

**A 10-YEAR BLUEPRINT TO SERVE EVERY  
HOMELESS CITIZEN IN THE PIKES PEAK REGION**

*Colorado Springs, CO*



Coordinated through

**Homeward Pikes Peak**

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The Pikes Peak Region's 10-year Blueprint exists only because agencies banded together to discuss homelessness as a multi-sector problem with a multi-sector response. Without the dedication and input of dozens of dedicated staff and volunteers, this document and its solutions would not be possible. We gratefully acknowledge the following organizations and leaders for their tireless committee work.

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We dedicate this blueprint to the citizens of our rich and diverse community. Homelessness will never be eradicated but we are making significant strides in providing multi-layered options for everyone experiencing this difficult life.

Dr. Robert Holmes  
 Executive Director  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Colorado Springs is relatively new in its effort to comprehensively deal with the homeless. Continuum of Care HUD data reveal approximately 1,100 homeless individuals in the Pikes Peak region. However, local homelessness experts (Homeward Pikes Peak, Peak Vista Homeless Clinic, the police department, etc.) estimate an additional 800 people remain uncounted. It is unrealistic to believe that homelessness can be eliminated. Instead, the agencies involved in creating this 10-Year Blueprint envision providing housing for every individual who wants it and optimizing solutions for the *causes* of homelessness in the Pikes Peak Region.

Homeward Pikes Peak serves as a coordinator for homeless services throughout the Pikes Peak region. The original Five-Year Blueprint to House Every Citizen of Colorado Springs was developed in 2003. The intervening years have brought significant change in the Continuum of Care as well as the working relationships between providers. Most important, planning together moved agencies from reactive to proactive mode. This change required anticipating conditions leading to homelessness and intervening with prevention resources. As most communities have found, prevention is significantly less expensive than re-housing.

To this end, key community agencies have outlined objectives and action plans in seven critical sectors: housing, healthcare, food, emergency services, veteran's services, prison re-entry, and access to services. An additional eight sectors will be added to the 10-Year Blueprint during 2009 and 2010. Together agencies are all working towards four common objectives:

- #1: Coordinated resources and formalized networks among agencies.
- #2: Outreach to unsheltered homeless individuals occurs on a regular basis.
- #3: A continuum of services is available in seven key sectors.
- #4: Measurable improvement of client's lives.

There is overlap between sectors and services, in part, because of the diligent community efforts to create a continuum of care with multiple entry and access points. Blueprint objectives are ambitious. They require more than the interagency collaboration of the past. They require a matrix of flexible communication and resource sharing unmarred by turf wars and characterized by blended funding and coordinated response.

As the multi-sector coordinator, Homeward Pikes Peak oversees coordination and data management between agencies. This effort includes comparing the community's response to homelessness with annual outcomes, comparing progress towards Continuum of Care end condition indicators with community quality of life indicators, and providing leadership for evidence-based practices and sustainable resources.

We acknowledge that life constantly changes and any document merely captures the dreams, desires and intentions of its constituents at one point in time. As such, this 10-Year Blueprint is just that - a blueprint, not a solid construct. It will be refined, expanded and improved through the lessons learned as our community meets the challenges of homelessness.

## BACKGROUND

Homeward Pikes Peak serves as a coordinator for homeless services throughout the Pikes Peak region. Homeward Pikes Peak aims *to be the catalyst in the Pikes Peak region's commitment to eliminate homelessness by coordinating, facilitating and monitoring a strategic plan for homeless services and resource utilization.*

The original Five Year Blueprint to House Every Citizen of Colorado Springs was developed in 2003. The genesis of the plan came from the federal government's request to the Interagency Council on Homelessness to create a 10-year plan. A five-year blueprint seemed optimal given the ever changing economic environment. The intervening years have brought significant change in the Continuum of Care as well as the working relationships between providers. Most importantly, planning together moved agencies from reactive to proactive mode. This change required anticipating conditions leading to homelessness and intervening with prevention resources. As most communities have found, prevention is significantly less expensive than re-housing.

As the 2009-2018 10-year Blueprint is developed, the continuum of care community reflected on its accomplishments over the past five years.

