Senior Support Services

Annual Report -- Year 2015

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 2200 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
- Three meals served each weekday for up to 250 seniors
- Emergency food and clothing banks
- Access to medical care, health screenings, counseling and health insurance
- 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 obtaining
  -- Assistance in obtaining and retaining low-income housing
  -- Rent and utility payment assistance
  -- Tenant-landlord dispute mediation
  -- Financial management counseling to prevent homelessness.
2015 Accomplishments

Overall
Provided services for 2,200 hungry and homeless seniors

Nutrition
Served 70,400 individual meals
Distributed 2600 emergency food bags

Other Basic Needs
Distributed 8700 clothing items
Distributed 8500 hygiene items
Made direct payments for birth certificates, prescriptions, healthcare-related items, moves, background checks, etc, for 229 seniors

Housing
Obtained or retained housing on 4,675 occasions
Made direct housing payments on behalf of 112 seniors
Made direct utility payments on behalf of 143 seniors
Moved the belongings of 87 seniors
Provided onsite storage for 185 homeless seniors

Government Benefits
Obtained or retained government benefits on 3,425 occasions.

Transportation
Distributed, free of charge, 2,775 roundtrip, local, bus tickets
Sold 411 monthly bus passes at half the market price
Transported or escorted clients by car to 675 medical appointments, government offices, shopping trips, home, etc

Health
Connected seniors with primary/specialty healthcare, dental, optical, mental health or substance use referrals, or emergency medical care on 1,096 occasions.
Weekly visits by an outreach worker who assisted or enrolled more than 200 clients in a health insurance program (CICP or Medicaid).
Monthly visits by a nurse who provided inoculations, foot care, health screenings and checkups.
Licensed Professional Counselor provided onsite, individual mental health or substance use counseling for 31 seniors.

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1 These are unduplicated individuals.
2 Meals were served to 1,460 unduplicated clients.
3 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. 1040 unduplicated clients benefited.
4 The average rent payment made on behalf of each client was $422.
5 The average payment to Xcel on behalf of each household was $500.
6 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. 805 unduplicated clients benefited.
7 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.
8 680 unduplicated clients benefited.
Employment and Life Skills
Clients benefited from 13,500 computer hours (word processing, email, Internet)
Obtained jobs for 32 seniors
50 seniors planned, planted, maintained and harvested our onsite garden (Horticultural Program)

Socialization
TV Room
Parties to celebrate holidays with a special meal and gifts distributed.
Quarterly field trips (picnics, baseball games, etc)

Demographics of clients
(Each client is at least 55 years of age)

Physical Condition and Health
80% -- mentally ill or impaired
75% -- challenges due to alcohol or drug use
70% -- physically frail or disabled
26% -- Veterans

Housing
60% -- homeless
80% -- homeless or at risk of homelessness
90% -- live alone or are homeless alone

Gender
25% -- women
75% -- men

Ethnicity
42% -- African-American
33% -- White (non-Latino)
17% -- Latino
4% -- American Indian
4% -- Asian

Income Level
82% -- living below the federal poverty level\(^9\)
$714 per month is the average income of each client

\(^9\) The federal Poverty Guidelines are used to determine the federal poverty level here. The 2016 federal Poverty Guideline for one person is $990 per month. (90% of our clients live alone or are homeless alone.)