



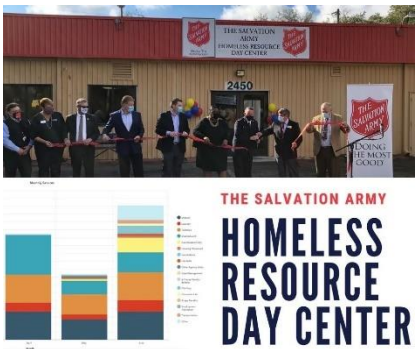
# Lee County Homeless Coalition, Inc. Annual Report

July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022



**Rare • Brief • One-Time**  
Help us reach our goal for homelessness in Lee County

# Who We Are and What We Do



# Lee County Homeless Coalition, Inc.

## Annual Report | July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022

The Lee County Homeless Coalition, Inc. was originally incorporated on December 4, 2008, as a private, not-for-profit Florida corporation under the provisions of Chapter 617 of the Florida Statutes. The function of the Coalition was established pursuant to Florida Statute 420.623 to plan, network, coordinate, and monitor the delivery of services to the homeless. The mission of the Coalition is to **“advocate, educate, and promote awareness of issues and obstacles facing homeless individuals in Lee County through community collaboration, planning and implementing solutions.”**

The Coalition has over 500 members including nonprofit agencies, businesses, faith-based organizations, and individual advocates, inclusive of people who are currently or have been previously homeless. The general Coalition meets monthly as do the committees that focus on Resources, Events, Data, and Communications. We are active on the Governance Board of the Lee Continuum of Care convened by Lee County Human & Veteran Services, the Bob Janes Empowerment Center Governing Board, Lee County Jail Re-entry Task Force, Centerstone Advisory committee, and Lee County Attainable Housing committee to name a few.

Due to the continued impact of the Coronavirus, we continued to adapt to the everchanging environment to ensure the business was being conducted in an effective and efficient manner. When another Coronavirus variant surged in our community, we did not want to cancel our Annual Homeless Service Day and Veterans Standdown, we worked with community health experts to develop a plan to keep both clients and Coalition members safe, moving the event outdoors. We are grateful for the return to the new normal, effective July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Centerstone, an agency member, will host the monthly coalition general membership meeting in a hybrid model, in their state-of-the-art conference meeting room. Most members felt a hybrid meeting model would be the best option moving into the new year. Recovery funds continued to come into the community and there are more resources to fund programs than ever before. The pandemic continued to shed light on gaps and needs in services which lead to further development of incentives and programs to address those needs. The Coalition was involved in a variety of activities and media events designed to raise public awareness of homeless issues. Included in this Annual Report are some of the activities and community events that the Coalition engaged in during this past fiscal year.

### The Lee County Homeless Coalition- Assistance to Member Agencies

The Coalition collaborates with individuals and agencies to identify potential gaps within our local continuum of homeless care. Each year we use profits from our fundraisers to assist our member agencies who may have encountered diminished funding, an increase in need, or who want to address a specific issue. The Coalition was pleased to be able to offer \$20,000 in funding to our agencies and assist those who needed help through our Community Grants program. The following member agencies received funding:

Abuse Counseling & Treatment Inc.	Affordable Homeownership Foundation
After The Rain Inc.	Children’s Network of SWFL
Community Cooperative Inc.	Goodwill of SWFL
Hearts & Homes Inc.	Jewish Families & Children’s Services
Our Mother’s Home Inc.	Salus Care
Samaritan Health & Wellness	



## Helping make a “House a Home” for a family or individual recently housed.



Throughout the year the Coalition receives In-Kind donations from businesses, faith communities, and thoughtful community members. The donations are inventoried and sorted and distributed to members for direct homeless outreach, emergency shelter needs. This year we started to accept in-kind donations for clients that were previously experiencing homelessness and who now are being housed through the Rapid Rehousing program. Items such as bedding, dishes, and towels were provided to housing case managers to help make their clients' new house a “home”. We recognized that beds were a problematic item to secure for the newly housed families or individuals. A process was set up to connect community donors that reached out to the Coalition with housing case managers to arrange for pickup and delivery to clients. We celebrated some great successes, that not only made the families and individuals happy but also supported our great case managers that work tirelessly to advocate for their clients. One can only imagine how close these bonds can become.



