

EMBRACING *Change* AND
ACHIEVING *Success* FOR ALL



Local Advocacy – How to Talk to your Legislators

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Presented by

PinPoint Results, LLC



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2020 Legislative Session Important Dates

Interim Legislative Committee Meetings:

- September 16-20
- October 14-18 and 21-25
- November 4-8 and 11-15
- December 9-13

*Legislative Delegation meetings will be held during this time

Legislative Session: January 14 – March 13

2020 Budget Outlook

- The 2020 Revenue Estimate – the amount of ADDITIONAL or new General Revenue that is anticipated to be available to build the state budget for FY 2020-21 – was recently reduced by the Estimating Conference (current year and next year's budget forecast by a combined \$800 million).
- Our projected new revenue forecast is still in positive territory – meaning state General Revenues are continuing to grow, but at a more modest pace, as the economy slows.
- That's the Good News and with this good news, we don't anticipate the Legislature to be in a position of having to cut the recurring base budget.
- The Unknowns, however, events that could cause a significant change in the state revenue forecast, are NUMEROUS. Tariffs, Brexit, Hong Kong, growing concerns of a recession in the European Union, Iran, Hurricanes, etc. The list is LONG.
- The bottom line – Florida's economy is strong, tourism is continuing at record levels and consumer sentiment is positive. Let's hope this continues as we approach the legislative session!

Budget Outlook: Housing Trust Funds

Total Available for FY 2020-21: \$350,770,000

- SAIL Total: \$104,970,000
- SHIP Total: \$245,800,000

Total Impact if no sweeps:

- 30,730 jobs created
- 32,848 people housed
- \$4.4 billion in positive economic impact

2020 Political Outlook

Second year of Governor DeSantis' Administration

House/Senate Campaigns on the Horizon

2020 FCEH Priorities

- 1. Continue Homeless Recurring Staffing and Challenge Grant Funding (\$6,181,500)**
- 1. Support the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (\$350,770,000)**
- 2. Support Homeless Statute Cleanup Legislation (HB 163 – Altman; SB 68 – Book)**

Now that you have your priorities, what can YOU do? Effectively communicate with your legislators!

- Attend Local Delegation Meetings – look for our email correspondences!
- Meet with your legislator in his or her district office
- Stay in regular communication with your State Senators and Representatives during interim committee meetings and legislative session, updating your local delegation on where your priorities stand – this can be accomplished through email and phone calls

Effectively Communicating with your legislative officials “Do’s and Don’ts”

- Do:

- ✓ Have your issue/problem well-defined in a 1-Minute Elevator Speech

- ❑ Legislators deal with dozens of issues each and every day – they are bombarded by constituent and special interest issues. You will have a very limited window to grab your legislator’s attention!

- ✓ Make your issue Compelling. Ask yourself this simple question: Why should my legislator care about this issue?

- ❑ If your issue relates to funding, what compelling information can you provide that makes your issue ‘worthy’ of the expenditure of taxpayer dollars?

- ❑ If your issue is a policy issue – meaning legislation may be required, again, what makes your issue unique and why should it be supported?

Effectively Communicating with your legislative officials “Do’s and Don’ts”

- Do:

- ✓ Have a ‘Leave Behind’ – a short, concise written document that summarizes your issue and your recommendations and/or requested ACTION. Be sure to include your contact information in the document.
- ✓ Meet with Legislative Staff if the State Representative or Senator is not available or if you’re having difficulty getting on your legislator’s calendar.
 - ❑ A relationship with your legislator’s staff is critical! They are the chief advisors to the elected officials and hold a position of great trust.
 - ❑ Often following a productive meeting with legislative staff will result in securing a meeting with your legislator

Legislative Leave Behind



2020 Consensus Legislative Priorities

The Florida Coalition for the Homeless (FCH) is a dynamic organization whose membership includes the state's 27 Local Lead Agency Continuums of Care (CoCs), homeless advocates, local service providers, members of the faith-based community, formerly homeless persons, educators, attorneys, mental health professionals and policy makers statewide. This diverse group is committed to implementing programs that prevent homelessness and rapidly re-house homeless individuals and families to return them to self-sufficiency and productive lives. The membership of the Florida Coalition for the Homeless has collaborated to establish the following 2020 Legislative Priorities to work toward ending homelessness in Florida and to increase the capacity of local CoCs to manage and deliver these critical programs.

1. Continue Homeless Recurring Staffing and Challenge Grant Funding

Ask: Maintain current Fiscal Year Funding for the recurring base budget Homeless Staffing (\$3 million) and Challenge Grants (\$3.1 million)

FCH supports the continuation of recurring funding for the homeless Staffing and Challenge Grants for Fiscal Year 2020-21. Without the Staffing Grant, Florida's CoC system, which has drawn down and administered over \$100 million in the past decade to the State, would not be able to operate. The Homeless Challenge Grant Program has been funded by the legislature each year consecutively since 2014. s. 420.644(4), Florida Statutes establishes the Challenge Grant Program and establishes criteria for local grant awards, competitively procured through the State Office on Homelessness. Challenge Grant funding is used by the CoCs to meet emergency housing needs of the homeless and at-risk individuals and families, especially those needs which cannot be met by any other program. This legislative initiative is supported by the Department of Children and Families and the Council on Homelessness.

