The Path Forward: Rethinking Solutions for Homelessness in Florida

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Central Florida Commission on Homelessness
Executive Summary
National Perspectives on Homelessness

Contemporary homelessness began in the 1980s when a shortage of affordable housing emerged. In the era between the Great Depression and the 1970s, homelessness was very limited. For instance, in 1970, the number of low-cost rental units exceeded the number of low-income renters by 300,000. By 1995, however, there were only 6.1 million low-rent units for the nation's 10.5 million low-income renter households, a shortage of 4.4 million units. This shift occurred because the number of low-income renter families climbed sharply over this 25-year period, while the number of low-rent units in the private market declined.\(^1\) By 2011, there were 8.5 million renters with worst case housing needs\(^2\); representing an increase of 43 percent between 2007 and 2011.\(^3\)

As the affordable rental housing shortage deepened in the 1980s, the initial response was the opening of congregate emergency shelter facilities then the subsequent development of transitional housing with an intent to help families and individuals address a range of personal issues prior to placing them in permanent housing. In 1987, Congress passed and President Reagan signed the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act – a "bill to provide urgently needed assistance to protect and improve the lives and safety of the homeless, with special emphasis on families and children."\(^4\) In the late 1990s, some communities began using data to evaluate progress on addressing homelessness and tested new ways to address homelessness. In 2000, the National Alliance to End Homelessness released A Plan, Not a Dream: How to End Homelessness in Ten Years - a bold, innovative strategy to end homelessness in the United States and emphasizing the use of data to "close the front door and open the back door to homelessness."\(^5\) With the re-institution of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness under President George W. Bush, the Council promoted the development of "ten year plans to end chronic homelessness"\(^6\) and joined with the National Alliance to End Homelessness to promote a shift to develop permanent supportive housing using a "Housing First" focus.\(^7\) More than 230 communities had adopted ten-year plans by 2009.\(^8\)

As part of the American Recovery Act, Congress provided $1.5 billion for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP).\(^9\) This funding made it possible for communities across the country to implement targeted homelessness prevention and an emerging practice known as Rapid Rehousing. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness\(^10\):

Rapid Rehousing places a priority on moving a family or individual experiencing homelessness into permanent housing as quickly as possible, ideally within 30 days of a client becoming homeless and entering a program. While originally aimed primarily at people experiencing homelessness due to short-term financial crises, programs across the country have begun to assist individuals and families who are traditionally perceived as more difficult to serve. This includes people with limited or no income, survivors of domestic violence, and those with substance abuse issues. Although the duration of financial assistance may vary, many programs find that, on average, four to six months of financial assistance is sufficient to stably re-house a household.

In May 2009, President Obama signed the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009.\(^11\) The HEARTH Act amended and reauthorized the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act with substantial changes that included a consolidation of HUD's competitive grant programs, a change in HUD's definition of homelessness and chronic homelessness, an increase in prevention resources, and a greater emphasis on performance.
In June 2010, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness launched Opening Doors, the nation’s first comprehensive strategy to prevent and end homelessness. Opening Doors serves as a roadmap for joint action by the 19 USICH member agencies along with local and state partners in the public and private sectors. The Plan addressed all sub-populations that experience homelessness and set measurable goals to end Veterans and chronic homelessness by 2015; and to end homelessness among children, families, and youth by 2020. The Plan’s strategies built upon data-driven approaches and engagement with mainstream housing, health, education, and human service programs and coordinated to prevent and end homelessness. Key themes included leadership, access to affordable and permanent supportive housing, opportunities for meaningful employment, linkages to healthcare, and retooling the homeless response system by transforming homeless services to crisis response systems that prevent homelessness and rapidly return people who experience homelessness to stable housing.

Since the launch of Opening Doors, nationally there has been a 10 percent reduction in overall homelessness and a 25 percent drop in the unsheltered population. Veteran homelessness has fallen 33 percent, including a 43 percent reduction in unsheltered homelessness among Veterans. In addition, family and child homelessness declined by 15 percent, including a 53 percent reduction among these families who were found to be unsheltered. Some cities that have adopted the approaches outlined in Opening Doors and have embedded Housing First as community practice, have achieved extraordinary results. In 2014, Phoenix and Salt Lake City both announced they had ended chronic homelessness among veterans. Both focused on a housing first approach and expanding access to permanent supportive housing. In January 2015, New Orleans announced that it had ended veteran homelessness before the federal deadline and is also on track to end chronic homelessness soon. In 2005, the state of Utah set out to end chronic homelessness; by January 2014, they had reduced chronic homelessness by 78% and are currently on track to end homelessness in 2015.

To further progress toward the goals of Opening Doors, several national initiatives are operating to support and encourage local work. These plans include: the Mayors Challenge to End Veterans Homelessness, 100,000 Homes Campaign, 25 Cities, and Zero 2016 (see sidebar).

To end homelessness, there is a growing consensus that local communities that achieve success:

- Create a local system that has a goal to make homelessness rare, brief and one time,
- Focus on housing solutions like Rapid Rehousing, permanent supportive housing, and Housing First practices,
- Use data to track progress and monitor performance,
- Invest only in proven solutions to homelessness, and
- Direct sufficient resources from the public and private sector to right-size the system and programs to be sufficient to match the community’s unique needs.

Initiatives Matrix by Local Continuum of Care
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Table 1

This table indicates the regions organized by Continuum of Care where national initiatives are currently being undertaken in Florida.

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1 Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. *In Search of Shelter: The Growing Shortage of Affordable Rental Housing*. June 1998
2 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines a “worst case housing needs” as a household with very low incomes (below half the median in their area) who do not receive government housing assistance and who either paid more than half their monthly incomes for rent, lived in severely substandard conditions, or both.
5 National Alliance to End Homelessness. *A Plan, Not a Dream: How to End Homelessness in Ten Years*
7 National Alliance to End Homelessness. SOLUTIONS BRIEF: What is Housing First? 2006.
9 The Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) provided financial assistance and services to prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless and help those who are experiencing homelessness to be quickly re-housed and stabilized. The funds were intended to target individuals and families who would be homeless but for this assistance. With a three year spending limitation, funds were allocated to states and local
government to provide for a variety of assistance, including: short-term or medium-term rental assistance and housing relocation and stabilization services, including such activities as mediation, credit counseling, security or utility deposits, utility payments, moving cost assistance, and case management. [HUD.gov](https://www.hud.gov)


17 Includes Daytona Beach/Daytona/Volusia, Flagler Counties CoC and City of Daytona

18 Includes Ft. Lauderdale/Broward County CoC and City of Ft. Lauderdale

19 Includes Ft Myers/ Cape Coral/Lee County CoC and City of Ft Myers

20 Includes Jacksonville- Duval, Clay Counties CoC and City of Jacksonville

21 Includes Miami- Dade County CoC and City of Miami

22 Includes Orlando/Orange, Osceola, Seminole Counties CoC and City of Orlando

23 Includes Tallahassee/Leon County CoC and City of Tallahassee

24 Includes Tampa/Hillsborough CoC and City of Tampa

25 Includes West Palm Beach/ Palm Beach County CoC and City of West Palm Beach
Status of Homelessness in Florida

With 1.1 million households living in poverty and an additional 2.1 million struggling financially, about 45 percent of all households in Florida find it difficult to afford necessities such as housing. Since the national downturn in the economy, many working families and individuals have become priced out of the homeownership and rental markets; when coupled with low average wages for workers in the Sunshine State, many households are vulnerable to homelessness. Despite recent progress in reducing chronic and Veteran homelessness in Florida, the pace is slower than the national average and youth homelessness in the state has surged.

Today, the homeless population of the state of Florida ranks as third largest in the nation, behind California and New York. In per capita terms, the number of people experiencing homelessness in Florida is also significantly higher than the national average: Florida’s 21.2 per 10,000 people rate of homelessness well exceeds the national rate of 18.3 per 10,000 people. As shown in Graph 2 below, Florida places tenth highest in the nation on a per capita basis; in comparison, the states with the highest rates are Hawaii, New York, California, Oregon, and Nevada.

While homelessness is steadily declining on a national scale, characteristic trends show that since 2007 Florida has made little progress in reducing homelessness within particular subgroups. Although family homelessness in the state has seen a 15 percent decline since 2007, the number of chronically homeless people has increased by 7 percent over this same seven-year period. The most recent figure of 7,989 chronically homeless people in Florida actually represents an increase of 526 persons since 2007. This figure is especially alarming considering the national trend for this subcategory, whereby chronic homelessness has declined by 30 percent since 2007.

The reduction in the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Florida decreased by 21 percent since 2007. This reduction contrasts to the national average decrease of 32 percent for this subgroup. The most recent Point in Time (PIT) Count report shows a staggering 52 percent of people experiencing homelessness were unsheltered in Florida compared to just 31 percent unsheltered nationally in 2014.

Youth homelessness remains a significant challenge in Florida; 18 percent of the nation’s homeless youth are located in the state. While the number of homeless youth increased by 80 percent between 2006 and 2013 on a national scale, it spiked by 150 percent in the state of Florida. According to the 2013 PIT Count, Florida’s 3,461 unaccompanied homeless children and youth accounted for a 7.6 percent share of total homeless in the state. Only California and New York have a larger share of unaccompanied youth and children compared to total homeless. Another equally worrying statistic is that of all homeless Veterans in the nation, 9.9
percent of them can be found in Florida, and of the nation’s *unsheltered* homeless Veteran population, 15.3 percent live in Florida.\(^{37}\)

Florida’s affordable housing crisis underpins the problem of homelessness in the state. Without enough supply of housing that people can adequately afford, many hard-working people are struggling to pay for a place to live. While both subsidized and market-rate rental units exist in the state, the housing supply is alarmingly deficient in comparison with the need.\(^{38}\) In fact, there are 623,306 people living doubled up in poor households.\(^{39}\) Moreover, for every five extremely low-income (ELI) households, whose incomes are 30 percent or lower than the Area Median Income (AMI), there is just one affordable rental unit available in Florida.\(^{40}\) In other words, there is a deficit of over 315,000 affordable units for people in the 0-30 percent AMI range.\(^{41}\) Moreover, for every five households earning incomes less than 50 percent of AMI, there were less than two available and affordable units in the state.\(^{42}\) In total, a recent study found that between 1993 and 2012, Florida’s affordable housing stock had declined by 51,000 units.\(^{43}\)

The high desirability to live in particular Florida cities drives up rent prices for many housing units, leaving them unattainable to low-income households.\(^{44}\) In all regions of Florida, except the Northwest and Northeast non-metropolitan counties, the demand for housing that is affordable to ELI households is twice the amount of the available supply.\(^{45}\) In Osceola County, there are only four available affordable units for every 100 ELI households.\(^{46}\) According to a recent study, even when the state does invest in affordable housing, only a small portion was invested in ELI housing.\(^{47}\) Just 17 percent of Florida Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) units are apportioned for ELI households whereas in Maine, Ohio, Oregon, and Virginia, 46 to 48 percent of LIHTC units are serving ELI households.\(^{48}\)