## November National Homeless & Hunger Awareness Month

The Lee County Board of County Commissioners officially proclaimed the month of November as “Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Month.” This is a time designated to educate the public and bring awareness to the needs of the homeless. Each year, the Coalition hosts a homeless challenge in mid-November to correspond with Hunger and Homeless Awareness Month.

## 16th Annual Dinner and Silent Auction, November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021

The Lee County Homeless Coalition raised more than \$32,000 during our sixteenth annual dinner and silent auction held on November 13<sup>th</sup> at the Crowne Plaza in Fort Myers. The success of the evening was based on the support of numerous sponsors, supporters, and volunteers. This year's Platinum Sponsor was the John & Aliese Price Foundation. Gold sponsors were Lahaina Realty, Park Royal Behavioral Health Services, CASL, and Housing Authority City of Ft. Myers. In total there were 25 generous community sponsors for this event.

Due to the need to still provide appropriate social distancing based on the COVID virus, attendance was limited to approximately 175 guests. Attendees bid on 30 beautiful baskets & items. Peter Busch of NBC-@, served as our “Celebrity” master of ceremonies, and guest speaker Kathleen Smith, Public Defender of the 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit provided an impassioned speech on those entering in and out of the justice system while also experiencing homelessness. The funds raised help the Lee County Homeless Coalition and its partners continue their mission to end homelessness in Lee County.

This year we introduced the Servant Leadership Award in combination with the Dean Blietz Memorial Award

for outstanding community service. There were 5 outstanding nominations and the award was presented to Janet Bartos. Janet was nominated by community advocates Daleen O'Dell and Jan Frick from Family Health Centers. Janet served as the Executive Director of the Lee County Homeless Coalition since its inception in 2009, she retired in September of 2021, and prior she worked for Lee County Human and Veterans Services as well as DCF. She was honored for many years of service to the most vulnerable in the community. Congratulations Janet!



## Homeless Challenge- November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 “Walk A Mile in Their Shoes”

This year's Homeless Challenge, “Walk a Mile in Their Shoes”, took place on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 15 participants walked approximately 15 miles over 8 hours in Lee County. We walked and rode the Lee Tran bus as well as the Lee County Jail transport van. Participants became familiar with the social services network and methods of everyday survival. The activity was designed to educate and promote awareness. Participants joined together for a meal and walked to visit various homeless provider agencies and shelters. This year, we began our challenge at the Lee County Jail CORE Facility and the event had a “reentry theme”. We started the morning at the Lee County Sheriff's Office Jail on Ortiz Ave, which included discussions with law enforcement, Lee Health emergency room staff, and some of our partner agencies. Throughout the day we identified and discussed as a group the many hardships and barriers those experiencing homelessness must overcome. We were fortunate to have spoken with individuals that were receiving services in the community, and they shared their stories of struggles but on this day, we celebrated them for their success. The goal was to have participants come away with a better understanding of the scope of the problem and how the system supports those experiencing the hardships of homelessness.





## 25th Annual Candlelight Vigil- December 21, 2021



The community came together on the steps of the Old Courthouse to memorialize the thirty homeless individuals who died during the year while living on the streets or in a homeless shelter in Lee County with the lighting of candles. Approximately 115 people came out to pay their respects, including Lee County Commissioners Ray Sandelli & Kevin Ruane, City of Ft. Myers Mayor Kevin Anderson, and Public Defender Kathy Smith. The Candlelight Vigil included Opening Remarks by Therese Everly, Executive Director. The Memorial Litany was given by board members William

Rodriguez & Johnny Limbaugh and bell ringer board member Lois Welsh. Opening prayer and committal were presented by Father Philip Read of All Souls Episcopal Church. The Pledge of Alliance was led by Veteran and Lee County Commissioner Ray Sandelli. Taps was performed by Harvey Charter and Commander Victor Paul Tuchman from the Jewish War Veterans Post 400 honoring the veterans that passed away throughout the year while experiencing homelessness. Homeless outreach workers lit the luminaries in honor of those who had died. Music was performed by the St. Luke's Episcopal Church Choir and the event concluded with a beautiful, bagpipied rendition of Amazing Grace. This event continues to bring attention to the tragedy of homelessness and educate our community about the lack of attainable housing, shelter, living wages, and accessible health care.





