DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING STABILITY **ANNUAL REPORT** 2021

DENVER
HOUSING STABILITY

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A Letter from
Mayor Michael Hancock

Throughout 2021, the Department of Housing Stability (HOST) continued to deploy resources to ensure the safety of Denver's most vulnerable and help keep our residents in their homes. In only its second full year of operation, the department has worked diligently to resolve episodes of homelessness, stabilize households at risk of displacement, and made great strides in developing housing that is affordable for all Denver residents.

From the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic through 2021, HOST has disbursed more than $123 million to fund emergency shelter and services, offer rent assistance to households in need, and more. In total, HOST deployed $171 million – an unprecedented amount of funding for housing and homelessness in 2021, including the newly passed Homelessness Resolution Fund. These funds have been a game changer in the lives of many individuals and families, helping people move into housing, stay in housing or stabilize in shelter. We also formed a Homelessness Cabinet, which aims to align strategies across city agencies and bring down barriers to services and resolving episodes of homelessness.

With the winding down of auxiliary shelters like the Denver Coliseum for public health emergency use in 2021, Denver has deployed innovative solutions like transforming a facility into a new 24-hour men's shelter at 4600 E. 48th Ave. that is anticipated to be purchased with the Rise Denver general obligation bonds in 2023. We also transformed an existing shelter nearby into the largest women's shelter in Denver's history. Both sites are open 24 hours a day and have services like laundry and case management. In the fall of 2021, HOST also embarked on an ambitious Housing Surge effort. During Denver's first 100-day housing surge, a total of 340 households, including 576 individuals, were placed into housing – far exceeded its goal of placing 200 households.

Recently, we also reached a new milestone: over 25,000 affordable homes currently exist in Denver. Despite the ongoing pandemic and construction challenges, we're continuing to provide homes that are truly affordable to residents in Denver. And we aren't stopping – there's still an urgent need for affordable homes, and we will continue utilizing every tool available to meet that need.

It has been my honor to serve as Mayor during these accomplishments. None of our work would be possible without the many community, nonprofit and government partners that walk alongside us in serving Denver's residents. I look forward to continuing our work together as we strive toward a healthy, housed and connected Denver.

Respectfully,

Mayor Michael Hancock

A Letter from Chief Housing Officer and HOST Executive Director **Britta Fisher**

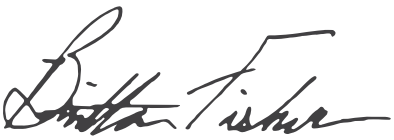
As the Executive Director of the Department of Housing Stability (HOST), I am happy to present the 2021 Housing Report. The report reflects HOST's work and progress toward the initiatives outlined in Housing an Inclusive Denver. 2021 was also HOST's second full year as a department, aligning shelter, housing, and stability services together to serve the full spectrum of Denverites.

In 2021, we continued to serve Denver's most vulnerable residents during an ongoing pandemic. Together with our partners, we served roughly 14,000 persons in shelters in 2021. It was our first year utilizing the Homelessness Resolution Fund, which voters passed as Ballot Measure 2B in late 2020. The fund has supported 24/7 shelter and rapid rehousing services for youth at Urban Peak; 24/7 shelter for women at 4330 E. 48th Ave.; pioneering shelter models like tiny homes villages; and housing with supportive services like Rhonda's Place. We also expanded our Safe Outdoor Spaces programs in 2021, offering low-barrier shelter, case management, and supportive services to individuals and couples living unhoused. This innovative model has brought much-needed stability and services to persons experiencing homelessness in Denver.

Despite challenges from the pandemic, city-funded programs housed the largest number of households—1,385—in a single year in Denver's history in 2021. Also in 2021, HOST worked harder than ever to keep Denverites in the homes they already live in. Together with our many partners, we served more than 3,000 households through rent and utility assistance to help keep people stabilized in their homes and more than 10,000 households served in stability programs.

