

Central Iowa
Shelter & Services
Fiscal Year 2019-2020

IMPACT Report

Since 1992 Central Iowa Shelter & Services' mission is to provide low-barrier shelter, meals and support services at no cost to adults experiencing homelessness and to facilitate their move toward self-sufficiency.



The "Give A Ham" brings joy and breakfast to the people staying at CISS during the holiday season each year. A partnership between the Iowa Pork Producers, the National Pork Board and Fareway, "Give A Ham" brings elected officials and business leaders together each year to serve breakfast to our community's most vulnerable.

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A Message from our CEO



Melissa O'Neil

Melissa O'Neil
CEO, Central Iowa
Shelter & Services
(CISS)

Dear Friends,

Reflecting on the 2019-20 fiscal year, we are struck by the feeling of being **BOLD**.

Undoubtedly, to be BOLD is most evident in the life-changing impact our mission has made on the men and women who walked through our doors. Our team works every day to bring programs and services to our community's most vulnerable. Here, we provide an overview of our programs and services. Please read at your leisure and feel free to reach out to me or any of our board members with questions and/or ideas for the future.

CISS is much more than a shelter, however. And to be BOLD means to step out of the mainstream and work to always improve. Organizationally, we have not shied away from transforming how we do our work so that we can best address homelessness in our communities. There are three areas our team and the board of directors have focused on in the past year:

Affordable Housing: In August of 2019 we were awarded \$2.7 million dollars from the National Housing Trust Fund to build 24 new apartments (29% increase in our portfolio) With the Support from Federal Home Loan Bank (\$1 million) the City of Des Moines (\$400k) , Polk County Supervisors, (\$400k), Polk County Housing Trust Fund (\$250k) and Jack Hatch and Sonja Roberts (\$200k) we were able to raise the money necessary to fully fund the addition. We are eager to get this project started and completed in FY 2020/21.

Real Estate Feasibility Study: With the growing excitement around the construction of 24 new apartments, we decided it was a natural next step to partner with Shyft Collective to conduct a Real Estate Feasibility study on the Mulberry Street Corridor. The Real Estate Study was completed in June of 2020 and provided the community with a road map to end homelessness in Central Iowa. We will be sharing this information with business and political leaders, neighbors and other stakeholders in the coming months and make a few BOLD announcements in the coming year.

Greenhouse Expansion: In the spring of 2020 the Schoen Family announced the expansion of the Mulberry Farm and Food Greenhouse. Growing the greenhouse allows CISS to expand the job training program and increase our food production in our own backyard. This allows residents living with us, either in Shelter or in one of the affordable housing options, to get real life experience that helps them find employment and get back to self-sufficiency.

Pathway to Housing and Self-sufficiency: We began a unique client advocacy program in the summer of 2019 with the support of the United Way of Central Iowa, Delta Dental, Nationwide and the City of Des Moines. Approximately 2,156 people received shelter and housing through our programs and services this year. With the implementation of this new program, we were able to house people faster. In fact, our length of stay in the shelter went from 45 days average to around 30 days. And, during summer of 2020, we had the fewest people staying in our shelter since I started as CEO over four years ago.

I am proud of the work CISS does for Central Iowa! Working hand in hand with community leaders, funders and our neighbors, we can provide ways for our homeless population to find hope and regain their confidence. We can turn BOLD moves into a better quality of life for all of us.

CISS At Work to Help Homeless Have Hope

Shelter: With 150 emergency shelter beds, 19 efficiency apartments for Veterans and 38 section 8 efficiency apartments, CISS provides 207 beds to adult men and women wanting to work their way back to self-sufficiency. New this year, our Pathways to Housing & Self-Sufficiency program took an intentional approach to working with each person as they came to the shelter. During intake, our case managers worked to better understand each person's situation and to help them find solutions that worked. Oftentimes, people are unaware of the programs and services available to help them get back to work and/or find permanent housing. During FY 2019/20, the average length of stay was reduced substantially, from 45 days to 30.