- A broader spectrum of agencies became involved in the continuum of care. This led to the City of Colorado Springs and El Paso County maximizing Housing and Urban Development (HUD) federal funding for the past five years including Super NOFA Bonus Grants.
- The Comprehensive Homeless Assistance Providers (CHAP) organization was revitalized and expanded to include any interested community member. This task force has over 100 members and is chaired by Executive Director of Homeward Pikes Peak, the Continuum of Care Permanent Coordinating Organization. Education programs are sponsored on a regular basis, along with site visits to homeless service agencies. The average attendance has increased 400%.
  - Each year CHAP chooses a theme for concentrated effort and study. Past topics include developing a philosophy of helping the homeless, accessing mainstream resources, developing alternative delivery systems for food services, Gulf Coast Hurricane Relief, cooperative teaching for Life Skills classes, and developing an initiative to provide additional funding for substance abuse and mental health services.
- The HUD-mandated Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), called the Client Management System in our continuum, is up and running productively under the aegis of Pikes Peak United Way.

- Annual and semi-annual counts of the homeless plus the collection and processing of demographic information have been done on a regular basis since 2003. Through these efforts, the continuum generated accurate data and was able to dispel several demographic “myths” that had previously circulated throughout the region.
- A five-year effort now channels panhandling funds from individuals who would spend them on drugs and alcohol to homeless service agencies who use the funds to enhance homeless programs. The most recent effort is the parking meter project. Downtown residents and visitors can put spare change into meters which is then distributed to homeless service providers.
- An annual “Conference on Homelessness” has been held for the past six years. The event brings local and national experts to Colorado Springs to address topics germane to homeless services providers. Additionally, the “Annual Forum on Homeless” addresses specific topics in fields of interest. Both gatherings are open to service providers and the public alike.
- The continuum sponsors a “Small Mental Health Providers” monthly meeting on the same day as the CHAP meeting. This program serves as a mutual support and cooperative services group for mental health providers which operate on limited funds. It is heavily attended by faith-based organizations.
- Gulf Coast Hurricane Relief was coordinated, for the most part, by Homeward Pikes Peak on a *pro bono* basis. Colorado Springs and its environs received slightly over 2,000 Gulf Coast Hurricane evacuees who were housed and provided with social and support services. In addition, the community assembled a set of demographic information on each family equal to any other city’s effort in the United States. Approximately half the evacuees likes the Pikes Peak region well enough to stay in the area long after aid ceased.
- Over the base five years, 60 new units for housing and case managing dual diagnosed chronically homeless individuals have been added to the continuum’s inventory.

While the homeless continuum of care solidified, other sectors of the community also moved forward.

In 2006, Pikes Peak United Way invited more than 100 interested community leaders to join Vision Councils to address one of nine different areas. Leaders were drawn from the private, public and nonprofit sectors and represented diverse interests and passions. Together the councils established quantitative indicators that measure the quality of life in El Paso County. The nine categories cover a variety of issues that citizenry can improve through public decision making and action. 2006-2007 data provides the baseline for measuring progress during the next decade.<sup>1</sup> Linking the 10-Year Blueprint for Homelessness to community indicators and HUD Goals will provide a format for reviewing annual status and progress.

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<sup>1</sup> Pikes Peak United Way. (2007). *Quality of Life Indicators for the Pikes Peak Region*. Colorado Springs, CO: Author

To quantify outcomes, particularly for the HMIS system, continuum of care leaders spent several sessions working with VisionLink, Inc between January and May 2008. The group completed a community self-assessment, defined ideal conditions, established indicators, and made progress on joint strategies. Four outcomes provide an overall measurement for the continuum of care sectors.

Outcomes:

- #1: Coordinated resources and formalized networks among homeless provider agencies.
- #2: Outreach to unsheltered homeless individuals occurs on a regular basis.
- #3: A continuum of services is available across the continuum of care and needs are met in an optimized, cost effective manner.
- #4: Measurable improvements in clients' lives.

Much has been accomplished in the past five years but much work remains to be done. The 10-Year Blueprint provides the direction, goals and benchmarks for that effort.