HOST also worked over the past year engaging over 1,750 individual stakeholders in the creation of the **Five-Year Strategic Plan** which was adopted by City Council in November of 2021 and will cover the years 2022-2026. Topline goals for HOST over the next five years include moving toward a reality where race no longer predicts one's housing outcomes; reducing unsheltered homelessness by 50%; building 7,000 units of affordable housing, including 900 supportive units; and reducing eviction filings by 25% from 8,000 to 6,000 annually.

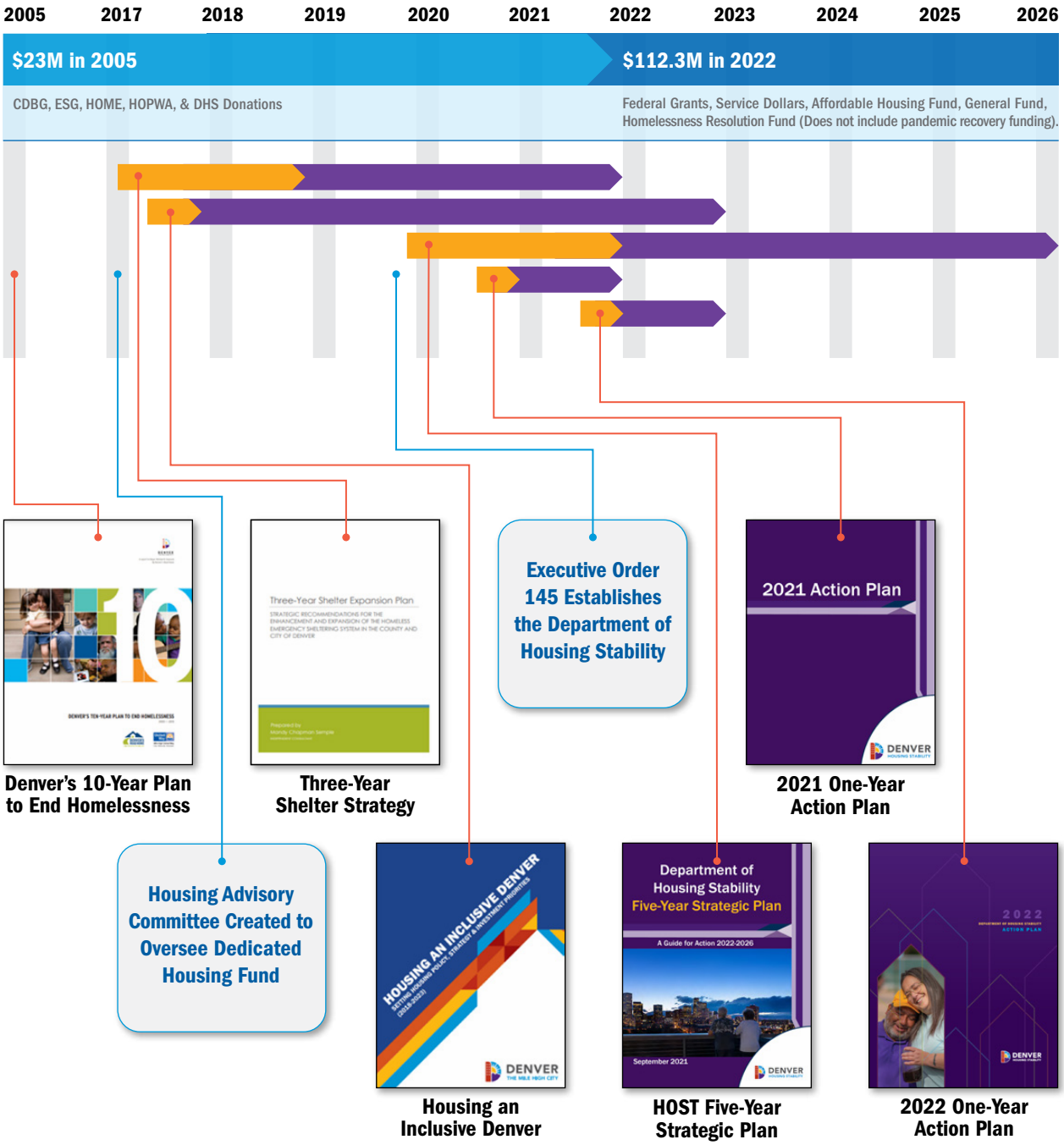
These are ambitious goals, and we cannot accomplish them alone. HOST is incredibly grateful for all our partners across the community who work tirelessly alongside us to achieve these goals. Thank you to our partners and the community for your hard work and engagement. If you'd like to learn more about HOST's work and our progress toward our goals, I encourage you to visit **denvergov.org/housing**.



