

Senior Support Services

Annual Report -- Year 2019

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 2,200 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 300 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.

2019 Accomplishments

Overall

Provided services for 2,200 hungry and homeless seniors¹

Nutrition

Served 80,660 individual meals²

Distributed 17,230 emergency food items³

Other Basic Needs

Distributed 10,700 clothing items⁴, 2,100 new socks, 1,029 new boxer briefs⁵

Distributed 12,000 hygiene items

Made direct payments for birth certificates, prescriptions, healthcare-related items, moves, background checks, etc, for 43 seniors

Housing

Obtained or retained shelter or housing on 4,450 occasions⁶

Made direct utility payments on behalf of 95 seniors⁷

Provided “Starter Kits” for 40 households⁸

Provided designer furniture and décor for 5 new households⁹

Moved the belongings of 32 seniors

Provided long-term, onsite storage for 150 homeless seniors, and short-term storage for 400 homeless seniors.

Government Benefits

Obtained or retained government benefits (or financial stability) on 3,840 occasions¹⁰

Legal

Obtained legal aid for 322 seniors¹¹

Transportation

Distributed, free of charge, 1900 roundtrip bus tickets

Sold 1035 half-priced monthly bus passes

Transported or escorted clients by car to 250 medical appointments, government offices, shopping trips, home, etc

Life Skills

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

Obtained jobs for 25 seniors

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

¹ These are unduplicated individuals.

² Meals were served to 1,548 unduplicated clients.

³ 635 clients benefitted.

⁴ 680 clients benefitted.

⁵ 307 clients benefitted.

⁶ 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. 965 unduplicated clients benefitted.

⁷ The average payment to Xcel on behalf of each household was \$486.

⁸ Each Starter Kit includes bowls, plates, cups, glasses, cooking utensils, cutlery, pots and pans, linens, etc

⁹ Home Builders Association of Metro Denver has coordinated with interior design firms to collect and donate the new furniture & furnishings for these previously homeless tenants. All the beneficiaries were previously homeless.

¹⁰ 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. 971 unduplicated clients benefitted.

¹¹ 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.

Health

Connected seniors with primary/specialty healthcare, health insurance, dental, optical, mental health or substance use referrals, prescriptions, or emergency medical care on 2,875 occasions¹²

Weekly visits by outreach worker who had 400 encounters with clients regarding SNAP, Old Age Pension, AND, Medicaid issues, rent or deposit assistance, and other financial matters

Licensed Professional Counselors provided 550 onsite, individual mental health or substance use counseling sessions for 110 seniors

Socialization

TV Room

Parties to celebrate holidays with a special meal and gifts distributed

Quarterly field trips (picnics, baseball games, etc)

Thirty 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% -- mental health challenges

75% -- alcohol or drug use challenges

70% -- physically frail or disabled

22% -- Veterans

Housing

62% -- homeless

80% -- homeless or at risk of homelessness

91% -- live alone or are homeless alone

Gender

75% -- men

25% -- women

.1% -- transgender

Ethnicity

47% -- African-American

22% -- White (non-Latino)

19% -- Latino

8% -- American Indian

4% -- Asian

Income Level

84% -- living below the federal poverty level¹³

\$814 per month is the average income of each client

¹² 776 unduplicated clients benefited.

¹³ The federal Poverty Guidelines are used to determine the federal poverty level here. The 2019 Federal Poverty Guideline for a one-person household is \$1,041 per month.