



## Legislation Text

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### **OrgCode Consulting, Inc. Report on How to End Homelessness within City of Gainesville/Alachua County (B)**

The purpose of this item is for the City Commission to review the Action Plan to address the OrgCode report to end homelessness and provide policy direction to City Staff and recommendations to the County Commission and the Local CoC (North Central Florida Alliance for Homelessness and Hungry) on the Action Plan.

OrgCode Consulting, Inc. is a private consultant firm that conducted an evaluation and review of the local community's efforts to address and end homelessness within Gainesville/Alachua County, including the local CoC efforts. Iain DeJong, President and CEO, conducted the evaluation during the week of June 13, 2016. On July 12, 2016, a final report was submitted to the City and County staffs. The OrgCode report was funded jointly by the City and County with the purpose of determining if and how the community could improve its efforts to address homelessness.

The OrgCode Report recommends several actions, including the reallocation of local dollars to implement the Housing First Model for the community. More specifically, the report recommends that GRACE Marketplace focus on emergency shelter rather than transitional shelter; and the local CoC implement the Housing First model and the Rapid Rehousing/Permanent Supportive Housing approach to address homelessness in the community. This report notes that, in most cases, the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) no longer supports Transitional Housing, and that the community could see a further decrease in its federal dollars if the community does not adhere to the Housing First model and the Rapid Rehousing/Permanent Supportive Housing approach.

The local CoC consists of five counties: Alachua, Levy, Bradford, Gilchrist, and Putnam Counties. The Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry is the lead agency responsible for ensuring that the local CoC complies with the rules and regulations governing the funded agencies. The local CoC is also responsible for submitting the federal funding application to HUD for the five-county area. The CoC is currently undergoing restructuring to adhere to the new federal approach to address homelessness. In September 2016, the CoC submitted its FY16/17 application to HUD.

The Housing First approach which includes the Permanent Supportive Housing Program, requires intensive case management services following the placement of homeless persons into housing in order to be successful. The homeless service providers have begun the transition to the Housing First approach to the community. The CoC has begun the implementation of a Coordinated Entry system designed to assure that services are targeted to those homeless persons most in need.

The purpose of the coordinated entry system is to provide housing services to homeless clients based upon needs and information gathered through the VI-SPDAT (Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance PreScreen Tool). The implementation of the Coordinated Entry system has begun in our community as well as with the other counties participating in the Local CoC. City and County staff are being trained on the coordinated entry system. This coordinated entry system will allow homeless clients throughout the County to

obtain services based upon needs, rather than the traditional approach of gaining access to services.

In addition, to support the Rapid Rehousing program, City and County staff recommend that the Alachua County Community Support Services Department (County) implement a Rental Assistance Program for the City. The purpose of this partnership with the County is to jointly fund a program to provide funding to complement other rent subsidy programs such as Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG), HUD CoC Rapid Rehousing, Challenge Grant and other related funding programs to address some of the homeless needs in the community. The proposed program would utilize SHIP funding to provide rental security and utility deposits, as well as, monthly rent subsidies (up to 12 months) to eligible low-income persons or households within Alachua County. As proposed, an interlocal agreement between the City and the County could allow for the County to administer the City and County SHIP funding set-aside for the Rental Assistance Program. The proposed agreement is subject to the approval of both City and County Commissions.

The OrgCode report also recommended that the City close Dignity Village by the end the calendar year. Given the current need for Dignity Village, staff recommends that Dignity Village remain open and active until further progress is made in the implementation of Housing First in our community.

The Action Plan includes timelines and recommendations for other items mentioned in the report. The report outlines the City, the County and the local CoC proposed action plans to address the findings and concerns in the OrgCode report. Staff is asking the City Commission to review the "Action Plan" and provide direction to staff, as well as recommendations to the County Commission, and the Local CoC to address homelessness. Representatives from the County, as well as the local CoC, are available to address the Action Plan.

At this time, no additional dollars are requested to implement the OrgCode recommendations. Staff will review the need for additional dollars as a part of the FY18 and FY19 budgets.

The City Commission review the Action Plan and provide policy direction to City staff and recommendations to the County Commission and the North Central Alliance for Homelessness and Hungry (local CoC).