When examining housing affordability it is important to consider both the price of the unit and the renter’s ability to pay rent for that unit based on his or her income. Florida’s rental market is one of the most unaffordable in the nation relative to typical renter incomes in the state.\(^{49}\) Moreover, when considering transportation and housing costs together, Florida’s largest metro areas are less affordable than the New York and San Francisco metro areas.\(^{50}\) Assuming a resident of Florida is working 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year, he or she would need to earn $19.39 per hour in order to afford a two-bedroom apartment at Fair Market Rent (FMR). Minimum wage earners find this situation even more difficult; they must work 56 hours per week year-round in order to pay for a two-bedroom at FMR.\(^{51}\) Non-elderly adults with disabilities who rely on Supplemental Security Income must pay 111 percent of their monthly income in order to afford a modest one-bedroom apartment.\(^{52}\) With a recent study confirming that there is a significant positive relationship between high rent prices in a community and homelessness, it is clear that unobtainable rent prices in Florida are linked to the problem of homelessness in the state.\(^{53}\)

Across the state, many working Floridians’ don’t earn enough to pay for daily necessities. Just one in five of Florida’s most common occupations pays a median hourly wage above $10.29. In addition, a new United Way study has found that *45 percent or 3.2 million* of all households in
Florida are struggling to afford necessities such as housing, childcare, health care, food, and transportation.\textsuperscript{54} 27 percent of all Florida households, or 1.93 million, are considered Cost Burdened, meaning that they pay over 30 percent of their income on housing,\textsuperscript{55} according to the HUD definition.\textsuperscript{56} Even worse, 16 percent of all Florida households are considered Severely Cost Burdened, since they pay over 50 percent of their incomes on housing. In 2014, there were 1.16 million Severely Cost Burdened households in Florida,\textsuperscript{57} and 513,608 of these were renter households.\textsuperscript{58}

Despite the fact that the median price of rent in Florida has dropped in the wake of the national economic downturn, median renter incomes in Florida have declined too, and at a sharper rate.\textsuperscript{59} With the gap between wages and income slowly growing since 2009, many potential renters are priced out of the market. One study found that many of the major metro areas in Florida experienced significant rent increases between 2013 and 2014. Most notably, West Palm Beach saw a 9.1 percent increase while Miami and Orlando rent prices climbed 6.3 and 6.5 percent over this one-year span, respectively.\textsuperscript{60} In comparison, the national average increase during this period was just 4.7 percent.

Many other factors such as medical problems, disabilities, job loss, domestic violence, foreclosure, and addictions play a decisive role in causing Florida homelessness.\textsuperscript{61} Local advocacy groups believe that funding cuts of Florida local and state human services and housing programs further aggravate the problem of homelessness.\textsuperscript{62}

The people experiencing homelessness in Florida represent a wide range of demographic groups and largely inhabit the major metropolitan areas. 2014 point in time estimates show that 10,564 persons, or 35 percent of homeless people in Florida are women while 5,694 persons, or 19 percent are under the age of 18.\textsuperscript{63} The majority of households that experience homelessness are white (61% white; 37% black).\textsuperscript{64} Family homelessness remains a difficulty as well; 12,812 families with children were counted as homeless during the 2014 point in time count.\textsuperscript{65} In Central Florida a total of 3,920 families were reported as living doubled up with other families in hotels and motels in 2013.\textsuperscript{66}

In recent years, youth and child homelessness appears to be a growing problem in Florida. As conveyed in Graph 3 below, of the 69,956 homeless students in Florida, 40,339 were between pre-Kindergarten and Grade 5 for the school year 2012-2013.\textsuperscript{67} Importantly, it should be noted that Department of Education Counts do not include children who are not enrolled in school or are too young for preschool, so this figure does not fully represent the extent of youth and child homelessness.\textsuperscript{68} In fact, the National Center on Family Homelessness estimates that the actual figure was 139,667 homeless children during the 2012-2013 school year, an increase by about 27,000 kids from three years prior.\textsuperscript{69}

In 2014, over half of all Florida homeless lived in unsheltered locations.\textsuperscript{70} For those who found temporary shelter, 10,273 people accessed Emergency Shelter and 9,449 accessed Transitional Housing.\textsuperscript{71} Further analysis demonstrates that of those chronically experiencing
homeless in Florida in 2014, a staggering 76 percent or 6,086 were in unsheltered locations. In addition, 2,128 Veterans remain unsheltered, which represents just under half of the 4,552 total homeless Veterans in Florida.\textsuperscript{72} In 2014, more than one-third of homeless families in the state were unsheltered.\textsuperscript{73}

In addition to the damaging human cost, chronic homelessness can be quite expensive for the community. One new Central Florida study concluded that the aggregate costs of incarceration, emergency room visits, and inpatient hospitalizations for people experiencing chronic homelessness was $31,065 per person, per year.\textsuperscript{74} This stands in contrast to the cost of solving the problem by providing permanent supportive housing at an annual cost of $10,051. Thus, the study concluded that it was possible to achieve an overall cost reduction of 68 percent per person, per year.\textsuperscript{75}

It is clear that the lack of housing at affordable costs hinders many Floridians' ability to attain and maintain a decent place to live. With too few jobs paying enough for people to afford to meet the basic needs for their family, many working people struggle and are at-risk of homelessness. For those who are disabled, the risk of homelessness is even greater. Even people who have admirably served their country through military service experience homelessness in Florida. Tragically, many youth, families with children, men, women and Veterans are unsheltered and struggling to survive by living in cars, under bridges, in parks, and in the woods across Florida. Rural, suburban, and urban communities are all impacted by homelessness.
Figure 2 One Day Count: Characteristics of People Experiencing Homelessness in Florida (2014)

This graph shows the unsheltered and sheltered numbers of subcategories of persons experiencing homelessness as counted during the 2014 point in time count by local Continuums of Care in Florida.


The annotated bibliography located in the appendix summarizes the state and national reports that have provided useful information for this project. These various reports were selected because they contain data on Florida homelessness since the year 2010. Each report was summarized and key policy opportunities and policy recommendations were identified.
Figure 3 Rate of Homelessness per 10,000 People (2013)

This graph compares 2013 Florida rate of homelessness per 10,000 people with the highest rates in the country and the national average.

http://b.3cdn.net/naeh/c0c5bc347638fc86d5_qem6ihsg4.pdf
Florida Homeless Schoolchildren (2013)

68,956 homeless youth were enrolled in Florida public schools in 2013, which represents 18% of the nation's homeless school-age children.

Figure 4
Source:78
Figure 5

42 Ibid, page 15.
44 Ibid.
45 University of Florida Shimberg Center on Housing Studies for Florida Housing Finance Corporation
46 Shinn, Gregory A. “The Cost of Long-Term Homelessness in Central Florida” Central Florida Commission on 
http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/Alignment_Report_1214.pdf
48 Ibid.
49 Out of Reach 2014. Twenty-Five Years Later the Affordable Housing Crisis Continues." National Low Income 
http://www.sjhp.org/images/Home%20Matters%20for%20Florida%202014.pdf, Page 14
51 Ibid.
54 United Way of Florida. Page 1
55 University of Florida Shimberg Center on Housing Studies 2014
56 “Affordable Housing.” US Department of Urban Development
57 University of Florida Shimberg Center on Housing Studies 2014
59 Home Matters 2015, page 16
60 “Apartment rent growth continues climb, reaches 4.7% in November.” Axiometrics, Inc. 2014. 
%20Homelessness%20in%20Florida%202010%20Final.pdf
63 2014 Council Report, page 16
64 Ibid, page 16
65 “PIT and HIC Data Since 2007.”
66 Shinn, Gregory A. “The Cost of Long-Term Homelessness in Central Florida” Central Florida Commission on 
68 Home Matters 2015, page 10
69 Ibid, page 10
70 “PIT and HIC Data Since 2007.”
71 Ibid.
72 AHAR Report page 42
73 Ibid,
74 Shinn, Gregory A. “The Cost of Long-Term Homelessness in Central Florida.” Page 30
77 http://b.3cdn.net/naeh/c0c5bc347638fc86d5_qem6ihsg4.pdf
Summary of Systems and Context

States can play critical roles to invest in building the capacity of local communities to achieve success. The State of Utah has demonstrated that by working effectively with local communities and scaling up proven solutions, it is possible to end chronic and Veteran homelessness.

Utah has a ten year plan to end both chronic and veteran homelessness by the end of 2015. Chronic homelessness has declined 72 percent since 2005 and chronic homelessness among veterans has reached an effective zero. Declines are primarily due to the provision of permanent supportive housing for targeted individuals using a housing first approach. Housing first means providing housing first rather than requiring sobriety or other steps to be taken prior to housing. This method has proven to be highly effective and cost efficient.

The decline in numbers of families experiencing homelessness as well as the drop in the State’s overall rate of homelessness underscore the success of permanent housing programs such as permanent supportive housing and rapid rehousing. In addition, the number of persons living on the street in Utah is well under the national average and has declined due to availability of additional resources and effectiveness of outreach programs.

To end homelessness across the state of Florida, a cross-sector and collaborative approach is required that brings together state and local government working in partnership with business, philanthropy, civic and faith leaders, and nonprofit organizations. In order to understand the current approach and context, we conducted community dialogues in the four largest metropolitan cities and/or regions: Central Florida, Jacksonville, Miami-Dade, and Tampa Bay. Additionally, key statewide leaders and national experts who have been working in Florida were interviewed for their perspectives. The community dialogues and key leader interviews explored the current and possible future extent of alignment between the following five dimensions, which are critical to reducing and ending homelessness:

- Creating a local system that has a goal to make homelessness rare, brief and one time,
- Focusing on housing solutions like Rapid Rehousing, permanent supportive housing, and Housing First practices,
- Using data to track progress and monitor performance,
- Investing only in proven solutions to homelessness, and
- Directing sufficient resources from the public and private sector to right-size the system and programs to be sufficient to match the community’s unique needs.

The community dialogues explored the systems and strategies that are being deployed to
address homelessness and gaps and barriers to ending homelessness that could be addressed by improvements to state policy and increased resources for stakeholders. The results of the dialogues revealed tremendous opportunity for improvements across all five key factors. See Appendix for ratings from three of the four communities.

Overview: State of Florida Approach to Homelessness

The primary state agencies that are engaged in addressing homelessness include the Council on Homelessness, Department of Children and Families/Office on Homelessness, and the Florida Housing Finance Corporation.

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. The Council consists of 17 members, representing nine state agency heads or their designees, four members appointed by the Governor, and four members representing statewide organizations and homeless advocacy groups. The Office on Homelessness has recognized and designated 28 local entities (CoCs) to serve as lead agencies for local planning efforts to create homeless assistance continua of care systems.

The Department of Children and Families/Office on Homelessness was established in 2001 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. The Office also administers federal pass through funding (Emergency Solutions Grant) and state funding as appropriated by the legislature. The latter has included Homeless Housing Assistance Grants, Challenge Grants, and Homelessness Prevention Grants. Homeless Housing Assistance Grants assisted in the acquisition of housing and construction of new, or repair of existing rental housing for occupancy by homeless people. The housing assistance may be either permanent housing or transitional with supportive services linked to the residents. 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. Eligible applicants are the 28 lead agencies. The Challenge Grant program provides grant funding to 28 lead agencies for homeless assistance Continuums of Care (CoC). The Challenge Grants must be used to assist the 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.

Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) administers state and Federal programs that provide a range of affordable housing opportunities in Florida. FHFC implements the Florida Housing Trust Fund, which provides funding for some housing programs that address homelessness. The Link to Permanent Housing Strategy (Link) was established in 2009 to provide persons with special needs the opportunity to live independently in affordable, permanent supportive housing. FHFC is designated as the “housing credit agency” responsible
for the allocation and distribution of Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) in Florida pursuant to a Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) and has funded permanent supportive housing for persons experiencing homelessness. Recently, FHFC launched a state pilot to finance the development of three permanent supportive housing projects to serve chronically homeless persons with significant needs who are high utilizers of publicly funded emergency, crisis and institutional resources because they lack permanent housing that is linked to appropriate community-based services. A priority objective of this pilot is to study the benefits of permanent supportive housing in relation to cost-savings to the public across multiple provider systems, as well as quality-of-life benefits.

