

Council on Homelessness

New Member Packet



OFFICE ON HOMELESSNESS

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State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

October 2019

Thank you for your willingness to serve on the Council on Homelessness (Council). Together with other stakeholders in every community around the state we are dedicated to reducing homelessness and caring for some of our most vulnerable citizens. As a representative of the State Office on Homelessness (Office), allow me to familiarize you with the important work the Council is engaged in.

Created in 2001, this 17-member Council, consisting of public and private representatives, exists to develop policy and advise the Office. We also collaborate with agency leaders and local homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) lead agencies to find ways to better serve our most vulnerable neighbors.

The Council currently carries out three committee calls every month and convenes in quarterly, face-to-face meetings which are all open to the public. The Office staffs these committee calls and meetings and will keep Council members briefed on all upcoming events. Please visit our website for up to date information related to all Council and Office meetings, events, and funding.

In this packet you will find information necessary to carry out the duties of a Council member. Please feel free to call or email me with any questions or concerns you have.

We look forward to working alongside you and the team you work with to continue in the fight to eliminate homelessness in Florida.

Sincerely,

Zachary Summerlin
Office on Homelessness
Florida Department of Children & Families
cell 850.363.1028
zachary.summerlin@myflfamilies.com

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

Mission: *Work in Partnership with Local Communities to Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency*

COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS BYLAWS

ARTICLE I. TITLE

The name of this body is the Council on Homelessness, established in accordance with the provisions of Section 420.622, Florida Statutes.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Council is outline in Section 420.622, Florida Statutes. The Council has the following responsibilities:

1. develop policy
2. advise the State Office on Homelessness
3. provide concurrence to the State Office on Homelessness, which may accept and administer moneys appropriated to it to provide annual "Challenge Grants"
4. provide concurrence to the State Office on Homelessness, which may administer moneys appropriated to it to provide homeless housing assistance grants annually to lead agencies for local homeless assistance continuum of care
5. provide input to the Department of Children and Families on the adoption of rules relating to the challenge grants and the homeless housing assistance grants and related issues consistent with the purposes of this section
6. provide to the Governor, the Legislature, and the Secretary of Children and Families a report summarizing the extent of homelessness in the state and the council's recommendations for reducing homelessness in this state by June 30 of each year

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Council shall be as specified in Section 420.622(2), Florida Statutes. Vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term by appointment by the initial appointing authority.

The State Office of Homelessness will alert the Office of the Governor when there are vacancies or if there are recommended additions to the membership for consideration.

Agency heads may identify a delegate and notify the State Office of Homelessness who will be serving as the delegate. A delegate can be a full-time designation or just in the absence of the agency head at a specific meeting.

The board may appoint ex-officio members who are members by virtue of their office. Ex-officio members will not have council privileges including the right to vote. Ex-Officio members will serve as subject matter experts for their office/organization and when requested by the Executive Committee, provide information within their scope of operations.

ARTICLE IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCIL MEMBERS OR DELEGATE

Each member of the Council will:

1. Actively participate in the quarterly meetings, in person or by phone or other telecommunication venue
2. Inform the agency leadership of discussions and actions pending or taken at quarterly meetings or committee conference calls

3. If legislatively mandated to be on the Council, that entity shall provide an agency report at the quarterly Council meetings regarding agency initiatives which influence or directly impact eliminating homelessness in the state of Florida
4. Review and approve the annual report
5. Actively participate on one committee

ARTICLE V. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Members are subject to the provisions of Chapter 112, Part III, Code of Ethics for Public Officers and Employees, and shall file annual financial disclosure statements in accordance with Section 112.3145, Florida Statutes, relating to disclosure of financial interests.

If an issue comes before the Council in which the member has a personal vested interest, or a vested relationship with an agency or person that will benefit from a decision relating to that issue, it shall be the duty of the member to declare the conflict of interest prior to the discussion of the issue. The member then will be prohibited from participating in the discussion of the issue. The member shall abstain from voting on the issue.

ARTICLE VI. REIMBURSEMENT

The members of the Council shall serve without financial compensation, but shall be entitled to approved travel expenses and per diem expenses incurred in attending Council meetings and related functions, as provided in Section 112.061, Florida Statutes, subject to the availability of funds.

ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS

The Officers of the Council shall be a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. The officers are elected by vote of the majority of voting Council members. Both officers shall serve for a term of two years and may succeed themselves in office.

A. Duties of the Chairperson

1. To plan and develop agenda for all meetings of the full Council.
2. To preside at and conduct all meetings of the full Council.
3. To serve as the official spokesperson for the Council in all activities that the Council may deem proper.
4. To sign official documents and correspondence on behalf of the Council.
5. To establish committees to assist the work of the full Council.
6. To appoint a Council member to serve as a Committee Chairperson.
7. To appoint individuals outside Council membership to serve as a resource to a Committee.

Duties of the Vice-Chairperson

1. To assume the powers and carry out the duties of the chairperson in the absence of the chairperson.
2. To assist the chairperson in monitoring the activities of the Council's committees.
3. To carry out other duties as delegated by the chairperson.

Election Process

1. The State Office on Homelessness will solicit members who are interested in serving in either of the Officer positions before the first meeting of the state fiscal year.
2. A ballot will be provided and included in the meeting notice prior to the annual elections.
3. Election of officers shall take place annually at the first meeting of the Council in the state fiscal year commencing July 1 of each year.

