

First 100-Day Plan for 2019 Denver Municipal Government Action Plan for Rights, Dignity, and Housing.

by Denver Homeless Out Loud in collaboration with other social justice organizations.

Homelessness was the foremost issue discussed during the 2019 Denver municipal election season. Candidates made many promises to address the homelessness crisis during their campaigns. On the 2019 ballot was Initiated Ordinance 300, “*Right to Survive*,” which every municipal candidate weighed in on. The massive opposition to *Right to Survive* boasted “*We Can do Better*.” Well, now it’s time to prove: indeed, we can do better. Now is the time to fulfil the promises to meaningfully address and work towards solving the crisis of mass homelessness in the City and County of Denver, Colorado (The City).

Denver’s Mayor and City Council often refer to their “first 100-day” action plans. What follows is our 100-day action plan regarding homelessness in Denver. This plan presents an overview of the scope of the need, solutions to meet that need, and immediate action steps the Mayor and City Council should take in the first 100 days after taking their oaths of office on July 15, 2019. While it is in places detailed, this document is not an exhaustive analysis or comprehensive plan, but instead a snapshot of need, opportunity, and necessary immediate action. Our plan is organized around three areas: I. ***Rights, Not Slight***s; II. ***Services, Not Sweeps***; and III. ***Housing, Not Warehousing***.

The Need for Housing in Denver, Colorado:

The City and County of Denver approximates a shortage of 26,000 low-income units for low income people in Denver. The Mayor's Five Year Housing plan aims to create 2,000 low income units by 2023. That’s only 7.6% of the stated need. As if that short-fall not bad enough, in reality between 2015-2017 the City only created 199 units of 0-30% area median income (AMI) housing for a universe of 31,854 renter households in the 0-30% AMI category plus thousands of homeless residents. That is 0.6% of the need. Based on its own date, it is clear that there is a disconnect between what Denver says and what they actually do.

Roughly 60% of people experiencing homelessness in Denver are either working or have income through Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or disability-based government income. A full-time minimum-wage Colorado worker earns only \$1,316.80 per month before taxes. That worker would need to work at least 127.21 hours per week, four weeks per month to afford an average-rate apartment within ten miles of Denver, Colorado. Someone on disability typically receives \$770.00 per month. On that income, there is essentially no housing on the market in Denver that a person could afford and have any money left for food, travel, or basic needs.

The 2018 Point-In-Time (PIT) one day survey of homelessness in Denver counted at least 3,445 people experiencing homelessness in Denver. This is a massive undercount. More accurate

counts consider that at least 1,762 Denver Public School children were homeless in the 2017-2018 school year, according to state data.¹ At least 900 homeless people visit St. Francis Center, a refuge providing services to people experiencing homelessness, each day. What's more, the extreme undercount does not consider the thousands of people couch surfing at a friend's or staying with family, hopping between motels, or sleeping in their cars every night. When considering all the known parameters of homelessness, we know there are *at least* 10,000 people living without a home in Denver.

So why not just put all these people in homeless shelters? Isn't that where homeless people are supposed to live? Two answers:

1. For starters, *Math*.

If you temporarily suspend the reality of at least 10,000 neighbors experiencing homelessness and consider only the 3,445 people who the City and County of Denver acknowledges are homeless, for those 3,445 people: **there are fewer than 2,000 total spaces at Denver's homeless shelters**. The City says there are an average of 150 open mats on shelter floors. The PIT counted 609 unsheltered homeless people. So **at least 459 people** are without a shelter option every day. These numbers don't even reflect the dearth of accessible shelters.

Critically, there are no shelters to accommodate people who work evenings/nights and need uninterrupted sleep during the day. There are not adequate shelters that allow people who require personal care to have their caregivers come in and assist. There are not shelters with adequate equipment and accommodations for people with physical disabilities such as guaranteed sleeping place near an electrical outlet for battery operated wheelchairs, chair lifts, roll-in showers, etc. Moreover, people with physical disabilities may need to dress/undress in bed and have no way to do this in private. There are limited shelters that allow service animals...Examples abound: there are not enough shelters to accommodate, and the inadequacies for people requiring accessibility options are even more limited.