Britta Fisher
Chief Housing Officer and HOST Executive Director

Denver Strategic Evolution

HISTORIC AND GUIDING PLANS AND DOCUMENTS



Plan development, including stakeholder outreach, public input, etc.

Plan Implementation, including community engagement, data collection and analysis and reports back to the community.

Housing an Inclusive Denver

Safe and affordable housing is the foundation of stability for residents, and a key driver to creating and maintaining diverse and vibrant neighborhoods across Denver. The *Housing an Inclusive Denver* five-year plan, adopted by City Council in February 2018, provides background on the housing challenges in the City and County of Denver and identifies legislative, regulatory, and investment strategies aimed at addressing those challenges.

Core Goals

Housing an Inclusive Denver focused on tools that address needs along the entire housing continuum, including housing for residents experiencing homelessness, affordable and workforce rental housing, and attainable homeownership. The plan sought to align the city and its partners' actions between 2018-2023 according to four strategic goals:

Create

Create affordable housing in vulnerable areas and areas of opportunity by focusing on production that considers specific neighborhood conditions, including areas vulnerable to displacement and neighborhoods that have strong amenities such as transit, jobs, high quality education and health care. Measurable outcomes from investment and policies under this core goal include new units created.

Preserve

Preserve affordability and housing quality by investing to maintain affordability in non-subsidized units and preserving or continuing affordability of existing publicly subsidized affordable housing. Measurable outcomes from investment and policies under this core goal include existing units preserved.

Promote

Promote equitable and accessible housing options by supporting programs and policies that help residents across the housing continuum access affordable housing. Measurable outcomes from investment and policies under this core goal include residents served through program investments or policy actions.

Stabilize

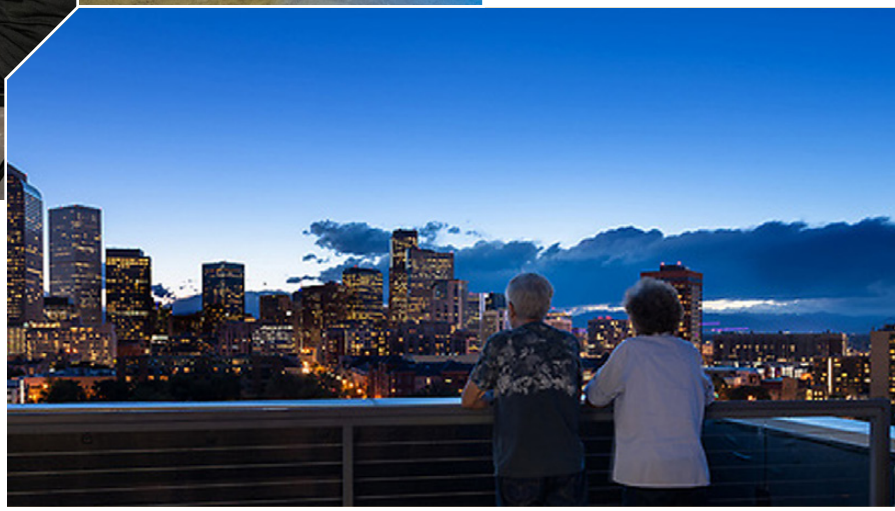
Stabilize residents at risk of involuntary displacement by supporting programs and policies that help a resident maintain their existing housing or stay in their community. Measurable outcomes from investment and policies under this core goal include residents served through program investments or policy efforts.

