

**2015 ANNUAL
REPORT**

**COUNCIL
ON
HOMELESSNESS**



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Submitted to:

Governor Rick Scott

Senate President Andy Gardiner

House Speaker Steve Crisafulli

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Florida's Council On Homelessness

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carroll
Secretary

Shannon Nazworth
Chairperson

June 30, 2015

The Honorable Rick Scott
Governor
PL05 The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott,

On behalf of the Florida Council on Homelessness, its members and our multiple state agency partners, I submit the "Council on Homelessness 2015 Report" for your consideration.

In accordance with state law, the Council has prepared recommendations for reducing homelessness in our state. The report also summarizes the extent of homelessness and characteristics of the men, women and children who do not have their own home.

I want to thank the members of the Council for taking on this responsibility and working diligently to study the issue and identify targeted solutions. Their efforts are making a difference in helping reduce the number of Floridians without a place to live.

The 2015 Report reflects a significant reduction in homelessness in Florida. This is due in large part to Florida's improving economy. It is also a result of community partnerships between Continuums of Care, local commissions, nonprofits, faith organizations, local government and the private sector. There has been an especially positive reduction in the number of homeless veterans in our state. Several Florida Mayors and communities have made the commitment to end veteran homelessness by the end of this year; and they are making great progress in achieving this goal.

However, unfortunately, there are still thousands of Floridians without a home. But, Florida's successes to date show that homelessness is not an intractable issue; there are ways to significantly reduce homelessness. Florida must continue to work diligently to reduce the number of persons without a place to live.

The recommendations in this report are designed to build upon and expand the success Florida has achieved in recent years. The Council encourages several potential solutions, from providing flexible funding to supporting local initiatives to helping households with extremely low incomes. And the Council places an emphasis on the need to continue increasing the supply of affordable housing for our homeless neighbors. The lack of an affordable place to live is the number one cause of homelessness.

There is no doubt that effective private and public collaboration at the State and local levels combined with strong community participation is a key to solving homelessness, as is breaking down the barriers to talking about it. I congratulate this Council on their work to do just that, and we appreciate your continued support of these efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shannon Nazworth".

Shannon Nazworth
Chairperson

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

Executive Summary

In 2001, Florida created an inter-agency Council on Homelessness; implementing what is now a national best practice. The purpose of the Council is to develop policy and make recommendations on how to reduce homelessness throughout the state.

Pursuant to section 420.622(9), Florida Statutes, the Council on Homelessness submits its annual report to the Governor and Florida Legislature summarizing recommended actions to reduce homelessness, plus data concerning those persons currently experiencing homelessness in Florida.

In 2014, the Council made the following recommendations for reducing homelessness:

- Fund affordable housing,
- Support local homeless Continuums of Care,
- Provide flexible funding to help communities address homelessness,
- Conduct a pilot to gather Florida-specific data, and
- Support funding for educating Floridians about how to reduce the number of homeless neighbors in their communities.

The Governor, the Legislature and state agencies acted upon several of these recommendations.

- Fund affordable housing – As in 2013 – 2014, 2015 saw a majority of the state’s affordable housing trust fund dollars allocated to the production of affordable housing. The Council recommends that this will continue in 2016, with an increased emphasis on the housing needs of Extremely Low-Income and Special Needs households.
- Support local homeless Continuums of Care – \$200,000 was appropriated to Department of Economic Opportunity for training and technical assistance for local Continuums of Care. The Council recommends funding to support Continuums of Care be increased to \$3,000,000 recurring.
- Provide flexible funding to help communities address homelessness – in 2015 the Legislature appropriated \$3,800,000 in recurring funding from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to fund Challenge Grants, flexible grants designed to support local efforts to reduce homelessness. The Council recommends that the state will continue this much needed support.
- Conduct a pilot to gather Florida specific-data – In 2013, the Council recommended the prioritization of a state pilot to conduct a Florida-specific analysis of the benefits of providing permanent supportive housing to high utilizers of crisis services. Florida Housing Finance Corporation initiated this pilot project in 2014; selecting three pilot sites. These supportive housing developments are moving from development and construction to implementation. The Council recommends ongoing support of this pilot and its next phases of cost/benefits data collection and analysis. This effort is essential to continued sound public policy development in addressing the needs of chronically homeless persons.

Florida is making progress in reducing the number of persons experiencing homelessness. This is partially due to improved economic conditions. It is also due to local efforts, supported by the state. However, there is still work to be done to make Florida a leading state in addressing the needs of our homeless population. Of particular need throughout the state, and noted clearly in this report, is access to affordable housing.

On one day and one night in January 2015, local communities counted 35,964 persons who were living on the street or in an emergency shelter. This data covers all 28 Continuums of Care across the state.

Nationally, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development reports homelessness amongst families with children as the fastest growing homeless population. This is also true for Florida. For school year 2013-2014, Florida's public schools identified 71,446 students as homeless. This includes families that have lost their housing and are staying with family and friends.

The first section of this report is dedicated to defining and describing the extent and nature of homelessness in Florida. This, along with the Point in Time data submitted by our 28 Continuums of Care, helps better assess needs, and coordinate efforts and best practices to reduce and end homelessness.

Overview of Recommendations

The Council on Homelessness submits its recommendations for state action to reduce the number of Floridians who are without a home. These recommendations relate to supporting and building strong Continuums of Care; increasing and creating affordable and supportive housing; continuing the state pilot for high cost/high needs homeless persons.

These inter-related recommendations are:

1. Support for local homeless Continuums of Care.
2. Support state funding for community efforts to reduce homelessness.
3. The State of Florida should embrace best practices; sharing them at the state level and incentivizing their adoption at the local level.
4. Increase Access to Affordable Housing through Four Critical Actions:
 - Using all Affordable Housing Trust Fund dollars for affordable housing
 - Support Rapid Rehousing programs
 - Revise the Community Contribution Tax Credit Program to increase production of rental housing for homeless and special needs households
 - Incentivize development partners to support best practices in administering affordable housing resources toward housing persons with the greatest need
5. Create more affordable and supportive housing for persons with Extremely Low Incomes (ELI), especially homeless households and persons with special needs.
6. Continue the Governor's and Legislature's Support of Florida Housing's Permanent Supportive Housing Pilot for High Needs/High Cost Chronically Homeless Persons as it transitions from the development to implementation phase.

Homelessness in Florida

The Definition of Homelessness

There are four broad categories of homelessness contained in the Federal Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act:

1. Those persons living in a place not meant for human habitation, in emergency shelter, in transitional housing, or are exiting an institution where they temporarily resided. People will be considered homeless if they are exiting an institution where they resided for up to 90 days and were in shelter or a place not meant for human habitation immediately prior to entering that institution.
2. Those persons who are losing their primary nighttime residence, which may include a motel or hotel or a doubled up situation, within 14 days and lack resources or support networks to remain in housing.
3. Families with children or unaccompanied youth who are unstably housed and likely to continue in that state. This category applies to families with children or unaccompanied youth who have not had a lease or ownership interest in a housing unit in the last 60 or more days, have had two or more moves in the last 60 days, and who are likely to continue to be unstably housed because of disability or multiple barriers to employment.
4. People who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, have no other residence, and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing..

This definition applies to all programs funded through the Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Grants, administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. It is also the definition used in the annual Point In Time Count of people experiencing homelessness.

The public education system uses a different definition. Each year, school districts report to the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) the number of students identified as homeless according to this definition during the school year. This definition defines a person as homeless if they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including those who are:

1. Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason;
2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, and camping grounds, due to lack of adequate alternative housing;
3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
4. Abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care placement;
5. Living in a public or private place not designed for or used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings to live;
6. Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations; substandard housing or similar setting; and
7. Migratory children living in any of the above circumstances.

The Causes of Homelessness

Homelessness is a significant issue that affects thousands of Floridians intimately; and has a wide and varied impact on communities across the state. There are a host of issues that may lead to homelessness including job loss, family crisis, disabilities, and struggles with mental health and substance abuse. To adequately understand homelessness requires addressing and considering issues that include affordable and supportive housing, poverty, the needs of families and children, as well as many other factors. While the 'public face' of homelessness is often those experiencing long-

term chronic homelessness, the reality is that this problem spans demographics and populations in our communities.

It is fundamentally true that the primary cause of homeless is a need for available, adequate, and affordable housing. However, there are many other factors that lead to homelessness:

- Lack of employment (including employability skills)
- Financial struggle or crisis
- Medical issues
- Issues related to substance abuse and mental health
- Family crisis and problems
- Lack of a safety net and structure of care for those in crisis
- Relocation
- Immigration
- Natural disaster

As our economy continues to grow and rebound from the recent recession, with unemployment rates dropping and opportunities rising, many of our citizens facing and experiencing homelessness remain challenged with barriers to stable and adequate housing. The good news is that there are proven methods and interventions that give people the resources and tools to move out of the cycle of homelessness:

- Building and supporting collaborative partnerships among local and state governments and community stakeholders and providers;
- Supporting coordinated assessment within our continuums to match the key resources available with our most vulnerable populations;
- Increasing the amount of permanent supportive housing for those experiencing chronic homelessness;

- Supporting rapid rehousing programs; creating plans to prioritize and move resources toward rapid rehousing interventions at the state and local level;
- Building active engagement with all community partners to move toward Housing First practices in our 28 continuums.
- Accessing education and job training programs, including postsecondary education

Faces of Homelessness

There are many misperceptions and unhelpful stereotypes associated with homelessness. For instance, many people believe that people experiencing homelessness are mainly male with disabling conditions, substance abuse problems, and fundamentally are to blame for their homelessness. It is true that many suffer in a condition of chronic homelessness (long-term and repeated homelessness with a disabling condition), and they represent some of the most vulnerable among our communities' homeless populations. But these are not to blame for their homelessness; it is usually a result of their disabling condition. And this population accounts for only between 10 - 15% of homeless people around the state. In reality, homelessness touches men, women, children, families, and youth in our communities. The great majority of these people have faced trauma, crisis, and hardship that are outside of their control. They are in need of, and are actively seeking, care and services to assist them. It is important to consider these numbers in understanding who is touched directly by homelessness in our communities:

- Nationally and in Florida, over 30% of those experiencing homelessness are female;
- Roughly 1/3 of homeless people are in families with children;

- Nationally nearly one-third of all homeless people are children and youth; Florida school districts identified 71,446 children and youth who were homeless or unstably housed;
- In Florida schools and nationally, 11% and 8%, respectively of all homeless people are unaccompanied children and youth (one who is not in physical custody of a parent or guardian);
- Nationally, more than one in ten homeless adults across the nation was a Veteran (11% of 442,723 homeless adults).