2. More importantly, *Reality*.

In reality: shelters are NOT a viable, healthy, safe, or even possible option for many people. Shelters are often extremely overcrowded and noisy, with conditions leading to disease, violence, and pests. Space is often inaccessible to people with physical and other disabilities. Shelters can be hostile and discriminatory to trans or gender-nonconforming people. Shelter hours--often requiring people to leave very early in the morning, and to wait in a long line for a bed in the evening--are often incompatible with people's work schedules. Shelters regularly force separation from loved ones and pets/service animals. Understandably, for these and many

¹ https://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/homeless_data - see Denver County for 2017-2018

more reasons²...many people prefer the freedom to come and go as needed rather than be effectively trapped in a shelter.

So, if not to shelters, where are people without homes supposed to go?

Often, thousands of homeless people in Denver are left with no options except to sleep outside, in abandoned buildings, or on buses, etc. Surviving outside without a house requires securing protection from extreme weather. It also requires finding protection from abusers who prey upon vulnerable people. And, now more than ever, being homeless requires seeking protection from police who are paid by the City to disrupt sleep, to displace people, and to steal their only belongings.

The current “camping ban” (truly a **survival ban**) ordinance, passed on a 9 to 4 vote by the Denver City Council in 2012, makes it illegal to use “*blankets, or any form of cover or protection from the elements other than clothing*” anywhere in the city of Denver [38.86.2]. Many people claim this law is not enforced; unfortunately, people experiencing homelessness in Denver know first-hand that the ban is very much enforced and used to harass them. Police records show that in 2017 alone, some 4,647 people were approached by police for violating the camping ban and forced to “*move along*.”

What does “move along” even mean?

In practice, “*moving along*” means countless sleepless nights, blankets being confiscated in the middle of cold nights, being forced to separate from friends and family, being put at risk of rape, assault, and death. Very rarely can anyone told to do so, actually “*move along*” into shelters, much less housing.

The City has also had a practice, as confirmed by a federal judge in the class action case *Lyall v. City of Denver* [16-2155], of sweeping away homeless people and their property with no notice and no way for affected people to retrieve their property. A settlement has been agreed on in *Lyall*, scheduled for finalization by the court in September 2019, but the City has not yet shown a commitment to even respect the agreement they made: they continue to sweep without proper notice.

The City references health and safety concerns as a need for sweeping away people and entire communities, yet does nothing to address the health and safety needs of people experiencing homelessness. The basic sanitation needs for bathrooms, showers, and trash services are denied with statement from the Mayor such as, “We don’t want to attract permanent homelessness by putting in porta potties.” This means hundreds of homeless people are chased from one place to the next, their property stolen, and their basic sanitation needs never met.

²<https://denverhomelessoutloud.org/2018/11/05/denver-homeless-out-loud-encouraging-city-of-denver-to-give-back-shelter-after-taking-it-in-cold-weather-front/>

Then, these displaced people are blamed for unsanitary conditions caused by the City's policies.

So then, if not shelters, and if we can't "move along", what must we do?

We, poor and homeless people who suffer the daily effects of policies written without us and against us, along with our allies who believe that the way people experiencing homelessness in Denver are treated is wrong, must lead our government on what actions must be taken now. **Policy must be directed by directly affected people.** We present this 100-day action plan to give Denver's Mayor and City Council direction - both for the long term and for immediate action in these next 100 days from July 15, 2019 to October 22, 2019 .

I. Rights, Not Sights.

--What we really need--

- Repeal of Survival Ban.

The "Urban Camping Ban" (better called survival ban) law makes it illegal to use "blankets, or any form of cover or protection from the elements other than clothing" anywhere in the city of Denver. We must end this inhumane, ineffective, expensive, unconstitutional law now and decriminalize homelessness in Denver.

- Repeal Sit/Lie Law.

The "Sit/Lie Law" [38-86.2], passed in 2005, making it illegal to "*sit or lie on the sidewalk or any non-designated seating area,*" on 16th Street Mall and the blocks on either side of 16th St. Like the survival ban, this law names homeless people as the primary violators of this law, which police records of enforcement confirm. The effect of this law on many homeless disabled people in particular, is that they cannot be on the mall without facing criminalization as they must sit and rest at some point. We must end this cruel and discriminatory law.