## Annual Homeless Census County (Point in Time Count)- January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022



Every year, the Coalition and its volunteers conduct a Point in Time (PIT) census to count the number of people experiencing homelessness and provide data to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The PIT count is also used to gather the information that allows local service providers to target services to meet the specific needs of the homeless in our communities. Due to a

surge of a COVID variant, our count was limited at Homeless Service Day & Veterans Standdown.

We utilized the Lee County Human & Veterans Services Arc GIS mobile phone app, in place of a paper survey which allowed us to capture high-quality data with accurate geographic locations. To maximize survey collection and minimize duplication, we strategically targeted geographic regions and engaged outreach workers, local law enforcement, advocates, college students, and human service partner agencies to participate. We counted over multiple days as HUD allows service-based counts to be conducted within a 7-day period. A virtual training was held over 3 days with 84 PIT volunteers. Those participating in the survey were provided resource guides and bus passes.

The PIT count, which asked people where they slept the night of January 26, 2022, included both sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals and families. The PIT count documented 560 homeless persons, of whom forty-seven (8.39%) were chronically homeless according to the HUD definition. HUD defines chronic homelessness as “an unaccompanied adult homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either continuously been homeless for a year or more or has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.” Among the 560 were forty-nine families with eighty-six children. There were 24 veterans recorded in the PIT count, 21 of which were active in a Rapid Rehousing program working with a case manager to obtain housing. The total number of persons estimated to be experiencing homelessness on the single night of January 26, 2022, was an increase from 2020 and 2021, which had 444 and 394 respectively. The lower estimate in 2021 is reflective of a modified counting methodology due to the pandemic. In 2022, the Point in Time Count was conducted as it had been prior to the pandemic. Volunteers and staff from homeless service providers conducted in-person interviews with persons who were encountered across Lee County on January 26, 2022. In addition to the change in methodology, the current economic conditions in the County have contributed to the increased estimates in 2022.

Housing and service programs for the homeless are provided in part through Continuum of Care funds from HUD. The 2021 Continuum of Care funding announcements were made in March 2022. Lee County was awarded funding to sustain existing programs and begin new programs that provide housing and services to persons experiencing homelessness. These programs are operated by Lee County Human and Veterans Services, Community Assisted and Supported Living, Lee County Housing Development Corporation, Jewish Family and Children Services, Saint Vincent de Paul, Goodwill Industries of SWFL, and The Salvation Army. The total awarded amount was \$2,046,670.

The Lee County Homeless Coalition would like to extend a special thank you to the volunteers who assisted with this year's PIT count.

## Homeless Service Day & Veterans Standdown January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022



We hosted the 21<sup>st</sup> annual Homeless Service Day and Veterans Stand Down on Saturday, January 29. The Coalition partnered with the Lee County Clerk of Court, Lee County Tax Collector, and JFCS of the Suncoast to host the first Traffic Court for veterans and those experiencing homelessness during this event. The goal of the Homeless Service Day & Veteran's Standdown is to provide increased access to services that can help break the cycle of homelessness and encourage hope, vision, and health. "Stand down" is a military term describing soldiers taking care of other soldiers in a safe, secure place. Unfortunately, last year this event was canceled due to the COVID pandemic, this year we were once again impacted by a COVID variant, to keep our service providers, volunteers, and clients safe we scaled the event back and moved outdoors. Once again, Citygate Ministries, 1735 Jackson St. Ft. Myers graciously hosted this event. We served approximately 150 people at the Homeless Service Day and Veterans Stand Down.

There were approximately 25 agencies and community groups providing services. Local providers assisted with services such as clothing, blankets, mental health referrals, substance abuse referrals, COVID vaccines and immunizations, employment opportunities, housing services, veteran's benefits, Social Security, and haircuts. This year Lee County School District's Project Access participated by providing support to families that are experiencing homeless with children in the Lee County School System. Premier Mobile provided primary health screenings for clients in their mobile unit. Participants received backpacks, resource guides, hygiene kits, bus passes, tarps, blankets, flashlights, food bags, and army surplus items. The Salvation Army provided lunch. The success of this event was due to the wonderful collaboration of agencies and volunteers who came together to help the community.