Outcomes: Units and Households

Housing an Inclusive Denver represents a shift from previous planning efforts that have focused primarily on citywide housing strategies with a preference for creation of new units. As such, the City and its partners has measured the effectiveness of housing investments not just by the number of units that are created and preserved, but also by the number of residents who are served through programmatic investments.

Housing an Inclusive Denver established the following outcome targets for the **four core goals:**

BY 2023	BY 2023	BY 2023	BY 2023
Create affordable housing in vulnerable areas and in areas of opportunity, by **creating 2,000 new affordable units**.	**Preserve** affordability and housing quality by preserving at least **1,000 affordable units**.	**Promote** equitable and accessible housing, by serving at least **20,000 households with programmatic resources**.	**Stabilize** residents at risk of involuntary displacement, by serving at least **10,000 households through programmatic investments.**



2021 Outcomes

In 2021, HOST and its partners:

CREATED	PRESERVED	PROVIDED	ASSISTED	SUPPORTED
576	290	5,761	10,031	17,502
new affordable housing units.	existing affordable housing units.	households with access to housing resources.	households at risk of involuntary displacement.	households through shelter and services.

	Create [UNITS]	**Preserve** [UNITS]	**Access** [HOUSEHOLDS]	**Stabilize** [HOUSEHOLDS]	**Support** [HOUSEHOLDS]
Homeless	49	40	1896	0	17502
<30% AMI	98	67	7	7451	0
31-80% AMI	429	157	5	2372	0
Homeownership	0	26	3853	126	0
Total	**576**	**290**	**5761**	**9949***	**17502**

*An additional 82 households outside of these categories were served; the total served by Stability programs is 10,031

Housing an Inclusive Denver 2018-2021 Totals

Housing an Inclusive Denver preceded Mayor Michael B. Hancock's establishment of the Department of Housing Stability (HOST) in November 2020. At that time, the new Department was tasked with creating a new **Five-Year Strategic Plan** to guide housing stability, homelessness resolution and housing opportunity. The new plan was adopted by City Council in November 2021. As such, this **2021 Annual Report concludes reporting on the progress toward the Housing an Inclusive Denver goals.**

After completing only four years of this five year plan, HOST exceeded three of these goals and was on pace to achieve the fourth by 2023. More than 2,700 units were created, surpassing the 2,000-unit goal. More than 25,000 households were served in access programs, exceeding the 20,000-household goal. More than 25,000 households were served in stability programs, more than doubling the 10,000-household goal. HOST also preserved 837 units of affordable housing, more than 80% of the way toward our 1,000-unit goal in only four years.

	TOTAL **Created**	TOTAL **Preserved**	TOTAL **Accessed**	TOTAL **Stabilized**	TOTAL **Supported**
Original Plan Goal by 2023	**1,800** 90% rental (1,800), 10% owner (200)	**1,000** 90% rental (900), 10% owner (100)	**20,000** households	**10,000** households	
Homeless	372	46	7,409	319	32,591
<30% AMI Rental	317	353	2,566	19,251	0
31-80% AMI Rental	1,390	412	407	5,232	0
Homeownership	650	26	14,843	584	0
TOTAL	**2,729**	**837**	**25,225**	**25,386**	**32,591**

Totals highlighted in green show where HOST exceeded by the end of 2021 the goals outlined to be accomplished by 2023 in *Housing an Inclusive Denver*.

While Denver still faces affordable housing shortages, the strategies in the **2021 Action Plan** and HOST's new **Five-Year Strategic Plan** seek to further meet the affordable housing challenges in Denver through innovative and data-driven solutions to ongoing and evolving challenges along the housing spectrum.

Funding priorities

Housing an Inclusive Denver represented the first effort by the city and its partners to align housing investments to serve populations along the income continuum, targeting resources to serve the most vulnerable residents. The plan included projected investment goals to serve each population, but actual spending was prioritized each year according to housing needs, market conditions, historic accomplishments, and the pipeline of housing projects.

The city and its partners took steps to align investments with Housing an Inclusive Denver goals, including doubling the Affordable Housing Fund to more than $30 million annually in 2018, and partnering with the Denver Housing Authority to create a $129 million surge in bond funding. In November 2020, Denver voters approved the Homelessness Resolution Fund to provide ongoing funding for homelessness resolution investments.

