**Senior Support Services**

**Annual Report -- Year 2013**

**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 government 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 2000 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

Open 12 hours each weekday and 5 hours on Sundays

* Daily breakfast for 54 seniors
* Daily hot lunch for 96 seniors
* Daily hot dinner for 48 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.

**2013 Accomplishments**

Overall

Provided services to 2,150 hungry and homeless seniors[[1]](#footnote-1)

Nutrition

Served 55,725 individual meals

Distributed 1370 emergency food bags

Other Basic Needs

Distributed 3600 clothing items

Distributed 1500hygiene items

Housing

Obtained or retained housing on 3100 occasions[[2]](#footnote-2)

Provided direct utility payments on behalf of 151 seniors[[3]](#footnote-3)

Physically moved the belongings of 75 seniors

Provided onsite storage for 150 homeless seniors

Government Benefits

Obtained or retained government benefits on 1500 occasions.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Transportation

Distributed, free of charge, 1600 roundtrip, local, bus tickets

Sold 384 monthly bus passes at half the market price[[5]](#footnote-5)

Transported or escorted clients by car to 700 medical appointments, government offices, shopping trips, home, etc

Health

Weekly visits by two mental health professionals who provided counseling

Weekly visits by a health care outreach worker who assisted or enrolled 200 clients in the Colorado Indigent Care Program at Denver Health

Monthly visits by a nurse who provided inoculations, foot care, health screenings and checkups

Employment and Life Skills

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

Obtained jobs for 50 seniors

Socialization

TV Room

Quarterly Birthday Parties where gifts are distributed

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

**Demographics of clients**

(Each client is at least 55 years of age)

Physical Condition and Health

80% -- mentally ill or impaired

75% -- alcohol or drug abuse problems

65% -- physically frail or physically disabled

25% -- Veterans

Housing

40% -- homeless

80% -- homeless or at risk of homelessness

90% -- live alone or are homeless alone

Gender

31% -- women

69% -- men

Ethnicity

43% -- African-American

34% -- White (non-Latino)

17% -- Latino

5% -- Native American

1% -- Asian / Pacific Islander

Income Level

85% -- living at or below the federal poverty level[[6]](#footnote-6)

$625 per month -- the average income of each client

1. These are unduplicated individuals. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 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. 700 clients benefited. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The average payment to Xcel on behalf of each household was $505. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 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. 800 clients benefited. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. As Senior Support Services and RTD subsidize our bus pass program, clients only have to pay $20 (half the standard senior rate) for each monthly bus pass. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The 2012 federal Poverty Guideline for those living alone is $931 per month. (90% of our clients live alone or are homeless alone.) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)