



Denver Mill Levy Services
at



2018 Annual Report





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Credits

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Rocky Mountain Human Services

(RMHS) is honored to serve Denver residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families. The Denver mill levy dedicated to Denver residents with I/DD helps to make our important work possible.

In this report, you'll read the stories of two families and one organization that have received mill levy support to meet their very different needs. All of the 4,265 Denver families who accessed mill levy dollars in 2018 had their own unique uses for this funding. That's what makes this source of funding and the way RMHS administers it so special. The RMHS Mill Levy Program supports individuals and families where and how they need it, and our service coordinators take pride in finding solutions personalized to the individual.

RMHS has made tremendous changes in its mill levy program in recent years that have resulted in about two-thirds of the mill levy funding we receive going to support organizations that are offering unique programs and provide direct support to address the individual needs of Denver residents with I/DD. We are leading the way statewide in using mill levy funds efficiently, effectively and transparently.

Thank you to Denver property-tax payers for your support of the I/DD community. Through our partnership with you, Denver Human Services and the City and County of Denver, we are supporting thousands of Denver residents with I/DD to pursue their vision for an improved quality of life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shari Repinski".

Shari Repinski
Executive Director



What Is the Mill Levy Program?

What is the RMHS Mill Levy Program?

In 2003, Denver residents approved a mill levy, or property tax, to support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in Denver.

Denver Human Services partners with Rocky Mountain Human Services (RMHS) to use the mill levy to achieve two common goals.

1. Increasing access to services.
2. Increasing options to address individual needs.

How does RMHS use the mill levy funding it receives?

RMHS uses mill levy funding in three ways:

1. Client-Directed Funds: To empower Denver residents with I/DD to directly access mill levy funds to meet their individual needs for services and support.
2. Community Partners: To support individuals, nonprofit organizations and businesses that provide unique I/DD services and support.
3. Enhanced RMHS Services: To provide additional support to Denver residents who access RMHS services by eliminating wait lists, enabling service coordinators more time to work with clients, and enhancing clinical programs.



RMHS Mill Levy Program

Who Received Services in 2018

Ages

Birth to Age 3 : **50 %**

Age 3 to 17 : **29 %**

Age 18 and Older : **21 %**

3,350
Children
(Ages 0 to 18)

915
Adults
(Ages 18+)

4,265
Individuals
(Total Population Served)