# 10-YEAR BLUEPRINT TO SERVE EVERY HOMELESS PERSON IN THE PIKES PEAK REGION

## OVERVIEW OF CURRENT HOMELESS POPULATION

Colorado Springs anchors the Pikes Peak region of Colorado, 60 miles south of Denver. The city accounts for 63% of El Paso County’s 587,272 residents. The county population increased 13.6% between 2000 and 2007.<sup>2</sup> With moderate housing costs and average employment rates, El Paso County attracts the hopeful seeking jobs, a temperate climate, and vibrant scenery. Colorado Springs centers on two main transportation routes - Interstate 25 (north-south from Mexico to Canada) and U.S. Highway 24 (east-west from Interstate 70 at Vail to Interstate 70 at Limon, CO). The result is easy access to a large city less sprawling than Denver. Approximately 80% of the population is white, 6.1% Black, 1% American Indian, 2.8% Asian, and 12.9% Hispanic. Twenty-seven percent of the county’s population live in households with income below \$25,000 per year and approximately 10% of county residents live in poverty. In 2004, 19.7% of the population had no health insurance and 7.4% was served through Medicaid.<sup>3</sup> Continuum of Care HUD data (2007)<sup>4</sup> collected by Homeward Pikes Peak reveal the following:

	Sheltered (emergency or transitional housing)	Unsheltered	Total
<b>General Homeless Pop.</b>			
Individuals	434	328	762
Family members	259	56	315
Total Homeless	693	384	1,077
<b>Subpopulations</b>			
Chronically Homeless	101	94	195
Severely Mentally Ill	172	54	226
Chronic Substance Abuse	188	60	248
Veterans	122	62	184
Persons w/ HIV or AIDS	7	4	11
Victims of Domestic Viol.	12	*	12
Unaccomp. Youth < 18	17	1	18

\* unknown

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census. (2008). American fact finder. El Paso County, Colorado. Available at <http://factfinder.census.gov>

<sup>3</sup> El Paso County Department of Health and Environment. (2005, April 4). *Annual report for 2004: Initial results from the El Paso County community health survey.*

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2007). Colorado Springs, Colorado: 2006 Homeless Assessment Data. Available at [http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/local/reports/2006\\_co\\_504\\_pop\\_sub.pdf](http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/local/reports/2006_co_504_pop_sub.pdf)

While the numbers shown are the official counts of homeless individuals through HUD surveys, local homelessness experts (Homeward Pikes Peak, Peak Vista Homeless Clinic, the police department, etc.) estimate an additional 800 people remain uncounted. They live in caves above Manitou Springs, camps hidden in the foothills, or are women and children who float from friend to friend. Credence is given to this estimate when examining Peak Vista's homeless patient count. Last year, the clinic registered 1,131 homeless individuals and provided 2,166 care visits for them.

An additional survey of homeless, unsheltered individuals was conducted during August 2006 by the Colorado Interagency Council on Homelessness.<sup>5</sup> This survey found:

- 71.3% of homeless were single.
- 22.5% were singles or couples with children under age 18.
- Males outnumber females (63.5% vs 36.5%).
- Nearly 17% identified themselves as Spanish/Latino/ Hispanic and slightly more than one-third (35.4%) were a minority ethnicity.
- Just 6.6% identified themselves a seasonal or year-round farm workers and only 3% were seasonal resort workers.
- Approximately 10% indicated that their homelessness was due to mental illness or medical problems.
- One in five (21.8%) had served in the U.S. military. This statistic is particularly significant since El Paso County is home to over 50,000 active military. The county is also home to over 76,000 veterans.

Other survey results include ties to the local community.

- Nearly 40% state the El Paso County was their last county of permanent residence.
- Housing continues to be an issue. Thirty-three percent of respondents were staying in time-limited transitional housing. Another 17.8% were staying in an emergency shelter or staying temporarily with family or friends (14.4%). Seventeen percent were unsheltered.

For the homeless, basic medical care, shelter, food, and clothing barriers are equally daunting. Mental illness often exacerbates underlying physical health ailments caused by the substance abuse. The most prevalent are pneumonia, bronchitis, acute pancreatitis, liver damage, cardiac dysrhythmias, chest pain, wounds, and gastrointestinal hemorrhaging. Medical treatment is confined to a few sites - the homeless medical services van (Peak Vista) and outreach and medical care through Catholic Charities and SET of Colorado Springs. Dental care is critical for positive interaction leading to housing, employment and community services. However, both Mission Medical and Peak Vista have long waiting lists. The lack of trained providers compound these barriers to delivering evidence-based integrated treatment. Few providers are anxious to work with homeless clients. Fewer still, know how or wish to work with individuals with serious mental illness and substance abuse. Qualified providers are rarely available beyond standard office hours, 8-5 Monday through Friday even at Peak Vista's Homeless Medical Clinic.