- Rights in Shelters.

The current emergency shelter system is primarily run by religious groups and non-profit corporations. While these groups may have good intent to provide needed shelter, the shelter industry does not respect the rights of shelter users for safe, clean environments, privacy, protection of their belongings, and dignified treatment. There is little or no due process in shelters, there are arbitrary rules, people can be kicked out for mild violations. The process to obtain shelter beds is onerous and can be a full time job. Even shelter providers admit to continual issues with bed bugs. Shelters must be required to uphold standards to protect our human and constitutional rights.

- ADA Access at Shelters.

A top priority of shelter revisions must be a full independent, client-lead assessment of accessibility for people with various disabilities. This assessment must lead to fixing all issues of inaccessibility found, including making shelters compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All homeless service providers should have an easy to find, easy to understand, fair

process for clients to request reasonable modifications. Staff at all homeless service corporations should be required to have training in disability cultural competency and ADA. The City must expeditiously amend service provider contracts to require shelter employees to be trained in trauma-informed service delivery. In collaboration with organizations run by people experiencing homelessness and civil rights organizations that support them, a set of standards and criteria for employees of shelter. Currently, anyone who has only had a customer service job at a convenience store can work at most shelters.

Further, the city must develop and implement (with involvement of people who use these services) a due process system for clients of all homeless services providers. This must include at a minimum a grievance and appeal system. Any termination of services must have appeal rights. A client run appeals board is advised. The assessment should be done by someone with ADA training that is approved by a committee of people who experience homelessness or an organization run by people that experience homelessness.

- Stop Police Harassment.

Police records and jail records show the massive disparity of police enforcement against homeless people to non-homeless people. If you are homeless (or perceived to be homeless) in Denver you are far more likely to get stopped by police, asked for identification, questioned, ticketed, or arrested. If you are homeless and Black or Brown, you are even more likely to have police contact. If you are Native American and homeless in Denver you are the most likely to have police contact ending in arrest. These disproportionate police contacts are the manifestation of discrimination throughout the (in-) justice system. This behavior by city officials causes additional undue stress, fear, distrust of police, cycles in jail, and even abuse or death by police. City and police harassment of homeless people must stop. Enforcement of laws should not be driven by complaints from the public, who often just don't want to see poverty in their neighborhoods. It is unconstitutional for police to have a practice of asking for ID from people who are not breaking any laws. There must be accountability for police who demand identification from people not breaking any law.

- Homelessness as a Protected Class.

Discrimination against people due to homelessness leads to inability to get jobs, loss of jobs, inability to get housing, loss of one's own children, being turned away from businesses, police abuse, murder of homeless people, and on and on... We must recognize this discrimination as wrong and protect against discrimination based on housing status by naming people who are homeless as a protected class.

- Constitutional Rights.

Again and again courts have found laws targeting people who are homeless or criminalizing necessary acts of survival for homeless people unconstitutional. Anti-homeless laws have been found in violation of the 1st, 4th, 8th, and 14th amendments of the U.S. Constitution. We must protect these rights already named in the U.S. Constitution.

--What the Mayor can do in 100 days--

- 1) The Mayor should immediately act to end the discriminatory police practice of asking for ID from people who are not breaking any laws.

- 2) The Mayor should immediately act to allocate funding in the city budget for community driven mental and medical health alternatives to police interactions with homeless people. Specifically, a crisis response team comprised of mental and physical health professionals, not police.
- 3) The Mayor should act to allocate funding to bring shelters up to ADA standards as determined by the assessment mentioned earlier.

--What City Council can do in 100 days--

- 1) **City Council should immediately act to decriminalize homelessness by repealing the survival ban [camping ban ordinance (DRMC 38-86.3)].**
- 2) City Council should act immediately to address the inaccessibility of shelters by requiring and funding a full independent, assessment of accessibility for people with disabilities.

II. Services, Not Sweeps.

--What we really need--

- Immediately implement the *Lyll v. City of Denver Settlement* to protect property rights of all residents of Denver, regardless of whether or not they have a home.