Key findings from the Community Dialogues

❖ Homelessness is a serious problem across the state of Florida and should be addressed as a statewide problem.
  ➢ Greater public education and awareness is needed since many people don’t “see” the problem and/or don’t understand that many people are “a paycheck away” from being homeless.
  ➢ The causes of homelessness are the same across the state – lack of affordable rental housing, low wages and unstable employment, disability benefits that aren’t sufficient to pay for housing, and lack of a safety net to help families and individuals facing an economic or personal crisis.

❖ The State of Florida should elevate ending homelessness to be a top priority for the State and encourage local governments to join with them.
  ➢ Local and state governments should take responsibility for the problem and become a leader and voice for change (i.e. engaging in the conversation, sharing results with community).
  ➢ Commit to investing in proven solutions and scaling resources sufficient to reach “functional zero” (ending homelessness does not mean that no one will ever experience a housing crisis again; functional zero is the dynamic state when homelessness is prevented whenever possible or is otherwise a rare, brief, and non-recurring experience).
  ➢ Educate business community about benefits of more affordable rental housing and the return on investment in solutions to end homelessness.
  ➢ Reach out to philanthropy and partners to increase public awareness

❖ A critical shortage of affordable rental housing for extremely low-income households is the root cause of homelessness.
➢ The State should incentivize affordable rental housing for extremely low-income households. This could include increasing the percentage of rental housing that is dedicated for extremely low-income households.

➢ The State should use and fund best practices that have worked in other states.

➢ The State should require developers to reduce admission barriers and admit families and individuals who experience homelessness without consideration of credit history, income sources, and nonviolent legal histories.

➢ Consider how to use land banks and foreclosed properties, leverage tax incentives, and include affordable housing as part of economic development incentives.

➢ Integrate housing for low-income households into existing private markets.

➢ Increase public awareness about the need for affordable housing and make the case for more development.

➢ Local government should bolster the housing stock through increased local government funding, becoming more involved in land and property development and more engaged with landlords.

➢ Identify opportunities to re-purpose vacant or under-used stock to be used for affordable rental housing for extremely low-income households.

❖ The State of Florida and local communities are just beginning to focus on housing solutions like Rapid Rehousing, permanent supportive housing, and Housing First practices.

➢ Fund Rapid Rehousing to reward proven programs with multi-year contracts that specify outcomes & success measures.

➢ Require local communities to create plans prioritizing Rapid Rehousing.

➢ Encourage developers and landlords to work with lead agencies and providers to provide housing units.

➢ Adopt best practices from other states that fund development, services and operations of permanent supportive housing through a unified funding system.

➢ Businesses and philanthropy need to be more actively engaged in the community in support of permanent supportive housing.

❖ Housing First practices need to be promoted statewide.

➢ Embrace Housing First as a priority and consider media campaign.
➢ Incentivize development of Housing First-type programs.

➢ Council on Homelessness should create and promote a clear definition of Housing First and provide capacity-building assistance to local communities and providers.

❖ Homelessness is expensive but solutions will cost less than the status quo.

➢ Cost of incarceration

➢ Health care costs

➢ Impact on tourism

❖ Better collaboration is needed. State agencies should stop working in silos.

➢ Frustrated with the fragmentation - want to have a cohesive, collaborative effort

➢ Create partnerships with business and philanthropy.

➢ Improve efficiency through uniformity, collaborative planning, and establishing requirements.

❖ There is a tremendous shortage of resources to provide critically needed services – case management, mental health services, substance use treatment, and healthcare. This contributes to homelessness and makes it harder for people to exit homelessness.

➢ Expand funding for wrap-around support services in permanent supportive housing, Rapid Rehousing, shelters, and outreach.

➢ Reform the state’s Medicaid program to be more effective as a tool to prevent and end homelessness.

➢ Link housing and service funding sources.

❖ Businesses and employers need to be better engaged to create greater access to jobs and to advocate for housing that is affordable at the wages their business pays.

➢ Increase wages to levels that will afford housing and offer more job opportunities.

➢ Businesses should realize how they can directly benefit from involvement in promoting permanent supportive housing.

➢ Offer both jobs and support services that will improve all areas of a person’s life.

➢ Spread knowledge and awareness about the causes and solutions to homelessness.
❖ Communities are beginning to create a local system that has a goal to make homelessness rare, brief and one time. A clear message about need for systems approach is needed to accelerate progress.

➢ The State of Florida needs to update programs and policies to support this approach.

➢ Make sure that CoCs create standards and common goals. Every CoC should adopt a goal to make homelessness rare, brief and one time and be able to provide the targets (metrics) and strategies that are being undertaken to achieve this goal.

➢ Strengthen ties between players in the system and support mechanisms. All state agencies on the Council on Homelessness should be contributing resources and reinforcing need for a systems approach. The Council should provide capacity-building assistance to help CoC’s and providers access mainstream resources.

❖ There is a tremendous need for improved and more comprehensive data collection and reporting that can then be used to track progress and monitor performance.

➢ Currently available data does not fully reflect problem across the state and locally.

➢ The different definitions of homelessness create confusion and lack of clarity.

➢ More data that demonstrates the vulnerability, types of disabilities, and interactions with criminal justice system would be helpful.

➢ Communities do not conduct annual Point In Time counts according to the same methodology so local counts are not reliable to track progress.

➢ Youth data is incomplete due to difficulties of counting youth and varying definitions of youth homelessness.

➢ The State should take the lead to create a statewide data warehouse or statewide collaborative Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in order to standardize data collection, measures, and reporting.

➢ The State should create a reliable funding stream to improve data.

❖ The State of Florida needs to be an active partner with local communities.

➢ The State should provide capacity-building assistance to local government, providers, and lead agencies.

➢ The State should require programs meet agreed-upon objectives and hold lead agencies accountable for implementing proven solutions and achieving results.

❖ The State of Florida should increase its investment in proven solutions to homelessness.
➢ Mobilize state agencies to provide funding and mainstream resources (i.e. Medicaid, mental health services, TANF, etc.).

➢ Increase FHFC investment in affordable rental housing for extremely low-income households, permanent supportive housing, and Rapid Rehousing.

❖ Philanthropy is willing and available to be more engaged statewide and locally.

➢ Encourage and support partnerships with developers and landlords to provide housing.

➢ Work with local and state government to fund programs that are aligned with best practices and community plans to end homelessness.

❖ Laws that criminalize do not address the underlying causes of homelessness and incarceration create more homelessness.

➢ Develop policies that don’t criminalize homelessness.

➢ Criminalization laws result in criminal records that might make people ineligible for housing and jobs.

➢ Dispel myths that criminalization works as solution to homelessness.

➢ Help eliminate barriers to housing and jobs for those with legal histories as a result of community policies that have criminalized homelessness.

❖ Focus on homelessness prevention.

➢ Improve re-entry planning from jails and prisons and avoid discharge to homelessness.

➢ Provide supportive housing to prevent discharge from mental health and substance use treatment to homelessness.

➢ End criminalization of homelessness because it perpetuates the cycle of homelessness and instead invest in solutions that are both less costly and more effective.

➢ Provide funding for targeted homelessness prevention assistance to divert households from entering emergency shelter or unsheltered homelessness.

Populations and Interventions

Veterans

Preventing and ending Veteran homelessness has been a national priority since 2009. *Opening Doors, the Federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness*, calls for an end to Veteran homelessness by the end of 2015. Homelessness among our nation’s Veterans has declined 33 percent between 2010 and 2015, and was as low as 49,933 Veterans on a single night in January 2014. Success can be attributed to new investments in Rapid Rehousing, permanent supportive housing, and expanded discharge services and employment services to Veterans in the past five years.

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness recently published *Criteria for Achieving the Goal of Ending Veteran Homelessness*. In early January 2014, New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu announced the city had met these criteria and effectively ended Veteran homelessness, becoming the first major U.S. city to achieve the goal and doing it a full year ahead of schedule.

Chronic Homelessness

People who experience chronic homelessness often have a serious physical or behavioral health disorder like bipolar, schizophrenia, or substance use disorder, and experience long-term or repeated episodes of homelessness. Permanent supportive housing (an affordable, subsidized apartment linked to intensive services) is usually necessary to exit homelessness and achieve stability. *Opening Doors* calls for an end to chronic homelessness by 2017 and calls for increased investment and improved targeting of permanent supportive housing to individuals and families who experience chronic homelessness.

Research has shown that permanent supportive housing is an effective and cost-efficient solution to chronic homelessness. People experiencing chronic homelessness often incur significant public costs. According to a study by the Central Florida Commission on Homelessness, the yearly average cost including hospitalization and incarceration expenses is $31,065 for chronically homeless people.81

Families With Children

Most families experience homelessness due to some unforeseen housing or financial crisis. Very few are homeless for a long time. Most families can fairly quickly resolve their housing crisis with some focused assistance. The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness in 2014 published “Family Connection: Building Systems to End Family Homelessness” and identified the key strategy areas for federal, state, and local action to end family homelessness. These include developing a centralized or coordinated entry system with the capacity to assess needs and connect families to targeted prevention assistance where possible and temporary shelter as
needed; tailoring interventions and assistance appropriate to the needs of families; and connecting families to the mainstream resources (benefits, employment, and community-based services). The specific interventions should be to provide Rapid Rehousing assistance to the majority of families experiencing homelessness and to increase access to affordable housing. They recommend reserving service-intensive housing interventions to the highest-need households. Finally, there is an emphasis upon evidence-based practices for serving families experiencing and at-risk of experiencing homelessness.

Youth

Preventing and ending youth homelessness by 2020 is a key goal of Opening Doors. USICH notes:

Youth experience homelessness for a variety of reasons. Home may not be safe: some youth leave home as a result of family conflict, which might include physical and/or sexual abuse. Home may not be supportive: a disproportionate number of youth identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning (LGBTQ) and may experience homelessness as a result of family rejection. Home may not exist: youth aging out of foster care are at high risk for becoming homeless during the transition to adulthood.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness recommends that communities adopt the following strategies:

• Early and intense intervention along with family reunification, if possible.

• An expansion of long-term housing options consistent with the developmental needs of young people.

• After-care support for youth aging out of foster care.

Single Adults

Single adults who are not Veterans or chronically homeless are the largest sub-population of people who experience homelessness. Like families, most single adults experience homelessness due to some unforeseen housing or financial crisis and very few are homeless for a long time. Most adults can quickly resolve their housing crisis if they are able to access temporary shelter and Rapid Rehousing services. For single adults with a serious physical or behavioral health disorder like bipolar, schizophrenia, or substance use disorder, access to subsidized housing with community supports or permanent supportive housing may be required.

Interventions

All populations:
• **Coordinated entry, intake and assessment**: A recent [HUD Policy Brief](https://www.hud.gov) noted that: “Most communities lack the resources needed to meet all of the needs of people experiencing homelessness. This combined with the lack of well-developed coordinated entry processes can result in severe hardships for people experiencing homelessness. They often face long waiting times to receive assistance or are screened out of needed assistance. Coordinated entry processes help communities prioritize assistance based on vulnerability and severity of service needs to ensure that people who need assistance the most can receive it in a timely manner. Coordinated entry processes also provide information about service needs and gaps to help communities plan their assistance and identify needed resources.”

