

2021 Action Plan



DENVER
HOUSING STABILITY



Table of Contents

<i>Laying the Foundation</i>	2
<i>Plan Overview</i>	4
<i>Data on Housing and Homelessness</i>	7
<i>Framework for Impact and Outcomes</i>	12
<i>Housing Investments and Additional Resources</i>	16
<i>Strategies to Achieve Impacts</i>	19
<i>Implementation and Five-Year Strategic Planning Process</i>	22
<i>Conclusions</i>	23
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	24

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Laying the Foundation

We start with the vision of healthy, housed, and connected. We start with two strategy documents that the new Department of Housing Stability (HOST) inherited, documents that provide a foundation for the work of the department – [Housing an Inclusive Denver](#) and the [Three-Year Shelter Strategy](#). We start with meeting people where they are. And, we know a lot about what works. We also have new circumstances in which we are operating, while we build toward our next five-year plan.

We, the Department of Housing Stability and our citywide, state, agency and external partners, know that *Housing First* based strategies work. We know that once someone is housed stably, they are better able to connect to resources, find and keep a job, get healthy, address behavioral and mental health issues, and feel safe and secure. Housing plus services works and Denver has proven it. [Denver has demonstrated for the nation that investing in housing + services changes lives](#). There is more work to do, tapping into proven solutions and piloting innovations that get people housed and keep people housed.

Approximately 100,000 households in Denver are cost burdened. There is funding for approximately 6,000 new and preserved affordable homes in the next five years. This is not enough. We, as the city, state, regional, non-profit, community partners, and business partners joined in this work, recognize the challenges and feel the pain of individuals, couples, and families facing housing insecurity. These challenges are exacerbated daily by an economic crisis on top of a public health emergency, response, and recovery. These are challenging times, but we plan to continue to meet these challenges through collaboration, cooperation, and community response.

This one-year 2021 Action Plan sets a foundation for long-term planning that incorporates the adjustments we have had to make in a world changed by COVID-19. The pandemic increased the need for programs and services while stretching our human resources and creating funding uncertainty. Our work in 2021 will be done with the knowledge that we will be required to continue our emergency response, and focus must be on what can be done to meet the growing needs of Denver residents within this environment. The plan answers how HOST will invest resources, create policy, and partner to:

- bring those who are experiencing homelessness inside (ideally to homes of their own and to a rehousing focused shelter system) and connect them to resources;
- connect with people in their neighborhoods to keep them in their homes;
- take advantage of opportunities to create more homes for individuals, couples, and families throughout the city; and
- monitor and report back to the community on successes and lessons learned.

HOST does not do this work alone. Partnerships and collaboration within the city and external organizations, businesses, and community groups enable the department to create programs, services, and projects to serve residents along the housing spectrum.

The value of our collaborative approach was keenly demonstrated in our [collective response to COVID-19](#) and its impact on our neighbors experiencing homelessness who depend on the emergency sheltering system for a safe place to sleep inside. Due to safe distancing requirements with the coronavirus, we lost more than half of our shelter capacity. There was already strategy and planning in place to convert to a 24/7 shelter system. Out of necessity, we cut the timeline from years to six weeks. We came together and built and staffed two auxiliary shelters that provided testing and healthcare on-site. We also converted many existing shelters to 24/7 operations with expanded services. With federal and state emergency funding, we were able to secure 810 hotel and motel rooms to expand capacity to serve those most at risk of contracting and those who were recovering from COVID-19. [Work continues](#) to transform an emergency sheltering system into a rehousing system. The need to get people inside remains. Our goal is to make sure the experience of homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time.

More Denver residents were facing housing instability and in need of financial support as the city faced the impacts of COVID, including job losses and compounding economic strain. We anticipate the growing need for Temporary Rental and Utility Assistance (TRUA) funding, eviction assistance, landlord tenant counseling and mortgage assistance to continue into 2021. While state and federal emergency funds allowed us to support more households, that funding is uncertain past December of 2020, as of the writing of this report.

Creating and preserving affordable housing options along the income spectrum is full steam ahead with the resources we have available, including the dedicated affordable housing fund. HOST provides gap financing for

developments and works with developers to incorporate affordable homes in new developments. From January through August 2020, more than 900 affordable homes were opened, under construction or have received commitment to funding by the city. This includes financing the creation of 420 new homes, preservation of 207 affordable units through acquisition or rehabilitation, breaking ground on 294 homes, and more than 300 available for occupancy. The department also negotiated voluntary affordable housing agreements which are expected to produce approximately 100 income-restricted affordable housing units.

While we navigate this new context, we remain grounded in strategies articulated in existing plans. [Housing an Inclusive Denver](#) (HID) is a five-year plan that designates how we appropriate funds across home ownership, affordable rental, and homelessness resolution. HID emphasizes that half of all funds will be spent to reach those in 30% AMI or below and those experiencing homelessness. These goals still guide our work and [funding priorities](#).

This 2021 Action Plan reflects our continued emergency response, investment in housing opportunities and programs, and helps establish baseline data and procedures to support the successful creation of a five-year strategic plan. This plan sets us up to create a five-year strategic plan during the 2021 calendar year through a transparent, public process alongside the [Housing Stability Strategic Advisors](#) and other stakeholders to be adopted by City Council in the fall of 2021.

Even before the public health crisis, need far outweighed resources available to serve. And still, together, we are able to make an impact, able to serve, support, and build capacity. With the steps we have made so far, we have demonstrated the positive outcomes of evidence based solutions. As the [Social Impact Bond](#) has shown, investment in housing with appropriate services makes a difference. Of the 330 individuals who have participated so far, more than 80% are still housed after two years. Denver has successfully made payments to investors each year of this program; payouts only being required if the program is achieving its goals. We know housing plus services works. We need more resources to serve more people with these evidenced based strategies.

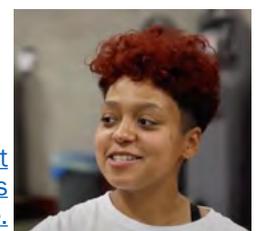
In 2019, the Department of Housing Stability came into existence. In 2020, a pandemic proved the importance of housing stability. In 2021, we will continue to demonstrate that housing stability is an essential component of what makes Denver a great place to live. We need to come together as a community to ensure all who call Denver home are healthy, housed, and connected.



Once someone is in stable housing, they are better able to connect to resources, find and keep a job, get healthy and address behavioral and mental health issues. HOST's efforts to get someone housed and keep people housed are multi-faceted, person-centered, and trauma informed.



[Learn more about connecting people to housing and support services through outreach and rehousing strategies.](#)



[Learn more about the city and HOST's COVID-19 response.](#)

Plan Overview

Denver is working to build an equitable, modern, and progressive city. While a lofty goal, city leadership has put in place policies, initiatives, programs, and funding to build a strong foundation to support this vision. As articulated in the [Denverright Plan](#) Denver should be:

- Equitable, affordable, and inclusive
- Made up of strong and authentic neighborhoods
- Well connected, safe and accessible
- Economically diverse and vibrant
- Environmentally resilient
- Healthy and active

Access to housing is a key element undergirding all of these efforts. Yet, like most growing cities in America, Denver's housing challenges have mounted in recent years. Denver has experienced rapid population and economic growth. Housing costs have increased, while incomes have failed to keep pace. This reality has placed too many Denver residents at risk of involuntary displacement and homelessness and without the foundation created by an affordable, stable home.

To strengthen the City's response to these challenges, on October 23, 2019, Mayor Michael B. Hancock signed Executive Order 145 to create the Department of Housing Stability (HOST). The department brought together existing investments and policies around housing and homelessness programs, development, and services.

In the words of Mayor Hancock, "Every single person in Denver deserves to be healthy, housed and connected. That's why we created the [Department] of Housing Stability. There is no bigger priority for me as Mayor, or us as a city, than for us to address the needs of our most vulnerable residents."

HOST's Vision and Approach

HOST seeks to implement this vision of a healthy, housed, and connected Denver by investing, creating policy, and working collaboratively to provide housing stability, homelessness resolution, and housing opportunity. To do this, HOST embraces four fundamental values established within [Housing an Inclusive Denver](#) (approved in 2018). These include:

- Leveraging and enhancing housing investments,
- Fostering communities of opportunity,
- Supporting housing as a continuum, and
- Embracing diversity throughout neighborhoods.

Throughout this work, HOST pursues strategies that are:

- Person-centered,
- Trauma-informed, and
- Data-driven.

