

CHAPTER 2020-44

House Bill No. 163

An act relating to homelessness; amending s. 420.621, F.S.; revising and providing definitions; amending s. 420.622, F.S.; increasing the number of members on the Council on Homelessness; revising the duties of the State Office on Homelessness; revising requirements for the state's system of homeless programs; requiring entities that receive state funding to provide summary aggregated data to the council; revising the qualifications for and amount of grant awards to continuum of care lead agencies; requiring continuum of care lead agencies to submit a report to the Department of Children and Families; increasing the minimum number of years for which projects must reserve certain units for the homeless; authorizing, rather than requiring, the Department of Children and Families to adopt certain rules; authorizing the office to administer certain money; creating s. 420.6225, F.S.; specifying the purpose of a continuum of care; requiring each continuum of care to designate a collaborative applicant; providing requirements for such applicants; authorizing such applicants to be referred to as continuum of care lead agencies; providing requirements for continuum of care catchment areas and lead agencies; requiring continuums of care to create continuum of care plans; specifying requirements for such plans; requiring continuums of care to promote participation by all interested individuals and organizations; creating s. 420.6227, F.S.; providing legislative findings and program purpose; establishing a grant-in-aid program to help continuums of care prevent and end homelessness; providing requirements for such program; repealing s. 420.623, F.S., relating to local coalitions for the homeless; repealing s. 420.624, F.S., relating to local homeless assistance continuum of care; repealing s. 420.625, F.S., relating to a grant-in-aid program; amending s. 420.626, F.S.; revising procedures for certain facilities and institutions to implement when discharging specified persons to reduce homelessness; amending s. 420.6265, F.S.; revising the Rapid ReHousing methodology; amending s. 420.6275, F.S.; revising the Housing First methodology; amending s. 420.507, F.S.; conforming cross-references; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 420.621, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

420.621 Definitions.—As used in ss. 420.621-420.628, the term:

(1) “Continuum of care” means a group organized to carry out the responsibilities imposed under ss. 420.621-420.628 to coordinate, plan, and pursue ending homelessness in a designated catchment area. Such a group shall be composed of representatives from certain organizations, including, but not limited to, nonprofit homeless providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public

housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, organizations that serve homeless and formerly homeless veterans, and organizations that serve homeless and formerly homeless persons, to the extent that these organizations are represented within the designated catchment area and are available to participate the community components needed 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. It includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness.

(2) “Continuum of care lead agency” or “continuum of care collaborative applicant” means the organization designated by a continuum of care under s. 420.6225.

~~(3)~~⁽²⁾ “Council on Homelessness” means the council created in s. 420.622.

~~(4)~~⁽³⁾ “Department” means the Department of Children and Families.

~~(4)~~ “District” means a service district of the department, as set forth in s. 20.19.

(5) “Homeless,” means:

(a) An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as defined under “homeless” in 24 C.F.R. 578.3; or

(b) An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence as defined under “homeless” in 24 C.F.R. 578.3. applied to an individual, or “individual experiencing homelessness” means an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes an individual who:

~~(a) Is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;~~

~~(b) Is living in a motel, hotel, travel trailer park, or camping ground due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations;~~

~~(c) Is living in an emergency or transitional shelter;~~

~~(d) Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;~~

~~(e) Is living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, bus or train station, or similar setting; or~~

~~(f) Is a migratory individual who qualifies as homeless because he or she is living in circumstances described in paragraphs (a)-(e).~~

The terms do not refer to an individual imprisoned pursuant to state or federal law or to individuals or families who are sharing housing due to cultural preferences, voluntary arrangements, or traditional networks of support. The terms include an individual who has been released from jail, prison, the juvenile justice system, the child welfare system, a mental health and developmental disability facility, a residential addiction treatment program, or a hospital, for whom no subsequent residence has been identified, and who lacks the resources and support network to obtain housing.

