

# WARREN VILLAGE

# FIRSTSTEP

Living in poverty has an impact beyond stress; it can also result in feelings of fear, hopelessness, and prioritization of daily survival over long-term planning. From day one, Warren Village's goal has been to help low-income, single-parent families make the journey from poverty to self-sufficiency.

## STRONG FOUNDATIONS *are Built Here*

Warren Village First Step is a service-intensive housing program that functions under the comprehensive program model of Warren Village. It includes the following holistic components:

### Safe & Affordable Housing

With safe, consistent and affordable housing, families can break the cycle of poverty and achieve self-sufficiency. First Step is a one-year community living program for women with children, serving 11 families at a time. On-site supportive services provide the tools and resources that empower residents to better support their families in the future.

### Program

Residents must participate in weekly meetings with their Family Advocate. Goals are assessed upon entry and throughout the length of residency at First Step. These goals are based on immediate areas of concerns identified by the resident and sequential programming goals. These goals are all directed to reduce barriers in order to sustain employment, increase financial potential, stabilize health, family and permanent housing.

### Eligibility

First Step conducts an intake interview, that screens applicants for goals, motivation for change, barriers to employment, as well as appropriate fit for community living. We cannot accept undocumented residents, or people with recent violent criminal history or sexual offenses. Applicants must be at least 18 years old and experiencing homelessness. They may be working on their High School Diploma or GED while living at First Step.

464 WOMEN AND CHILDREN SERVED SINCE 2007



## PROGRAM MODEL



First Step has been funded by the City of Denver since its inception in 2007.



## OUTCOMES

In 2019, First Step housed 21 families an average length of stay of 10.7 months, after which time:

- 71% increased employment income
- 38% obtained need-based financial benefits
- 70% found permanent subsidized housing
- 70% of families participated in mental health treatment
- Three families participated in intensive preventative family therapy through partnership with Tennyson Center for Children

## SUCCESS STORIES - JOHNNITA

Johnnita experienced a lifetime of abuse from her family members, which caused ongoing anxiety and trauma. She recognized that she needed support and stability in order to change the trajectory of her life and the lives of her children. After months of unstable housing with her children, she was referred to Warren Village First Step.

"I recall pulling up to the First Step house for my interview, and immediately felt a sense of home, with the lush gardens and sunflowers," said Johnnita. After learning more about the program and what it offered in terms of support and safe housing for her family, she was ready to move in. When she learned that volunteers from Frontline Farming, which sits adjacent to the property, regularly bringing fresh vegetables over for the residents, Johnnita felt a sense of community that had been lacking in her life. She realized Warren Village First Step was not just a place to rest her head, but a home and a place she and her kids could have a physical space that was theirs where they could shower regularly and be able to accumulate belongings once again.

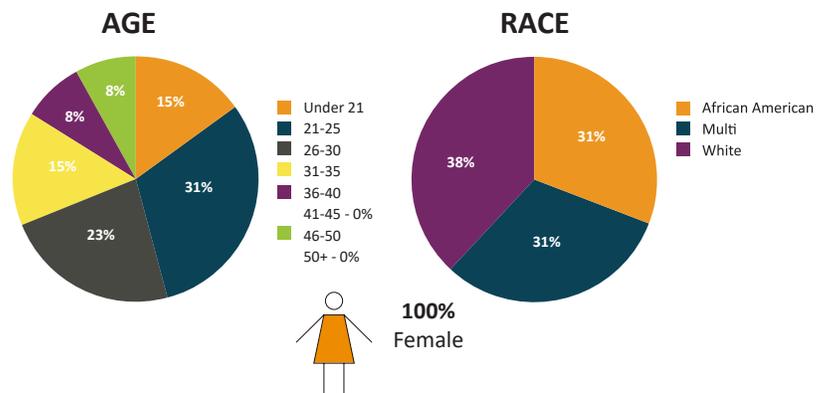


Johnnita embraced every opportunity that First Step offered, including the Life Skills Classes, which taught her valuable personal organization skills, goal setting, and mindfulness exercises. Every aspect of living at First Step gave Johnnita the skills she needed to cross the bridge to self-sufficiency. While working with her advocates there was always an open door and a listening ear. "My advocates helped me develop a clear plan, process, and resources which lessened my fears. First Step gave me a voice, at a time when I could not speak for myself!"

## FIRST STEP FAMILIES

### Participation

Residents must be able to maintain a part-time schedule of employment and/or education. They must participate in on-site weekly life skills classes and meetings with their Family Advocate. Rent is set at \$25 per month. Warren Village First Step is a member of the Credit Builders Alliance, which gives residents the opportunity build credit without assuming additional debt by paying rent on time.



## GET INVOLVED

### Building the First Step Community Together

We appreciate the support and compassion that our volunteers have for our residents and their efforts in making a difference through:

- Hosting a Community Night with a group by providing dinner and activities for resident families.
- Providing enriching children's programming while parents participate in Life Skills classes.
- Sponsoring move-out boxes full of first home supplies (silverware, plates, cooking utensils, shower curtains, etc.).
- Pitching in with property beautification projects, such as maintaining the garden, painting, or cleaning.



### Donate

100% of individual donations go directly to resident services. Donations for First Step can be mailed to 1323 Gilpin St., Denver, CO 80218, Attn: Monica Cox.

## INTERESTED IN HOUSING?

To apply for housing at Warren Village First Step, please contact Program Manager, Tori Ciucci-Walley by calling 303.477.3843 or emailing [tcuucci@warrenvillage.org](mailto:tcuucci@warrenvillage.org) to complete an eligibility prescreen. Please note: applicants will need valid identification, a birth certificate and a social security card. A criminal background check will be conducted.