The Cost of Homelessness

Homelessness affects local economies. It creates a higher demand for public services including health care, law enforcement, substance abuse and mental health programs, and access to education and social services. Homelessness – especially chronic homelessness - presents a high cost to our communities. People who are experiencing chronic homelessness are:

- More likely to need access to the most costly health care services; their housing situation renders them more vulnerable to ongoing conditions that cause them to continually cycle through hospitals and treatment facilities.
- More likely to spend time in jail or prison, often as a result of regulations against loitering, sleeping in cars or public places, and begging or panhandling. Recent studies have revealed that the homeless cycle in the prison and jail systems is a cost of \$14,480 per person, per year.
- More likely to cycle in and out of Emergency Shelter, which is of significant cost to our communities and not as affordable in the long run as providing rapid rehousing interventions and permanent supportive housing solutions.

A recent study conducted by the Central Florida Commission on Homelessness revealed that “the average annual cost to be homeless and cycling in and out of incarceration, emergency rooms

and inpatient hospitalizations was \$31,065 per person per year.” The study found that the cost of providing permanent supportive housing to even those in a long-term chronic homeless situation would be one-third of that cost per year, and would save the community millions of dollars over a multi-year period.

It is evident that equipping our Continuums of Care with the resources and funding they need to provide stable housing and proven solutions and interventions for the homeless individuals they serve will present a great return on investment for our state and communities.



A Snapshot of Homelessness in Florida – 2015 Point in Time Count

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requires that the homeless Continuums of Care conduct an annual count of homeless persons who are sheltered in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs and safe havens on a single night during the last ten days of January. Further, HUD requires that the continuums conduct a count of unsheltered homeless people every other year, on odd numbered years. For 2015, the state's 28 homeless Continuums of Care carried out their sheltered and unsheltered counts as required.

The objective is to produce an unduplicated count, or relatively reliable estimate of the number of homeless people in the community. The federally approved methods for the count include a report of all homeless persons identified, plus a statistically valid sampling to arrive at an unduplicated estimate. The unsheltered count methods typically are street counts, street counts with interviews, or screening and interviewing persons at supportive service agencies where the homeless seek help.

Conducting the point-in-time counts is challenging and requires many volunteers. The Continuums of Care across our state continue to make remarkable success in compiling the one-day counts. Even with these efforts, the results from year to year can be influenced by many factors, many of which are entirely outside the control of the Continuums of Care.

For 2015, the 28 continuums reported the total number of persons identified as homeless persons to be 35,964; compared to 41,335 in 2014. The 2015 count reflects a decrease of 5,371 homeless

persons, a reduction of nearly 13%. In 24 of the counties, the homeless population decreased from 2014. In 8 counties, the count reflects a 10-20% decrease compared to 2014. In 10 counties, the count reflects a decrease of more than 20% compared to 2014.

The Point In Time Count provides a snapshot of the persons experiencing homelessness on a given night. It does not reflect homelessness throughout

“The Pasco Point-in-Time count this year was a much more thorough activity. We have been able to reduce homelessness in Pasco by several new initiatives and programs. We utilized a state funded rapid re-housing program and utilized Emergency Solutions Grant funding to create several rapid re-housing programs. In 2014, the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) programs was introduced and many of our veterans received rental assistance. We have made a concerted effort to improve data gathering and assessment through HMIS and effectively utilize five resource centers to serve as a point of contact for the homeless and at-risk families and individuals.”—Eugene Williams, Executive Director, Coalition for the Homeless of Pasco County

the year. But it does provide a good barometer for how communities are doing overtime.

In reporting their counts results, the Continuums of Care identified a number of factors that impacted the totals, both up and down. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- Successful programs implemented in the county and increased funding to provide housing: increased funding for rapid re-housing programs, implementation of Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding in new agencies, more effective and concerted effort in Point in Time (PIT) count, and better utilization of Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data, and increased federal resources dedicated to ending homelessness among veterans – Support Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) and Veterans Administration Supportive Housing (VASH).
- Stricter enforcement of trespass ordinances made the street homeless less visible and harder to find and count;
- Changes were made in the method used for the count, including better recruitment of volunteers;
- Fewer emergency shelters that serve and target the homeless were identified than in prior years;
- Change in federal instructions limited shelter counts to only those facilities identified in the planning area's homeless housing inventory;

- Count results were adjusted to better ensure that only those who are literally homeless are reported, resulting in decreases particularly by eliminating school-age children and other homeless who are in jail;
- The lack of service providers in rural counties made it harder to identify, find, and count the homeless;
- Some Continuums of Care had fewer volunteers to carry out the count;
- More permanent supportive housing beds were available in 2015 reducing the number of chronically homeless persons;
- Weather conditions tend to have significant impact on the count from year to year.

Efforts to improve data quality, including developing consistent and better methodologies for conducting the Point in Time Counts are needed. While the decrease reflected in Florida's Point in Time Count for this year can be attributed to the efforts of our continuums to address the needs of the homeless as well as the increase in certain federal funding streams (especially to the focus to house the Veteran homeless population) into our communities – caution is needed in assessing these counts. Year-to-year comparisons at the community level can be misleading.



Addressing Homelessness in Florida

Building and Supporting Strong Continuums of Care

A Continuum of Care is a regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals. Each continuum has a local homeless assistance plan, providing a framework for a comprehensive and seamless array housing and services programs to address the various needs of those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. In the State of Florida there are 28 continuum of care planning areas with a designated lead agency coordinating and implementing their plan within their communities (see Appendix – Lead Agencies and Map of CoC across Florida).

Over the last six years Florida has witnessed remarkable change. There has been a new collaborative movement among human service providers, non-profits, governments, education systems, the faith-based sector, and community organizations and activists - coming together to support new ideas for reducing homelessness. At the forefront of this movement are concentrated efforts to:

- Improve collaboration with public and private entities
- Improve data gathering and utilize coordinated assessment
- Braid multiple funding sources across the spectrum of need in the continuum

Improving and Building Collaboration

Florida is experiencing a new era in innovative programs and services to assist those recovering from the economic recession and targeting families and individuals who are looking for a way out of homelessness. Communities committed to

permanent change, leading homeless and extremely low income households back to sustainability, have made great strides forward. At the forefront of many of these new and innovative collaborations are our communities Continuums of Care.

Through capacity building, collaboration, and technology, continuums work tirelessly to bring all service programs together and unite them, while focusing the limited available community resources on our most vulnerable populations.

This can only be accomplished when groups of concerned citizens and agencies come together and begin the process of creating honest long-range, comprehensive plans to prevent and end homelessness in their communities. Why? Because when all residents of a community are given a fair opportunity to succeed we all benefit.

Examples of these agencies can include:

- State agencies
- Federal agencies
- Law enforcement
- City and county Government
- Hospitals and clinics
- Faith-based organizations
- Private Foundations
- Local non-profit organizations

As these agencies and organizations are engaged, it is the job of the Continuum of Care to organize them in a way that accomplishes its primary purposes:

1. Promote communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness by engaging others in comprehensive strategic planning
2. Conduct the annual or biennial Point-in-Time (PIT) Count.

3. Implement a standardized intake and assessment by all community partners; screen clients for eligible services throughout the continuum.
4. Coordinate homeless services with other community systems of care.
5. Provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers and state and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused by homelessness. Continuums of Care oversee the Annual Continuum of Care Grant Funding Application from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, as well as multiple state funding opportunities.
6. Promote access to, and effective utilization of, mainstream programs.
7. Optimize self-sufficiency among people experiencing homelessness.
8. Oversee the continuum's Homeless Management Information System(HMIS).

Coordinated Assessment and Prioritization

Coordinated Assessment is defined to mean, "A centralized or coordinated process designed to coordinate program participant intake, assessment, and provision of referrals. A centralized or coordinated assessment system covers the geographic area, is easily accessed by individuals and families seeking housing or services, is well advertised, and includes a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool."

A core component of Coordinated Assessment provides public information on service access which is important in the efforts to end homelessness. Through Coordinated Assessment, not only do people know where to go for services, it matches homeless persons with needed assistance; and prioritizes and targets resources.

Coordinated Assessment is typically documented in HMIS, thereby enabling programs to review current

and prior assessments, as well as to evaluate program effectiveness. Entering all assessment data in HMIS provides more consistent and accurate information on what kind of assistance homeless individuals and families need.

Challenges, risks, and issues that Continuums of Care face in incorporating a good model in the continuum include closing the 'side doors', agreeing on an assessment tool and trusting outcomes entered by other programs. The assessment tool provides a procedure for determining which applicants are eligible and appropriate for the variety of housing and support services available in the community as well as other eligibility factors.

West Palm Beach/Palm Beach County CoC

Individuals and families in need of homeless prevention or homeless assistance access information and services through the Senator Philip D. Lewis Center Homeless Resource Center (HRC), which serves as the CoC's Central Point of Access. All individuals seeking assistance are screened at the HRC by a Navigator or by the Homeless Outreach Teams (HOT) during off-site outreach. The Navigators first complete a Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) or FVI-SPDAT over the phone; based on those scores, appointments are set for a full SPDAT (Service Prioritization Assistance Tool) at the HRC.

Individuals are evaluated on a variety of criterion, including: rental history; criminal history; domestic violence; mental health challenges; disabling conditions; language barriers; educational attainment; employment status; and length of homelessness. This information is gathered during the completion of the SDPAT and housing recommendations are made based on the SPDAT

Operation REVEILLE

On November 11, 2014, Veteran's Day, as part of a national goal to end Veteran homelessness by 2015, the Tampa Hillsborough Homeless Initiative (THHI), in collaboration with the City of Tampa and Hillsborough County, launched Operation: REVEILLE-Tampa/Hillsborough County.

Operation: REVEILLE provided up to 12 months of housing and services for 70 Veterans regardless of their discharge status; with 52 being housed on Veteran's Day. Each home was pre-furnished and stocked with food and household supplies. Over 90% of the Veterans that participated in Operation: REVEILLE was homeless. The remaining 10% were low-income home-owners that were in need of home repairs.

