Volusia/Flagler County Coalition for the Homeless

Lead Agency and Collaborative Applicant for the Commission on Homelessness and Housing (FL 504-CoC)

Annual Report for 2019—2020

Executive Director
Jeff White
Goals:
- Prevent Veteran homelessness: At functional “zero” in Volusia and Flagler Counties as of 2015
- End chronic homelessness
- End Unaccompanied Youth Homelessness
- Prevent and end homelessness for families and children
- Set a path to ending all types of homelessness

Objectives:
- Enhance the Coordinated Entry System
- Assure the Provision of Homeless Prevention, Early Intervention Services, and Human Services.
- Increase Services, Retool Existing Services and Enhance the Provision of Housing Services
- Assure Access to Health Services
- Assist Clients to Achieve Economic Stability
- Utilized COVID Resources to assist with the immediate response to the pandemic.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has designated over 400 identified areas throughout the United States to serve as continuums of care. A Continuum of Care (CoC) is a regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals.

The Volusia/Flagler County Coalition for the Homeless (VFCCH) is the lead agency for the Commission on Homelessness and Housing which represents the HUD designated FL-504 Continuum of Care for Volusia and Flagler counties. The Commission of Homelessness and Housing via the lead agency (VFCCH) is responsible for conducting the annual count of the homeless, for identifying the gaps in available housing and services to the subpopulations of homeless, and strategically planning and organizing the expansion of housing and supportive services to meet the needs. These “gaps” are missing services that are needed to ensure that clients can successfully exit homelessness.

VFCCH goals and objectives as listed are in alignment with The Commission on Homelessness and Housing’s 5 Year Strategic Plan (2017-2022), are in accordance with HUD’s updated Federal Strategy to Prevent and End Homelessness, “Home Together”, and are as set forth in HUD’s National Performance Objectives for Continuums of Care. With the pandemic occurring, VFCCH added the goal of utilizing COVID Resources through the Cares Act for helping to achieve the immediate and long term goals of ending homelessness.

Implementing Strategies

By implementing strategies addressed by “Home Together” and the Florida Office on Homelessness, the vision and intent of Commission on Homelessness and Housing’s 5-year strategic plan efforts is ultimately to:

- Re-house or shelter people the moment they ask for help, where no one has to sleep outside who doesn’t want to;
- Permanently house people as quickly and efficiently as possible; and
- Effectively connects homeless households to mainstream self-sufficiency services in order to minimize returns to the homeless system.
Response:
- COVID-19 Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)-CV funding for both short term and long term goals
- Short term include:
  - Assisting COVID-19 impacted individuals and families with immediate housing solutions
  - Strengthening housing focused practices
  - Increasing capacity of Street Outreach and Placement
  - Implement an Intensive Rapid-Rehousing (RRH) Program
  - Strengthen the delivery of Coordinated Entry and the prioritization process
  - Incorporating CDC guidelines for safe and effective practices

2020 brought a new challenge to the housing community: COVID-19. With the Coronavirus pandemic, it has become evident that the true economic impact has not yet even begun to be realized. According to the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), COVID-19 related claims for re-employment Assistance (March 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020) there have been 47,305 individuals who have filed for re-employment in Volusia County and 8,651 who have filed in Flagler County. That’s well over five times the total amount of claims filed for all of last year for Volusia County (7,922) and more than six times that of claims filed for all of last year for Flagler (1,312). These staggering numbers clearly forecast what is to come as far as individuals and families who will most certainly need assistance with remaining in their housing but more so with being rapidly rehoused once assistance has ended.

The effect of COVID-19 economically has already been seen with the increase on our by-name list for Rapid Rehousing (RRH): we currently have 192 households on the by-name list that qualify for RRH (this does not include those who are prioritized for PSH). Fifteen of those are priority clients who could be transitioned into housing given immediate assistance provided by additional funds.

FL-504 have experienced an increase in our waitlist for transitional housing for families: The two primary transitional housing shelters, Hope Place and Family Renew Community have a waitlist of 181 households (de-duplicated).

There has also been an increase in domestic violence associated with COVID-19 which has put added stressors on the capacity of our Domestic Violence Shelters. VFCH has a Coordinated Entry Domestic Violence (DV) Navigator that has been instrumental in engaging and placing DV clients (to include recent COVID-19 impacted clients) into housing solutions. Additional Rapid Rehousing could also be used to assist in this area to assist with the flow into permanent housing and open new shelter availabilities.