~~(6) “Local coalition for the homeless” means a coalition established pursuant to s. 420.623.~~

~~(7) “New and temporary homeless” means individuals or families who are homeless due to societal factors.~~

~~(6)(8) “State Office on Homelessness” means the state office created in s. 420.622.~~

Section 2. Section 420.622, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

420.622 State Office on Homelessness; Council on Homelessness.—

(1) The State Office on Homelessness is created within the Department of Children and Families to provide interagency, council, and other related coordination on issues relating to homelessness.

(2) The Council on Homelessness is created to consist of 19 ~~17~~ representatives of public and private agencies who shall develop policy and advise the State Office on Homelessness. The council members shall be: the Secretary of Children and Families, or his or her designee; the executive director of the Department of Economic Opportunity, or his or her designee, who shall advise the council on issues related to rural development; the State Surgeon General, or his or her designee; the Executive Director of Veterans’ Affairs, or his or her designee; the Secretary of Corrections, or his or her designee; the Commissioner of Education, or his or her designee; the Director of CareerSource Florida, Inc., or his or her designee; one representative of the Florida Association of Counties; one representative of the Florida League of Cities; one representative of the Florida Supportive Housing Coalition; one representative of the Florida Housing Coalition; the Executive Director of the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, or his or her designee; one representative of the Florida Coalition for the Homeless; the Secretary of the Department of Elder Affairs, or his or her designee; and four members appointed by the Governor. The council members shall be nonpaid volunteers and shall be reimbursed only for travel expenses. The appointed members of the council shall be appointed to staggered 2-year terms, and are encouraged to have experience in the administration or provision of resources, services, or housing that addresses the needs of persons experiencing homelessness. The council shall meet at least four times per

year. The importance of minority, gender, and geographic representation shall be considered in appointing members to the council.

(3) The State Office on Homelessness, pursuant to the policies set by the council and subject to the availability of funding, shall:

(a) Coordinate among state, local, and private agencies and providers to produce a statewide consolidated inventory for the state's entire system of homeless programs which incorporates local continuum of care plans regionally developed plans. Such programs include, but are not limited to:

1. Programs authorized under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, as amended by the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009, 42 U.S.C. ss. 11302 ss. 11371 et seq., and carried out under funds awarded to this state; and

2. Programs, components thereof, or activities that assist persons who are homeless or at risk for homelessness.

(b) Collect, maintain, and make available information concerning persons who are homeless ~~or at risk for homelessness~~, including summary demographics information drawn from the local continuum of care Homeless Management Information System or the annual Point-in-Time Count, and the local continuum of care Housing Inventory Chart required by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development current services and resources available, the cost and availability of services and programs, and the met and unmet needs of this population. All entities that receive state funding must provide summary aggregated access to all data they maintain in summary form, with no individual identifying information, to assist the council in providing this information. The State Office on Homelessness, in consultation with the designated lead agencies for a ~~local homeless~~ continuum of care and with the Council on Homelessness, shall develop a process by which summary data is collected ~~the system and process of data collection from all continuum of care lead agencies for the purpose of analyzing trends and assessing impacts in the statewide homeless delivery system for delivering services to the homeless. Any statewide homelessness survey and database system must comply with all state and federal statutory and regulatory confidentiality requirements.~~

(c) Annually evaluate state and continuum of care system programs local services and resources and develop a consolidated plan for addressing the needs of the homeless or those at risk for homelessness.

(d) Explore, compile, and disseminate information regarding public and private funding sources for state and local programs serving the homeless and provide technical assistance in applying for such funding.

(e) Monitor and provide recommendations for coordinating the activities and programs of continuums of care local coalitions for the homeless and

promote the effectiveness of programs to prevent and end homelessness in the state addressing the needs of the homeless.

(f) Provide technical assistance to facilitate efforts to support and strengthen ~~establish, maintain, and expand local homeless assistance~~ continuums of care.

(g) Develop and assist in the coordination of policies and procedures relating to the discharge or transfer from the care or custody of state-supported or state-regulated entities persons who are homeless or at risk for homelessness.