For three years the city has been fighting a class action lawsuit against them for seizing homeless people's property without due process in sweeps. This case, *Lyll vs City of Denver* reached a settlement agreement in March 2019, but it still awaits final ruling by the judge on September 20th 2019.

However, the city can implement the agreement's provisions without a court order. The settlement agreement does a number of things, but most importantly, in summary, it requires the city give at least 48 hours to 7 days (depending on the size of the encampment) notice attached to the person's property before they can remove any property. Since this settlement was agreed to, the city has violated these rights and taken property without proper notice. If this right to proper notice is not provided by the city after the judge rules this into law, they can be taken back to court for violating these rights. None of us want that. The city, under court mandate, must follow these processes to protect people's right to their property and due process.

- Eliminate complaint-based enforcement.

By cleaning at regular times instead of doing massive sweeps based on complaints, the city can minimize the taking of homeless people's property. All camps should be given the needed trash receptacles and bathroom facilities to maintain a clean space, rather than being evicted and/or forced to live in a situation where there is trash, feces and urine.

- Medical and mental health workers instead of cops.

Police should not be responsible for cleaning encampments. This is a job for cleaning crews. Police presence turns what should be a routine clean up into an enforcement action leading to criminalization of survival, trauma, tickets, and arrest. In order to do the job of cleaning and use that stressful time to support folks on the streets who are struggling, medical and mental health professionals should be sent out with the cleaning crews without police.

This should be modeled similarly to the CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) model in Eugene, OR, which utilizes a response team comprised of a mental health responder and a medic to answer calls through the 911 dispatch system as well as a separate emergency number specific to the program. The model responds to up to 20% of emergency calls in Eugene. Funding should be redirected from current cost of sweeps to these non-police crisis response teams.

- Infrastructural pieces relevant to non-police crisis response.

The response model of CAHOOTS has had its tremendous impact because of the community awareness, connection, and involvement in the program as well as the additional infrastructural pieces in Eugene that center services with dignity such as a sobering clinic, respite clinic, and immediate temporary shelter. These are components that must be created and supported with community involvement in coordination with the launch of a non-police crisis response team. Additional community-driven mental health facilities should be created with the motive that treatment facilities should not act like or look like replicated jail cells.

- Trash Services.

The solution to trash is trash cans and trash can servicing, not displacement of homeless people. We cannot continue to treat homeless people like trash by sweeping people from place to place, rather than simply maintaining basic trash services where people are staying outside. Trash cans and regular servicing of those cans should be in public places near every encampment.

- Expand Triangle Works (or “sweep trash not people”) cleaning program.

For the past few months a crew of five people who are homeless have been hired through Bayaud Enterprises and made up a cleaning crew, called Triangle Works. They have been cleaning the streets near Triangle park where many homeless people stay outside. This cleaning crew has had a great impact on the lives of those hired and on providing needed trash services to homeless encampments in this neighborhood. This crew should be expanded with funding from the city to clean more regularly and to include more neighborhoods. The result will be more people who are homeless getting employment.

- Sharps Boxes.

In order to properly contain sharps, such as needles, sharps boxes should be installed in public places to ensure safe disposal. More trash crews, such as Triangle Works, should also carry sharps containers with them and with more crew hours can better assist in this disposal.

- Public Restrooms.

The solution to poop and pee outside is accessible public bathrooms. Currently there are no accessible public bathrooms open 24/7 in Denver and the few public bathrooms that do exist are only open limited hours of the day. Ultimately, the people of Denver, especially people without housing or money, have no place to go to the bathroom. If we actually want to address the health and safety of people without housing and the broader community, porta potties with handwashing, or permanent bathrooms, should be placed near every encampment, and high foot traffic area in the city. Furthermore, porta potties should be serviced regularly so they don't overflow or stink. These bathrooms should include options accessible to people who can't use small units.

- Shower Trucks.

People living without housing in Denver have to walk long distances or wait in long lines to get a shower, or more often than not go without showers. This extreme lack of necessary hygiene leaves people unhealthy, less able to keep and hold jobs, and has countless other hurtful effects on the homeless community. The city should help fund the creation of trucks with showers (such as the Live Well showers run by a church in Denver now). These shower trucks should be brought to encampment areas on a regular basis. These should be ADA accessible or have ADA accessible option nearby.