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<sup>5</sup> Colorado Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2007). El Paso/Colorado Springs Continuum of Care.

The community currently has 39 housing slots available for homeless individuals including those with substance abuse issues. Another 53 slots are available through Shelter plus Care programs for individuals with mental health concerns. Both types of facilities have waiting lists. Community providers, supported by HUD surveys, estimate there are 300-400 homeless 18 - 64 year olds impacted by co-occurring substance abuse and mental health problems. Estimates also reflect that each homeless individual with a co-occurring condition costs the community \$54,000 per year in untreated medical, emergency room, police and fire/ambulance services. During 2007, Homeward Pikes Peak, the El Paso County Co-Occurring Disorder Collaborative, and Harbor House moved 25 individuals into small apartments with wrap around services and treatment. The cost of housing and treatment for these individuals ranges from \$12,000 - \$18,000 per year - **one-third the cost of homelessness and non-treatment.**

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## **COMMUNITY RESPONSE**

HUD has established five national objectives:

- Create new Permanent Housing beds for chronically homeless persons.
- Increase the percentage of homeless persons staying in Permanent Housing over six months to at least 71.5%.
- Increase the percentage of homeless persons moving from Transitional Housing to Permanent Housing to at least 63.5%.
- Increase the percentage of homeless persons employed at exit to at least 19%.
- Decrease the number of homeless households with children.

Colorado Springs agencies which serve the homeless strive to maintain even high standards than those delineated by HUD. During 2008, Colorado Springs

- Increased Permanent Housing beds by **45** (a 64% increase due to specialized funding streams)
- Increased the percentage of homeless persons staying in Permanent Housing over six months to **91%**
- Increased the percentage of homeless persons moving from Transitional Housing to Permanent Housing to **86%**

The percentage of homeless persons employed at exit from homelessness is already **18%** and all sectors are working diligently to incorporate education and employment supports into their service streams.

While the number of unsheltered families with children decreased from 75 to 56 (25%) during 2006, the difficult economic times in 2008 negatively impacted family housing. All agencies are working diligently to expand options and decrease wait times for family housing.

## STRUCTURE OF THE 10-YEAR BLUEPRINT DOCUMENT

### *Vision*

To house every citizen of Colorado Springs.

### *Goal*

An optimized set of solutions for homelessness  
in the Pikes Peak Region.

The Pikes Peak region's continuum of care is characterized by 15 key sectors:

- Healthcare
- Housing
- Food
- Emergency Services
- Veterans' Services
- Prison Re-Entry
- Access to Services
- Clothing and Furniture
- Disability Services
- Discharge Policies and Process
- Daycare
- Youth Services
- Police
- Transportation
- Education

The first seven major areas will be considered in the 2009 10-Year Blueprint. Information is presented on each of the seven sectors. Background data, issues, barriers, strategies for reform, and action steps were developed by community agencies directly involved with service provision. Outcomes and indicators are tied to those developed in the continuum of care meetings with VisionLink. A culminating view of community challenges from the Homeward Pikes Peak perspective aligns goals, strategies and timelines with the community's Quality of Life Indicators.

The Blueprint is articulated so that each October a community-based team of homeless services providers, formerly homeless, business leaders, politicians, faith-based representatives, veterans, police, medical representatives, and other interested parties can meet to review, update and advance (by one year) the Blueprint. Additional service areas or amended goals and outcomes can be also considered.