## First Annual Traffic Court January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Keeping with the mission of the Coalition in recognizing gaps and helping implement solutions, this year we



hosted the Inaugural “Traffic Court” for veterans and those experiencing homelessness at the annual Homeless Service Day and Veteran’s Standdown. The event was produced in partnership with the Lee County Homeless Coalition, JFCS of the Suncoast, the 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Administrative Office of the Courts, and the Lee County Tax Collector. Our goal was to provide a potential pathway to securing a driver’s

license or ID, which empowers individuals to obtain resources and increase opportunities for sustainable employment. We had forty-six clients preregistered. They were informed they needed to provide a valid government-issued ID is required, such as a DD214, VA card, birth certificate, or driver’s license. Court services were provided in the gymnasium to allow for safe distancing, and any issues related to license clearances were followed up with the next business day. Judge Gagliardi graciously disposed of fifty-three cases allowing for walk-ups, and the court forgave over \$12,000 in fines. Traffic court provided increased access to the judicial system that often is exceedingly difficult for those experiencing homelessness to access. We estimate this event saved attendees hundreds of hours attempting to resolve their cases. We are extremely grateful to Judge Gagliardi, for her service on a very cold Saturday morning. The joy was visible on the faces of those that received grace from the court that morning.

## Lee County Homeless Coalition – CoC General Membership Meeting

This meeting occurs on the third Thursday of every month and this year we had to continue conducting over Zoom. We look forward to offering a hybrid meeting option in July and members can attend in person or via Zoom. Meeting attendees included nonprofit homeless assistance 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, veterans service providers, homeless and formerly homeless individuals, and other service organizations. These meetings reflect the full membership of the CoC and affirm and vote on members of the CoC Governing Board and the Coalition Board of Directors. Each committee reports to the General Coalition. One member agency is highlighted each month and has an opportunity to share its mission and accomplishments. Our June meeting included a review of the CoC Point in Time and Housing Inventory Count findings which are reported to HUD and are one of the tools used to identify gaps and develop a strategy to fill the gaps. The General Coalition Meeting provides an excellent opportunity to network, discuss best practices, and share information.

## Lee County Homeless Coalition – CoC Committee Meetings

### Data Committee

The Data Committee is focused on ensuring the CoC General Membership and Governing Board have timely access to the quality data necessary to make data-driven planning possible. The Committee is responsible for regular review of data reports; tracking system performance, responding to CoC data requests, evaluating the quality, timeliness, and accuracy of data input, data management, and data reports; and maintaining and implementing the Data Quality Plan. The Data committee looks at the data at a more granular level and they make recommendations to the Performance Evaluation Ranking Committee (PERC) which is a subcommittee of the governing board. The PERC and Data committee worked together this year to better define the work of each committee, and to ensure effective communication of data and metrics through the CoC. The Data Committee meets on the first Wednesday of the month via Teams.

### Resource Committee

The Resource Committee is focused on the relationship between the agencies that provide housing and services for persons experiencing homelessness, and the CoC General Membership. The Committee is responsible for engaging agencies who are beginning new homelessness initiatives and connecting them to the CoC, obtaining and disseminating information regarding program guidelines, available services, and agency changes to the CoC General membership. This committee gathered and evaluated information regarding community resources and needs and recommended actions to enhance our crisis response system. This committee was responsible for choosing Agency Spotlights. The selected agency presented to the general membership to provide awareness of the services offered throughout the Continuum of Care. They also reviewed gaps in services and discussed community needs. The committee worked throughout the year regarding landlord engagement and the availability of the various housing vouchers. Resources for landlord and tenant rights are now on the leehomeless.org website. Coalition members, Affordable Homeownership Foundation received a grant for a “Good Tenant” training which will also provide tenants with tools to be successful in their rental homes. The committee recognized the success of the “Traffic Court” at the Homeless Service Day and developed a strategy for increasing access for clients by securing the Florida License on Wheels (FLOW) Bus for events throughout the year. They also updated the pocket resource guide and created a Spanish translation for the Homeless Survival Guide in partnership with FGCU. The Committee meets the second Thursday of each month via Zoom.

