



The Homeless Plan Overview

*Working together to eliminate homelessness in Longmont,
Colorado*

Adopted August 26, 2009

The Longmont Housing Opportunities Team (LHOT) is a collaborative partnership working to end homelessness, with over 50 members representing government, social services, shelters, housing providers, domestic violence agencies, police, mental health, school district, banks, youth services, churches, senior services, businesses, recovery programs, and private individuals.

LHOT's Mission: To reduce homelessness, LHOT brings together community partners and mobilizes resources.

LHOT's Vision: Homelessness is eliminated in Longmont.

The Longmont Housing Opportunity Team (LHOT) believes that:

- **Everyone deserves a home and we will work under a Housing First or Rapid Re-Housing model.**

This model is grounded in the belief that individuals and families are best able to address the problems which contributed to them becoming homeless when they are in stable housing of their own rather than when they are living in emergency shelters or are constantly moving to keep sheltered. It also uses scarce resources to provide permanent housing units which will remain in service for years to come.

- **Permanent Supportive Housing is a top priority to help address the greater mental health and/or substance abuse issues that are so prevalent among the homeless.**

With supportive services and case management which help a person/family deal with the issues that brought them to homelessness, they can improve their situation, increase their income, and access services and resources as appropriate.

- **Any housing for homeless people should always include supportive services until they are stable and self-sufficient (however that is defined for them).**
- **The community should always be leading people to self-sufficiency and independence, not to reliance and dependence.**

With these beliefs in mind, this Homeless Plan was designed over several years with much public and member input.

The number of homeless persons in Longmont is increasing at an alarming rate. In 2000, when Longmont first conducted its own homeless count of 206 persons, to 414 persons in 2009, there has been a 101% increase. The number of times that an individual is homeless is increasing. In 2000, 67% were homeless for the first time, in 2009 only 30% were homeless for the first time. For individuals who were homeless more than once, the percent increased from 33% in 2000 to 69.9% in 2009. Continuing to “manage” the homelessness problem is no longer a viable strategy since the problem only continues to grow.

This plan changes how we will deal with homelessness as a community. Our current national system evolved to manage homelessness – not end it. While this Plan cannot end poverty, nor always stop our neighbors from losing their homes, it does end the institutionalization of homelessness as we know it.

It starts with leadership. People who believe in the vision and have the determination to end homelessness must join forces and address this issue in a collective effort. To show that our Plan is working and to measure our impact, we need additional data. Baseline information is needed to make good decisions and monitor progress toward our investment in people and housing. We also need a custom roadmap that fits our unique local needs and assets. We will continue to bring public and private stakeholders to the table and create a guide that is focused on our vision of making sure all people of Longmont have safe, affordable, permanent homes.

This is a working document that will change and evolve as information and data is provided that gives us a clearer picture of what we are facing; as people implement programs, receive services and provide feedback of what we can do better or differently; and as funding is or is not available.

While we want to eliminate homelessness, LHOT understands that there are many factors impacting people’s lives. Personal choices often make it difficult to help someone change their life. Long term systemic changes must be made and multiple services, support and options must be provided to help each person to access and choose the solutions that will work for them. To this end, we have identified 8 goals to move our community from one that tolerates and accepts homelessness to one with a population that is fully housed.

Goal 1: Permanent and Transitional Housing

Develop and maintain new and existing permanent and transitional housing units as part of a Housing First and rapid re-housing system that meets current and future needs.

Goal 2: Services

Provide access to quality supportive services which seek to address the root cause of each person's homeless situation and move them from a state of homelessness to one of self-sufficiency.

Goal 3: Community Awareness and Coordinated Responses

Create community awareness and support for LHOT's coordinated effort to eliminate homelessness in Longmont.

Goal 4: Shelter System

Maintain the presently available shelter and emergency assistance for all of Longmont's homeless populations until an adequate supply of transitional and permanent housing becomes available.

Goal 5: Prevention and Redirection

Utilize community resources to prevent at-risk families and individuals from becoming homeless.

Goal 6: Funding

Continue to develop budgets and funding to ensure that an effective response to identified needs can be waged using the strategies in this plan.

Goal 7: Skills, Education, Training and Employment

Help homeless individuals acquire requisite skills and training critical to the procurement of gainful employment and/or self-sufficient living.

Goal 8: Evaluation and Accountability

Ensure that Longmont's efforts to end homelessness are on track and meet established goals, objectives, and outcomes.

Setting, adapting and achieving these goals and the sub-goals set forth in more detail in the Plan will be the focus and will form the basis of the work program of LHOT for the coming years. Reports to the community will be provided at the annual Homelessness Awareness Event.