# CONTINUUM OF CARE SERVICES

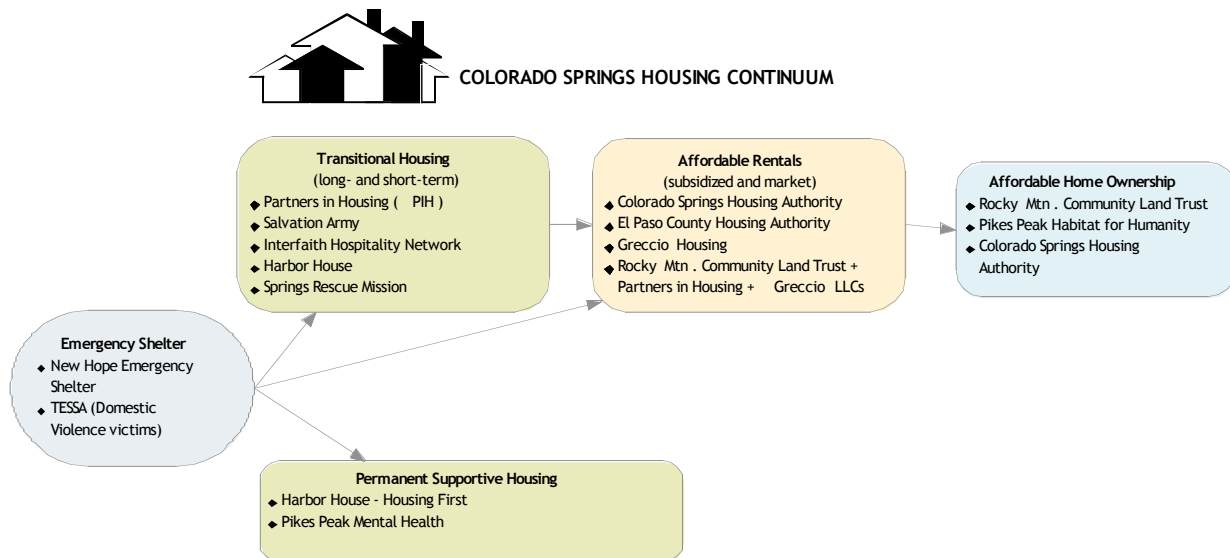
## SECTOR 1: HOUSING

### Overarching Goal

All individuals and families in the community have access to safe, decent, affordable housing along with appropriate support services, commensurate with their needs, to promote self-sufficiency and well-being.

### Sector Description

Housing is a complex issue in any community and, for most communities, the lack of housing is a key contributor to homelessness. Colorado Springs provides a continuum of housing from emergency shelter to home ownership supported by an array of local agencies.



It should be noted that funding across the housing continuum is provided through various programs and at varying levels by the City of Colorado Springs, El Paso County, the Colorado Division of Housing and HUD. Additionally, the list of agencies reflected in the illustration above, as well as named throughout this plan, is not all-inclusive. There are other housing and homeless service providers not specifically called out in this document that contribute significant support across the continuum. Representative providers across the Colorado Springs housing continuum include the following agencies. Please note this is not an all-inclusive list, but is meant to provide a reasonable cross-section of major housing participants in the community. All figures and statistics are current as of January, 2009.

### Emergency Shelter

- **Salvation Army's** New Hope Emergency Shelter provides emergency shelter for men, women, and families. The New Hope Shelter is Colorado Springs only 24/7 emergency shelter and can accommodate up to 200 people. In cold weather, the Shelter can accommodate an additional 45 individuals. Residents receive a warm place to sleep, meals and access to shower and laundry facilities where all necessary provisions are supplied. The Center also collaborates with the City of Colorado Springs, serving as first-call shelter in its cold weather emergency plan. Counseling and resource advocacy are also available for those who wish to get off the streets. In addition, New Hope houses The Children's Discovery Center, a special developmental program for families with children living at the Center. The goal of The New Hope Center is to help lead residents out of the cycle of homelessness to self-sufficiency.
- **TESSA**, through its Safehouse, accommodates 32-42 women and children who are victims of domestic violence. TESSA is the primary agency dedicated specifically and solely to the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault in El Paso and Teller Counties in Colorado. The Safehouse provides food, clothing and shelter to women and children for up to six weeks. Victims have access to TESSA support groups, therapists and advocates.

