



We will make  
homelessness rare,  
short-lived and non-  
recurring in Fort Collins.

## rare

Homelessness is mitigated  
whenever possible by access to  
affordable housing and responsive  
services in the community.

## short-lived

System Response and re-housing  
interventions make experiences  
with homelessness as least  
traumatizing and short as possible.

## non-recurring

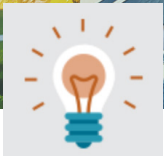
Supportive services monitor  
housing retention and stabilization  
among those transitioning from  
homelessness or housing insecurity.

# together

Homeward 2020 maintains a persistent vision for Fort Collins: together we will make homelessness rare, short-lived and non-recurring in our community. This vision and disciplined attention on the issue of homelessness has defined a decade of work and continues to carry us forward into our shared future.

Homelessness solutions will continue to be a necessary priority in social policy and community development in Fort Collins throughout the coming years. Decisive leadership and multi-sector cooperation must overcome significant system failures and inequities that have left our community's most vulnerable people in housing insecurity, economic vulnerability, and healthcare crisis. We know ending homelessness not only improves individual and community health, but there is also a strong economic case to provide permanent solutions for people experiencing homelessness. **Most importantly, our efforts can yield life-changing results and opportunities for all when we focus on ending homelessness in our community.**

We prevent homelessness whenever possible, and when it occurs we have a comprehensive system in place to ensure it is a rare, brief and non-recurring experience.



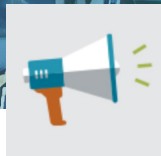
### Catalyst

We bring the community together to ignite collaborative action and initiative.



### Convener

We learn and strategize action together.



### Advocate

We advocate for an efficient and effective system to rehouse people experiencing homelessness.



### Data-driver

We collect and share data to improve understanding and drive outcomes.

# What causes homelessness?

## Poor Health and Lack of Appropriate Care

Health and homelessness are inextricably linked. Health problems can cause household instability and are dramatically exacerbated by the homeless experience. People experiencing homelessness suffer from chronic diseases, physical disabilities, mental health disorders, substance use disorders, cognitive disabilities and trauma at far higher rates than the population-at-large. Chronic disease and acute problems are difficult to manage and worsen while homeless. With a safe, stable home as an essential foundation, medical diagnosis, planned healthcare interventions, treatment and recovery are far more effective. Housing is healthcare.

### Of people experiencing long-term homelessness in Fort Collins:

- 50% self-identify as disabled.
- 44% say they are struggling with mental health issues or substance use disorders.
- 50% are enrolled in Medicaid to assist with medical care costs and coordination.

\*Source Housing First Initiative

## Housing is Out of Reach

There is a lack of housing options that low and limited income people can afford. Today, most households become homeless because they simply do not make enough money to pay for housing and other household necessities. Without affordable housing as a secure base, people are forced into greater financial risk, household instability, eviction and, increasingly, widespread homelessness.

**434 people are experiencing long-term homelessness (six months or longer) in Fort Collins today.**

17%

poverty rate  
in Fort Collins

9,000+ households in Fort Collins are  
extremely cost burdened, paying more than  
50% of their income on housing.

## Escaping Violence and an Unsafe Home

A domestic violence episode is commonly reported among women, youth and families experiencing homelessness. Youth homelessness is often rooted in family and household conflict, household insecurity due to poverty or lack of acceptance at home. Mental health disorders, substance abuse, exposure to trauma or neglect can drive people to escape an unsafe home.

- 26% of people experiencing long-term homelessness in Fort Collins report abuse or violence in the home as a cause.
- 90% of minors accessing youth shelters report violence or fighting at home.
- 40% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ+ and state family rejection as a contributing factor of homelessness.

## Racial Disparities, Discrimination and Other Systemic Barriers

Most minority groups in the U.S. are overrepresented in homelessness. The effects of long-standing racial discrimination linger and perpetuate disparities, as well as discrimination against persons with criminal records, the LGBTQ+ community and persons utilizing housing vouchers. In addition, many individuals who are homeless face numerous other systemic barriers to accessing housing: credit issues, poor tenant record, criminal histories, proof of sufficient income, savings for move-in costs and more.

