

By the Committee on Appropriations; and Senator Book

576-04577-20

202068c1

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to homelessness; amending s. 420.621, F.S.; revising, adding, and deleting defined terms; amending s. 420.622, F.S.; expanding the membership of the Council on Homelessness to include a representative of the Florida Housing Coalition and the Secretary of the Department of Elderly Affairs or his or her designee; providing that the Governor is encouraged to appoint council members who have certain experience; revising the duties of the State Office on Homelessness; revising requirements for the state's homeless programs; requiring entities that receive state funding to provide summary aggregated data to assist the council in providing certain information; removing the requirement that the office have the concurrence of the council to accept and administer moneys appropriated to it to provide certain annual challenge grants to continuums of care lead agencies; increasing the maximum amount of grant awards per continuum of care lead agency; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; revising requirements for the use of grant funds by continuum of care lead agencies; revising preference criteria for certain grants; increasing the maximum percentage of its funding which a continuum of care lead agency may spend on administrative costs; requiring such agencies to submit a final report to the Department of Children and Families documenting certain outcomes achieved by grant-funded programs; removing the requirement that

576-04577-20

202068c1

the office have the concurrence of the council to administer moneys given to it to provide homeless housing assistance grants annually to certain continuum of care lead agencies to acquire, construct, or rehabilitate permanent housing units for homeless persons; conforming a provision to changes made by the act; requiring grant applicants to be ranked competitively based on criteria determined by the office; deleting preference requirements; increasing the minimum number of years for which projects must reserve certain units acquired, constructed, or rehabilitated; increasing the maximum percentage of funds the office and each applicant may spend on administrative costs; revising certain performance measure requirements; authorizing, instead of requiring, the Department of Children and Families, with input from the council, to adopt rules relating to certain grants and related issues; revising requirements for an annual report the council must submit to the Governor, Legislature, and Secretary of Children and Families; authorizing the office to administer moneys appropriated to it for distribution among certain designated continuum of care lead agencies and entities; creating s. 420.6225, F.S.; specifying the purposes of a continuum of care; requiring each continuum of care, pursuant to federal law, to designate a collaborative applicant that is responsible for submitting the continuum of care funding application for the designated catchment area

576-04577-20

202068c1

to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development; providing requirements for such designated collaborative applicants; authorizing the applicant to be referred to as the continuum of care lead agency; providing requirements for the office for the purpose of awarding certain federal funding for continuum of care programs; requiring that each continuum of care create a continuum of care plan for specified purposes; specifying requirements for such plans; requiring continuums of care to promote participation by all interested individuals and organizations, subject to certain requirements; 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, which may include any aspect of the local continuum of care plan; requiring continuums of care to submit an application for grant-in-aid funds to the office for review; requiring the office to develop guidelines for the development, evaluation, and approval of spending plans; requiring grant-in-aid funds for continuums of care to be administered by the office and awarded on a competitive basis; requiring the office to distribute such funds to local agencies to fund programs that are required by the local continuum of care plan, based on certain recommendations; limiting the percentage of the total state funds awarded under a spending plan which may be used by the continuum of care lead agency for staffing

576-04577-20

202068c1

and administrative expenditures; requiring entities that contract with local agencies to provide services and that receive certain financial assistance to provide a specified minimum percentage of the funding necessary for the support of project operations; authorizing in-kind contributions to be evaluated and counted as part or all of the required local funding, at the discretion of the office; repealing s. 420.623, F.S., relating to local coalitions for the homeless; repealing s. 420.624, F.S., relating to local homeless assistance continuums of care; repealing s. 420.625, F.S., relating to a grant-in-aid program; amending s. 420.626, F.S.; revising procedures that certain facilities and institutions are encouraged to develop and implement to reduce the discharge of persons into homelessness when such persons are admitted to or housed for a specified period at such facilities or institutions; amending s. 420.6265, F.S.; revising legislative findings and intent for Rapid ReHousing; revising the Rapid ReHousing methodology; amending s. 420.6275, F.S.; revising legislative findings relating to Housing First; revising the Housing First methodology to reflect current practice; 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