- Laundry Trucks.

Similarly, people living without housing in Denver have to walk long distances, wait in long lines, or pay money people don't have to do laundry. More often than not homeless people are simply unable to do laundry. This lack of necessary hygiene leaves people unhealthy, less able to keep and hold jobs, and has countless other hurtful effects on the community. The city should help fund the creation of more laundry trucks (such as the two currently run by Bayaud now). These Laundry trucks should be brought to encampment areas including along the rivers on a regular basis.

- Recreation Center Access.

The city of Denver has public recreation centers in many areas of the City. These centers have showers and bathrooms already in them. If these centers were accessible to people who are homeless, it would make a significant dent in addressing hygiene needs without any needed new construction. In addition to the changes to the current PLAY pass for poor people which were agreed on in the class action settlement, the cost of these passes should be waived for people with no income in enabling them access to the showers and bathrooms. Recreation center access positive social supports.

- 24/7 Lockers at Accessible Locations.

When you are living without housing, you have nowhere to store personal belongings while going to a job or appointment or whatnot. In addition to the locker storage facility agreed on in the class action lawsuit settlement, lockers which are accessible 24/7 in public places should be funded and permitted by the city and located around the City. Furthermore, the permitting process for private businesses to install small numbers of lockers on their property should be waived or amended.

--What the Mayor can do in 100 days--

- 1) The Mayor should direct the police, public works, and other agencies to follow the lawsuit settlement. This means always - not just when it is convenient.
- 2) The Mayor should immediately re-direct city budget away from police to a non-police crisis response model.
- 3) The Mayor should immediately direct Public Works to install and service trash cans near every encampment. He should budget for and fund porta potties near every encampment.
- 4) The Mayor should immediately budget for and fund an expansion of the Triangle Works program which employs people experiencing homelessness to do trash services on the streets.

--What City Council can do in 100 days--

- 1) **The City Council should immediately move to support the creation of a non-police crisis response team to replace police presence in sweeps and instances of crisis and conflict in Denver.**
- 2) **The City Council should immediately act to support policies that replace sweeps with trash services, bathrooms, and basic needs.**

III. Housing, Not Warehousing.

--What we really need--

- Housing, not shelters.

Shelters are not housing. They function as are warehouses to keep poor people out of sight. Given the fact that housing for the poor is all but non-existent it is great there is this option for some, but we cannot continue to treat shelters as a housing option. Real housing has space for all of a person's basic needs, for privacy, and for personal autonomy. City Council should end the practice of treating shelters as a "solution to homelessness" and invest instead in actual housing.

Housing can even be more economical than many shelters. When a proposal comes to invest in expanding or improving shelters, those dollars should at least be matched for housing - if not simply redirected to housing instead. Housing should be the long term solution, with autonomy for a setting of your choice. This means no limits on when you can come and go, what you can bring with you, what you wear, who your support systems are, how you identify, and how you choose to use the space.

Funding

- Commit funding to 0-30% AMI Housing.

\$30,000,000 dollars for "affordable" housing is one drop in an ocean of need. Much less, considering the half of that budget for "affordable" housing is for 40% - 100% AMI. Until the city begins to commit dollars in the billions to actual public and low-income housing, we will continue to be a city with thousands of people without housing. The budget should shift money from police, jails, development subsidies for the rich, BIDs, and the like into low-income housing. The city should increase the budget for 0-30% AMI housing to at least \$60M in 2020, with plans to increase yearly.

Land and Buildings

- Identify land.

As long as the land still vacant or unused in Denver continues to be used by for-profit developers for projects that only benefit the rich we will not address our low-income housing crisis. City, or quasi-city, owned land should be identified around the city and dedicated to

low-income (0-30%AMI) housing projects. The city should also buy private land and transfer ownership to non-profits or community land trusts who will build 0-30% AMI housing.

- Buy old hotels.

