

Council on Homelessness

2013 Report



Submitted June 2013 to:

Governor Rick Scott
Senate President Don Gaetz
House Speaker Will Weatherford
Secretary David E. Wilkins

Council on Homelessness

Department of Children and Families

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Florida's Council on Homelessness

Rick Scott
Governor

David E. Wilkins
Secretary

Shannon Nazworth
Chairperson

June 30, 2013

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

Dear Governor Scott:

On behalf of the members of the Council on Homelessness, it is my honor to submit the 2013 Council on Homelessness Report for your consideration.

In accordance with state law, the Council has prepared recommendations for reducing homelessness in our state. This year the Council limited its recommendations to four core actions identified as necessary to reduce the number of persons experiencing homelessness in Florida.

The report also summarizes the extent of homelessness in our state and provides information concerning Floridians who are without a place to live.

Homelessness continues to be a growing concern in Florida. According to *2012 Annual Homeless Assessment Report, Volume I*, issued by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, since 2007 Florida has had the largest increase in the rate of homelessness. 7,107 more Floridians experienced homelessness in 2012 than had experienced homelessness in 2007; a 14.8% increase. Nationally, during the same period, homelessness decreased 5.7%.

Florida continues to have the third largest homeless population in the country; 8.7% of the nation's homeless live in Florida. It also has the third highest rate of unsheltered homeless persons (64.1%)

The Council has worked diligently to identify the causes of homelessness in Florida and develop targeted strategies that can demonstrably reduce the number of persons without a place to live. We hope you will take these recommendations into consideration as you work to improve the quality of life for all Floridians.

The Council is committed to addressing the housing and services needs of our vulnerable neighbors. If you have questions on the report, I can be reached at (904) 359-9650.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shannon Nazworth", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Shannon Nazworth
Chairperson

Cc: David E. Wilkins, Secretary; Dept. of Children and Families

Executive Summary

Implementing what is now a national best practice, in 2001 Florida created an inter-agency Council on Homelessness; the purpose of which is to develop recommendations for state leadership on how to reduce homelessness throughout the state.

In accordance with 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.

On one day and one night in January 2013, local communities counted 45,364 persons who were living on the street, or in an emergency shelter. This data covers 54 counties and all 28 reporting homeless continuum of care planning areas. Thirteen (13) counties did not conduct a count of the unsheltered homeless due to the lack of resources to do the count.

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 2011-2012, Florida's public schools identified 63,685 students as homeless. This includes families that have lost their housing and are staying with family and friends.

The Council on Homelessness submits its recommendations for state action to reduce the number of Floridians who are without a home. These inter-related recommendations focus on: meeting the housing needs of households with Extremely Low Incomes, especially those with a disability or other special need; continuing support of community agencies which lead the homeless continuum of care planning process; providing flexible funding to support local initiatives to help persons exit homelessness; and prioritizing a state pilot to conduct a cost benefit analysis of providing affordable housing linked with support services for high utilizers of crisis services.

Section 1
Recommendations to Reduce Homelessness

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

Recommendation One

Create Housing for Extremely Low Incomes, especially households with Special Needs as defined by Florida Administrative Rule, 67-48.002.

Appropriate resources to Florida Housing Finance Corporation to produce housing for households with Extremely Low Income, homeless households and persons with special needs.

Rationale:

There are approximately 450,000 Extremely Low Income (ELI) renter households in Florida. These are households with incomes at or below 30 percent of the area median income (AMI) for their communities. This equates to a family of four in Orlando earning \$17,550 or less per year; or an elderly couple in the Panhandle with an annual income of \$11,550. A large majority (75%) of ELI households are cost burdened, spending 40 percent or more of their income on housing. Between 2005 and 2011, the number of cost-burdened ELI renter households increased 24 percent, from 256,357 in 2005 to 317,990 in 2011.

Across the state, the need for housing affordable to ELI households far exceeds the supply. A 2013 analysis conducted by the University of Florida's Shimberg Center on Housing Studies for Florida Housing Finance Corporation found that in all regions of the state, except the Northwest and Northeast non-metropolitan counties, the need is twice the supply. For every 100 ELI renter households there are 50 or fewer affordable and available units. Statewide the average is 31 affordable and available rental units for every 100 ELI renter households.

