



# Northern Colorado Continuum of Care and Overview of Homeless Response System



Rupa Venkatesh, Assistant City Manager

Kelli Pryor, Director, Northern Colorado Continuum of Care

Brittany Depew, Homelessness Lead Specialist, Social Sustainability

Sgt. Annie Hill, HOPE Team, Police Services

September 12, 2023

- What reflections do Councilmembers have about the Northern Colorado Continuum of Care and the City's role in the homelessness response system?
- Are there next steps around this work that Councilmembers would like to prioritize?

## Continuum of Care Report

- Types of Homelessness
- State of Homelessness
- Regional Coordination

## City Role in Response System

- Local Coordination
- Funding
- Compassionate Response (HOPE Team)

## Next Steps

- Challenges
- Emerging Needs & Priorities

## Strategic Objective 1.2

Collaborate and leverage community partners' expertise in addressing priority human service issues like poverty and mental health and make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring

## Strategic Objective 5.7

Reduce incidents of, and impacts from, disruptive and unwanted behaviors through working closely with the community's human service providers to offer creative approaches that balance compassion and consequences.

The City's role is to effectively manage homelessness to balance the needs of our most vulnerable and maintain quality of life for the community.

This is done through a variety of community partners, programs, and tools.

Council Priority: Homelessness Initiatives

Housing Strategic Plan vision that “everyone has healthy, stable housing they can afford”

- Critical needs outlined in the HSP include connecting housing and health; utilizing a Housing First approach; building strong partnerships; and inclusivity, housing diversity, and affordability as community values.

## What is it?

- Continuums of Care (CoCs) are federally designated regions tasked with coordinating a community-wide response to homelessness, including funding priorities, system interventions, and elevating Housing First practices.
- The Northern Colorado Continuum of Care (NoCO CoC) consists of Larimer and Weld Counties and was officially recognized by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in January of 2020.
- The NoCO CoC is not one entity, but rather a collective of community partners all working together to ensure an effective homelessness response system capable of identifying, intervening, and house people as fast as possible.
- Two Lead Agencies with staff dedicated to CoC activities
  - United Way of Weld County – CoC and Coordinated Entry Lead
  - Homeward Alliance – Data (HMIS) Lead

[www.nocococ.org](http://www.nocococ.org)



The experience of homelessness does not affect everyone in the same way; we need a dynamic response system that can intervene quickly and appropriately.

- Lower Acuity – Majority resolve episode of homeless on own
- Moderate Acuity – Need short to medium term rent assistance and services to resolve homelessness
- High Acuity – Smallest percentage of people, but need most supports, like permanent financial and support to resolve homelessness and maintain housing

Based on a vulnerability needs assessment of about 400 experiencing homelessness in Fort Collins, August 2023:

- 14% had severe acuity of needs
  - Usually chronically homeless, intensive and long-term intervention recommended
- 44% had moderate to high acuity of needs
  - Medium term intervention or on-going rental subsidy/voucher recommended
- 42% had lower acuity of needs
  - Light-touch or short-term rental assistance recommended



## Pillars of Work

- Strategic Alignment across the region and various stakeholders related to homelessness response
  - CoC Governing Board
  - CoC General Membership
  - Committees and Workgroups
  - Engaging in local, county, and regional strategic planning efforts
  - Coordinating funding
- Coordinated, prioritized housing placements based on vulnerability and appropriate available resources
  - Community-led prioritization of scarce resources
  - Coordinated Assessment Housing Placement System (CAHPS)
  - Weekly case conferencing
- Shared quality data to understand the scope and outcomes
  - Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
  - Program-level data as well as comprehensive system-wide data





- Began in 2016 to respond to veteran homelessness and has expanded dramatically and now is the primary system used to identify and house single adults and families as well.
- CAHPS is a community driven process to IDENTIFY and ASSESS people for their housing needs, MATCH them to available housing resources, and NAVIGATE housing barriers until they are permanently housed.