(h) Spearhead outreach efforts for maximizing access by people who are homeless or at risk for homelessness to state and federal programs and resources.

(i) Promote a federal policy agenda that is responsive to the needs of those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness ~~the homeless population~~ in this state.

(j) Review reports on continuum of care system performance measures and ~~Develop outcome and accountability measures and promote and use~~ such measures to evaluate program effectiveness and make recommendations for improving current practices to work toward ending homelessness in this state in order to best meet the needs of the homeless.

(k) Formulate policies and legislative proposals aimed at preventing and ending homelessness in this state ~~to address more effectively the needs of the homeless~~ and coordinate the implementation of state and federal legislative policies.

(l) Convene meetings and workshops of state and local agencies, continuums of care ~~local coalitions and programs,~~ and other stakeholders for the purpose of developing and reviewing policies, services, activities, coordination, and funding of efforts to end homelessness ~~meet the needs of the homeless.~~

(m) With the input of the continuums of care, conduct or promote research on the effectiveness of current programs and propose pilot projects aimed at ending homelessness ~~improving services.~~

(n) Serve as an advocate for issues relating to homelessness.

(o) Investigate ways to improve access to participation in state funding and other programs for the prevention and reduction ~~alleviation~~ of homelessness to faith-based organizations and collaborate and coordinate with faith-based organizations.

(4) The State Office on Homelessness, ~~with the concurrence of the Council on Homelessness,~~ shall accept and administer moneys appropriated to it to provide annual “challenge grants” to lead agencies of homeless

assistance continuums of care designated by the State Office on Homelessness ~~under pursuant to s. 420.6225 s. 420.624~~. The department shall establish varying levels of grant awards up to ~~\$750,000~~ \$500,000 per continuum of care lead agency. The department, in consultation with the Council on Homelessness, shall specify a grant award level in the notice of the solicitation of grant applications.

(a) To qualify for the grant, a continuum of care lead agency must develop and implement a local homeless ~~assistance~~ continuum of care plan for its designated catchment area. ~~The services and housing funded through the grant must be implemented through the~~ continuum of care's care plan ~~must implement a coordinated entry assessment or central intake system as provided in s. 420.6225(5)(b) and must be designed~~ to screen, assess, and refer persons seeking assistance to the appropriate housing intervention and service provider. The continuum of care lead agency shall also document the commitment of local government or private organizations to provide matching funds or in-kind support in an amount equal to 25 percent of the grant requested. Expenditures of leveraged funds or resources, including third-party cash or in-kind contributions, are authorized only for eligible activities carried out in connection with a committed on one project in which such funds or resources have not been used as leverage or match for any other project or program. ~~The expenditures and~~ must be certified through a written commitment.

(b) Preference must be given to those continuum of care lead agencies that have demonstrated the ability of their continuum of care to help households move out of homelessness ~~provide quality services to homeless persons and the ability to leverage federal homeless assistance funding under the Stewart B. McKinney Act with local government funding or private funding for the provision of services to homeless persons.~~

(c) ~~Preference must be given to lead agencies in catchment areas with the greatest need for the provision of housing and services to the homeless, relative to the population of the catchment area.~~

(c)(d) The grant may be used to fund any of the housing, program, or service needs included in the local homeless ~~assistance~~ continuum of care plan. The continuum of care lead agency may allocate the grant to programs, services, or housing providers that implement the local homeless ~~assistance~~ continuum of care plan. The continuum of care lead agency may provide subgrants to a local agency to implement programs or services or provide housing identified for funding in the continuum of care lead agency's application to the department. A continuum of care lead agency may spend a maximum of 10 ~~8~~ percent of its funding on administrative costs.

(d)(e) The continuum of care lead agency shall submit a final report to the department documenting the outcomes achieved by the grant-funded programs ~~grant~~ in enabling persons who are homeless to return to permanent housing, thereby ending such person's episode of homelessness.