ARTICLE VIII. COMMITTEES

The Council may establish committees, either standing or temporary, as it deems necessary and appropriate to carry out its duties and responsibilities.

There shall be an executive committee comprised of the Council Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, the immediate past Chairperson, and the chairs of each standing committee of the Council. The executive committee's duties shall be:

1. To ensure that the functions of the Council as described in state law are carried out.
2. To promote the Council's cooperative working relationship with the State Office on Homelessness, other agencies of state government, and other partners in serving the needs of the homeless.
3. To identify agenda items for full Council meetings and to approve the agenda for full Council meetings.
4. To take any delegated action when requested or lawful emergency action on behalf of the Council when timing does not allow for full Council consideration at a regularly scheduled Council meeting. Any such actions shall be reported to the full Council.

Committees may meet by phone, videoconference or in-person. All committee meetings must be noticed by the State Office on Homelessness.

Committee Chairpersons, in collaboration with the Council Chair, will define the scope of the established committee and prepare a charter for the committee. In addition, a committee chairperson will:

1. Identify members of the committee
2. Establish a meeting schedule and collaborate with the State Office on Homelessness to ensure meetings or conference calls are noticed appropriately
3. Establish agenda for meeting or conference call
4. Ensure meeting summary is provided to the Council Chair, Vice Chair and the State Office of Homelessness

ARTICLE IX. MEETINGS

- A. The Council shall meet a minimum of four times each year, with the year being the state fiscal year. All meetings of the Council and its committees shall be properly noticed public meetings, pursuant to state statute.

- B. Quorum
A quorum of the Council or committee shall be fifty percent (50%) of the current membership of the Council or committee. At least a simple majority of affirmative votes of members present and voting is required to take official and final action on a matter before the body. Telephonic or video presence is allowed for Council or committee meetings and quorum requirements.

- C. Open Meeting Requirement
All meetings of the Council, and its committees, shall be open to the public, pursuant to Government in the Sunshine State provisions.

- D. Minutes
Minutes of full Council meetings shall be provided within one month following the meeting to all members by the State Office on Homelessness.

Council on Homelessness Member Roster

Designation	Agency	Council Representative	Phone	Email
Statutorily Identified	Dept of Children & Families	Ute Gazioch Director of Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services	850.717.4322	ute.gazioch@myflfamilies.com
	Dept of Economic Opportunity	Isabelle Potts Program & Coordination Support	850.921.3148	isabelle.potts@deo.myflorida.com
	Dept of Health	Patricia Boswell Administrator, FL Dept of Health in Volusia County	386.274.0799	patricia.boswell@flhealth.gov
	Dept of Veterans Affairs	Don Stout	727.319.7421	stoutd@fdva.state.fl.us
	Dept of Corrections	Vacant		
	Agency for Health Care Administration	Molly McKinstry Deputy Secretary for Health Quality Assurance	850.412.4334	molly.mckinstry@ahca.myflorida.com
	Dept of Education	Skip Forsyth Director of Homeless Education Program	850.245.0089	skip.forsyth@fldoe.org
	CareerSource FL	Warren Davis Policy Analyst	850.889.0698	wdavis@careersourceflorida.com
	FL Association of Counties	Claudia Tuck, Council Vice-Chair Department Director, Alachua County Community Support Services	352.264.6704	ctuck@alachuacounty.us
	FL League of Cities	Rick Butler Vice-Mayor, City of Pinellas Park	727.541.7713	rbutler@pinellas-park.com
FL Supportive Housing Coalition	Shannon Nazworth, Council Chair Executive Director, Ability Housing	904.359.4197	snazworth@abilityhousing.org	

Council on Homelessness Member Roster

Designation	Agency	Council Representative	Phone	Email
	FL Housing Finance Corporation	Bill Aldinger Policy Director	850.488.4197	bill.aldinger@floridahousing.org
	FL Coalition for the Homeless	Daniel Ramos President	561.355.4771	dramos@pbcgov.org
Governor's Appointee	Provident Housing Solutions	Steve Smith President	407.595.0179	stevesmith@nbcfl.org
	Leading Homelessness Initiative	Andrae Bailey CEO & President	407.456.0605	andrae@leadhomelessness.org
		Vacant		
		Vacant		
Ex-Officio	Children's Home Society - Pensacola	Lindsay Cannon Director, Program Operations	850.303.9842	lindsey.cannon@chsfl.org
	Dept of Elder Affairs	John McQuillan Livable Communities Coordinator	850.414.2120	mcquillanj@elderaffairs.org
		Jeanne Curtin Director of Livable Communities	850.414.2028	curtinj@elderaffairs.org
	US Dept of Veterans Affairs	Nikki Barfield VISN 8 Network Homeless Coordinator	727.575.8136	nikki.barfield@va.gov

Office on Homelessness Address & Staff Contacts

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Jayne Lincoln
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Mary Ellen Keeler
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Council on Homelessness Member Roster

Active Committees of the Council on Homelessness

The Office on Homelessness staffs three active committee calls monthly. The committee calls are scheduled on the respective Wednesdays at 10:00am ET.

