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Seminole Community Action Strategy: An Approach to Impact and Reduce Homelessness in Seminole County



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Task Force extends its appreciation and commends the support of a number of community organizations and individuals who contributed their time, research, and resources to our deliberations. While a listing of every contribution would be a document to itself, the following organizations and individuals deserve special attention:

- **John Hillenmeyer** for his community-minded volunteerism as Chair of the Task Force and his reassurances that the seemingly arduous process of the first few months would culminate in a product that would be good for the County.
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- **Wayne Weinberg** for his consistent support in assuring an infrastructure of productivity.
- **The Central Florida Foundation** for its insights and support in helping us understand how our Seminole efforts are related to the larger regional activities on homelessness.
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- **Valmarie Turner** and her staff for their unrelenting attention to Seminole County's efforts on behalf of our homeless neighbors.
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- Special thank you to **Roger Pynn** for his specialized expertise.
- Special thanks to **Philip Mangano** of the American Round Table to Abolish Homelessness and former federal homelessness czar in the Bush and Obama Administrations for his tireless work as the strategic adviser to the Task Force in the shaping of the Action Strategy. Mr. Mangano brought his unparalleled national expertise on ending homelessness, his decades of practical experience in the public and private sector, and a guiding hand of partnership to all our deliberations.

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MOST IMPORTANT FOR THE SEMINOLE
TASK FORCE WAS THE DEVELOPMENT OF
AN **ACTION STRATEGY** SHAPED BY
BUSINESS PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Seminole County has a long history of fostering partnerships to accomplish long-term goals. Those achievements demonstrate the efficacy of partnership between various sectors. That approach is no less vital in advancing a strategy to mitigate a social problem than it is in resolving economic issues.

The objective of the Task Force is to utilize the perspective of the business community to create a strategic approach to supplement the ongoing efforts addressing homelessness in the community.

Specifically, the Task Force recommends a first year strategy and partnership to:

- End the homelessness of the 120 most vulnerable families in Seminole County. Many of these families have children in the Seminole school system whose educational attainment is at risk. Many of these families live in hotels and motels.
- End the homelessness of the 50 most vulnerable and disabled individuals in Seminole County. Many of these individuals languish on the streets and in the downtown of Seminole's communities or live long-term in its shelters.

These 120 families and 50 individuals represent more than 400 homeless men, women, and children in Seminole County.

To accomplish these first year goals the Task Force encourages strategic investments:

- To maximize federal and regional funding opportunities
- To expand and extend promising existing initiatives
- To encourage a more entrepreneurial approach to solving a social problem

The Task Force further recommends:

- Building on existing resources and opportunities in the community
- Strengthening what already works
- Adding best practices that have achieved results in other communities

This approach and the resulting recommendations are a Year One strategy meant to begin a process that will foster enhanced creativity in current resource allocation and create a template of action and results that will encourage further private sector partnership and investment.

SEMINOLE ACTION/ACTION STRATEGY (SAAS)

The Task Force highlighted two themes in its deliberations: **Accountability** and **Action**.

ACCOUNTABILITY

To ensure accountability for implementation and outcomes, the Task Force recommends the creation of **Seminole Action**, a Board comprised of members of the Task Force and other community members who will:

- a. Set metrics and benchmarks for the Action Strategy.
- b. Be accountable for achieving the goals of the Action Strategy and the assurance that Seminole County receives a fair share of federal, state, and philanthropic resources targeted to the region.
- c. Work with the County government and elected and appointed officials to ensure collaboration in achieving the housing of homeless families and individuals.
- d. Create **Seminole Action Network Exchange (SANE)**, chaired by the County Manager to convene a wide range of community stakeholders to overcome impediments to achieving the goals of the Action Strategy.
- e. Establish the **Seminole Action Opportunity Foundation (SAOF)** to secure private sector resources to be invested in the accomplishment of the housing of families and individuals targeted in the Action Plan.
- f. Ensure partnership and collaboration among stakeholders in the County's efforts to reduce and end homelessness, especially between the private, public, and non-profit sectors.
- g. Insist on a broader audience of stakeholders and monitor, encourage, and assist in refining due diligence focused on cost efficiencies for all resources to be invested in reducing and ending homelessness in the County.
- h. Engage a facilitator to ensure that these accountability elements are implemented.

ACTION

If there is a theme that resonates all the way from people who are homeless on the street to provider

agencies to business owners to Commissioners, that theme is "we want effective action."

The members of the Task Force intend to move beyond the efforts of the past, while embracing their best ideas, to a focus on resolute, timely, effective, and efficient intervention to remedy homelessness. The Task Force was particularly focused on strategies that could be replicated for every profile of homeless person. To that end they created Action Strategies for both homeless families and individuals that would end the cumulative homelessness of 120 families and 50 individuals representing more than 400 homeless children, women, and men in the next year.

ACTION STRATEGY FOR FAMILIES

Specifically, the Task Force recommends that 120 of the most vulnerable families be prioritized for housing resources and housed in the first year of the Action Plan. The priorities established by the Task Force were in consultation with a wide range of community stakeholders, particularly the school system:

- Any family found living on the street or in a car.
- 75 of the most vulnerable families living in motels/hotels paid by an agency or family as determined by the VI-SPDAT, a federally mandated assessment tool that measures vulnerability and prioritizes homeless people by risk for resources.
- 45 families living in doubled up, motel, or shelter situations identified by School Department social workers, the Families in Need (FIN) initiative of the Seminole School Board, and other school related personnel as being most at risk.

Task Force Action Recommendations include:

1. Increase the Operation New Start (ONS) initiative to house 75 families. ONS was recently created by the County's Community Services Department to target homeless families in hotels with services and housing. The initial funding is from the Seminole County Commissioners.
2. Expand the FIN contract to 45 families and include added resources to extend case

management for a year, and to include housing search, placement, and stabilization.

