



2020 Consensus Legislative Priorities

The Florida Coalition for the Homeless (FCH) is a dynamic organization whose membership includes the state's 27 Local Lead Agency Continuums of Care (CoCs), homeless advocates, local service providers, members of the faith-based community, formerly homeless persons, educators, attorneys, mental health professionals and policy makers statewide. This diverse group is committed to implementing programs that prevent homelessness and rapidly re-house homeless individuals and families to return them to self-sufficiency and productive lives. The membership of the Florida Coalition for the Homeless has collaborated to establish the following 2020 Legislative Priorities to work toward ending homelessness in Florida and to increase the capacity of local CoCs to manage and deliver these critical programs.

1. **Continue Homeless Recurring Staffing and Challenge Grant Funding**

Ask: Maintain current Fiscal Year Funding for the recurring base budget Homeless Staffing (\$3 million) and Challenge Grants (\$3.1 million)

FCH supports the continuation of recurring funding for the homeless Staffing and Challenge Grants for Fiscal Year 2020-21. Without the Staffing Grant, Florida's CoC system, which has drawn down and administered over \$100 million in the past decade to the State, would not be able to operate. The Homeless Challenge Grant Program has been funded by the legislature each year consecutively since 2014. s. 420.644(4), Florida Statutes establishes the Challenge Grant Program and establishes criteria for local grant awards, competitively procured through the State Office on Homelessness. Challenge Grant funding is used by the CoCs to meet emergency housing needs of the homeless and at-risk individuals and families, especially those needs which cannot be met by any other program. This legislative initiative is supported by the Department of Children and Families and the Council on Homelessness.

2. **Support Homeless Statute Cleanup Legislation**

Ask: Support SB 68 by Senator Book and HB 163 by Representative Altman

Chapter 420, Florida Statutes governing the State Office on Homelessness and the programs administered under the Office's purview have become antiquated and out of date with federal law governing homelessness grant funding programs that provide the majority of funding for Florida's programs that seek to prevent and end homelessness. These revisions conform state law to current federal law and grant program definitions and clarifies statutory responsibilities for local homeless Continuums of Care Lead Agencies, while preserving financial and programmatic accountability provisions in state law for programs administered by the State Office on Homelessness. The policy contained within the House and Senate bills are supported by the Department of Children and Families and the Council on Homelessness. The only difference between SB 68 by Sen. Book and HB TBD by Rep. Altman – SB 68 contains a provision to fund the Challenge Grant out of the documentary stamp revenues distribution and increases the grant by \$6.9 million over current Fiscal Year appropriation. Presently, the Homeless Challenge Grant is funded out of General Revenue. The House bill does not contain this language.

3. **Support the Affordable Housing Trust Fund**

Ask: Use all Affordable Housing Trust Fund monies on affordable housing – no sweeps!

FCH is advocating for the legislature to use all the Affordable Housing Trust Fund monies for housing programs. The State Housing Initiative Partnership (SHIP) and the State Apartment Incentive Loan Program (SAIL) are highly leveraged, with private sector loans and equity providing \$4 to \$6 for every dollar of state funding—thus, greatly increasing economic impact. If ALL the affordable housing trust fund dollars are used for housing, it will create 30,730 jobs and have an \$4.4 billion economic impact to the State of Florida (*Florida Housing Finance Corporation*).