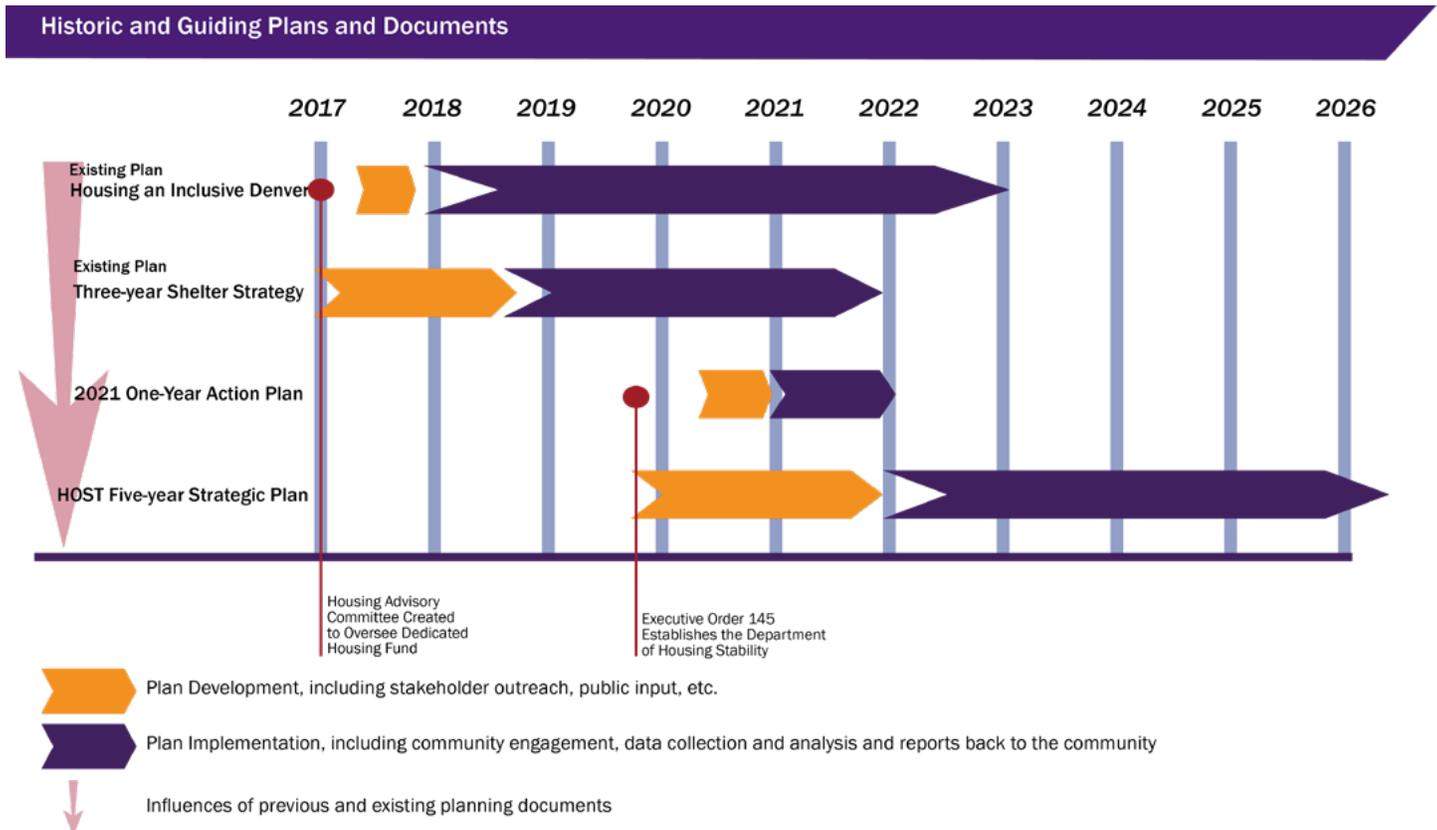
Strategic Planning Process and the Role of this Action Plan

In January 2020, HOST began convening community members to develop a five-year plan to achieve this vision. More than 100 Denver stakeholders representing nonprofits, community organizations, developers, people with lived experience, City Council members, government agency partners, funding partners, and businesses were meeting regularly. In late March, however, the COVID-19 pandemic created a new reality where the needs of those without homes or at risk of losing their homes were paramount. The City and the HOST team responded to the crisis, putting long-term strategic planning efforts on a new course.

Though the strategic planning process continued in truncated form, the level of community engagement necessary to create a long-term plan was not possible within the context of the pandemic. The stakeholders who had been meeting recommended that HOST prepare a one-year action plan for the short-term and continue with longer-term planning in 2021. This approach was formally recommended by the Strategic Planning Executive Committee and approved by the Mayor and City Council.

Within that context, this 2021 Action Plan serves three key purposes.

- It provides a **roadmap** for HOST that focuses on what is possible and most important within the context of the pandemic for 2021.
- It provides a **bridge** between existing strategies set in [Housing an Inclusive Denver \(HID\)](#) and the [Three-Year Shelter Strategy](#) to the forthcoming five-year strategic plan, which will guide HOST’s work in 2022-2026.
- It further lays the **foundation** for the complete integration of the Department of Housing Stability’s work, brought together in 2019.



HOST Goals for 2021

The 2021 Action Plan identifies key strategies for the year based on existing plans and what community stakeholders identified as most critical within the context of continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This plan focuses also on what is possible within an uncertain budget environment.

In 2021, HOST will:

- Continue to **lead the community’s response to COVID-19 for those at risk of losing their housing or who are experiencing homelessness**, including the provision of safe shelter and isolation options, testing and medical support to mitigate virus transmission through coordination with public health, and housing stability and rehousing support;
- **Serve at least 11,000 households** through programmatic assistance, including:
 - **2,000 households in housing stability programs** (e.g., tenant-landlord counseling, eviction assistance, emergency home repair programs, and rent and utility assistance),
 - **5,000 households in homelessness resolution programs** (e.g., shelter, street outreach, rehousing programs, employment programs),
 - **4,000 households in housing opportunity programs** (e.g., homebuyer counseling, down payment assistance, etc.);
- **Fund affordable housing projects** in line with HOST’s priorities and aligned with [Housing an Inclusive Denver](#) goals;

Plan Overview (cont.)

- **Expand outreach, maintain and rebuild pre-pandemic shelter capacity (2,100 beds)**, increase access to case management and housing outcomes, and provide appropriate social distancing;
- **Create a five-year strategic housing plan** with clear, measurable goals associated with the HOST's impact framework and solutions scaled to a five-year timetable;
- **Support policy and systems change** (e.g., Affordable Housing Zoning Incentive Project, eviction prevention policy);
- **Advance equity and inclusion** through utilization of equity lens to analyze data and assess access to services and outcomes; create and implement departmental work plan on equity and inclusion;
- **Create at least 610 units** and preserve around 300 units.

These goals are grounded in data. Need for the supports that HOST funds is significant. More than one-third of Denver households pay more than the recommended 30% of their incomes on housing, and only 7% of Denver's housing stock is income restricted to ensure affordability. Additionally, access to homeownership is not equitable: while more than half (54%) of white non-Hispanic/non-Latinx householders are homeowners, only 40% of Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) are homeowners. Further, too many Denver residents experience homelessness. In 2020, 4,171 people experienced homelessness on a single night in January. The COVID-19 pandemic's economic impacts have exacerbated these challenges. As a result, requests for financial assistance to keep people in their homes increased by 270%, and the number of beds available in Denver's existing shelters were reduced by more than 50%.

These one-year goals are also aligned toward the impacts HOST seeks to create with the Denver community. HOST aims to create a Denver where:

- Residents have the choice in when and under what circumstances they move or remain in their homes and neighborhoods;
- Residents experience homelessness rarely, and, if they do, it is brief and one time;
- Residents have equitable access to housing options that meet their needs (e.g., affordability, renting and ownership options, size, etc.) with easy access to community resources (e.g., transportation, healthy food options, healthcare, etc.).

The Department of Housing Stability's ability to achieve these goals is dependent upon available funding and other critical, human, technological and partner resources. While federal funds may continue to be available to support emergency response, HOST expects the City's 2021 budget and the funding available from other sources to be impacted by the ongoing public health crisis and economic downturn.

Next Steps

Implementation of the 2021 Action Plan will be overseen by Housing Stability Strategic Advisors. This group, appointed by the Mayor and City Council, is comprised of individuals whose experience provides valuable insight into the work of HOST. With their guidance, implementation approaches may pivot if needed to respond to the evolving COVID-19 crisis.

To guide the five-year strategic planning process, the Housing Stability Strategic Advisors will meet jointly with the Strategic Planning Executive Committee. The five-year planning process will seek input from a broad cross-section of community stakeholders. HOST anticipates finalizing a draft plan in Summer 2021 and submitting the plan for subsequent City Council approval by November 2021.