Operation: REVEILLE was initially developed in St. Louis in July 2014 and replicated in Tampa in November 2014. With only two months of planning, Operation: REVEILLE brought together over 350 volunteers and 50 vendors. Operation: REVEILLE was also able to leverage funds, in-kind services, and products from private corporations, public agencies, non-profit and faith-based organizations to provide immediate



permanent supportive housing with wrap-around case management services, birth certificates, identifications, employment, health care, dental, food, household supplies and connections to benefits such as social security, VA and food stamp.

Not only is this process easy replicable in other locales, but it can also assist with homeless youth, ex-offenders and chronically homeless persons.

Photos by Siva Beharry.

Operation: REVEILLE
provided up to 12 months
of housing and services for
70 Veterans



score. The scores are recorded and as beds become available, placement is offered to the individual or family with the highest SPDAT score. CoC Partners that receive Federal CoC and ESG funds or any local funds (as required by the funder) must participate in the Coordinated Assessment process and track data in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

Braiding of Multiple Funding Sources across the Spectrum of Need in the Continuum

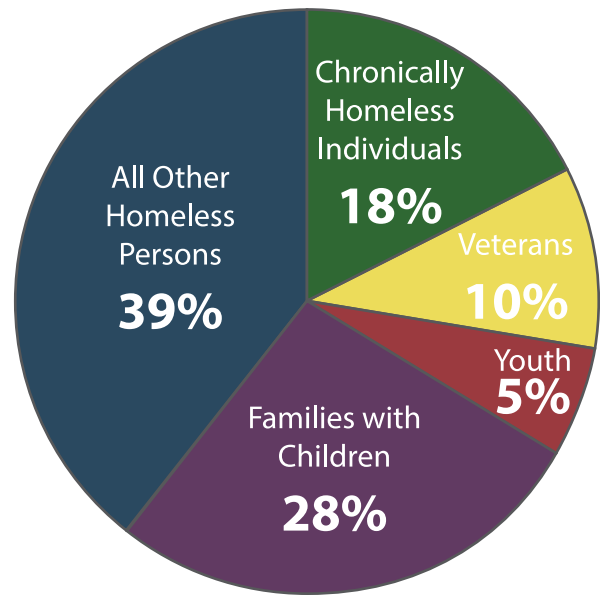
Running a Continuum of Care and fulfilling all of the accompanying mandates, moving forward with new initiatives, and working towards the goal of functional zero requires creativity, tenacity, and the ability to braid multiple local, state, and federal funding sources.

It is not uncommon for a single agency to have more than twenty governmental grants in addition to the private funding they receive. Why are so many grants necessary and how can they work together?

The annual Point in Time count provides a broad trend line on what kind of progress a community is making in its efforts to reduce homelessness. Measuring and monitoring informs the community and funders on the effectiveness of existing programs. The HMIS database is the repository of this information and enables analysis to measure how a Continuum of Care is doing as a whole. Coordinating these multiple aspects requires thousands of volunteer hours and braiding together multiple pieces of federal, state and local grants to fund the professional staff needed. These efforts

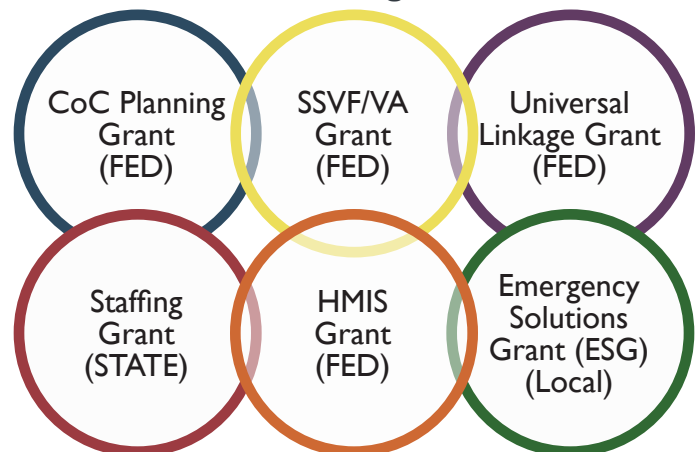
allow communities to know who is homeless and what type of interventions they are most likely to need in order to resolve their homelessness.

Continuum of care of Northeast Florida Homeless Sub-Population
2015 Point in Time Count = 1,853 Persons



All of these pieces are braided together to address Veteran and chronic homelessness in our community.

Continuum of care of Northeast Florida Funding Sources Utilized to Meet Staffing Needs



Challenge Grant 2014

In 2014, the Legislature appropriated \$3,800,000 for Challenge Grants. In accordance with section 420.622, Florida Statutes, these competitive grants are available to lead agencies throughout the State of Florida. The grants can be used to fund any of the housing, or service needs included in the local homeless assistance Continuum of Care plan. The lead agency may allocate the grant to programs, services, or housing providers that implement the local plan.

The Office on Homelessness was able to fund fifteen (15) of the lead agencies throughout the state, with awards ranging from \$87,000 to \$300,000. Below are four (4) of the lead agencies that received a Challenge Grant award and the projects that are being implemented in each community.

Big Bend Homeless Coalition

The Big Bend Homeless Coalition located in Tallahassee, Florida will be using their Challenge Grant funds for several different projects. The following descriptions highlight the main projects the grant will fund:

- Critical financial assistance with meals and staff during the move and transition of the Tallahassee–Leon County
- Shelter into the new Comprehensive Emergency Services Center.
- Restructuring of Big Bend Homeless Coalition’s HOPE Community Men’s dorm – formerly operating as transitional housing for single men – into emergency housing for families with dependent children.
- Support the Capital City Youth Services Drop-In Center for a Street Outreach Program for Homeless Youth.

This program serves clients in Leon, Franklin, Gadsden, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Jefferson, and Wakulla Counties.

Emergency Services and Homeless Coalition of Northeast Florida

To move the needle in the right direction, communities must find the funding for promising initiatives. In an environment that is resistant to change and often has rigid rules on how, when, and on whom funds can be expended, this is a difficult task. The Challenge Grant, offered competitively through the Florida Department of Children and Families, Provided the community the opportunity to pilot two types of programs that have proven successful elsewhere.

One of the pilot programs is a diversion program for families. Diversion is identifying and providing targeted housing case management for families that are seeking to enter shelter but have not yet spent a night homeless. The goal of this intervention is to prevent the family from becoming homeless. This pilot allows us to gather data on the scope of the issue; the comfort level existing agencies have in providing the required light touch case management, and a baseline of the immediate and long term effectiveness. A different funding source will be used to provide third party analysis of the program and what it tells us about the inflow rate of families into the homeless system and the cost that would be associated with significantly reducing the inflow.

This program serves clients in Duval, Clay, and Nassau Counties.

Zero: 2016

Zero: 2016 formally launched in January of 2015, with the participating communities pledging to walk their streets block by block in order to survey each of their homeless neighbors during the national 2015 Homeless Point-in-Time Count (PIT). Communities will use this information to develop by-name files for each person experiencing homelessness on their streets—a strategy designed to help communities connect people to available subsidies and appropriate housing options as quickly as possible.

The communities have committed to functional Zero Veteran homelessness by December 31, 2015 and chronic homelessness by December 31, 2016. The six Florida communities are:

- Big Bend CoC
- Jacksonville/Duval/Clay/Nassau Counties CoC
- Miami/Dade County CoC
- Ft Lauderdale/Broward County CoC
- Ft Myers/Cape Coral/Lee County CoC
- West Palm Beach/Palm Beach County CoC

In Lee County for example, between January and April 2015, the local Continuum of Care (CoC) placed 100 individuals experiencing homelessness into permanent housing, which breaks down as follows:

- 22 Chronically Homeless Not-Veterans
- 39 Chronically Homeless Veterans
- 39 Homeless Veterans (Non-Chronic)

L. Robyn Andrews of Emergency Services & Homeless Coalition of Northeast Florida highlights the measures taken in their community:

“Our community partners and stakeholders are committed to reaching this goal and have focused collaborative efforts and resources, which includes the implementation of a coordinated intake & assessment system for our tri-county area and the utilization of a by name master list of all of the homeless Veterans and chronic individuals on our streets in order to ensure that we are successful in reaching functional zero in our community.”



EscaRosa Coalition on the Homeless

The EscaRosa Coalition has four (4) provider partners that they work with to execute the Challenge Grant. One provider has an emergency shelter that is used to provide temporary shelter to homeless families; the provider will then assist with the clients' first month's rent and deposits to move them out of the shelter environment. Two other providers will provide prevention assistance, and the remaining provider provides transportation assistance to get clients a bike so that they can get to work. The results thus far have been incredible.

In summary, through the use of the Challenge Grant Funds, EscaRosa has been able to fund case management, rapid rehousing, medium term transitional housing, prevention, transportation, birth certificates, emergency shelter, and material goods.

This program serves clients in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties.

Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust

One of the most innovative projects funded by the Challenge Grant in Miami-Dade County is Camillus Health Concern's: Project Dade Cares. Project Dade Cares provides comprehensive healthcare to homeless persons in Miami-Dade County, as part of HUD funded supportive services only. This operating year, as part of a pilot project developed by the Miami Coalition for the Homeless, Camillus Health Concern, City of Miami Mobile Outreach Program, the 11th Judicial Criminal Mental Health Circuit Jail Diversion Program, and the Homeless Trust, the Project Dade Care's Psychiatric Nurse practitioners, hand in hand with the City of Miami Homeless Outreach program, took to the streets seven days a week to perform psychiatric assessments, prescribe and administer medications, make referrals, and initiate a SOAR disability

applications for chronically homeless individuals that were refusing all services due to suspected severe mental illness (SMI).

The pilot, "Lazarus Project" named after Lazaro Trueba a City of Miami Mobile Outreach Program Supervisor, and seasoned outreach worker, has assisted 20 clients that have been homeless between 2-20 years and whose untreated SMI makes them the most vulnerable, underserved, and disengaged chronically homeless individuals in Miami-Dade County. One of the clients assisted by Lazarus had been psychiatrically hospitalized 98 times in the last five years alone. Since its inception, Lazarus has successfully housed 10 or 50% of its participants, and they are aggressively looking to house all their clients.

This program serves clients in Miami-Dade County.

Training and Technical Assistance

In addition to this funding, \$200,000 was appropriated to provide training and technical assistance for our Continuums of Care around the state. The focused goal of this assistance is to strengthen and build capacity in nonprofits, local governments, Continuums of Care, and other stakeholders working to end homelessness in the state of Florida. In the 2014-2015 fiscal year, the Florida Housing Coalition, under a contract with the Department of Economic Opportunity provided webinars, workshops, symposiums, and site visits to communities throughout the state. These site visits (in 10 different communities) assisted local Continuums of Care in a variety of areas including system redesign, rapid rehousing, housing first, outreach, increasing the stock of permanent supportive housing, and working with local elected officials, public housing authorities, and other stakeholders.