With the additional resources through the Cares Act, VFCH estimates an additional $962,210 of ESG COVID Round 1 to be used towards the “Housing Surge” approach of housing the homeless. Round 2 should be available in the next 6 to 9 months with an amount to be determined by the Department of Children & Families.
Stakeholders from different avenues of the community who represent categories outlined by HUD make up the VFCCH Board of Directors. As required by HUD, there is at least one homeless individual or formerly homeless individual who participate on the Board of Directors. In addition, the President of the Board also serves on the Commission on Homelessness and Housing’s Board of directors as the HMIS representative for VFCCH as well as Co-Chair of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) committee. Several other Board members participate on various committees which support the Commission on Homelessness and Housing to include the Strategic Planning committee, Coordinated Entry committee and HMIS committee.

VFCCH Board of Directors 2019-2020

Board President: Chet Bell
Board Vice President: Sharon Warriner
Treasurer: William Clark
Secretary: Loretta Wilary
Director: Anastasia Rice
Director: Glenda Butler
Director: Christine Sikora
Director: Barry Davis
Director: Tony Marks
Clients Served

- Total Served: 12,200
- Family Members Served: 6,633
- Households Served: 2,166
- Veterans Served: 299
- Chronic Homeless Served: 425

Client Success

The number of clients served through Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) in Volusia/Flagler over the past year increased slightly from 147 in 2018-19 to 150 in 2019-20. Our participating agencies continue to work to flow individuals and families through PSH units which allows newly identified chronically homeless families to enter into subsidized housing. Additionally, the local housing authorities have continued to utilize their homeless preference vouchers in partnership with the CoC to place homeless and chronically homeless individuals into permanent housing units provided by these vouchers.

The number of unduplicated individuals and families that were provided with Rapid Rehousing services went from 474 in the 2018-19 grant cycle to 535 in the 2019-20 grant cycle. Agencies continue to use the Housing First approach to facilitate Rapid Rehousing for homeless individuals and families in our area.

The number of unduplicated individuals and families that were provided with prevention services increased as tracked in HMIS from 8,480 in 2018-19 to 10,514 in 2019-20. Prevention services may include case management, assistance with rent, utilities, emergency food, emergency hotel/motel stays, and rapid rehousing into another unit prior to an actual eviction.
Grant Awards 2019-2020

- HMIS Grant $122,134
- Coordinated Entry Grant $171,753
- FL-504 Planning Grant $54,373
- My Place Apartment Permanent Supportive Housing Grant $199,870
- Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) $220,000
- Temporary Assistance for Families (TANF) Grant $46,582
- Challenge Grant $148,500
- Staffing Grant $107,142
- United Way CEOP $75,000
- United Way HRCC $65,000
- Volusia County CFAB $213,445

FUNDING

Over the last year, VFCCH has successfully implemented the addition of two HUD CoC Supportive Services funding, which includes a Housing Locator and a Coordinated Entry Domestic Violence Navigator; and the consolidation of the two HMIS grants. The total number of HUD CoC grants for VFCCH resulted in four grants but a significant increase of funding. This overall increase of VFCCH’s grant capacity has allowed VFCCH to expand direct services, focus on a high risk population and continue to improve the Coordinated Entry System.

Through the Department of Children & Families (DCF), VFCCH administers the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), Temporary Assistance for Families Grant (TANF) and the Challenge Grant. Within these funding streams, allowable components include Prevention, Rapid Rehousing, Emergency Shelter and Street Outreach. For 2019-2020, the ESG funding flowed directly through entitlement districts such as the County of Volusia and non-entitlement areas (Deltona, Port Orange, Daytona Beach and Flagler County) as identified by the state of Florida based on population and need. Moving forward, VFCCH will facilitate the non-entitlement ESG funding under the Unified Funding contract for all DCF/State of Florida Contracts. Due to Volusia County being an entitlement area, DCF reduced the amount of ESG funds that flowed through VFCCH. Due to the high utilization of ESG services, VFCCH was able to take advantage of an additional $20,000 of funds at the end of the fiscal year.