• **Targeted homelessness prevention**: Investing in homelessness prevention can be an important component of the state and community response to homelessness when the programs is tightly targeted. Services may include landlord mediation, legal representation to prevent eviction, housing relocation, and linkage to other community resources. Financial assistance may cover rent or utility arrearages, application fees, security or utility deposits, car repairs or transportation assistance and any other one time assistance that may stabilize the family’s financial and housing situation. Targeting financial assistance and services to those that match the profile of other households that have already entered shelter will result in the greatest impact. If that data is not available, homelessness prevention should be targeted to the households with the most urgent and intense housing crises and barriers.

• **Street Outreach to people who are unsheltered**: According to the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration](https://www.samhsa.gov)：“Meeting people where they are—geographically, philosophically, emotionally—is the essence of outreach to people experiencing homelessness. Rather than expecting people to access services on their own, outreach workers across the country take services to where people are. These outreach workers are often the first and only point of contact for people who might otherwise be disconnected.” Street outreach is particularly important in places like Florida where there a high numbers of people residing outdoors without access to emergency shelter.

• **Emergency shelter**: Emergency shelters play a critical role in a crisis response system for all populations. These facilities provide temporary or transitional shelter generally for a period of 90 days or less. Facilities may serve all populations or serve sub-populations like youth, families with children, single adults, or Veterans. The best emergency shelters operate 24/7 year round with few admission requirements beyond homelessness and provide services that are permanent housing-focused. The result is that families, adults, and youth have a safe place to stay, and their experience of homelessness is as brief as possible.

**Population-specific interventions:**

• **Rapid Rehousing** places a priority on moving a family or individual experiencing homelessness into permanent housing as quickly as possible, ideally within 30 days of a
client becoming homeless and entering a program. Time-limited services may include housing identification, rent and move in assistance and case management.

- **Permanent supportive housing (PSH)** is decent, safe, affordable, community-based housing that provides disabled tenants with the rights of tenancy and links to voluntary and flexible supports and services for people with disabilities who are experiencing chronic homelessness.

- **Targeted transitional housing** offers residential living and services for up to two years which is reserved for those individuals with severe or specific needs who choose transitional housing over other services that would help them more quickly reconnect to permanent housing. Programs serving these populations should have as few barriers as possible to program entry (e.g. sobriety requirements) and to continuation in the program.

- **Family reunification.** Often, youth simply need to be reconnected to their family and provided case management and counseling to resolve the family conflict that led to homelessness.

- An expansion of long-term housing options consistent with the developmental needs of young people. Unfortunately, some youth cannot be safely connected to adults and families and require a safe, alternative form of permanent housing, which should include the services and case management necessary to attend to their needs.

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<td>Adults &amp; Families Experiencing Chronic Homelessness</td>
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<td>Rapid Rehousing</td>
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<td>Permanent Supportive Housing</td>
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<td>Targeted Transitional Housing</td>
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<th>Family reunification</th>
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<td>Developmentally appropriate housing</td>
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Table 6 Summary of population-specific responses.

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Key Actions

Introduction

Florida is poised to align the public sector, private sector and the independent sector together to create real impact and produce tangible and measurable results for people experiencing homelessness. Collaboration, innovative policies, better alignment of current investment, and new investment in proven approaches to prevent and end homelessness will be required. This section describes opportunities for state, business and philanthropy to partner with local communities and nonprofit organizations.

The key state policy strategies should be to:

- Build the capacity for improved state and local response.
- Accelerate Rental Housing Production and Access to Affordable Rental Homes for ELI (extremely low income) households.
- Finish Ending Veteran homelessness.
- Fast-track Adoption and Implementation of Rapid Rehousing.
- Scale Production of Permanent Supportive Housing.

The key business and philanthropic opportunities that can support state and local efforts should be to

- Promote proven practices and solutions to homelessness.
- Provide funding to “fill in the gaps” to create seamless systems of care.
- Launch a statewide initiative to engage rental housing developers and property managers to set-aside units for Veterans, families, youth, and single adults to exit homelessness.

Key policy and resource shifts: opportunities to create tangible and measurable results for people experiencing homelessness

Build the capacity for improved state and local response. Improved capacity to plan and execute collaborative strategies that result in meaningful shifts in programs and policies to produce tangible and measurable solutions for people experiencing homelessness requires a paradigm shift, significantly improved cross-government and cross sector, and greater accountability by all sectors and organizations. The key leaders are the governor and the state agencies that participate on the Florida Council on Homelessness, the Florida Office on Homelessness (part of the Department of Children and Families), and the 28 local entities (CoCs) that serve as lead agencies for homeless assistance continuum of care systems. Recent
Federal changes due to the HEARTH Act have enabled the state and local communities to act more strategically to achieve progress on ending homelessness.

The current approaches to addressing homelessness appear to be fragmented and siloed, too often disconnected from the proven practices, and lacking an ability to track progress and hold each other accountable. These beliefs echoed across all community dialogues, key informant interviews, and review of recent reports about homelessness in Florida. The theme “homelessness is a statewide problem that requires a statewide approach” suggests that it’s time to move away from the current practice of treating homelessness as a uniquely local problem that leaves all decision making to local jurisdictions and the 28 CoCs. A new approach would shift to requiring greater accountability for results and increased collaboration. Communities need to tailor responses to meet local needs while also implementing only proven approaches.

Another theme that resounded across the community dialogues, key informant interviews, and review of recent reports about homelessness in Florida was a lack of confidence in the quality, comprehensiveness, and timeliness of data to measure the extent of homelessness, track progress, and monitor state, local, and program accountability. A review of recent trends in homelessness based on the annual Point In Time count, revealed wide variation (see Appendix C). Follow up with CoC leaders revealed that methodologies are locally set and too often changed from year to year which means that it’s not possible to compare between CoCs or to compare from year to year in some communities. Consistently across all community dialogues there was a call for a statewide HMIS data system or the creation of a data warehouse that could ensure that HMIS data was consistently collected, analyzed and reported. There was a call to ensure that data about populations who experience homelessness but are not included in the PIT and HMIS system are counted and included in planning for investment and policy responses. Finally, the use of data for community planning and performance monitoring (program and community) was consistently mentioned as rarely occurring at local and state levels.

The key actions that are recommended are summarized below. For a more detailed description, please see the appendix.

- The Florida Council on Homelessness should be required to develop and execute a state strategic plan that is aligned with Opening Doors (the federal strategic plan) and has a goal to make homelessness rare, brief and one time. Each state agency (including AHCA, DCF, DOE, DOEA, DOH, DVA, FHFC, DOC) should identify policies that can be leveraged and resources that can be invested to prevent and end homelessness. This should include establishing state policies that prohibit discharge into homelessness from state corrections and other institutional settings operated or funded by the state (i.e. psychiatric hospitals, substance use treatment facilities, etc.). Working with the Office of Homelessness, the Council should jointly set priorities for state funding to scale Rapid Rehousing, permanent supportive housing, and Housing First practices as foundations in a state strategic plan.
• The Florida Council on Homelessness and the Office on Homelessness should use data to inform decisions, ensure accountability and focus on outcomes. In order to do this, the Office on Homelessness will need to significantly enhance its capacity to collect, analyze and report data about homelessness. The Office should develop a statewide HMIS or data warehouse. The Florida Council on Homelessness and the Office on Homelessness should issue state guidance for the 28 CoCs on implementing cross-sector data strategies, specific methodologies for conducting local PIT counts and by-name registries of people who experience unsheltered or chronic homelessness. The Council’s annual report should report on outcomes achieved by the CoCs with regard to housing placement, length of homelessness, and progress in achieving reductions in homelessness across all populations.

• The Council on Homelessness should invest in and leverage HUD capacity building to support CoCs to conform to HEARTH requirements and adopt best practices, use state and federal funding strategically and improve partnerships with local governments, businesses, and philanthropy. The Office on Homelessness should conduct an overall review and determine whether there are opportunities to streamline and merge smaller CoCs to increase efficiency and improve outcomes while preserving the ability to respond to differing regional needs.

Accelerate Rental Housing Production and Access to Affordable Rental Homes for ELI (extremely low income) households. Support more affordable rental housing that serves extremely low income (ELI) households. The severe shortage of affordable rental housing is a primary cause of homelessness in Florida. Expanding access to ELI households through better targeting of existing rental housing and rental assistance as well as production of new apartments and new state rent subsidy sources are needed to address this crisis. CoCs and homeless assistance providers will need to be more effective at building partnerships with landlords (private, nonprofit, and public housing agencies) and linking households who are at imminent risk or experiencing homelessness to these units and rental assistance. Landlords will also need to be willing to lift screening for credit and non-violent legal history since people who experience homelessness will generally have poor credit histories. Across the country, a growing number of public housing authorities (PHAs) have become integral to their community’s efforts to prevent and end homelessness. There are very few places in Florida where the PHA is an active partner with the CoC and homeless assistance providers.

Increased ELI rental housing availability is a critical cross-cutting strategy that will leverage greater success across the other key actions. To get across the finish line with ending Veteran homelessness, improved access to ELI rental housing for Veterans is essential. By increasing ELI rental housing availability, communities can do a better job at targeting permanent supportive housing to families and individuals experiencing chronic homelessness rather than using their permanent supportive housing stock as a substitute for the affordable apartment needed by families and individuals who don’t require the services provided by supportive
housing. Better relationships with ELI housing landlords is essential to Rapid Rehousing approaches.

There appear to be meaningful opportunities to target more state and Federal resources to support the production of more affordable rental housing to serve ELI households. (Citations forthcoming from NLIHC/FHFC reports)

There are many strategies that can accelerate progress in this area. See appendix for a more detailed description.

• Ensure that a greater percentage of new units that receive funding and tax credits through the FHFC are targeted to ELI households. Require developers to be more effective partners with CoCs and homeless assistance providers and to reduce admission barriers for households with histories of homelessness. This should occur across all FHFC-administered programs.

• Build the capacity of CoCs and homeless assistance providers to be effective partners with landlords and public housing authorities. Leverage new HUD requirements that each CoC develop a coordinated entry process. Coordinated entry processes help communities prioritize assistance based on vulnerability and severity of service needs to ensure that people who need assistance the most can receive it in a timely manner.

• Convene public housing authorities, CoCs and homeless assistance providers, state agencies and local government leaders to discuss ways to bring federal housing subsidies into partnerships to better address homelessness. Bring in PHA leaders from communities outside of Florida to discuss the impact they’ve had and the lessons learned that can be applied across Florida. Utilize technical assistance resources developed by the Corporation for Supportive Housing, the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the US Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH).

• Ensure consistent and predictable state funding for affordable housing and homeless assistance programs. Predictable and consistent funding resources and cycles will help local governments, developers and other stakeholders plan and prepare to apply for future funding opportunities. This allows emerging organizations and local governments to take advantage of Florida’s existing technical assistance and predevelopment funding, knowing that they will have opportunities to apply for funds in a future cycle. Predictability and consistency is key in helping to build housing development and operations capacity throughout the state and strengthen capacity where it currently exists.
Finish Ending Veteran homelessness. By building on the momentum of a 36% reduction in homelessness among Veterans between 2009 and 2014, a functional end to Veteran homelessness is within reach. The significant Federal investments by HUD and the VA are at a scale sufficient for Florida to reach an end to Veterans homelessness if the resources are deployed effectively and in partnership with local and state partners from the nonprofit, private and philanthropic sectors. New Orleans, the first community in the country to achieve a functional end to homelessness among Veterans, built an “all hands on deck” approach that relies heavily on coordination between local, state, and federal agencies as well as the non-profit sector and private landlords. Success in addressing homelessness among Veterans is also a “proof point” that solving homelessness is possible.