Recommendations Supporting Continuums of Care

The Council on Homelessness submits three recommendations of critical actions related to supporting and building our Continuums of Care that the state can undertake enabling communities across Florida to reduce the number of persons experiencing homelessness.

Recommendation One Support State Funding for Community Efforts to Reduce Homelessness

During the 2015 Legislative Session, the Legislature recognized the importance of providing additional resources to the local homeless Continuums of Care. Recurring dollars from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund amounting to \$4,000,000 were appropriated to fund Challenge Grants, flexible grants supporting local efforts to reduce homelessness.

The Council recommends continued support to provide flexible sources of state financial aid to local Continuums of Care through Challenge Grants.

Funding is used to help end or prevent homelessness through rental and utility assistance, increased number of beds for emergency shelters, drop in center creation, along with the resources to quickly obtain legal identification to enable unemployed homeless to secure jobs.

Communities need additional resources to reduce and eliminate homelessness. Each community has differing needs and priorities. The communities should be provided flexible state support, which

they can utilize to best meet their identified priorities.

Such funding can be an essential source of cash match for federal and private grants. The funding should be flexible so as to address a broad array of needs including housing, education, job training and placement, health services, childcare and other support services. Use of the aid should be consistent with the community's plan to end homelessness.

A flexible funding source can enable communities to pilot promising practices, implement best practices, and new service delivery models that might otherwise not be possible. Future state funding can also fill gaps in local service budgets, should federal grant in aid dollars be cut in coming budget plans.

Recommendation Two Support for Local Homeless Continuums of Care

In the 2014 Legislative Session, the Legislature recognized the importance of ensuring adequate capacity among the local homeless continuums of care. \$1,000,000 in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund was provided for distribution to the homeless Continuums of Care lead agencies throughout the state. This funding was in addition to the existing \$2,000,000 in recurring funding provided to the continuums.

The Council recommends this increase in the annual recurring funds from the General Revenue fund for local homeless Continuums of Care to

\$3,000,000 (an added \$1,000,000 million recurring combined with the already funded \$ 2,000,000 recurring). This would ensure their ability to engage communities in efforts to end homelessness.

In addition to developing and implementing Plans to End Homelessness, Continuums of Care work to secure essential Federal resources targeted to reducing homelessness. Funding is used to provide adequate staffing, office resources, and training, along with support to conduct the state and federally required homeless Point in Time Count.

Continued state financial assistance is essential to helping continuums work to end homelessness in their communities. This includes conducting federally required planning, data collection, program coordination and grant writing necessary to successfully compete for significant grant funding to house and serve persons experiencing homelessness.

Each year the federal government appropriates resources to community partners in the homeless Continuum of Care to reduce homelessness. These community organizations have secured more than \$300 million in federal, local and private financing for community services and housing in Florida. In 2014, the Continuums' of Care brought in excess of \$84 million in Federal grants to Florida to provide vital services to some of our state's most vulnerable residents.

Recommendation Three

The State of Florida should embrace best practices; implementing them at the state level and incentivizing their adoption at the local level.

Key among these are: Housing First, Rapid Rehousing, Permanent Supportive Housing, Coordinated Intake and Prioritization, Diversion,

and Data-Driven-Decision-making. Four critical actions should be pursued toward this end:

- The state agencies represented on the Council on Homelessness, as well as the Office on Homelessness, should take a leadership role in modeling and sharing best practices for reducing and ending homelessness at the state level; ensuring that all entities utilizing state resources, including but not limited to Continuums of Care, child welfare agencies, community based care organization implement, Managing Entities, Managed Care Organizations, criminal justice contractors, are implementing best practices.
- Organizations participating in the Council on Homelessness should facilitate the production of permanent supportive housing by linking support services resources with housing resources so housing created for households with the complex needs have the supports they require to live independently.
- The Office on Homelessness should maintain a data warehouse which enables the state to accurately measure progress towards reducing homelessness in Florida as well as assess the performance of local efforts to reduce homelessness.
- Using a cross sector philanthropic, government and nonprofit collaboration, Florida should pursue a Social Impact Bond/Pay for Success approach to increase resources available to create permanent supportive housing units.

Housing

At its core homelessness is a housing issue. Persons are homeless because they don't have a place to live. While some individuals and families have additional barriers, the fundamental reason for their homelessness is the lack of an affordable place to live.

The key solution to homelessness is a stable home. To address this root cause of homelessness, Florida must fund the development of more rental housing affordable to Extremely Low Income ("ELI", earning 30% or less of the Area Median Income) households, with a focus on creating housing for families experiencing homelessness and persons with a special need.

According to the most recent legislatively mandated triennial rental housing needs assessment, "2013 Rental Market Study: Affordable Housing Needs" (University of Florida, Shimberg Center for Housing Studies), Florida has 737,435 low-income cost burdened renter households (earning 60% or less of the Area Median Income and paying more than 40% of their income on housing (rent and utilities). 70% of these households (513,608) are severely cost burdened; paying more than 60% of their income on housing.

The housing affordability crisis is more severe for ELI households. Florida has 457,677 ELI renter households; 65% are severely cost burdened.

According to "Out of Reach 2015" (National Low Income Housing Coalition), the average rent for a 1-bedroom apartment is \$811/month; \$1,012 for a 2-bedroom apartment. Yet, the income for a four-person ELI household is \$17,482 (\$1,457/month). Therefore, a 2-bedroom apartment's rent is 69% of a 4-person ELI family's income.

The Florida Minimum Wage is \$8.05/hour. A full-time minimum wage worker must work 77 hours each week to afford a 1-bedroom apartment; 97 hours each week to afford a 2-bedroom apartment.

Persons with a disabling condition that rely upon Supplemental Security Income (SSI) have an even greater crisis. In Florida, SSI is \$733/month. Therefore, the average 1-bedroom apartment costs 111% of the person's monthly income.

A comprehensive plan to reduce and end homelessness must have an emphasis on investment in affordable and accessible housing. Of great need is the Permanent Supportive Housing, the proven solution for persons that have experienced chronic homelessness; as well as for many homeless Veterans.

Our communities must focus on rapid rehousing as a key intervention for individuals and families. The key components to developing successful rapid rehousing programs include ongoing community partnerships with developers and landlords, incentives for landlords to provide housing for homeless households, usage of housing vouchers and subsidies to sustain housing, and ongoing services and links to community resources helping people maintain housing for the long run.

Housing Our Neighbors – A Crucial Need

At its root, homelessness is the result of the inability to afford and maintain housing. Any plan to end homelessness must incorporate an investment in creating affordable housing. This includes supportive housing, which is permanent housing coupled with supportive services. There are many in our communities who benefit from affordable housing with supportive services – youth aging out of foster care, the elderly, homeless households, Veterans, persons in recovery, and extremely low income families.

Affordable housing, and supportive housing for some of our most vulnerable neighbors, improves lives, is cost effective, and benefits our communities.

Here are some of the stories of people in our communities whose lives have been impacted by affordable housing with the supports and services they needed to find safety, health, and stability.



ROBERT

Robert was homeless for several years. He had lost his home due to drugs which lead him to the streets and couch surfing at his sister's home. Robert did not have a handle on his addiction, and lying and stealing became second nature to him. When he began to steal from his sister to pay the drug dealer, he knew he had hit rock bottom. Robert realized that it was in his sister's best interest if he left; he showered, took the few personal items he owned and left his sister's. He remained on the streets, sleeping outside, on porches, benches or wherever he felt comfortable. Robert continued to volunteer at a local thrift store in the midst of all this chaos.

One day, while in the waiting room of the hospital, Robert noticed a preacher in the lobby. Robert wrote a note to the pastor, "Pray for me." As Robert was leaving the pastor called over to him and said they were going to pray together, "right now."

Robert felt like his prayers were answered when a local agency called to say they had a home for him. Having a supportive place "Gave me a chance to be the person I knew I could and always wanted to be for the last three years."



SUNNY

Sunny Nelson is a cancer survivor, she also takes care of a daughter who is disabled. "My husband was a pastor who never wanted to buy a house. When he passed away, we were able to find housing for a couple of years from another pastor but eventually we needed a place of our own that we could afford."

Sunny and her daughter rely on Social Security and disability payments to make ends meet and they don't go very far. Her housing provides a safe place to live, within walking distance of a grocery store and church.



JAMES

James enlisted in the Air Force after graduating from high school in 1970. After several years of service to his country, he was honorably discharged and returned home. He found steady employment at a warehouse on his community's West side. But, after 17 years of employment, the warehouse closed and James became unemployed.

Over the next several years, James' employment was sporadic. To avoid homelessness, James stayed with grandparents. But when they passed away he no longer had stable employment or housing and became homeless for the first time. James was homeless for most of the next 15 years, until he was connected to the Veterans Administration Health Care for Homeless program.

With community partners, the VA was able to help James find a place to live; the local Housing Authority provides him a rental assistance voucher and the VA provides him case management services, all funded through the Veterans Administration Supportive Housing program – a partnership of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Veterans Administration.

James now has a stable place to live and the supports necessary to get back on his feet. When asked about his first night in his new apartment, James said he slept so well he thought he had died and gone to heaven!



TYRONE

Tyrone is a 19 year old college student, entering his sophomore year. He's majoring in psychology, works part time as a line cook at Chipotle and likes hip hop, easily creating song lyrics on request. His smile is infectious and his eyes light up when he talks about his hopes and dreams of a successful future as a therapist and a musician, a future that could have been much different.

Tyrone was one of the approximately 15,000 young people that age out of the foster care system each year in Florida. Without a support system that comes with the guidance and supervision from family or mentors, these 18 year old youths are considered adults but frequently lack the skills necessary to live self-sufficiently. Almost 25% of youth that transition out of foster care experience homelessness.

Luckily, Tyrone was able to find a supportive place to live. "Living here is the best I've lived in my whole, entire life. Now I have a place to live. Before, I never had my own room. That was one of my dreams. And now I have my own place. It's such a blessing to be living here, such a blessing."

"When I was growing up in foster care," he explained. "I didn't have any guidance or anyone to help me. It was pretty much me on my own and I just had a place to sleep and live."