(5) The State Office on Homelessness, ~~with the concurrence of the Council on Homelessness,~~ may administer moneys given appropriated to it to provide homeless housing assistance grants annually to continuum of care lead agencies for ~~local homeless assistance continuum of care,~~ as recognized by the State Office on Homelessness; to acquire, construct, or rehabilitate ~~transitional or~~ permanent housing units for homeless persons. These moneys shall consist of any sums that the state may appropriate, as well as money received from donations, gifts, bequests, or ~~otherwise from any other~~ public or private source, which are intended to acquire, construct, or rehabilitate ~~transitional or~~ permanent housing units for homeless persons.

(a) Grant applicants shall be ranked competitively based on criteria that include, but are not limited to, all of the following:

1. The ability of the continuum of care to provide quality services.

2. The ability of the continuum of care to leverage federal homeless assistance and private funding.

3. The extent of the need for providing housing and services to individuals experiencing homelessness in a continuum of care’s planning areas relative to the population of the counties served.

4. The effectiveness of the continuum of care in keeping families housed Preference must be given to applicants who leverage additional private funds and public funds, particularly federal funds designated for the acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of ~~transitional or permanent housing for homeless persons; who acquire, build, or rehabilitate the greatest number of units; or who acquire, build, or rehabilitate in catchment areas having the greatest need for housing for the homeless relative to the population of the catchment area.~~

(b) Funding for any particular project may not exceed \$750,000.

(c) Projects must reserve, for a minimum of 20 ~~10~~ years, the number of units acquired, constructed, or rehabilitated through homeless housing assistance grant funding to serve persons who are homeless at the time they assume tenancy.

(d) No more than two grants may be awarded annually in any given ~~local homeless assistance continuum of care~~ catchment area.

(e) A project may not be funded which is not included in the local ~~homeless assistance continuum of care~~ plan, as recognized by the State Office on Homelessness, for the catchment area in which the project is located.

(f) The maximum percentage of funds that the State Office on Homelessness and each applicant may spend on administrative costs is 10 ~~5~~ percent.

(6) The State Office on Homelessness, in conjunction with the Council on Homelessness, shall establish performance measures related to state funding provided through the State Office on Homelessness and use those grant-related measures to and specific objectives by which it may evaluate the performance and outcomes of continuum of care lead agencies that receive state grant funds. Challenge Grants made through the State Office on Homelessness shall be distributed to lead agencies based on their overall performance and their achievement of specified objectives. Each lead agency for which grants are made under this section shall provide the State Office on Homelessness a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of the program in achieving its stated purpose. In evaluating the performance of the lead agencies, the State Office on Homelessness shall base its criteria upon the program objectives, goals, and priorities that were set forth by the lead agencies in their proposals for funding. Such criteria may include, but are not limited to, the number of persons or households that are no longer homeless, the rate of recidivism to homelessness, and the number of persons who obtain gainful employment.

(7) The State Office on Homelessness must monitor the challenge grants and homeless housing assistance grants to ensure proper expenditure of funds and compliance with the conditions of the applicant's contract.

(8) The Department of Children and Families, with input from the Council on Homelessness, may ~~must~~ adopt rules relating to the challenge grants and the homeless housing assistance grants and related issues consistent with the purposes of this section.

(9) The Council on Homelessness ~~council~~ shall, by June 30 of each year, provide to the Governor, the Legislature, and the Secretary of Children and Families a report summarizing the extent of homelessness in the state and the council's recommendations for ending ~~reducing~~ homelessness in this state.

(10) The State Office on Homelessness may administer moneys appropriated to it for distribution among the continuum of care lead agencies and entities funded in the 2018-2019 state fiscal year which are designated by the office as local coalitions for the homeless ~~28 local homeless continuums of care designated by the Department of Children and Families.~~

Section 3. Section 420.6225, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

420.6225 Continuum of care.—

(1) The purpose of a continuum of care, as defined in s. 420.621, is to coordinate community efforts to prevent and end homelessness in its catchment area designated as provided in subsection (3) and to fulfill the responsibilities set forth in this chapter.