"Ending veteran homelessness doesn't mean we'll never see a veteran on the street," Ms. Obama said. "That's an unfortunate reality. It means when someone does experience a housing crisis, we will be prepared to get them back into a home right away and for good."

Remarks by First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama in New Orleans to commend their efforts to eliminate veteran homelessness, which officials say is the first in the country to do so. April 20, 2015.

- Launch a statewide initiative to engage rental housing developers and property managers to set-aside units for Veterans to exit homelessness. Build upon the promising practices that have been pioneered by other communities.

- Leverage, coordinate and support activities across the national initiatives that are underway in Florida. These include the Mayors Challenge to End Veterans Homelessness, “surge” communities’ plans to reach functional zero and Zero 2016 community plans, and the 25 Cities Initiative that is being implemented in Miami, Tampa, and Orlando.

- Ensure every CoC is working with the VA medical center and contracted providers to achieve the goal to end Veterans homelessness by 2015 and has adopted specific criteria and measures for achieving the goal of ending Veteran homelessness. Every community should be:
  - Implementing a Housing First system orientation and response that integrates outreach; prevention; housing; services; benefits and employment; and health and wellness.
  - Identifying all homeless Veterans by name, moving unsheltered Veterans to safe shelter, and developing a plan to re-house each Veteran.
  - Conducting coordinated outreach and engagement and implementing a coordinated entry system.
Deploying the federal funding – Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) to rapidly rehouse Veterans and for targeted prevention to help Veterans who are imminently at risk of homelessness retain or obtain stable housing and deploy HUD-VASH (the HUD-VA supportive housing program) for vulnerable Veterans who are experiencing chronic homelessness.

Develop metrics to monitor and report monthly progress on prevention, homeless Veteran program participants and point-in-time homeless Veteran census data.

**Fast-track Adoption and Implementation of Rapid Rehousing.** Create a Rapid Rehousing (RRH) approach in every community to serve families, single adults and youth experiencing homelessness. The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) describes Rapid Rehousing as a system-wide strategy that is effective for most populations and should be a significant portion of any community’s response to homelessness rather than just one or two programs within a region. RRH is designed to help individuals and families to quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing.

Rapid Rehousing assistance is offered without preconditions (such as employment, income, absence of criminal record, or sobriety) and the resources and services provided are typically tailored to the unique needs of the household. The core components of a Rapid Rehousing program are housing identification, financial assistance for rent and move-in, and case management/service coordination. Rapid Rehousing has been shown to be more cost-efficient and effective than transitional housing and long stays in emergency shelter. The VA’s Rapid Rehousing program – SSVF – has been effectively scaled up to be a key reason cited for the progress on ending homelessness among Veterans.

“A large study that looked at over 9,000 homeless people entered into the state-wide HMIS found that the single greatest predictor of returning to homelessness was not being enrolled in Rapid Rehousing. People exiting from a shelter or transitional housing program were 4.7 and 4.0 times more likely to return to homelessness, respectively, than a person exiting from a rapid re-housing program. This was true even after controlling for demographic differences.”

Focus Strategies, citing State of Georgia research study.

Across Florida, most communities are just beginning to explore the benefits of RRH as a cost-efficient and effective strategy to address homelessness. There is a critical knowledge gap about how CoCs and homeless assistance providers should shift funding and re-tool programs to implement Rapid Rehousing. There also appear to be significant opportunities to target state and Federal resources to support implementation of Rapid Rehousing statewide.

- Provide capacity building support and technical assistance to increase the ability of CoCs, homeless assistance organizations and local government to deliver Rapid Rehousing, including providing RRH for vulnerable individuals and families and incorporating RRH into the CoCs’ coordinated entry systems.
• Encourage and create funding incentives for transitional housing providers to convert transitional housing to Rapid Rehousing. Provide technical assistance and training to support this shift.

• Encourage and create more flexibility for local communities to use SHIP funds to provide time-limited rental assistance (up to 24 months) through Rapid Rehousing programs that serve families, youth, and individuals experiencing homelessness and are part of the CoCs’ coordinated entry system. Provide technical assistance to local governments to build their capacity to fund and support these programs.

• Improve the operations and impact of the State’s ESG (Emergency Solutions Grant) allocation from HUD as a resource for RRH funding. For example, revising the contracting process to be ongoing so that funding is available without disruption (currently due to the contracting process funds are only available 6 out of 12 months) would result in smoother implementation which would be less disruptive to families and improve planning and staffing by organizations that implement Rapid Rehousing programs.

• Permit the use of TANF and set-aside some TANF funds for RRH. Using guidance provided by HHS through an informational memorandum: TANF-ACF-IM-2013-01 (Use of TANF Funds to Serve Homeless Families and Families at Risk of Experiencing Homelessness) the DCF can build upon the lessons learned by other states that have adopted this Federal flexibility (i.e. California, New Jersey, Michigan, Minnesota, Utah, and Washington).

• Appropriate new or re-directed state funding to pay for costs associated with three components of Rapid Rehousing (housing identification, financial assistance for rent and move-in, and case management/service coordination). These funds could also be used to fill the gaps of an ESG and/or TANF funded program approach.

• Explore replication of the Secure Jobs initiative to integrate RRH with employment and training services by creating a partnership between philanthropy and appropriate state agencies. Consider new opportunities available under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to establish partnerships with Workforce Florida, Inc, and its regional affiliates.

Scale Production of Permanent Supportive Housing. Permanent supportive housing (PSH) is decent, safe, affordable, community-based housing that provides disabled tenants with the rights of tenancy and links to voluntary and flexible supports and services for people with disabilities who are experiencing chronic homelessness. Permanent supportive housing is a proven, effective means of reintegrating chronically homeless and other highly vulnerable homeless families and individuals with psychiatric disabilities or chronic health challenges into the community by addressing their basic needs for housing and providing ongoing support that meets their healthcare and supportive services needs.
Cite CF report on PSH

During 2013 and 2014, Florida Housing Finance Corporation (FHFC) has approved financing resources for 573 PSH units set aside in 19 developments for households experiencing homelessness.86 The majority of the developments serving households who experienced chronic homelessness are in urban counties such as Pinellas, Duval, Hillsborough, Palm Beach and Miami-Dade. Funding PSH housing stock for these households in rural and smaller communities has been a challenge. Some Local Government Housing Trust Fund dollars have been used for housing in these counties. FHFC provided funding for a total of 4 small developments in the following counties: Pasco (30 units), St. John’s (4 units), Leon (9 units), and DeSoto (18 units).

Currently, there are 11,939 units of PSH (16,118 beds). About 20 percent of units are reserved for family households. Only 37 percent of beds are targeted to families and individuals who experienced chronic homelessness.87 This is troubling since PSH investment is intended to address chronic homelessness. It is likely that many households currently being served in PSH could be more cost-effectively served through ELI rental housing. By assisting these households to “move up” from PSH, it would free up PSH units for households who experience chronic homelessness and are unlikely to exit homelessness unless PSH is provided.

Insert SHOP tool estimates of gap and result of improved targeting.

According to key informants and participants in community dialogues, in addition to the need for more capital funding for PSH unit production, the availability of rent or operating subsidies and funding for healthcare and supportive services are a significant barrier to production of permanent supportive housing. The lack of capacity to develop, operate, manage, and provide services in PSH was frequently mentioned. Additionally, CoCs need technical assistance to create coordinated entry systems that can appropriately assess, prioritize and link households who experience chronic homelessness to PSH units.

Key actions that can accelerate progress in ending chronic homelessness among families and individuals is summarized below. See appendix for a more detailed description.

- Build state and local capacity to develop, operate, manage, and provide services in PSH by investing in projects and providers. This includes providing capital financing, funding for rental, leasing and/or operating assistance in sponsor-, project- and tenant-based supportive housing, and providing funding for supportive services for outreach to identify and assist persons experiencing chronic homelessness move into PSH, to access appropriate health care services, and to maintain housing.
  - This should include targeting existing production programs administered by the FHFC and identification of new or increased funding to scale the State’s investment in PSH to be commensurate with the needs.
Set aside a portion of the soon-to-be-available National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) for production and operations of PSH.

Pursue development of a Social Impact Bond/Pay For Success approach to PSH through cross sector philanthropic, government and nonprofit collaboration.

Pursue competitively awarded federal funding (i.e. HUD’s Section 811 Project Rental Assistance demonstration) and other national initiatives that provide resources for PSH.

- Provide healthcare services targeted to individuals who experience chronic homelessness and can be served in permanent supportive housing or affordable housing. The greatest opportunities can be achieved by partnering with the State’s Medicaid program and DCF behavioral healthcare providers. *(More content forthcoming)*

- Mobilize and engage public housing agencies/authorities (PHAs) to partner with community organizations to develop permanent supportive housing for individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness.

- Explore lessons learned from Florida Housing Finance Corporation’s (FHFC) state pilot to finance the development of three permanent supportive housing projects to serve chronically homeless persons with significant needs who are high utilizers of publicly funded emergency, crisis and institutional resources because they lack permanent housing that are linked to appropriate community based services. A priority objective of this pilot is to study the benefits of permanent supportive housing in relation to cost-savings to the public across multiple provider systems, as well as quality of life benefits.

- Develop state standards of quality for supportive housing in Florida to ensure consistency in how the funding is used locality by locality.

Content after this point is ROUGH – more to come

3 key business and philanthropic opportunities that can support state and local efforts to produce tangible and measurable results for people experiencing homelessness

Promote proven practices.

Provide funding to “fill in the gaps” to create seamless systems of care.

Launch a statewide initiative to engage rental housing developers and property managers to set-aside units for Veterans, families, youth and single adults to exit homelessness.
“Extremely-low-income persons” or ELI means one or more natural persons or a family whose total annual household income does not exceed 30 percent of the median annual adjusted gross income for households within the state.

USICH issued guidance “Criteria for Achieving the Goal of Ending Veteran Homelessness”

The Paul & Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation initiated Secure Jobs with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to build a coordinated service system that links homeless households who are receiving Rapid Rehousing assistance with the public workforce system.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. Congress passed the Act by a wide bipartisan majority; it is the first legislative reform in 15 years of the public workforce system.

Communication from Bill Aldinger, FHFC, April 21, 2015

2014 Housing Inventory Count, Florida. Housing and Urban Development.

Pay for Success (PFS)/Social Impact bonds leverage philanthropic and other private investors to provide services for a target population and focus on results and impact. With PFS, the government works with a financing organization where private investors provide up-front funding to help achieve a specific result for a target population to measurably improve individuals’ lives. The government only pays if the agreed-upon goal is achieved. This allows the government to better partner with and leverage the resources of philanthropic and other investors to help drive evidence-based innovation and invest in what works. PFS is being implemented in Massachusetts, Minnesota, Colorado, and Cleveland, Ohio to address homelessness.
Conclusion: Call to Action
Appendix A

Annotated Bibliography

Nationwide Initiatives to Reduce Homelessness in Florida

The following five nationwide initiatives seek to find solutions to homelessness through solidifying partnerships and dedicating resources. These initiatives have been adopted in various cities and counties within the state of Florida. Each initiative and the geographic areas in Florida where they have been active are described below.

