

Downtown Denver Homeless Outreach

- The City works with shelters to ensure those who are homeless can find a safe place to stay, and we are projected to spend \$47 million this year on dozens of direct and indirect costs related to homelessness.
- To date, **no shelter has turned away any homeless person wanting to enter**. Shelters are providing beds and mats to as many as **1,500 people per night**, with Denver Rescue Mission's downtown shelter and overflow facility in Northeast Denver still operating at **79 percent of capacity**.
- Unfortunately, a number of homeless individuals continue to camp outside the Samaritan House and Denver Rescue Mission shelters. The majority of those individuals **refuse services**, including shelters.
- Since September, employees from multiple city agencies have connected **more than 650 people** outside and inside these shelters with medical, food, bus passes, housing, mental health and other services.
- Even with this increased outreach and the opening of the Lawrence Street Community Center, which is serving about 900 people per day, **this unsafe, unhealthy, unsanitary and inhumane situation continues**. People are still sleeping outside, even in the cold, and items continue to pile up on sidewalks.
- The Department of Public Works has been on site **three days a week** to remove the considerable trash accumulating in the area and to power-wash sidewalks (when weather appropriate). In January, PW increased trash removal and sidewalk cleaning to **five days a week**.
- Beginning this month, the city will take the following actions to protect people, maintain public health, and respond to mounting concerns from nearby residents and businesses:
 - **Post information** – Public Works will post information around the area advising that public spaces must remain free of obstruction. The same information will be distributed to people encamped on the public right of way. People will be strongly encouraged to seek shelter and services and not leave items behind.
 - **Continue to connect people to services** – Outreach teams will continue to connect individuals with services. Those who continue to violate city codes will receive a verbal warning. Subsequent encounters with the same individuals who remain in violation of city codes will result in progressive punishment.
 - **Enact temporary storage for impacted individuals** – The city will temporarily store items left behind on the sidewalk for up to 30 days.
 - **Place 250 chronic homeless individuals into permanent supportive housing** – Earlier this year, the City launched an innovative Social Impact Bond Program that will help transition people living on the streets into housing and services.
 - **Give a Better Way relaunch** – In response to the growing number of drive-by curbside drop offs of food and other items to the homeless, the city will begin a renewed push around better ways to give.
 - **Pilot Employment Program** – The city is planning to launch a jobs program this spring/summer that would provide opportunities for homeless individuals to work for city departments.
- The safest, most sanitary and dignified place for people experiencing homelessness is indoors. Without the stability of a place to sleep each night, it is very difficult to achieve self-sufficiency. Anyone needing shelter services is urged to contact the Mile High United Way at 2-1-1, or if it is an emergency, such as in bitter cold weather, call 9-1-1.