

Human Services Safety Net Mill Levy (HSSN) Fact Sheet

The HSSN: What is it?

- In November 2010, Boulder County voters approved Ballot Initiative 1A, a temporary 0.9 mill levy increase on property taxes. The purpose of the increase is to help fill a void left by state and federal cuts to funding for housing and human services programs during a time when need has been skyrocketing.
- The HSSN generates about \$5 million each year, for a total investment of about \$20 million through the end of 2014.
- The HSSN is scheduled to expire at the end of 2015, and Boulder County Commissioners have placed a proposed 15-year extension of the HSSN on the November 2014 ballot.

Why was it adopted?

- Boulder County's need for services like food assistance has increased over 120% since 2008 (from 8,900 to 20,000 people). For Medicaid programs, it's been a 162% increase (16,000 to 42,000 people). During this same time, federal and state cuts to safety net programs have not been restored, and many cities and counties continue to fall further behind the need in their communities.

What does it mean for homeowners?

- As an example, on a \$300,000 home in Boulder County, the 0.9 mill levy property tax amounts to \$21 per year.

What has it funded since 2011 and what have been the impacts?



Child Care: Nearly \$2 million in HSSN funding has gone to the Boulder County Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). The waitlist for CCAP, which had been closed due to budget cuts, was re-opened, and income limits for it were raised so more people could qualify; 300 additional children and their families are now receiving subsidized child care as a result; The Child Care Assistance Program's primary goal is to help parents maintain employment, find work, or get an education so they can stabilize themselves.



Housing: Nearly \$4 million in HSSN funding has gone to the county's Housing Stabilization Program, which (since 2008) has provided rental assistance for over 1,700 families at risk of homelessness, some of whom were displaced by the September 2013 Boulder County flooding; The funding has also supported the collaboration among many community partners around Boulder County: 777 of the HSP referrals have come from partner non-profits like OUR Center, Sister Carmen, and EFAA.



Health Coverage: About \$4 million in HSSN funding has been invested directly into supporting the county's medical and dental clinics that serve at-risk low-income families and individuals.



Basic Needs & Family Stability: the HSSN has invested **over \$6 million** in boosting *access* to services that families and individuals need to stabilize, like **food and financial assistance and health insurance**.

HSSN Return on Investment

- The HSSN has invested \$2 million into the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), helping ensure ongoing quality childcare for an **additional 300 children**; A recent [Harvard study](#) found the return (community savings by reducing expensive down-the-line services for children not benefitting from this investment) is nearly **\$13 for every \$1 spent** on early childhood development.
- The HSSN has invested over \$6 million in boosting access to basic needs like health insurance; Between October 2013 (the beginning of Affordable Care Act enrollment) and today, Boulder County has seen a 31% increase in Medicaid enrollment and a corresponding **monthly increase in Medicaid payments to area providers of about \$5 million (\$60 million per year)**.
- The HSSN has invested about \$4 million into the county's Housing Stabilization Program, which provides both rental assistance and other case management supports. Recent studies have found that **emergency shelter costs the community five to eight times more** (including mental health care, hospitalization, and correctional system costs) than housing stabilization services.
- The HSSN has invested over \$6 million investment in boosting access to basic needs like food assistance; Sodexo Foundation and Center for American Progress studies indicate that the **annual cost of hunger in the U.S. is between \$90 billion and \$167 billion** (including illness, poor educational outcomes, charitable contributions to address food insecurity).
- Foster care placement costs four times more (\$5,500 per month) than wrap-around family preservation services. The HSSN's investments (\$20 million between 2011 and 2014) have been utilized across all the major family support areas. During this time, Boulder County has safely decreased - by about 100 children - out-of-home placements by reducing neglect. This reduction has generated **an estimated \$1.7 million in annual savings** for Boulder County.