A number of old hotels have been condemned or are on the verge of being condemned in Denver. The city should buy these hotels, insulate, renovate and convert them into low-income (0-30%) housing.

- Convert Dog Parks.

Denver has many dog parks. This is more places for dogs to play, rest, and poop than the city has places for people who are homeless to rest. At least half of the land on each of these dog parks should be converted into tent dwelling spaces, tiny home dwelling, or full scale low-income housing.

- City Partnership with Churches for Land.

The City should partner with churches by helping fund and permit low-income housing on church land.

- Community Land Trusts for low income housing.

The land is not ours to own, much less make a profit off of. Yet the privatization of land for speculation and profit making is ever further displacing people from homes and community. By putting land in the control of the community, and enabling the community to cap housing costs and stop speculative market pricing, community land trusts enable housing to be more affordable for lower-income people and stop displacement of lower-income residents. City Council should support shifting land into community-led land trusts.

Codes and Permitting

- Wave Permits for Churches, Nonprofits, or any land owner to host tent communities.

The current city permitting options hosting people to live on one's private church, non-profit, or other private land is not clear and creates almost impossible barriers to communities stepping up to provide space of people without housing. Following cases from around the country, the city should wave any permitting requirements for churches, non-profits, or land owners who wish to host people in tent communities with bathrooms on their own property. The city should not intervene in these groups using their own land to follow their mission and beliefs.

- Tent Villages.

The city should support all kinds of private dwelling at 0-30% - tents, tiny homes, apartments, single homes, etc. We need structures, including tents, to meet the need more quickly while we wait for more high quality longer-term construction. While tiny homes are extremely quick and cheap to build, even these take more time when people could be living safer in a tent village than in the shelters or on the streets. The city should be moving forward simultaneously with quick housing options including both tents and tiny homes, while also building apartments, single family homes, and other housing types. Tents or tiny homes are not the "housing solution" but they are especially quick and cheap to build - while also maintaining basic privacy, dignity, and autonomy. These options should be treated as quick crisis-required options, while construction on higher quality housing is taking place.

- Tiny Home Village in every City Council district.

When city council was voting on moving the Beloved Community Tiny Home Village to Globeville, many council people stated that every council district should have a tiny home village. Land should be identified in each council district immediately to build a village in each district.

- Group Living.

The city should support changing the zoning for group living to enable more unrelated adults to share housing, thus lowering the cost of living.

- No City funded deals for upper income housing. Require any mixed income housing developments to have fifty percent 0-30% tenants. Permit only lower income housing.

Almost all of the new development in Denver is for upper income people (80% AMI and above). “Mixed income” developments only result in a token number of units for low or extremely low income residents. These units are often smaller than the other units and can not accommodate a family needing several bedrooms. While almost all of this development is done by private developers, the city has a say in permitting these developments. The city should use its power to vote against high income developments informing the developers they will only vote for the permit, contract, or zoning change if the development includes low-income (30-50% AMI) and extremely low income (0-30% AMI) housing.

- No opt out option for building low income housing.

The current Inclusionary Housing Ordinance (IHO) has an option for developers to “buy out” of the affordability requirement. Many developers take this option, meaning they put in massive developments with no housing under 60% AMI. Furthermore, the money from these “buy outs” is supposed to go into affordable housing, but records of this are not clear or public. City Council should end this “buy out” option and require all development following the IHO include actual low-income housing, no “buy outs” and not just 60%, 80%, or 120% AMI units.

Building Standards

- Housing for all abilities 0-30%.

At least 40% of those homeless in Denver have a disability. Much of Denver’s housing is still not ADA accessible, leaving people even more stuck in homelessness. Low-income housing developments should be built to ADA standards, and older housing should be brought to ADA standards. Meeting federal fair housing act amendments standards allows housing to accommodate the residents as they age.

Policy

- DHA low-income housing expanded.

Denver Housing Authority’s mission is to create low-income housing and they do provide the most low-income housing in the city. They are the quasi city owner of much inner city land. However, they have been increasingly deviating from that mission by selling off their land to private developers to build market rate housing or office space. DHA should be required to follow their mission and use their land only for low-income housing. Additionally, DHA housing

vouchers provide much of the most flexible low-income housing options and these vouchers should be expanded with city money stepping in to fund more vouchers.