3. Utilize the 25 Section 8 Rental Vouchers designated by the Seminole Housing Authority for non-working homeless families. The FIN and ONS initiatives are initially focused on both working and non-working families. Since there are far more non-working families, the need to supplement those resources is essential to target the most needy.
4. Ensure that case management resources, according to best practice, are apportioned one case manager to every 12 households. In national and local studies, desirable outcomes of stability, housing, and jobs/income are enhanced by this best practice ratio.
5. Initiate through the County an exploration of ways to expand the successful Family Self-Sufficiency Program and target openings to more homeless families. This initiative focuses on short-term support to families to secure employment oriented to licensed and/or credentialed careers as an essential aspect of this strategy to engage homeless families. To coordinate various employment opportunities for homeless families and individuals, an Employment Specialist should be hired.
6. Commence a County analysis of the results of the Prevention Program for Families.
7. Explore the expansion of childcare programming for homeless families with children up to school age for families who require the service.
8. Facilitate through the Seminole Action Board a prioritization of collaboration and coordination among County agencies with non-profit providers, the private sector, and faith organizations.
9. Identify for the faith community network in the County specific services required by homeless families to stabilize their tenancy and create a trajectory to employment.

10. Sensitize Seminole public and private employers to the situation of employees who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Those concerns should be part of a feedback mechanism to the Employment Specialist and/or agencies working with the 120 families. The Seminole Action Board will create the mechanisms for such reporting.

ACTION STRATEGY FOR INDIVIDUALS

Specifically, the Task Force Recommendations include:

1. The Task Force again recommends prioritizing the most vulnerable and disabled individuals, those experiencing chronic homelessness during Year One of the Action Strategy.
2. The Task Force has determined that in the first year of this strategy the fifty (50) most vulnerable, visible, and disabled will be targeted with the evidence-based Housing First strategy that has been adopted in communities across the United States and beyond.
3. The Task Force strongly recommends a cost benefit analysis in Seminole County.
4. The Task Force strongly recommends that the Seminole Action Board research the response of other communities in delineating homeless people and non-homeless “panhandlers” on the street and make recommendations with regard to appropriate interventions.
5. The Task Force recommends that the Seminole Action Board and County officials ensure a fair share allocation to Seminole County of federal, state, and philanthropic resources focused on homelessness.

TASK FORCE ACTION STEPS

1. Work with the providers, the Central Florida Homeless Commission, the Central Florida Foundation, Sheriff, Aspire Health Partners, Health Care for the Homeless, and others to

target the 50 most vulnerable and disabled homeless individuals in Seminole County and house them in the next year.

2. Adopt the Housing First strategy detailed in the 2012 Addressing Homelessness study.
3. Hire a minimum of three engagement/outreach staff immediately to administer the VI-SPDAT to assess homeless individuals who are unsheltered to access resources at the Central Florida Foundation targeted to the most vulnerable individuals in the region.
4. Deepen coordination and communication between agencies serving homeless individuals through meetings convened by the County's Community Services Department.
5. Prioritize Veterans in efforts to house homeless individuals.
6. Engage one provider to assess, house, and support the tenancies of 50 chronic homeless individuals, preferably sole sourced expeditiously.
7. Establish, in consultation with the County Manager's office, Seminole Action Board, and the CBO(s), an agreed upon set of benchmarks to ensure expeditious assessment through the VI-SPDAT assessment and housing placement.

8. Create a Seminole Action Board recommendation of developers of permanent supportive housing if no such agencies are found within the County.

9. Future considerations:

- o Explore the creation of housing for homeless individuals on land owned and appropriately zoned by St. Stephen Church.
- o Evaluate a private sector model of housing and support services identified by Task Force Members.

SEMINOLE ACTION/ACTION STRATEGY – CREATION OF A TEMPLATE FOR THE FUTURE

The Family and Individual strategies in these recommendations are targeted to our most vulnerable and disabled neighbors here in Seminole County. The focus on 120 families and 50 individuals will not end homelessness in the County. Creating a template of action focused on quantifiable results through performance will give the County a structure for addressing its larger homeless population in the next five years. What works and what doesn't will be clearer. What savings accrue to the community will be calculated. What strategies advance the larger goal of accomplishing the end of homelessness will be more visible.



**CREATING A TEMPLATE OF ACTION FOCUSED ON
QUANTIFIABLE RESULTS THROUGH PERFORMANCE WILL GIVE
THE COUNTY A STRUCTURE FOR ADDRESSING ITS LARGER
HOMELESS POPULATION IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.**

SEMINOLE COMMUNITY ACTION STRATEGY:

AN INCREMENTAL APPROACH TO IMPACT AND REDUCE HOMELESSNESS IN SEMINOLE COUNTY



THE OBJECTIVE OF
THE TASK FORCE
IS TO UTILIZE THE
PERSPECTIVE OF THE
BUSINESS COMMUNITY
TO **CREATE A
STRATEGIC
APPROACH TO
SUPPLEMENT
THE ONGOING
EFFORTS
ADDRESSING
HOMELESSNESS
IN THE
COMMUNITY.**

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Those achievements demonstrate the efficacy of partnership between various sectors. That approach is no less vital in advancing a strategy to mitigate a social problem as it is in resolving economic issues.

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The Task Force encourages strategic investments to maximize federal and regional funding opportunities, to expand and extend promising existing initiatives, and to encourage a more entrepreneurial approach to solving a social problem. The Task Force further recommends building on existing resources and opportunities in the community, strengthening what already works, and adding best practices that have achieved results in other communities.

This approach and the resulting recommendations are a Year One strategy meant to begin a process that will foster enhanced creativity in current resource allocation and create a template of action and results that will encourage further private sector partnership and investment.



MISSION

Create partnerships, eliminate obstacles, and execute effective and efficient strategies that deliver measurable results in eliminating homelessness in Seminole County.

VISION

- o To provide resources and talent that encourages, drives, and rewards effective and efficient collaboration for reducing then ending homelessness in our community.
- o To influence and educate our community on the phenomenon of homelessness and its prevention.
- o To hold all parties involved accountable for measurable results in interventions and active collaboration in the community.
- o To identify and mitigate the root causes for homelessness in the community to ensure that prevention of homelessness is achieved.