Investments previously in Denver Human Services were not integrated into the Housing an Inclusive Denver plan goals or language. However, this 2021 Annual Report does reflect accomplishments with resources to address homelessness resolution alongside the goals outlined in Housing an Inclusive Denver. In addition, HOST received federal and local funds in specific response to the COVID-19 pandemic. HOST's new strategic plan includes all funding under a shared strategic vision and goals.

Funding priorities from *Housing an Inclusive Denver* include:

40% to 50%
of housing resources invested to serve residents earning at or below 30% of Area Median Income (AMI) and those experiencing homelessness who are seeking to access or maintain rental housing, including;

- **20% to 25%** of housing resources to serve residents experiencing homelessness
- **20% to 25%** of housing resources to serve residents earning at or below 30% AMI

20% to 30%
of housing resources invested to serve residents earning 31% to 80% AMI that are seeking to access or maintain rental housing.

20% to 30%
of housing resources invested to serve residents seeking to become homeowners or remain in homes they already own.

2021 **Total Expenditures: All Housing Investments**

TOTAL SPENDING

- Homeless: $126,546,579 | 80%
- 0-30% AMI Rental: $3,614,903 | 2%
- 31-80% AMI Rental: $24,909,086 | 16%
- Homeownership: $3,340,185 | 2%

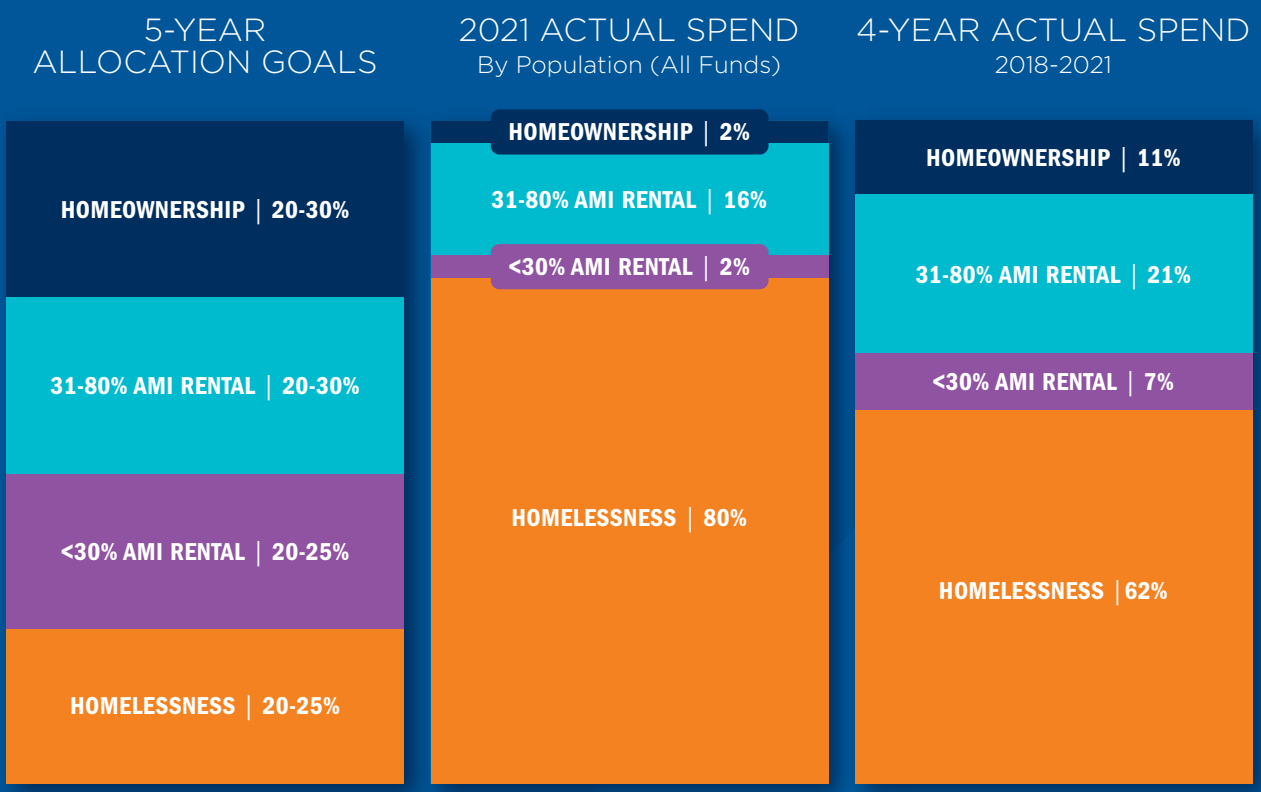
AMI = Area Median Income calculated by Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

