



Lee County Homeless Coalition

To advocate, educate, and promote awareness of issues and obstacles facing homeless individuals in Lee County through community collaboration, planning, and implementing solutions.

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August 5, 2021

The Honorable Spencer Roach
Chair of the Lee County Legislative Delegation
3436 Marinatown Lane
North Fort Myers, Florida 33903

Dear Representative Spencer Roach,

The Lee County Homeless Coalition is requesting placement on the Lee County Legislative Delegation Meeting agenda. The Lee County Homeless Coalition is a not for profit organization. We are an advocacy group made up of community and faith-based service providers, local businesses, people who are currently experiencing or who have experienced homelessness, and other advocates committed to ending homelessness. We are one of 27 coalitions/lead agencies in the state of Florida. Working together we have established two priorities. The document outlining our priorities is attached.

We greatly appreciate your leadership. Thank you for the work you are doing to make our community a better place to live.

Sincerely,

Janet Bartos
Executive Director
Lee County Homeless Coalition

Compassion | Commitment | Community



2022 Legislative Priorities

The Florida Coalition to End Homelessness (FCEH) is a dynamic organization whose membership includes the state's 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 to End Homelessness has collaborated to establish the following 2022 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. Support Homeless Recurring Staffing Grant

Ask: Support a 20% increase in current Fiscal Year Funding for the recurring base budget Homeless Staffing Grants (\$3.6 million)

FCEH supports the increase in recurring funding for the homeless Staffing Grants for Fiscal Year 2022-23. Continuums of Care continue to incur additional costs to complete the required tasks as outlined in the s. 420.644. Without the Staffing Grant, Florida's CoC system, which draws down and administered over \$90 million annually to the State, would not be able to operate. The Staffing Grant, which was last increased in 2016, provides \$107,143 to each of the State's 28 Continuum of Care Lead Agencies. The grant provides for the operational expenses for each CoC. A few examples of the operational expenses include: salaries, office rent, equipment, electricity, internet, telephone and supplies. On average, each CoC supports 3 full time staff positions with this funding. Due in part to the limited amount of funding the Staffing Grant provides, there has been large turnover inside the CoC local offices. Many of the employees staffing the CoC's have advanced degrees and can double or triple their salaries by joining other organizations. It is critical our CoC system retains their staff with institutional knowledge. The CoCs have done exemplary work in reducing homelessness over the past 5 years and without appropriate staff levels, this momentum may be lost.

2. Continue Homeless Recurring Challenge Grant Funding

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

FCEH supports the continuation of recurring funding for the homeless Challenge Grants for Fiscal Year 2022-23. 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.

** Additional legislative items may be added before the 2022 Legislative Session.*