

# 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 obtainment
  - 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<sup>1</sup>

## Nutrition

Served 70,400 individual meals<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>

Made direct housing payments on behalf of 112 seniors<sup>4</sup>

Made direct utility payments on behalf of 143 seniors<sup>5</sup>

Moved the belongings of 87 seniors

Provided onsite storage for 185 homeless seniors

## Government Benefits

Obtained or retained government benefits on 3,425 occasions.<sup>6</sup>

## Transportation

Distributed, free of charge, 2,775 roundtrip, local, bus tickets

Sold 411 monthly bus passes at half the market price<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup>

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

<sup>2</sup> Meals were served to 1,460 unduplicated clients.

<sup>3</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. 1040 unduplicated clients benefited.

<sup>4</sup> The average rent payment made on behalf of each client was \$422.

<sup>5</sup> The average payment to Xcel on behalf of each household was \$500.

<sup>6</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. 805 unduplicated clients benefited.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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<sup>9</sup>

\$714 per month is the average income of each client

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<sup>9</sup> 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.)