He wants other foster children to know that with the right environment they can be successful individuals, with goals and dreams. And he sees his music delivering that message.

"My point of view on my hip hop is I want to talk about success. I want to talk about the struggle, the hard times, the poverty. I want to talk about being at your lowest. I want to talk about the humbleness of life. Talk about appreciation, about happiness."

Housing Recommendations

The Council on Homelessness submits three recommendations of critical actions the state can undertake to enable communities across Florida to reduce the number of persons experiencing homelessness.

Recommendation One

Increase Access to Affordable Housing through Four Critical Actions:

1. Use all Affordable Housing Trust Fund dollars for affordable housing.
2. Support Rapid Rehousing programs by amending the SHIP program to permit local communities to provide a rent subsidy program for a period of up to 24 months for very-low-income households with at least one adult that is a person with a special need or homeless as an eligible use.
3. Revise the Community Contribution Tax Credit Program to include the production of rental housing for homeless and special needs households within the provisions provided for the production of housing for low-income homeownership; designate a portion of the credits for the production of this rental housing.
4. Incentivize development partners to support local efforts to implement best practices. State administered affordable housing resources should be deployed to projects and developers which demonstrate active participation in efforts to house persons with the greatest need.

Recommendation Two

Create More Affordable and Supportive Housing for Persons with Extremely Low Incomes, especially Homeless Households and Persons with Special Needs

1. Amend the SAIL program funding reservations so that housing for Homeless and Special Needs households receives at least 10% of the program funds.
2. Use any National Housing Trust Fund resources allocated to the State for the creation of housing affordable to Extremely Low-Income households; with a focus on creating housing for families experiencing homelessness and persons with a special need.
3. Target Affordable Housing Trust Fund and National Housing Trust Fund resources to the development of permanent supportive housing units; link funding for services to these housing units.

The Council recommends utilizing all Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust fund resources for affordable housing, with an increased focus on the housing needs of Extremely Low- Income, Homeless and Special Needs households. Persons with Special Needs as defined in Section 420.0004(13), Florida Statutes, means an adult person requiring independent living services in order to maintain housing or develop independent living skills and who has a disabling condition; a young adult formerly in foster care who is eligible for services under s. 409.1451(5); a survivor of domestic violence as defined in s. 741.28; or a person receiving benefits under the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program or the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program or from Veterans' disability benefits.

In state fiscal year 2014-15, Florida Housing Finance Corporation, through competitive application cycles, selected twenty-three Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) developments for funding. These twenty-three PSH developments account for a total of 662 rental units that will be developed to serve

homeless and special needs households. These developments include:

- Graham at Gracepoint in Tampa Florida will be owned and operated by Gracepoint. The organization will provide rental housing, on-site supportive services and help accessing community based resources for formerly chronically homeless persons with mental illness.
- Ozanam Village in Pasco County will be owned and operated by the Society of St. Vincent's of de Paul and will provide housing and supportive services for homeless veterans with disabilities through community-based public-private partnerships.
- Le Juene Gardens in Miami-Dade will provide specially designed units for wheelchair bound and mobility-impaired persons with minimal financial resources. The development will be owned and operated by Spinal Cord Living-Assistance Development, Inc, which will also provide community-based services coordination and other services such as employment and skills training programs through community-based partnerships.

In addition to the permanent supportive housing and preservation units, a total of 585 units will be set aside for extremely low-income households that are integrated into mixed-income affordable housing developments that were selected for financing in state fiscal year 2014-15. These mixed-income developments will serve families, elders, and/or persons with disabling conditions, through a variety of financing resources including federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, state housing funds, private loans and foundation grants. At least 50 percent of these units will be identified as Link to Permanent Housing units that serve ELI households with special needs that are referred by a designated community-based services referral agency.

Three keys to success for providing stable, community-based permanent rental housing for

homeless and special needs households is the housing must:

- Not cost burden the household.
- Be linked with appropriate and sufficient community-based supportive services.
- Adequately address specific needs of the intended residents, including credit and other barriers that prevent them from accessing the rental units.

Recommendation Three

Continue the Governor's and Legislature's Support of Florida Housing's Permanent Supportive Housing Pilot for High Needs/ High Cost Chronically Homeless Persons as it Transitions from the Development to Implementation Phase.

In 2013, the Legislature provided a special \$10 million appropriation to Florida Housing Finance Corporation to fund permanent supportive housing for persons with special needs (persons with disabilities, survivors of domestic violence and youth aging out of foster care). Based on the Florida Housing's work with state agencies and supportive housing and homelessness stakeholders, the Council recommended the state pursue a pilot to develop permanent supportive housing, targeting high needs/high cost individuals who are chronically homeless. These most vulnerable individuals often cycle in and out of residential care or institutional settings because of their lack of stability in the community and are often high utilizers of acute care and crisis services.

To implement the Council's recommendation, Florida Housing utilized the special appropriation to fund permanent supportive housing projects targeting these individuals. As a commitment for receiving capitol and operations financing, Florida Housing required that each pilot site be in a community with a comprehensive and coordinated

approach for identifying, assessing, prioritizing, and serving chronically homeless persons. Another key requirement was that each pilot site partner with qualified researchers to conduct a Florida-specific analysis of the efficacy of permanent supportive housing on the individuals' health and quality of life as well as its impacts on publicly funded systems of care. Key State agencies including Agency for Health Care Administration, Department of Children and Families, Department of Elder Affairs, Department of Health and Florida Department of Veteran Affairs are working with Florida Housing to help address implementation issues and needs. One of the roles the newly established (August 2014) Florida State Interagency Workgroup on Permanent Supportive Housing is to provide the Pilot and its sites guidance and assistance as applicable and appropriate.

Three pilot sites were selected. Each is in different stages of development. As of this report they are:

Duval County – The Village on Wiley development has nearly completed construction. The tenant

selection and application process has begun and individuals are preparing to move into one of the development's 43 units.

Miami-Dade County – The Coalition Lift development is scheduled to close on its financing in June and begin construction this summer. The estimated completion date for the 34 unit development is January 2016.

Pinellas County – The Pinellas Hope V development has begun construction. The development is hoping to begin tenant lease-up of its 45 units in December 2015.

The Duval County site's cost/benefit study methodology and approach has been approved and individuals are being enrolled in the study. The Miami-Dade and Pinellas County sites are finalizing their cost/benefits study's methodology and approach. The data collection and analysis will occur for at least 2 years after the initial lease-up of the building. It is anticipated to have cost/benefits study outcomes in 2017.

Elderly Mortgage Assistance Program (ELMORE) – Preventing Elderly Homeowners from Becoming Homeless through State and Local Collaboration

The Elderly Mortgage Assistance Program (ELMORE) is a program to provide financial assistance to elderly homeowners, with reverse mortgage commitments, to keep them from losing their homes. Identified eligible elderly homeowners are at extreme risk of foreclosure because they are in significant arrears in paying their homeowner's insurance, property taxes or homeowner's association fees. Upon need and resources determinations, eligible and interested applicants may receive up to \$25,000 to bring their fees current and stop the foreclosure. These homeowners may also be eligible to have up to 12 months of future property charges paid on their behalf. Applicants also receive financial benefits and counseling services and assistance in completing their applications.

The Program is funded through the federal Hardest Hit Program and administered by Florida Housing. Identifying and assisting these elderly homeowners has been made possible through a collaboration between Florida Housing Finance Corporation, Florida Department of Elder Affairs, local Aging and Disability Resource Centers and a statewide network of foreclosure counseling agencies.

As of June 18, 2015, 607 elderly homeowners, in SFY 2014-15 have received a total of \$8,504,000 in assistance to keep them in their homes.

Department of Education— Homeless Education Program

The Federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act requires that state educational agencies and school districts ensure that homeless children and youth have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other students; including the removal of barriers to enrollment and attendance. In Florida, the Homeless Education Program (HEP), through the Florida Department of Education (FDOE), is designed to address the problems that homeless children and youth face in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school, and to work with school districts to resolve them. The FDOE HEP program provides leadership, technical assistance, educational funding, and support to school districts to ensure that homeless students are identified, enrolled, attend school, and have access to resources to help them achieve academically.

In 2014-2015, 48 school districts received federally funded awards ranging from \$23,750 to \$120,000, for a total of \$3,411,250, to serve homeless students. Over the years, funds within this program have been used to provide case management and outreach services; to offer tutoring, supplemental instruction, and other educational services, including mentoring and summer educational programs; to refer students and their families to medical, dental, mental, and other health services; and to offer student and parental engagement activities, among many others.

The school districts in our state capture and report the number of students identified as homeless any time during the school year to the FDOE; therefore, the count is a cumulative one

(see Appendix for counts of homeless students reported by school district.)

During the 2013-2014 school year, Florida school districts identified 71,446 children and youth who were homeless. This is a two-percent increase from 2012-2013; however, a significantly lower increase than the previous four years. The majority of those identified as homeless, 53,625 (75%), were temporarily sharing the housing of other persons due to the loss of their housing or economic hardship; a two-percent increase from the previous school year. Additionally, of those identified, eleven percent (7,573) were “unaccompanied youth.” A homeless “unaccompanied youth” is defined as one who is not in physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Homeless Students Reported in Florida Public Schools		
School Year	Homeless Students	Change
2009 - 2010	49,112	+19%
2010 - 2011	56,680	+15%
2011 - 2012	63,685	+12%
2012 - 2013	70,215	+10%
2013 - 2104	71,446	+2%

Source: 2008-2014 Survey 5 Student Demographic Format and Federal State Indicator Format. Florida Department of Education, Automated Student Database System.

In addition to the above support and resources from the FDOE, through this federally funded program, every school district in Florida has a homeless education liaison. These liaisons assist

homeless students and their families in many ways including collaboration with their local community partners. Here are some of their stories.

Sarasota County Schools



The Sarasota County Schools' Homeless Education Program (Schoolhouse Link), in addition to helping students with educational needs, helps homeless families connect with local resources such as the Sarasota Housing Authority (SHA). In 2014, the SHA Board voted to annually set aside 15 Section 8 Housing Vouchers for chronically homeless families selected by Schoolhouse Link. Their goal was to improve educational outcomes and create opportunities for families by providing stable housing.