Conference Call Instructions: Dial-in: 1-888-585-9008

Participant Code: 351-186-925#

Committee Name	Subject	Meets
Executive Committee	Any business of the Council, upcoming meetings, annual report, legislation, other issues.	1 st Wednesday of the month 10:00 a.m.
Affordable Housing	Affordable housing for homeless people or people living in poverty. Discussion of housing grants and opportunities.	2 nd Wednesday of the month 10:00 a.m.
Continuum of Care (CoC) and Veteran's Committee	Policy impacting the 27 Continuum of Care lead agencies, discussion related to funding, federal impacts, etc. Updates on state and federal activities related to homeless veterans, funding, etc.	4 th Wednesday of the month 10:00 a.m.

CHAPTER 420.621 - 420.6275

- 420.621 Definitions.
- 420.622 State Office on Homelessness; Council on Homelessness.
- 420.623 Local coalitions for the homeless.
- 420.624 Local homeless assistance continuum of care.
- 420.625 Grant-in-aid program.
- 420.626 Homelessness; discharge guidelines.
- 420.6265 Rapid ReHousing.
- 420.6275 Housing First.

420.621 Definitions.—As used in ss. 420.621-420.628, the term:

(1) “Continuum of care” means the community components needed to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency. It includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness.

(2) “Council on Homelessness” means the council created in s. 420.622.

(3) “Department” means the Department of Children and Families.

(4) “District” means a service district of the department, as set forth in ¹s. 20.19.

(5) “Homeless,” applied to an individual, or “individual experiencing homelessness” means an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes an individual who:

(a) Is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;

(b) Is living in a motel, hotel, travel trailer park, or camping ground due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations;

(c) Is living in an emergency or transitional shelter;

(d) Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;

(e) Is living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, bus or train station, or similar setting; or

(f) Is a migratory individual who qualifies as homeless because he or she is living in circumstances described in paragraphs (a)-(e).

The terms do not refer to an individual imprisoned pursuant to state or federal law or to individuals or families who are sharing housing due to cultural preferences, voluntary arrangements, or traditional networks of support. The terms include an individual who has been released from jail, prison, the juvenile justice system, the child welfare system, a mental health and developmental disability facility, a residential addiction treatment program, or a hospital, for whom no subsequent residence has been identified, and who lacks the resources and support network to obtain housing.

(6) “Local coalition for the homeless” means a coalition established pursuant to s. 420.623.

(7) “New and temporary homeless” means individuals or families who are homeless due to societal factors.

(8) “State Office on Homelessness” means the state office created in s. 420.622.

History.—s. 9, ch. 87-106; s. 18, ch. 92-58; s. 20, ch. 93-200; s. 202, ch. 99-8; s. 9, ch. 2001-98; s. 2, ch. 2009-164; s. 238, ch. 2014-19.

¹**Note.**—Section 2, ch. 2012-84, deleted s. 20.19(5), which set out service districts.

420.622 State Office on Homelessness; Council on Homelessness.—

(1) The State Office on Homelessness is created within the Department of Children and Families to provide interagency, council, and other related coordination on issues relating to homelessness.

(2) The Council on Homelessness is created to consist of 17 representatives of public and private agencies who shall develop policy and advise the State Office on Homelessness. The council members shall be: the Secretary of Children and Families, or his or her designee; the executive director of the Department of Economic Opportunity, or his or her designee, who shall advise the council on issues related to rural development; the State Surgeon General, or his or her designee; the Executive Director of Veterans’ Affairs, or his or her designee; the Secretary of Corrections, or his or her designee; the Secretary of Health Care Administration, or his or her designee; the Commissioner of Education, or his or her designee; the Director of CareerSource Florida, Inc., or his or her designee; one representative of the Florida Association of Counties; one representative of the Florida League of Cities; one representative of the Florida Supportive Housing Coalition; the Executive Director of the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, or his or her designee; one representative of the Florida Coalition for the Homeless; and four members appointed by the Governor. The council members shall be nonpaid volunteers and shall be reimbursed only for travel expenses. The appointed members of the council shall be appointed to staggered 2-year terms, and the council shall meet at least four times per year. The importance of minority, gender, and geographic representation shall be considered in appointing members to the council.

(3) The State Office on Homelessness, pursuant to the policies set by the council and subject to the availability of funding, shall:

(a) Coordinate among state, local, and private agencies and providers to produce a statewide consolidated inventory for the state’s entire system of homeless programs which incorporates regionally developed plans. Such programs include, but are not limited to:

1. Programs authorized under the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, 42 U.S.C. ss. 11371 et seq., and carried out under funds awarded to this state; and

2. Programs, components thereof, or activities that assist persons who are homeless or at risk for homelessness.

(b) Collect, maintain, and make available information concerning persons who are homeless or at risk for homelessness, including demographics information, current services and resources available, the cost and availability of services and programs, and the met and unmet needs of this population. All entities that receive state funding must provide access to all data they maintain in summary form, with no individual identifying information, to assist the council in providing this information. The State Office on Homelessness, in consultation with the designated lead agencies for a local homeless continuum of care and with the Council on

Homelessness, shall develop the system and process of data collection from all lead agencies for the purpose of analyzing trends and assessing impacts in the statewide homeless delivery system. Any statewide homelessness survey and database system must comply with all state and federal statutory and regulatory confidentiality requirements.