Data on Housing and Homelessness

Access to an affordable home has consistently been one of the most critical issues facing Denver residents, and it is even more important now amid the COVID-19 crisis. While many Denver residents continue to rely on the safety of their home during the pandemic, those without homes or facing housing instability are at increased risk. Overall, while comprising less than 1% of Denver residents, about 5% of all those who have test positive for COVID-19 are persons experiencing homelessness, and 6 individuals experiencing homelessness have died with their deaths attributed to COVID-19 (2% of all Denver COVID-19-attributed deaths) through July 2020. At the same time, the need for rental and utility assistance to keep households in their homes has surged during the pandemic, with requests for assistance from HOST-funded programs increasing by 270%.

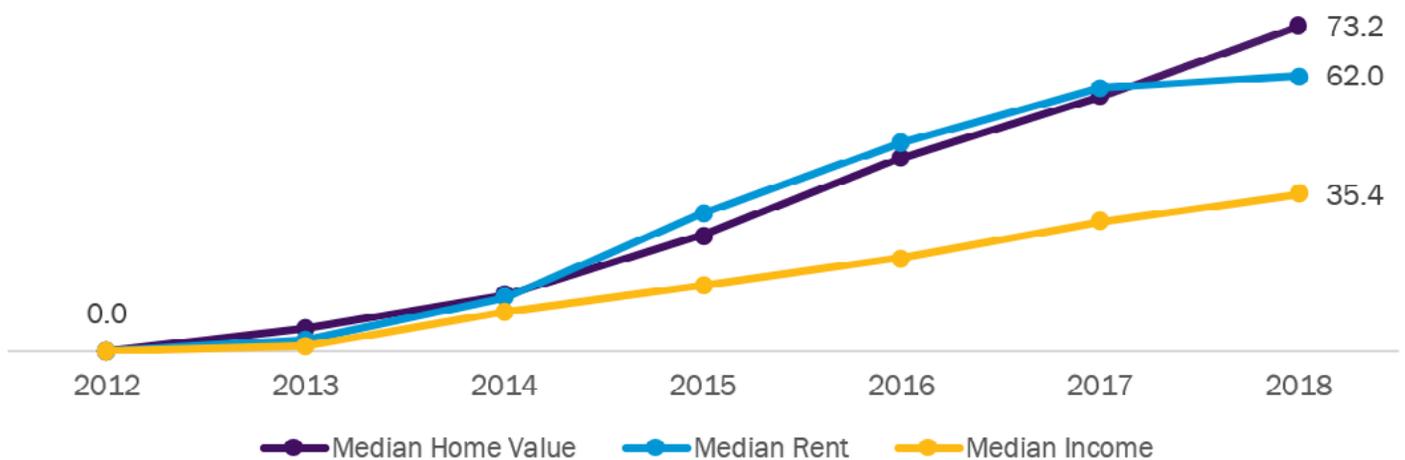
This section summarizes data on housing and homelessness in Denver. People experiencing housing instability and homelessness are unique individuals. HOST's strategies must be person-centered, trauma-informed, and culturally competent, and they must also be grounded in data on community needs. This section discusses the following trends (1) household growth and impacts on housing costs and housing stability; (2) access to homeownership; and (3) the prevalence of homelessness.

Denver rents and home values have risen consistently and outpaced income growth, leaving many vulnerable to housing instability.

In recent years, the number of households seeking housing in Denver has increased significantly. From 2012 to 2018, the number of households in Denver grew by 15%. This is much higher than the growth rate statewide (9%), and nationally (5%).¹ Over this period, Denver's housing stock also increased, but more slowly (12%), increasing pressure on rents and home prices.²

Housing costs in Denver have increased rapidly at the same time. In the first quarter of 2020, the median apartment in Denver rented for over \$1,500 per month; the median one-bedroom unit rented for about \$1,460 per month, and the median two-bedroom rented for nearly \$2,000.³ Between 2012 and 2018, rents increased by 62%.⁴ As of June 2020, the median sales price of a single-family home reached \$483,182, and the median sales price of a condo or townhome was \$383,723.⁵ From 2012 to 2018, the median value of a home in Denver increased by 73%.⁶ During this same period, incomes only increased by 35%, causing housing costs to consume a larger share of households' budgets.⁷

Figure 1. Percent Increase in Median Home Value, Median Rent, and Median Income Since 2012



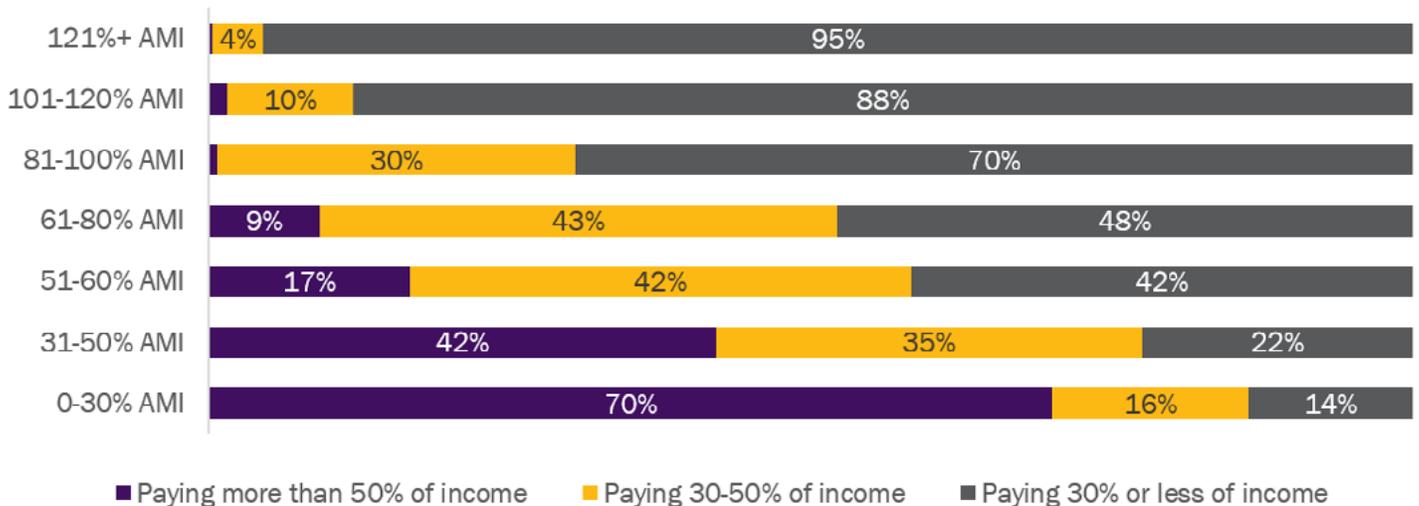
Source: [U.S. Census Bureau](#), American Community Survey 1-year estimates, 2012-2018.
Note: Data are for Denver County.

Spending too much on housing places many households one job loss, medical issue, or other financial crisis away from losing their home and forces many households to make difficult tradeoffs between keeping their homes or paying for other essential items (food, medicine, etc.). The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines a household as housing cost burdened if they spend more than 30% of their income on housing and severely cost burdened if they spend more than 50%. In 2018, 36% of all Denver households (more than 100,000)

Data on Housing and Homelessness (cont.)

spent more than 30% of their incomes on housing. Of those, more than 50,000 households spent more than 50%.⁸ Affordability challenges are concentrated among Denver's lowest income households. Of those earning less than 30% of the area median income, 70% spent more than 50% of their incomes on housing.⁹

Figure 2. Prevalence of Housing Cost Burden among Denver Residents by Area Median Income, 2018.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018 1-year estimates, via University of Minnesota Public Use Microdata Series. Note: Data are for Denver County.

