



DOUGLAS COUNTY HOMELESS INITIATIVE

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2025

MINUTES

Thursday, April 10, 2025	9:00 AM	BOCC Hearing Room, Conference Rooms A & B
--------------------------	---------	--

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

2. **Aurora Regional Navigation Campus:**

Emma Knight, Homelessness Division Manager, City of Aurora: The City of Aurora was awarded \$15,360,852 in response to the State Division of Housing HB 1378 grant application for the Aurora Regional Navigation Campus (ARNC). The City of Aurora, Adams County, Arapahoe County, and Douglas County allocated a combined total of \$39,991,454 of funding towards the Campus renovations. In May of 2024, the City of Aurora purchased the Crowne Plaza Hotel to convert it into the ARNC. In Fall of 2024, the design process began. In the first quarter of 2025, renovations have begun, and the Campus is expected to open in the fourth quarter of 2025. In January of 2025, the ARNC had been opened as a temporary emergency weather shelter. In March, they averaged 111 people per night. The temporary emergency weather shelter closed in April to complete the renovations to the ARNC.

Jim Goebelbecker, Executive Director, Advance Pathways: Advance has been selected as the program operator for the ARNC. Advance started with four sober living homes. Their programs are designed by people with lived experience with homelessness and substance disorder. Advance, in partnership with the Springs Rescue Mission, has continued to develop their programs by applying and learning best practices with organizations that have been doing this successfully for 35+ years. The ARNC Day Center will be a welcoming place where all can come to be in a safe place where they are offered daily needs and shelter.

There will be three tiers to the shelter program. Tier one will be emergency shelter with acute care no matter their condition. They will have onsite EMS services for people who may be experiencing withdraw from substances. Participants will receive a cot, meal service, and offered compassion. For those who want to engage with case management and additional services, they can move into tier two of the program. Tier two is an engaged semi-congregate shelter program called "Courage". Participants in the Courage step will develop a plan with a case manager to address obstacles and to build skills for sustainable employment and housing. Tier two participants are offered a private bed and storage space while they continue forward movement to tier three. Tier three is workforce transitional housing and includes approximately 220 units. In tier three, "Commitment", participants have a private room with a private entrance, parking, different mealtimes which help build community, and may pay up to 30% of income towards program fees.

This helps build responsibility for the skill of paying rent. Tier three is available up to two years to allow participants to pay off debt, purchase a car, and gain stability to move on to permanent housing.

ARNC will be able to provide 20 respite beds for people being discharged from the hospital to recover from an illness for up to 30 days. Participants must be able to care for themselves as this will not be a medically supervised component. In addition, there will be an onsite medical clinic with two exam rooms, a reception area, and a private medical office. The hours of operation will be Monday – Friday for participants to access medical care to help relieve pressure on local emergency hospital rooms.

The ARNC will provide wraparound services including vital document replacement, legal assistance, workforce training, resume building, interviewing skills, addiction recovery options, and other services the community has identified. Approximately 85% of their staff has lived experience with addiction recovery. ARNC will provide an independent security team who are equipped in de-escalation and will continue to collaborate closely with Aurora Police Department.

ARNC will not provide mental health services or substance abuse treatment onsite but will partner with detox and mental health service providers in the community including Aurora Mental Health, Potomac Campus and Ridgeview Campus just outside of Aurora. Transportation will be provided to and from appointments as needed. Douglas County Opioid Council is currently exploring a model with a Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU), crisis detox facility, co-located at a hospital. They anticipate this pilot beginning in Sky Ridge Hospital and the new, incoming Common Spirit Hospital.

3. Homeless Prevention Update:

Steven Dodrill, Community Programs Administrator: The Housing Stability Program (HSP) was launched in 2024, as a pilot program to support Douglas County residents at risk of homelessness through rental assistance, utility support, and case management. Participants must reside in Douglas County and have an income at or below 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI) which is just under \$40,000 per year for a household of four. Participants must be at high risk of housing instability, defined as losing their primary nighttime residence within 14 days.

The program's goal is to help participants maintain their current housing while fostering long- term stability through individualized case management plans. HSP partners include Catholic Charities, Douglas County Housing Partnership (DCHP), Advocates for Children CASA, Manna Resource Center, The Crisis Center, and AD Works!

HSP launched in August of 2024 and concluded its first contract on March 31, 2025. The program assisted seven households comprised of 25 individuals avoid homelessness. Just over \$62,000 of assistance was provided accompanied by over 70 hours of case management services provided by our community partners.

Douglas County was awarded \$40,000 in Homelessness Resolution Program funds (HRP) for homeless preventions services, requiring a \$20,000 match for a total project budget of \$60,000. The Board of County Commissioners approved the 2024 HRP contract on March

25, 2025, with an effective date of April 1, 2025. Building on the successes of the Housing Stability Program, Douglas County aims to continue providing targeted homeless prevention services to residents at risk of losing their housing. By leveraging the awarded HRP funds, the program plans to assist an additional 4-6 families through financial assistance and supportive services.

