



NEWS

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Metro Mayors, Denver Foundation Boost “Flex Fund” to Provide Quick Assistance to Prevent and Address Homelessness

Learn how to access funds and further supplement the fund

Denver, CO – The Metro Mayors Caucus announced today new funding for the “[Flex Fund](#),” at the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative which provides flexible, one-time assistance to help people experiencing homelessness secure permanent housing and, in some cases, remain in housing. With more than \$126,000 in 2019 contributions from the Metro Mayors Caucus, The Denver Foundation, and the private sector, the Flex Fund can continue to provide critical assistance to homeless and housing insecure individuals and families across the seven-county metro area.

The Flex Fund was created in June 2018 at the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative with funding from the Metro Mayors Caucus. In 2019, The Denver Foundation challenged metro area mayors to recommit to the fund by matching or exceeding a new grant totaling \$50,000. In response, more than 30 mayors pledged nearly \$70,000 and the Fund has attracted an additional \$10,000 in private sector contributions.

The Flex Fund covers move-in costs like security or utility deposits and pro-rated rent as well as landlord mitigation. Nonprofit providers of housing and services for those experiencing homelessness can apply to the fund to assist residents across the region. Last year, the fund helped households in Aurora, Boulder, Commerce City, Castle Rock, Denver, Lakewood, and Thornton among others.

“Having a safe place to call home is foundational – it is essential to the success of our families, schools, communities, and our regional economy. But in our high cost housing market, many of our coworkers, neighbors, and family members are at risk of homelessness,” said Wheat Ridge Mayor Bud Starker, who chairs the Metro Mayors Caucus committee on Housing, Hunger and

– more –

Homelessness. “That’s why we created the Flex Fund at Metro Denver Homeless Initiative. We’re grateful that these additional funds are available to address critical needs for more people.”

“A recent survey revealed that 40% of Americans could not pay an unexpected \$1,000 expense. A single missed paycheck, the loss of a job, an unexpected illness or medical expense, or a family breakup can propel a household into homelessness or keep them trapped in homelessness. The individuals and families living with this reality need immediate and meaningful support to secure permanent housing, which is the essential first step toward stability,” said M. Julie Patiño, Director of Basic Human Needs for The Denver Foundation. “We commend mayors throughout the region for coming together to support critical housing needs and for recognizing that we need regional, unified approaches to address homelessness and housing insecurity.”

The Flex Fund is already making a difference, says Matt Meyer, PhD, Executive Director of the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative. “Property owners willing to rent to our community’s most vulnerable members in a high cost, low-vacancy rental market are very hard to come by, and for households with lots of barriers, it takes months to find a unit.” Meyer points to two recent examples of residents helped by the Flex Fund:

- After four months of living in emergency shelter, a family of six found a landlord willing to accept their rental voucher. The voucher, however, would not cover the \$2,600 security deposit. A case manager at the shelter applied for Flex Fund assistance on behalf of the family and was able to quickly secure funds to cover the deposit before the property was rented to a different applicant.
- An individual who has experienced homelessness in the past and now resides in low-income, subsidized housing fell behind on rent and utility payments after a series of unexpected hospitalizations. She was able to obtain assistance for the past due utilities but remained at-risk of losing housing because of unpaid rent. One-time support from the Flex Fund paid off the remaining amounts owed in rent to help her remain housed.

Metro Denver Homeless Initiative is working to increase awareness among housing and homeless services providers across the region about the Flex Fund. Learn how to access the Flex Fund here – https://www.mdhi.org/flex_fund – or by contacting Matt Meyer, Metro Denver Homeless Initiative, matt.meyer@mdhi.org, 720.544.3352.

For additional information on how to further supplement the fund, contact Catherine Marinelli, Metro Mayors Caucus, catherine@metromayors.org, 720.280.3358.

For additional information about the Flex Fund and reporting on the fund, contact Laura Bond, lbond@denverfoundation.org, 303.300.1790; or

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The Denver Foundation is a community foundation that inspires people and mobilizes resources to improve life in Metro Denver. In 2017, the Foundation and its donors awarded more than \$66 million in grants. The Denver Foundation has three roles: stewarding an endowment to meet current and future needs for Metro Denver, working with community leaders to address the core challenges that face the community and managing more than 1,000 charitable funds on behalf of

individuals, families and businesses. To learn more about The Denver Foundation, visit www.denverfoundation.org.

Metro Denver Homeless Initiative leads and advances collaboration to end homelessness, working closely with each county in the Metro Denver Continuum of Care (CoC) region (Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, and Jefferson counties) to coordinate services and housing for people experiencing homelessness and build a homeless crisis response system that gets people back into housing as quickly as possible.

Metro Mayors Caucus is a nationally-recognized, voluntary membership organization for mayors in the Denver metropolitan region. Founded in 1993 and the first of its kind in the nation, the Metro Mayors Caucus is a unique forum that fosters personal relationships and uses dialogue to identify common purposes, challenges, and solutions that benefit the region and its forty member municipalities. Collectively, mayor members of the Caucus represent more than 2.5 million Coloradans.