2. Support Homeless Statute Cleanup Legislation

Ask: Support SB 68 by Senator Book and HB 163 by Representative Altman

Chapter 420, Florida Statutes governing the State Office on Homelessness and the programs administered under the Office's purview have become antiquated and out of date with federal law governing homelessness grant funding programs that provide the majority of funding for Florida's programs that seek to prevent and end homelessness. These revisions conform state law to current federal law and grant program definitions and clarifies statutory responsibilities for local homeless Continuums of Care Lead Agencies, while preserving financial and programmatic accountability provisions in state law for programs administered by the State Office on Homelessness. The policy contained within the House and Senate bills are supported by the Department of Children and Families and the Council on Homelessness. The only difference between SB 68 by Sen. Book and HB TBD by Rep. Altman – SB 68 contains a provision to fund the Challenge Grant out of the documentary stamp revenues distribution and increases the grant by \$6.9 million over current Fiscal Year appropriation. Presently, the Homeless Challenge Grant is funded out of General Revenue. The House bill does not contain this language.

3. Support the Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Ask: Use all Affordable Housing Trust Fund monies on affordable housing – no sweeps!

FCH is advocating for the legislature to use all the Affordable Housing Trust Fund monies for housing programs. The State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) and the State Apartment Incentive Loan Program (SAIL) are highly leveraged, with private sector loans and equity providing \$4 to \$6 for every dollar of state funding—thus, greatly increasing economic impact. If ALL the affordable housing trust fund dollars are used for housing, it will create 30,730 jobs and have an \$4.4 billion economic impact to the State of Florida (Florida Housing Finance Corporation).

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Florida Coalition
FOR THE HOMELESS
CELEBRATING *25*
YEARS

Effectively Communicating with your legislative officials “Do’s and Don’ts”

- Do:

- ✓ Be sensitive to TIMING! The first time to meet with your legislator is NOT in Tallahassee when they are in session. If you wait to have your first meeting during the legislative session, it’s almost always – “Game Over”.
- ✓ Meet in the local district office, months or weeks before legislative session.
- ✓ Be persistent in securing a meeting – remember, in Florida, the job of a legislator is a part time job – many legislators have full-time day jobs. It may take three to four phone calls and several emails to get on your legislator’s calendar – don’t give up!

Effectively Communicating with your legislative officials “Do’s and Don’ts”

- Don’t:

- ✓ Be afraid or nervous – you are a constituent; your legislator represents YOU;
- ✓ Don’t rush your meeting; typically, when meeting in the district office, you will be given 15-30 minutes to discuss your issue. If you can present your ‘ask’ in 15 minutes, then do it. It’s always good when you can give back time to a busy legislative official. They appreciate that!
- ✓ End your meeting without clearly having made your **Ask**. Legislators typically meet with dozens of people each week – don’t be that person, that when you leave, your legislator has no idea of what you were asking for! Be Specific!

Presenting Your Issue

- Crafting your message:
 - ✓ Don't assume that your legislator knows about your issue or what you do or the programs you administer or the people you serve.
 - ✓ Your goal is to educate, educate, educate, educate AND Explain to them

‘WHY’

they should care about the issue you are presenting to them today.

The Impact of Civic Disengagement

– a.k.a. Indifference or Sitting on the Sidelines;

- If your legislator doesn't know you, they likely won't help you
- The level of competition among advocates is fierce – Homeless programs are one of thousands of special interests that bombard the Legislature each year
- Look at your local legislator's election campaign website – does he or she have a position or priority concerning Florida's Homeless or preventing homelessness? Sadly, many do NOT – It's not on the radar
- If you don't lay the groundwork at the local level on the importance of what you do, about the people you serve, the impact of homelessness in your communities, success stories – what works/what doesn't,

NOTHING WILL HAPPEN

The Impact of Civic Disengagement – a.k.a. Indifference or Sitting on the Sidelines;

- Did you know? Since the Florida Coalition for the Homeless began their Advocacy Initiative five years ago, we've seen the Homeless Staffing and Challenge Grants go from \$0 recurring to \$6.1 million recurring!
- Further, since the Florida Coalition for the Homeless began their Advocacy Initiative five years ago, we've seen the Dept. of Children and Families go from never requesting a Legislative Budget Request issue for homeless issues, to regularly including your priorities – see statute cleanup legislation for this year, and subsequent year Challenge Grant Funding.

These are the RESULTS you get when you tirelessly educate and advocate!

PPR's Communication Commitment to FCH

- You will never have to guess where your issue stands – we firmly believe in effectively communicating with our clients.
- This means you will receive regularly communications from our office, giving you the latest information on where your priorities stand.
- During session, we will hold a legislative update call weekly, preceded by a weekly written update on behalf of your priorities.
- In addition to our weekly calls and written reports, we will also provide pertinent updates, as necessary.
- If an issue should arise that your advocates in Tallahassee should be made aware of, please do not hesitate to reach out to our team at any time!

Questions?

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