



**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
City Commission Agenda Memo  
CONFERENCE MEETING**

**#19-0175**

**TO:** Honorable Mayor & Members of the  
Fort Lauderdale City Commission

**FROM:** Chris Lagerbloom, ICMA-CM, City Manager

**DATE:** February 19, 2019

**TITLE:** Update on Initiatives Addressing Homelessness in Fort Lauderdale

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At the February 5, 2019 Conference Meeting, the City Commission briefly discussed the status of homelessness in Fort Lauderdale. Subsequently, the Commission requested to further the discussion and to evaluate current efforts in advancing the City's Comprehensive Homeless Strategy addressing the City's strategic goals on ending homelessness.

The City has a long history of serving the most vulnerable population residing in Fort Lauderdale, from implementing the first police homeless outreach team to establishing the first Community Court in Florida (Exhibit 1). The success of the City is due to building and maintaining collaborative relationships with federal, state, local government agencies; and non-profit, faith based, and charitable organizations that work in a unified effort addressing homelessness in our community. These continuous efforts for ending homelessness include new and innovative initiatives that allow persons experiencing homelessness more opportunity to engage in services.

**Current Initiatives**

In October 2018, the City was awarded a grant from the Center of Court Innovation, Inc. and the Department of Justice in the amount of \$200,000. This grant is to establish a Community Court Pilot Program that leverages resources and unifies a collaborative effort to ending homelessness in Fort Lauderdale.

The first Community Court was held in January 2019 and was very successful. Since the inception of the Community Court, thirty-two (32) participants have appeared in court and were assigned to a Case Manager who has been working with them to receive treatment as well as obtaining permanent housing. Two program participants have graduated from the Community Court Pilot Program and have obtained jobs and housing.

The Community Court quickly realized that due to limited community resources, some program participants did not receive treatment or housing assistance at the time of the court proceedings and were placed on a wait list. This has proven to be very challenging

for the Community Court as it is designed to address the underlying issues of the participants' behavior to improve their quality of life and obtain self-sufficiency.

In addition to Community Court Pilot Program, the City funded the Food Repatriation Program this year. Staff has identified a significant source of food waste, and created a program to address the repatriation of food from restaurants/venues to homeless shelters and food pantries around the City that serve meals to our neighbors in need. Depending on the organization, food pantries and shelters serve anywhere between 100-700 meals per day, with up to 15% of their budgets often going to food resources to make meals. Staff recently filled the coordinator role for the Food Repatriation Program and it is anticipated to be operational soon.

Further, the City has partnered with the United Way who administers the Broward Business Council, United We End Homelessness Initiative. The City has assigned the Homeless Interventions Administrator to United Way to help execute the United We End Homelessness Initiative and provide administrative support to the Senior Director of the Broward Business Council for one year.

Through this partnership, Broward Business Council and the City's Homeless Interventions Administrator manage new Fort Lauderdale homeless initiatives funded by private funding, as well as \$800,000 provided by the City. The primary focus of the new Broward Business Council Homeless Initiatives is to address the downtown homeless encampment and provide funding for hotel costs, move in costs, utility deposits, short term rental assistance, opening a day respite center for individuals and families, and an expansion of meal sharing that includes mobile showers. The City's contribution toward this initiative is outlined in Exhibit 2.

As the lead partner with the Broward Business Council, the Broward County Community Partnership Division relocated eighty-two (82) individuals from the downtown encampment to local hotels throughout Broward County. As of February 7, 2019, seventy (70) individuals were placed in permanent housing, three (3) individuals were still in hotels, three (3) were reunited with family and seven (7) individuals disengaged from the program. Broward County, Broward Business Council, and other homeless service providers continue to work collaboratively to ensure all persons from the downtown encampment are permanently housed.

Concurrently, the collaboration funded the expansion of the meal sharing program managed by Hope South Florida. The expansion provided for a full-time coordinator to oversee meal sharing events seven days a week and increase the availability of mobile showers. Hope South Florida has expanded the program and is currently serving meals seven days a week except for the first and fourth Friday of each month and the mobile showers are provided three days a week. The meal sharing weekly schedule and homeless hotline information is provided in Exhibit 3.

Two individual day respite centers will be funded by the Broward Business Council's Homeless Initiative. The Salvation Army Day Respite Center will be assisting homeless

individuals and Hope South Florida Day Respite Center will be assisting homeless families.

In addition, Broward Partnership for the Homeless, Inc., (Partnership) just received approval by City Commission to expand their facility to develop seventy-two (72) units of affordable housing. The facility will set-aside units for persons experiencing homelessness. Further, the Partnership received new funding to provide a case manager, to directly work with the homeless on the street and to provide outreach, engagement and referrals to appropriate services.

### **Strategic Connection**

This item is a *Commission Annual Action Plan* priority, included within the Policy Agenda, advancing the Comprehensive Homeless Strategy.

This item is a Press Play Fort Lauderdale Strategic Plan 2018 initiative, included within the Public Places Cylinder of Excellence, specifically advancing:

- Goal 3: Be a community that finds opportunities and leverages partnerships to create unique, inviting and connected gathering places that highlight our beaches, waterways, urban areas, and parks.
- Objective 5: Work with partners to reduce homelessness by promoting independence and self-worth through advocacy, housing, and comprehensive services.
- Initiative 2: Implement a comprehensive short and long-term strategy with community partners to address Homelessness

This item also furthers the *Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035 Vision Plan: We Are Community*.

### **Attachments**

Exhibit 1 – Homeless Assistance Initiatives

Exhibit 2 – United Way of Broward City Funding Matrix

Exhibit 3 – Meal Sharing Schedule

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