### Transitional Housing

- **Partners in Housing's** Homeless Self-Sufficiency program serves eligible homeless families with children, adult childless couples, and adult single individuals by providing them with transitional housing for a period of up to two years, along with supportive services. As part of this program, ancillary services include individualized case management, life skills training, budget counseling, and educational and job counseling. Program goals include helping clients find permanent housing, further their education, find sustainable employment, improve family stability, and facilitate long-term goal achievement and self-sufficiency.
- **Salvation Army's** Transitional Family Housing Program provides a stimulating and safe refuge for families with children to evaluate their lives after times of crisis. Transitional housing provides:
  - 13 two-bedroom and 5 one-bedroom apartments with private bathroom, kitchen, dishwasher, refrigerator, washer and dryer
  - A full-service commercial kitchen and cafeteria are available for lunch meals
  - School-aged childcare services available
  - Recreational facilities including playground, gym, basketball court and fitness center
  - Wireless Internet access and Linkin'Labs computer check-out program
  - 24-hour staff on site

The transitional Family Housing Program addresses physical, emotional, spiritual, and financial needs of the family while teaching clients the strategies that will permanently keep them on the road to self-sufficiency.

- **Harbor House** provides transitional housing, substance abuse treatment, and intensive case management to long-term homeless, chronic substance abusers in El Paso County. Harbor House places 20-30 individuals annually in its highly structured therapeutic environment. With a safe place to live and intensive services, chronic inebriates work towards health, sobriety and self-sufficiency. Outcomes include sobriety and comparisons of service utilization along with measurable improvements in six major life domains including employment, legal, family and social, psychiatric, and medical.
- **Interfaith Hospitality Network** realizes its mission by providing transitional short-term transitional housing, meals, and supportive services to homeless families with children and those at immediate risk to experience homelessness. IHN can accommodate 16 people in up to four families at a time for a negotiable maximum of three months per family. IHN's primary goal is to assist families with children to transition into safe, affordable housing. A secondary goal is meeting community transitional housing needs in the most cost-effective manner possible. Although it is a secular organization, the Interfaith Hospitality Network partners with congregations of diverse faiths and denominations to provide shelter and direct support to homeless families.
- **Springs Rescue Mission's** one-year residential recovery program serves men suffering from chronic alcoholism, drug addiction, or those having difficulty functioning in society due to a lack of life skills. Housing is provided in conjunction with the Men's New Life Program. Men earn increased privileges as they progress through the program, learning appropriate tools of responsibility and community interaction. Ongoing one-on-one case management sessions are used to establish and meet personal and professional goals, and provide spiritual and cognitive counseling. Transitional beds will increase to 50 in 2009 with the completion of the Springs Rescue Mission's new Life Skills Center.
- Smaller organizations also offering transitional housing include, but are not limited to: Liza's Place (14 beds), Urban Peak (20 beds for homeless teens), Alano Recovery Homes (30 beds) and Colorado House (Up to 60 beds).

#### Affordable Rentals

- **Colorado Springs Housing Authority** manages over 700 affordable rental units in Colorado Springs, approximately 400 of which are family units, with the remainder provided as senior housing. In addition, CSHA manages over 2000 Section 8 housing vouchers under its own program, as well as managing Section 8 programs for the El Paso County Housing Authority and for the City of Manitou Springs. The affordable rentals are arranged on a scattered site basis. That is, the majority of the dwellings are single family houses with some duplexes, four-plexes, or six-plexes scattered throughout Colorado Springs. Participants in the program pay 30% of their adjusted gross income for the rent to the Housing Authority. Since 2006, Section 8 and public housing options have been full. Only seniors or disabled individuals can add their names to waiting lists. Housing Choice Vouchers are available to assist tenants in paying rent and utility payments on homes or apartments in the private market, per federal guidelines. The CSHA also offers comprehensive CHFA and HUD-certified first-time homebuyer education services open to the public (as does Partners In Housing).