During the spring months, when the pandemic started, we were able to work with community partners to move many of our clients to offsite locations that allowed for social distancing. We were also able to find permanent housing for 28 clients through funds from the CARES Act. These funds covered the deposit and first month's rent, expenses that many of our clients are not able to save for on their income.

Nutrition and Health: There is much research that shows the importance of nutritious food for a person to be able to problem solve and feel good. CISS operates its Mulberry Farm and Food programs from its commercial grade kitchen at 1420 Mulberry Street. Our kitchen prepares approximately 600 meals daily, 365 days a year for onsite "customers."

In addition to three solid meals per day, clients coming to the shelter receive health screenings. This service helps them find the additional care they need, whether that is as simple as helping them get the medicine they need for an infection or more time intensive as we help to guide them to the medical attention they need to improve their mental health.

Job Training: We offer three areas for job training: food production through our greenhouse, food service through our kitchen and janitorial.

Clients looking to build their skills in food production work in our Greenhouse. They learn to grow fruits and vegetables and are responsible for the harvest. Plans to "Grow the Greenhouse" are underway and will not only grow the physical size of the greenhouse but will include an Aquaponics system that will grow food faster and include fish in the production. Look for this project to get started in early 2021.

Once the food is harvested, the job trainees in the food service go to work. In addition to preparing 600 meals per day for onsite service, they also prepare food for our Summer Meals program. In 2018, CISS launched this program with 8 sites with the goal to bring a warm meal to kids in food insecure areas throughout the metro. It was a great success and has expanded to 16 sites and served over 100,000 meals this year.

Another job training opportunity while at the shelter is our janitorial program. Clients interested in learning how to clean commercial buildings join the training for three months and learn about purchasing supplies, cleaning, and customer service. We plan to work with area businesses in 2021 to expand this training program. Special Note: The cleaning teams at CISS have worked diligently to keep the building clean during the pandemic. We are proud to say that at the time of print for this document, there had not been an outbreak (3 or more cases at a time) in the building.



Members of our food service job training program prepare food for our Summer Meals program.



A youth group volunteers at the Shelter during the holidays.



Volunteers helping prepare breakfast for the annual "Give A Ham" event on Giving Tuesday.

CISS FAST FACTS

153 Veterans were served through our Veterans Housing programs.

219,000 meals were prepared and served onsite in our commercial-grade kitchen.

100,774 meals were prepared through our Mulberry Farm and Food program for Summer Meals.

248 individuals increased income upon exit

312 moved into housing from shelter

1500 people volunteered time to help at CISS giving over 18,000 hours of service or the equivalent of almost 9 FT positions.

Volunteers organizing the clothes in our Clothing Closet.

Dave Ellis **Chairman of the Board**

On behalf of the CISS board of directors, I want to say THANK YOU!

Our mission is to help homeless adults facilitate their way back to self-sufficiency. We know that the best way to do this is to help people gain new or different skills to secure a job and to help them find affordable housing. Both sound easy, and yet, employment and housing are two of the tallest hurdles the clients at the Shelter face.

Early in 2019, research came out showing Des Moines had an overwhelming shortage of affordable housing in the market. This is a big problem for our clients at the Shelter, because even as they work with our staff to get healthier and more employable, it is hard to find an apartment near public transportation that is in that \$500 per month range.

We are excited to be part of the solution with the CISS building expansion, which will bring an additional 24 affordable apartments to the area. And, after conducting our Mulberry Street Corridor Feasibility Study, we now have ideas for the area that will bring the neighborhood together for years to come.

It is this kind of BOLD thinking and partnering that has elevated CISS from being “just a homeless shelter” to being a strategic partner in housing, job training and community betterment.

We could not do this work without people like you. Thank you for taking the time to read about a few of our impacts on the community this past year. Our funders and volunteers help us create this positive impact, and we look forward to doing more in the coming years.

Sincerely,
Dave Ellis

