



Homeless Issues and Considerations

Claudia Tuck, Director
Community Support Services

February 20, 2018 Joint City/County Motion

1. The County affirms the City's ranking of vendors: #1 - ACCHH and #2 Grace Foundation
2. Term of contract is nine months with an option for one additional year, with that renewal to be determined by July 1, 2018
3. Recommend that contract negotiations include a recommendation for up to \$125,000 a year from Alachua County contingent on a City match and assuming compliance with local government minimum wage.
4. Request that City and County Staff bring to the Oversight Board their suggestions for benchmarks for successful grant administration, and who will measure it.

Fully Executed Services Agreement

1. Includes initial (9) nine month term
2. Requires compliance with Alachua County Ordinance No. 16-05 (Minimum Wage)
3. New program performance requirements based on HMIS Reports reduces administrative burden
4. Revised performance measures including Alachua County resident priority, separation of meal and day services reporting
5. County staff to monitor data reporting via HMIS

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5. Request how to substantially reduce the number of residents in Dignity Village, including how to implement single room occupancy, Tiny Houses, and other housing options be placed on the agenda at the next Oversight Board meeting. This might include capital improvements grants to the Grace Foundation or other vendors.

(Work in Progress / City Direction)

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7. Request a meeting between the City and County Commissions be scheduled to exclusively discuss homelessness to be in March if possible no later than April and that the following subjects be discussed:
 - A. **A public option** including the differences between management philosophies outlined tonight by County Staff and City Staff and the Coalition as well as any public option efficiencies that can be incorporated into ACCHH, for example: Use of County/City facilities departments for maintenance.

(Work in Progress)

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- B. The role of the Oversight Board and make it more effective or get rid of it.

At the March 12, 2018 Empowerment Center Oversight Advisory Board meeting Commissioner Ward moved to ask the City of Gainesville Commission and the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners to expand the duties of the Empowerment Center Oversight Advisory Board to be a task force on homelessness in Alachua County. Commissioner Hutchinson 2nd. Call for Public input. Input received. Motion carried 5-0.

Expanded Role of the Oversight Board

Staff recommended Advisory Board Members discuss the expanded role in light of:

1. How will the Advisory Board coordinate its efforts with the CoC recognizing in part the geographic areas served/represented?
2. Are there particular areas of interest regarding the CoC, i.e., training, strategies, prioritization, etc?
3. Which Advisory Board member(s) will represent the Advisory Board on the CoC and with what authority?
4. Does the expanded role extend to other related issues such as affordable housing, panhandling, medical respite, and other quality of life issues?
5. If the role is expanded, is anything else needed to accomplish the goal of making the Advisory Board more effective?
6. If the role expands, should composition of the board also be expanded, i.e. other municipalities, major healthcare providers, real estate developers, etc.

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- C. Recommendations from Staff as to how the **point in time survey** could be more scientifically valid.

The CoC is responsible for the development, coordination and submission of Homeless data to HUD and the State.

Changes in the Point-in-Time Count Process for 2018

- Increased number of survey coverage zones
- Centralized staging area
- Utilized formerly and currently homeless individuals
- Law enforcement and fire rescue provided locations of homeless individuals
- Completed a known locations count of unsheltered homeless
- Did a complete census (shelter) count
- CoC Outreach committee assigned team leads for each county
- Count was conducted over multiple days based on where the individuals slept

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- D. **Performance measures** with the onus on Commissioners to make sure that Staff understands what they mean by the meeting and they be prepared to discuss those.
- E. Issue of the **Veteran's Building** and whether that would be handicapping the ability to bring people inside from the pavilion who would like to be include and with the understanding with each of the options. Staff is to ensure that all backup materials produced by both the City and County are distributed to both Boards well in advance of the meeting.
- F. Discussion about whether or not to **open more buildings on the campus**.
- G. Discuss a plan of **how to utilize the property** at Grace Market Place.
- H. Request that City and County Staff have an opportunity to present what they thought were some of the **good ideas in the model proposed by Mr. Stockwell** that the County might want to consider in cooperating into how we work with anyone who does it.

(Work in Progress)

History – Past Actions

10-Year Plan to End Homelessness

- Officially titled GRACE (Gainesville Region/Alachua County Empowerment) for the Homeless
- Developed in 2005 with input from all stakeholders
- Adopted by the City and County Commissions on December 15, 2005
- Relevant Timeframe was 2005 to 2015
- Goals targeted to addressing and ending homelessness
- ✓ Some achieved, including establishment of a One-Stop Homeless Assistance Center (OSHAC)

GRACE Marketplace

- Owned by City, Operated by the Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry (ACCHH)
- Funded largely by the City and County
- Originally an OSHAC with emergency shelter
- Later added transitional housing
- Currently a low-barrier emergency shelter using the housing first approach
- No children
- Day services for homeless

Dignity Village

- Campsite managed by the City
- Land is owned by the State and leased by the City
- Most campers use services offered by GRACE Marketplace

Key Stakeholders

Service Receivers and Providers

- Homeless Persons
 - Individuals
 - Families
 - Recent (short-term)
 - Chronic (long-term, repetitive)
- Property Owners – City of Gainesville
- Current Operator – ACCHH
- Legal Advocates – Southern Legal

Key Stakeholders

Service Providers

- Continuum of Care (CoC) – a coalition of:
 - Service providers for the homeless
 - Local governments
- Veterans Affairs
- Housing Authorities
 - Major employers
 - Business leaders
 - Educational leaders
 - Other community organizations

Key Stakeholders

Funders & Policy Direction

- HUD
- State Government
- City Government
- County Government
- Veterans Affairs
- Continuum of Care
 - HUD requires communities to submit a single application for Homeless Assistance Grants to ensure local policies are consistent with national priorities, streamline the funding application and encourage local coordination of housing and services.