## By the numbers

- 814 people active on the CAHPS By-Name List in mid-August
  - 404 from Fort Collins
    - 380 Single Adults, 24 Families
- 40 Partner Agencies
  - 16 specifically based in Fort Collins
- 25 Access Points for Assessment
- 4 Weekly Case Conference Meetings
  - Regularly attended by 50+ people



# Current State of Homelessness - Data

Homelessness is very fluid, as people flow in and out of our system, and data related to homelessness should be understood within its specific context.

## Point in Time Count

- Snapshot of sheltered and unsheltered homelessness on one night in January each year
- Helpful to understand trends year over year; notoriously an undercount though

## Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

- Shared data system that allows for quality, comprehensive, real-time data on people accessing homelessness programs

	Fort Collins
PIT Count 1/24/23	393 Total Counted; 106 Chronic
HMIS 1/24/23	1043 Total Active without Permanent Housing*; 379 Chronic
HMIS 8/24/23	1578 Total Active without Permanent Housing*; 553 Chronic

\*Active = has received homelessness services in FC the last 90 days and have no documented housing destination



## Tenets of the homelessness response system:

- People-Centered
- Housing First
- Data-Driven
- Collaboration is Key

## Elements:

- Collaboration & Convening
- Funding
- Policy
- Enforcement
- Strategy Partner

## Tactical Team

- Created November 2022 to address urgent and emerging needs and collaborative rapid response
- Internal departments and external partners

## Internal Coordination Team

- Monthly updates, building solutions for ongoing issues and concerns

## Community Partners

- Strong partnership network
- Aid in identification of needs, gaps, challenges, and successes

## Accelerated Site Cleanup Process

- Pilot program launched early 2023 – began weekly cleanup cadence
- Site occupants are offered resources at time of tagging, connected with HOPE Team and/or Outreach Fort Collins

## Quarterly Strategy Sessions

- Program staff and executive leadership quarterly strategy and prioritization

## County

- Strategic planning efforts funded by State of Colorado and led by Homeward Alliance
- 24-month process began in summer 2023

