

2017 Report of Saint Francis Center to the 131st Annual Convention of the Diocese of Colorado—October 26-27, 2018

The mission of Saint Francis Center is to reveal God's love for humanity by providing a safe place for people who are homeless in Metro Denver to meet their basic needs for day-to-day survival while offering them assistance to transition out of homelessness.

Executive Summary

Looking back on 2017, the word that comes to mind to describe the year is **growth**. Every program we offered our guests did more this year than last — we served more people, we provided more essential resources, and we demonstrated the myriad of ways that personal transformation starts at the Center. The greatest accomplishment we are celebrating from 2017 is the opening of Saint Francis Apartments at Cathedral Square. This project, our second foray into constructing permanent housing for formerly homeless individuals, was a one-of-a-kind partnership with Saint John's Cathedral, and is a beautiful example of people of faith putting their beliefs into action, by utilizing their resources for the benefit of their community. Thanks to the time, talent, and treasure of so many who committed to seeing this project come to fruition, more than 60 individuals now have a place to call home. Another major undertaking from 2017 was the permanent closure of Denver Urban Matters, and SFC assuming their signature program, Urban Education. This program offers engaged learning opportunities to people of all ages about the complexities of poverty and homelessness. Urban Education is a great opportunity for church, school, or other community groups to deepen their understanding of homelessness in Denver through a facilitated group process. Looking ahead to 2018, St. Francis Center will be celebrating our 35th anniversary of service to the Denver community.

Goal 1: To provide emergency services to adults who are homeless.

Projected Outcomes:

- Our day shelter will serve more than 750 different men and women a day, with close to 10,000 different people accessing shelter throughout the year.
- The St. Francis Center outreach team will have 14,500 encounters with homeless men and women, and connected many with shelter and emergency services.

Actual Outcomes:

- We provided shelter to 10,302 different guests, serving a daily average of 724 different people.
- Our outreach team had 6,600 encounters with homeless individuals in downtown Denver, helping hundreds access shelter, healthcare and emergency services.

Goal 2: To provide stabilizing services that help men and women end their homelessness.

Projected Outcomes:

- More than 1,200 men and women will receive employment services.
- The health clinic will provide high quality healthcare services to more than 1,100 different guests.
- More than 1,500 different men and women will receive help accessing resources such as birth certificates, bus tickets, transportation, and information/referrals through our Social Services staff.
- More than 90,000 units of clothing would be distributed.

Actual Outcomes:

- Employment Services served close to 1,895 different individuals and helped place people in 328 full-time jobs.
- The health clinic served 724 different guests, who visited the clinic over 1,556 times.
- Social Services staff served over 2,344 different individuals and provided over 5,843 different services.
- Guests visited the clothing room over 17,597 times, resulting in over 90,000 units of clothing being distributed.

Goal 3: To support men and women after they transition out of homelessness, helping them to continue to remain housed and meet goals for self-sufficiency.

Projected Outcomes:

- St. Francis Center will help 325 different people find or retain housing.
- Case managers will provide intensive support to residents in 69 units of housing.
- 90% of those receiving case management support will remain housed.

Actual Outcomes:

- St. Francis Center helped 374 different individuals find or retain housing.
- Case Managers provided intensive support to residents in 69 units of housing.
- 96% of those who received case management support across all SFC housing programs stayed either in supportive housing or moved on to other permanent housing arrangements.

A. Community Impact:

The Day Center continues to help hundreds of people every day with emergency services and with support to aid the transition out of homelessness. Grant funds helped allow us to keep a full schedule of hours and program services available to meet what continues to be a growing need in the Denver Metro area. Efforts are also underway to increase essential service area (showers, clothing, mail, and storage) access by utilizing additional volunteer resources. Funds also helped us continue to be a key collaborative partner with the Women’s Homelessness Initiative to provide access and transportation to overnight shelter for women at area churches.

Collaborations:

St. Francis Center continues to maximize resources by seeking partnerships with outside groups and having those groups provide services on-site. On-site partnerships include:

On-Site Partner	Service
Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (CCH)	Stout Street Clinic services operate at SFC. CCH also provides a benefits acquisition team at SFC
Mental Health America of Colorado	Provides on-site mental health counseling resources at St. Francis Center
Veterans Administration	Provides on-site services for veterans at SFC
Catholic Worker Soup Kitchen	Provides a meal twice a week for guests
Denver Department of Human Services	Provides on-site benefits acquisition services to guests

In addition, we work with many community partners beyond the shelter walls. The Downtown Denver Partnership provides funding for street outreach, and Denver County’s workforce center system provides access to job listings. We partner with the Women’s

Homelessness Initiative to provide transportation to and from local churches for overnight overflow shelter for women. We coordinate services with all area shelters through formal meetings and ongoing contacts. SC also provides leadership to the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative and Denver's Road Home to coordinate with other agencies and reduce the number of people who are homeless in Denver.

