



LAUDERTRAC

HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES UPDATE FORT LAUDERDALE

Tracking Progress on Commission Priorities for 2020



June 2020

CITY COMMISSION MAKES HOMELESSNESS A TOP PRIORITY FOR 2020



Homelessness in the U.S. is caused by many factors, such as a lack of affordable housing, insufficient income, health problems, and domestic violence to name a few. Whatever the reason, hundreds of thousands of people go homeless on a single night across the country. For example, in 2019, there were 2,803 homeless people in Fort Lauderdale/Broward County on a given night and 14.4 homeless per 10,000 people in the general population.¹ In addition, a recent report published by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development named Fort Lauderdale/Broward County as one of the top “largely suburban” communities in the country last year for the largest number of homeless individuals, homeless veterans, and the chronically homeless.²

No matter how large or small, countries, states, and cities around the world are touched by homelessness, including the City of Fort Lauderdale.

The City has been working to decrease homelessness in our community and create affordable housing opportunities for its homeless population and, this year, the City Commission made homelessness and housing a top priority.

To address this Commission priority, the Homelessness and Housing Opportunities Results Team identified three key areas—affordable housing, homeless housing and support activities, and Community Court – and developed 11 tasks and multiple deliverables that focus on:

- ▶ Evaluating activities and initiatives to identify the root cause of homelessness in the Fort Lauderdale and ways to create additional housing opportunities in the City.
- ▶ Strengthening the data collection and reporting delivery process to highlight the City’s contributions to homelessness programs and initiatives as they relate to dollars spent and people served.
- ▶ Identifying affordable and workforce housing opportunities for homelessness solutions.

The Results Team will also work on expanding and encouraging the type and number of affordable housing units within City limits through direct financial investment and increased development incentives.

To maximize funding streams and resources, the Team will leverage existing programs and partnerships, such as the 17th Judicial Circuit Community Court, the Rapid Rehousing Program, and Housing Opportunities with Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) to address the root causes of homelessness, offer therapeutic and community services, rapidly rehouse homeless individuals and families, and increase housing stability for people living with HIV/AIDS.

¹ National Alliance to End Homelessness. (n.d.). SOH: State and CoC Dashboards. FL-601. <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-dashboards/?State=Florida>

² The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Community Planning and Development. (January 2020). The 2019 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. <https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2019-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

NEWS AND NOTES

Hotel Voucher Program Provides Shelter to Homeless During COVID-19 Pandemic

A stay-at-home order was issued across the country to help slow the spread of COVID-19. To assist one of our most vulnerable populations during the order, the City of Fort Lauderdale developed a Homeless Hotel Voucher Program to temporarily shelter the City's homeless neighbors.

Staff from Housing and Community Development, Neighbor Support, and the Police Department worked together to implement the program, as well as secure hotels willing to partner with the City.

Funding for the program was provided through Community Development Block Grant CARES funds, which supported a 30-day hotel stay (with an option of an additional 30 days) at one of two hotels, three meals a day, and case management services.

The City successfully provided shelter to 104 adults and one child, who all agreed to honor the program guidelines, hotels' rules of conduct, and participate in case management services to assist them in a long-term solution to the underlying reasons for their homelessness.

Fort Lauderdale is the only city in Broward County to create a hotel voucher program to help the homeless during the COVID-19 pandemic.



City Prevents Evictions During COVID-19 Pandemic

The City of Fort Lauderdale's Housing and Community

Development Division launched a Rental Assistance Program to provide up to three months of financial support (not to exceed \$5,000) to eligible Fort Lauderdale residents who lost their jobs or whose work hours were reduced due to COVID-19.

The Rental Assistance Program, which was funded through the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program, provided limited funding enabling the City to serve up to 50 households on a first-ready, first-served basis.

The program kicked off April 7, 2020. Residents submitted completed applications and required documents to the City via email and, if eligible, rental assistance was paid directly to their landlords. Rents had to be reasonable and meet fair-market rates.

The City successfully mitigated homelessness by preventing evictions for more than 43 eligible Fort Lauderdale households through the Rental Assistance Program. Seven applications are still in the review, and if approved, the City will have met its goal of providing financial assistance to the maximum number of households.



Be Counted, Fort Lauderdale! Complete Your Census.

Funding for numerous homelessness and housing programs and services is tied to census data. Please complete your 2020 Census and help Fort Lauderdale get its fair share of billions of dollars in federal funding for the next 10 years.

Everyone counts! Get counted today at my2020census.gov, 1-844-330-2020, or by mailing back your questionnaire.

GET INFORMATION AND UPDATES



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

24-hour Neighbor Call Center: 954-828-8000

Website: www.fortlauderdale.gov

Email Updates: www.fortlauderdale.gov/enews

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CityofFortLauderdale

Twitter: www.twitter.com/FTLCityNews

YouTube: www.youtube.com/cityoffortlauderdale

Nextdoor: www.nextdoor.com