- El Paso County Housing Authority:** The EPCHA does not develop or manage public housing. However it holds 103 tenant-based Section 8 housing vouchers that are managed/contracted out to the Colorado Springs Housing Authority. These vouchers assist low-income individuals and families, the elderly, and the disabled in obtaining decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Voucher programs place the choice of housing in the hands of the individual or family; people that are issued housing vouchers are responsible for finding a suitable housing unit where the owner agrees to rent under the program. Because a family's housing needs change over time, such as changes in family size or job relocations, the voucher program is designed to allow families to move without the losing housing assistance. For this reason the number of vouchers that EPCHA holds may not all be currently used in El Paso County, however, the reverse is true. Vouchers from other areas, even other states, may be assisting people inside the County. The need for affordable housing greatly outweighs the supply; therefore a waiting list is in place for tenant-based Section 8 vouchers. As of the 2007 Audit Report of the EPCHA and CSHA there are currently 2,303 unduplicated applicants on the waiting list, and clients who applied in July of 2004 are now being served. No section 8 contracts are due to expire. However, as noted in the Colorado Springs Housing Authority paragraph above, the Section 8 waiting list has been closed as of as of May 2006.
- Greccio Housing:** Greccio develops long-term affordable rental housing as opposed to temporary rental housing. It serves the working poor and disabled who have income, targeting a variety of persons in need, not just one population, and disperses its housing throughout the city to integrate its low-income residents into the community. Through public / private partnerships, donations and volunteer efforts, Greccio is able to purchase and rehabilitate rental properties at significantly lower cost than would otherwise be possible. Greccio passes on its up-front savings in the form of unsubsidized rents at below market rates to singles, couples and families with children. The agency currently owns and manages 193 affordable rental units.
- Rocky Mountain Land Trust, Partners in Housing, and Greccio Housing's** various partnerships provide rental housing to lower-income working households at affordable rents. These units are income restricted and rent restricted, meaning that the rent is capped at a level considered to be affordable for a certain household income, and families must earn a certain income level or below in order to qualify to live in the housing. These partnerships own and operate close to 70 affordable units restricted to household earning at or below 30%, 40%, 50% and 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

### Affordable Home Ownership

- **Rocky Mountain Community Land Trust** is a local 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides quality affordable housing opportunities for limited income families in the City of Colorado Springs and El Paso County through home ownership with families and collaborations with other non-profits. Homebuyers must be at or below 80% of the median income for El Paso County and the family must be a first time homebuyer (not having owned a home in the last three years). To date, 157 low-income families and individuals have become first-time homebuyers through the RMCLT program.
- **Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity:** Through volunteer labor and tax-deductible donations of money and materials, Habitat builds and rehabilitates simple, decent houses in partnership with the community and prospective homeowners. Habitat houses are sold to partner families at no profit and financed with affordable, no-interest loans. The homeowners' monthly mortgage payments go into a revolving "Fund for Humanity" that is used to build more affordable houses. In addition to making a 1% down payment and their monthly mortgage payments, each homeowner family invests hundreds of hours of their own labor-sweat equity-into the building of their house and the houses of others. To date, Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity has built 92 single-family homes.
- **Colorado Springs Housing Authority:** CSHA has assisted over 900 low-income (maximum 60% AMI) families and individuals become first-time homebuyers through its home-buyer education and “second deed of trust” (funding assistance) programs.

### Permanent Supportive Housing

- **Harbor Housing First:** Harbor House initiated a new program in February 2007, in partnership with the City of Colorado Springs and Homeward Pikes Peak. Harbor House's Housing First provides immediate access to permanent living units and supportive services to the most under-served population in the community—homeless alcoholics and substance abusers. The “housing first” philosophy purports that housing is a basic human need and that all services can be offered with respect and compassion and in the spirit of hope and recovery. Housing First houses individuals and then develops relationships that will motivate them to get whatever help they need to lead more independent, self-sufficient lives. During 2007, Homeward Pikes Peak, the El Paso County Co-Occurring Disorder Collaborative, and Harbor House moved 25 individuals into small apartments with wrap around services and treatment. These are permanent supportive housing beds with five additional beds planned to be added per year. The cost of housing and treatment for these individuals ranges from \$12,000 - \$18,000 per year - one-third the cost of homelessness and non-treatment.

### Progress in the Last Five Years

Over the past five years the face of housing for the homeless and the low income populations has changed significantly. Demand for affordable housing has increased but so have opportunities for collaboration. Partners acknowledge the need to work together and share resources to optimize their ability to meet the area's affordable housing needs. Thus collaboration has become the cornerstone an array of strategies employed across Colorado Springs' housing continuum.