(2) Under the federal HEARTH Act of 2009, each continuum of care is required to designate a collaborative applicant that is responsible for

submitting the continuum of care funding application for the designated catchment area to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The designated continuum of care collaborative applicant shall serve as the point of contact for the State Office on Homelessness, is accountable for representations made in the application, and, in carrying out responsibilities under this chapter, may be referred to as the continuum of care lead agency.

(3) Continuum of care catchment areas must be designated and revised as necessary by the State Office on Homelessness and must be consistent with the continuum of care catchment areas recognized by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development for the purposes of awarding federal homeless assistance funding for continuum of care programs.

(4) The State Office on Homelessness shall recognize only one continuum of care lead agency for each designated catchment area. Such continuum of care lead agency must be consistent with the designated continuum of care collaborative applicant recognized by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development in the awarding of federal funds to continuums of care.

(5) Each continuum of care shall create a continuum of care plan, the purpose of which is to implement an effective and efficient housing crisis response system to prevent and end homelessness in the continuum of care catchment area. A continuum of care plan must include all of the following components:

(a) Outreach to unsheltered individuals and families to link them with appropriate housing interventions.

(b) A coordinated entry system, compliant with the requirements of the federal HEARTH Act of 2009, which is designed to coordinate intake, utilize common assessment tools, prioritize households for housing interventions, and refer households to the appropriate housing intervention.

(c) Emergency shelter, designed to provide safe temporary shelter while the household is in the process of obtaining permanent housing.

(d) Supportive services, designed to maximize housing stability once the household is in permanent housing.

(e) Permanent supportive housing, designed to provide long-term affordable housing and support services to persons with disabilities who are moving out of homelessness.

(f) Rapid ReHousing, as specified in s. 420.6265.

(g) Permanent housing, including links to affordable housing, subsidized housing, long-term rental assistance, housing vouchers, and mainstream private sector housing.

(h) An ongoing planning mechanism to end homelessness for all subpopulations of persons experiencing homelessness.

(6) Continuums of care must promote participation by all interested individuals and organizations and may not exclude individuals and organizations on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, familial status, or religion. Faith-based organizations, local governments, and persons who have experienced homelessness are encouraged to participate. To the extent possible, these individuals and organizations must be coordinated and integrated with other mainstream health, social services, and employment programs for which homeless populations may be eligible, including, but not limited to, Medicaid, the state Children's Health Insurance Program, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program, the Food Assistance Program, and services funded through the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Block Grant, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and the welfare-to-work grant program.

Section 4. Section 420.6227, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

420.6227 Grant-in-aid program.—

(1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.—The Legislature finds and declares that many services for households experiencing homelessness have been provided by local communities through voluntary private agencies and religious organizations and that those resources have not been sufficient to prevent and end homelessness in the state. The Legislature recognizes that the level of need and types of problems associated with homelessness may vary from community to community, due to the diversity and geographic distribution of the homeless population and the resulting differing needs of particular communities.

(2) PURPOSE.—The principal purpose of the grant-in-aid program is to provide needed assistance to continuums of care to enable them to do all of the following:

(a) Assist persons in their communities who have become, or may likely become, homeless.

(b) Help homeless households move to permanent housing as quickly as possible.

(3) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a grant-in-aid program to help continuums of care prevent and end homelessness, which may include any aspect of the local continuum of care plan, as described in 420.6225.

(4) APPLICATION PROCEDURE.—Continuums of care that intend to apply for the grant-in-aid program must submit an application for grant-in-aid funds to the State Office on Homelessness for review.

(5) SPENDING PLANS.—The State Office on Homelessness shall develop guidelines for the development, evaluation, and approval of spending plans that are created by local continuum of care lead agencies.

(6) ALLOCATION OF GRANT FUNDS.—The State Office on Homelessness shall administer grant-in-aid funds for continuums of care, which must be awarded on a competitive basis.

