A9. Housing the Homeless

***Housing First** moves the homeless individual or household immediately from the streets or homeless shelters into their own apartments. **Housing First** approaches are based on the concept that a homeless individual or household's first and primary need is to obtain stable housing.*

***Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)** is geared towards episodically homeless persons with moderate needs (moderate acuity).*

The department of Human Services is currently working with community partners to develop a City of Boulder Homeless Action Plan as part of the Boulder County Ten-Year Plan to Address Homelessness (2014).

Key Issues:

- Housing First approaches, including permanent supportive housing (PSH) are cost-effective and provide a stable base for recovery when the costs of homelessness and mental illnesses (e.g., emergency room visits, hospitalizations, incarcerations, etc.) are taken into account.
- Although demand for RRH and PSH is high in Boulder, both are difficult to implement on a scale that meets demand.
- Fair Market Rent (FMR) rates are set too low to afford typical rents in this area.
- Local vacancy rates are very low and, even with rental assistance programs, competition for available housing is difficult for homeless individuals and families, which may have background issues such as poor credit, evictions, or convictions.
- Other barriers to supporting the homeless include zoning/planning barriers (e.g., zoning requirements such as maximum number of unrelated occupants in units, parking requirements, and planning process).
- Reducing homelessness in Boulder requires supportive services such as shelter, food, health, mental health, case management, and employment assistance, in addition to coordination among homeless service providers, regional service coordination, and community partnerships.
- Housing options that could support people experiencing homelessness in Boulder:
  - Permanent private market housing for families and individuals with incomes below 30% Area Median Income (AMI);
  - Permanent supportive housing;
  - Creative options (e.g., scattered site Housing First units, SROs); and
  - Program-based transitional housing with services in congregate settings.

Background:

- Boulder County prevention and rapid re-housing programs have helped over 1,000 people maintain or obtain housing since 2010.
- In 2008, Boulder County developed a five-year Human Services Strategic Plan.
- Boulder's current percentage of residents living below the federal poverty line is higher than the national average.
- The Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, now being updated, emphasizes housing development in urban areas, which may create barriers to a more regional approach to homeless and very low-income housing.

Implementation Options:

1. Build new partnerships between nonprofit housing developers, homeless service providers, and private developers to provide more housing for the homeless.
2. Strengthen regional partnerships for housing the homeless.
3. Assess barriers/feasibility of creative options.
4. Support local and regional efforts in landlord outreach/recruitment and in reducing FMR barriers.

Goals Addressed Through this Tool:

✓ ***Strengthen Our Commitments***

Maintain the Middle

✓ ***Create Diverse Housing Choices in Every Neighborhood***

Create 15-Minute Neighborhoods

✓ ***Strengthen Partnerships***

Enable Aging in Place

1175 Lee Hill. *Source: Boulder Housing Partners*