Chronically homeless for years, single mom Amber and her four school-age daughters were one of the first families selected for this program. They have benefitted tremendously from having stable, sustainable housing. Prior to this placement, the family's housing instability, unfortunately, affected every aspect of the family's life, including the girls'

education. They struggled with their attendance and grades. The girls had difficulty fitting in and problems with self-esteem and wellness. Now, Amber states, "I feel like we are finally winning. We were able to celebrate the holidays for the first time in our own home and all of my girls have good school attendance and are on the honor roll now." Today and tomorrow are brighter for Amber and her children because housing and education are both community priorities in Sarasota County.

Santa Rosa County



The One Family, One Year, One Home Transitional Housing Program is a collaborative effort between the Santa Rosa County School District, ESCAROSA Coalition on the Homeless, Pensacola Habitat for Humanity, and Family Promise, a Faith-based Emergency Housing Program. With limited transitional housing in Santa Rosa County, the four groups created transitional housing by refurbishing repossessed Habitat houses that were sitting empty. Homeless families with children who participated in the program received intensive case management,

with the goal of self-sufficiency and stability after one year. The increased resources the families have built have been profound.

Prior to participation, one family of three had lost employment, due to a serious health issue. After six months in the program, the father received a hip replacement and is now employed. The mother completed her GED, became employed, and was promoted recently to shift manager. The middle school daughter, who was at risk of retention, was promoted to the eighth grade and maintained straight A's throughout the school year. Another family also made great strides. Unemployed due to a broken ankle, the father successfully recovered and is now employed at a construction firm. The family saved money to buy a reliable vehicle and recently purchased a home. Between the two families, six school-age children have moved from homelessness to stability and self-sufficiency.

The program was a pilot, and after the success of these families, the program will continue and expand. Thus, more homeless families with children will be provided a home with rent and utilities covered for one year, case management, and assistance in transitioning to stable permanent housing.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

The Homeless Education Program (Project UP-START), at Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), provides support and resources to homeless students in the district. One of these students, Price Destinobles, recently graduated from North Miami Senior High School. Since eighth grade, he has been living with many different families due to his mother's incarceration and an absent father. Despite a lack of stability, income, or his parents, Price achieved academically in school, served as president of his school's 5000 Role

Models program, participated in sports (basketball, volleyball, and cross country), and was a member of the school's culinary club. Due to his perseverance, he has been accepted to Florida International University's (FIU) prestigious Institute of Hospitality and Tourism Education and Research, and is part of FIU's "Fostering Panther Pride" program that serves homeless and foster youth at FIU. This summer, he will participate in FIU's "Golden Scholars Summer Bridge Program."



Appendices

Appendix I—Number of Homeless People per County

Source: 2015 Point-in-Time Count, Department of Children and Families, Office on Homelessness

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Alachua	1,596	879	1,034	1,034	1,745	1,516	636
Baker	N/C	12	2	N/C	N/C	No count	N/C
Bay	352	317	378	287	284	253	308
Bradford	78	5	39	36	50	No count	0
Brevard	1,207	1,221	1,889	1,907	1,567	1,567	1178
Broward	4,154	4,154	3,801	3,801	2,820	2,738	2624
Calhoun	N/C	N/C	1	1	1	No count	6
Charlotte	541	598	716	828	573	511	548
Citrus	297	405	502	507	243	188	180
Clay	N/C	7	113	244	35	102	147
Collier	329	401	390	390	375	361	389
Columbia	554	554	462	458	491	473	538
DeSoto	319	761	15	176	330	340	333
Dixie	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	No count	N/C
Duval	3,244	3,910	4,284	2,533	2,594	1,801	1566
Escambia	713	713	549	572	830	862	884
Flagler	39	79	98	128	154	188	105
Franklin	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	No count	23
Gadsden	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	No count	9
Gilchrist	N/C	1	6	32	0	No count	0
Glades	220	220	N/C	N/C	N/C	96	96
Gulf	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	2	0
Hamilton	123	343	103	103	107	102	114
Hardee	1,410	1,410	104	17	61	124	124
Hendry	727	727	16	N/C	N/C	138	138
Hernando	185	136	148	209	147	77	218
Highlands	1,782	1,782	105	55	215	495	483
Hillsborough	7,473	7,473	7,336	7,336	*	2,291	1931
Holmes	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	2	No count	0
Indian River	662	648	606	774	837	1,048	812
Jackson	N/C	11	34	34	14	13	3
Jefferson	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	4
Lafayette	69	69	57	58	63	60	68

Lake	491	796	1,008	1,019	282	187	265
Lee	931	1,041	1,054	969	848	871	638
Leon	437	437	683	783	1,072	805	808
Levy	115	15	0	98	13	N/C	13
Liberty	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	2
Madison	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	1
Manatee	558	528	528	612	820	494	308
Marion	678	356	941	1,032	530	918	787
Martin	211	517	306	314	486	567	504
Miami-Dade	4,333	3,832	3,777	3,817	3,734	4,156	4152
Monroe	1,040	1,040	926	904	658	678	615
Nassau	N/C	61	165	84	138	93	140
Okaloosa	2,361	1,842	2,145	1,962	1,108	904	592
Okeechobee	383	383	32	190	78	158	158
Orange	1,279	1,494	2,872	2,281	2,937	1,701	1396
Osceola	374	443	833	722	599	278	372
Palm Beach	2,147	2,147	2,148	2,148	1,559	1,559	1421
Pasco	4,527	4,527	4,442	4,502	3,305	3,305	1045
Pinellas	4,163	3,948	3,890	3,971	3,913	3,391	3387
Polk	820	820	1,095	1,100	404	536	464
Putnam	911	288	141	164	89	49	26
St. Johns	1,237	1,237	1,386	1,391	1,437	1,401	1161
St. Lucie	788	995	771	636	915	976	1096
Santa Rosa	317	317	72	70	151	N/C	130
Sarasota	787	787	787	890	1,234	891	943
Seminole	368	397	810	658	842	275	344
Sumter	52	48	57	77	37	59	68
Suwannee	343	123	280	284	318	308	350
Taylor	N/C	N/C	N/C	14	6	N/C	N/C
Union	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C
Volusia	1,874	2,076	2,215	2,276	1,967	1,445	1222
Wakulla	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C
Walton	85	420	619	484	453	Okaloosa- Walton combined	91
Washington	3	N/C	N/C	N/C	N/C	No count	0
Totals	57,687	57,751	56,771	54,972	43,455	41,335	35,964

Homeless Population Characteristics

The 28 local continuum of care planning agencies have reported the following information on the make-up of the homeless population in Florida. They captured this information from direct interviews or from agency data on homeless persons served as entered into the Homeless Management Information System [HMIS]. The 2015 data is compared to 2014 data.

Gender

Men made up the majority of homeless persons. Of 30,552 persons surveyed in 2014, 19,988 were men (65%). The data for 2014 remains consistent with last year's results.

Year	Men	Women
2015	63.6%	35.5%
2014	65%	35%

Age

The age ranges of the 2014 homeless population were reported as follows:

Age			
Age Ranges	Number of Persons	2014 %	2015 %
Under 18	6,852	18.6%	18.9%
18 – 24	2,566	8.8%	7.1%
24 – 60	24,677	64.8%	68.1%
Over 60	1,893	7.9%	5.2%
Total	35,988		

These results are consistent with the focus of the count – those persons living in shelters or staying on the streets. Families with children are more likely to be sharing the housing of others, and are not allowed to be included in the federal counts, due to this living arrangement.

Ethnicity

In 2015, 5,091 homeless persons out of 36,136 responding to the survey indicated that they were either Hispanic or Latino. At 14.1% of the homeless population, this is up from the 2014 level of 10.5%.

Race

The reported race of the homeless population reflects more White and Black/African Americans than other races.

Population Category	2015 Number	2015 Percentage	2014 Percentage
American Indian/Alaskan	413	1.1%	1.0%
Asian	121	0.33%	0.3%
Black/African American	13,144	36.4%	34.0%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	111	0.30%	0.3%
White	20,759	57.4%	54.3%
Multiple Races	1,189	3.3%	N/C
Total	35,737		

Household Type

The great majority, 20,633, of the unsheltered and sheltered homeless population are single adults or households without children. For 2015, the breakdown of the homeless by household type was reported as follows:

Household Type	Number responding	% of Total
One adult and one child	3,662	13%
No children in household	23,821	84.3%
Only children in household	766	2.7%
Total	28,249	

Military Veterans

Of the homeless persons responding to the question on active duty in the U.S. military, 16.3% indicated that they were veterans.

Military Veterans				
Served/Active Duty	2015 numbers	2015 Percentage	2014 Numbers	2014 Percentage
Yes	5,100	16.3%	3,974	14.0%
No	25,855	83.7%	24,139	86.0%
Total	30,955		28,113	

Disabling Conditions

The breakdown by type of disability indicates once again that the greatest issues are substance abuse and mental illness. In the survey, respondents may report more than one disabling condition.

Disabling Condition			
Condition	2015 Number	2015 Percentage	2014 Percentage
Physical	5,548	28%	26.1%
Substance Abuse	6,463	32.6%	37.1%
Mental Illness	6,654	33.6%	29.8%
HIV/AIDS	524	2.6%	3.3%
Developmental	623	3.1%	2.3%
Total	19,812		

Foster Care History

In asking whether the homeless individual had been in foster care, 1,979 persons out of the 24,737 responding to the question indicated that they had been in foster care. This figure represents 8% of the respondents.

Causes and Length of Time Homeless

The data collected upon entry to shelters seeks to identify the major causes contributing to a person becoming homeless, how long they have been homeless as of the day of the count, whether the person has had previous episodes of homelessness, and how long the person has lived in the community before becoming homeless. The 2015 survey results follow.

Causes of Homelessness			
Cause	2015 Number	2015 Percentage	2014 %
Employment/Financial	8,700	41.5%	48.0%
Medical/Disability	3,675	17.5%	17.2%
Family Problems	4,119	19.6%	17.2%
Forced to relocate	4,114	19.6%	16.1%
Recent Immigration	209	1%	0.5%
Natural Disaster	168	0.8%	1.2%

Number of Times Homeless			
Times	2015 Number	2015 Percentage	2014 %
No prior/First time	7356	29.6%	14.3%
One prior episode	6,833	27.5%	32.2%
Two or three prior episodes	5,966	24%	30.0%
Four or more prior episodes	4,718	19%	24.0%
Total	24,873		

Length of Time in Community Before Becoming Homeless			
Length of Time	2015 Number	2015 Percentage	2014 Percentage
Less than one week	1,724	8.1%	10.9%
1 to 4 weeks	938	4.4%	6.3%
1 to 3 months	1,681	7.9%	7.4%
3 to 12 months	2,355	11.1%	13.3%
More than 1 year	14,530	68.4%	62.2%
Total	21,228		

[Source: Lead Agency Survey of 2015 Point-in-Time Count, May 2015, Department of Children and Families.]