100% in 2021 in Denver was $73,360 for a single person household.

TOTAL FUNDING

- Administration: $9,939,601 | 6%
- DHA IGA Payment: $8,112,372 | 5%
- Development: $21,657,000 | 12%
- Programs: $134,114,457 | 77%

2021 **Progress on Funding Priority Goals**



2021 Action Plan

In January 2020, HOST began convening community members to develop a five-year plan to achieve this vision of a healthy, housed and connected Denver. But by late March, 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 a different 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.

Goals

The 2021 Action Plan identified 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. The plan focused on what was possible within an uncertain budget environment.

In 2021, HOST and our partners:

- **Continued 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,
  - housing stability and rehousing support;
- **Served at least 21,000 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),
  - 15,000 households in homelessness resolution programs (e.g., shelter, street outreach, rehousing programs, supportive housing, employment programs),
  - 4,000 households in housing opportunity programs (e.g., homebuyer counseling, down payment assistance, etc.);
- **Invested the first year of the Homelessness Resolution Fund to bolster housing opportunities and support for residents experiencing homelessness;**
- **Funded affordable housing projects in line with HOST's priorities and aligned with Housing an Inclusive Denver goals, creating at least 610 units and preserving about 300 units;**
- **Expanded outreach and implemented at least three temporary managed campsites to better support residents experiencing unsheltered homelessness during the pandemic;**
- **Maintained and rebuilt pre-pandemic shelter capacity with appropriate social distancing (2,100 beds) and continue 24/7 shelter with increased support for rehousing;**
- **Created 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;**
- **Supported policy and systems change (e.g., Affordable Housing Zoning Incentive Project, eviction prevention policy);**
- **Evaluated departmental decisions through equity framework and create and implement a departmental equity, diversity, and inclusion work plan.**

Strategies and Accomplishments

Housing Stability

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

Policy and Systems Change

- Coordinate with the Mayor's Office and CPD to review barriers to gentle infill (e.g., acces-sory dwelling units, home expansions) and recom-mend solutions

Programs

- Support expansion and improvement of housing stability programs to keep people in their homes
- Work with NEST to coordinate community outreach strategies and feedback loops with community navigators

Date and Reporting

- Evaluate outreach strategies for programs to ensure resident access services
- Coordinate with Denver County Court to ob-tain robust data on evictions.
- Coordinate with NEST to complete demo-graphic analysis of Denver neighborhoods; publish information online for community use

Homelessness Resolution

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

Policy and Systems Change

- Advise on Safe Outdoor Space approaches
- Continue to coordinate with MDHI on OneHome implementation
  - Pilot quicker housing needs assessment
  - Assess length of time units remain vacant; decrease vacancy times for units
- Identify dedicated liaisons in HOST and related departments to expedite permit processing for shelter improvements
- Coordinate with partners encourage greater inclusion LGBTQ guests in shelter and other services.