576-04577-20

202068c1

117 read:

118 420.621 Definitions.—As used in ss. 420.621-420.628, the
119 term:

120 (1) "Continuum of care" means the group organized to carry
121 out the responsibilities imposed under ss. 420.621-420.628 to
122 coordinate, plan, and pursue ending homelessness in a designated
123 catchment area. The group is composed of representatives from
124 certain organizations, including, but not limited to, nonprofit
125 homeless providers, victim service providers, faith-based
126 organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public
127 housing agencies, school districts, social service providers,
128 mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable
129 housing developers, law enforcement, organizations that serve
130 homeless and formerly homeless veterans, and organizations that
131 serve other homeless and formerly homeless persons, to the
132 extent that these organizations are represented within the
133 designated catchment area and are available to participate ~~the~~
134 ~~community components needed to organize and deliver housing and~~
135 ~~services to meet the specific needs of people who are homeless~~
136 ~~as they move to stable housing and maximum self-sufficiency. It~~
137 ~~includes action steps to end homelessness and prevent a return~~
138 ~~to homelessness.~~

139 (2) "Continuum of care lead agency" or "continuum of care
140 collaborative applicant" means the organization designated by a
141 continuum of care pursuant to s. 420.6225.

142 (3) ~~(2)~~ "Council on Homelessness" means the council created
143 in s. 420.622.

144 (4) ~~(3)~~ "Department" means the Department of Children and
145 Families.

576-04577-20

202068c1

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

~~(5) "Homeless," means an individual who or a family that:~~

~~(a) Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, as defined under "homeless" in 24 C.F.R. 578.3; or~~

~~(b) Will imminently lose his, her, or its 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~~

576-04577-20

202068c1

175 ~~include an individual who has been released from jail, prison,~~
176 ~~the juvenile justice system, the child welfare system, a mental~~
177 ~~health and developmental disability facility, a residential~~
178 ~~addiction treatment program, or a hospital, for whom no~~
179 ~~subsequent residence has been identified, and who lacks the~~
180 ~~resources and support network to obtain housing.~~

181 ~~(6) "Local coalition for the homeless" means a coalition~~
182 ~~established pursuant to s. 420.623.~~

183 ~~(7) "New and temporary homeless" means individuals or~~
184 ~~families who are homeless due to societal factors.~~

185 ~~(6)-(8)~~ (6) "State Office on Homelessness" means the state
186 office created in s. 420.622.

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

189 420.622 State Office on Homelessness; Council on
190 Homelessness.—

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

195 (2) The Council on Homelessness is created to consist of 19
196 members ~~17 representatives of public and private agencies~~ who
197 shall develop policy and advise the State Office on
198 Homelessness. The council is composed of the following members
199 ~~shall be:~~ the Secretary of Children and Families, or his or her
200 designee; the executive director of the Department of Economic
201 Opportunity, or his or her designee, who shall advise the
202 council on issues related to rural development; the State
203 Surgeon General, or his or her designee; the Executive Director

576-04577-20

202068c1

of Veterans' Affairs, or his or her designee; the Secretary of Corrections, or his or her designee; the Secretary of Health Care Administration, 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; the Executive Director of the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, or his or her designee; the Secretary of the Department of Elderly Affairs, 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 Coalition for the Homeless; 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;~~ and four members appointed by the Governor, who is encouraged to appoint members who have experience in the administration or the provision of resources or services that address, or of housing that addresses, the needs of persons experiencing homelessness. The council members shall be nonpaid volunteers and shall be reimbursed only for travel expenses. The ~~appointed~~ members of the council appointed by the Governor shall be appointed to staggered 2-year terms. ~~and~~ The council shall meet at least four times per year. The importance of minority, gender, and geographic representation must ~~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