VA Surge Communities


The Department of Veterans’ Affairs (VA) released a NOFA for the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program a few weeks ago. This NOFA included $300 million in funding to both renew existing grants (Priority 2) and for new grantees (priority 3). There is also new, one time “surge” funding (priority 1) that will provide an additional $300 million over the next three years to 78 communities that have the highest need based on number of homeless veterans, veteran population, economic levels, and unmet needs.

Counties/Cities in Florida

- Tampa/Hillsborough County CoC
- St. Petersburg/Clearwater/Largo/Pinellas County CoC
- Daytona Beach/Daytona/Volusia, Flagler Counties CoC
- Orlando/Orange, Osceola, Seminole Counties CoC
- Jacksonville- Duval, Clay Counties CoC
- Palm Bay/Melbourne/Brevard County CoC
- Miami/Dade County CoC

25 Cities

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has launched the 25 Cities Initiative to help communities with high concentrations of homeless Veterans to intensify and integrate their local efforts to end Veteran homelessness by 2015. This is a joint effort by VA, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and local community partners including city government, housing authorities, community providers to identify by name all of the remaining homeless Veterans in their respective communities and work together to find permanent housing solutions for these Veterans and chronically homeless individuals. The Home Depot Foundation is a sponsor of the initiative.

The VA has contracted with Atlas Research, in partnership with the 100,000 Homes Campaign (Community Solutions) and the Rapid Results Institute to design and implement the program.

Participating Cities in Florida:
• Orlando
• Tampa
• Miami

100,000 Homes Campaign

The 100,000 Homes Campaign focused on identifying and housing individuals and families who remain trapped in homelessness and are dependent on costly emergency services. This campaign brought together change agents from across the country to find and house 100,000 of the most vulnerable and long-term homeless individuals and families over three years. The 100,000 Homes Campaign was designed to fundamentally alter the response to chronic homelessness by giving communities concrete tools and connecting change agents in order to facilitate collaboration.

Participating Counties/Cities in Florida

- Tallahassee and Leon County
- Nassau County
- Jacksonville
- St. John's County
- Daytona
- Pasco County
- Ft. Lauderdale/ Broward County FL
- Pinellas County
- Treasure Coast
- Miami-Dade County
- Monroe County
- West Palm Beach/Palm Beach County
- Gainesville

Zero: 2016

Zero: 2016 is a movement of communities working to end veteran homelessness by the close of 2015 and end chronic homelessness one year later. Coordinated by Community Solutions, the national effort supports participants in optimizing local resources, tracking progress against monthly housing goals, and accelerating the spread of proven strategies.

Participating Continuums of Care in Florida:

- Tallahassee/Leon County CoC
- Jacksonville-Duval, Clay 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

Mayors Challenge

The Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness is a way to solidify partnerships and secure commitments to end Veteran homelessness from mayors across the country. Specifically, the call to action, announced by First Lady Michelle Obama and amplified by the HUD Secretary, by leaders across HUD, VA, USICH, and by the National League of Cities, is for mayors to make a commitment to ending Veteran homelessness in their cities in 2015.

Participating Counties/Cities in Florida (as of May 2015)
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State Reports

This section compiles Florida state reports published between 2010 and 2014 that contain data on Florida homelessness. The publications analyze economic conditions such as unemployment and the weak affordable housing market and their major role in causing increases in homelessness in Florida. These reports also describe key demographic information. Many of these reports highlight the need for a greater number of resources available in order to fully house Florida’s homeless population. There is also a common call for greater collaboration between state agencies and organizations in order to more efficiently serve people experiencing homelessness. In their recommendations, some of these reports underscore the importance of finding solutions to a growing child homelessness population in Florida and promote training and education for people who work in emergency shelters, health care staff, and police.

“Asset Limited Income Constrained, Employed Report in Florida”

United Way of Florida

2010


This report discusses the results of a recent study analyzing the conditions of households that are struggling financially in Florida. A key finding of this report is that 45 percent of households in Florida are having difficulty in paying for basic, everyday necessities. A thorough description of the demographic group defined as “Asset Limited Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE)” is explained with supplementary graphs to support. The report discusses the negative effects of income constraints on access to food, healthcare, childcare, transportation, and many other daily expenses. The causes, consequences, and challenges of being in this group are reported, along with specific demographic and geographic characteristics of people part of the ALICE group. This publication also explores how the condition of ALICE households could be improved through better income opportunities and short-term interventions by public and private organizations.


Department of Children and Families.

http://www.fl-counties.com/docs/pdfs/2010-council-on-homelessness-report.pdf?sfvrsn=0
These legislatively mandated reports by the Florida Council on Homelessness highlight major community efforts to address homelessness over the prior year. The reports describe the characteristics of people experiencing homelessness and whether, and by how much, these figures have changed since the prior year’s report. Brief factoids and simple charts convey the need for policy change. There is a common tone of urgency in these reports, with headers and statements such as “Florida is in a Crisis.” The report covers a range of policy recommendations, which include the need for funding for the state’s affordable housing trust fund, ongoing funding for CoC’s, and calls for support for programs such as Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Rehousing. All of these recommendations are backed up with a thorough rationale.

“Home Matters”: the 2014 and 2015 Reports

*Florida Housing Coalition.*

2014 and 2015

http://www.sjhp.org/images/Home%20Matters%20for%20Florida%202014.pdf


Both reports provide a detailed explanation of the benefits that accrue to residents and communities when people are able to access affordable housing. Facts about people who are housing cost burdened or homeless, as well as the prevalence of low wage jobs in Florida are explored in great detail. The reports discuss the mismatch between high rents and low wages and the difficult situation renters face in securing housing in the state. Specific attention is given to the recent loss of many affordable housing units and the tightened rental market. The lack of affordability in buying homes is also discussed and in particular the disparity between mortgage rates and wages for commonly held jobs in the state. Lastly, these reports discuss the positive impacts of the Sadowski Housing Trust Funds and calls for full appropriation.

“Homelessness in Florida: Homeless and Extremely Low Income Families and Individuals Need Housing Options 2010”

*Florida Coalition for the Homeless*

2010


This report gives a brief and succinct picture of the people affected by homelessness and presents a broad array of causes. Citing HUD data, the report illustrates the problem with simple raw numbers and percentages that describe the characteristics of people experiencing homelessness. The main unmet need leading to homelessness is affordable housing, according to the report. Lack of prevention assistance is discussed briefly, along with data to support the idea that prevention is the most cost effective and efficient way to reduce homelessness. The
report supports Housing First and other effective methods of quickly rehousing people. Lastly, a chart lists the numbers of people experiencing homelessness by county in the state.

“Homeward Bound: Housing Homeless Floridians Policy and Resource Guide”

*Florida Housing Coalition.*

September 2014

[http://www.flhousing.org/?page_id=6646](http://www.flhousing.org/?page_id=6646)

This document provides a historical overview of homeless assistance policy in the U.S. and Florida, examines trends in national and state homeless populations, and describes key policies and programs with a particular focus on empirical research. *Homeward Bound* is intended to provide an introduction to homeless issues for entry-level employees at Continuum of Care lead and member agencies, as well as mainstream affordable housing providers, funders, elected officials, and others with an interest in ending homelessness. This report begins by expressing the need for a change in policy in Florida in order to end homelessness and offers broad recommendations. This document then describes the history and details of current federal government programs that seek to address national homelessness while providing extended definitions of “homelessness” and related terms. Dispersed throughout the report are case studies of successful local programs implemented in Florida and other states. HUD PIT data is employed to illustrate that as the total homeless population of the US has decreased by 9% from 2007-2013, it has only decreased by .4% in Florida.

“2013 Rental Market Study: Affordable Housing Needs”

*Shimberg Center for Housing Studies.*

April 2013


This report begins by outlining Florida trends in affordable housing needs, particularly citing the need for people with low incomes and those who are cost burdened. This study reveals that there is a significant housing shortage for people who are at or below the 30 percent of AMI (area median income) threshold. For this group, there are only 31 affordable and available units for every 100 households. Exploring statewide trends in homelessness between 2000 and 2011, the study concludes that renter’s real buying power has diminished during this period, causing units to become less accessible to renters and buyers. Significant attention is given to the household income and analyzing data regarding low income households across multiple Florida counties. Many tables and maps of Florida show the distribution of low-income and cost burdened renter households through a county-level analysis.

“State Brief: Florida. National Survey of Programs and Services for Homeless Families”

*National Institute for Children and Poverty*
This data sheet summarizes state data from HUD PIT data to describe the homelessness practices and programs currently in place in Florida. This report also looks at funding sources. Data from Florida Department of Children and Families and Broward Partnership for the Homeless, Inc., and other local coalitions is used.

National Reports

The following national reports published between 2010 and 2014 capture data on Florida homelessness. Many of these publications describe economic conditions that have led to homelessness in across the United States and particularly in Florida. The most prominent factor causing homelessness, as described in these reports, is lack of affordable housing. As a result, many of the recommendations express the need for more affordable housing in the form of Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Rehousing, and Housing First strategies. In addition, these reports refer to many studies showing that people living below the poverty line or working minimum wage jobs cannot adequately afford housing in Florida and are thus pushed into homelessness. Common recommendations in these reports express the need to raise the minimum wage to a livable standard, thereby allowing a greater number of people access to housing.


US Department of Housing and Urban Development.


These reports look at the most significant annual changes from the previous year in homeless subpopulations in all fifty states. Using simple charts and graphics, these reports demonstrate which states have the highest and lowest rates of various homeless subcategories. In analyzing the Point In Time data, the reports provide a picture of the status of homelessness for that particular year and illustrate any major changes that have occurred in terms of the numbers of people experiencing homelessness over the past few years. The reports also analyze CoCs within states and make comparisons between them. The goal of these AHAR reports is to comprehensively illustrate major trends in homelessness figures; no policy recommendations are made.

The most recent report highlights that Florida’s unsheltered homeless rate of 52.2 percent is the third highest rate in the nation. Also, 45.6 percent of homeless families in Florida are found in
unsheltered locations. The report also notes that there were 1,230 unaccompanied children in Florida in 2014.

“Consolidated State Performance Report: Parts I and II”
US Department of Education
School Year 2012-2013
This annual US Department of Education report documents the educational performance of children and youth throughout the nation. The most important piece of information in this report is the table on Page 62 that records the number of enrolled children and youth in public schools. The numbers for homeless students are divided by grade in school and totaled at the bottom. There were 69,956 total students experiencing homelessness during the school year 2012-2013. In these counts, it is important to note that Department of Education Counts do not include children who are not enrolled in school or are too young for preschool, so this figure does not fully represent the extent of youth and child homelessness.

“PIT and HIC Data Since 2007”
US Department of Housing and Urban Development
December 2014
This Point in Time and Housing Inventory Count data presents the raw numbers of people experiencing homelessness and bed inventory figures since 2007. No further analysis is made.

“The State of Homelessness in America 2015"
National Alliance to End Homelessness
2015
http://b.3cdn.net/naeh/458837a0513453bec1_56m6zdnl3.pdf
This report provides a bar graph that illustrates the comparison between states of the rate of homelessness (number of homeless people per 10,000 people) utilizing HUD Point in Time data. In Florida, there are 21.2 people experiencing homelessness per 10,000, a total of 41,542 persons. For every 10,000 Veterans in Florida, 31.3 are homeless, according to the report. Maps of the United States along with charts show the change in homelessness over the previous year and change in homeless subcategories such as sheltered or unsheltered. The report reviews populations who are at risk for homelessness, specifically providing figures of economic and housing-related factors, with a large emphasis on the number of people in poverty or unemployed.
Florida’s poverty rate of 17 percent exceeds the national rate of 15.8 percent. This report then looks at the state of the response system and analyzes the trend of increased emergency shelter and permanent supportive housing capacity across the country between 2007 and 2013.