BACKGROUND

Homelessness is an issue that has been festering in Seminole County for decades. No plan, no strategy will resolve this community concern in a week, a month, or a year. A concerted, results-oriented strategic approach sustained over a multi-year period has demonstrated in communities across the country the capability to reduce dramatically the number of homeless people in a community.

The good news in Seminole County is that there is currently a constellation of political and civic will poised to take resolute action in aligning strategy and resources.

Recent actions by the Board of County Commissioners, the school system, Leadership Seminole, homeless providers, the Sheriff's Office and City Police Departments, the faith community, and other community actors indicates a renewed sense of commitment and urgency to achieve quantifiable results in reducing the number of families and individuals experiencing the long misery of homelessness.

In recent years efforts have been made to fashion a plan to address homelessness. In 2007 in response to a national partnership of more than 1,000 communities who adopted 10 Year Plans, Seminole County shaped a 10 Year Plan only to join with many other communities in seeing the effort undermined by the severe recession.

Again in 2012 a group of concerned agencies and individuals coalesced by the County's Community Services Department in response to the request of the Board of County Commissioners created the document "Addressing Homelessness in Seminole County (Addressing)." That thoughtful report catalogued resources available to homeless individuals and families, reviewed current activities in the County focused on homeless households, and recommended a Housing First approach.

Just as "Addressing" built on the past planning and efforts recommended by the 2007 planning effort, the recommendations of the Leadership Seminole convened Task Force are meant to be a strategic implementation of the themes and perspective of "Addressing." Most especially that Report's call for collection of data; monitoring of outcomes; case management support; self-sufficiency; and a Housing First approach, all themes central to the strategic recommendations of the Task Force.

The Task Force is further indebted to the Central Florida Commission on Homelessness in its support for efforts in Seminole and the comprehensive report, "The Current State of Family Homelessness in Central Florida (CSFH)." Once again themes from this report are central to the Task Force approach – focus on Rapid Rehousing; prioritization of families most in need; research and data to inform priorities; access to rental housing affordable to homeless households; sharing resources among family and individual subpopulations; and cost benefit analysis of approaches.

The Task Force has been appreciative of the support of County elected and appointed officials. The County Manager has attended a number of Task Force meetings and has met individually with Task Force representatives on a number of occasions. County Commissioners have engaged in separate meetings with Task Force representatives as well as have other County personnel including the Director of the Community Services Department, Sheriff's representatives, the County Attorney, and School Department personnel including the Superintendent.

ACTION STRATEGY THEMES

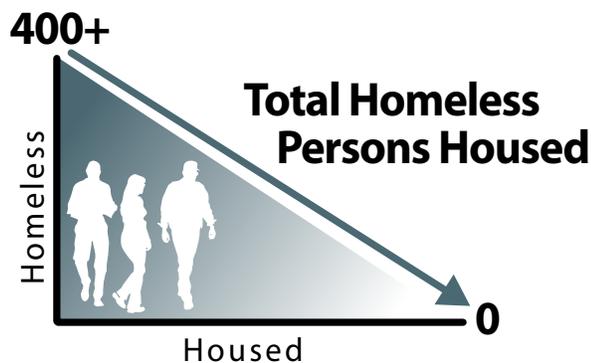
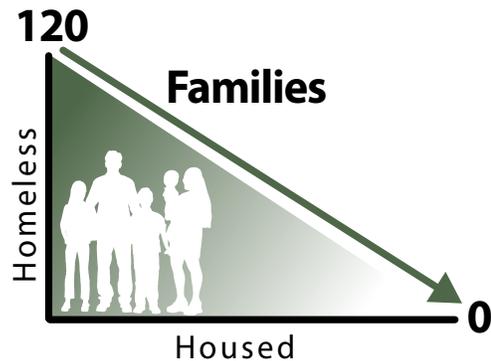
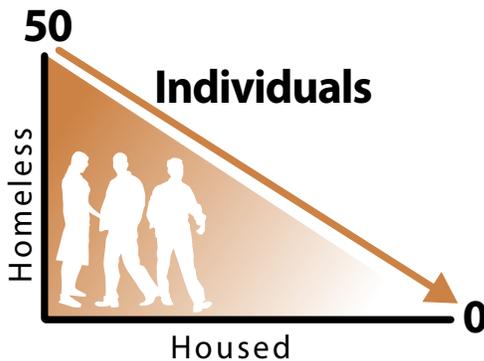
In these meetings with County officials, four themes were sounded repeatedly:

- Moving forward in a partnership of action.
- Involving the business community and private sector.
- Ensuring results from investments.
- Collaborating and cooperating more aggressively.

In its own deliberations, most important for the Seminole Task Force was the development of an action plan shaped by business principles and practices. This intent is consistent with the Central Florida Report recommendation that calls for the development of “an action plan with short term measurable targets.”

The remainder of this Seminole Task Force strategy document is focused on the creation of such an action plan for Seminole County.

Action Strategy: To End the Cumulative Homelessness of...



THE SEMINOLE COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION STRATEGY:

STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION



To arrive at a strategic approach to family and individual homelessness in Seminole County, Leadership Seminole with a grant from the Board of County Commissioners convened a group of Seminole County business and civic leaders (Appendix A). Over the past seven months these leaders have met with homeless providers and County staff, heard best practices from other communities, examined plans, dialogued with the Central Florida Commission on Homelessness, the Homeless Services Network, and Seminole County Public School officials, including Superintendent Dr. Walt Griffin, and the faith community, including Dr. Joel Hunter. The Task Force meetings were facilitated by Mark Brewer, President and CEO, Central Florida Foundation.

Group meetings, as well as individual meetings convened specifically for Task Force representatives by the Homeless Services Network, have been held with homeless provider agencies in Seminole County. In the meetings with those on the frontlines, their recommendations and themes included:

- Focus different strategies for the subpopulations of families and individuals.
- Foster coordination and a collective voice among providers with County initiatives, with the State. Need for a “communications system for collaboration.”
- Access more housing units affordable and accessible to homeless households. Involve property managers, landlords, and developers.
- Identify more “Bridge” housing units.
- Develop peer support models.
- Involve the business community in support and analysis.
- Encourage an employment emphasis.
- Develop youth, domestic violence, and criminal justice populations emphasis.
- Include questions that identify homeless people in jail assessments.
- Create a Task Force on discharge planning in health, corrections, and foster care systems including idea of a “Health Navigator” to prevent discharged persons from falling into homelessness.

