

Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
Denver Housing First Collaborative
2/06

The Denver Housing First Collaborative (DHFC) is one of eleven sites funded through a federal initiative under the Interagency Council on Homelessness. Funds for the treatment team flow from a 3 year SAMHSA grant. The housing component of the program is funded by a 5 year HUD S+C grant and a 2 year City funded HOME voucher grant. Primary care is funded through a 3 year HRSA grant and the Veteran's Administration funds the VA case manager and the multi-site evaluation. The program funding began in October, 2003 with clients beginning enrollment on Feb. 2nd, 2004.

The DHFC program is intended to serve individuals who meet the definition of chronically homeless (4 or more episodes in the last 3 years, or 1 continuous episode for a year) and who have a mental health, health and or addiction disorder. The program provides intensive case management, supported housing, benefit acquisition, substance and mental health treatment, healthcare and vocational counseling using the ACT model.

Referrals to the DHFC program are made by Outreach Workers, the Stout Street Clinic's medical and mental health staff, other homeless service providers and self referrals. Given the program is currently over capacity, recent referrals are placed on a wait list. When slots become available, the team informs Outreach Workers that they are ready to enroll the person so that they can be found and informed of their acceptance into the program. Assuming the prospective candidate meets the criteria of chronically homeless and has a disability, they may be enrolled upon agreeing to the following: a) that they want housing, b) that they agree to pay 30% of their income towards rent, c) that they will consider allowing DHFC to become their payee and d) that they will agree to meet with a member of the team at least twice per month.

A multi-disciplinary ACT team of 12, including staff from CCH, MHCD, Arapahoe House, Denver Health and the VA work with the 100 individuals enrolled to secure and stabilize them in housing, hence the "housing first" approach. Upon securing housing, all other treatment needs are provided by the team and partnering agencies whenever possible. As an ACT team, the staff meets 4 mornings a week from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. to review the status and daily needs of each participant. Staff sign up to outreach and accompany individuals to their appointments in the community. Services that are provided outside of CCH include intensive outpatient substance treatment, residential treatment and detoxification.

An Advisory Board comprised of all partnering agencies and other homeless service providers meets monthly to discuss the evolution and sustainability of the project. This group meets on the 2nd Friday of each month from 1:30-3:00 at CCH's 2111 Champa building.