(7) DISTRIBUTION TO LOCAL AGENCIES.—The State Office on Homelessness shall distribute funds awarded under subsection (6) to local agencies to fund programs that are required by the local continuum of care plan, as described in s. 420.6225 and provided in subsection (3), based upon the recommendations of the local continuum of care lead agencies, in accordance with spending plans that are developed by the lead agencies and approved by the office. Not more than 10 percent of the total state funds awarded under a spending plan may be used by the continuum of care lead agency for staffing and administrative expenditures.

(8) LOCAL MATCHING FUNDS.—If an entity contracts with local agencies to provide services and receives financial assistance obtained under this section, the entity must provide at least 25 percent of the funding necessary for the support of project operations. In-kind contributions, including, but not limited to, materials, commodities, transportation, office space, other types of facilities, or personal services may be evaluated and counted as part or all of the required local funding, at the discretion of the State Office on Homelessness.

Section 5. Section 420.623, Florida Statutes, is repealed.

Section 6. Section 420.624, Florida Statutes, is repealed.

Section 7. Section 420.625, Florida Statutes, is repealed.

Section 8. Subsection (3) of section 420.626, Florida Statutes, is amended, and subsection (2) of that section is republished, to read:

420.626 Homelessness; discharge guidelines.—

(2) The following facilities and institutions are encouraged to develop and implement procedures designed to reduce the discharge of persons into homelessness when such persons are admitted or housed for more than 24 hours at such facilities or institutions: hospitals and inpatient medical facilities; crisis stabilization units; residential treatment facilities; assisted living facilities; and detoxification centers.

(3) The procedures should include all of the following:

(a) Development and implementation of a screening process or other mechanism for identifying persons to be discharged from the facility or institution who are at considerable risk for homelessness or face some imminent threat to health and safety upon discharge.;

(b) Development and implementation of a discharge plan addressing how identified persons will secure housing and other needed care and support upon discharge.;

(c) ~~Communication with~~ Assessment of the capabilities of the entities to whom identified persons may potentially be discharged to determine their capability to serve such persons and their acceptance of such persons into their programs, and selection of the entity determined to be best equipped to provide or facilitate the provision of suitable care and support.;

(d) Coordination of effort and sharing of information with entities that are expected to bear the responsibility for providing care or support to identified persons upon discharge.; ~~and~~

(e) Provision of sufficient medication, medical equipment and supplies, clothing, transportation, and other basic resources necessary to ensure assure that the health and well-being of identified persons are not jeopardized upon their discharge.

Section 9. Section 420.6265, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

420.6265 Rapid ReHousing.—

(1) ~~LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.—~~

(a) ~~The Legislature finds that Rapid ReHousing is a strategy of using temporary financial assistance and case management to quickly move an individual or family out of homelessness and into permanent housing.~~

(b) ~~The Legislature also finds that public and private solutions to homelessness in the past have focused on providing individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness with emergency shelter, transitional housing, or a combination of both. While emergency shelter and transitional housing programs may provide critical access to services for individuals and families in crisis, the programs often fail to address their long-term needs.~~

(c) ~~The Legislature further finds that most households become homeless as a result of a financial crisis that prevents individuals and families from paying rent or a domestic conflict that results in one member being ejected or leaving without resources or a plan for housing.~~

(d) ~~The Legislature further finds that Rapid ReHousing is an alternative approach to the current system of emergency shelter or transitional housing which tends to reduce the length of time a person is homeless and has proven to be cost effective.~~

(e) ~~It is therefore the intent of the Legislature to encourage homeless continuums of care to adopt the Rapid ReHousing approach to preventing homelessness for individuals and families who do not require the intense level of supports provided in the permanent supportive housing model.~~

~~(2) RAPID REHOUSING METHODOLOGY.—~~

~~(1)(a) The Rapid ReHousing response to homelessness differs from traditional approaches to addressing homelessness by focusing on each individual’s or family’s barriers to housing. By using this approach, communities can significantly reduce the amount of time that individuals and families are homeless and prevent further episodes of homelessness.~~