Based upon the 2013 HUD Point in Time Count statewide data and 2011-2012 Florida Department of Education counts of homeless students, the Shimberg Center on Housing Studies reports there are 42,476 homeless individuals and 31,148 homeless families with children in Florida. The Shimberg Center on Housing Studies reports that these statistics undercount the real number of homeless individuals and families. They do not include 6,798 unaccompanied homeless youth working to stay in school and 24,815 families with children in school who live in unstable housing such as motels and doubled up with friends, neighbors or relatives.

In addition to the cost burden necessary for ELI households to access permanent housing, these individuals and families frequently have other issues that adversely impact their ability to access and/or retain permanent housing. These issues can include a disabling condition, escaping a domestic violence situation, suddenly becoming unemployed or underemployed or losing their home to foreclosure. Many of these issues create barriers to passing landlord screenings.

Recommendation Two

Sustain Ongoing Funding for Local Homeless Coalitions

Continue recurring funding for local homeless coalitions and lead agencies sufficient to ensure capacity to secure essential federal resources targeted to reducing homelessness.

Rationale:

Continued state financial assistance is essential to helping community partners carry out federally required planning, data collection, program coordination and grant writing necessary to successfully compete for significant grant funding to house persons experiencing homelessness.

Each year the federal government appropriates resources to community agencies 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 2012, they brought nearly \$80 million in federal grants to Florida.

Based on a sample of small and medium sized homeless planning areas, the community partners have identified the workload and costs incurred to carry out these prerequisite actions for eligibility to apply for federal homeless housing grants.

Table 1 Workload and Cost for Federal Prerequisite Activities		
<u>Federal Requirement</u>	<u>Staffing Needed</u>	<u>Cost to Carry Out Action</u>
Annual point in time count of the sheltered and unsheltered homeless	1.0 FTE	\$18,300
Homeless continuum of care planning – year round	0.75 FTE	\$31,450
Preparation of federal continuum of care application for funds	0.8 FTE	\$23,210
Coordinated Assessment System for intake, need assessment, and referral	0.5 FTE	\$14,920
Homeless Management Information System for data collection on all persons served	0.75 FTE	\$38,780
Local coordination across all service providers	1.67 FTE	\$67,370
TOTAL:	5.47 FTE	\$126,660
Source: 2013 Survey of Agencies leading local continuum of care planning, Office on Homelessness, Department of Children and Families. April 2013		
Planning Areas Responding: Suncoast Partnership, Lee County, St. Johns, Monroe County, Marion County, Suwannee Valley, Pinellas County, Charlotte County, Okaloosa Walton CoC		

Recommendation Three

Support State Funding for Community Efforts to Reduce Homelessness

Provide a flexible source of state financial aid to local homeless coalitions and lead agencies to fund priority services and housing for the homeless.

Rationale:

Communities need 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 homeless service plan.

A flexible funding source can enable communities to pilot 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 Four

Prioritize a State Pilot to Provide Florida-specific Data

Prioritize a state pilot to conduct a cost benefit analysis of providing affordable housing linked with support services for high utilizers of crisis services.

Rationale:

Persons experiencing homelessness interact with multiple organizations and systems providing or responsible for public healthcare, emergency services, basic needs; as well as law enforcement, the courts and correctional facilities. Studies in other states have documented significant fiscal and social benefits associated with aligning appropriate and adequate resources and programs to efficiently link affordable housing with support services for homeless persons or families with the greatest need that facilitates and supports stable and productive lives in their communities.

Florida does not have reliable data concerning the cost benefits across its multiple systems. A pilot project to assess the inter-connected cross-agency savings associated with targeting aligned public and private resources to high-utilizers of crisis services will enable Florida to develop strategies and policies, which will result in the best results for the persons served while providing the most cost-effective utilization of public resources

Section 2
Homeless Conditions in Florida

Point in Time Counts – 2013

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that the homeless continuums of care conduct an annual count of the homeless persons who are sheltered in emergency shelters, transitional housing and safe havens on a single night during the last ten days of January. Further, HUD requires that the continuums of care also must conduct a count of the unsheltered homeless population every other year, required on odd numbered years. For 2013, the state's 28 homeless continuums of care carried out both the sheltered and unsheltered counts required.

The goal is to produce an unduplicated count, or statistically reliable estimate of the homeless in the community.

Who is counted as Homeless?

