



HAAT Force End of Season Report

October 1, 2024-April 30, 2025

Our goal for this season was to support individuals formerly served by Severe Weather Shelter Network (SWSN), our partner organization who suddenly closed their doors in August, as well as clients who qualify for HAAT Force. We saw triple the need for sheltering due to the closure of SWSN, as well as the continuing increase in people experiencing homelessness in the Denver Metro area. We worked diligently with partner agencies and local governments to address this need and were able to help fill the gap in services left behind by the closure of SWSN.

HAAT Force employees completed training with Metro Denver Homeless Initiative's (MDHI) Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and began entering clients into the database this season. Doing so provides valuable information, allowing multiple agencies to access the same information to help the unhoused members of our community in a more efficient manner. Many clients have had success in receiving case management, housing, and additional support as we work toward ending homelessness in the Denver Metro area through this coordination.

HAAT Force hired three people with lived experience as part-time employees during the 2024-2025 season. These individuals were identified due to the strong work ethic they modeled over the current and previous severe weather seasons in offering to volunteer for the organization while waiting for their vouchers and looking for other job opportunities. Two of the employees are current clients of HAAT Force, and both individuals have added significant value to the work being done by the organization. They provide valuable insight into the survivalist mindset that most of our clients live with on a day-to-day basis and can connect with clients on a more impactful level due to their level of understanding. One lived-experience employee has taken over management and development of the HMIS process and has streamlined our efforts in utilizing the database. This individual has been able to deescalate clients with her calm manner and general understanding of their frustrations.

Our lived-experience employees modeled positive behaviors and habits for many of our clients, leading to a significant increase in client led volunteer support. One of our clients began helping on shelter days with managing tasks such as taking out the trash and breaking down boxes. While this seems small, we had days we were had up to 100 clients in the building, providing vouchers and hundreds of meals to keep them nourished during

the entirety of the severe weather event, and every bit of help made the process go smoother for everyone involved! During a severe weather event this client's car broke down in the motel's parking lot. He quickly offered to complete work for the motel to pay them back for his car taking up space in their parking lot until he was able to get it running again, and his eagerness to support the motel in a less-than-ideal situation got him hired by the motel, exchanging maintenance work for a room. He, his wife, and their four children now have a temporary home.

All individuals we serve receive case management support via various processes. During each sheltering event clients meet with staff and volunteers who provide resources and inquiry of their needs. Colorado Access provided on-site care management, and the majority of our clients are referred to us by other organizations who offer case management services to them on a regular basis, including the City of Centennial, Movement 5280, Giving Heart, SafeSide Recovery Center, and Life Center. Due to ensuring our clients receive regular case management, we have clients who have accessed necessary medical care, received housing, received food resources, received assistance with mechanical issues with their cars, and have become gainfully employed.

HAAT Forces realizes the need for additional case management and refers clients to various locations in the area that have scheduled case management services available. Due to the large influx of clients as well as limited staff and finances HAAT Force relies largely on other providers to provide case management services.

Client quotes-

- Don, a HAAT Force client, was walking by the office on a nice day and saw the Executive Director outside. He stopped and thanked HAAT Force for extending the last voucher event when there was significant snow on the ground, letting us know what an impact that made because he wouldn't have had a place to sleep that night otherwise. He also said, "I don't know how I would have survived the winter without the nights in the motel."
- During a vouchering event the Executive Director was contacted by an out-of-state family friend of clients Tim and Sandy, who notified us that Tim had been arrested, and Sandy was left alone in the motel room with all their belongings. Tim is the primary caregiver for his wife, Sandy, who is disabled with cognitive impairment and functions at the level of a seven-year-old. We spent the weekend coordinating with the motel, Sandy, and the family friend, arranging resources, and working with Adult Protective Services to come up with a solution, while continuing to shelter Sandy for her safety, despite the vouchering event having ended the previous night. Once Tim had been released from jail, he emailed us the following note-

“I wanted to thank you, and everyone else who reached out to assist Sandy, on the weekend of February 22nd.

I was unable to reach her or get her packed out of the motel room. She was so distraught and confused that she could not focus to even call anyone for help.

What was quickly turning into an unpleasant escalation of nonsense at my end would have had a profound destructive effect on Sandy.

So, thank you to all who assisted her, and stood by until others who came to help were all able to coordinate their plan.”

Numbers for the 2024-2025 Season:

- 14 voucher events
- 38 total nights of sheltering provided
- 561 vouchers issued
- 316 people registered to receive services
- 192 individuals sheltered
- 97 men and 95 women sheltered
- 20 children sheltered
- 18 dogs and 5 cats sheltered
- 128 households sheltered (42 families + 86 individuals)
- 29 nights of shelter provided to one individual qualifying for the Medically Vulnerable funding due to pneumonia, provided by Colorado Access
- 3 nights of shelter provided to one individual qualifying for the Medically Vulnerable funding due to a broken pelvis, provided by Colorado Access
- 9 clients permanently housed (5 adults, 4 kids, and 2 dogs)

Photos:

