

Briefing - DHS IDDEAS DENVER START CONTRACT AMENDMENTS

Summary

DHS IDDEAS program staff request City Council approval of low-cost extension amendments to the following contracts:

- **DHS Contract with RMHS to implement and administer the Denver START program**, a nationally recognized, evidenced based crisis prevention and intervention program for Denver residents age 6 and up with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and mental behavioral health needs (MH/IDD). **(Scheduled for review by the Safety, Housing, Education, and Homelessness Committee on September 4, 2024)**
- **DHS Contract with University of New Hampshire National Center for Start Services** (UNH NCSS) NCSS to provide training and consultation to RMHS on the development of the Denver START program. **(Ordinance request anticipated in next several weeks; currently pending CAO review and vendor signature)**

Funds are already appropriated and available in the IDDEAS program budget.

Amendments Overview

RMHS Denver START Program development and administration

	Current Contract	Amendment
Term Length	3 years	10 month extension
Term Dates	9/1/2021 – 8/31/2024	New end 6/30/2025
Maximum Budget	\$5,663,864	\$5,700,266 (add \$36,420)

UNH NCSS training, consultation, and certification to the RMHS Denver START Program

	Current Contract	Amendment
Term Length	3 years	10 month extension
Term Dates	9/1/2021 – 8/31/2024	New end 6/30/2025
Maximum Budget	\$599,072	\$623,174 (add \$24,102)

Background - Denver START Program

A comprehensive model developed by the University of New Hampshire’s National Center for START Services, START optimizes independence, treatment, and community living for persons with IDD/MH ages 6 and up. The Denver START Program is being developed in response to the 2018 [Needs Assessment for Residents with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities](#) and the 2019 [IDDEAS Advisory Council](#) recommendations for the IDDEAS Program to address gaps in adequate mental health services for people in Denver with I/DD. In 2021, DHS awarded to Rocky Mountain Human Services (RMHS) a competitively procured contract to develop a START program for Denver residents with I/DD, as well as a sole-source contract with UNH NCSS to provide training and consultation to RMHS on the development of the Denver START program.

Approval of these amendments will provide the time needed for the Denver START program to achieve certification from UNH NCSS and solidify the foundation for the ongoing successful operation of the Denver START program to support the needs of Denver's residents. Program certification was originally targeted for completion within Year 3; the extended timeline for certification aligns with the [National Center for START services standards for implementation](#).

Outcomes to Date

The development of the Denver START program has demonstrated strengthening our city's safety net for families with I/DD, particularly when they are experiencing crisis related to mental health, with impacts in the following areas:

- Since the program's inception, Denver START has served a total of **130 persons** (83 adults and 47 children) with an **active enrollment population of 70** at the end of June 2024. This is almost double the team's active census at the end of FY23.
- **Consistent trends in the reduction of emergency service use.** The Denver START crisis line with 24/7 support has responded to 364 calls. Of the **364 crisis line contacts**, 328 resulted in the person remaining in their community setting. (*See Appendix for Graphic Representations of this Data*)
- Culturally and linguistically competent services provided to diverse population of which a **majority of the people receiving services self-identified as a person of color** and supports for people speaking a variety of languages including Spanish and American Sign Language.
- Developed **8 institutional linkage agreements with community partners** to help enhance Denver's ability as a whole to meet the needs of this vulnerable population.
- Facilitated **38 community trainings** aimed at enhancing local capacity to support people with IDD/MH.
- Formed the **Denver START Advisory Council** composed of key community stakeholders who are critical partners for program success and help support the establishment of institutional linkage agreements through their professional expertise in the community.
- UNH NCSS has conducted **12 site visits** with the Denver START program providing consultation and training for the RMHS Denver START staff.

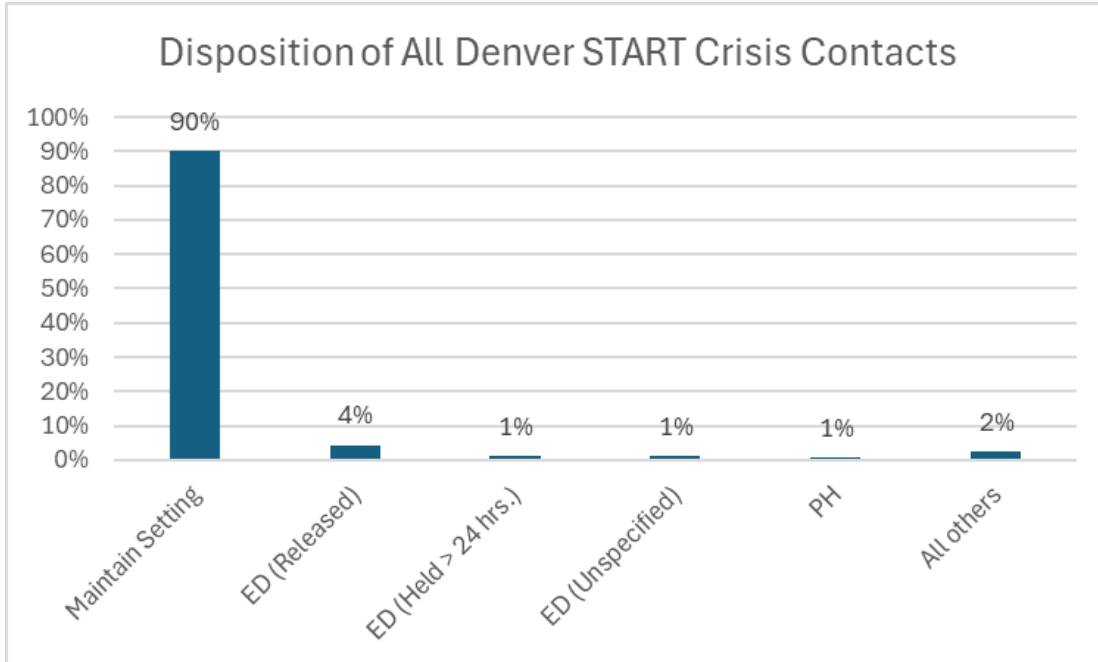
Denver START Program Status and Future

- **The RMHS Denver START program has been working closely with the UNH NCSS team and is on track for full program certification in January 2025.**
- Following certification, the UNH NCSS team will shift to providing ongoing support and training for the RMHS Denver START staff.
- DHS is working with RMHS on a plan to support continued Denver START program growth including initiating research into developing diversified funding sources.
- Anticipated cumulative enrollment of approximately 180 persons by the end of the updated contract term, with a projected active monthly caseload of 110 individuals.

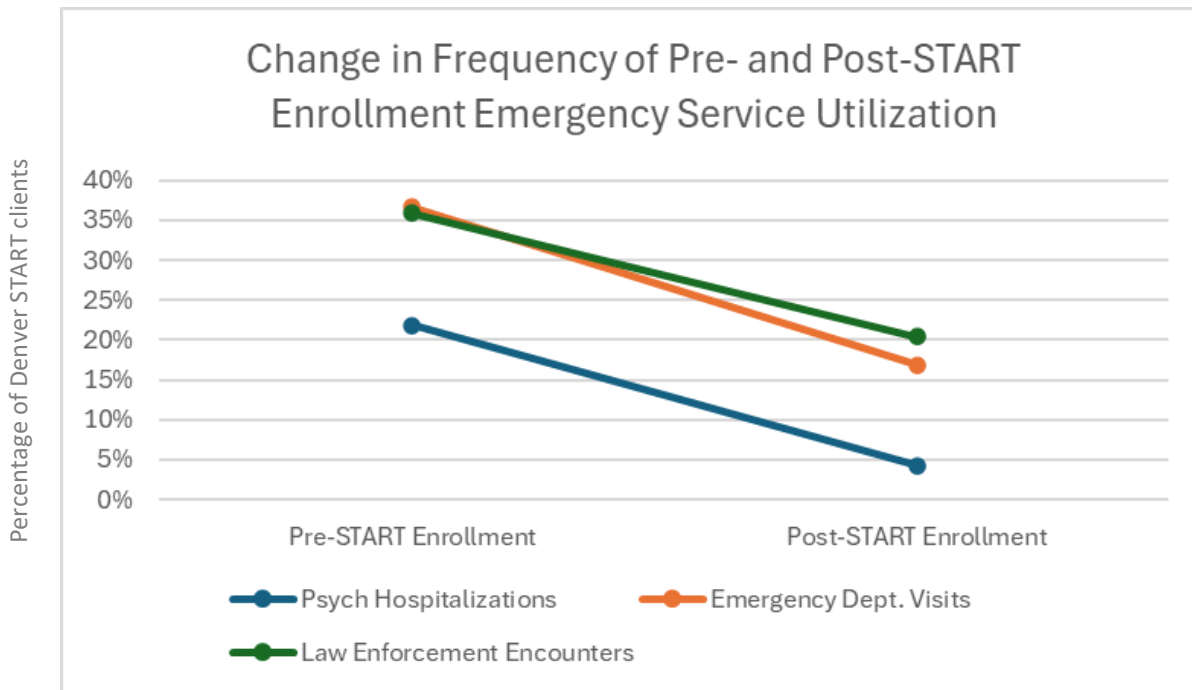
Questions?

Please contact DHS IDDEAS Program Manager Michaela Hennig (michaela.hennig@denvergov.org)

APPENDIX



Since Denver START began serving clients in June 2022, their 24/7 crisis line responded to 364 calls from clients in crisis. Of the 364 crisis line contacts, 328 (or 90%) resulted in the person remaining in their community setting. (NOTE: ED = emergency department; PH = psych hospitalization)



Percentage of START Clients that reported emergency service utilization in 12 months prior to START enrollment compared to percentage of START enrollees who reported emergency service utilization in period of time after START enrollment (range 1 - 28 months)