B. Lessons Learned

Our greatest accomplishment we are celebrating from 2017 is the opening of Saint Francis Apartments at Cathedral Square. This project, our second foray into constructing permanent housing for formerly homeless individuals, was a one-of-a-kind partnership with Saint John's Cathedral, and is a beautiful example of people of faith putting their beliefs into action, and utilizing their resources for the benefit of their community. The project was completed on-time and on budget. The building is fully leased but also challenging to the case management staff as we are housing individuals referred into residency through our internal processes and housing individuals through external programs which are looking to place individuals of high vulnerability.

St. Francis Center understands and appreciates that to best serve our guests in an ever-changing environment, the services we offer must remain relevant to those we serve. We have established an advisory and engagement board comprised of current and former clients. This group was initially created as an advisory board to inform and advise staff on programming, needs, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. The group has taken it upon itself to serve as peer mentors and organize pro-social events.

Other input is gathered monthly when the director of basic services holds a community forum to engage in conversation with our guests. The information gathered from these meetings is then discussed within the whole basic services team. In the past, we have had formerly homeless individuals on our Board of Directors. While we currently do not have guest representation, we remain open to this possibility, should someone who would be a good fit seek the position. Additionally, housing residents and day shelter guests have been directly involved in informing the ongoing strategic planning process which is scheduled to complete in October.

We have also has implemented client satisfaction surveys that allows clients to provide feedback on quality and effectiveness of services and staff and also provides the opportunity for additional questions, concerns and general feedback.

Prior input from clients has led us to change how we organize our storage area, and to expand storage capacity at our employment services office.

Because we serve a transient population, it can be hard to regularly engage the same constituency. Additionally, many candidates for providing feedback are very busy, engaged in receiving key services, pursuing employment, looking for housing, attending appointments, etc. They can provide informal feedback, but may be unavailable for a formal community forum.

Due to the nature of our population, online surveys are not an effective way to solicit feedback. To overcome this, we train staff, including case managers, to ask for feedback and encourage residents to participate in community forums to guide us in how services are structured and delivered.

C. Future Plans

In February, 2017, under the leadership of the deputy executive director, a group of staff members representing various departments within the organization began meeting monthly, with the goal of creating a positive environment for everyone at SFC that reflects the diversity of the community we serve. This has evolved into a permanent diversity, inclusion, and equity committee. Racial equity is a priority and focus of this group. In the first quarter of 2018, the group established two goals, which are now being implemented. The goals are as follows:

Goal 1: Recommend comprehensive policies and procedures that promote diversity, inclusion, and equity.

We are looking to provide better hiring practices and career ladders for diverse applicants. We have compiled best practices for recruiting and hiring diverse candidates, and now use this tool for all job openings.

Goal 2: Develop and encourage opportunities to grow in understanding of diversity and promote equity.

We are committed to training our leadership, and all staff and volunteers, to understand diversity and equity issues. Trainings are in process of development.

SFC faces challenges similar to many organizations in recruiting diverse candidates. To overcome this issue we are creating systems to promote our open positions to as many community members as possible. We have experienced, on more than one occasion, a qualified candidate turn down a job offer when we were unable to meet his or her salary requirement.

As discussed, we are now using best practices for hiring minority candidates, including using job descriptions that emphasize diversity and inclusion, emphasizing experience and skills over professional degrees (when possible), and focusing the recruiting, hiring and interview processes on inclusion. We are now posting positions across the metro area with education institutions, faith communities, community agencies, and other organizations that have a diverse ethnic/racial constituency. We are also working internally on creating career ladders so people of all backgrounds have the opportunity to enter and grow within the agency.

Additionally, the most important need identified by our guests (Wellness), and clients (Employment Services) is the acquisition of stable housing solutions. The pathway to acquiring this scarce resource is navigated through case management. It is clear to us that increased resources for case management would have the biggest impact in increasing the self sufficiency of our cohort. Our E Logic system has been in place for a short time and we are still waiting for substantive data to draw significant conclusions. By end of year 2018, we should have additional insight.