### Event Committee

The Event Committee promoted collaborative leadership in different community sectors to inspire and energize residents and service providers to commit to preventing and ending homelessness. While the pandemic still impacted our community, this committee continued to innovate and was able to organize and execute the annual Point in Time Count, the Homeless Service Day & Veterans Standdown, the Inaugural Traffic Court held during the Homeless Service Day, the Homeless Challenge, the Red Sox Community Corner event, and the Candlelight Vigil. The Committee meets the first Tuesday of month via Zoom.

### Communication Committee

The Communication Committee is focused on communicating the vision and design of the CoC and the Coordinated Entry System to clients, service providers, businesses, faith-based providers, and other stakeholders. The Committee is responsible for creating a uniform communications campaign that communicates the shared goals of all CoC members by designing, implementing, and maintaining a system-wide messaging plan to build community support and drive system change efforts to enhance our Crisis

Response System. The committee augmented the leehomeless.org website with educational and resource materials to better serve our members and the community. A Trauma-Informed Care training module was uploaded as an educational resource, the Cold Weather Outreach flyer was updated in English and Spanish, and a Creole translation was developed. The Traffic court event was new this year and the committee developed a communication and digital logistic strategy to create awareness and ensure an effective event. The committee also developed communication strategies to message educational opportunities for diversion training and suicide prevention training. Social media posting was enhanced this year, with a media push each month on the agency spotlight from the general meeting, along with the activity of the Coalition throughout the year. The committee meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month via Zoom.

## Corporate Sponsorship

This year we are proud to announce the Coalition received its first Corporate Sponsorship in the amount of \$10,000 from Verizon, our business cell phone service provider. We look forward to working with Verizon on building impact within our community.

## Advocacy & Education

The Lee County Homeless Coalition participated in a multitude of events and speaking engagements throughout the year that promoted awareness and education of homeless needs in our area, including Heights Elementary School, FGCU Honors students, and the City of Ft. Myers Homeless Taskforce. Volunteer training was provided



to Citygate Ministries for their new homeless outreach program. We actively engaged in workgroups and subcommittees to promote best practices, raise awareness of gaps, and needs within the Continuum of Care. We were fortunate to participate in the Boston Red Sox community corner as well as Jennifer's Boutique First Friday's Give Back in Ft Myers. These events provided a venue for advocacy as well as generous donations. This year we participated in workgroups focused on Veteran homeless referrals and supported the Lutheran Services of Florida refugee program. We ramped up our social media campaigns and highlight the



work of the members of the Coalition. The Coalition provided training, free of charge, to our members. Diversion training was presented by Orgcode. Diversion training is a best practice that empowers individuals experiencing homelessness with the opportunity to self-resolve a crisis and develop a plan to secure housing. Also, the VA presented training on suicide prevention and tools to assist those in crisis.

The Lee County Pocket Guide to Emergency Assistance (Green Book) was updated in digital format and placed on our website where it can be easily downloaded and printed. The pocket guide is a valuable resource for those experiencing homelessness and for our members. The booklet was provided to those who needed services and to service providers and agencies. The Coalition in partnership with FGCU translated the "Homeless Survival Guide" into Spanish. This guide is a one-page document that lists many of the agencies that provide services to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It is a smaller version of the Green Book that is placed on the website and available for download and printing. Both these resource guides can be found on our website. We also updated & distributed a document with free meal sites and food pantries. The Coalition provides referral information and helps those in need make connections that could help them avoid homelessness. This



year the Coalition was able to assist over 1112 individuals by referring them to services.

Over 1335 All-Day bus passes were provided to the community during the many outreach events our member agencies provided. We provided 1688 31-day bus passes. These bus passes are distributed to the Lee County Sheriff's Office Re-entry unit, Children's Network of SWFL, and to our community-based agencies that provide rapid rehousing services. The bus passes are used for individuals that need transportation for the purpose of employment, housing search, or obtaining social services.