“America’s Youngest Outcasts”

_National Center on Family Homelessness_

November 2014


This comprehensive report looks at the most recent federal data to illustrate the situation of child homelessness across the country. Along with reporting data trends and characteristics of child homelessness including racial and ethnic disparities, this report investigates the causes of child homelessness, describing the affordable housing crises, high rates of family poverty, and the recession as the major factors.

Combining the four factors of child homelessness, child well being, risk for child homelessness, and state policy and planning efforts, the report develops a ranking system by state, which Florida ranked 33rd (first being the best). In terms of risk of child homelessness, Florida ranks 42nd in the nation, with over 10 percent of children without health insurance. In 2012-2013, there were a total of 139,667 homeless children in Florida.

The report details the negative impact that homelessness has on children and offers a brief history of the federal response along with recommendations for effective responses to child homelessness. The report provides “report cards” that rank each state based on their extent of child homelessness, child well-being, risk for child homelessness, and state policy and planning.

“Aligning Federal Low Income Housing Programs”

_National Low Income Housing Coalition Report_

December 2014


The research presented in this report highlights the degree to which programs such as Low Income Tax Credit (LIHTC), HOME and Affordable Housing Program (AHP) serve Extremely Low Income (ELI) households. The report includes an analysis of how five states target LIHTC units to households at various income levels. Florida is one of the five states studied. The report notes that ELI households occupy just 17 percent of LIHTC units in Florida compared to XXX. The study also found that only 15 percent of households in LIHTC units were given rental subsidies. An analysis of survey and interviews to determine the existence of rental housing development strategies allowing ELI the opportunity to afford housing units is also presented. Five case studies on ELI households are conducted in various communities throughout the country. The report concludes that LIHTC does serve ELI households, but with help from other programs. It also found that there is a lack of data available about LIHTC, HOME, and AHP.
housing developments. The report concludes with recommendations, including modifications of LIHTC, improved data, and more research in these fields.

“Out of Reach 2014. Twenty-Five Years Later the Affordable Housing Crisis Continues”
National Low Income Housing Coalition
2014
http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/oor/2014OOR.pdf

This report captures information about the gap between wages and rents across the nation. This report takes a comprehensive look at income levels such as minimum wages, median household incomes, and Supplementary Security Income Recipient wages, and compares these figures with typical rent prices for each state. The most prominent piece of information from Out of Reach is the hourly wage a full-time worker must earn in order to afford a decent two-bedroom rental home at HUD-estimated Fair Market Rent (FMR) while spending no more than 30 percent of income on housing costs. In Florida, this figure is $19.39. The report also notes the Area Median Income of Florida, which is $56,749 along with the estimated hourly mean wage, which is $13.73. It then lists the need to have 1.4 full time jobs in Florida at mean renter wage in order to afford a two bedroom at FMR. This report describes the difficulty low-wage workers face, especially those who are Extremely Low Income (ELI), in paying for housing. The report ranks each state by the hourly wage needed in order to afford a two-bedroom FMR.

“Ending Homelessness Among Veterans”
United States Interagency Council on Homelessness
February 2013

This report gives an update on the Federal Strategic Plan and the Department of Veterans Affairs plan for ending veteran homelessness by 2015. This report details trends in veteran homelessness since 2010 and options for investment in programs for the future are explored as well. Data analyzed in this report include HUD and Veteran Affairs 2009 report “A Supplemental Report to the 2009 AHAR Report” along with HUD PIT Counts from 2010-2012. According to the report, 11 percent of all unsheltered homeless Veterans are in Florida, a total of 3,130 persons. Additional research studies are cited within the report.

“New Perspectives on Community-level Determinants of Homelessness”
Byrne, Thomas. Muley, Ellen, Fargo, Jamison. Montgomery, Anne.
Journal of Urban Affairs
2012
This study seeks to confirm many past studies by demonstrating the significant positive relationship between rent levels and homelessness. There are three primary points concluded from this paper. The first is that homelessness is rooted in housing dynamics and the lack of affordable housing. Second, the presence of baby boomers and Hispanics and high mobility rates are positively correlated with homelessness. The report finds that generally Hispanics have been underrepresented in homeless population in the past due to reliance on informal housing (cultural explanation), but that high mobility—moving from one community to another—disrupts these “kinship networks.” Third, this study finds that valuable information about the determinants of homelessness can be found in analyzing HUD Point In Time Data. The report suggests two possible policy solutions to these problems: to increase supply of affordable housing and to provide more safety net funding so people are able to afford housing.

“Priced Out in 2014”

Technical Assistance Collaborative

April 2015

This report outlines the crisis of Extremely Low Income (ELI) housing across the nation. The report explains that many people who are ELI also suffer from disabilities and thus require a unique set of supports. The solution for these vulnerable ELI populations is to expand Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) supply, a task that is often difficult due to the stigma attached to both ELI and PSH. The report then describes the importance of the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) as a solution for ELI households. NHTF Statute, Interim Rule, State Allocation Plans, and funding for the NHTF are discussed at length. In a chart, the report notes that $25 million dollars is allocated to Florida for every $500 million in the National Housing Trust Fund. The report also offers a vision for the future, which includes policy recommendations linking Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) with ELI. The report ends with case studies of ELI-PSH achievements in the states of Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Illinois.

“Vulnerable to Hate: A Survey of Hate Crimes & Violence Committed against Homeless People in 2013”

National Coalition for the Homeless

June 2014

The purpose of this report is to thoroughly document the problem of hate crimes against people experiencing homelessness nationwide. The report authors seek to ensure that everyone is equally protected by civil rights. Many of the narratives presented are gathered from local news reports while homeless advocates and service providers also contribute with information about incidents from their communities. The report summarizes the upward trend in hate crimes against people experiencing homelessness between 1999 and 2013; in Florida, 230 have been committed during this time period. According to the report, there were 13 hate crimes against homeless individuals in Florida in 2013. The report describes the profiles of homeless victims and accusers and the disparity between FBI and NCH definitions of hate crimes homicides. Detailed accounts of individual cases represent the bulk of the report, which includes detailed descriptions of crimes committed in Florida communities. The report analyzes current federal, state, and local legislation and concludes with policy and education recommendations.

“Share No More: The Criminalization of Efforts to Feed People in Need”
National Coalition for the Homeless
October 2014

This report describes some of the ways communities around the country have criminalized homelessness and pushed the problem out of sight. This report examines the myths of food-sharing and presents responses to debunk these myths. The purpose of this document is to educate lawmakers, advocates, and the general public about food-sharing laws and to implement systemic attitudinal changes about homelessness. Accounts of incidents of food-sharing are drawn from the media and partner organizations. The report then presents various cases of attempts to criminalize homelessness in various cities around the country along with success stories of cities finding alternative ways to reduce hunger. The report provides a bar graph showing that in Florida, two cities have passed food-sharing legislation, two cities have pending legislation, and one city has suspended legislation. A brief section at the end is devoted to policy recommendations in terms of legislation, coalition formation, as well as local, state, and federal advocacy.

Other Key Reports
The following reports were published by the Central Florida Commission on Homelessness. The reports explore the costliness of homelessness, the gaps and priorities in current practices and infrastructure, and highlight best practices for finding solutions to people experiencing homelessness.

“The Cost of Long-Term Homelessness in Central Florida”
Shinn, Gregory A.
Central Florida Commission on Homelessness
This report provides evidence that allowing homelessness to exist in a community is more expensive than solving the problem. Studying specifically homelessness in Central Florida, the report finds that providing permanent supportive housing to chronically homeless people is significantly less costly to the state than allowing them to remain homeless. The report investigates some of the causes of homelessness. The shortage of affordable housing for people with low incomes is an integral cause of the problem. Many statistics in the report demonstrate the difficulty people with low incomes face in affording rent. To further strengthen the argument that homelessness is costly, the report provides a brief review of cities around the country to demonstrate the impact of supportive housing on reducing chronic homelessness. The report fully details the community costs of hospital visits, incarceration and other expenses that occur as a result of chronic homelessness. Toward the end, the report recommends coordination and leadership in order to end chronic homelessness through the development of more permanent supportive housing.

“Homelessness in Central Florida: Central Florida Commission on Homelessness’ Gaps and Priorities Report”

Central Florida Commission on Homelessness
2014

This report looks at the gaps and priorities of both the infrastructure and the programs that exist in Central Florida as part of the homelessness system. The report examines the current state of data collection and how it can be improved, and how CoCs can better serve people at-risk or experiencing homelessness based on current information and expert opinion. Other areas explored include funding capacity, nonprofit capabilities, and private and faith sector involvement. This report takes an in-depth view of many subcategories of homelessness, including family and Veteran homelessness. In analyzing programs, this report studies the opportunities for employment growth, support service and prevention focus, and the importance of affordable housing.

“Solutions for Homelessness: Creating Change through Innovation and Investment”

Central Florida Commission on Homelessness
2015

http://rethinkhomelessness.org/best-practices-funding-report/
This report summarizes best practices in reducing homelessness in multiple cities in the US. The purpose of this report is to show that these practices can be replicated in Central Florida. The report provides a heat map of the area concentration of homelessness in Central Florida. The first finding suggests that it is crucial to have leaders such as business and philanthropic groups to champion best practices. Secondly, the Commission stresses the need for more funding; currently the Federal sector is the primary investor in finding solutions to homelessness. Thirdly, strategies such as collaborative funding and continuous community awareness have been proven to help reduce homelessness. The report concludes with the message that many of these practices are not just the "right" thing to do, but also the "smart" thing to do.
Appendix B

Snapshot Data

The following data snapshots depict the most recent trends and characteristics of Florida homelessness. The data describes the state of Florida as a whole as well as the major metropolitan areas. Along with providing an illustration of unsheltered and unsheltered homelessness in each locale, these graphs show the proportion of the inventory of both temporary and permanent housing solutions. Additionally, an illustration of the discrepancy between monthly rent affordability and monthly income is given. Copies of these snapshots were distributed at each of the Business Funders and Providers Dialogue meetings.

Florida
Central Florida

One Day Count: Characteristics of People Experiencing Homelessness in Orange County (2014)

Count

Chronic   Families   Single Adults   Unaccompanied Youth   Veterans

Sheltered: 864
Unsheltered: 266
864
266


Orange County Inventory of Homeless Programs (2014)

Most of Orange/Osceola/Seminole Counties' inventory (89%) is for emergency and temporary interventions rather than permanent housing solutions.

Program Type

Emergency Shelter
Permanent Supportive Housing
Rapid Rehousing
Transitional Housing

Source: HUD's 2014 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Program Housing Inventory Count Report. [https://www.hudexchange.info/reports/COC_HC_State_FL_2014.pdf]

One Day Count: Unsheltered and Sheltered Households in Orange County (2014)

864
266

Family Sheltered
Family Unsheltered
Single Sheltered
Single Unsheltered


Orange County Monthly Rent Affordability v. Monthly Income

Monthly income needed to afford two bedroom FMR: $3,277
Median monthly household income: $4,567
Minimum Wage earner income: $1,373
SSI recipient earned income: $720

A full-time worker needs to earn $18.99 an hour to afford a 2-bedroom apartment in Orange/Osceola/Seminole Counties.

