

**To: Florida Council on Homelessness**

**From: Eugene Williams, Council Member and President, Florida Coalition for the Homeless**

**Date: November 30, 2017**

**Re: Proposal to Revise Florida Statutes Related to Homelessness**

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The purpose for this December agenda item is to put on Council Members' radar the priority of the Florida Coalition for the Homeless (FCH) to make statutory revisions to the homeless statute, not to discuss the proposed draft in detail at the December Council meeting. We do, however, welcome each Council Member to review the initial proposed draft and submit written comments and questions to Erik Braun prior to our next Council Meeting where the agenda item can be discussed in greater detail if desired.

FCH recommends that statutory revisions be made to conform state law to current federal law and grant program definitions, as well as clarify statutory responsibilities for local homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) lead agencies, while preserving accountability provisions in state law for programs administered by the State Office on Homelessness.

The goal for FCH is to gain the Council's support for this legislative measure during the 2019 legislative Session. FCH will also be seeking DCF's support for this bill as we will be asking the Department to adopt the measure to their 2019 Legislative agenda and to run the bill as an agency bill.

Florida's current statutes governing Homelessness Programs administered by the State Office on Homelessness are no longer in alignment with Federal law and Federal grant programs for preventing homelessness that provide much of funding for the State Office on Homelessness and its service provider agencies. Florida Coalition for the Homeless (FCH) recommends aligning state law with federal law and federal grant requirements, updating and clarifying definitions and roles, and preserving the authority of the State Office on Homelessness to effectively and efficiently administer programs and funds received to prevent and end homelessness.

Draft proposed changes are reflected in the attached statutory revisions contained on the DCF template. These changes conform state law to federal law and federal grant programs that provide most of Florida's funding to prevent homelessness. Overall, definitions are out of date with federal law (the federal HEARTH Act of 2009); references to State Office on Homeless service provider requirements are inconsistent and out of date with federal law. The proposed changes will simplify the administration of federally funded homelessness programs and provide critical consistency between state and federal requirements and definitions.