

The Denver Joint Task Force on Homelessness

STRATEGIC PLAN

The Denver Joint Task Force on Homelessness is a collaboration among multiple partners working to support people experiencing homelessness in Denver. Convened in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 emergency, the Denver Joint Task Force on Homelessness now works to address broader issues related to public health, service provision, housing, and more. Its members include representatives from the Denver Department of Public Health and Environment, the Denver Department of Housing Stability, Denver Health and Hospital Authority, the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, and the Homeless Leadership Council.



VISION

Well-being and safe, chosen homes for all people who live in Denver.



MISSION

The Denver Joint Task Force on Homelessness collaboratively creates and advocates for trauma-responsive, person-centered systems and services that promote health, equity, and choice among people experiencing homelessness.



How We'll Get There

GOAL

Advocate for health, housing, and other needs of people experiencing homelessness.

Identify the most pressing health issues among people experiencing homelessness.

- Conduct a community health needs assessment.

Advocate for affordable housing policies.

- Identify and support investments in affordable housing.
- Identify and support initiatives to fund supportive services.

Advance policies and programs that address the top causes of death among people experiencing homelessness in Denver, including substance use and overdose.

- Disseminate information about where and how to access medication assisted treatment.
- Disseminate information about where and how to access recovery support services for all substance use conditions.
- Increase access to medication assisted treatment for opioid use disorders.
- Increase access to peer-run recovery and resiliency programs.
- Increase access to overdose prevention tools, such as naloxone and fentanyl test strips.
- Identify effective pain management strategies and increase access for people experiencing homelessness.

Improve infrastructure to create healthier spaces in shelters.

- Conduct a Denver shelter needs assessment that includes an industrial hygiene consultation.
- Advocate for funding to make identified infrastructure changes.
- Support funding and investments in shelter capacity, transitional housing, and long-term housing.
- Advocate for the integration of health services into shelters, transitional housing, and long-term housing.

GOAL

Coordinate efforts to support people experiencing homelessness among cross-sector partners.

Disseminate information from the Denver Joint Task Force on Homelessness to service providers.

- Identify networks and create one channel of communication from the Denver Joint Task Force on Homelessness to partner organizations.
- Use health alert networks (HANs) to share urgent public health information.

Ensure the longevity and impact of the Denver Joint Task Force on Homelessness.

- Identify long-term funding options.
- Engage with state and federal partners such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE) to identify opportunities for alignment.
- Identify and engage with other key stakeholders, including experts by experience, to gain feedback and ensure that the Denver Joint Task Force on Homelessness is responding to the most pressing needs.

GOAL

Increase situational awareness of issues affecting people experiencing homelessness, especially emerging threats, among homeless service providers, medical providers, government agencies, and people experiencing homelessness.

Use real-time data to assess disparities and emerging threats.

- Create a disparities dashboard and analysis tool integrating data from multiple sources.
- Analyze case and outbreak data to inform a COVID-19 testing schedule.
- Identify and implement COVID-19 environmental mitigation strategies.

Support efforts to create a Colorado social health information exchange that incorporates data on homelessness services.

- Map existing health and wraparound services for people experiencing homelessness in the Denver metro area.

GOAL

Establish and share effective approaches to supporting people experiencing homelessness.

Advance low-barrier, trauma-responsive strategies to improve health care access and delivery for sheltered and unsheltered communities.

- Create cultural competency guidelines to help providers address vaccine hesitancy and other health disparities.
- Support the training of shelter partners to increase COVID-19 testing and vaccination rates and reduce persistent health disparities.
- Create a public health emergency plan to support people experiencing homelessness facing emerging threats, including climate change emergencies such as heat waves, infectious disease outbreaks, and more.

Create a knowledge base of approaches to supporting people experiencing homelessness.

- Identify evidence-based approaches and promising, innovative practices addressing COVID-19 testing, vaccination, and other health disparities.
 - Develop evidence-based approaches and promising, innovative practices addressing COVID-19 testing, vaccination, and other health disparities.
 - Conduct an evaluation of the benefits of transitional housing such as activated respite, especially following a hospitalization.
 - Distribute information about evidence-based approaches to partner organizations and to other groups doing similar work.
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GOAL

Promote equity.

Include people experiencing homelessness and perspectives of people with lived experience in Denver Joint Task Force on Homelessness activities.

- Invite people experiencing homelessness or with lived experience to be present and engaged members of the Denver Joint Task Force on Homelessness.
- Ensure Denver Joint Task Force on Homelessness products reflect the intersectionality of classism with systemic oppressions such as racism, ableism, genderism, stigmatization of mental health, substance use, trauma, and other structural factors.

Incorporate equity principles into the Denver Joint Task Force on Homelessness structure.

- Use consensus-driven decision-making.
- Conduct implicit bias or other inclusivity training with the full Denver Joint Task Force on Homelessness.