- Understand the role that domestic violence plays in family homelessness.
- “Can’t build our way out of homelessness.”
- Reduce child care barriers for heads of households to work.
- Upgrade Housing Navigators to assist with search and placement and stabilization needed as an “upgrade” to case management.
- Create “referral coordinators” between providers and resources.

These strategic components from the field have been invaluable in formulating a plan of action. While not all will be remedied in the first year of the Action Plan, efforts will be made to address many of these inductive insights and recommendations in the first year. Those not addressed will be a focus for subsequent years.

In its deliberations, the Task Force agreed on these approaches to an Action Plan:

1. Actions and investment will be made for both homeless families and individuals.
2. Performance expectations for investment of public or private resources will be measurable, quantifiable outcomes.

3. The single metric of greatest consequence in the life of a homeless household is that their homelessness is ended, hence, that is the metric of “success” for the Task Force.
4. The real and perceived lack of coordination between public and private agencies needs resolution, without which efficiency and effectiveness are compromised and results depreciated.
5. Business principles and practices are essential to accomplishing the goals associated with the reduction of homelessness.
6. The attempt to resolve all issues identified at one time would only dissipate attention and resources mitigating impact and results.
7. The private sector cannot solve the problem of homelessness on its own. Collaboration with government and non-profits in an action and results oriented strategy offers the best partnership for impact, investment, and outcomes.
8. Identify Best Practices in other communities and nuance them for replication in Seminole County. No need to reinvent the wheel.



COLLABORATION WITH GOVERNMENT AND NON-PROFITS
IN AN **ACTION AND RESULTS ORIENTED**
STRATEGY OFFERS THE BEST PARTNERSHIP
FOR IMPACT, INVESTMENT, AND OUTCOMES.

SEMINOLE ACTION/ACTION STRATEGY: ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACTION

The Task Force prioritized two basic principles drawn from the business mindset in its deliberations – **Accountability** and **Action**. From those themes the Task Force recommends a first year action strategy targeting the most vulnerable and disabled homeless families and individuals (*detailed in the following section as Action Strategy for Families and Individuals*).

ACCOUNTABILITY

SEMINOLE ACTION BOARD

Additionally, the Task Force recommends the creation of an Advisory Board, **Seminole Action**, which will oversee the implementation of the Seminole Action Strategy. Seminole Action will establish metrics and benchmarks for the first year and its Board Members will serve as the advisors to the **Seminole Action Opportunity Foundation (SAOF)** (*see page 12*). The Seminole Action Board, comprised of current Task Force members and other community members, will ensure accountability in the implementation of the Action Strategy and collaboration with County and provider agencies in achieving the outcomes of the Action Strategy.

To monitor the implementation of the recommendations of this Seminole strategy, assist in the creation of metrics for initiatives for homeless individuals and families, monitor the incremental benchmarked goals, make recommendations to improve outcomes, and contribute to the shaping of a template for further action and investment; and generate private resources to supplement public expenditures, the Task Force recommends that Seminole Action will engage a facilitator to ensure that these accountability elements are implemented.

Within the first month of operation, the Seminole Action Board will precipitate the creation of a comprehensive catalogue of all resources presently available in the County for homeless families and individuals. That cataloging will be entrusted to the Community Services Department (CSD) of Seminole County. The Seminole Action Board will make recommendation regarding the enhancement of collaboration of agencies and consolidation of funding within 60 days of operation. The Seminole Action Board will identify all additional resources to accomplish the work of the Action Strategy. That identification will involve members of Seminole Action and personnel in the Community Services Department.





IN SUMMARY, THROUGH THE BEST AVAILABLE DATA AND ESTIMATES, **THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 600 HOMELESS FAMILIES IN SEMINOLE COUNTY.**



SEMINOLE ACTION NETWORK EXCHANGE (SANE)

As part of Seminole Action, the **Seminole Action Network Exchange (SANE)** will be chaired by the County Manager convening a wide range of community public and private leaders. Central to the Task Force priority to create a strategic approach rooted in performance, results, and investment will be the creation of SANE, comprised of a wide range of community public and private leaders, including representatives of Leadership Seminole Task Force, Central Florida Commission on Homelessness, Homeless Services Network, County officials overseeing resources potentially related to homeless people, private sector housing developers and landlords, providers, and a variety of other public and private sector partners.

SANE will serve to assist in remedying impediments front line agencies identify in the housing of homeless families and individuals to the realization of the Action Strategy. SANE will work with the Seminole Action Board to identify resources from the Seminole Action Opportunity Foundation, Homeless Services Network, the faith community, and the County, focused on solutions to identified issues.

SEMINOLE ACTION OPPORTUNITY FOUNDATION (SAOF)

The Task Force recommends the creation of a privately funded community-advised impact fund, the **Seminole Action Opportunity Fund (SAOF)** to be held by a community-based partner that provides due diligence and offers expertise in the grant making process and contracting. The Seminole Action Board will act to secure funds and will advise SAOF regarding disposition and investment of funds to attain the objectives of the Action Strategy. All funds in SAOF will be invested only in Seminole County related efforts as directed by the Seminole Action Board.

A small group (5 - 7) of members of the Seminole Action Board will create an Opportunity Fundraising Committee charged with identifying and closing individual and corporate investors in the Action Strategy. No event fundraising will be done.



OF THE 600 HOMELESS FAMILIES IN SEMINOLE COUNTY **APPROXIMATELY 120 ARE IN MOTELS/HOTELS AND 30 IN SHELTER.**

ACTION

FAMILY STRATEGY OVERVIEW

The best estimate of the total number of homeless families in Seminole County, based both on homeless children reporting done by the Seminole County School Department and through the Point in Time (PIT) count done every two years, is between 500 and 600 families. Of these 600 possible families, according to the data collected by the Central Florida Commission on Homelessness' report (CFCH), The Current State of Family Homelessness in Central Florida, nearly three quarters, or 450 are living in doubled up situations and considered homeless by the U.S. Department of Education definition. As noted in the CFCH report, the Point in Time is "a snapshot of the homeless population taken on a given day. Since 2005, HUD requires all CoC applicants to complete this count every other year in the last week of January. This count includes a street count in addition to a count of all clients in emergency and transitional beds."