~~(2)(b) In Rapid ReHousing, when an individual or a family is identified as being homeless, the individual or family is assessed and prioritized for housing through the continuum of care’s coordinated entry system, temporary assistance is provided to allow the individual or family to obtain permanent housing as quickly as possible, and necessary, if needed, assistance is provided to allow the individual or family to retain housing.~~

~~(3)(e) The objective of Rapid ReHousing is to provide assistance for as short a term as possible so that the individual or family receiving assistance attains stability and integration into the community as quickly as possible does not develop a dependency on the assistance.~~

Section 10. Section 420.6275, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

420.6275 Housing First.—

~~(1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.—~~

~~(a) The Legislature finds that many communities plan to manage homelessness rather than plan to end it.~~

~~(b) The Legislature also finds that for most of the past two decades, public and private solutions to homelessness have focused on providing individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness with emergency shelter, transitional housing, or a combination of both. While emergency shelter programs may provide critical access to services for individuals and families in crisis, they often fail to address their long-term needs.~~

~~(c) The Legislature further finds that Housing First is an alternative approach to the current system of emergency shelter or transitional housing which tends to reduce the length of time of homelessness and has proven to be cost-effective.~~

~~(d) It is therefore the intent of the Legislature to encourage homeless continuums of care to adopt the Housing First approach to ending homelessness for individuals and families.~~

~~(2) HOUSING FIRST METHODOLOGY.—~~

~~(1)(a) The Housing First approach to homelessness provides permanent differs from traditional approaches by providing housing assistance, followed by case management, and support services responsive to individual~~

or family needs once after housing is obtained. By using this approach when appropriate, communities can significantly reduce the amount of time that individuals and families are homeless and prevent further episodes of homelessness. Housing First emphasizes that social services provided to enhance individual and family well-being can be more effective when people are in their own home, and:

~~(a)1.~~ The housing is not time-limited.

~~(b)2.~~ The housing is not contingent on compliance with services. Instead, participants must comply with a standard lease agreement.

~~(c)~~ ~~Individuals and families~~ and are provided with individualized the services and support ~~that are necessary to help them~~ maintain stable housing do so successfully.

~~3.~~ ~~A background check and any rehabilitation necessary to combat an addiction related to alcoholism or substance abuse has been completed by the individual for whom assistance or support services are provided.~~

~~(2)(b)~~ The Housing First approach addresses the societal causes of homelessness and advocates for the immediate return of individuals and families into housing and communities. Housing First links affordable housing with community-based social service and health care organizations ~~Housing First provides a critical link between the emergency and transitional housing system and community-based social service, educational, and health care organizations and consists of four components:~~

~~(a)1.~~ Crisis intervention and short-term stabilization.

~~(b)2.~~ Screening, intake, and needs assessment.

~~(c)3.~~ Provision of housing resources.

~~(d)4.~~ Provision of case management.

Section 11. Paragraph (d) of subsection (22) of section 420.507, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

420.507 Powers of the corporation.—The corporation shall have all the powers necessary or convenient to carry out and effectuate the purposes and provisions of this part, including the following powers which are in addition to all other powers granted by other provisions of this part:

(22) To develop and administer the State Apartment Incentive Loan Program. In developing and administering that program, the corporation may:

(d) In counties or rural areas of counties that do not have existing units set aside for homeless persons, forgive indebtedness for loans provided to create permanent rental housing units for persons who are homeless, as

defined in s. 420.621 ~~s. 420.621(5)~~, or for persons residing in time-limited transitional housing or institutions as a result of a lack of permanent, affordable housing. Such developments must be supported by a ~~local homeless assistance~~ continuum of care developed under ~~s. 420.6225 s. 420.624~~, be developed by nonprofit applicants, be small properties as defined by corporation rule, and be a project in the local housing assistance continuum of care plan recognized by the State Office on Homelessness.

Section 12. This act shall take effect July 1, 2020.

Approved by the Governor June 18, 2020.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 18, 2020.