Definition of Homelessness

HUD's Definition of Homelessness

Determines eligibility for HUD-funded homeless assistance programs

Four categories:

- People living in a place not meant for human habitation, an emergency shelter, transitional housing, or an institution where they temporarily reside
- People likely to become homeless within 14 days
- Families with children or unaccompanied youth who are unstably housed and likely to continue in that state
- People fleeing domestic violence

General Policy

Decisions on Approach to Homeless Services

Managing Homelessness Approach

- Services provided at the shelter
- Emergency shelter
- Day Services
- Keeps people homeless
- Effectiveness of managing homelessness is measured by number of services provided

Housing Focused Approach

- Provides services at a home
- Permanent housing costs less than emergency shelter
- Housing focused means putting more funds into housing subsidies and fewer funds into services at the shelter
- Effectiveness of Housing Focused Approach is measured by number of persons permanently housed, how quickly, and recidivism

Exclusively Homeless Services or Services for the Entire Community

Can they exist on the same campus?

- Yes, if a diverse variety of services makes it more attractive and cost efficient
- Requires:
 - Spatial separation of day services, from community services and residential services
 - State, local and non-profit satellite offices provided
 - Not all agencies represented, everyday
- Some non-homeless people may not go there for services
- Can assist rent burdened by offering low/no cost services, i.e., meals, laundry, etc.

Temporary and Permanent Housing on Same or Separate Campus

Can they exist on the same campus?

- Yes, but not as efficiently as when they are separated
 - More difficult when a low barrier emergency shelter and tent encampment are present
- Separate 20+ acre campus
- Should the Empowerment Center be exclusive for Permanent Housing (SRO, Tiny Houses)?
- Should the City/County relocate the low barrier emergency shelter?

Policy Direction – Managing Homelessness Approach: PROS

- Efficiently provides many services to the homeless
- Provides low-barrier emergency shelter services or transitional services to the homeless day services
- Laundry, meals, showers, mail
- Encourages and facilitates contact between the homeless and the social service system
- One-stop center for a variety of services
- Mainly supported by the local community
- Gainesville has the only emergency shelter center
- Equally funded by the City of Gainesville and Alachua County in the amount \$1,086,000 (\$543,000 each).

Managing Homelessness Approach: CONS

- Not effective at housing people (keeps people homeless).
- Individuals who are in emergency shelters and transitional housing are still counted as homeless.
- Not supported by Federal or State governments.
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) no longer supports emergency housing services.
- Not supported by CoC. ▪ The Coc lost money in the past due to its support and submission of emergency and transitional housing applications to HUD.
- CoC would be impacted by local agencies that continue to implement a Managing Homelessness Approach, because the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) measures the total reduction of homelessness within the community.
- CoC has changed its approach to homelessness by supporting the Housing Focused Approach to homelessness, and the CoC received an increase in funding in 2017.
- More expensive to operate.

Housing Focused Approach: PROS

- Reduces incidences of homelessness.
- Reduces amount of time spent being homeless.
- Provide services where the homeless client resides.
- Permanent housing is less expensive than emergency shelter.
- Puts more funds into housing subsidies and fewer funds in shelter services
- Effectiveness is measured by the number of persons placed in permanent housing;
- How quickly they're placed; and the rates of recidivism.
- The City and the County provide \$240,000 to support a rental assistance program that emphasizes housing or providing financial assistance to prevent homelessness.
- A Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) grant in the amount of \$800,000 is being implemented through a partnership with Alachua County, Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, and the Alachua County Housing Authority to provide supportive services to homeless individuals who have mental health and substance abuse issues.
- Case management services for the Housing Focused Approach are provided by supportive service agencies.
- The Housing Focused Approach is the best practice model that is supported by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the local CoC.
- This approach is less expensive than the Managing Homelessness Approach.

Housing Focused Approach: CONS

- There may not be enough landlords willing to rent apartment units to homeless clients.
- There may be resistance from some homeless persons who do not want to sign a lease.
- It is necessary to develop a pool of risk funds to cover damages or loss of rental income if homeless residents move out.
- Rental subsidies may be needed for those homeless clients who don't have sufficient income or wages to support essential needs.
- Affordable housing options may not be located in preferred areas.
- Are there other housing options available for the homeless (SRO, tiny housing, small housing, or permanent supportive housing, etc.)?
- Additional funds will be needed to support a housing focused option for the community.

Policy Direction – Exclusively Homeless Services versus Services for the Entire Community

Question: Can they exist on the same campus?

- YES, if a variety of services makes it more attractive and cost-efficient.
- Requires separation of day services from community and residential services.
- Would assist low-income residents by offering low-cost services.
- Some non-homeless people may not use the services.
- We can assist those who are rent-burdened by offering low-cost services.

Policy Direction – Emergency and Permanent Housing on Same or Separate Campus or Other Areas

- Question: Can they exist on the same campus?
- Yes, but not as efficiently as when they are separated.
- It's more difficult when a low-barrier emergency shelter is present.
- Should the Empowerment Center be exclusively used for permanent housing (SRO, tiny housing)?
- Should we consider relocating the low-barrier shelter to another location (maybe training facility/smaller facility)?



Questions?