(c) Annually evaluate state and local services and resources and develop a consolidated plan for addressing the needs of the homeless or those at risk for homelessness.

(d) Explore, compile, and disseminate information regarding public and private funding sources for state and local programs serving the homeless and provide technical assistance in applying for such funding.

(e) Monitor and provide recommendations for coordinating the activities and programs of local coalitions for the homeless and promote the effectiveness of programs addressing the needs of the homeless.

(f) Provide technical assistance to facilitate efforts to establish, maintain, and expand local homeless assistance continuums of care.

(g) Develop and assist in the coordination of policies and procedures relating to the discharge or transfer from the care or custody of state-supported or state-regulated entities persons who are homeless or at risk for homelessness.

(h) Spearhead outreach efforts for maximizing access by people who are homeless or at risk for homelessness to state and federal programs and resources.

(i) Promote a federal policy agenda responsive to the needs of the homeless population in this state.

(j) Develop outcome and accountability measures and promote and use such measures to evaluate program effectiveness and make recommendations for improving current practices in order to best meet the needs of the homeless.

(k) Formulate policies and legislative proposals to address more effectively the needs of the homeless and coordinate the implementation of state and federal legislative policies.

(l) Convene meetings and workshops of state and local agencies, local coalitions and programs, and other stakeholders for the purpose of developing and reviewing policies, services, activities, coordination, and funding of efforts to meet the needs of the homeless.

(m) Conduct or promote research on the effectiveness of current programs and propose pilot projects aimed at improving services.

(n) Serve as an advocate for issues relating to homelessness.

(o) Investigate ways to improve access to participation in state funding and other programs for prevention and alleviation of homelessness to faith-based organizations and collaborate and coordinate with faith-based organizations.

(4) The State Office on Homelessness, with the concurrence of the Council on Homelessness, shall accept and administer moneys appropriated to it to provide annual "Challenge Grants" to lead agencies of homeless assistance continuums of care designated by the State Office on Homelessness pursuant to s. 420.624. The department shall establish varying levels of grant awards up to \$500,000 per lead agency. The department, in

consultation with the Council on Homelessness, shall specify a grant award level in the notice of the solicitation of grant applications.

(a) To qualify for the grant, a lead agency must develop and implement a local homeless assistance continuum of care plan for its designated catchment area. The continuum of care plan must implement a coordinated assessment or central intake system to screen, assess, and refer persons seeking assistance to the appropriate service provider. The lead agency shall also document the commitment of local government or private organizations to provide matching funds or in-kind support in an amount equal to the grant requested. Expenditures of leveraged funds or resources, including third-party cash or in-kind contributions, are authorized only for eligible activities committed on one project which have not been used as leverage or match for any other project or program and must be certified through a written commitment.

(b) Preference must be given to those lead agencies that have demonstrated the ability of their continuum of care to provide quality services to homeless persons and the ability to leverage federal homeless-assistance funding under the Stewart B. McKinney Act with local government funding or private funding for the provision of services to homeless persons.

(c) Preference must be given to lead agencies in catchment areas with the greatest need for the provision of housing and services to the homeless, relative to the population of the catchment area.

(d) The grant may be used to fund any of the housing, program, or service needs included in the local homeless assistance continuum of care plan. The lead agency may allocate the grant to programs, services, or housing providers that implement the local homeless assistance continuum care plan. The lead agency may provide subgrants to a local agency to implement programs or services or provide housing identified for funding in the lead agency's application to the department. A lead agency may spend a maximum of 8 percent of its funding on administrative costs.

(e) The lead agency shall submit a final report to the department documenting the outcomes achieved by the grant in enabling persons who are homeless to return to permanent housing thereby ending such person's episode of homelessness.

(5) The State Office on Homelessness, with the concurrence of the Council on Homelessness, may administer moneys appropriated to it to provide homeless housing assistance grants annually to lead agencies for local homeless assistance continuum of care, as recognized by the State Office on Homelessness, to acquire, construct, or rehabilitate transitional or permanent housing units for homeless persons. These moneys shall consist of any sums that the state may appropriate, as well as money received from donations, gifts, bequests, or otherwise from any public or private source, which are intended to acquire, construct, or rehabilitate transitional or permanent housing units for homeless persons.

(a) Grant applicants shall be ranked competitively. Preference must be given to applicants who leverage additional private funds and public funds, particularly federal funds designated for the acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of transitional or permanent housing for homeless persons; who acquire, build, or rehabilitate the greatest number of units; or who acquire, build, or rehabilitate in catchment areas having the greatest need for housing for the homeless relative to the population of the catchment area.

(b) Funding for any particular project may not exceed \$750,000.

(c) Projects must reserve, for a minimum of 10 years, the number of units acquired, constructed, or rehabilitated through homeless housing assistance grant funding to serve persons who are homeless at the time they assume tenancy.

(d) No more than two grants may be awarded annually in any given local homeless assistance continuum of care catchment area.

(e) A project may not be funded which is not included in the local homeless assistance continuum of care plan, as recognized by the State Office on Homelessness, for the catchment area in which the project is located.

(f) The maximum percentage of funds that the State Office on Homelessness and each applicant may spend on administrative costs is 5 percent.