Further exacerbating the problem, the COVID-19 crisis has caused many Denver residents to lose their jobs. While Denver started 2020 with a low unemployment rate (2.7%), unemployment more than quadrupled to reach a high of 12.3% in April 2020 and remained nearly three times higher than pre-covid levels in July 2020 (7.8%).¹⁰

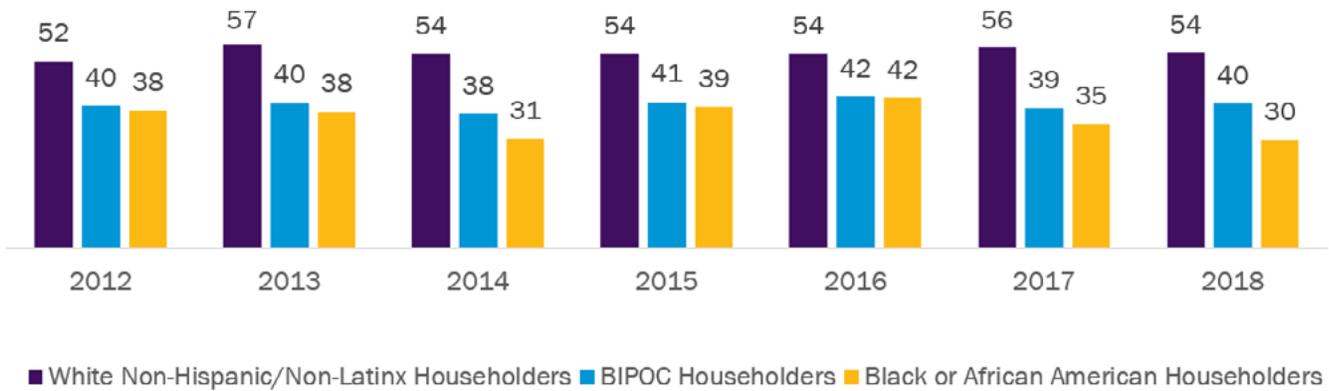
Impacts to housing stability as a result of the COVID-19 crisis are already being seen. Since the COVID-19 crisis hit, more households have started to seek out assistance from HOST's Temporary Rental and Utility Assistance (TRUA) program. Through the first seven months of 2020, more than 1,200 households have been served through TRUA. In comparison, 996 were served over the entire year of 2019.¹¹

To increase the availability of long-term affordable housing, income restrictions can be placed on units as a requirement to receive public funds to ensure that they remain affordable for certain periods of time. However, only 23,500 units in Denver are income-restricted currently. This represents only 7% of Denver's housing units. Even with 1,233 city-funded, income-restricted units under construction among 21 developments in mid-2020 and 1,066 scheduled to break ground next year, there is an extreme shortage of income-restricted affordable rental and for sale units.

Homeownership rates among Black and Indigenous People of Color lag behind their white counterparts.

Due to the historic exclusion of Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) from homeownership opportunities, BIPOC households have lower homeownership rates than white non-Hispanic/non-Latinx households.¹² In Denver overall, 49% of households owned their homes in 2018. This rate has been fairly stable.¹³ Among white non-Hispanic/non-Latinx households, homeownership is more prevalent: 54% of white non-Hispanic/non-Latinx households owned their homes in 2018.¹⁴ In contrast, only 40% of BIPOC households owned their homes.¹⁵ The homeownership rate among black households in Denver was even lower (30%).¹⁶ Given the role that homeownership plays in wealth-building, addressing this disparity is critical.¹⁷

Figure 3. Homeownership Rate (%) by Race and Ethnicity of Household, 2012-2018

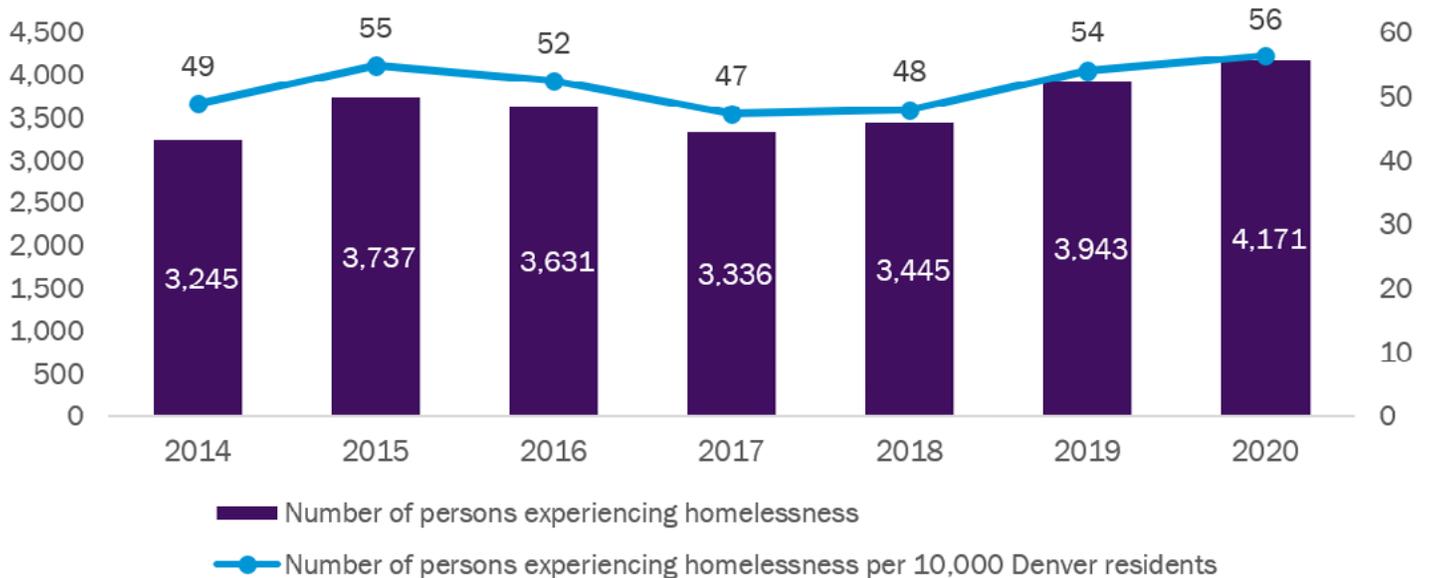


Source: [U.S. Census Bureau](#) American Community Survey 1-year estimates, 2012-2018.
 Note: Data are for Denver County. Homeownership rate is the percentage of households for each race/ethnic group who own a home vs. rent it. The U.S. Census Bureau identifies the race and ethnicity of the household by the race and ethnicity of the person in whose name the housing is owned or rented.

Homelessness has risen in recent years, particularly among those who are unsheltered, and BIPOC are overrepresented.

Too many of Denver’s residents experience homelessness and find themselves in a need of a safe place to stay and resources to quickly regain housing. According to the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, [an annual census](#) of persons experiencing homelessness on a single night in January, 4,171 persons experienced homelessness in Denver [on a single night in 2020](#). This is 56 out of every 10,000 Denver residents. While the number of persons experiencing homelessness averaged about 3,500 people from 2014 to 2018, counts in recent years have shown increases.

Figure 4. Point-in-Time Count of Persons Experiencing Homelessness In Denver County, 2014-2020



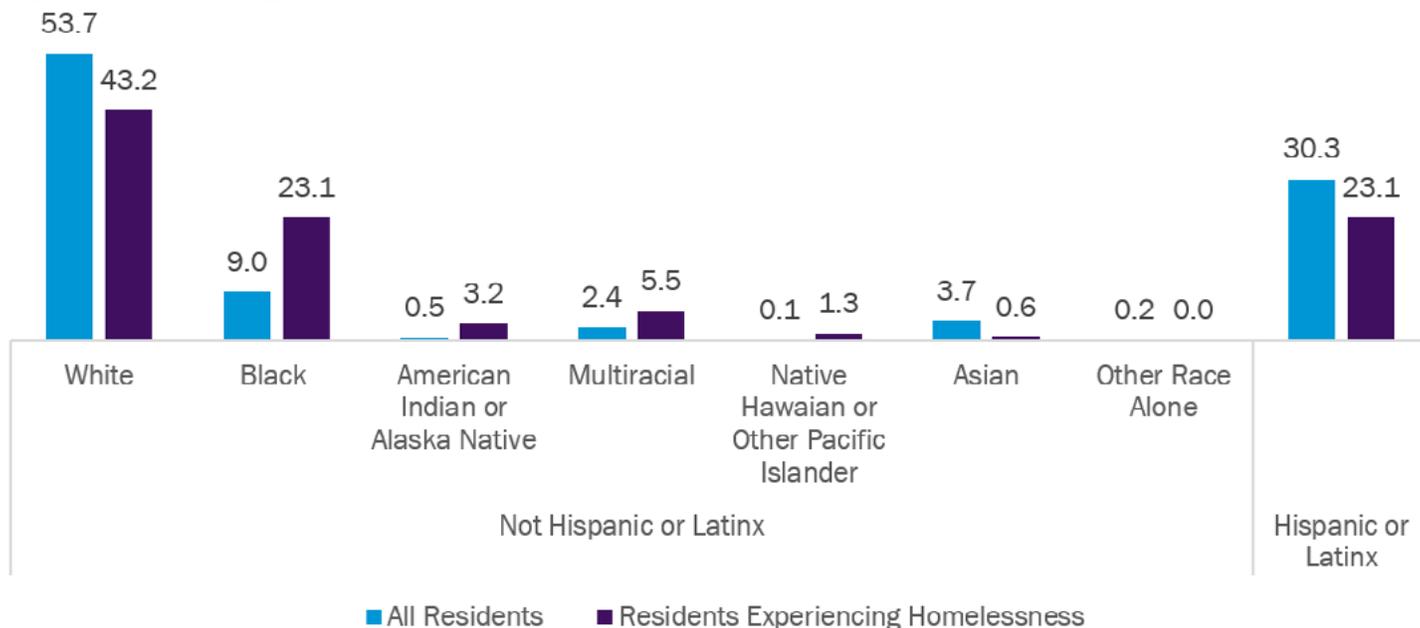
Source: Metro Denver Homeless Initiative, [Point-in-Time County-level Reports](#), 2014-2020; Colorado State Demography Office.
 Note: Data are for Denver County.