Ethnicity

Hispanic/Latino : **35 %**

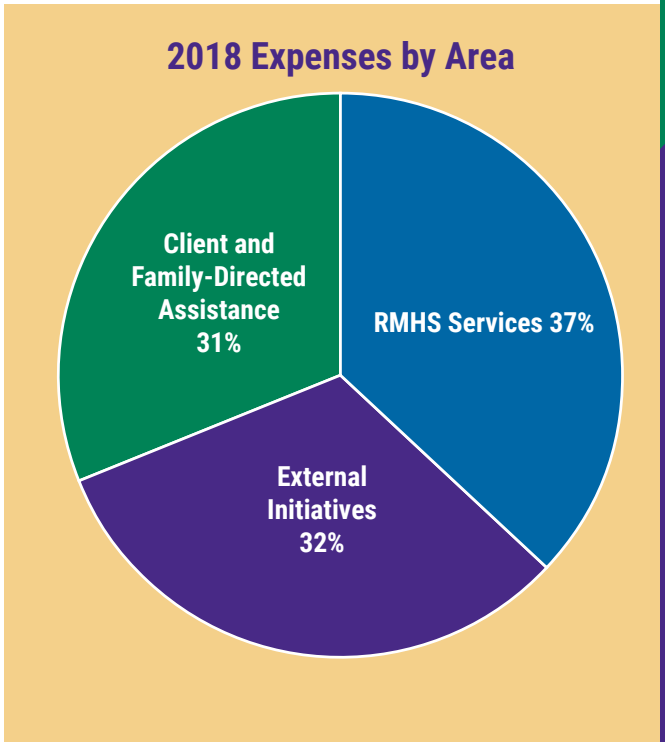
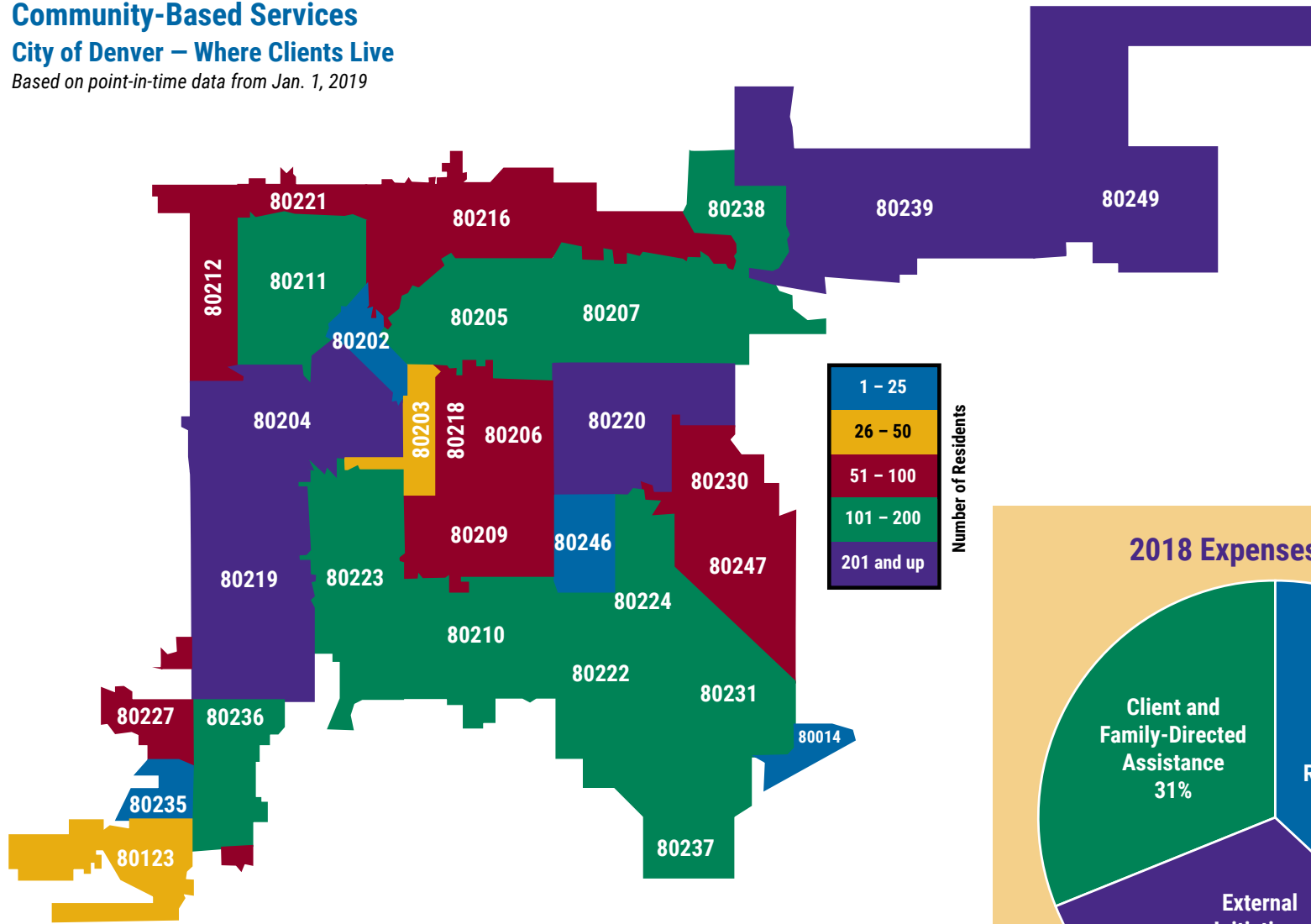
White : **44 %**

African American/Black : **13 %**

Other : **8 %**

Community-Based Services City of Denver – Where Clients Live

Based on point-in-time data from Jan. 1, 2019



Surrounding Families with Services and Support

Mill Levy Funding Provides Personalized Solutions for Young Family

Louis Reed unexpectedly became a single father of twins six years ago after his partner, Kate, gave birth to their daughters, Annika and Sasha.

Kate suffered an aneurism and stroke four days after childbirth that required emergency surgery and put her in a coma. She was left with a permanent traumatic brain injury and paralysis on the right side of her body. Kate remained at Craig Hospital for four months until she could come home to her family. Louis and the twins moved in with Kate's parents, Maggie and Ken Morris.

When Annika and Sasha were 2 years old, Sasha became a client of the Rocky Mountain Human Services (RMHS). Sasha was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and Dravet syndrome, a rare genetic dysfunction of the brain that causes seizures. She needs constant monitoring and a controlled environment for her safety.

Today, Sasha is in the state-funded Family Support Program, which provides support and services to families who are caring for family members from age 3 to age 17 with developmental delays or disabilities. The program surrounds families with the resources they need to achieve their goals. Case managers tailor support plans to each family. Services can include respite, assistive technology, parent and sibling support, and therapy.

If RMHS relied on state funding alone for the Family Support Program, more than 800 families would have been waiting for services in 2018. Mill levy funding eliminated the need for a wait list.

The mill levy has also helped Sasha's family in other ways. Last year, the girls' mother moved into a home for women with brain injuries, a major change for the twins. At the same time, their father was working toward becoming a certified nursing assistant, which would enable him and the girls to move out of Maggie and Ken's house. Sasha was getting bigger and faster and required a more manageable environment for monitoring. The move also allowed Maggie and Ken freedom to focus on Maggie's medical needs as she had been diagnosed with cancer.



Sasha's service coordinator put in a request for rental assistance through the RMHS Mill Levy Client Assistance Program, a program through which Denver residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities can request funding to meet their individual needs.

Then, their service coordinator went to work to find Louis and the twins a good place to live. The Client Assistance Program paid for the family's deposit and first month's rent for an apartment in the same school district with suitable programs to support Sasha's development.

RMHS Services

RMHS has used mill levy funding internally to:

- Reduce wait time for children from birth to age 18 to receive assessments for developmental delays and disabilities, so they can receive therapies as soon as possible (Early Intervention).
- Provide additional funding beyond state dollars for direct services and case management for families of children ages 3 and older with I/DD (Family Support Services Program). Without mill levy, more than 800 individuals would wait for services.
- Clients enrolled in Medicaid waivers can access additional services, including day habilitation, respite, transportation and residential habilitation, through mill levy funding.
- Offer trainings, such as first aid, to family members and providers.
- Implemented a wait-list coordinator position to ensure people waiting for other services are accessing mill levy-funded services as needed.



"It's traumatic enough that mommy's not here," said their grandmother, Maggie. "Now, the girls get to stay in the same school, and it's close enough that we can get them after school."

Louis started his new career in January 2019. It would've taken the family a lot longer to save the money for a deposit without the RMHS Mill Levy Client Assistance Program.

Client Assistance funding also paid for a trampoline that allows Sasha to release energy in a contained way, special lamps that help her sleep, a sensory swing and a weighted blanket. These items have helped her adapt to her new environment.

"RMHS has just helped us tremendously," Maggie said. "It's been a really rough road, and they've been there every step of the way."



RMHS Services

RMHS Programs Providing Mill Levy-Funded Services	2018 Mill Levy Funding
Early Intervention	\$ 736,738
Family Services and Support	718,080
Life Essentials Provider Network	597,990
Service Coordination	1,031,655
Children's Clinical	1,428,426
Behavioral Health	244,055
Community Outreach and Communications	147,179
RMHS Initiatives	170,000*
Total	\$ 5,074,123

*2018 total is an estimate due to changes in budget structure across two contract terms.