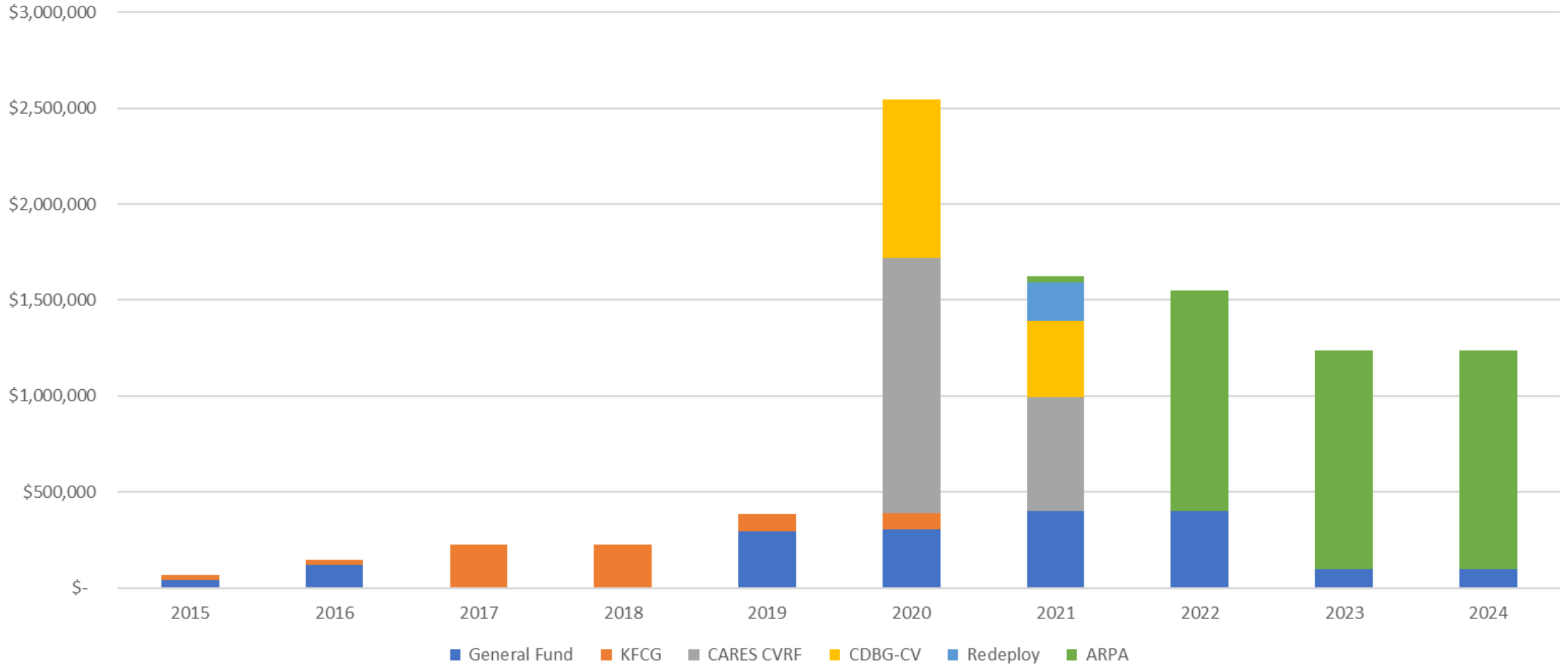
## Regional

- Efforts coordinated by the Continuum of Care

## Upstream Solutions

- Decrease number of people becoming unhoused
- Require cross-sector commitment and collaboration
- Critical needs outlined in Housing Strategic Plan

## Homelessness Funding History



## 2023-2024 Funding

- \$1,135,000 in ARPA funds:
  - Resource Navigation
  - 24/7 Shelter
  - Seasonal Overflow Shelter
  - Emergency Weather Response
  - Street Outreach
  - Regional data system (HMIS)
  - General operations

## Greater Pandemic-era Resourcing Supported & Expanded:

- Street Outreach
- 24/7 Emergency Shelter
- Rapid Rehousing
- Case Management and Resource Navigation

## Homeless Outreach & Proactive Engagement

- The HOPE team is an innovative Outreach team within the police department that uses problem-oriented policing strategies to address issues surrounding homelessness within our city. Through robust community partnerships we use a holistic approach to provide compassionate service to our homeless population while promoting public health and safety for all Fort Collins residents.





## Program Goals

- Build relationships with individuals experiencing homelessness: Work to establish trust and rapport with people experiencing homelessness, in order to better understand their needs and connect them with appropriate resources.
- Collaborate with Outreach Programs, Service Providers, and municipal and county courts to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive response to homelessness.
- Support and assist with maintaining the city landscape and natural areas, by addressing homeless encampments and encouraging unhoused individuals to utilize shelters as needed.
- The HOPE Team provides training and education to police officers and other community members on how to effectively engage with individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Monitor and evaluate program effectiveness: The outreach team regularly monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of their program, using data to make adjustments and improve outcomes over time.

## Identify the impacts homelessness has on:

- Individuals
- Communities
- Environment



## Housing Affordability

- 18.7% increase in development costs per unit from 2022 to 2023.
- Fair market rent increased 7.2% from 2022 to 2023.
- Median sales price in Q2 2023 was \$550,000.

## Funding/End of ARPA

- Nationally, funding available does not meet the current need while housing costs continue to rise.
- Locally, pre-pandemic funding was \$398,000/year
- Current allocation about \$1.2 million/year – strong positive impacts
- Critical need to reassess gaps, needs, and priorities for next budget cycle

## What the Data Misses

- Each data point represents a person – this can get lost by focusing solely on data and trends.
- Those not accessing services (e.g., families doubled up).

## Direct Resourcing Citywide

- Effective strategy to engage, not currently available widely

## Non-Shelter Alternatives

- Safe Parking Program

## Family & LGBTQIA+ Homelessness

- Family homelessness can be difficult to track but a notable increase has been seen at partner agencies; space is becoming a concern.
- Members of the LGBTQIA+ community are more likely to become and stay homeless, and specific services and shelters for this population can lead to better outcomes.

## Strategic Planning

- Countywide strategic planning efforts have become a priority across the region.
- A strategic planning process, being led by Homeward Alliance, launched in summer 2023

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**Thank you!**