576-04577-20

202068c1

233 providers to produce a statewide consolidated inventory of ~~for~~
234 the state's ~~entire system of~~ homeless programs, including local
235 continuum of care plans ~~which incorporates regionally developed~~
236 ~~plans~~. Such programs include, but are not limited to:

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

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

245 (b) Collect, maintain, and make available information
246 concerning persons who are homeless ~~or at risk for homelessness,~~
247 including summary demographic ~~demographics~~ information drawn
248 from the local continuum of care Homeless Management Information
249 System or the annual Point-in-Time Count and the local continuum
250 of care Housing Inventory Chart required by the Department of
251 Housing and Urban Development, ~~current services and resources~~
252 ~~available, the cost and availability of services and programs,~~
253 ~~and the met and unmet needs of this population. To assist the~~
254 council in providing this information, all entities that receive
255 state funding must provide the council with summary aggregated
256 ~~access to all data they maintain in summary form,~~ which may not
257 include ~~with no individual identifying information, to assist~~
258 ~~the council in providing this information.~~ The State Office on
259 Homelessness, in consultation with the designated lead agencies
260 for a ~~local homeless~~ continuum of care and with the Council on
261 Homelessness, shall develop a process by which summary data is

576-04577-20

202068c1

collected ~~the system and process of data collection~~ from all 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 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.

576-04577-20

202068c1

(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 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, continuum 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 prevention and alleviation of homelessness to faith-based organizations and~~ Collaborate and coordinate with faith-based organizations, investigate ways to improve such organizations' access to state funding, and

576-04577-20

202068c1

investigate ways to improve such organizations' participation in other programs that are intended to prevent and reduce homelessness.

(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 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 a ~~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 ~~continuum of care~~ ~~plan must implement a coordinated assessment or central intake entry system as provided in s. 420.6225(4)(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, may be made ~~are authorized~~ only for eligible activities carried out in connection with a ~~committed on one~~

576-04577-20

202068c1

project. Such funds or resources may ~~which have not~~ have 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 continuum of care ~~those~~ 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 lead agency may provide subgrants to a local agency to implement programs or services or provide housing identified for funding in the lead agency's application to the department. A 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.

576-04577-20

202068c1

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

390 (a) Grant applicants shall be ranked competitively based on
391 criteria determined by the State Office on Homelessness.
392 ~~Preference must be given to applicants who leverage additional~~
393 ~~private funds and public funds, particularly federal funds~~
394 ~~designated for the acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation~~
395 ~~of transitional or permanent housing for homeless persons; who~~
396 ~~acquire, build, or rehabilitate the greatest number of units; or~~
397 ~~who acquire, build, or rehabilitate in catchment areas having~~
398 ~~the greatest need for housing for the homeless relative to the~~
399 ~~population of the catchment area.~~

400 (b) Funding for any particular project may not exceed
401 \$750,000.

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

406 (d) No more than two grants may be awarded annually in any

576-04577-20

202068c1

407 given ~~local homeless assistance~~ continuum of care catchment
408 area.

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

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

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

576-04577-20

202068c1

employment.

(7) The State Office on Homelessness shall ~~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 shall,~~ By June 30 of each year, the council shall 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 2020-2021 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 purposes of a continuum of care, as defined in s. 420.621, are 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.

576-04577-20

202068c1

465 (2) Pursuant to the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid
466 Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009, each continuum of
467 care is required to designate a collaborative applicant that is
468 responsible for submitting the continuum of care funding
469 application for the designated catchment area to the United
470 States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The
471 continuum of care collaborative applicant shall serve as the
472 continuum of care's point of contact to the State Office on
473 Homelessness, is accountable for representations made in the
474 application, and, in carrying out its responsibilities under
475 this chapter, may be referred to as the continuum of care lead
476 agency.