(6) The State Office on Homelessness, in conjunction with the Council on Homelessness, shall establish performance measures and specific objectives by which it may evaluate the performance and outcomes of lead agencies that receive grant funds. Challenge Grants made through the State Office on Homelessness shall be distributed to lead agencies based on their overall performance and their achievement of specified objectives. Each lead agency for which grants are made under this section shall provide the State Office on Homelessness a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of the program in achieving its stated purpose. In evaluating the performance of the lead agencies, the State Office on Homelessness shall base its criteria upon the program objectives, goals, and priorities that were set forth by the lead agencies in their proposals for funding. Such criteria may include, but are not limited to, the number of persons or households that are no longer homeless, the rate of recidivism to homelessness, and the number of persons who obtain gainful employment.

(7) The State Office on Homelessness must monitor the challenge grants and homeless housing assistance grants to ensure proper expenditure of funds and compliance with the conditions of the applicant's contract.

(8) The Department of Children and Families, with input from the Council on Homelessness, must adopt rules relating to the challenge grants and the homeless housing assistance grants and related issues consistent with the purposes of this section.

(9) The council shall, by June 30 of each year, provide to the Governor, the Legislature, and the Secretary of Children and Families a report summarizing the extent of homelessness in the state and the council's recommendations for reducing homelessness in this state.

(10) The State Office on Homelessness may administer moneys appropriated to it for distribution among the 28 local homeless continuums of care designated by the Department of Children and Families.

History.—s. 10, ch. 2001-98; s. 60, ch. 2008-6; s. 24, ch. 2009-96; s. 3, ch. 2009-164; s. 137, ch. 2010-102; s. 10, ch. 2011-15; s. 336, ch. 2011-142; s. 4, ch. 2012-84; s. 5, ch. 2013-74; s. 107, ch. 2014-17; s. 239, ch. 2014-19; s. 2, ch. 2014-214; s. 23, ch. 2015-98; s. 5, ch. 2016-210.

420.623 Local coalitions for the homeless.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The department shall establish local coalitions to plan, network, coordinate, and monitor the delivery of services to the homeless. Appropriate local groups and organizations involved in providing services for the homeless and interested business groups and associations shall be given an opportunity to participate in such coalitions, including, but not limited to:

- (a) Organizations and agencies providing mental health and substance abuse treatment.
 - (b) County health departments and community health centers.
 - (c) Organizations and agencies providing food, shelter, or other services targeted to the homeless.
 - (d) Local law enforcement agencies.
 - (e) Local workforce development boards.
 - (f) County and municipal governments.
 - (g) Local public housing authorities.
 - (h) Local school districts.
 - (i) Local organizations and agencies serving specific subgroups of the homeless population, including, but not limited to, those serving veterans, victims of domestic violence, person with HIV/AIDS, and runaway youth.
 - (j) Local community-based care alliances.
- (2) FUNCTIONS OF LOCAL COALITIONS.—Major functions of the local coalitions are to:
- (a) Develop or assist with the development of the local homeless continuum of care plan, as described in s. 420.624, for the catchment area containing the county or region served by the local homeless coalition. Unless otherwise specified in the plan or as a result of an agreement with another coalition in the same catchment area, the local coalition shall serve as the lead agency for the local homeless assistance continuum of care.
 - (b) Discuss local issues related to homelessness and the needs of the homeless.
 - (c) Inventory all local resources for the homeless, including, but not limited to, food assistance, clothing, emergency shelter, low-cost housing, emergency medical care, counseling, training, and employment.
 - (d) Review and assess all services and programs in support of the homeless and identify unmet needs of the homeless.
 - (e) Facilitate the delivery of multiagency services for the homeless to eliminate duplication of services and to maximize the use of limited existing resources for the homeless.
 - (f) Develop new programs and services to fill critical service gaps, if necessary, through reallocation of existing resources for the homeless.
 - (g) Develop a community resource directory of services available to the homeless for use by agencies, volunteers, information and referral systems, and homeless persons.
 - (h) Develop public education and outreach initiatives to make homeless persons aware of the services available to them through community agencies and organizations.
 - (i) Identify and explore new approaches to shelter care for the homeless.
 - (j) Monitor and evaluate local homeless initiatives to assess their impact, to determine the adequacy of services available through such initiatives, and to identify additional unmet needs of homeless persons.
 - (k) Collect and compile information relating to the homeless population served and report on a regular basis, but at least annually, such information to the department, as directed by the department.
 - (l) Develop an annual report detailing the coalition's goals and activities.

(m) Develop spending plans pursuant to the grant-in-aid program created under s. 420.625. Spending plans shall include a competitive ranking of applications from local agencies eligible for funding pursuant to the provisions of s. 420.625.

(n) Develop a strategy for increasing support and participation from local businesses in the coalition's programs and activities.

(3) DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES.—The department shall develop guidelines for coalition activities, coalition reports, and development of local plans of action.

History.—ss. 10, 13, ch. 87-106; s. 3, ch. 88-303; ss. 27, 29, ch. 88-376; s. 39, ch. 95-210; s. 140, ch. 97-101; s. 11, ch. 2001-98; s. 138, ch. 2010-102; s. 19, ch. 2016-216.