Programs

- Transition shelters to 24/7 model focused on rehousing
  - Provide funds to support operational and service needs
  - Coordinate with RTD on transportation
  - Convene partners to refine planning for families
- Support for alternatives to congregate shelter (e.g., tiny homes, bridge housing)
- Coordinate shelter and safe outdoor space efforts with rehousing strategy, funded through CARES Act
- Maintain shelter capacity and occupancy rates while also ensuring safe distancing

Date and Reporting

- Continuing to support the widespread use of HMIS
- Exploring measurement strategies around accessibility needs
- Work with MDHI, Colorado Village Collabora-tive, and DDOHE to utilize HMIS to manage data on Safe Outdoor Space programs
- Continue to support SIB and its external evaluation

Housing Opportunity

Residents have equitable access to housing options that meet their affordability needs and the opportunity to increase wealth through home ownership.

Policy and Systems Change

- Coordinate with CPD on Affordable Housing Zoning Incentive project
- Coordinate with the Mayor's Office and CPD to review barriers to gentle infill (e.g., accessory dwelling units, home expansions)
- Collaborate with the Mayor's Office and CPD to assess permitting process timeliness; recommend steps to improve efficiency without impacting safety by year end.
- Support use of OneHome Coordinated Entry in new developments

Programs

- Refine strategy for utilizing land trusts and other options to preserve affordability citywide
  - Resolve technical issues
  - Increase amount of land held in trust
- Ensure a robust pipeline of affordable housing development
  - Increase the number of income-restricted units

Date and Reporting

- Coordinate with Mayor's Office and CPD to track and analyze data on the permitting process for HOST-funded projects

Cross-Departmental Operations

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

Policy and Systems Change

- Complete required review of DRMC Article V, Chapter 27 that created affordable housing fund and related reporting

Programs

- Continually evaluate barriers to operations for policy solutions based on practice
- Improve communication about housing supports available in coordination with other City partners (e.g., NEST, DHS), targeted to neighborhoods most in need
- Create and post a HOST organizational chart with programmatic contact information for community use

Date and Reporting

- Examine data on outputs and outcomes through a racial equity lens
- Align required contract reporting to impact framework and establish public-facing reporting by funding source and strategy
- Integrate data on need into HOST dashboards and outcome targets
- Evaluate timeliness of the contracting process; propose changes to increase efficiency and service delivery

Quantitative targets identified in the 2021 Action Plan, and the actual results of the year's work.

Households served in stability programs

Target: **at least 2,000** | Actual: **10,031**

Shelter capacity

Target: **2,100 beds** | Actual: **Shelter capacity was above 2,100 beds every night in 2021**

MONTH 2021	AVERAGE NIGHTLY CAPACITY
January	2349
February	2519
March	2617
April	2600
May	2556
June	2447
July	2546
August	2497
September	2516
October	2655
November	2722
December	2357
Total	**2531**

Serve at least 15,000 households across all homelessness resolution programs

Goal: **at least 15,000** | Actual: **17,502 households supported through shelter and services**

Affordable housing units created

Goal: **at least 610** | Actual: **576**

Supportive housing units created

Goal: **130** | Actual: **49**

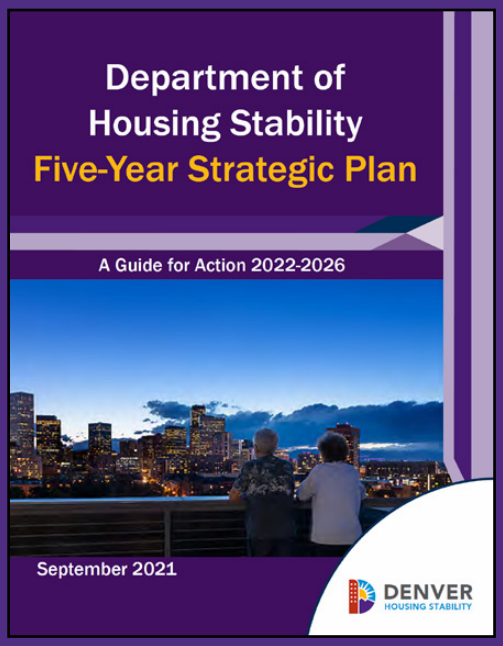
Affordable housing units preserved

Goal: **about 300** | Actual: **290**

Households served in opportunity programs

Goal: **at least 4,000** | Actual: **5,761**

Setting our Sights on the Five-Year Strategic Plan



As we transition to implementing HOST's new Five-Year Strategic Plan, which retains many of the core values and commitments of Housing an Inclusive Denver, like prioritizing resources to those with the greatest needs, HOST's reporting will shift to align with the new plan. Housing an Inclusive Denver articulated how we would invest resources, and reporting focused on whether actual expenditures aligned with those investment goals. Under that plan, we learned more about the difference our investments and other efforts make in the community.