Persons experiencing homelessness in Denver are disproportionately BIPOC. While more than half (54%) of Denver residents are white non-Hispanic/non-Latinx, only 43% of those experiencing homelessness in 2020 are white non-Hispanic/non-Latinx. The majority of persons experiencing homelessness (57%) are BIPOC. Disparities are particularly significant among the black and American Indian and Alaska Native communities. While only 9% of

Data on Housing and Homelessness (cont.)

Denver residents are black non-Hispanic/non-Latinx, 23% of those experiencing homelessness are black non-Hispanic/non-Latinx. While less than 1% of Denver residents are American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN), non-Hispanic/non-Latinx, 3% of those experiencing homelessness are AIAN non-Hispanic/non-Latinx. Additionally, 3% of those counted in the PIT identify as AIAN and Hispanic or Latinx.

Figure 5. Percentage of Denver County Residents by Race and Ethnicity



Source: Data for all Denver residents is from the [U.S. Census Bureau](#) 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates; Data for residents experiencing homelessness is from the [2020 Point-in-Time Count](#). Note: Data are for Denver County.

In 2020, the PIT identified a large number of individuals who were experiencing chronic homelessness and who were unsheltered. In 2020, 29% of people reported experiencing chronic homelessness. Someone is considered to be experiencing chronic homelessness if they have been homeless for at least 12 months continuously or in at least 4 separate episodes in the past three years and they have a disabling condition that affects their ability to maintain housing independently. In addition, 996 people (24% of everyone identified on the PIT) were unsheltered. This is a substantial increase from 2019 and prior years when about 14% of those counted were unsheltered.

Transgender and gender non-conforming individuals are more likely to be unsheltered. Seventy percent of those counted in 2020 identified as male, and 29% identified as female; 0.6% identified as transgender, and 0.5% identified as gender non-conforming. While 26% of men and 19% of women were unsheltered, 32% of transgender individuals and 53% of gender non-conforming individuals were unsheltered.¹⁸



Figure 6. Persons Experiencing Homelessness in Denver County by Sheltered Situation, 2014-2020



Source: Metro Denver Homeless Initiative, [Point-in-Time County-level Reports](#), 2014-2020.
 Note: Data are for Denver County.

Furthermore, the population of persons experiencing homelessness is aging. One out of four people experiencing homelessness in Denver was age 55 and older, and 5% were age 65 and older. Researchers project that the number of people experiencing homeless age 65 and older will increase in coming years, increasing use and costs of hospital services, shelter support, and nursing homes.¹⁹

While most persons experiencing homelessness in Denver are single adults or couples without children, too many families and unaccompanied youth experience homelessness. In 2020, 820 people in 247 households were experiencing homelessness as part of a family; this is 20% of all those counted in the PIT. Families experiencing homelessness in Denver are more likely to be newly homeless: 43% of people in families were newly homeless compared to 13% of everyone counted.²⁰ Addressing family homelessness is critical to protect and support children.²¹ Children who experience homelessness are more likely to experience family separation, academic achievement challenges, and behavioral health issues compared to children in general.²² Additionally, 195 people (5%) were unaccompanied youth under the age of 25 who may need supports tailored to their age.²³

To understand housing needs and match households to available resources, Denver participates in a regional coordinated entry system called [OneHome](#). Coordinated Entry is a national best practice required by HUD and led by Metro Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI). Two-thousand households are assessed in Denver annually for housing needs through OneHome. Many households who experience homelessness are not currently in the OneHome system; providers connect those they think are most in need of limited housing resources. Of those households assessed in 2019, about 1,300 households' assessments indicated a need for permanent housing subsidies with supportive services, and 675 households' assessments indicated a need for shorter-term rental assistance and supports.²⁴

Framework for Impact and Outcomes

Grounded in the foundational values and core goals established in [Housing an Inclusive Denver](#) as well as strategic vision established in the [Three-Year Shelter Strategy](#), HOST seeks to create a healthy, housed, and connected Denver. This 2021 Action Plan represents a next step toward an outcomes-oriented, data-driven approach that is centered on impact. To accomplish this, this plan proposes an initial framework to (1) define the impacts HOST aims to co-create with community stakeholders and (2) link those impacts to measurable outcomes and key goals within each of the department's three focus areas: housing stability, homelessness resolution, and housing opportunity.

This framework lays a foundation for further planning. HOST expects to improve upon this groundwork through community input in the five-year strategic planning process. This will likely include refining how HOST defines its impact, exploring other meaningful measures, and setting quantitative targets. Further, because this work was undertaken during the pandemic, it may need to be adjusted throughout the course of the year as the coronavirus continues to impact the community, knowing that there will be disparate impact on people of color and those without full access to health care and employment.

Work within and across these focus areas is deeply interconnected to support residents along the entire housing continuum. Progress in one area reinforces improvement in another. The framework for impact and key goals in 2021 should be understood within this context.

Within this proposed structure, HOST aims to work with the community to foster these impacts:

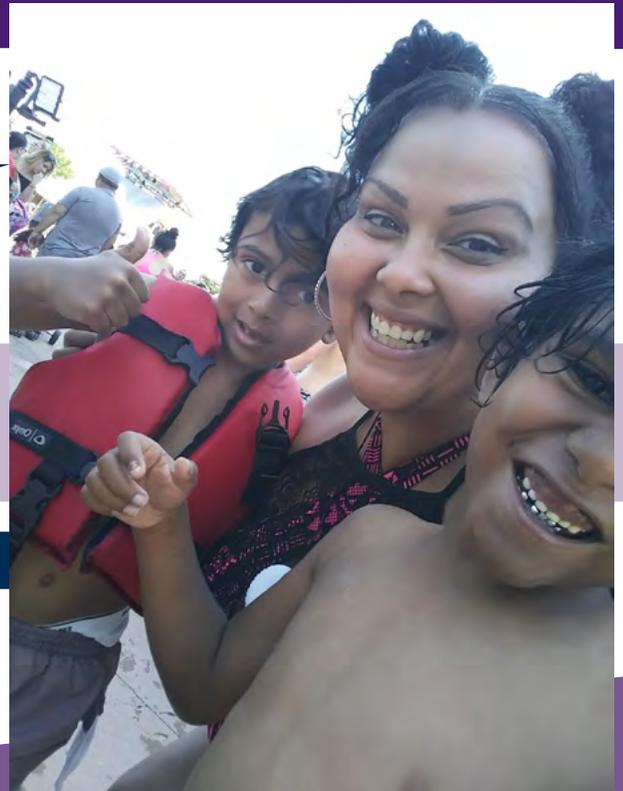
- **Housing Stability:** Residents have the choice in when and under what circumstances they move or remain in their homes and communities.
- **Homelessness Resolution:** Residents experience homelessness rarely, and, if they do, it is brief and one-time.
- **Housing Opportunity:** Residents have equitable access to housing options that meet their needs (e.g., affordability, renting and ownership options, size etc.) with easy access to community resources (e.g. transportation, healthy food options, healthcare, etc.).