Internal Support

Mill Levy Program Helps Blind Teen See

*Gustavo Finally Saw His Mom's Face
for the First Time*

Eighteen-year-old Gustavo Garcia may be legally blind, but that doesn't mean he can't see.

With relatively new technology, Gustavo can read and learn more easily in school, see the faces of his friends and family, and so much more.

"I can see almost like anyone else," Gustavo said.

The adaptive technology is a pair of digital glasses – eSight – designed to give the blind sight. The glasses cost between \$6,000 and \$10,000, but thanks to the Rocky Mountain Human Services (RMHS) Mill Levy Client Assistance Program, the glasses were free to Gustavo's family. Denver residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities can request funding to meet their individual needs through the Client Assistance Program.

Gustavo has been an RMHS client for most of his life. His journey toward gaining sight began when his mother, Xochith, discovered eSight on Pinterest. The family researched more and were able to access a pair for Gustavo to try at an event. Gustavo put on the glasses and found he could see his mother's face and read without assistance, bringing tears to Xochith's eyes.



The glasses can help people with a wide variety of conditions that cause blindness. In Gustavo's case, his optic nerve didn't fully develop. Gustavo is also on the autism spectrum, and he started losing his hearing at age 15. This makes the gift of sight all the more valuable.

The Garcia family was struggling with medical and financial hardships when they were introduced to the technology. Gustavo's father, Ricardo, had been diagnosed with a heart problem. He could no longer work as an auto-body technician. They were forced to dig into Ricardo's retirement to pay home and medical expenses, almost losing the house where Gustavo has spent the last 15 years of his life.

Xochith discovered she was eligible to be paid as a family caregiver for Gustavo through a state program, and Ricardo found he was able to get disability income that saved their house. The combined income is supporting the family while Ricardo waits for heart surgery that could put him back to work.

Xochith still knew she had to find a way to get Gustavo eSight glasses – the only problem was the price. But their RMHS Service Coordinator Emily Fraser thought that the RMHS Mill Levy Client Assistance Program might cover the cost. About two weeks later, Gustavo's request for mill levy funding was approved.

Now, the glasses will help Gustavo in high school and support his goal of going to college.

Gustavo wants to eventually become a motivational speaker and help others with similar disabilities overcome challenges. His advice: "Keep pushing through it," because things get better.

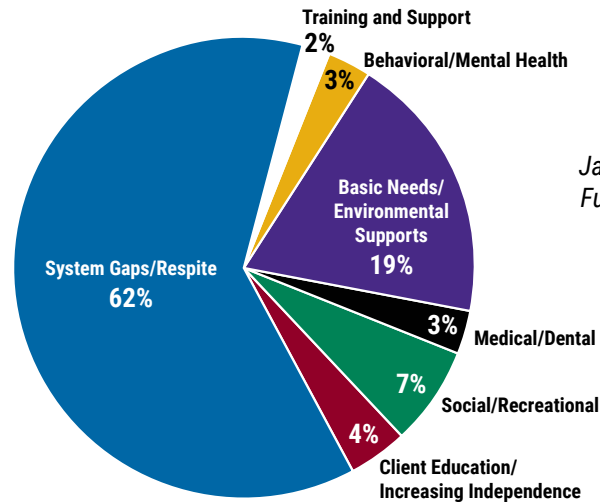
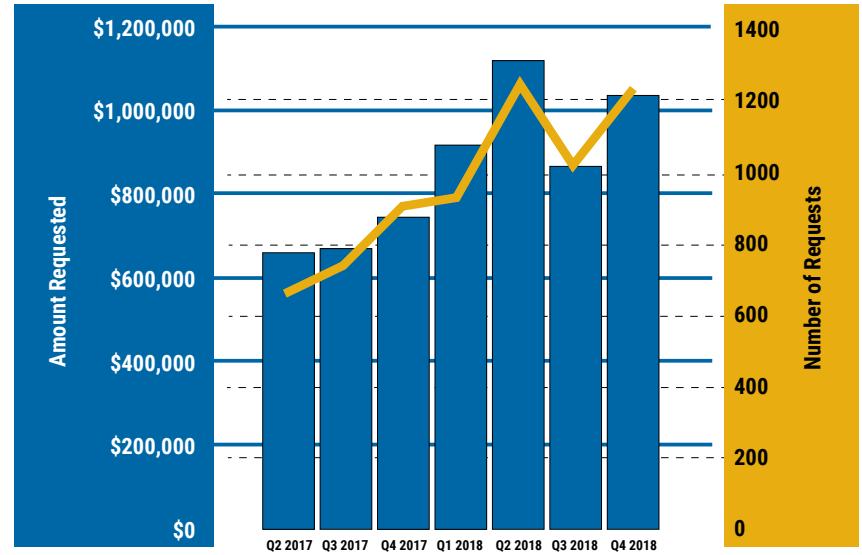
Gustavo is looking forward to the day when his hearing can be fixed, too.