As an example, Partners in Housing (PIH) increased its Transitional Housing inventory by 100% from 25 to 70 units. Total homeless served increased from 168 individuals (including 111 children) in 2003 to 302 individuals (including 188 children) in 2008. Expanded beds and services also meant that a more diverse population is reached. In 2003, services were confined to families with children. In partnership with the Rocky Mountain Community Land Trust, PIH developed the Colorado House and Resource Center. Partners In Housing now also serves homeless single adults and childless couples. Rocky Mountain Community Land Trust, Greccio Housing, and PIH also partnered to provide 74 affordable rental units for residents as low as 30% AMI.

Meanwhile, operation of the emergency shelter transferred from the Red Cross to the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army initiated a holistic transitional housing program to support families in gaining skills to move from homelessness to self-sufficiency. For more intensive support, Harbor House was founded by a community-wide taskforce dedicated to case management, treatment and housing for homeless individuals impacted by substance abuse. This effort added 34 Transitional beds. As stated above, these are permanent housing slots with five additional slots added per year. Harbor House is in the process of purchasing a dedicated 12-apartment property to house recovering substance abusers who are enrolled in the Harbor House program.

At the far end of the housing continuum, working both individually and in partnership, Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity and the Rocky Mountain Community Land Trust (RMCLT) have continued to make home ownership affordable for low-income individuals and families. Since 1997, RMCLT has partnered with 157 low-income families (with 209 adults and 155 children) to help them become first-time homeowners. RMCLT currently has 127 families in homeownership and partners with approximately 15-20 additional families each year. Likewise, Pikes Peak Habitat for Humanity (PPHFH) has worked to bring affordable home ownership to 35 low-income families over the past five years. Currently, PPHFH and RMCLT are collaborating to develop a mixed-income neighborhood, comprised of 67 lots (36 owned by PPHFH and 31 by RMCLT). PPHFH will use its lots to build houses that will be sold to very low-income families. The RMCLT lots will be developed into a mix of affordable and market-rate homes. The two agencies plan to build six to 12 homes per year over the next three to five years.

Clearly, communication and collaboration have been critical to progress. Providers discuss homeless housing as a community issue not an agency problem. Together they have worked diligently to move the homeless *into and along* the housing pipeline, providing more than simply a temporary refuge.

### Current Gaps and Barriers

A wide array of inter-related factors, some positive, some negative, impact the housing continuum. The most prevalent of these factors include the following:

- The requirements of homeless individuals with special needs (physical or mental disabilities), the elderly (assisted versus independent), domestic violence victims (women, children, men), veterans (physical and mental injuries), and youth.
- Economic conditions, both local and national, including unemployment, interest rates, financing access, utilities costs, and changes in employment sectors. The major loss of “primary jobs” (e.g. high tech) changes both quantity and type of housing services required to meeting community needs. Coordination with other sectors is critical for developing long-term strategies (e.g., changes in post-secondary education) to offset negative impact.
- Housing market conditions, especially rental vacancies, Section 8 availability, and foreclosures.
- Affordable housing development conditions. This barrier is significant for long-term housing solutions and includes land availability (infill versus expansion), funding, proximity of services to available housing and development sites, land-banking obstacles, zoning, neighborhood attitudes, and growing “soft” costs such as development, impact, and tap fees.
- Ft. Carson expansion projects an estimated increase of 25,000 soldiers and family members (from 45,600 to 71,300 individuals) through FY 2013. The good news is that the expansion will also increase local secondary employment opportunities, particularly in the service/retail sector. That, in turn, helps reduce the potential homeless number. However, the increased demand for off-post housing, both rental and home purchases, drives up the cost of local housing. Since most job growth will be in the lower-income, hourly wage population, there will be less affordable housing available which drives up potential homeless numbers.

El Paso County is conducting a comprehensive community housing assessment. Due to be completed in 2009, the information should help delineate services gaps and provide a baseline for continued progress. A similar assessment of Ft. Carson expansion impact is critical. A number of the housing agencies are working closely with military liaisons to determine the impacts of troop expansion across all spectrums including behavioral and physical health, education, employment and as well as housing. Based on current market conditions, housing providers anticipate increasing gaps in emergency shelter capacity, transitional housing, and affordable rentals.