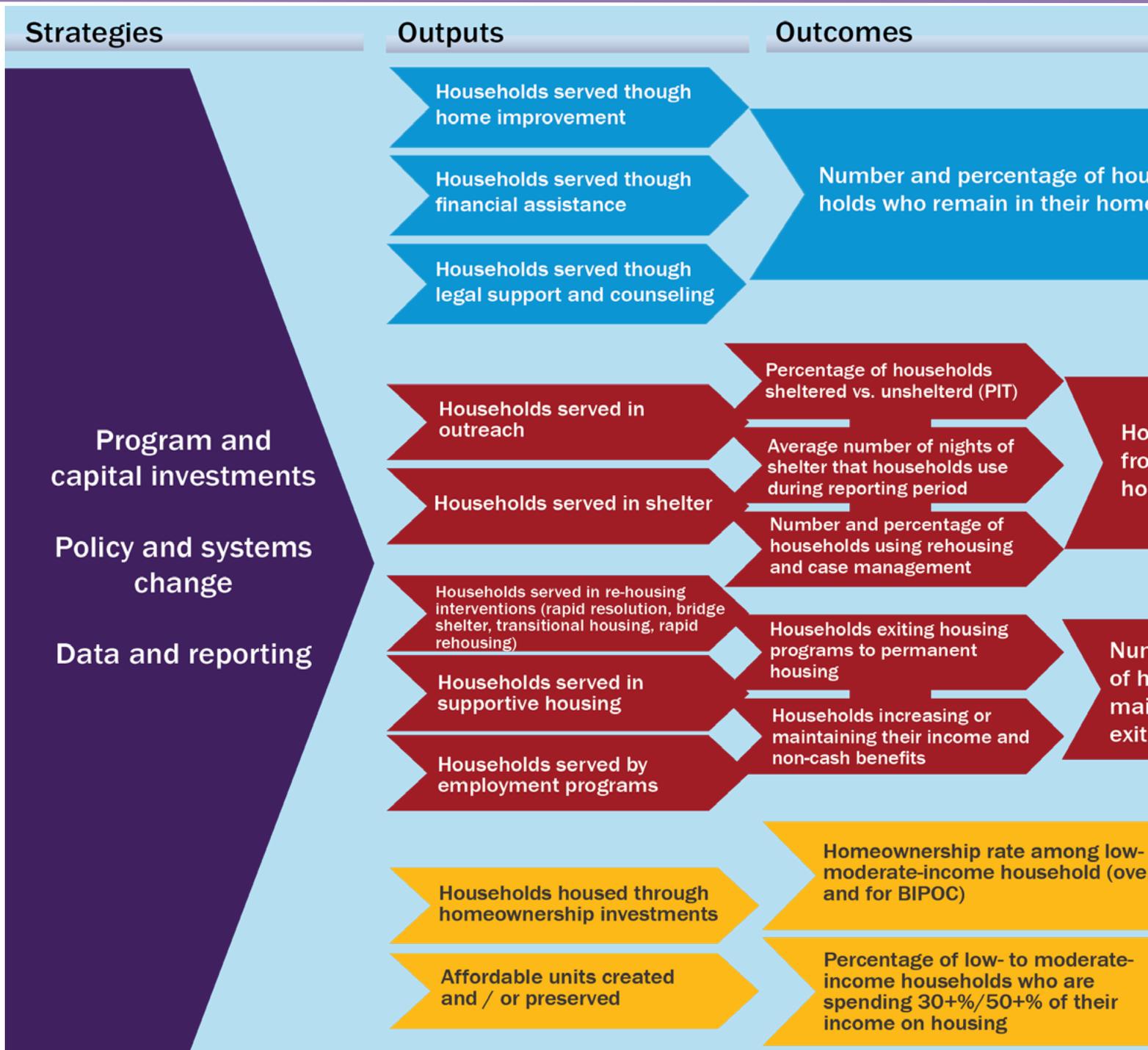
To drive these impacts, HOST's program and capital investment, policy and system change, and data and reporting strategies should be aligned to achieve critical, long-term goals.

- **Housing Stability:** Increase the percentage of households served who remain in their homes or who have moved voluntarily six months later.
- **Homelessness Resolution:** Decrease the number of people experiencing homelessness in Denver per 10,000 residents
- **Housing Opportunity:**
 - Decrease the disparity in the homeownership rate between white and Black and Indigenous People of Color among low- to moderate-income households
 - Decrease disparities in cost burden among low- to moderate-income households by race, household size, and income level and census tract
- **Across the continuum:** Ensure equitable access and outcomes for households most in need of HOST supports by disaggregating data on outputs and outcomes by race and other demographic characteristics.

To assess progress toward these goals, measurable outputs and outcomes are proposed. Because these measures are new, HOST will use 2021 to benchmark current conditions. That data will be used to establish measurable targets for the five-year plan. Specific priority strategies to drive progress toward these outcomes in 2021 are outlined in the next section. Additional strategies will be integrated into the five-year strategic plan.



Framework for Impact and Outcomes (cont.)



EQUITY LENS: DISAGGREGATE DATA BY RACE AND OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS TO

Resources

FUNDING POLICY DATA SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE REPORTING PLATFORMS

Impacts



Housing Investments and Additional Resources

In 2021, the City and County of Denver will prioritize investments to support residents' housing stability. While much of the funding for these efforts is allocated to the [HOST budget](#), other city agencies also receive funding to support these needs. These agencies include Denver Human Services, Department of Public Health and Environment, Department of Safety, Office of Financial Empowerment and Protection, and Department of Finance.

HOST drives progress toward its goals by funding programs, services, and housing to support residents along the entire housing continuum. Funding comes from federal and local sources including grants, tax and other revenues and philanthropic efforts. In addition to its role as a funder, HOST supports its vision by working in partnership with community organizations and other city agencies, advancing policy changes, and investing in data systems and reporting platforms.

HOST Revenue Streams and Investment Areas

HOST receives revenues from a range of local and federal funding streams and invests them into the community to support its vision. Specifically, revenues are invested to align with priorities established in [Housing an Inclusive Denver](#) to respond to community needs, and fulfill the requirements and intended purposes of the specific sources. Figure 7 shows the revenues HOST receives from these sources.

The amounts in the table below are estimates for revenues in 2021. Actual revenue is affected by two processes. First is the [city budget process](#), which is currently underway. Second is the process by which HOST receives federal funds. These amounts are estimated based on historical levels; actual funding received may change. A sales tax measure to support homelessness resolution is proposed to be on the November ballot. If this measure is approved by the voters, a supplement to this plan will be developed to allocate those funds.

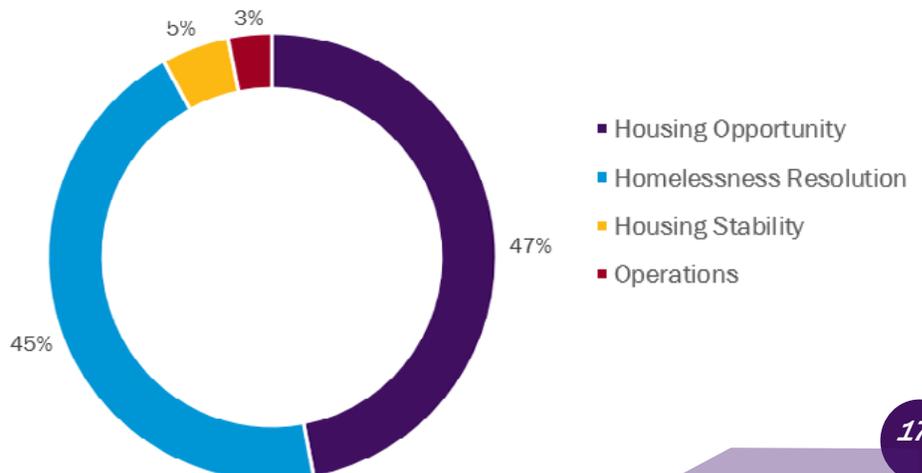


Figure 7. HOST Revenue Streams and Amounts, 2021 (Projected)

Funding Source	Amount	Percentage (%)
HOST General Fund Budget	\$27,094,462	26.2
Affordable Housing Fund	\$32,391,293	31.2
AHF Carry Forward	\$4,800,000	4.6
Property Tax	\$8,606,481	8.3
General Fund and DHS Transfer	\$3,700,000	3.6
Recreational Marijuana Use Tax	\$9,603,700	9.3
Linkage Fee Collection YTD and Carry Forward	\$5,681,112	5.5
Federal Funds	\$28,451,950	27.5
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	\$2,039,064	2.0
CDBG Cares Act	\$1,203,712	1.2
HOME Investment Partnerships Program	\$4,590,873	4.4
Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS	\$4,034,774	3.9
Neighborhood Stabilization Program II	\$57,363	0.1
Skyline Housing	\$2,732,458	2.6
Rental Rehabilitation	\$95,861	0.1
Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)	\$597,226	0.6
ESG Cares Act 1	\$2,059,400	2.0
ESG Cares Act 2	\$9,042,223	8.8
Continuum of Care	\$1,998,996	1.9
Other Funds	\$15,458,516	15.0
Metro Mortgage Assistance	\$3,000,000	2.9
Revolving Affordable Housing Loan Fund	\$3,400,000	3.3
Inclusionary Housing Ordinance	\$3,600,283	3.5
Community Development-Donation	\$321,473	0.3
Homeless Services Donations Fund	\$856,580	0.8
Affordable Housing Fund	\$669,324	0.7
Homeless Services Fund	\$1,260,856	1.2
Homeless Shelter Utility Support	\$350,000	0.3
Housing Stability Private Grants Fund	\$2,000,000	1.9
Total	\$103,396,221	100.0

HOST invests these funds across its focus areas and to support departmental operations. HOST aims to invest in evidence-based approaches and encourage innovation to find new, creative solutions.

Figure 8. Projected HOST Investments by Focus Area*



* based on eligible fund uses and/or historic expenditures, actual investments may vary

Housing Investments and Additional Resources (cont.)