The County of Volusia which is an entitlement district for ESG, consults with the CoC in formulating its agenda for ESG funding. The County holds community development meetings which are open to the public and requests stakeholders to attend in order to provide the needed input necessary to determine the means by which the funding will be used. VFCCH is also the lead agency and facilitates the Children and Family Advisory Board (CFAB) Basic Needs, Emergency Assistance and Homeless Prevention Grant administered through the County of Volusia. This grant adds support where prevention efforts are essential. United Way funds were awarded to VFCCH in 2019 for two years for the Coordinated Entry Outreach Program and HRCC Program.
DCF 2019-2020

**Staffing Grant:** $107,142.00

**Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG):** $200,000
- Neighborhood Center (Prevention): $10,000
- Family Life Center (Emergency Shelter): $50,526
- Salvation Army (RRH/Outreach): $50,500
- HUM (RRH): $49,500
- Catholic Charities (Prevention/RRH): $29,474
- VFCCH Admin: $10,000

**Temp Assistance to Needy Families (TANF):** $46,582
- Neighborhood Center: $22,613
- Family Renew Community: $22,613
- VFCCH Admin: $1,356

**Challenge Grant:** $148,500
- Neighborhood Center: $84,175
- Halifax Urban Ministries: $31,725
- Family Renew Community: $21,600
- VFCCH Admin: $11,000

HUD

**The Neighborhood Center of West Volusia**

- PH-18W: $145,541
- PH-29: $82,340
- PH-HYP: $89,667
- PH-16WS: $147,811
- PH-19: $113,951

**Halifax Urban Ministries**

- Permanent Supportive Housing for Families: $51,034
- Permanent Supportive Housing for Individuals: $111,996
- Rapid Rehousing Individuals and Youth: $102,843
- Joint TH-RRH DV: $55,403

**Volusia/Flagler County Coalition for the Homeless**

- My Place Apartments: $199,870
- FL 504 Coord Entry DV Housing Navigator: $171,753
- FL 504 HMIS Consolidated: $122,134
- FL 504 Planning Grant: $54,373
The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires local Homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) agencies to follow strict guidelines when planning and conducting the Point In Time (PIT). Locally, the Volusia/Flagler Coalition for the Homeless (VFCCH) is the CoC agency responsible for conducting the PIT. Each year VFCCH strives to get an accurate count of homeless persons using guidance and strategies that have proven successful for our and other CoC’s in the past.

- More than 88 volunteers participated in the PIT this year. VFCCH continues to receive widespread support and participation from local non-profits and faith-based organizations who provide housing-related services, including the Veteran Administration, Salvation Army, Halifax Urban Ministries, SMA Healthcare, Neighborhood Center of West Volusia, City of Daytona Beach Housing Authority; and numerous professionals who are leaders in the community.

- The PIT numbers for 2020 increased by 5% over 2019, which also saw an increase after a steady downturn in the previous 5 years (2014-18).

- The Sheltered Count went from 368 in 2019 to 459 in 2020 (30% increase). This is the second year that sheltered housing has increased significantly, which is reflected by the rise in sheltered housing in our area.

- The Unsheltered Count went from 507 in 2019 to 453 in 2020 (an 11% decrease).
VFCCH Programs

Number of People Referred into Coordinated Entry for 2019-2020: 3,162

Number of People Receiving Services for Prevention, Transitional or Permanent Housing: 3,035

COORDINATED ENTRY, HMIS AND HOUSING FIRST

VFCCH continues to improve the Coordinated Entry system for Volusia and Flagler counties. The coordinated entry system is the key component that links homeless/at risk of homeless families and individuals to appropriate resources covers the entire geographic area for the FL- 504 CoC. The coordinated entry effort of existing programs, strategic collaborations within the two counties and throughout the several municipalities/communities helps achieve its’ success. The overarching goal is to provide coordinated entry by leveraging existing resources and aligning mainstream resources and existing systems.

Under the current system, specific agencies that are linked to the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) act as the single points of entry or coordinated access points of entry in geographically relevant areas of the continuum (most of which have already been established; coordinated access points are located in areas which have a high need for homeless services as indicated by the Homeless Count). VFCCH continues to reach out to and expand the scope of agencies who are participating into HMIS in order to extend coverage to the fullest extent possible.

