



Legislation Text

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Update on the Provision of Homeless Services at the Empowerment Center (B)

This item is a request for the City Commission to hear an update on the provision of homeless services at the Empowerment Center.

This item supports City Commission Strategic Initiative 3.1: Continue implementation and engage in the update of the 10 year plan to end homelessness.

The Gainesville City Commission and the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners adopted the Ten Year Plan to End Homeless almost a decade ago. A major goal of the Plan was the development of a One Stop Homeless Assistance Center for Gainesville and Alachua County. On May 5, 2014, the Alachua County Coalition for the Hungry and Homeless (ACCHH) began limited services for the homeless at the Empowerment Center under a contract with the City of Gainesville in the amount of \$308,000. The services for the homeless were equally funded between the City of Gainesville and Alachua County for FY14 in the amount of \$154,000 each. Other homeless services were to be added throughout the year to the services available at the Empowerment Center.

The Service Agreement and the License Agreement have been modified several times in the first year to accommodate funding as well as the demand for services for the Homeless. Grace Marketplace has been operating as a one Stop Homeless Assistance Center for less than twelve months, however, the City, the County and ACCHH have been working to meet the demands for services as well as control the expectations for this new Center. With the opening of the Empowerment Center, an unofficial campground developed adjacent to the Empowerment Center. There was an expectation that camping services would be provided on campus instead of on the adjacent property to the Empowerment Center. The campground brings its own set of challenges and opportunities for the City and the County. City staff was asked to negotiate a lease agreement with the State of Florida's Department of Agriculture to gain access and control of the ten acres adjacent to the Empowerment Center. The lease agreement was negotiated by staff, and approved by the City Commission on January 15, 2015.

Included in this presentation are some major milestones and action steps/decision points that have occurred since the homeless services began at the Empowerment Center.

The City of Gainesville recently executed an Amended and Restated Service Agreement with ACCHH in the amount of \$559,680 for the Provision of Homeless Services at the Empowerment Center for FY15. The Oversight Board reviewed the request and made the recommendation to the City and the County Commission for the increase in funding. In addition, the Oversight Board will be reviewing the fundraising efforts of ACCHH and the proposed FY16 budget for ACCHH and make recommendations to the City and the County regarding future funding.

The City Commission hear an update from staff on the provision of homeless services at the Empowerment Center.