



## 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. Increase Homeless Recurring Staffing Grant

*Ask: Support a 20% increase (\$600,000) in current Fiscal Year Funding for the recurring base budget Homeless Continuum of Care Staffing Grants (\$3.6 million)*

FCEH supports the \$600,000 increase in recurring funding for the homeless Staffing Grants for Fiscal Year 2022-23. The request would increase the homeless Staffing Grant from \$3 million to \$3.6 million. Continuums of Care continue to incur additional costs to complete the required tasks as outlined in the s. 420.644. Without the Staffing Grant, which is supported in DCF's Legislative Budget Request, Florida's CoC system, which draws down and administers 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 and health insurance benefits (which has increased since the staffing grant was last increased), office rent, equipment, electricity, internet, telephone and supplies. On average, each CoC supports three 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 CoC employees have advanced degrees and current compensation is limited by budget constraints, leading to high turnover, which is very expensive to the CoC due to the specialized training that is required. A well-run CoC system must retain experienced staff with institutional knowledge. The CoCs have done exemplary work in reducing homelessness over the past five years and without adequate funding to support staffing and operations, this momentum may be lost.

### 2. Continue Homeless Recurring Challenge Grant Funding – Included in DCF's LBR

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

FCEH supports DCF's Legislative Budget Request for 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.