The Coalition advocated for homeless needs during the 2022 Legislative Session. We kept abreast of the issues and kept our members informed of the CoC legislative priorities. We met with our local delegation in person, letters were written, and phone calls were made to ensure our priorities and concerns were heard from a local perspective. We participated in conference calls with the Florida Coalition to End Homelessness (FCEH) and worked together to successfully implement legislative and executive agendas that represent the interest of Florida's twenty-seven Continuums of Care.

They continue to assist us in establishing priorities and advocating for them. Our unified advocacy efforts resulted in a successful FY 2022 Legislative Session.

- ✓ Homeless Staffing Grant was fully funded: \$3M.
- ✓ Homeless Challenge Grant was fully funded: \$3,181,500.
- ✓ Affordable Housing: **Total Housing: \$362,725,000** – This is the largest housing total since FY 2007-2008.
- ✓ Federal Emergency Shelter Grant Program Funding: \$7,211,973
- ✓ Back of the Bill Language: allows for the unexpended balance of ESG-CV funds to be used in the new state FY 2022-2023, which aligns the state spending deadline with the federal deadline which is 9/30/22.
- ✓ SNAP Funding/Proviso Language: \$20,000,000  
From the funds in Specific Appropriation 354A, the nonrecurring sum of \$20,000,000 from the Federal Grants Trust Fund is provided for the implementation of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Important funding, like the Challenge and Staffing Grants, were secured. These funding sources are vital to helping us continue our local work to combat homelessness. The Challenge Grant provides a flexible source of funding for CoCs. Most government funding comes with a robust set of regulations. Challenge Grants allow CoCs to fill the gap where other grants cannot be used and respond to their unique and pressing needs. The Staffing Grant provides administrative funding that CoCs can leverage to build their capacity to create effective crisis response systems. We continue to join with a host of stakeholders to raise awareness of the tremendous need for more affordable and supportive housing in our communities.

## Continuum of Care (CoC)

Homeless Continuums of Care (CoCs) are responsible for creating a plan to prevent and end homelessness in their local geographic area, implementing that plan, collecting, and using data to assess the needs and effectiveness of programs, and coordinating local community stakeholders to achieve the plan's goals. In Lee County, the Continuum of Care is a broad group of individual stakeholders and organizations who are engaged to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time. Collaboration among CoC members occurs through regular meetings of the Lee County Homeless Coalition and various subcommittees. Combining our efforts strengthened the impact when addressing the needs of people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. By

design, the CoC promotes a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. It is a prerequisite to applying for federal housing grants through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which is done by the Lee County Department of Human and Veteran Services, the lead funding applicant.

The Coalition works in conjunction with the Lee County Department of Human and Veteran Services to coordinate many facets of the CoC, including planning and conducting the annual HUD-mandated Point-In-Time (PIT) count of persons who are homeless.

- Governance and Ranking Committee

The passage of the HEARTH Act in 2009 changed how programs and funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) work to help the homeless. One of the requirements of the HEARTH Act was the formation of a Governing Board for each local Continuum of Care (CoC). The Lee County CoC Governing Board's responsibilities include adopting a process for future board members, approving policies and procedures for the Lee County CoC, working on goals, objectives, and performance measurements for the CoC, and providing semi-annual reports to the general membership of the CoC. The Governance Board developed and adopted a CoC Strategic Plan in 2019 which replaced the 10-year Plan to End Homelessness. The plan is reviewed and updated each year.

Most government funding comes with a robust set of regulations. Our CoC is expected to address homelessness through a coordinated community-based process of identifying the needs and building a system of housing and services that addresses those needs. The CoC Governing Board established a process for applying, reviewing, and prioritizing project applications for funding in the annual HUD CoC funding competition, DCF State Office on Homelessness funding, and any other funding for which the CoC Collaborative Applicant is the eligible applicant on behalf of the CoC.

- Coordinated Entry

The Lee County Continuum of Care (CoC) established and operated a Coordinated Entry System (CES) that provides an initial, comprehensive assessment of the needs of individuals and families for housing and services. Coordinated Entry has been designed to provide standardized access and assessment and coordinate housing and services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Coordinated Entry facilitates referrals and housing placements to ensure that individuals and families experiencing homelessness receive appropriate assistance with both immediate and long-term housing and service needs. Coordinated Entry shifted the process for accessing housing from a "first-come, first-served" method to a structured procedure that prioritizes persons experiencing homelessness using uniform tools and data that focuses on identifying, engaging, and housing persons who lack other resources to resolve their homeless episode. The Coordinated Entry phone line is open 24 hours a day / 7 days a week and is maintained by Lee County Human & Veterans Services. Persons who access the CE system are placed on the "Connect" list and meetings are regularly held where case managers discuss their clients' needs and housing providers determine who has available and the most appropriate housing.