In conversation with numerous frontline providers and researchers, most recognize that the majority of these families are not in an "at risk" situation with regard to abuse or physical danger.

Many choose to live with relatives or friends in order to have a safe place to live and to save money.

Additionally, there are homeless families living in motels/hotels. There are also families living in shelters. According to the analysis of the CFCH Report, about 20% of the total of homeless families live in motels/hotels and 5% live in shelters. Since there is not specific data in this regard for Seminole County, utilizing the CFCH research, of the 600 homeless families in Seminole County approximately 120 are in motels/hotels and 30 in shelter.

Further, the CFCH Report indicates that 1% of homeless families live on the street or in cars. A point of good news here is that during the recent PIT count, the Homeless Services Network (HSN), the County Community Services Departments, and the Seminole Housing Authority were encouraged to create a strategy of immediate housing intervention should any family be found outside or in a car. Thankfully, no family in Seminole County was found living in those conditions, a fact confirmed by the School Department.

In summary, through the best available data and estimates, there are approximately 600 homeless families in Seminole County and according to the data of the CFCH Report, the likely distribution of those families is 450 living in doubled up situations, 120 living in motels/hotels, and 30 living in shelter.

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS:

FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

The Task Force recommends prioritizing the most vulnerable and at risk families during Year One of the Action Strategy. In consultation with the School Department's Families in Transition Program (FIT, now FIN) and in conversations with other providers and through data in the CFCH Report, the following priorities were established:

- First, families living outside or in a car.
- Second, families living in motels/hotels whose rent is paid by an agency or families who are living in shelter.
- Third, families living in motels/hotels whose rent is paid by the family.
- Fourth, families living in doubled up situations where the well-being of the children or parents is at risk.

Obviously, these are not static categories or inflexible rankings. If a child were identified by the school department in imminent risk and if that child were doubled up, that family would be in the first tier of priority.

The priorities are flexible to accommodate real life situations.

Additionally, as the HSN requires vulnerability assessments (VI-SPDAT) of all families and individuals, each household will be assessed for risk and prioritized on that basis. Our community-based priorities will cede to the VI-SPDAT in most cases, as that assessment tool utilization is a factor in the level of federal funding.

Specifically, the Task Force recommends that 120 of the most vulnerable families be prioritized for housing resources in the first year of the Action Plan. The priorities established by the Task Force were in consultation with a number of community stakeholders including the school system:

- Any family found living on the street or in a car.
- 75 of the most vulnerable families living in motels/hotels paid by an agency or family as determined by the VI-SPDAT assessment, a federally mandated assessment tool that measures vulnerability and prioritizes homeless people by risk for resources.
- 45 families living in doubled up, motel, or shelter situations identified by School Department social workers, Families in Need (FIN) initiative of the Seminole School Board, and other school related personnel as being most at risk.



Given that the data is imprecise in all of these categories, flexibility to target more or less families in each is understood based on real world experience. The goal is to house 120 of the most at risk families in Seminole County. That would be one-fifth of the estimated total 600 homeless families in the County in the first year of the Action Strategy.

While the strategic sequencing of the situations of families is subject to change the numbers in each group, the goal of stably housing 120 families in the first year of the Action Strategy remains constant.

Some of the work to achieve the 120 placements has already begun. Recently Heart to Heart, a Seminole service provider, received a contract from the Board of Commissioners to target 25 motel families and resolve their homelessness this year.

Additionally, Families in Transition (FIT) Fund (now FIN) has contracted with three Seminole providers, A Child at Heart, Pathways to Home, and The Sharing Center to target 42 most at risk families with assistance to be placed in a hotel or temporary housing and with follow-up case management services indicating that “the end goal is to assist with more permanent solutions.”

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDED ACTIONS - FAMILIES

- 1. Increase the Operation New Start (ONS) initiative to house 75 families.** ONS was recently created by the County's Community Services Department to target homeless families in hotels with services and housing. The initial funding is from the Seminole County Commissioners. The focus would be on the most vulnerable and at risk.
- 2. Extend the FIT (now FIN) contract to 45 families and include added resources to extend case management for a year, and to include housing search, placement, and stabilization.** As the FIT (now FIN) document indicates as above, “the end goal is to assist with more permanent solutions.” The 45 families should have the same trajectory as all other families, permanent solutions. Two more FTE's with specific housing and stabilization responsibilities should be added to the program.

An evaluation of expenditures on motels/hotels should be conducted as relates to those resources being invested in permanent housing or in Bridge housing that evolves to permanent housing for the families.

- 3. Utilize the 25 Section 8 Rental Vouchers designated by the Seminole Housing Authority for non-working homeless families.** The FIN and ONS initiatives are initially focused on both working and non-working families. Since there are far more non-working families, the need to supplement those resources is essential to target the most needy. The Rapid Rehousing model, which offers short-term rental assistance to families, will not work for all homeless families. Families who score highest in the Vulnerability Index (VI-SPDAT) will need access to long-term voucher resources. The cost of this targeting is zero. Agencies working on Operation New Start and the FIN initiative will access these resources for their families.
- 4. Ensure that case management resources, according to best practice, are apportioned one case manager to every 12 households.** In national and local studies, desirable outcomes of stability, housing, and jobs/income are enhanced by this best practice ratio.
- 5. Initiate through the County an exploration of ways to expand the successful Family Self-Sufficiency Program and target openings to more homeless families. This initiative focuses on short-term support to families to secure licensed and/or credentialed careers as an essential aspect of this strategy to engage homeless families. To coordinate various employment opportunities for homeless families and individuals, an Employment Specialist should be hired.** Families cannot anticipate long-term subsidies, nor should they be dependent on them. Incorporating an aggressive employment strategy for each family is a long-term cure and trajectory away from dependence. Mercer County, NJ has developed an initiative emphasizing employment for homeless

families as they move from homelessness to housing. Mercer County officials should either be invited to Seminole County or a visit planned by Seminole leaders to Mercer County.

