

How Supportive Housing Providers Can Partner with Denver Police Department

Denver Police Department (DPD) personnel are often on the front line of responding to street homelessness, and they have a strong interest in Denver's strategy to move more individuals from homelessness to housing. This document outlines their recommendations on how police and Supportive Housing projects can work together as partners.

When You're Considering a Site for a New or Renovated Building

As your first contact, reach out to the DPD District Commander who oversees policing in the district where your potential building is located. They may involve others such as sector lieutenants or Community Resource Officers (CROs). Reach out as early as possible, definitely before beginning site or building design work or before community outreach begins. Neighbors will be reassured knowing DPD has been consulted, and early consultation makes it more likely DPD will be prepared and comfortable helping to answer questions or reassure neighbors later in the process.



ASK

- About crime trends in the area, any particular risks to be aware of
- For a consultation on Crime Prevention and Safety through Environmental Design (including entrances/exits and landscaping features)
- Who your point of contact should be going forward

SHARE

- Size of building being contemplated
- Anything you know about resident selection/who will be served (or when you will know that information if not until later in the process)
- Types of services that will be offered
- Whether spaces or services will only be used by residents or by external community members as well

DISCUSS

- Supportive housing/housing first model you'll be using
- Approach to community outreach/engagement
- How to stay in communication

As Projects Become Solidified, Neighborhood Outreach Begins



Remember, DPD CROs often attend routine neighborhood meetings where the project isn't on the agenda, so they are likely to get questions even when the proposed housing team is not present. CROs can be a great resource to help facilitate dialogue between neighbors and housing teams, and even among residents of supportive housing later.

DISCUSS

- Aspects of the services and building that promote stability and safety
 - A) A service approach that engages with residents on a frequent basis, a building team that will be aware of how residents are doing and can intervene early if challenges arise
 - B) Services that help promote resident stability, the evidence behind those service models
 - C) Elements of Safety through Environmental Design that will be incorporated
 - I. Lighting
 - II. Location of entrances/front desks/cameras to keep “eyes” on things
 - D) Front desk staffing hours
 - E) Any additional safety-related features (e.g. cameras)

- Lease requirements
 - A) How property management and service providers will problem-solve any challenging behaviors
 - B) Situations when an eviction or mutual agreement to rescind a lease might be used

- Questions DPD may get from the public, their comfort level with attending community outreach events and/or answering questions about the safety of the proposed building

INFORM DPD

- Of any websites, handouts or materials that will be shared with neighbors

- About public meetings or open houses

As You Prepare for and Open your Building

PLAN



- Protocols for any police calls to the building, for example:
 - A) If staff is calling – requesting a co-responder if mental illness is involved
 - B) If a resident called – checking in with any on-site staff before responding to non-emergency calls
 - C) If no staff is present – where to leave a copy of the “contact card” so the building team knows what happened
 - D) Who DPD’s point of contact should be when a conversation is required
 - E) Whether or how property management and service staff will follow up on any police calls inside the building
 - F) How DPD can best direct residents they come into contact with back to the services/staff within the building (what really is available on site or not)
- Schedule regular communication, especially in the early weeks/months as a building is transitioning new residents all at once, to discuss any questions and/or concerns from staff, residents or neighbors to problem-solve follow-ups
 - A) Buildings may want to request a “Good Neighbor Report” so they can track calls to their address and/or the larger neighborhood. Registered Neighborhood Organizations will likely be tracking this info
- Education and training for residents on when to call police vs. other methods for handling conflicts or concerns that may not actually require police involvement

Areas Where Extra Communication and Problem-Solving with DPD May be Helpful or Necessary

- When guests or visitors come into the building
- Concerns from DPD about arrests/activities of known residents that did not occur in the building (and therefore aren’t actionable under the lease) they believe may pose a safety concern for other residents
- Whether/how DPD might help work with residents within a building to develop resident-led strategies for handling concerns or conflict among residents inside a building: One police district help set up a Neighborhood Watch on each floor of an affordable housing building in response to residents’ desires to have more influence over the activity that occurred where they live, giving them a greater sense of pride in the building and their neighbors.

About This Document

DPD was a key partner helping to identify individuals to serve with the Social Impact Bond, and several police districts have worked with other supportive housing providers in their districts. In an effort to pave the way for deeper understanding and partnership between supportive housing providers and the department, police districts were surveyed about their experience and provided recommendations for supportive housing providers. In January 2020, key personnel from DPD attended a training on supportive housing to learn more about the model and how it is being implemented in Denver. These recommendations are based on those surveys/conversations. This document was published in April 2020. Contact Councilwoman Robin Kniech: KniechAtLarge@denvergov.org or at 720.337.7712.