- Best Practices

Best practices for effectively ending homelessness include:

- Housing First programs and policies geared at helping households move into stable permanent housing as quickly as possible followed by the provision of appropriate support services.

- Service providers that offer increased income and employment opportunities.
- Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for chronically homeless households and those with the greatest needs.
- Rapid Re-housing (RRH) to quickly exit households out of homelessness and into permanent housing.
- Diversion of those for whom the homeless system does not offer the best solution.
- Prevention Services to keep people at imminent risk of homelessness stably housed.
- Coordinated Entry to ensure data-sharing and appropriate prioritization for housing interventions.
- Data-driven decision-making to ensure that resources are being used effectively and efficiently
- A focus on system-wide performance outcomes so the system works well to effectively end homelessness for the community.

- Systems Performance

HUD has developed seven system-level performance measures to help communities gauge their progress in preventing and ending homelessness:

1. Length of time persons remain homeless.
2. The extent to which persons who exit homelessness to permanent housing destinations return to homelessness within 6,12, and 18 months.
3. Number of homeless persons.
4. Jobs and income growth for homeless persons in CoC Program-funded projects.
5. Number of persons who become homeless for the first time.
6. Homelessness prevention and housing placement of persons defined by Category 3 of HUD's homeless definition in CoC Program-funded projects.
7. Successful housing placement: The purpose of these measures is to provide a more complete picture of how well a community is preventing and ending homelessness.

The number of homeless persons (measure number three) correlates with a CoC's progress toward eliminating homelessness by counting the number of people experiencing homelessness both at a point in time and over the course of a year. The six other measures help communities understand how well they are reducing the number of people who become homeless and helping people become quickly and stably housed. System performance measures data that enables communities to evaluate and improve their performance. Because these are system-level measures, they can reveal significant information about how well homelessness assistance programs are functioning and where improvements are necessary.

The data helps identify CoC gaps in data and services. It is critical for CoC's to consider the populations they are serving when evaluating their performance and potential system changes. Populations such as youth, seniors, victims of domestic violence, and people experiencing chronic homelessness have unique circumstances. Coalition committees are active in reviewing the data and identifying unmet needs.



- Response to Covid continued into 2022

Our response to the negative impacts of COVID continued and non-congregate shelter was provided to those who tested positive and did not have a home to recuperate in. In April the non-congregate shelter was closed due to the waning effects of COVID in the community. Over 280 individuals were served during the pandemic. The Housing Outreach and Treatment (HOT) teams which consist of outreach workers, law enforcement, and behavioral health care professionals stayed active. Lee County Human & Veteran Services expanded the Homeless Outreach team to 7 full-time staffers, who provide front-line services to those in need. The Homeless Resource and Day Center at The Salvation Army remained in high demand by providing access to much-needed services for those experiencing homelessness. Prevention services continued that included rental and utility assistance programs and provided Housing Counseling services to those facing eviction. The CoC initiative to House 100 households in 100 days which began last year, was so successful it was launched a second time in January with another great success. The Family Transition Collaborative (FTC) demonstrated great outcomes in placing families in permanent housing, the Board of County Commissioners approved the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of funding for the FTC.

## ***THANK YOU TO*** our Members and Generous Donors

The community's generosity and support are greatly appreciated by the Coalition, we could not do this work without you! We received private donations as well as those received through fundraising and membership dues throughout the year. These donations have a positive impact on many people in our community who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless.