Further, a relationship between vocational opportunities at the School Department, Goodwill, and the private sector would facilitate employment possibilities. Linkage through an “employment specialist” would enhance the opportunity.

6. Commence a County analysis of the results of the Prevention Program for Families. If effectively accomplishing its objectives, extend that program to prevent more families from falling into homelessness.

7. Explore the expansion of childcare programming for homeless families with children up to school age for families who require the service.

8. Facilitate through the Seminole Action Board a prioritization of collaboration and coordination among County agencies with non-profit providers, and private sector and faith organizations. The Board recommends that the Community Services Department should take the lead in organizing monthly meetings of provider leaders and the Community Services Department. The Central Florida Commission and the Central Florida Foundation and the Homeless Services Network should attend these singular meetings, as well as FIN leadership and other agencies that serve homeless people in Seminole County. Lack of coordination of resources and vision is an issue that every stakeholder group identified. The Board will make a priority to facilitate communication and coordination among all public, non-profit, faith, and private agencies working on the issue of homelessness.

9. Identify for the faith community network in the County specific services required by homeless families to stabilize their tenancy and create a trajectory to employment.

10. Sensitize Seminole public and private employers to the situation of employees who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. These concerns should be part of a feedback mechanism to the Employment Specialist and/or agencies working with the 120 families. The Seminole Action Board will create the mechanism for such reporting.

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS

1. The Task Force again recommends prioritizing the most vulnerable and disabled individuals, those experiencing chronic homelessness during Year One of the Action Strategy.

To demonstrate the cost effective intervention of Housing First strongly recommended in the 2012 Addressing Homelessness document, and by this Task Force, communities have conducted cost benefit analysis studies – how much did the homeless individual cost the public purse randomly ricocheting through expensive health and law enforcement systems and how much did they cost after being placed in housing with services. In every study housing and services prove to be less expensive than costly health and law enforcement interactions.

2. The Task Force has determined that in the first year of this strategy the fifty (50) most vulnerable, visible, and disabled will be targeted with the evidence-based Housing First strategy that has been adopted in communities across the United States and beyond.

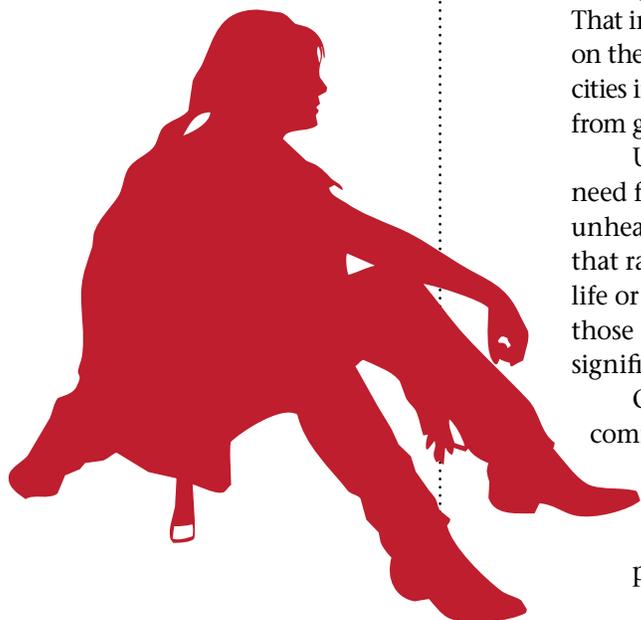
Housing First places this chronic population into housing after a brief engagement period and customizes services to support the tenancy and to respond clinically and practically to the presenting disabilities, focused on maintaining the housing.

The Task Force acknowledges the effort the Sheriff's Department has initiated in interacting with homeless people on the streets and distinguishing them from others on the streets who are asking for money. That instinct is correct according to the research that tells us there are many on the streets who are "panhandling" who are housed. Initiatives in other cities indicate that the "panhandling" requires a "market" of the public who from good intentions and conviction offer money.

Unfortunately, delineating between those simply in financial need for a meal or a bus ticket and those utilizing the money for unhealthful purposes is difficult. There is no research that indicates that randomly giving money to people on the streets improves their life or circumstances. There is substantial research that indicates that those same resources invested in solutions for homeless people can make significant, positive change possible in vulnerable lives.

Other communities have combined aggressive public service and community education campaigns urging the well-intentioned citizenry to give to programs that serve homeless people rather than haphazardly on the street.

To reinforce their campaign, communities have combined that public service campaign of compassionate solutions with community



outreach/engagement from non-profits, including police and non-profit case managers engaging the street population together. This combination of “drying up the market,” and education, and increased engagement has insured that resources are more effectively targeted to homeless people.

3. The Task Force strongly recommends a cost benefit analysis in Seminole County.

Recent Point in Time counts (PIT) indicate that 400 individuals are experiencing chronic homelessness in Seminole County on any given night. Each year hundreds of volunteers under the guidance of the County’s Community Services Department go out on a single night to assess unsheltered homeless people throughout the County. That number is then added to the number of homeless people in shelter and other places unfit for human habitation. The resulting addition of numbers gives a one-night snapshot of homelessness in Seminole County. Knowing the costs of this population to the public purse pre and post housing is vital to motivate political and civic will.

4. The Task Force strongly recommends that Seminole Action research the response of other communities in delineating homeless people and non-homeless “panhandlers” on the street and make recommendations with regard to appropriate interventions.

Engagement of the Sheriff’s street initiative should be engaged in this effort.

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDED ACTIONS - INDIVIDUALS

1. Work with the providers, the Central Florida Homeless Commission, the Central Florida Foundation, Sheriff, Aspire Health Partners, Health Care for the Homeless, and others to target the 50 most vulnerable and disabled homeless individuals in Seminole County and house them in the next year.

