



# LAUDERTRAC



## HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES UPDATE

Tracking Progress on Fort Lauderdale Commission Priorities for 2021

June 2021

### BUILDING A BRIDGE THROUGH HELP, HOUSING, AND HOPE



Before and after photo of Reed Family Residence Project

### Reviving Safe and Affordable Homes

Availability of affordable homes that are safe, decent and habitable plays a crucial role in preventing homelessness. The City's Housing and Community Development Division administers the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program to promote affordable housing, and has changed the lives of many, including the Reeds' family.

The Reeds are a senior couple who took custody of their 11 grandchildren, despite struggling financially and facing other challenges. The family of 13 resided in a two-bedroom, one-bathroom house that did not meet basic safety and habitability standards. As opposed to adding the burden of code fines and liens to the difficult circumstance of the Reeds, the City found a solution that would help the conditions and prevent a potential homelessness situation. The City assisted by demolishing the inadequate structure and replacing it with a five-bedroom, three-bathroom single-family house. Their new home now provides a safe and decent environment for the couple and their 11 grandchildren, and better meets the needs of the family.



### Leadership in the Homeless Outreach Unit

As a member of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department for almost twenty years, Sergeant Monica Ferrer first joined the Homeless Outreach Unit as an officer. Applying her educational skills in social work and knowledge from her Master of Business Administration degree, Sergeant Ferrer's dedication and success in supporting individuals that experience homelessness ultimately led to her supervising the unit.

Under Sergeant Ferrer's leadership, the unit partnered with the Neighbor Support Division and initiated the City's congregate shelter program in 2021 to relocate and house over 70 homeless individuals. To ensure public safety, she also monitors enforcement of the laws, when necessary, if services are refused

and rehabilitation is not feasible. In addition, the three outreach officers interact daily with our homeless community, offer services from shelter placement to detox programs, and provide reunification services whenever possible. The City is proud of her leadership and support in finding solutions for mitigating homelessness.



## Community Court at City Hall

The 17th Judicial Circuit Community Court at Fort Lauderdale returned to the City Hall Commission Chambers in January 2021. Currently, Community Court proceedings continue with COVID-19 guidelines and neighbors experiencing homelessness can expect to be greeted by City staff and volunteers. The participants receive an assessment and are referred to engage with service providers virtually from tablets onsite. The providers offer access to quality services and treatment to address root causes and barriers.

According to the 2020 Broward County Point in Time Count, over 50 percent of unsheltered homeless reported drug abuse and almost 15 percent reported alcohol abuse. Understanding the need for substance abuse services, Fort Lauderdale Police Homeless Outreach consider this need when referring program participants. Henderson Behavioral Health screens for usage during the initial assessment to make the necessary referrals for those who may qualify.

### Referrals include:

- ▶ Broward Addiction Recovery Center offers detox and treatment services or appointments for participants.
- ▶ Fellowship Recovery Community Organization assists with respite services when needed.
- ▶ SunServe engages the client in initial intake and case management for substance abuse and mental health.
- ▶ Care Resource is a qualified health center that also offers linkage to rapid housing services.
- ▶ A number of sober living providers offer additional transitional support.
- ▶ Other facilities that may be appropriate according to the individual's insurance or lack thereof.

Robust support and engagement such as this is critical to promote success to all of those seeking recovery. If you or your agency are interested in partnering with the City's homeless initiatives, please contact Christopher Leonard in the Neighbor Support Division at (954) 828-6139.

## GET INFORMATION AND UPDATES



**24-hour Neighbor Call Center:** 954-828-8000  
**Website:** [www.fortlauderdale.gov](http://www.fortlauderdale.gov)  
**Email Updates:** [www.fortlauderdale.gov/enews](http://www.fortlauderdale.gov/enews)  
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