

Senior Support Services

Annual Report for the Year 2010

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 1600 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 72 seniors
- Daily hot lunch for an average of 119 seniors
- Daily hot dinner for an average of 71 seniors
- Mid-day meal on Sundays for an average of 108 seniors
- Emergency food and clothing banks
- Access to medical care, health screenings and mental health care
- Transportation or escort to government offices, work, medical care, etc
- 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.

2010 Accomplishments

Overall

Provided services to 1,650 low-income and homeless seniors¹

Nutrition

Served 73,500 individual meals

Distributed 760 emergency food bags

Other Basic Needs

Distributed 2000 clothing items

Distributed 1200 hygiene items

Housing

With a direct rent payment, obtained or retained housing for 130 seniors²

Through tenant-landlord mediation, retained or obtained housing on 2950 occasions³

Provided direct utility payments on behalf of 226 seniors⁴

Physically moved the belongings of 108 seniors

Provided on-site storage for 170 seniors

Government Benefits

Obtained or retained government benefits on 2400 occasions⁵

Transportation

Distributed 12,000 free bus tokens

Sold 384 monthly bus passes at half the market price⁶

Escorted clients to 300 medical appointments, government offices, shopping trips, home

Health

Weekly visits by a mental health professional who provided counseling

Weekly visits by a health care outreach worker who assisted or enrolled 161 clients in the Colorado Indigent Care Program at Denver Health

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

Provided free eyeglasses for 36 seniors

Employment and Life Skills

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

Obtained jobs for 70 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 130 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 130 seniors helped with housing directly above it.

⁴ The average payment to Xcel on behalf of each household was \$263.

⁵ It takes an enormous amount of staff time and persistence to obtain government benefits for even one senior in part 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, Supplemental Security Income, Social Security, veterans' benefits, food stamps, and one-time payments including LEAP or rent & 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

- 42% -- African-American
- 41% -- White (non-Latino)
- 11% -- Latino
- 4% -- Native American
- 2% -- Asian / Pacific Islander

Income Level

- 85% -- living at or below the federal poverty level⁷
- \$600 per month -- the average income of each client

Physical Condition and Health

- 80% -- mentally ill or impaired
- 75% -- alcohol or drug abuse problems
- 66% -- physically frail or physically disabled
- 34% -- Veterans

Housing

- 40% -- homeless
- 90% -- live alone or are homeless alone

Gender

- 26% -- women
- 74% -- men

⁷ The 2010 federal Poverty Guideline for our average client (who lives alone) was \$903 per month.