2. Adopt the Housing First strategy detailed in the 2012 Addressing Homelessness study to house the 50 most vulnerable and disabled individuals in the County.

Housing First is an evidence-based, consumer preferred, cost effective intervention that solves homelessness. The basis of work with individuals in Seminole should be a Housing First approach.

3. Hire a minimum of three engagement/outreach staff immediately to administer the VI-SPDAT to assess homeless individuals who are unsheltered to access resources at the Central Florida Foundation targeted to the most vulnerable individuals in the region.

Housing and service resources now available through the Central Florida Commission on Homelessness (CHCH), the Central Florida Foundation (CFF), and soon through the Homeless Services Network (HSN) will be made available on the basis of the VI-SPDAT indicator of vulnerability and other community determined factors. Without that VI-SPDAT assessment, Seminole County homeless individuals will not qualify for CFCH or HSN housing and case management funds. While some assessments have been done in Seminole, ensuring that many, if not all, unsheltered homeless individual are assessed will position Seminole homeless individuals to receive those critical resources.

If just 25 Seminole homeless individuals secure those housing and service resources, the value of that investment in three engagement workers would be approximately \$500,000 over the first year of the strategy based on CFCH estimates of \$10,000 for housing and \$10,000 in services in the first year of tenancy.

The three engagement specialists will conduct an assessment of unsheltered and sheltered individuals and families, utilizing an assessment tool known as the Vulnerability Index (VI-SPDAT) which is used to prioritize those engaged according to vulnerability. The County will contract with a community-based organization (CBO) to hire and supervise the three workers. In consultation with



THERE IS NO RESEARCH THAT INDICATES THAT RANDOMLY GIVING MONEY TO PEOPLE ON THE STREETS IMPROVES THEIR LIFE...THERE IS SUBSTANTIAL RESEARCH THAT INDICATES THAT **THOSE SAME RESOURCES INVESTED IN SOLUTIONS FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE CAN MAKE SIGNIFICANT, POSITIVE CHANGE POSSIBLE IN VULNERABLE LIVES.**

Seminole Action and the County Manager the CBO will set metrics regarding specific goals of number of people/households assessed. The CBO will be accountable to the County and Seminole Action for the achievement of the agreed upon metrics.

The CBO will conduct outreach to hospitals, law enforcement, and emergency responders to secure “frequent flyer” lists to ensure that their engagement is comprehensive through the contract. The CBO will ensure that all data derived will be entered into the registry (VI-SPDAT database) and the County Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

Cost of the 3 engagement staff: \$135,000.

Once the 50 are identified, the work of the engagement staff would be to do housing search, placement, and stabilization.

4. Deepen coordination and communication between agencies serving homeless individuals through meetings convened by the Community Services Department.

Of special import are the engagement/ outreach services of the HOPE and PATH Teams and the Sheriff’s Department in facilitating assessment outcomes.

5. Prioritize Veterans in efforts to house homeless individuals.

Homeless Veterans have separate resources for their housing and services through the U.S. Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD). A HUD-VASH voucher offers both resources for housing and support services.

6. Engage one provider to assess, house, and support the tenancies of 50 chronic homeless individuals, preferably sole sourced expeditiously.

- If 50 are housed/supported by other than County funds, cost to County is \$50,000 in bonus payments and some share of administrative costs for the contracting agency plus a share of the \$135,000 for assessment personnel.
- If 25, as above, \$25,000 in bonus funds plus a share of the \$135,000 for assessment personnel and \$10,000 in housing costs for 25 tenancies.
- If 0, \$10,000 for housing and \$10,000 for services for each of the 50 individuals.

Housing resources for the 50 could combine HUD-VASH, HUD McKinney through HSN, CFCH resources, County HOME funds, and other public and private sources.

Both the housing and services costs above are generous and could be mitigated by the provision of other federal, state, and pass through resources. Obviously, the most readily available would be the CFCH and HSN resources tied to the Vulnerability Index (VI-SPDAT).

7. Establish, in consultation with the County Manager's office, Seminole Action, and the CBO(s), an agreed upon set of benchmarks to ensure expeditious assessment through the VI-SPDAT and housing placement.

8. Create a Seminole Action Board recommendation to identify developers of permanent supportive housing if no such agencies are found within the County.

In either case, to secure a contract to house the 50 most vulnerable, the housing entity will identify the strategic components including housing types, landlord engagement, etc.

9. Future considerations

o Explore the creation of housing for homeless individuals on land owned, and appropriately zoned, by St. Stephen Church.

The site already houses an underutilized program for Veterans. Given that siting is so difficult, these buildings and land offer a rare opportunity for housing homeless individuals.

o Evaluate a private sector model of housing and support services identified by Task Force members.



RECENT POINT IN TIME COUNTS (PIT) INDICATE THAT **400 INDIVIDUALS ARE EXPERIENCING CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS IN SEMINOLE COUNTY ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT.**



CREATION OF A TEMPLATE FOR THE FUTURE

The Family and Individual strategies in these recommendations are targeted to our most vulnerable and disabled neighbors here in Seminole County. The focus on 120 families and 50 individuals will not end homelessness in the County. Creating a template of action focused on quantifiable results through performance will give the County a structure for addressing its larger homeless population in the next five years. What works and what doesn't will be clearer. What savings accrue to the community will be calculated. What strategies advance the larger goal of accomplishing the end of homelessness will be more visible.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CONTINUUM OF CARE A community planning body required by HUD to organize and deliver housing and services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency. Continuum of Care also refers to the system of homeless programs in the community.

COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM is a community-wide process to identify and assess households experiencing homelessness, and prioritize access to programs and resources to end their homelessness. An effective coordinated entry process includes prioritization, Housing First orientation, emergency services, standardized assessment, referral to housing, outreach, and use of HMIS.

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS (HUD) is experienced by an individual or family head of household with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more or has had at least four episodes of homelessness totaling 12 months in the past three years and who lives in a place not meant for human habitation, an emergency shelter, or will return to homelessness after 90 days or less in institutional care.

