



## DOUGLAS COUNTY HOMELESS INITIATIVE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2024

### MINUTES

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Thursday, November 14, 2024

9:00 AM

BOCC Hearing Room,  
Conference Rooms A & B

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In - Person Attendees: Alton Reynolds, Andrea Barnum, Cassie Ratliff, Catherine Millis, Dan Makelky, Dan Marlow, Darren Weekly, Donte Young, Ellie Reynolds, Erin White, Greg Matthews, Jamie Fisher, Jennifer Eby, Jonathan Holloway, Josh Soldner, Kelli Smith, Kirk Wilson, Laura Hefta, Melody D'Haillecourt, Meredith Griffin, Mike Hill, Mike Polhemus Paul Baca, Rand Clark, Ruby Richards, Sandy Holms, Scott Nelson, Shawn Sanchez, Steven Dodrill, Tiffany Marsitto

1. **Welcome & Introductions: Commissioner Laydon**

2. **McKinney Vento Update:**

**Dr. Meredith Griffin, Director of Health, Wellness DCSD: McKinney-Vento (MV) Eligibility definition of homelessness is broader than the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of homelessness. The MV eligibility includes any child or youth living in shared housing due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; living in motels, hotels, or campgrounds due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations; emergency or transitional shelters; and primary nighttime residence not intended for sleeping (cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings). HUD's definition excludes those couch surfing or doubled up. HUD conducts an annual point in time (PIT) count a night in January. MV counts are continuous and recertified every year. MV numbers include students residing outside of Douglas County whose school of origin at the time of MV eligibility was Douglas County School District (DCSD). In the 2023-24 school year there were 373 MV students, 132 of them were eligible for 2024-25 school year, 22 graduated, 104 found stable housing in District, 100 that moved out of district, 12 had withdrawn, and 3 dropouts. As of October 25, 2024, there are 269 MV students. In the 2024-25 school year 65 students met the HUD definition of homeless. MV also offers various services and supports including free and reduced lunch, school fees, before and after care, transportation, tutoring, community engagement, school supplies, clothing, technology and limited medical care needs such as glasses.**

**3. Rental Assistance Overview:**

**Steven Dodrill, Douglas County Staff:** Rental assistance and eviction prevention typically require a demand for payment or a late notice. Whereas homeless prevention is aimed at individuals who have received a notice to appear in court within 14 days or who have already attended court. Douglas County has a very limited pilot program for homeless prevention services called the Housing Stability Program (HSP). HSP supports residents at risk of homelessness by providing various services to help them maintain stable housing. The program is funded through an ESG grant award of \$50,000 with a \$25,000 match utilizing Community Services Block Grant funds. Services provided include rent or utility assistance, case management, connections to mental health supports, employment, and domestic violence resources. Eligible participants must reside in Douglas County, have an income at or below 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI), and meet the criteria indicating at risk of homelessness. To date, the HSP program has helped three households avoid homelessness and provided over \$20,000 in assistance. The State has decided to facilitate rental assistance and eviction prevention programs and not pass those funds along to local communities to stand up their own programs. The State has set aside 45% of Proposition 123 funds for the emergency rental assistance program (ERAP). To be eligible you must be at or below 80% AMI, at risk of eviction or displacement, must not have received assistance in the last 12 months, and have had a significant life event. More information is available on the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) website. Additional Douglas County resource information is available at Douglas County Housing Partnership (DCHP) website for income restricted rentals and housing choice vouchers or section 8. There are additional local and regional resources available through calling 211.

**4. Built for Zero-Veterans:**

**Rand Clark, Douglas County Staff:** Douglas County has achieved the designation of functional zero for Veterans utilizing the Built for Zero framework. Functional zero means that Douglas County has developed a system of care that is able to prevent homelessness whenever possible and ensure that when homelessness does occur, it is rare, brief, and one-time. The critical infrastructure to meeting this goal was the implementation of HEART, the collaboration with community partners including Metro Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI), the Veterans Administration (VA), Volunteers of America (VOA) and the implementation and use of Homeless Information Management System (HMIS). Douglas County has begun to implement a similar system of care with our community partners to move towards functional zero for unhoused families and single adults.

**5. Executive Committee Member Updates: None**

**6. HEART and the Municipalities:**

**Tiffany Marsitto, HEART Supervisor:** HEART completed a total of 331 calls for service for the month of October. Of those 331 calls, 56% were proactive street outreach by HEART, 22% were dispatched by law enforcement, 15% were citizen calls, 4% were public referral forms, and 3% were community partner calls. The call outcomes included 78 individuals contacted by HEART, nine were not from Douglas County, 22 were not homeless, 28 refused services, five involved law enforcement action, 171 where no unsheltered person was found, 11 were provided general information, and three unoccupied encampments identified. While 43 households received one or more services for October, the highest categories of HEART program enrollments included: 17 nights of hotel vouchers, 16 transportation assistance, 15 referrals to housing support, and eight were referred to a shelter of their choosing. During the month of October services provided by location include Highlands Ranch 29%, Castle Rock 20%, Parker 17%, Lone Tree 20%, Castle Pines 10%, Englewood 3%, and Larkspur 1%.

**Success Story:** An unhoused Veteran called the HEART hotline to obtain assistance and resource navigation. The unit met with the male at the library in Highlands Ranch. After assessing the needs of the client, his information was obtained, and he was enrolled onto the Veteran by name list for case conferencing. The male was provided a hotel voucher for the night while the navigator contacted numerous housing programs for Veterans. An organization called Houses for Warriors was contacted and secured transitional housing for the client three days after the initial contact.

**7. Public Comment: None**

**8. Closing Comments: Commissioner Laydon:**

**No meeting in December. Have a wonderful Holiday season!**

*\*\*The Next Regular Meeting Will be Held on Thursday, January 9, 2025 @ 9:00 a.m.\*\**