420.624 Local homeless assistance continuum of care.—

(1) A local homeless assistance continuum of care is a framework for a comprehensive and seamless array of emergency, transitional, and permanent housing, and services to address the various needs of homeless persons and persons at risk for homelessness. The nature and configuration of housing and services may be unique to each community or region, depending on local needs, assets, and preferences.

(2) The purpose of a local homeless assistance continuum of care is to help communities or regions envision, plan, and implement comprehensive and long-term solutions to the problem of homelessness in a community or region.

(3) Communities or regions seeking to implement a local homeless assistance continuum of care are encouraged to develop and annually update a written plan that includes a vision for the continuum of care, an assessment of the supply of and demand for housing and services for the homeless population, and specific strategies and processes for providing the components of the continuum of care. The State Office on Homelessness, in conjunction with the Council on Homelessness, shall include in the plan a methodology for assessing performance and outcomes. The State Office on Homelessness shall supply a standardized format for written plans, including the reporting of data.

(4) Each local homeless assistance continuum of care plan must designate a lead agency that will serve as the point of contact and accountability to the State Office on Homelessness. The lead agency may be a local homeless coalition, municipal or county government, or other public agency or private, not-for-profit corporation.

(5) Continuum of care catchment areas must be designated and revised as necessary by the State Office on Homelessness, with the input of local homeless coalitions and public or private organizations that have previously certified to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and that currently serve as lead agencies for a local homeless assistance continuum of care. Designated catchment areas must not be overlapping. The designations must be consistent with those made by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development in conjunction with the awarding of federal Stewart B. McKinney Act homeless assistance funding.

(6) The State Office on Homelessness shall recognize only one homeless assistance continuum of care plan and its designated lead agency for each designated catchment area. The recognition must be made with the input of local homeless coalitions and public or private organizations that have previously certified to the

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development that they currently serve as lead agencies for a local homeless assistance continuum of care. The designations must be consistent with those made by the United States Department of Housing and Development in conjunction with the awarding of federal Stewart B. McKinney Act homeless assistance funding.

(7) The components of a continuum of care plan should include:

- (a) Outreach, intake, and assessment procedures in order to identify the service and housing needs of an individual or family and to link them with appropriate housing, services, resources, and opportunities;
- (b) Emergency shelter, in order to provide a safe, decent alternative to living in the streets;
- (c) Transitional housing;
- (d) Supportive services, designed to assist with the development of the skills necessary to secure and retain permanent housing;
- (e) Permanent supportive housing;
- (f) Rapid ReHousing, as specified in s. 420.6265;
- (g) Permanent housing;
- (h) Linkages and referral mechanisms among all components to facilitate the movement of individuals and families toward permanent housing and self-sufficiency;
- (i) Services and resources to prevent housed persons from becoming or returning to homelessness; and
- (j) An ongoing planning mechanism to address the needs of all subgroups of the homeless population, including but not limited to:
 1. Single adult males;
 2. Single adult females;
 3. Families with children;
 4. Families with no children;
 5. Unaccompanied children and youth;
 6. Elderly persons;
 7. Persons with drug or alcohol addictions;
 8. Persons with mental illness;
 9. Persons with dual or multiple physical or mental disorders;
 10. Victims of domestic violence; and
 11. Persons living with HIV/AIDS.

(8) Continuum of care plans must promote participation by all interested individuals and organizations and may not exclude individuals and organizations on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, familial status, or religion. Faith-based organizations must be encouraged to participate. To the extent possible, these components must be coordinated and integrated with other mainstream health, social services, and employment programs for which homeless populations may be eligible, including Medicaid, State Children's Health Insurance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Food Assistance Program, and services

funded through the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Block Grant, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and the welfare-to-work grant program.

History.—s. 12, ch. 2001-98; s. 72, ch. 2002-1; s. 33, ch. 2010-209; s. 6, ch. 2016-210; s. 20, ch. 2016-216.

420.625 Grant-in-aid program.—

(1) **LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.**—The Legislature hereby finds and declares that most services for the homeless have been provided by local communities through voluntary private agencies and religious organizations and that the growing numbers and increasing needs of the homeless have generally outstripped the capabilities of such local agencies to adequately respond to the problems of the homeless in Florida. The Legislature further recognizes that the level of need and types of problems associated with homelessness may vary widely from community to community, due to the diversity and geographic distribution of the homeless population and the resulting differing needs of particular communities. While the need of all homeless and displaced persons for services is recognized, it is the legislative intent that, in awarding financial assistance to local agencies under this section, preference be given to those agencies offering services targeted for the new and temporary homeless.

(2) **PURPOSE.**—The principal objective of this program is to provide needed assistance to local agencies to enable them to:

(a) Assist persons in their communities who have become, or are about to become, homeless.

(b) Where possible, restore the homeless living in their communities to suitable living conditions and self-sufficiency as quickly as possible.

(3) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is hereby established a grant-in-aid program to help local communities in serving the needs of the homeless through a variety of supportive services, which may include, but are not limited to:

(a) Public education and outreach programs.

(b) Information and referral services, including state and local telephone hotlines and local emergency shelter location and housing location services.

(c) Case management services.

(d) Emergency financial assistance for persons who are totally without shelter or facing loss of shelter.

(e) Emergency and temporary shelter programs.

(f) Temporary rent and income supplements.