Appendix II—Homeless Students Reported in Florida Public Schools by Florida County 2009-2014

DISTRICT NAME	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
ALACHUA	446	594	632	551	809
BAKER	191	249	304	262	112
BAY	641	1,175	1,477	1,626	1,184
BRADFORD	122	154	215	143	194
BREVARD	965	1,165	1,350	1,645	1,690
BROWARD	2,953	2,101	2,158	2,185	2,323
CALHOUN	47	58	84	57	60
CHARLOTTE	441	495	488	493	519
CITRUS	371	323	328	303	312
CLAY	824	741	862	1,379	1,110
COLLIER	1,360	1,407	1,281	1,123	849
COLUMBIA	380	403	567	578	549
DADE	4,268	4,406	5,773	6,475	3,252
DESOTO	223	225	278	367	402
DIXIE	60	48	31	29	28
DUVAL	947	1,169	1,422	1,896	2,111
ESCAMBIA	1,237	1,091	1,423	1,621	2,054
FLAGLER	246	322	367	517	522
FRANKLIN	126	160	205	230	279
GADSDEN	713	533	556	586	699
GILCHRIST	27	20	17	<11	14
GLADES	18	34	26	17	24
GULF	<11	<11	<11	35	20
HAMILTON	342	326	343	218	234
HARDEE	146	188	183	128	125
HENDRY	139	156	200	195	450
HERNANDO	242	497	645	521	443
HIGHLANDS	61	92	429	385	461
HILLSBOROUGH	3,124	3,659	3,559	3,170	3,233
HOLMES	24	62	90	96	102
INDIAN RIVER	347	311	273	278	434
JACKSON	119	158	177	152	113
JEFFERSON	<11	<11	<11	<11	<11
LAFAYETTE	141	196	195	217	207
LAKE	2,162	2,992	3,541	2,908	3,229
LEE	1,143	1,282	1,392	1,446	1,313
LEON	523	762	650	470	702
LEVY	263	182	128	217	157
LIBERTY	22	21	41	52	52
MADISON	57	74	103	263	534

MANATEE	1,684	1,788	1,641	1,791	1,854
MARION	1,691	1,911	2,223	2,421	2,373
MARTIN	68	80	115	125	157
MONROE	298	328	343	343	382
NASSAU	145	230	210	331	428
OKALOOSA	482	404	573	538	533
OKEECHOBEE	203	318	396	495	573
ORANGE	1324*	3,887	4,844	7,234	6,736
OSCEOLA	1,364	1,923	2,825	3,156	4,941
PALM BEACH	1,960	1,443	1,636	3,107	2,991
PASCO	2,093	2,230	1,997	1,904	2,071
PINELLAS	2,462	2,915	3,085	3,076	3,038
POLK	2,219	2,446	2,304	2,547	3,767
LAKE WALES	N/A	N/A	136	187	246
PUTNAM	720	736	885	734	808
ST. JOHNS	344	493	584	679	803
ST. LUCIE	222	348	324	466	543
SANTA ROSA	1,328	1,467	1,651	1,703	1,776
SARASOTA	872	1,229	877	917	924
SEMINOLE	1,322	1,697	1,865	2,235	2,034
SUMTER	124	48	155	156	174
SUWANNEE	322	315	346	344	298
TAYLOR	73	89	96	88	123
UNION	121	148	157	124	130
VOLUSIA	1,889	2,016	2,228	2,195	2,261
WAKULLA	108	56	99	56	56
WALTON	40	114	175	230	313
WASHINGTON	165	168	79	121	138
SCHOOL DEAF/BLIND	0	0	<11	14	12
FL VIRTUAL SCHOOL	0	0	<11	38	34
FAU - LAB SCHOOL	0	<11	<11	<11	<11
FSU - LAB SCHOOL	0	<11	<11	<11	<11
FAMU - LAB SCHOOL	0	0	11	<11	11
TOTALS	49,112	56,680	63,685	70,189	71,446

*Orange data submitted after reporting deadline indicated 4,040 homeless students.

N/A: Not Applicable – Lake Wales Charter Schools System was established in the 2011-2013 school year.

Note: <11 means that fewer than eleven students were identified; counts of one to ten students are identified as <11.

Source: 2008-2014 Survey 5 Student Demographic Format and Federal State Indicator Format, Florida Department of Education

Appendix III—Overview of Funding, Office on Homelessness

For the 2015-16 fiscal year, the Department anticipates receiving funding for four (4) grant categories. The categories include: HUD Emergency Solutions Grant, Homelessness Prevention Grant (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families - TANF), Challenge Grants, and Staffing Grants. Below is a description of each grant award and the funding information.

Grant	2014 Award	Anticipated 2015 Award
Emergency Solutions Grant	\$4,605,599	\$5,019,268
Homelessness Prevention (TANF)	\$876,000	\$876,000
Challenge Grant	\$3,800,000	\$3,800,000
Staffing Grant	\$2,000,000 (plus an additional \$1,000,000 in non-recurring funds). \$3,000,000 total	\$2,000,000

Emergency Solutions Grant

The Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program was established through the Stewart B. McKinney Act of 1987, as amended by the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing of 2009 – the HEARTH Act.

The purpose of the Federal ESG Program is to help improve the quality and quantity of emergency shelters for homeless persons, to help cover the costs of operating emergency shelters, and to fund essential supportive services to homeless individuals so they may have access to safe and sanitary shelter and the services and assistance they need to improve their situations. In addition, the ESG Program is used to fund short-term rental assistance to prevent homelessness, as well as to help move homeless persons back into permanent rental housing. Finally, the program can assist street outreach programs to connect unsheltered homeless persons with local housing and supportive services.

Funds are available annually and are awarded by the Department of Children and Families through a grant application process. Non-profit agencies and government entities are eligible to apply.

Homelessness Prevention Grant (TANF)

The Homelessness Prevention Grant program provides emergency financial assistance to families with children facing the loss of their housing due to a financial or other crisis. The Office on Homelessness is authorized to provide these grants annually to the lead agencies for the local homeless assistance continuum of care planning areas in the state. Only those agencies can apply, using the application provided above. The intent of the program is to provide case management and financial assistance for overdue rent or mortgage payments and overdue utility bills to enable the family to remain stably housed after receiving the assistance.

Challenge Grant

The Challenge Grant program is authorized by section 420.622(4), Florida Statutes, to provide grant funding to lead agencies for homeless assistance Continuums of Care (CoC). The Challenge Grants must be used to assist the local homeless CoC lead agencies and local providers to implement a written plan for addressing the needs of the homeless populations. The lead agencies may allocate the grant funds to programs, services, or housing providers that support the implementation of the local CoC plan. The overall goal of the grant is to use the Challenge Grant to partner with local agencies to reduce homelessness in Florida.

Staffing Grant

This grant is a recurring appropriation from the Legislature that began in 2013. The purpose of these grants is to enable the lead agencies to collect the data, plan for homeless services, write grant applications, and coordinate services within the state. The Staffing grants help improve the overall quality of life for homeless persons through the coordination with community agencies that provide services and programs. This grant funding is only available to the homeless lead agencies.

Appendix IV—Continuum of Care Planning and Funding

Return on the Planning Investment

The state’s continuums of care areas have become very successful in competing for and receiving housing grants from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, to create transitional and permanent housing for the homeless. In the most recent grant cycle, (FY2014), the 28 continuums of care have received grant awards totaling \$84,255,169. This helps to fund over several hundred local projects in Florida. The growth in grant funding being secured to help serve Florida’s homeless is reflected in the following table of awards.

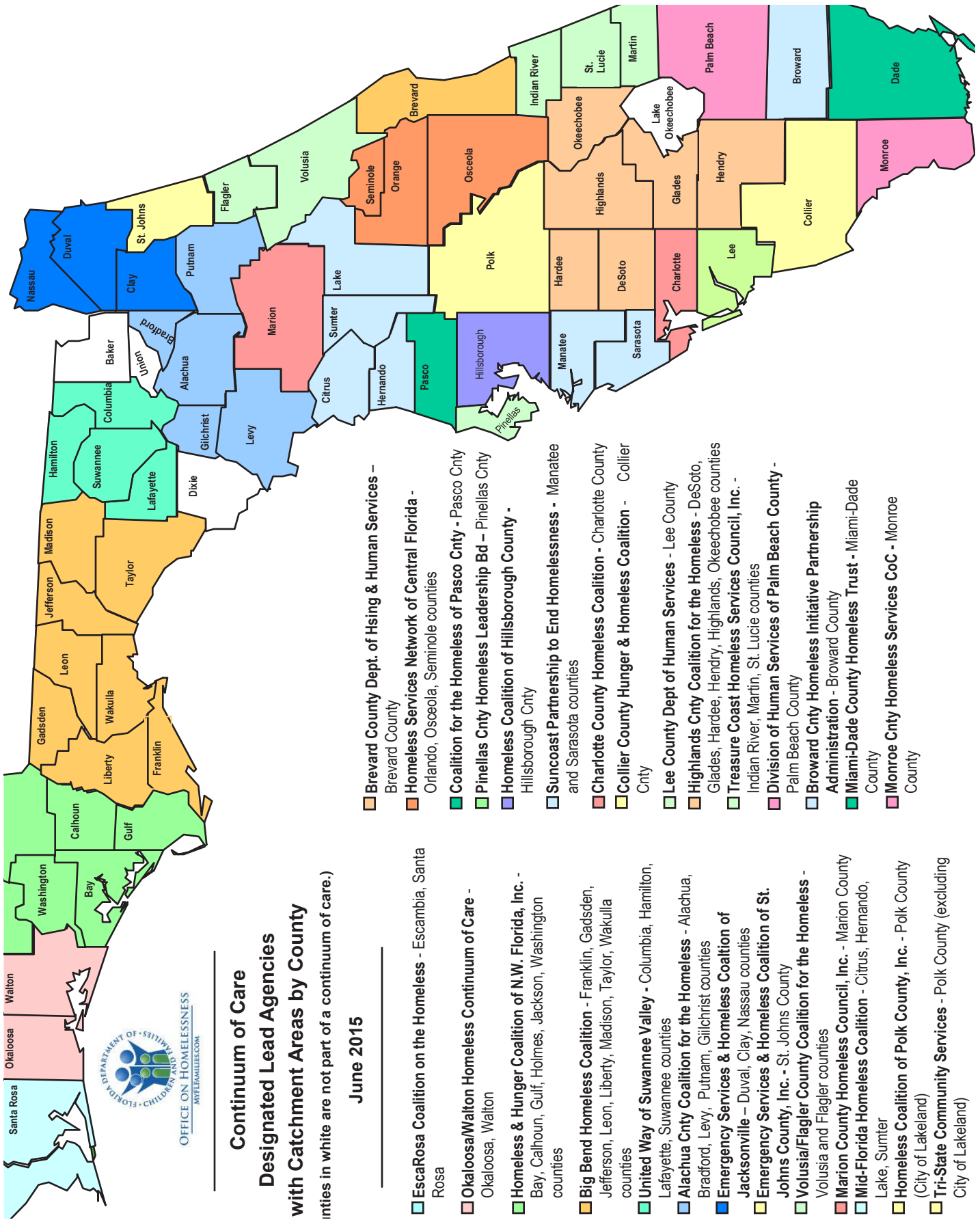
Year	Continuum of Care	
	Awards	
2007	\$62,693,380	
2008	\$67,181,336	
2009	\$73,836,367	
2010	\$77,739,489	
2011	\$78,767,112	
2012	\$78,554,056	
2013	\$82,932,029	
2014	\$84,255,169	