Other related funding streams

While HOST manages a large amount of revenue, many other funders support housing development and programs to bolster housing stability and resolve homelessness. To ensure that these efforts maximize the use of available resources, HOST coordinates with a range of supportive partners.

- **City Partners:** HOST coordinates with its partner city agencies in the use of these resources. It works with Denver Economic Development and Opportunity (DEDO) on the use of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and HUD grant monitoring and reporting, Denver Human Services (DHS) on supports for families experiencing homelessness and property tax rebate approaches, and the Department of Finance (DOF) on the [Denver Social Impact Bond](#) project.
- **Statewide Partners:** HOST also works closely with the Colorado Division of Housing (CDOH) within the Department of Local Affairs and the Colorado Housing Finance Agency (CHFA). CDOH supports affordable housing development through the allocation of rental assistance vouchers and gap financing and funds housing stability and homelessness resolution programming. CHFA awards low-income housing tax credits that are a critical component of an affordable development's capital stack.
- **Supportive Partners:** HOST partners with Denver Housing Authority (DHA) and the development community to create new affordable housing. HOST works with DHA to create innovative solutions for land acquisition to support a strong pipeline of affordable and supportive housing units, including the DHA Delivers for Denver (D3) bond initiative. HOST also works with developers to provide gap financing after developers have already raised other funds to support the majority of their project costs.
- **Philanthropic Partners:** Private funders, foundations, and businesses are also investing in interventions that support HOST's work. A collection of private funders came together in April 2019 to partner with the City and HOST to expand services available in Denver's shelters and expand bridge housing opportunities to provide more safe, stable places for people to stay while connecting to permanent housing. This also included capital investments in safety and accessibility improvements. In addition, the Caring for Denver Foundation provides an important new resource for mental health and substance misuse services.
- **Federal Coronavirus Response:** To support its response to the pandemic, the City is able to utilize Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds as well as supplemental federal funds appropriated by Congress to support response and recovery (e.g., those resources allocated through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act). Through July 2020, the City spent roughly \$27.9 million on sheltering support for residents experiencing homelessness and has allocated \$6.5 million toward housing stability and rehousing assistance. However, these funds are time limited. Additional funding sources will be required to maintain services supported by these temporary resource streams.

Additional Resources

The impact of HOST's investment in programs, services, and housing is magnified by critical human, partner, and technological resources. To do its work, HOST relies on partnerships within the Denver community to provide critical services, develop new housing, and engage in dialogue about community needs. HOST also engages with its broader City team to coordinate on programs, address barriers, and improve efficiencies.

Critically, HOST is working with partners to build robust platforms for data collection and reporting. This includes an internal data system to support contracts, invoicing, and program information, as well as leveraging the statewide Homeless Management Information System database managed locally by MDHI. Such systems support HOST's fiscal responsibility and its efforts to become more data-driven and outcomes oriented. Through these platforms, HOST is better able to support critical reporting internally, to funders, and to the community.

Strategies to Achieve Impacts

HOST's 2021 priorities are informed by Denver's current context. The COVID-19 pandemic has altered the landscape in which HOST works, and emergency response has required the investment of significant time and personnel. Both staff at partner agencies and within HOST are stepping up to do more than ever before to meet the needs of the community. As a result, progress toward some strategic priorities has accelerated, while progress toward others has slowed.

The pandemic has deeply impacted Denver's sheltering capacity and has required significant change to existing service models. In order to provide safe social distancing, the number of beds available within congregate shelter settings was reduced from about 2,100 beds to about 900 beds. It has also become less safe for residents experiencing homelessness to travel back and forth between overnight and daytime shelter. To address these challenges, the City and its partners came together to convert existing shelter spaces to 24/7 models of operation, provide supplemental congregate space to address needed capacity while providing relief to existing shelters, and added hotel/motel options for those in need of isolation. Key goals of the [Three-Year Shelter Strategy](#) to provide around the clock shelter and rehousing-focused operations were made possible in just a matter of weeks in early 2020 through an infusion of funds in direct response to COVID-19 and its impacts for those who are experiencing homelessness. However, this funding is time limited and cannot support these critical services indefinitely.

Other areas of HOST's work have also experienced added strain due to the pandemic. As stated earlier, the need for housing stability support has increased substantially. Market uncertainty created by the pandemic has required staff to take a brief pause in pursuing 2020 objectives to understand developer concerns and consider strategies for efficient deployment of housing opportunity funding. Further, some of HOST's funding streams, including local funds, have been negatively impacted by market volatility during a recession.

Within this context, HOST will concentrate on what is most critical and what possible in 2021. As a result, the scope for 2021 activities is more focused on specific milestones than previous years. A broader set of strategies informed by additional community engagement will be articulated in the five-year strategic plan (2022-2026).

In 2021, HOST will:

- Continue to **lead the community's response to COVID-19 for those at risk of losing their housing or who are experiencing homelessness**, including the provision of safe shelter and isolation options, testing and medical support to mitigate virus transmission through coordination with public health, and housing stability and rehousing support;
- **Serve at least 11,000 households** through programmatic assistance, including:
 - **2,000 households in housing stability programs** (e.g., tenant-landlord counseling, eviction assistance, emergency home repair programs, and rent and utility assistance),
 - **5,000 households in homelessness resolution programs** (e.g., shelter, street outreach, rehousing programs, employment programs),
 - **4,000 households in housing opportunity programs** (e.g., homebuyer counseling, down payment assistance, etc.);
- **Fund affordable housing projects** in line with HOST's priorities and aligned with [Housing an Inclusive Denver](#) goals;
- **Expand outreach, maintain and rebuild pre-pandemic shelter capacity (2,100 beds)**, increase access to case management and housing outcomes, and provide appropriate social distancing;
- **Create a five-year strategic housing plan** with clear, measurable goals associated with the HOST's impact framework and solutions scaled to a five-year timetable;
- **Support policy and systems change** (e.g., Affordable Housing Zoning Incentive Project, eviction prevention policy);
- **Advance equity and inclusion** through utilization of equity lens to analyze data and assess access and outcomes and creation and implementation of departmental work plan;
- **Create at least 610 units** and preserve around 300 units.

Strategies to Achieve Impacts (cont.)

Housing Stability

Residents have the choice in when and under what circumstances they move or remain in their homes and communities

Programs and Development

- Support expansion and improvement of housing stability programs to keep renters and homeowners in their homes, serving at least 2,000 households across all programs
- Work with Neighborhood Equity & Stabilization (NEST) to coordinate community outreach strategies and feedback loops with community navigators

Policy and Systems Change

- Work with stakeholders, legal assistance providers, partner city agencies, and City Council to identify and develop policies to prevent evictions and provide comprehensive tenant protections where possible
- Provide policy guidance to support efforts being led by City Council and partner city agencies to create a rental registry to enhance protections for renters and more effectively communicate with landlords

Data and Reporting

- Evaluate outreach strategies for programs to ensure residents can access services
- Coordinate with Denver County Court to obtain robust data on evictions
- Coordinate with NEST to complete demographic analysis of Denver neighborhoods; publish information online for community use
- Work with partners to evaluate outcomes for households served in alignment with impact framework and utilize equity lens to examine access and performance

Homelessness Resolution

Residents experience homelessness rarely, and, if they do, it is brief and one-time

Programs and Development

- Maintain and rebuild shelter capacity (2,100 beds) and increase access to case management and housing support
- Continue to support 24/7 shelter model focused on rehousing guests quickly and providing comprehensive services
 - Provide funds to support operational and service needs
 - Refine strategy for robust rehousing and emergency support for families experiencing homelessness
- Expand outreach to support access to shelter, housing, medical care and other services for people experiencing homelessness, especially for those in encampments
- Support rehousing strategy that leverages federal and local funds to connect those who are sheltered and unsheltered to stable housing and services
- Work with external partners and city partners, such as Denver Department of Public Health and Environment (DDPHE) to support Safe Outdoor Space approaches in response to the public health emergency
- Serve at least 5,000 households across all homelessness resolution programs
- Support alternatives to congregate shelter, including tiny homes

Policy and Systems Change

- Continue to coordinate with MDHI on OneHome implementation
 - Pilot quicker housing needs assessment to expand OneHome coverage
 - Advocate for continuous measurement of key performance measures (e.g., vacancy timelines)
- Coordinate with partners to create safe and welcoming spaces for LGBTQ and other underserved guests in shelter and other services, starting with implementation of sensitivity training

Data and Reporting

- Explore data collection strategies to measure accessibility needs
- Continue to support the Social Impact Bond (SIB) and its external evaluation to understand impacts of supportive housing on housing stability and justice system outcomes
- Continue to support the widespread and consistent use of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and an accurate count of unsheltered homelessness during PIT
- Work with MDHI, nonprofit partners, and DDPHE to utilize HMIS to manage data on Safe Outdoor Space programs