### Larimer County Population/People Experiencing Long-term Homelessness in Fort Collins:

Race	Population	Homeless
White	82%	56%
Multiracial	2%	3%
Black, African American	.9%	3%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	.5%	6%

\*Sources: Larimer County Demographics; Housing First Initiative

\$1000

Montly cost of a modest  
1 bedroom rental home

Working at minimum wage  
\$11.10/hour  
each week you have to work  
73 hours  
to afford a modest 1 bedroom rental home.

\$809

Supplemental Security Income  
(SSI) Monthly Payment in  
Colorado (65+, blind or disabled)

# The solution to homelessness is a housing focus across the system

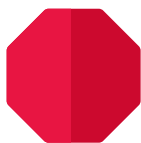
Affordable housing and supportive services



## Prevention

Prevention strategies prevent housing crises from occurring and prevent people who face such crises from experiencing homelessness.

- Reduce housing cost burdens
- Eviction prevention and mediation
- Prevent institutional discharges to homelessness
- Flexible emergency funds



## Diversion

Assist people to resolve their immediate housing crisis by accessing alternatives to entering emergency shelter or the experience of unsheltered living.

- Identify safe alternatives
- Family reunification or conflict resolution
- Assist connections to social supports
- Flexible financial support bringing resources to potential solutions



## Emergency Shelter

Emergency Shelter and Interim Housing provide short-term places for people with nowhere else to live to stay temporarily, meet basic needs such as food, safety and hygiene, and be supported to seek and obtain housing.

- Low barriers to access
- Coordinated intake and assessment
- Rapid exit, housing-focused services
- Trauma informed care
- Outreach to those not accessing services



## Affordable Housing

Ensure access to affordable, community-based housing for people experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness, in which the tenant holds a lease.

- Adequate deeply affordable housing (0-30%AMI)
- Vouchers, subsidies and rapid rehousing funds
- Community landlord engagement
- Inventory set aside and dedicated for people exiting homelessness



## Retain

Retention Services are designed to help the individual or family stay housed and live a safe, stable, healthy and empowered life in the community.

- Resident and tenancy support services
- Employment, benefit and entitlement assistance
- Medicaid/Medicare and planned healthcare navigation
- Strengths-based case management and community reintegration



## Sustain

The community has a comprehensive response in place to ensure homelessness is prevented whenever possible, or if it can't be prevented, it is a rare, brief, and one-time experience.

- Coordinated system response
- Data-informed and performance driven system
- Multi-sector and niche partnerships
- Targeted and aligned funding and resourcing

# who we are

Homelessness is a community-wide issue requiring community-wide involvement in solutions. Homeward 2020 is a collaborative, multi-sector community think-tank guiding implementation of Fort Collins' 10-Year Plan to make homelessness rare, short-lived and non-recurring. We do this by setting priorities, developing alignment for outcomes, catalyzing action and suggesting policy to create a securely housed and healthy community for all.

**Housing First approaches connect people back to a home as quickly as possible, and provide services people may need to be stable and secure.**

## 10-Year Plan Final Phase

### Community-wide Priorities Implemented (2018-2020)

- Applied evidence-based best practices to address chronic and complex homelessness.
- Increased community-based housing and support solutions.
- Built capacity for a sustainable, responsive system.
- Strengthened relationships with landlords, justice system and healthcare systems to assist with targeted outcomes.
- Developed a public dashboard and reporting to improve understanding and outcomes.
- Convened learning events and discussions for multi-sector stakeholders, partners, community groups and general public.
- Augment a regional approach through creation of a Northern Colorado Continuum of Care.

### Sustaining the Vision

In 2020, following implementation of Fort Collins' 10-year plan to make homelessness rare, short-lived and non-recurring, the community will capitalize on the organization's decade of disciplined research and system development, application of key evidence-based models, data collection, consultation with local and national experts and ongoing, cooperative community work.

### Community Action Strategy

With the community, we will create a community action strategy, focused on scaling up solutions to overcome increasing homelessness in Fort Collins. We will identify performance targets, existing assets and persistent gaps, priority next steps, and resources and partnerships to support the effort.

## We know what to do. We know how to do it.

**Together, we will make homelessness rare, short-lived and non-recurring in Fort Collins.**

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