Duval, Clay, Nassau

One Day Count: Characteristics of People Experiencing Homelessness in Duval, Clay, and Nassau Counties (2014)


One Day Count: Unsheltered and Sheltered Households in Duval, Clay, and Nassau Counties (2014)


Duval, Clay, and Nassau Counties Inventory of Homeless Programs (2015)

Source: Duval, Clay, and Nassau Counties CoC

Monthly Rent Affordability vs. Monthly Income

Hillsborough

One Day Count: Characteristics of People Experiencing Homelessness in Tampa (2014)

- Sheltered: 551
- Unsheltered: 892

- Chronic: 161
- Families: 126
- Single Adults: 199
- Unaccompanied Youth: 561
- Veterans: 199

Tampa Inventory of Homeless Programs (2014)

- Sheltered: 551
- Unsheltered: 892

- Most of Tampa inventory (53%) is for permanent housing solutions.

Program Type:
- Emergency Shelter
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Rapid Rehousing
- Transitional Housing


One Day Count: Unsheltered and Sheltered Households in Tampa (2014)

- Family Sheltered: 302
- Family Unsheltered: 199
- Single Sheltered: 561
- Single Unsheltered: 892


Tampa Monthly Rent Affordability v. Monthly Income

- Monthly income needed to afford two bedroom FMR: $1,710
- Median monthly household income: $4,783
- Minimum Wage earner income: $1,373
- SSI recipient earned income: $720

A full-time worker needs to earn $18.29 an hour to afford a 2-bedroom apartment in Tampa-Hillsborough County.

Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition, "Out of Reach 2014. Twenty-Five Years Later the Affordable Housing Crisis Continues." [http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/2014/05/OR.pdf](http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/2014/05/OR.pdf)
Pinellas

One Day Count: Characteristics of People Experiencing Homelessness in Pinellas County (2014)


Pinellas County Inventory of Homeless Programs (2014)

Most of Pinellas County inventory (79%) is for emergency and temporary interventions rather than permanent housing solutions.

Program Type
- Emergency Shelter
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Rapid Rehousing
- Transitional Housing

Pinellas County Monthly Rent Affordability v. Monthly Income

Monthly income needed to afford two bedroom FMR
- $2,170

Median monthly household income
- $4,783

Minimum Wage earner income
- $1,373

SSI recipient earned income
- $720

A full-time worker needs to earn $12.25 an hour to afford a 2-bedroom apartment in Pinellas County.

One Day Count: Unsheltered and Sheltered Households in Pinellas County (2014)


Comparing the monthly rent of selected income demographic groups with the Fair Market Rate (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment in Pinellas County.

Tampa Bay

One Day Count: Characteristics of People Experiencing Homelessness in Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties (2014)

- Sheltered: 2,242
- Unsheltered: 2,066
- Total: 4,308

One Day Count: Unsheltered and Sheltered Households in Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties (2014)

- Family Sheltered: 203
- Family Unsheltered: 203
- Single Sheltered: 824
- Single Unsheltered: 2,242


Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties Inventory of Homeless Programs (2014)

- Emergency Shelter: 1,766
- Permanent Supportive Housing: 1,367
- Rapid Rehousing: 114
- Transitional Housing: 2,397

Source: *HUD’s 2014 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs Housing Inventory Count Report* [https://www.hudexchange.info/reports/CoC_HIC_Stats_FL_2014.pdf]

Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties Monthly Rent Affordability v. Monthly Income

- Median monthly household income: $4,783
- Minimum Wage earner income: $1,373
- SSI/recipient earned income: $720
- Rent: $3,170


Appendix C
Trend Graphs *(captions/data source forthcoming)*

C 1

C 2
Appendix D

Key Informants (not yet finalized)

The individuals from following organizations participated in calls with Barbara Poppe.

Central Florida Commission on Homelessness
Community Solutions
Corporation for Supportive Housing
ESHC of Jacksonville
Florida Housing Coalition
Florida Housing Finance Corporation
Florida Office on Homelessness
Florida Supportive Housing Coalition
Harbor House
Miami Coalition for the Homeless
Miami-Dade Homeless Trust
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
National League of Cities
Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board
Rapid Results Institute
Stewards for Affordable Housing
Tampa Hillsborough Homeless Imitative
US Interagency Council on Homelessness
US Department of Veterans Affairs
Appendix E

List of Participants

Rhonda Abbott
Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board

Joelle Allen
Peacock Foundation, Inc.

Sheryl Allen-Golden
Wellcare

Robyn Andrews
Coalition for the Homeless of Nassau County

Alicia Apfel Hancock
Apple Tree Perspectives, Inc.

Harold Barley
Metroplan Orlando

Thomas Bilodeau
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Jacob Board
Nonprofit Center of Northeast Florida

Shannon Boozman
JPMorgan Chase & Co.

Sylvia Borden
Tampa Bay CDC

Shed Boren
Camillus Health Concern

John Bowls
Barnabas Health Services

Daniel Brady
Douglas Gardens Community Mental Health Center

Melissa Brass
Catholic Charities Diocese of St. Petersburg

Glenn Brown
Children’s Board of Hillsborough County

Robert Brown
Heart of Florida United Way

Thomas Chatmon
City of Orlando

Kevin Chinault
The Salvation Army - Clearwater

Kirsten Clanton
Southern Legal Counsel, Inc.

Pauline Clarke - Trotman
Better Way

Sherri Claudio
Orlando VA Medical Center

Peter Coburn
Veterans Affairs

Officer Rey Coll
Homeless Outreach and Support Team

Bob Cook
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Duggan Cooley
United Way Pasco

Danielle Corbin
Catholic Charities, Pinellas Hope

Frank Cornier
CDC of Tampa

Jennifer Couch
Trinity Rescue Mission

Christina Crespi
Miami Downtown Development Authority

Mike Daly
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Rick Denny
Trinity Rescue Mission

Megan Dewton
Mental Health Resource Center

Mordecai Dixon
Crisis Center Tampa Bay

Brack Dodd
The Salvation Army Area Command St. Petersburg, Florida

Nicole Dorr
The Junior League of Tampa

Mary Downey
Community Hope Center

James Dunbar
Metropolitan Ministries

Frankie Elliot
Fl. Real Estate Foundation

**Terrell Ellis**
Miami-Dade Homeless Trust

**Will Evans**
Community Connections of Jacksonville

**Christine Falkowski**
The Transition House, Inc.

**Guela Ferguson**
Florida Philanthropic Network

**Susan Finlaw-Dusseault**
Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board

**Thomas F. Fleischmann**
Jewish Community Services

**Kaia Forgét**
Rollins College Philanthropy & Nonprofit Leadership Center

**Elizabeth Frazier**
Tampa Bay Lightning Foundation

**Mara Frazier**
Westgate Resorts

**Beatrice Froute de Domec**
Catholic Charities Diocese of St. Petersburg

**Anna Frusciante**
Sundari Foundation, Inc.

**Cindy Funkhouser**
Sulzbacher Center

**Flora Maria Garcia**
United Arts of Central Florida

**Jack Garrett**
Tampa Hillsborough Homeless Initiative

**Nancy Gidusko**
Walt Disney World Resorts

**Dawn Gilman**
Emergency Services & Homeless Coalition of Northeast Florida

**Eduardo (Eddie) Gloria**
Camillus House

**Bree Goldstein**
Publicly Related

**Larry Gonzalez**
Jacksonville Housing Authority

**Alexandra Gorfinkel**
City of Miami Beach

**Ashley Grave de Peralta**
Miami Bridge

**Eric Gray**
Community Food & Outreach Center

**Meredith Griffin**
OCPS-Homeless Education

**Nordeka Hall**
River Region Human Services, Inc.

**Sarah Hande**
Florida Blue

**Jodie Hardman**
Bank of America

**R. Patrick Hayle**
Mercy Support Services

**Lili High**
Catholic Charities Jacksonville

**Beth Houghton**
Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board

**Bonnie Hubbard**
Elizabeth Morse Genius Foundation

**Suzanne Hudson Smith**
Community Connections

**Steven Hurley**
Committed Citizen

**Barbara A (Bobbie) Ibarra**
Miami Coalition for the Homeless

**Marti Johnson**
Emergency Services & Homeless Coalition of Northeast Florida

**Julie Kempner**
Pinellas County

**Annette Kennedy**
2-1-1 Tampa Bay Cares, Inc.

**Matthew Kennedy**
Walt Disney World

**Penny Kievet**
City Rescue Mission (CRM)

**Alissa Kraman**
Pathways to Home/ CBC Central Fl

**Patricia Langford**
Alpha House of Tampa
Justin LaRosa  
Hyde Park United Methodist  
Downtown  

City of Gainesville  

Shannon Nazworth  
Ability Housing of Northeast Florida, Inc.  

Gracepoint  

Margaret Linnane  
Rollins College Philanthropy & Nonprofit Leadership Center  

Maria Negron  
Children’s Board of Hillsborough County  

Michael Raposa  
Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board and St. Vincent de Paul South Pinellas  

Shawn Liu  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  

Sandra Newson  
Carrfour Supportive Housing, Inc.  

Valerie Read  
Universal Orlando Foundation  

Christine Long  
Metropolitan Ministries  

Wendy Oliver  
Dr. Phillips Charities  

Royce Reed  
JPMorgan Chase & Co.  

Sherry Magee  
CNL Financial Group  

Michelle Palmer  
Harbor House of Central Florida  

Jacqueline Richardson  
City of Gainesville  

Victoria (Vicki) Mallette  
Miami - Dade Homeless Trust  

Ellen Parcell  
Heart to Heart  

Bethany Robinson  
XO Factor, Inc.  

Lori Martini  
GiveWell Community Foundation  

Ruth Patrick  
BETA Center  

Gina Rogers - Mooney  
JPMorgan Chase & Co.  

Terrance McAbee  
Homeless Empowerment Program  

Kerri Payton  
Directions for Living  

Gregory Rolle  
National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty and Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board  

Jill McReynolds  
HANDS of Central Florida  

Orlando J Perez  
Tampa Homeless Outreach, Inc.  

Lauren Romero  
Catholic Charities Diocese of St. Petersburg  

Jerry Moran  
La Cena Ristorante  

Spencer Pfleiderer  
Central Care Mission and Compassion Corner  

Luis Rosa  
The Salvation Army Area Command St. Petersburg, Florida  

John Moskos  
Wells Fargo Private Bank  

Joseph Pondolfino  
Gracepoint  

Kay Rawlins  
Orlando City Soccer Club  

Thelma Mungen  
Orlando Housing  

Zeynep Portway  
Christian Help  

Melissa Saldana  
Lutheran Services Florida  

John Murphy  
Harvest Time International  

Andrew Powell  
Rescue Outreach  

Fred Murry  

Melissa Powell
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manny Sarria</td>
<td>Alachua County Department of Community Support Services</td>
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<td>Matt Schmitt</td>
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<td>Mark Segel</td>
<td>The Jewish Federation of Pinellas &amp; Pasco Counties</td>
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<td>Brent J. Semachko</td>
<td>JPMorgan Chase &amp; Co.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lori Serino</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development</td>
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<td>Jim Shanks</td>
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<td>Julie Shematz</td>
<td>The Salvation Army - Tampa</td>
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<td>Marie Small</td>
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<td>Christine Smith</td>
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<td>Karen Smith</td>
<td>The Salvation Army Area Command St. Petersburg, Florida</td>
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<td>Eddie Soler</td>
<td>Florida Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer L. Sprague</td>
<td>Bay Pines VA Healthcare System</td>
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<td>Abigail Stanton</td>
<td>Pinellas County Human Services</td>
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<td>Paul Stasi</td>
<td>City Rescue Mission</td>
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<td>Traci Stickney</td>
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F. Policy Recommendations