least 55 years of age)

Ethnicity

- 39% -- African-American
- 39% -- White (non-Latino)
- 17% -- Latino
- 4% -- Native American
- 1% -- Asian / Pacific Islander

Income Level

- 87% -- living at or below the federal Poverty Threshold⁷

Physical Condition and Health

- 70% -- mentally ill
- 65% -- alcohol or drug abuse problems
- 50% -- physically frail or physically disabled
- 34% -- Veterans

Housing

- 40% -- homeless
- 80% -- live alone or are homeless alone

Gender

- 22% -- women
- 78% -- men

⁷ The 2008 federal Poverty Threshold for our average client is \$1142 per month.