

Potential Barriers to Success

For county, federal, and nonprofit agencies, the economic downturn is a considerable concern. Funding cuts for training, recruitment and retention of staff directly impact the ability to serve clients in a timely manner and with sufficient resources.

Meeting HUD Priorities

The food sector specifically supports the following HUD Priorities.

<b>HUD Priority</b>	
B7	Make communities more livable.
F6	Provide supportive services, such as health care assistance that will permit homeless individuals to become productive members of society.

## SECTOR 4: EMERGENCY SERVICES

### Overarching Goal

The community will provide appropriate crisis and emergency services and support to chronically and acutely homeless clients while referring them to the best sources to help them move toward achieving dignity and self-sufficiency.

### Sector Description

The Emergency Services sector of the continuum of care provides:

- short-term food allotments and pet food;
- financial assistance for medical needs and prescriptions;
- mental health crisis assistance;
- hygiene (e.g., haircuts, 38 showers daily);
- clothing;
- bedding;
- backpacks;
- emergency transportation assistance (e.g., bus tokens, gasoline vouchers);
- access to identification (e.g., birth certificates);
- legal and tax assistance;
- housing referrals;
- a resources room for job placement, educational programs, and access to other social service agencies; and
- spiritual encouragement.

Approximately 20% of the 30,000 annual client visits to **Ecumenical Social Ministries (ESM)** are individuals experiencing homelessness. These homeless were living in another's home (n=329), halfway houses (n=135), hotels (n=286), shelters (n=259), or were homeless and on the street (n=551). For homeless with co-occurring disorders, ESM provides a valuable link to medical treatment and housing. Pikes Peak Behavioral Health clinicians are co-located at Ecumenical Social Ministries and Peak Vista Homeless Medical Clinic. Clinicians serve approximately 25 homeless consumers at any given time and about 75 annually. About half of the consumers treated are placed in to permanent housing situations or acquire the benefits for which they are eligible.

**Springs Rescue Mission** helps an average of 4,000 families every year with services similar to ESM. The Springs Rescue Mission is the region's largest provider of clothing and furniture to the low-income and homeless. Recently, it furnished 10 apartments for the Housing First program. Emergency Services needs are increasingly critical for women and children. El Pomar Foundation Fellows are working with Springs Rescue Mission to develop a women's shelter as well as a women's self-sufficiency program. Equally important, the agency works with Northern Churches CARES' Adopt-a-Child Program to attract funds to keep families in their homes and preventing homelessness.

Smaller agencies such as Westside CARES, Northern Churches Cares, Tri-Lakes Cares, Gods Pantry, Manna Ministries, Crossroads, and Grace Be Unto You Ministires also provide homeless intervention through food pantries, clothing, healthcare referrals, and referrals to other continuum-of-care agencies. Their goals are to provide temporary crisis services and connect the homeless with community resources that help them meet long-term basic needs.

### Progress in the Last Five Years

During the past five years new and increased funding has supported an overall increase of the types and quantity of services available to the homeless. Showers, the “clothes closet,” haircuts and food purchases reflect service expansion. The Co-occurring Disorder Collaborative has been particularly instrumental in coordinating multi-agency, multi-sector emergency/crisis services for homeless clients with mental health and substance abuse issues. Funding has also enabled ESM and the Springs Rescue Mission to improve physical facilities making them more welcoming and accessible. The advent of the 2-1-1 referral system and recent continuum of care efforts have greatly improved emergency services coordination and interagency collaboration.

### Current Gaps and Barriers

Emergency services providers agree that the community needs additional emergency shelter and housing, food, access to medications, counseling (mental health and substance abuse), job assistance, and access to hygiene (e.g., showers, haircuts) in order to better serve the homeless. However, certain segments of the homeless population are more critically underserved than others. These are:

- families with children, especially single mothers;
- the chronically homeless, many of which have mental health and substance abuse issues; and
- ex-offenders, especially those recently released with no identification or documentation.