### **Governmental Agencies partners**

Cape Coral Police Dept.  
City of Cape Coral  
Florida Department of Children and Families  
Housing Authority City of Ft. Myers

Lee County Human & Veteran Services  
Lee County Sheriff's Office  
Lee County Tax Collector  
School District of Lee County  
Veterans Administration

### **Coalition Agencies and Businesses**

ACT  
Affordable Home Ownership Foundation  
After the Rain of SWFL  
AHF Aids HC Foundation  
AIM  
Alliance of the Arts  
Altar'd State  
AMI Kids  
Angel Wings  
Beacon of Hope Place  
Brothers and Sisters United  
Cancer Alliance of Naples  
CASL  
Catholic Charities  
CDM Smith  
Cella Molnar & Associates  
Center for Progress and Excellence  
Children's Network of SWFL  
Chipolte  
Clean Skies LLC

Jewish Family & Children's Services  
Jewish Federation of Lee and Charlotte Counties  
John and Michelle Hamilton Fund  
Karen Glanert Trust  
Lee Health  
Lehigh Chamber Foundation  
Justified Ministries  
Lahaina Realty  
Lifeline Family Center  
Love Incorporated SWFL  
Lutheran Services of Florida  
McGregor Clinic  
McNew Foundation  
Midwest Food Bank  
Molina Health Care  
Network for Good  
New Beginnings of SWFL  
Our Mother's Home of SWFL  
Park Royal Behavioral Health Services

Community Connection  
Community Cooperative  
EF Gaines Surveying  
Enterprise Holding Foundation  
Family Health Centers  
Fidelity Charitable  
Flaherty Builders  
Florida Gulf Coast University Goodwill  
Freedom Health  
Harry Chapin Food Bank  
Hearts and Homes for Veterans  
Healthy Start Coalition  
Hope Hospice

#### **Faith Communities**

All Souls Episcopal Church  
All Faiths Unitarian Congregation  
Rise Christian Church

#### **Individuals and Families**

Alan Anderson & family  
Anita Arnold  
Janet Bartos  
Daniel Bates & Family  
Carl Baxter  
Caroline Brown  
Irene Cappuccilli  
Joanna Carioba  
Robert Conklin & Family  
Amy Davies & Family  
John Davis & Family  
Marcia Davis  
Albert and Allison De La Torre  
Melody Dennis  
Kristen Doohan  
Camille Drake-Brasfield  
Dr. Ed Drass  
Pat Epifanio  
Mary Fischer  
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We had several businesses, organizations & faith community partners that collected In- Kind donations for us throughout the year. Thousands of items were donated; these donations were provided to Shelters, Homeless Outreach teams, and case managers that work throughout the county. Your thoughtfulness is appreciated.

## ***THANK YOU TO:***

Amazon  
Arden Court  
Bed, Bath & Beyond  
Angela Bishop  
Busey Bank  
Cape Coral High School National Honor Society  
Cape Coral Technical College  
Jamie Cayias  
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InSite Managed Solutions  
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Our Lady of Light Community  
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Royal Palm Coast Realtor Association  
Nathan Shaw  
Snap Fitness  
St. Columbkille Catholic Church  
Subaru of Ft. Myers  
Three Oaks Middle School  
United Way  
Vera Bradley Outlet  
West Elm at Coconut Point Mall

**We LOVE our Volunteers;** the Coalition appreciates the community coming together and supporting our efforts to end homelessness in Lee County. We could not do what we do without our volunteers! Many thanks to all our volunteers for their support and contributions. Let us all work together to make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time.

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Johnny Limbaugh, Chair - Lieutenant Dion Freeman, Vice Chair  
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Therese Everly

**To learn more about the Lee County Homeless Coalition, please visit our website  
at [www.leehomeless.org](http://www.leehomeless.org)**

Annual financial reports can be found on our website or contact [info@leehomeless.org](mailto:info@leehomeless.org)



## Donation Information



Candlelight Vigil

☐ Please accept this general donation to be used where needed.

☐ \$35    ☐ \$75    ☐ \$125    ☐ \$250    ☐ \$500

☐ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ other

☐ My donation is in memory of (name): \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_  
(spouse, parent, friend, etc.).

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Donate online at: [www.leehomeless.org](http://www.leehomeless.org)

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LCHC is partially funded through the Lee County Department of Human & Veteran's Services and the State of Florida Department of Children and Families. Thank you for your thoughtful and generous contributions.



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**239.322.6600**

***We thank you for your support and kindness!***