"Now that I have the eyes, I'm waiting for the ears," he said.



Client and Family-Directed Funds

Individual Requests



January 2018 – December 2018
Funding for Individual Requests
by Category

Client Assistance

Connect Us Harnesses Power of Play

*Metro-Area Nonprofit Is Among
2018 Denver Mill Levy Funding Recipients*

A group of school-aged children are clustered around a volleyball net. One team serves and a water balloon sails through the air, exploding on a now drenched opposing team, causing a second explosion of laughter and cheers. This was the scene on water day at a Connect Us summer camp.

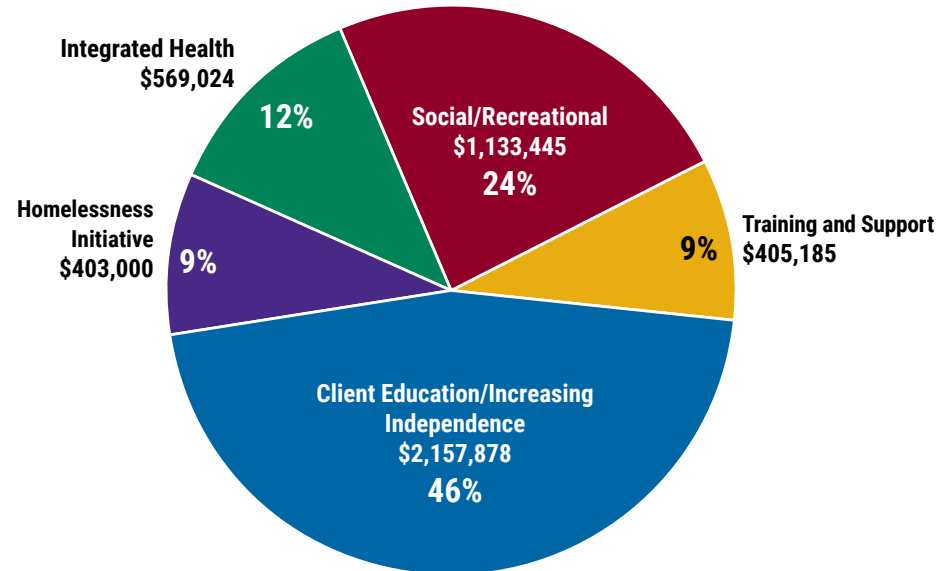
This may sound like a typical summer camp, but something different is at play. Children who are typically developing and children with disabilities are having fun together. Connect Us, a metro area nonprofit, is dedicated to connecting kids through the power of play.

"We all want to be connected," said Stephanie Schiff, Connect Us founder and executive director. "We have an innate desire to make friends and develop positive relationships."