Housing Opportunity

Residents have equitable access to housing options that meet their needs with easy access to community resources

Programs and Development

- *Within development pipeline, continue to promote opportunities that align with HOST's financing priorities (e.g., anti-displacement, supportive housing, preservation, deep affordability, transit access, and resources and amenities)*
- *Ensure a robust pipeline of affordable housing development and preservation through City funding and partnership with DHA*
 - *Increase the number of income-restricted units, creating at least 610 units, of which at least 130 will be supportive housing, and preserving about 300 units;*
- *Collaborate with CPD to identify development projects through rezoning and Large Development Review (LDR) process that accommodate affordable housing*
- *Continue to support access to homeownership through Metro Down Payment Assistance (Metro DPA), land trusts, and other initiatives*
- *Serve at least 4,000 households across housing opportunity programs*
- *Collaborate with Mayor's Office and partner agencies to incorporate affordable housing into land acquisition opportunities*

Policy and Systems Change

- *Coordinate with Community Planning and Development (CPD) to advance the Affordable Housing Zoning Incentive project, which will make policy recommendations related to incentive tools, evaluate the linkage fee structure, and evaluate inclusionary housing if state law provides flexibility for such programs*
- *Collaborate with CPD to identify lessons learned from the expedited affordable housing review pilot for reducing barriers and improving efficiency for affordable housing development.*
- *Support use of OneHome Coordinated Entry in new supportive housing developments*
- *Coordinate with Mayor's Office and CPD to review barriers to innovative infill opportunities (e.g., accessory dwelling units)*
- *Launch a pilot program that provides preference to residents at risk of displacement and homelessness*

Data and Reporting

- *Align compliance with program and funding requirements to ensure households served represent target constituencies*
- *Proactively integrate Salesforce to align projects with funding priorities*

Cross-Departmental Operations

The department delivers efficient, timely support for residents and community partners while measuring what matters and engaging the community

Programs and Development

- *Improve communication about housing stability, homelessness resolution and housing opportunity supports available in coordination with other City partners (e.g., NEST, DHS), targeted to individuals and neighborhoods most in need*

Policy and Systems Change

- *Work with the Mayor's Office of Social Equity and Innovation to develop and implement a departmental workplan on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion*
- *Coordinate with city, state and federal partners to pursue and respond to legislative priorities that support housing stability such as increased funding for housing and homelessness.*
- *Leverage data systems to benchmark the timeliness of contracting and other operational processes; engage partners to identify obstacles or potential opportunities to improve efficiencies and set clear expectations and milestones for partner agencies.*
- *Complete required review of DRMC Article V, Chapter 27 that created affordable housing fund and related reporting*

Data and Reporting

- *Create a five-year housing plan that further refines the impact framework outlined in the 2021 plan and creates measurable goals associated with the impact framework.*
- *Utilize 2021 contracts across housing continuum to benchmark for measurement of outcomes and create a foundation for performance-based contracts that align with the five-year strategic plan.*
- *Disaggregate data on outputs and outcomes by race, ethnicity, and other demographic characteristics for households served by HOST and its contracted partners to examine program access and performance through an equity lens*
- *Expand current dashboards to reflect strategies and outcomes along the full housing continuum*

Implementation and Five-Year Strategic Planning Process

This 2021 Action Plan was developed in close collaboration with the HOST Strategic Planning Executive Committee and incorporates community input. It will guide HOST's work in 2021. To track outcomes and monitor progress, HOST is working to establish the Housing Stability Strategic Advisors.

The Housing Stability Strategic Advisors are being appointed in the Fall of 2020 through a public process managed by the Mayor's Office of Boards and Commissions and in partnership with City Council. Interested community members must submit an application in order to be considered. Of those who apply, six members will be appointed by the Mayor, and five members will be appointed by City Council.²⁵

The Housing Stability Strategic Advisors group will include 11 members:

- Two with professional or lived expertise of the effects of gentrification and displacement or housing instability on lower income households;
- Two with professional or lived expertise in homelessness or in providing housing or services for residents experiencing homelessness;
- Two with professional or lived expertise living in affordable housing or developing income-restricted housing;
- One representing public, private, or philanthropic partner organizations that fund affordable housing;
- Two representatives from organizations that have a national best practice perspective on housing stability, homelessness resolution, or housing opportunity;
- Two community representatives.

At least three advisors will have lived experience of gentrification and displacement, homelessness, and affordable housing. The group will provide advice and recommendations to the Executive Director of the Department of Housing Stability on the implementation of the 2021 Action Plan along with other support as outlined below and in the [Denver Revised Municipal Code](#).

To implement the strategies outlined in this 2021 Action Plan, HOST will work with the Strategic Advisors and the community to collaborate and lead progress through investment decisions, interdepartmental coordination, and other strategies. HOST will convene community stakeholders, including community groups, service and affordable housing providers, public and private funders, and those who are at risk of or experiencing involuntary displacement or homelessness.

Process for five-year strategic planning in 2021

While the 2021 Action Plan will provide shorter-term guidance on policy and investment priorities, a robust, long-term vision for how HOST will create a healthy, housed, and connected Denver is also needed. HOST will continue the strategic planning process through 2021 in order to develop a five-year strategic plan.

In 2021, HOST will convene the Housing Stability Strategic Advisors with members from the Strategic Planning Executive Committee to oversee the development of the five-year plan and recommend the plan to city leadership. It will then go to the Mayor and City Council for approval. To solicit input from community stakeholders, HOST will meet with stakeholder groups representative of the continuum of work at least quarterly. HOST will also organize at least two input meetings with consumers of HOST services and residents affected by housing instability and/or homelessness, and work with community partners to administer a survey to get additional input from those who may not be able to attend the meetings.

The draft plan is expected to be finalized in the Summer of 2021 and submitted for subsequent approval from City Council by November 2021.



Conclusions

In order to build a healthy, housed, and connected Denver, HOST was created to consolidate and amplify the work in housing and homelessness resolution that had previously been spread across multiple city agencies.

A strategic planning process began in early 2020 to collaboratively focus HOST's work into a long-term plan for investing dollars in programs and developments; creating policy; and working collaboratively to further activate partnerships to provide housing stability, homelessness resolution, and housing opportunity across the housing and income spectrum.

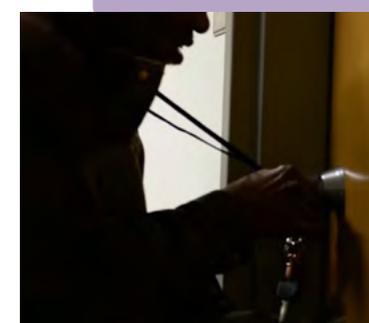
COVID-19 required HOST to pivot, as the public health crisis required immediate and innovative responses to housing instability and homelessness resolution. While strategic planning efforts continued, HOST, other city agencies, and partners recognized the need to balance 2020 realities and related budgetary, human, and other resource constraints with the need to have a plan that incorporates community input for both the short- and long-term.

This Action Plan builds off existing strategies to put forth a roadmap for HOST's work in 2021. It focuses on high impact areas for Denver residents, particularly in light of the ongoing public health emergency and environment of limited resources, while laying the foundation for a Five-Year Strategic Plan for 2022 - 2026. The work of HOST in 2021 will continue to incorporate the strategies and goals outlined in [Housing an Inclusive Denver](#) and the vision articulated in the [Three-year Shelter Strategy](#). These will also inform discussion of the Five-Year Strategic Plan.

HOST would like to thank all of those who have been involved in the efforts to date and looks forward to creating a city that is more equitable, modern and progressive where people are healthy, housed and connected

Endnotes

- 1 American Community Survey, 2012 and 2018 1-Year Estimates.
- 2 American Community Survey, 2012 and 2018 1-Year Estimates.
- 3 Quarterly Denver Metro Apartment Vacancy and Rent Report
- 4 American Community Survey, 2012 and 2018 1-Year Estimates.
- 5 Denver Metro Area Association of Realtors, Monthly City and County Market Trends Reports.
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- 7 Percentage increases in median rent, home values, and incomes are based on amounts that are not adjusted for inflation.
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- 11 TRUA program data maintained by Department of Housing Stability.
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- 23 Metro Denver Homeless Initiative. 2020. "2020 Point in Time Reports & Dashboard." Accessed: July 21: 2020. https://www.mdhi.org/2020_pit_reports
- 24 OneHome assessment data, 2019.
- 25 Within each category with two members, the Mayor and City Council each appoint one member. The Mayor appoints the representative from the public, private, or philanthropic funding community.



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Mayor Hancock signs Executive Order 145 to create the Department of Housing Stability (HOST). October 23, 2019.

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DENVER
HOUSING STABILITY