



Legislative #160383

Moving to End Homelessness in Alachua County

**Alachua County
City of Gainesville
North Central Florida Alliance for the Homeless and Hungry**



HEARTH Act

(Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act)

Communities across the country respond to homelessness with a variety of housing and services programs, including emergency shelters, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing.

The HEARTH Act, passed in 2009, placed a greater emphasis on permanent supportive housing and rapid re-housing as solutions to end homelessness.



The Paradigm Shift

Congress' changing perspective on the types of projects being renewed and the need for strategic thinking

House Appropriations Committee Report:

“It is not the committee’s intention to maintain an entitlement program for ailing and inflexible service providers. The Committee reminds providers in the Continuum of Care (CoC) that these funds are intended to assist and house the homeless as effectively and efficiently as possible.”

HUD’s Homeless Assistance Overview of FY 2012 Funding and HEARTH Update Webinar, July 2012



CoC Generally

- **Continuum of Care (CoC)** is a planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for the homeless.
- **Collaborative Applicant** is designated by the Continuum of Care (CoC) to carryout its administrative and fiscal functions related to Registration, the Consolidated Application and applies for CoC planning funds.



Local CoC

- North Central Florida Alliance for the Homeless and Hungry
- Geographic Area Served – 5 Counties
 - Alachua, Levy, Putnam, Gilchrist, Bradford
- **Collaborative Applicant** - Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry



Purpose of the HEARTH Act

- A consolidation of HUD's competitive grant programs
- Created the Rural Housing Stability Assistance Program
- HUD's definition of homelessness and chronic homelessness
- A simplified match requirement
- An increase in prevention resources
- An increase in emphasis on performance



Approach

In order to effectively end homelessness, a community needs a clear, deliberate, and comprehensive strategy.



Ten Essential Steps

1. Plan
2. Data
3. Emergency Prevention
4. System Prevention
5. Permanent Housing
6. Outreach
7. Shorten Homelessness
8. Rapid Re-Housing
9. Services
10. Income



HUD Policy Priorities

Scoring and Funding Criteria

- Housing First Approach
- Rapid Re-Housing
- Permanent Supportive Housing



Housing First: Definition

- *Quickly and successfully connect* those experiencing homelessness *without preconditions and barriers* to entry such as sobriety, treatment or other participation requirements.
- Supportive services are *offered* to maximize housing stability and prevent returns to homelessness



Housing First

- “Based Upon Participant Needs and Preferences”
- Participant Choice
- Follow Lease Terms
- Agree to Case Management



Transition Dignity Village

- Temporary Campsite for Homeless Persons
- Phasing Out Determined by Implementation of Housing First
- Minimize New Entries, Establish Wind Down Date
- Enforce Rules (fires, behaviors, etc.)
- Assemble Group of Professionals to Assist
- Complete VI-SPDAT on Each Resident
- Prioritize and Move into Suitable Housing



Re-Align Shelter Practices

- Establish Diversion Strategy
- Daily Housing Focused Conversations
 - Housing Plan (>8 days in shelter, 3+ returns in 90 days)
- Monitor Shelter Length of Stay
- Low Barrier Admission Policies
- Eliminate Non-Housing Services/Programs
- Complete VI-SPDAT and Prioritize Housing



Outlying Camps

- Develop Outreach Strategy – (CoC)
 - Fund and Coordinate (Meridian, Three Rivers, VA, Helping Hands)
- 80/20 Time Allocation
 - (Case Management –vs- Identifying)
- Designated “Housing Focused” Case Managers



CoC Next Steps

- Training – VI-SPDAT, Coordinated Entry, etc.
- Transition Housing Approach
 - Reduce Length of Time in “Homeless Status”
 - Rapid Re-housing, Permanent Supportive
- Establish P&P and Quality Assurance
- Align with HUD expectations
- Educate the Provider Community



City/County/CoC Leadership

- Agreement on Leadership Roles and Unwavering Support
- Align Contract Language and Expectations
- Coordinate Funders
- Incentivize Contracts
- Develop Joint Contract Review Teams



City/County/CoC Leadership

- Community-wide Policies and Procedures
 - Coordinated Entry
 - Release of Information
 - HMIS
 - Outreach Standards
 - Shelter Standards
 - Volunteer Involvement
 - Grievance Process



Expected Outcomes

- Higher Housing Retention Rates
- Lower Returns to Homelessness
- Reduce Use of Crisis Services
- Provide Interim Reports