The intent is to identify those men, women and children who meet HUD's definition of a homeless person. This is limited to:

- (1) Those living in a publicly or privately operated shelter providing temporary living arrangements;
- (2) Those persons whose primary nighttime residence is a public or private place not intended to be used as an accommodation for human beings, such as: a car, park, abandoned building or camping ground;
- (3) A person who is exiting from an institution, where he or she lived for 90 days or less, and who was otherwise homeless immediately prior to entering that institution;
- (4) A person who is fleeing from a domestic violence situation;
- (5) A person who will lose their primary nighttime residence within 14 days, where no subsequent dwelling has been found and the individual lacks the resources to obtain permanent housing.

Who is not counted as homeless?

- Persons residing in permanent supportive housing programs, such as rental assistance vouchers;
- Persons living in emergency shelters and temporary housing that is not dedicated to serving the homeless, such as alcohol detox centers;
- Individuals and families temporarily staying with family or or friends due to the loss of their own housing or economic reasons (doubled up or sofa surfing).

The total awards for 2012 only cover grant renewals. Awards for new homeless projects submitted for funding had not been announced in time for this report. A breakdown of the grants by each of the planning areas 2011 and 2012 is attached.

The result of grants has been the growth in housing options to enable the homeless to get off the street, and to get back into permanent housing. This growth is reflected in the chart below comparing the number of beds available in 2001, to the supply in 2012.

Beds Available for the Homeless				
Year	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Permanent Housing	Total Beds
2001	7,967	10,589	3,683	22,239
2012	10,168	13,958	14,558	38,684

The major growth in the permanent housing bed supply reflects the shift in best practices away from sheltering, to rapid re-housing of the homeless into permanent housing. This model is called “Housing First,” and has demonstrated cost effective outcomes in ending a person’s episode of homelessness.

HUD Continuum of Care Awards
By Florida Planning Areas
2011 and 2012

Continuum of Care	2012 Award	2011 Award
Suncoast	722,807	689,844
Hillsborough	5,188,111	5,252,836
Pinellas	3,555,027	4,199,590
Polk	388,551	195,138
Lakeland	1,266,347	1,147,842
Volusia/Flagler	1,341,868	1,381,650
Okaloosa/Walton	61,853	621,146
Big Bend	1,204,042	1,199,272
Central FL	5,885,637	5,699,557
North Central	637,364	900,916
Treasure Coast	1,279,080	1,489,624
Jacksonville	4,588,269	4,593,530
Esca Rosa	987,587	1,126,176
St. Johns’	208,264	208,264
Brevard	871,759	860,271
Miami Dade	31,389,776	29,438,528
Broward	9,318,247	9,555,151
Lee	2,164,377	2,230,767
Monroe	521,973	502,634
Palm Beach	5,098,759	4,931,779
Collier	315,368	330,761
Marion	243,341	250,430

Continuum of Care	2012 Award	2011 Award
Pasco	287,860	1,014,276
Charlotte	231,246	220,643
Northwest	44,470	45,222
Mid-Florida	390,205	270,863
Suwannee Valley	160,334	208,868
Highlands	201,534	201,543
TOTAL	\$78,554,056	\$78,767,112

Note: The 2012 awards only reflect the grants announced for renewal awards as of May 2, 2013. Additional awards for new project applications have not yet been announced.

Council Participants
2012-2013

	<u>Represented by:</u>
Department of Children and Families	Kriss Vallese
Department of Economic Opportunity	Sean Lewis
Department of Health	Duane Ashe
Department of Corrections	William Carr Chris Southerland
Department of Veterans' Affairs	Alene Tarter
Workforce Florida, Inc.	Chris Hart
Florida Department of Education	Lorraine Allen
Agency for Health Care Administration	Molly McKinstry
Florida Housing Finance Corporation	Bill Aldinger
Florida Coalition for the Homeless	Rayme Nuckles Angela Hogan
Florida Supportive Housing Coalition	Shannon Nazworth
Florida League of Cities	Alana Brenner Rick Butler
Florida Association of Counties	Claudia Tuck
Governor's Appointees	Steve Smith Vicki Sokolik Ardian Zika Cherron Newby Arthur Rosenberg Jeffrey McAdams Joanell Greubel Teri Saunders
Ex Officio	Lindsey Berling-Cannon Tom Bilodeau