(g) Job counseling and assistance programs, including temporary day care services, for persons seeking employment.

(h) Meals programs.

(i) Services coordination.

(4) **APPLICATION PROCEDURE.**—Local agencies shall submit an application for grant-in-aid funds to the district administrator for review. During the first year of implementation, district administrators shall begin to accept applications for district funds no later than October 1, 1988, and by August 1 of each year thereafter for

which funding for this section is provided. District funds shall be made available to local agencies no more than 30 days after the deadline date for applications for each funding cycle.

(5) SPENDING PLANS.—The department shall develop guidelines for the development of spending plans and for the evaluation and approval by district administrators of spending plans, based upon such factors as:

(a) The demonstrated level of need for the program.

(b) The demonstrated ability of the local agency or agencies seeking assistance to deliver the services and to assure that identified needs will be met.

(c) The ability of the local agency or agencies seeking assistance to deliver a wide range of services as enumerated in subsection (3).

(d) The adequacy and reasonableness of proposed budgets and planned expenditures, and the demonstrated capacity of the local agency or agencies to administer the funds sought.

(e) A statement from the local coalition for the homeless as to the steps to be taken to assure coordination and integration of services in the district to avoid unnecessary duplication and costs.

(f) Assurances by the local coalition for the homeless that alternative funding strategies for meeting needs through the reallocation of existing resources, utilization of volunteers, and local government or private agency funding have been explored.

(g) The existence of an evaluation component designed to measure program outcomes and determine the overall effectiveness of the local programs for the homeless for which funding is sought.

(6) ALLOCATION OF GRANT FUNDS TO DISTRICTS.—State grant-in-aid funds for local initiatives for the homeless shall be allocated by the department to, and administered by, department districts. Allocations shall be based upon sufficient documentation of:

(a) The magnitude of the problem of homelessness in the district, and the demonstrated level of unmet need for services in the district for those who are homeless or are about to become homeless.

(b) A strong local commitment to seriously address the problem of homelessness as evidenced by coordinated programs involving preventive, emergency, and transitional services and by the existence of active local organizations committed to serving those who have become, or are about to become, homeless.

(c) Agreement by local government and private agencies currently serving the homeless not to reduce current expenditures for services presently provided to those who are homeless or are about to become homeless if grant assistance is provided pursuant to this section.

(d) Geographic distribution of district programs to ensure that such programs serve both rural and urban areas, as needed.

(7) DISTRIBUTION TO LOCAL AGENCIES.—District funds so allocated shall be available for distribution by the district administrator to local agencies to fund programs such as those set forth in subsection (3), based upon the recommendations of the local coalitions in accordance with spending plans developed by the coalitions and approved by the district administrator. Not more than 10 percent of the total state funds awarded under a spending plan may be used by the local coalition for staffing and administration.

(8) **LOCAL MATCHING FUNDS.**—Entities contracting to provide services through financial assistance obtained under this section shall provide a minimum of 25 percent of the funding necessary for the support of project operations. In-kind contributions, whether materials, commodities, transportation, office space, other types of facilities, or personal services, and contributions of money or services from homeless persons may be evaluated and counted as part or all of this required local funding, in the discretion of the district administrator.

History.—s. 28, ch. 88-376; s. 103, ch. 96-175; s. 6, ch. 2013-74.

420.626 Homelessness; discharge guidelines.—

(1) It is the intent of the Legislature, to encourage mental health facilities or institutions under contract with, operated, licensed, or regulated by the state and local governments to ensure that persons leaving their care or custody are not discharged into homelessness.

(2) The following facilities and institutions are encouraged to develop and implement procedures designed to reduce the discharge of persons into homelessness when such persons are admitted or housed for more than 24 hours at such facilities or institutions: hospitals and inpatient medical facilities; crisis stabilization units; residential treatment facilities; assisted living facilities; and detoxification centers.

(3) The procedures should include:

(a) Development and implementation of a screening process or other mechanism for identifying persons to be discharged from the facility or institution who are at considerable risk for homelessness or face some imminent threat to health and safety upon discharge;

(b) Development and implementation of a discharge plan addressing how identified persons will secure housing and other needed care and support upon discharge;

(c) Assessment of the capabilities of the entities to whom identified persons may potentially be discharged, and selection of the entity determined to be best equipped to provide or facilitate the provision of suitable care and support;

(d) Coordination of effort and sharing of information with entities that are expected to bear the responsibility for providing care or support to identified persons upon discharge; and

(e) Provision of sufficient medication, medical equipment and supplies, clothing, transportation, and other basic resources necessary to assure that the health and well-being of identified persons are not jeopardized upon their discharge.

(4) This section is intended only to recommend model guidelines and procedures that mental health facilities or institutions under contract with or operated, licensed, or regulated by the state or local governments may consider when discharging persons into the community. This section is not an entitlement, and no cause of action shall arise against the state, the local government entity, or any other political subdivision of this state for failure to follow any of the procedures or provide any of the services suggested under this section.

History.—s. 13, ch. 2001-98.

420.6265 Rapid ReHousing.—

(1) **LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.**—

(a) The Legislature finds that Rapid ReHousing is a strategy of using temporary financial assistance and case management to quickly move an individual or family out of homelessness and into permanent housing.