Developments of the Coordinated Entry and HMIS processes:

- Implemented Case Conferencing as an upgrade to the Coordinated Entry Break-out groups
- Refined CE reporting process to capture full services related to prevention
- Implemented CE for emergency and transitional housing and prevention
- Continued to reach out and engage new HMIS participants
- Contracted with the Early Learning Coalition for $10,007 in 2019-20 to provide capacity building trainings for the community to include CoC access, HMIS, Coordinated Entry and Housing First trainings.
- VFCCH continues to partner with the Volusia County and Flagler County School systems to assist with identification and placement of homeless families with children identified through the school system for placement through C.E. into Rapid Rehousing and other housing solutions
- VFCCH entered into a partnership and grant agreement with SMA Healthcare and their Pathways program to support the HRCC position which would free up $41,466 in United way funding to support housing related services for high utilizers being served by both organizations.

Number of People Referred into Coordinated Entry for 2019-2020: 3,162

Number of People Receiving Services for Prevention, Transitional or Permanent Housing: 3,035
My Place Apartments targets chronically homeless individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. VFCCH, as the HUD CoC Lead Agency, is tasked with being the model for all other permanent supportive housing projects targeting chronically homeless individuals and therefore ascribed to the Housing First model. VFCCH partners with SMA Healthcare, who provides case management services for the tenants in this housing. In accordance with the Housing First model, VFCCH accepts all referrals through Coordinated Entry and therefore does not screen out based on substance use, instability of mental health, current or past legal issues, credit history, income status, sexual identity, or domestic abuse issues.

My Place Apartment Annual progress report for the grant year 2019 to 2020 demonstrated an 90% Housing Stability Measure which in essence meant that 36 out of the 40 individuals who were tenants in My Place either remained stably housed at “My Place” or transitioned into permanent housing of their own.
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ACCOMPLISHMENTS for 2019-2020

2019-2020 came with the opportunity to expand partnerships with the local housing authorities, to include: the Daytona Beach Housing Authority, the New Smyrna Beach Housing Authority, the DeLand Housing Authority, and the Flagler County Housing Authority. These partnerships provided the availability of vouchers for our clients to be able to maintain permanent housing.

The Commission on Homelessness and Housing for Volusia Flagler (FL 504 CoC) 2020 Point in Time Count totaled 904, an increase of 5% over last year’s count of 875. The Sheltered Count increased from 368 in 2019 to 459 in 2020. The expansion of Halifax Urban Ministries’ Family Shelter and the Veterans’ Grant Per-Diem program, and the addition of the First Step Emergency Shelter; accounts for the significant increase in the sheltered count. Conversely, the Unsheltered Count decreased from 507 in 2019 to 453 in 2020; an 11% decrease.

VFCCH was successful in the HUD 2019 CoC Competition and increased our funds by $300,000. The CoC was competitive in the process and it resulted in the award of two Domestic Violence Bonus awards and an approximate increase of 10% in all of the Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing Grants.

VFCCH’s United Way Coordinated Entry Outreach Grant was renewed for the two-year grant cycle at $75,000.

VFCCH was awarded $65,000 a year for two years to implement a new United Way grant for a Health Resource Care Coordinator who will work to house the most vulnerable, chronically homeless high utilizers of services.

VFCCH partnered with SMA Pathways Program for additional $41,466 to provide support for homeless high utilizers of the healthcare system in the way of Housing and Homeless assistance, not previously covered under the HRCC or Pathways program.

VFCCH added a HRA (Health Reimbursement Account) which was made available to employees January 1, 2019.

VFCCH has reworked its website and linked it to the vfcontinuum website for the COHH.

VFCCH is employing Facebook and Twitter on a limited basis.

VFCCH completed a staff restructuring during 2019-20, resulting in the creation of a Grant and Compliance Administrator and IT/Website staff.

MONITORING

HUD has tasked VFCCH with the oversight of all service agencies directly funded by HUD. In addition, the State of Florida has assigned the responsibility for monitoring to VFCCH. Monitoring programs have become a critical piece of VFCCH’s responsibilities as the collaborative applicant and lead agency. In the upcoming year, the VFCCH Monitoring Team will facilitate more intensive monitorings.
Thanks to Our Funders