EMERGENCY SHELTER is any facility designed to provide temporary or transitional shelter for people who experience homelessness, typically (but not exclusively) for a period of 90 days or less. Supportive services may or may not be provided in addition to the provision of shelter. HUD encourages average length of stay to be less than thirty (30) days.

HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS OR FAMILIES lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including residing in an emergency shelter or a place not meant for human habitation or exiting an institution after temporary residence of less than 90 days; will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence; are fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member; or who is defined as homeless by any other federal statute.

HOMELESS VETERAN is an individual who served any branch of the U.S. military, including those who are ineligible for Veteran Health Administration benefits.

HOMELESS YOUTH are typically defined as unaccompanied youth ages 12 and older (up to age 24) who are without family support and who are living in shelters, on the streets, in cars or vacant buildings, or who are “couch-surfing” or living in other unstable circumstances.

HOMELESSNESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (HMIS) is a computerized data collection tool designed to capture client-level information over time on the characteristics and service needs of men, women, and children experiencing homelessness, report unduplicated and aggregate client level data, as well as program and system level outcomes

HOUSING FIRST is an evidence-based practice based on consumer choice and prioritizes rapid placement in permanent housing [generally scattered site] without service requirements or preconditions. The underlying principle of Housing First is that people are better able to move forward with their lives if they are first housed.

POINT IN TIME (PIT) – A snapshot count of the homeless population taken on a given day. Since 2005, HUD requires all CoC applicants to complete this count every other year in the last week of January. This count includes a street count in addition to a count of all clients in emergency and transitional beds.

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (PSH) is decent, safe, community-based housing that provides persons with disabilities with the rights of tenancy and access to services and is subsidized or otherwise affordable to its residents.

RAPID RE-HOUSING prioritizes moving a family or individual experiencing homelessness into permanent housing as quickly as possible, ideally within 30 days of a client becoming homeless. Time-limited services may include housing identification, rent and move-in assistance, and case management, including employment assistance to sustain housing.

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING is a temporary residential program with appropriate support services to facilitate movement to independent living within 24 months. HUD encourages that this be a limited portion of the community inventory for specific sub-populations (e.g., youth or domestic violence victims) or short-term interim housing.

VI-SPDAT (VULNERABILITY INDEX-SERVICE PRIORITIZATION DECISION ASSISTANCE TOOL) is an intake and case management assessment tool to determine vulnerability and health and social service needs in order to prioritize individuals and families most in need for housing and services and refer individuals to appropriate interventions. Each CoC sets its own parameters for prioritization.

APPENDIX A - TASK FORCE

JOHN HILLENMEYER

Chief Executive Officer Emeritus Orlando Health
Chair
Seminole County Homelessness Taskforce

CHRIS ADAMS

Administrator for Behavioral Health
South Seminole Hospital

ERIC BASS

Vice President
JP Morgan Chase

WENDY BRANDON

CEO
Central Florida Regional Hospital

CAROL BUFORD

President/COO
Omni One Group

BRENDA CAREY

Commissioner
Seminole County Board of Commissioners

SANDY CHACE

Senior Vice President
CBRE

JODA CONNELL

Vice President/Business Development
First Green Bank

MELANIE CORNELL

Principal
HKS Architects

RON DAVOLI

President/CEO
Wharton-Smith

SESHA DHANYAMRAJU

CEO/Managing Partner
Digital Risk

MICHAEL EASTHAM

President
Fellowship Financial Group

SUSAN FERNANDEZ

Manager, Corporate Communications
Mitsubishi Hitachi Power Systems Americas, Inc.

MARA FRAZIER

Senior Director
Community Affairs & Westgate Foundation

DAVE GIERACH

President
CPH

PAUL GODDARD

President/Founder
M Paul General Contractors

DOUG HARCOTBE

Senior Executive Officer/Administrator
Florida Hospital Altamonte & NE Market

ANDRIA HERR

President
Orlando Operations Hylant

DREW JETER

Senior VP
CH2M

DAWN KRAUS

Chair
Leadership Seminole Board of Directors

DEBORAH LA FLEUR

Shareholder
GrayRobinson

TODD MORGAN

President
Comprehensive Energy Services

LYN PATRICK

CFO
Florida Business Interiors

KEITH RAYMOND

Market President Central Florida
Harbor Community Bank

PETE SCHOEMANN

Partner
Broad & Cassel

MIKE SMITH

Senior Vice President
BB&T Commercial Lending

RICHARD SWEAT

President/CEO
.decimal

ALAN WIGINTON

Director/Trustee
Wiginton Corporation

JOHN WILLIAMS

President/CEO
Wayne Densch Inc.

Facilitator

MARK BREWER

President/CEO
Central Florida Foundation

SUPPORT TEAM

ANDREW POWELL

Executive Vice President
Central Florida Commission
on Homelessness

EVAN SMITH

Project Manager
Central Florida Commission
on Homelessness

SANDI VIDAL

Vice President
of Community Strategies and Initiatives
Central Florida Foundation

WAYNE WEINBERG

President
Leadership Seminole

APPENDIX B

ENTITIES PARTICIPATING IN PROVIDER MEETINGS

Aspire Health Partners	Pathways to Care
Camaraderie Foundation	Pathways to Home
CareerSource Central Florida	Recovery House of Central Florida
Catholic Charities	Rescue Outreach Mission
Community Based Care of Central Florida	SafeHouse of Seminole
City of Sanford	Salvation Army, Sanford
Dave's House	Seminole County Community Services Department
Florida Department of Health in Seminole County	Seminole County Manager's Office
Goodwill Industries of Central Florida	Seminole County Public Schools
Health Care Center for the Homeless	Seminole County Sheriff's Office
Health Council of East Central Florida	Shepherd's Hope
Heart To Heart Homes	Southern Affordable Services, Inc.
Homeless Services Network of Central Florida	St. Peter's Episcopal Church
HOPE Helps	The Salvation Army
Leadership Seminole	The Sharing Center

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THE TASK FORCE PRIORITIZED
TWO BASIC PRINCIPLES DRAWN
FROM THE BUSINESS MINDSET
IN ITS DELIBERATIONS —
ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACTION.