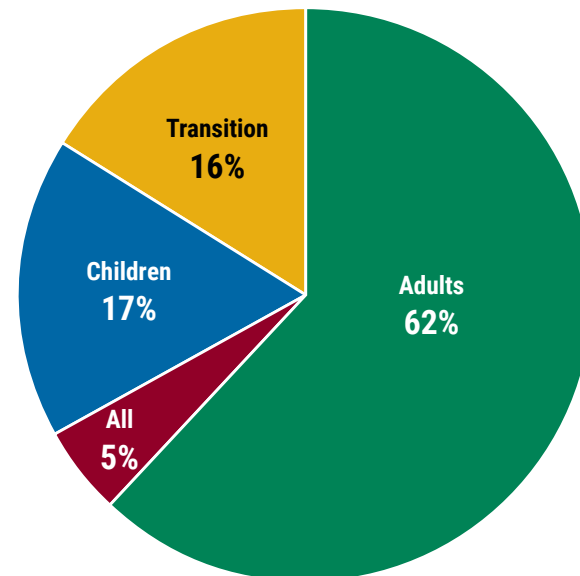
Schiff founded Connect Us in 2009 after watching her 5-year-old son struggle socially. She observed the hurdles her son faced on the playground and dedicated herself to creating a safe environment for children to play. The pilot program was a weekly summer camp.

Today, Connect Us does much more, including recess facilitation and after-school groups, but the mission has remained the same – to develop the skills in young children necessary to becoming socially competent, self-confident and resilient individuals through physical, creative and collaborative play in a guided learning environment.

2018 External Initiatives by Priority Area



2018 Budget Amount by Ages Served



In 2018, the organization celebrated its 10th anniversary summer camp. The camp is physically located in Greenwood Village, so attendees are primarily Arapahoe County residents. In 2018, Connect Us served significantly more Denver children, thanks to mill levy funding through Rocky Mountain Human Services (RMHS). Connect Us used the funding to provide scholarships to 12 Denver children with disabilities.

RMHS, in collaboration with its Community Advisory Council, selects organizations and companies to receive mill levy funding for programs that provide unique services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In 2018, 21 "external initiatives" received RMHS mill levy funding.

"Connect Us is harnessing the power of play to support children to be empowered and have the tools necessary to be self-confident, resilient and feel successful with their peers," Schiff said.

2018 RMHS External Initiatives Mill Levy Recipients

Ability Connection Colorado: RAMP Extension Program
Active Community Access

Arts & Community Exploration - ACE (Jewish Family Service)
ASPEN Program (Tennyson Center for Children)

Autism Society of Colorado: Autism 101 Community and Police Training
Colorado Cross Disability Coalition: Probate Power

Denver Regional Council of Governments: DD Network of Care Website
Guided by Humanity Yoga

Homelessness Project (CFPD)

Laradon Early Intervention Family Navigator
Laradon Expansion of Behavioral Services

Parent to Parent

Pizzability

Project World (Activity Options)

Resource Ability (Financial Health Institute)
REVEL: Mentor Program

Self-Employment Education (Celebrate EDU)
Social Inclusion (Connect Us)

StellarCare Vacations

Supported Employment Collaborative: Goodwill & Jewish Family Service
T.A.C.T.

THRIVE: Project Independence

The Wayfaring Band

RMHS Community Advisory Council

Pamela Bisceglia, Chair

Lynette Johnson

Brian Lewno

Tim Lomas

Anne Patton



External Initiatives

Denver Mill Levy Services
at



Rocky Mountain Human Services | 9900 East Iliff Avenue | Denver, CO 80231 | P: **303.636.5600** | www.rmhumanservices.org

Colorado Springs | 17 South Weber Street | Colorado Springs, CO 80903 | 719.323.2600

Pueblo | 111 North Union Avenue | Pueblo, CO 81003 | 719.649.2974