As a result, the Five-Year Strategic Plan sets measurable goals for how we want to change key outcomes for our community (e.g., reducing unsheltered homelessness by 50%, increasing the home-ownership rate among BIPOC households to 45%). Our reporting will shift to focus on how we are moving the needle on those outcomes, while still reporting out on the work of our department.

What will be new: The Five-Year Strategic Plan measures our success in terms of outcomes for our community. To clearly define the impacts HOST is working to achieve with the Denver community and to ensure progress can be measured, the plan established an Impact Framework and 14 measurable goals related to that framework. Reporting on the Five-Year Plan will focus on reporting out progress toward those goals and the measures identified in our Impact Framework. For example, this reporting will include new components, like tracking:

- **reductions** in the rate of housing cost burden and increases in the rates of homeownership;
- **reductions** in the rates of eviction filings and foreclosures among income restricted homes;
- **reductions** in the average length of time someone experiences homelessness in Denver, increases in housing outcomes among households experiencing homelessness, and reductions in unsheltered homelessness; and
- **reductions** in procurement, contracting, and invoice processing times.

What will continue: Under Housing an Inclusive Denver, we have reported out on the affordable homes we help to create and preserve and the households that we serve through the programs we provide and invest in. That reporting is still central to the new Five-Year Strategic Plan and will continue. Going forward, reporting on income-restricted units will provide greater specificity as identified in the plan.

What will be discontinued: Under Housing an Inclusive Denver, we reported out on how we spent funding according to priorities set in that plan (i.e., homeownership, 31-80% AMI Rental, <30% AMI rental, and homelessness). Because the Five-Year Plan focuses on outcomes rather than setting investment priorities, HOST will no longer report out on how we have invested our funding according to those categories. HOST will, however, provide a publicly available financial dashboard to provide transparency into our funding is being used as articulated in the Five-Year Strategic Plan.

Acknowledgements

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 and where people are healthy, housed, and connected.

DENVER MAYOR

Michael B. Hancock

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Amanda Sandoval, District 1
Kevin Flynn, District 2
Jamie Torres, District 3
Kendra Black, District 4
Amanda Sawyer, District 5
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Maria Sepulveda, Habitat for Humanity
Randy Kilbourn, Olin Resident Council and community advocate
Jennie Rodgers, Enterprise Community Partners
Melanie Lewis Dickerson, Community Solutions
Kristin Toombs, Colorado Division of Housing
Marsha Brown, Denver Human Services
Thomas Allen, Denver Indian Center

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING STABILITY STAFF

DENVER CITY STAFF AND CITY-WIDE PARTNERS

City Attorney's Office
Community Planning and Development
Denver Human Services
Denver Economic Development and Opportunity
Department of Finance
Denver Department of Public Health and Environment
Department of Public Safety
Department of Transportation and Infrastructure
Denver Parks and Recreation
Human Rights and Community Partnerships, including the Office of Financial Empowerment and Disability Rights Division

HOST would also like to acknowledge those who have been responsive in partnering in the overall city response to COVID-19 for those currently unhoused and unsheltered and those at risk of losing their housing due to the financial complications accompanying the public health crisis. In addition to the City departments and offices listed above:

Governor Jared Polis' Office Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Colorado National Guard
Denver Public Health
Homeless Leadership Council
Office of Emergency Management
Denver Technology Services
Bayaud Enterprises

HOST would like to acknowledge the private funders who have allowed us to do more for the communities we serve:

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Association of General Contractors of Colorado
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Colorado Health Foundation
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Kaiser Permanente
Mile High United Way
PDC Energy
VISIT Denver