(b) The Legislature also finds that public and private solutions to homelessness in the past have focused on providing individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness with emergency shelter, transitional housing, or a combination of both. While emergency shelter and transitional housing programs may provide critical access to services for individuals and families in crisis, the programs often fail to address their long-term needs.

(c) The Legislature further finds that most households become homeless as a result of a financial crisis that prevents individuals and families from paying rent or a domestic conflict that results in one member being ejected or leaving without resources or a plan for housing.

(d) The Legislature further finds that Rapid ReHousing is an alternative approach to the current system of emergency shelter or transitional housing which tends to reduce the length of time a person is homeless and has proven to be cost effective.

(e) It is therefore the intent of the Legislature to encourage homeless continuums of care to adopt the Rapid ReHousing approach to preventing homelessness for individuals and families who do not require the intense level of supports provided in the permanent supportive housing model.

(2) **RAPID REHOUSING METHODOLOGY.—**

(a) The Rapid ReHousing response to homelessness differs from traditional approaches to addressing homelessness by focusing on each individual's or family's barriers to housing. By using this approach, communities can significantly reduce the amount of time that individuals and families are homeless and prevent further episodes of homelessness.

(b) In Rapid ReHousing, an individual or family is identified as being homeless, temporary assistance is provided to allow the individual or family to obtain permanent housing as quickly as possible, and, if needed, assistance is provided to allow the individual or family to retain housing.

(c) The objective of Rapid ReHousing is to provide assistance for as short a term as possible so that the individual or family receiving assistance does not develop a dependency on the assistance.

History.—s. 7, ch. 2016-210.

420.6275 Housing First.—

(1) **LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.—**

(a) The Legislature finds that many communities plan to manage homelessness rather than plan to end it.

(b) The Legislature also finds that for most of the past two decades, public and private solutions to homelessness have focused on providing individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness with emergency shelter, transitional housing, or a combination of both. While emergency shelter programs may provide critical access to services for individuals and families in crisis, they often fail to address their long-term needs.

(c) The Legislature further finds that Housing First is an alternative approach to the current system of emergency shelter or transitional housing which tends to reduce the length of time of homelessness and has proven to be cost-effective.

(d) It is therefore the intent of the Legislature to encourage homeless continuums of care to adopt the Housing First approach to ending homelessness for individuals and families.

(2) HOUSING FIRST METHODOLOGY.—

(a) The Housing First approach to homelessness differs from traditional approaches by providing housing assistance, case management, and support services responsive to individual or family needs after housing is obtained. By using this approach when appropriate, communities can significantly reduce the amount of time that individuals and families are homeless and prevent further episodes of homelessness. Housing First emphasizes that social services provided to enhance individual and family well-being can be more effective when people are in their own home, and:

1. The housing is not time-limited.

2. The housing is not contingent on compliance with services. Instead, participants must comply with a standard lease agreement and are provided with the services and support that are necessary to help them do so successfully.

3. A background check and any rehabilitation necessary to combat an addiction related to alcoholism or substance abuse has been completed by the individual for whom assistance or support services are provided.

(b) The Housing First approach addresses the societal causes of homelessness and advocates for the immediate return of individuals and families into housing and communities. Housing First provides a critical link between the emergency and transitional housing system and community-based social service, educational, and health care organizations and consists of four components:

1. Crisis intervention and short-term stabilization.

2. Screening, intake, and needs assessment.

3. Provision of housing resources.

4. Provision of case management.

History.—s. 4, ch. 2009-164.

CHAPTER 414.161

414.161 Homelessness prevention grants.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—There is created a grant program to provide emergency financial assistance to families facing the loss of their current home due to a financial or other crisis. The State Office on Homelessness, with the concurrence of the Council on Homelessness, may accept and administer moneys appropriated to the Department of Children and Families to provide homelessness prevention grants annually to lead agencies for local homeless assistance continuums of care, as recognized by the State Office on Homelessness. These moneys shall consist of any sums that the state may appropriate, as well as money received from donations, gifts, bequests, or otherwise from any public or private source that is intended to assist families to prevent them from becoming homeless.

(2) GRANT APPLICATIONS.—Grant applicants shall be ranked competitively. Preference shall be given to applicants who leverage additional private funds and public funds, who demonstrate the effectiveness of their homelessness prevention programs in keeping families housed, and who demonstrate the commitment of other assistance and services to address family health, employment, and education needs.

(3) ELIGIBILITY.—In order to qualify for a grant, a lead agency must develop and implement a local homeless assistance continuum of care plan for its designated catchment area. The homelessness prevention program must be included in the continuum of care plan.

(4) GRANT LIMITS.—The maximum grant amount per lead agency may not exceed \$300,000. The grant assistance may be used to pay past due rent or mortgage payments, past due utility costs, provision of case management services, and program administration costs not to exceed 3 percent of the grant award. The homelessness prevention program must develop a case plan for each family to be assisted, setting forth what costs will be covered and the maximum level of assistance to be offered.

(5) PERFORMANCE.—The lead agency must track, monitor, and report on each family assisted for at least 12 months after the last assistance provided to the family. The goal for the homelessness prevention program is to enable at least 85 percent of the families assisted to remain in their homes and avoid becoming homeless during the ensuing year.

History.—s. 4, ch. 2013-74.