The total awards for 2014 cover both grant renewals and new projects. A breakdown of the grants by each of the planning areas for 2013 and 2014 follows:

HUD Continuum of Care Awards

By Florida Planning Areas 2013 and 2014		
Continuum of Care	2013 Award	2014 Award
Suncoast	\$800,833	785,655
Hillsborough	5,782,271	6,243,959
Pinellas	3,792,806	3,914,556
Polk	704,421	605,615
Lakeland	989,191	994,538
Volusia/Flagler	1,406,249	1,049,538
Okaloosa/Walton	621,146	628,910
Big Bend	1,309,174	1,325,497
Central FL	6,004,072	7,159,105
North Central	646,153	677,341
Treasure Coast	1,340,469	1,381,491
Jacksonville	4,586,646	4,569,262
EscaRosa	964,894	948,354
St. Johns	152,400	152,400
Brevard	828,171	817,332
Miami-Dade	32,519,448	32,258,225
Broward	10,246,854	10,256,442
Charlotte	231,246	218,035
Lee	2,030,730	2,061,821
Monroe	499,054	528,073
Palm Beach	5,496,169	5,461,193
Collier	298,064	312,296
Marion	242,225	241,997
Pasco	776,756	758,924
Northwest	42,247	49,162
Mid-Florida	371,706	370,361
Suwannee Valley	278,346	279,172
Highlands	201,534	205,915
TOTAL	\$83,163,275	\$84,255,169

* Charlotte County Extended their 2012 Grant Through 2013 and was awarded a 2014 Grant from HUD



**Continuum of Care
Designated Lead Agencies
with Catchment Areas by County**

Counties in white are not part of a continuum of care.)

June 2015

- Escalante Coa on the Homeless - Escambia, Santa Rosa
- Okaloosa/Walton Homeless Continuum of Care - Okaloosa, Walton
- Homeless & Hunger Coalition of N.W. Florida, Inc. - Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Washington counties
- Big Bend Homeless Coalition - Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla counties
- United Way of Suwannee Valley - Columbia, Hamilton, Lafayette, Suwannee counties
- Alachua Cnty Coalition for the Homeless - Alachua, Bradford, Levy, Putnam, Gilchrist counties
- Emergency Services & Homeless Coalition of Jacksonville - Duval, Clay, Nassau counties
- Emergency Services & Homeless Coalition of St. Johns County, Inc. - St. Johns County
- Volusia/Flagler County Coalition for the Homeless - Volusia and Flagler counties
- Marion County Homeless Council, Inc. - Marion County
- Mid-Florida Homeless Coalition - Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Sumter
- Homeless Coalition of Polk County, Inc. - Polk County (City of Lakeland)
- Tri-State Community Services - Polk County (excluding City of Lakeland)

- Brevard County Dept. of Hsing & Human Services - Brevard County
- Homeless Services Network of Central Florida - Orlando, Osceola, Seminole counties
- Coalition for the Homeless of Pasco Cnty - Pasco Cnty
- Pinellas Cnty Homeless Leadership Bd - Pinellas Cnty
- Homeless Coalition of Hillsborough County - Hillsborough Cnty
- Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness - Manatee and Sarasota counties
- Charlotte County Homeless Coalition - Charlotte County
- Collier County Hunger & Homeless Coalition - Collier Cnty
- Lee County Dept of Human Services - Lee County
- Highlands Cnty Coalition for the Homeless - DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Okeechobee counties
- Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council, Inc. - Indian River, Martin, St. Lucie counties
- Division of Human Services of Palm Beach County - Palm Beach County
- Broward Cnty Homeless Initiative Partnership Administration - Broward County
- Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust - Miami-Dade County
- Monroe Cnty Homeless Services CoC - Monroe County

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Council on Homelessness

2014-2015

Agencies

Department of Children and Families

Department of Economic Opportunity

Department of Health

Department of Corrections

Department of Veterans' Affairs

CareerSource Florida, Inc.

Florida Department of Education

Agency for Health Care Administration

Florida Housing Finance Corporation

Florida Coalition for the Homeless

Florida Supportive Housing Coalition

Florida League of Cities

Florida Association of Counties

Governor's Appointees

Ex Officio

Representatives

Ute Gazioch

Sean Lewis

Mary T. Green

Chris Southerland
Lauren Walker

Alene Tarter

Carmen Mims

Lorraine Husum Allen

Molly McKinstry

Bill Aldinger

Angela Hogan

Shannon Nazworth

Rick Butler

Claudia Tuck

Steve Smith

Frank Diaz

Bob Dickinson

Cherron "CC" Newby

Lindsey Berling-Cannon

Nikki Barfield

Col. Washington Sanchez, Jr.

Glossary

Catchment area—The geographical area of the state for which each Homeless Continuum of Care lead agency provides services.

Coalition—A group of service providers, interested citizens, local government officials and others who work together on affordable housing and homelessness issues in their communities. Generally, a coalition is not to be confused with a Continuum of Care lead agencies which is a formal HUD-designation.

Continuum of Care—The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) designed the Homeless Continuums of Care to promote communitywide commitment and planning to the goal of ending homelessness. In Florida there are 28 Continuum of Care lead agencies serving 64 of 67 counties.

Council on Homelessness—The Council on Homelessness was created in 2001 to develop policies and recommendations to reduce homelessness in Florida. The Council’s mission is to develop and coordinate policy to reduce the prevalence and duration of homelessness, and work toward ending homelessness in Florida.

Department of Children & Families (DCF)—An agency of Florida state government charged with protecting vulnerable children and adults, helping families return to self-sufficiency, and advancing personal and family recovery and resiliency.

Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO)—An agency of Florida state government that promotes economic opportunities for all Floridians; formulating and implementing successful workforce, community, and economic development policies and strategies.

Emergency Shelter—A living facility open to individuals and families who are homeless. The set-up of an emergency shelter may be in dormitory style, or with individual rooms for shelter residents. Many shelters offer case management to help residents with housing, jobs, and social services.

Extremely Low-Income (ELI)—Household income that is 30% of the annual federal poverty guidelines published by the Department of Health and Human Services. For example, in 2014 a Florida family of 4 would have a yearly income of \$16,850 or less.

Florida Housing Finance Corporation— Florida Housing was created by the Florida Legislature more than 25 years ago to help Floridians obtain safe, decent, affordable housing that might otherwise be unavailable to them. The corporation provides funds for the development of housing.

Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act (HEARTH)— Signed by President Obama in 2009 amending and reauthorizing the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act with substantial changes related to competitive grant programs, changes in HUD’s

definition of homelessness, increase/changes that applies to those eligible for homeless assistance programs funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)—A Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a local information technology system used to collect client information and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness. Each Continuum of Care is responsible for selecting an HMIS software solution that complies with HUD’s data collection, management, and reporting standards.

Housing First—Housing First is an approach to ending homelessness that centers on providing people experiencing homelessness with housing as quickly as possible – and then providing services as needed. This approach has the benefit of being consistent with what most people experiencing homelessness want and seek help to achieve.

Housing Trust Funds—Housing trust funds are established in state and local governments as a way of funding affordable housing. Many trust funds like Florida’s Sadowski Act Trust Fund receive funding from dedicated revenue from real estate doc stamps. They may also be funded by general revenue and government bonds.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001—A federal Act pertaining to the education of homeless children and youth to ensure that each homeless student has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youth. Requires states to review and undertake steps to revise laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and youth.

Office on Homelessness—Created in 2001, the Office on Homelessness was established as a central point of contact within state government on homelessness. The Office coordinates the services of the various state agencies and programs to serve individuals or families who are homeless, or are facing homelessness. Office staff work with the 17-member Council on Homelessness to develop state policy. The Office also manages targeted state grants to support the implementation of local homeless service continuum of care plans. The Office is responsible for coordinating resources and programs across all levels of government, and with private providers that serve the homeless. It also manages targeted state grants to support the implementation of local homeless service continuum of care plans.

Point-in-Time (PIT) Count—HUD requires Continuums of Care (CoCs) to count the number of people experiencing homelessness in the geographic area that they serve through the Point-in-Time count (PIT). Conducted by most CoCs during the last ten days in January, the PIT count includes people served in shelter programs every year, with every other year also including people who are unsheltered. Data collected during the PIT counts is critical to effective planning and performance management toward the goal of ending homelessness for each community and for the nation as a whole.

Permanent Supportive Housing— A combination of housing and services intended as a cost-effective way to help people live more stable, productive lives. Supportive housing is widely believed to work well for those who face the most complex challenges—individuals and families confronted with homelessness and who also have very low incomes and/or serious, persistent issues that may include substance abuse, addiction, mental illness, HIV/AIDS, or other serious challenges to a successful life. Supportive housing can be coupled with such social services as job training, life skills training, alcohol and drug abuse programs, community support services (e.g., child care, educational programs), and case management to populations in need of assistance.

Transitional Housing—Temporary housing, generally a room, a house or an apartment, that serves individuals and families who are going from homelessness to permanent housing and self-sufficiency. Transitional housing programs offer residents help in finding work, food, permanent affordable housing, etc.