4. Executive Committee Member Update:

Jason Gray, Mayor of Castle Rock: Castle Rock Police Department is experiencing a reduction in calls for service with unhoused community because of the collaboration with and interventions of the Crisis Response Team (CRT), Homeless Engagement and Resource Team (HEART), and Police Department.

Sasha Easton, Workforce Director and Division Manager, AD Works!: A Job Fair was held in April, with 63 vendors and over 500 students attended. AD Works! partnered with Denver, Adams, Boulder, Jefferson, counties on a DRCOG grant application and was awarded \$5,200,000 in total and AD Works! was specifically awarded \$1,200,000. The plan for these funds is to train 3800 job seekers over the next four years in HVAC, electrical, plumbing, pipe fitting and sheet metal, and building management occupations. Three additional grants that AD Works! has applied for include one from the US Department of Labor for Veterans experiencing housing insecurity or justice involved. The second grant is through the State of Colorado called Pathway Home for justice involved individuals. This grant allows working with pre-released inmates for workforce development and training and provides support after release. The last grant is through the Colorado State Education Department for a more in depth and robust GED program through AD Works! Douglas County has supported these grant applications through letters of support.

Jeff Garcia, County Attorney: Convening a summit between the attorney's office, the Castle Rock Police Department, the Sheriff's office, and local businesses to help clarify that Douglas County is prosecuting shop lifting and to gather local feedback for creation of an enhanced ordinance to help prevent future shoplifting crimes.

Kirsten Swanson, Executive Director, Douglas County Community Foundation: Douglas Has Heart fund is over \$2000. Close to securing a matching gift for a Mother's Day gift drive, will give updates as things evolve.

Caroline Frizell, Director of Communications and Public Affairs: A question will be on the Community survey asking if people are aware of the Handouts Don't Help campaign and if they are taking the next step to donate. In addition, Douglas County is coordinating with Ellie Reynolds, Douglas County Economic Development Corporation, for a roundtable session with businesses to discuss additional marketing materials that businesses may be interested to help spread the word about the campaign including QR codes, window clings, or cards.

Jason Johnson, Executive Director, Metro Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI): The week of April 28th, MDHI will be releasing the first State of Homelessness for 2024 statewide dashboard to all the CoC's throughout the state. MDHI is hosting the first Metro Denver

CoC convening on April 24, 2025, at Boulder Community Center for all local CoC partners. The in-person registration is full at 250 registrations but still have virtual registrations available.

Laura Hefta, Councilmember, Parker: Anthony Mazzeo from Parker Police Department has been successfully engaging with businesses in Parker. Congratulations to HEART for continuously engaging with a gentleman that had been homeless in Parker for four years and has now reunited with his family in New York. It is that kind of relationship building and persistence that makes a difference in people's lives.

5. HEART:

Tiffany Marsitto, Community Services Supervisor: March HEART activity summary includes 22 new clients enrolled in the HEART program, 222 total referrals, 23 clients exited the program with 17% going to permanent housing, and 29 business engagements. HEART activities that were completed for the month include a presentation for 60 students and 10 teachers at Cherry Hills Christian School. After the presentation, student filled bags for the homeless that included water bottles, protein bars, toiletries, canned goods, and notes of encouragement for the recipients. Of the 41 active clients on the HEART case load, four are families. We are actively case conferencing for these families to help get them stabilized. In March 2025, there were 22 new enrollments to the HEART program, in February of 2025, there were 24 enrollments and in March of 2024, there were 30 enrollments. In March of 2025, there were 54 households that received one or more services in the HEART program.

HEART completed a total of 222 calls for service for the month of March 2025. The services provided by location included Highlands Ranch 37%, Castle Rock 14%, Parker 14%, Lone Tree 12%, Castle Pines 17%, and Englewood 6%. Exit outcomes for the 23 clients included 17% exited to permanent housing, 22% exited to temporary housing, 31% exited to shelter, 13% were no contact, and 17% wanted to remain homeless but out of County.

The March success story comes from HEART Navigator Alyssa DeJesus. In February, HEART Navigator Alyssa DeJesus received a referral through the HEART website about a newly homeless woman in Castle Rock who was living out of her vehicle. Alyssa connected her with local resources for food, clothing, and gas while working to find housing solutions. During cold weather nights, limited hotel vouchers from local churches were provided temporary relief. Determined to secure stable housing, the woman proactively submitted multiple apartment applications each week. In early March, she reached out to Alyssa with the exciting news that she had signed a lease and moved into her new apartment the day before. Alyssa commended her dedication and perseverance in overcoming homelessness. Now settled in her new home, the woman is thriving and continues working with nonprofit partners to build long-term self-sufficiency.

6. Public Comment: No Comment

7. Closing Comments: Commissioner Laydon

The Next Regular Meeting Will be Held on Thursday, May 8, 2025 @ 9:00 a.m.

