



## **HOMeward PIKES PEAK**

### **WISDOM WORKS COLLABORATIVE | SEPTEMBER 2025**

## **STRATEGIC RESPONSE UPDATE**

### **CURRENT CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIC SHIFTS**

We're facing significant uncertainty with our HUD funding, which represents about \$2 million annually—a little over half our budget. With the radical policy changes happening, our housing first model that we've been operating for almost 15 years may need fundamental changes, and it's incredibly stressful because we don't know exactly what's coming.

Our clients are asking us directly about the changes that passed on July 4th and what it means for them. It's hard to provide assurance when we don't even know ourselves. This is particularly challenging since we work with clients who have diagnosed mental illness—they can catastrophize better than most, and we're struggling with how to support them when they're doing that.

We feel that we need to increase our advocacy voice to fix broken systems and evaluate how we operate, looking at new ways of delivering these critical services. We believe the funding is going to change, but we'll still have homeless individuals and families, so we need to evaluate how we deliver those services in these challenging times.

### **OUR RESPONSE STRATEGY**

We're going to lean into shoring up each other and doing as much advocacy as possible. We believe the world is calling us to coach our clients to be able to change with this tidal shift, and we need to advocate to ensure that there remains some kind of safety net because not everyone is going to be able to face the changes ahead.

This summer we wrote a white paper on our housing first model, and now we're working with a communications expert to make that into bite-sized chunks for advocacy briefs. We're creating an outreach plan to get them in front of different levels of stakeholders. We have some big goals of getting to talk to the HUD secretary in the next two months.

Thankfully, we have great support—the mayor is bought into helping us because he doesn't want 100 more households homeless in six months. He wants to help us ensure that some of what we do can remain, though we know it won't all remain.

### **OUR HOUSING FIRST MODEL AND SUCCESS METRICS**

We believe in the housing first model and that it's successful in helping people end homelessness for themselves, making homelessness rare, brief, and non-reoccurring.

Our success metrics vary widely—turning in paperwork on time is huge for one client, while getting a job at a living wage is success for another. These are both valuable. Our direct support staff see these successes and talk about them—there's buzz in the office when someone does their laundry on their own, which is huge for an individual who can't get out of their apartment. We celebrate all successes, whether big or small, internally. We think we need to make it comfortable to share externally as well and normalize it.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND COLLABORATION

Our board supports our leadership being out of the office 75% of the time to be meeting with people in the community for advocating and fundraising, which is huge. We were only able to do this because we got to promote our operations manager.

We see opportunities for collaboration—for example, when other housing programs are opening, they're going to meet applicants who aren't right for their program but would be great for housing first. We can share knowledge about creating great programs and refer clients appropriately.

## INSIGHTS FROM THE GROUP DISCUSSION

The group strongly resonated with HPP's advocacy focus, with many organizations expressing similar desires to expand their community voice but lacking the resources to do so effectively. There was recognition that safety net organizations are often too consumed with daily operations to pursue advocacy work, yet without it, the need continues to grow.

The group appreciated the unique collaborative model where organizations work together while competing for the same funding - a dynamic rarely seen in other sectors. HPP's advocacy work was viewed as benefiting the entire sector, with their white paper and messaging becoming shared resources that help all organizations articulate their value.

Practical collaboration opportunities were identified, including cross-referrals between programs and resource mapping to identify overlapping strengths versus unique capabilities. The conversation also touched on the need for broader shifts in nonprofit funding structures to reduce competitive pressures while maintaining collaborative impact.

## THRIVING LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

### CONSCIOUSNESS

#### By Me → Through Me

- We are confident in the "by me" phase of leadership consciousness.
- We all aspire to be a little higher, towards the "through me," but that's okay.
- We're doers in our current consciousness level.

### SKILLS

#### Analysis: Staffing Models and Volunteer Labor | Develop App

- We need to do an analysis of our staffing models and see where we can bring in more volunteer labor.
- We need to live into the mantra of "do more with less."
- We need to develop skills to help generate more revenue by getting our app off the ground and monetizing some of the things we discussed.

### PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR

#### Problem Solvers | Curiosity | Constructive Debate

- We will continue to be problem solvers.
- We will be curious with all aspects of what we're going through, engaging in constructive debate and being in conversations to seek to understand.

- We need to maintain boundaries around our work so we're not aligning too much with our staff or clients and entering crisis mode with them.
- We will ask more questions of each other and our peers instead of being reactive and shutting down.

## **ACTIONS & PRACTICES**

### **Standardization | Implement/Educate/Implement**

- We will create standardization of case management because case managers are the largest number of direct service staff members we have. This will include finding a middle ground between case managers who spend all day with a client doing everything versus those who empower clients and move on.
- We will implement, evaluate and implement again so we become a learning organization and avoid reducing staff-to-client ratios or lower quality services.

## **COMMITMENTS**

### **Staff work session on CM | Board Give + Get | Roll out SOS by 12/1/2025**

- We will have a work session for the organization around the boundaries of case management in the next 60 days.
- Carolena will talk to our board about increasing our "give get" policy (the monetary goal that board members give per year).
- We will roll out the SOS app by December 1st, either accelerating our current developer or switching developers to get it done.