477 (3) For the purpose of awarding federal homeless assistance
478 funding for continuum of care programs, the State Office on
479 Homelessness shall do both of the following:

480 (a) Designate and, as necessary, revise continuum of care
481 catchment areas, which must be consistent with the continuum of
482 care catchment areas recognized by the United States Department
483 of Housing and Urban Development.

484 (b) Recognize a single continuum of care lead agency for
485 each such catchment area, which must be consistent with the
486 continuum of care collaborative applicant designation recognized
487 by the United States Department of Housing and Urban
488 Development.

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

576-04577-20

202068c1

494 components:

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

497 (b) A coordinated entry system, compliant with the
498 requirements of the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid
499 Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009, which is designed to
500 coordinate intake, utilize common assessment tools, prioritize
501 households for housing interventions, and refer households to
502 the appropriate housing intervention.

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

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

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

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

512 (g) Permanent housing, including linkages to affordable
513 housing, subsidized housing, long-term rent assistance, housing
514 vouchers, and mainstream private sector housing.

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

517 (5) Continuums of care must promote participation by all
518 interested individuals and organizations and may not exclude
519 individuals and organizations on the basis of race, color,
520 national origin, sex, handicap, familial status, or religion.
521 Faith-based organizations, local governments, and persons who
522 have experienced homelessness are encouraged to participate. To

576-04577-20

202068c1

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 hereby 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 these resources have not been sufficient to prevent and end homelessness in this 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.

576-04577-20

202068c1

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

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

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

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

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

579 (8) LOCAL MATCHING FUNDS.—If an entity contracts with local
580 agencies to provide services and receives financial assistance

576-04577-20

202068c1

under this section, the entity must provide a minimum of 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

576-04577-20

202068c1

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 discharge 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 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, and using housing
stabilization support services to help them remain stably
housed.

(b) The Legislature also finds that public and private
solutions to homelessness in the past have focused on providing

576-04577-20

202068c1

639 individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness with
640 emergency shelter, transitional housing, or a combination of
641 both. While emergency shelter and transitional housing programs
642 may provide critical access to services for individuals and
643 families in crisis, the programs often fail to address permanent
644 housing ~~their long-term~~ needs and may unnecessarily extend their
645 episodes of homelessness.

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

651 (d) The Legislature further finds that Rapid ReHousing is a
652 cost-effective ~~is an alternative~~ approach to ending homelessness
653 which reduces ~~to the current system of emergency shelter or~~
654 ~~transitional housing which tends to reduce~~ the length of time
655 that a person is homeless and which is demonstrably more ~~has~~
656 ~~proven to be~~ cost effective than alternative approaches.

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

663 (2) RAPID REHOUSING METHODOLOGY.—

664 (a) The Rapid ReHousing response to homelessness differs
665 from traditional approaches to addressing homelessness by
666 focusing on each individual's or family's barriers to housing.
667 By using this approach, communities can significantly reduce the

576-04577-20

202068c1

amount of time that individuals and families are homeless and prevent further episodes of homelessness.

(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.

(c) 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 nearly ~~most of the past~~ two decades, public and private solutions to homelessness ~~have~~ focused on providing individuals and families who were ~~are~~ experiencing homelessness with emergency shelter, transitional housing, or a combination of both. This strategy failed to recognize that, 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.

576-04577-20

202068c1

(c) The Legislature further finds that Housing First is a cost-effective ~~an alternative approach to the current system of emergency shelter or transitional housing which tends to ending homelessness and reducing~~ ~~reduce~~ the length of time of homelessness for many individuals and families ~~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.—

(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:

1. The housing is not time-limited.

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

3. 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~~

576-04577-20

202068c1

~~been completed by the individual for whom assistance or support services are provided.~~

(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:

1. Crisis intervention and short-term stabilization.
2. Screening, intake, and needs assessment.
3. Provision of housing resources.
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

576-04577-20

202068c1

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.