Accordingly, DHA should take steps to get more landlords to accept low-income vouchers, in particular ensuring compliance with the source of income anti-discrimination bill passed last year. One of the reasons that landlords may not choose to accept housing vouchers is there is no provision of a damage deposit. Landlords are left holding the bag when voucher tenants move out. If damage deposits could be funded as part of the city-sponsored vouchers, more landlords might be willing to participate in the program.

- City should not follow proposed HUD housing guidelines.

Under the control of President Trump and Ben Carson, HUD has been pushing for discriminatory policies including immigrant family separation, discrimination against transgender people, and raising of rents. The city of Denver should intervene in these policies and refuse to follow them.

- Deny discriminatory “crime free” housing approach.

Some subsidized housing around the country has recently taken a “crime free” policy that leads to residents being evicted for low-level “crimes.” These policies play out with massive racist outcomes. Denver should refuse to use or support housing with such policies.

- Independent housing without required services - unconditional housing options.

Many subsidized housing projects in Denver have extensive requirements that force tenants to agree to “services: whether or not the services that are desired or helpful. If the resident does not accept these services, the resident cannot live there. While some services help some individuals it is inappropriate to tie required services to housing. One’s landlord already has enough power, allowing them access to any information about social services dramatically increases the power imbalance. People need housing that enables them to live independent lives with needed supports, but not controlled by rigorous rules and service requirements. The city should support housing that meets these standards and promotes services that are voluntary based on an individual’s need.

Housing Rights and System Change

- Right to Housing.

Housing is a human right. Yet since the 1990’s the federal government declared it is not the governments’ responsibility to ensure all have housing. We have enough housing for all those without to have housing, yet we have thousands without housing in Denver. Until we commit as a society to treat housing as a human right, we will continue to create token housing, temporary vouchers, and things here and there that never come close to meeting the need. The City Council should take this basic step of admitting the actual need and making plans to meet the need - even if there isn’t the budget or policies needed to meet the actual need right away.

- Renters Rights.

Renters in Denver have few rights to protect them from un-due eviction, livability standards, and the like. New laws were passed at the state level this year to help protect renters and these laws should be followed and promoted in Denver. Furthermore, they should be expanded by _____. They should also add to the Source of Income protection bill to ban landlords from requiring

people have proof of income three times the rent even when they have a voucher paying their rent.

- Rent Control.

Market forces make rents continue to rise as housing is bought and sold as a commodity. Rent control is one method to help cap that constant rise in rent. Currently state law creates barriers for Denver enacting rent control. Denver city officials should step up to support this change at the state capitol.

- Focus on ending market based housing, not just vouchers.

Ultimately, vouchers are not the answer to making housing attainable for low-income people. As long as market forces continue to raise rents, vouchers will also have to compete in the market and make it harder and harder to remain at attainable prices. The city should be working to end these forces of market profit by prioritizing social housing, rent controls, community land trusts, and other means.

- Social Housing.

Countries around the world who treat housing as a responsibility of the government, not a commodity to be run by the private sector, have almost no one without housing in their cities. We in Denver should be shifting in this direction - building social housing with public money.

--What the Mayor can do in 100 days--

- 1) **The Mayor should immediately commit to budgeting to fund the actual housing need for individuals, couples and families who are homeless - even if the full budget cannot be immediately met. Begin by budgeting \$60M for 0-30% AMI housing in 2020, at least half of which would be specifically for people experiencing homelessness. Plan to expand funding yearly.**
- 2) The Mayor should use executive authority to ensure Churches, Nonprofits, or land owners have clear automatic permission, without permit processes, to host tent communities with bathrooms for people without housing.

--What City Council can do in 100 days--

- 1) The City Council should immediately demand the Mayor increase the 2020 budget for 0-30% AMI housing to 60M.
- 2) The City Council should immediately work with the city and community partners to identify locations in their district to create at least 100 units 0-30% AMI housing for people coming from homelessness in 2020 or before.

It is time to get going. There is work to be done...
Everyone deserves rights, dignity, and housing.

Denver Homeless Out Loud

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