

Senior Support Services

Annual Report -- Year 2016

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 2,400 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 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:
 - Obtaining government benefits
 - Obtaining and retaining affordable housing
 - Paying rent and utilities on behalf of clients
 - Mediating tenant-landlord disputes
 - Preventing homelessness through financial management counseling
 - Connecting clients to healthcare providers and health-related services
 - Leading Care Coordination in complex client situations.

2016 Accomplishments

Overall

Provided services for 2,400 hungry and homeless seniors¹

Nutrition

Served 76,000 individual meals²

Distributed 25,000 emergency food items

Other Basic Needs

Distributed 12,200 clothing items

Distributed 9,200 hygiene items

Made direct payments for birth certificates, prescriptions, healthcare-related items, moves, background checks, etc, for 237 seniors

Housing

Obtained or retained shelter or housing on 5,662 occasions³

Made direct housing payments on behalf of 148 seniors⁴

Made direct utility payments on behalf of 116 seniors⁵

Moved the belongings of 108 seniors

Provided onsite storage for 172 homeless seniors

Government Benefits

Obtained or retained government benefits (or financial stability) on 2,846 occasions⁶

Legal

Obtained legal aid for 270 seniors⁷

Transportation

Distributed, free of charge, 1,900 roundtrip bus tickets

Sold 1,608 sharply discounted monthly bus passes⁸

Transported or escorted clients by car to 239 medical appointments, government offices, shopping trips, home, etc

Life Skills

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

Obtained jobs for 11 seniors

37 seniors planned, planted, maintained and harvested our onsite garden (Horticultural Program)

¹ These are unduplicated individuals.

² Meals were served to 1,646 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. 1,056 unduplicated clients benefited.

⁴ The average rent payment made on behalf of each client was \$368.

⁵ The average payment to Xcel on behalf of each household was \$488.

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. 988 unduplicated clients benefited.

⁷ This includes investigating open warrants, background check related issues, and working with Colorado Legal Services regarding tenant eviction, replacement ID's, name change issues, etc.

⁸ Both Senior Support Services and RTD subsidize our bus pass program. Clients pay half the market rate, or less, for each monthly pass.

Health

Connected seniors with primary/specialty healthcare, dental, optical, mental health or substance use referrals, or emergency medical care on 1,921 occasions⁹

Weekly visits by an outreach worker who had 341 encounters with clients regarding health insurance matters including Medicaid appointments, CICP referrals, doctors' appointments, Medicaid card replacements, etc.

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

Licensed Professional Counselor provided 405 onsite, individual mental health or substance use counseling sessions for 129 seniors

Socialization

TV Room

Parties to celebrate holidays with a special meal and gifts distributed

Quarterly field trips (picnics, baseball games, etc)

67 seniors served as members of our Senior Advisory Council

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

25% -- Veterans

Housing

60% -- homeless

80% -- homeless or at risk of homelessness

90% -- live alone or are homeless alone

Gender

74% -- men

26% -- women

.1% -- transgender

Ethnicity

40% -- African-American

36% -- White (non-Latino)

17% -- Latino

4% -- American Indian

3% -- Asian

Income Level

79% -- living below the federal poverty level¹⁰

\$566 per month is the average income of each client

⁹ 799 unduplicated clients benefited.

¹⁰ The federal Poverty Guidelines are used to determine the federal poverty level here. The 2017 Federal Poverty Guideline for one person is \$1,005 per month.