

The Need for Housing for Homeless Persons

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Prepared for Florida Housing Finance Corporation
227 N. Bronough St., Suite 5000
Tallahassee, Florida 32301-1329

Prepared by Shimberg Center for Affordable Housing
University of Florida
P. O. Box 115703
Gainesville, Florida 32611-5703

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Introduction and Summary of Findings

This section of the Rental Market Study estimates the number of people needing housing designated for homeless persons in Florida counties. This number comprises sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons as well as residents of permanent supportive housing. The report then estimates the supply of transitional housing and permanent supportive housing and the need for additional housing of this type.

In total, we estimate that 64,680 people living in Florida are homeless on any given day. In addition, an estimated 6,089 people live in permanent supportive housing. Therefore, a total of 70,769 people are in need of the transitional housing and permanent supportive housing beds designed to serve this population. Currently, Florida has an estimated 19,606 such beds in operation or under development. Therefore, the state needs an additional 51,163 beds to serve these populations.

Please note that these estimates do not take into account the destruction of homes caused by the 2004 hurricane season. The loss of homes due to the hurricanes undoubtedly has increased the number of people without permanent homes in Florida.

Methods

The estimates of supply and persons needing housing come from the 2003 Continuum of Care plans submitted to HUD. The Office on Homelessness of the Florida Department of Children and Families compiled the data from the plans and supplied it to the Shimberg Center for this report.

The Continuum of Care plans are submitted annually by local homeless coalitions and related organizations as part of applications for federal McKinney Act homeless assistance funds. Each plan covers an individual county or a group of counties. The plans include a Gaps Analysis that estimates the number of homeless individuals and families living in the county or counties covered by the plan and the supply of transitional and permanent supportive housing beds available to these individuals and families. Most local governments in Florida recognize the Continuum of Care Gaps Analyses as the preferred method for quantifying the housing needs of homeless persons, and estimates derived for Gaps Analyses are nearly always incorporated directly into local Consolidated Plans.

The supply estimates in this report include the transitional housing and permanent supportive housing beds identified for each Continuum of Care region in the plans. A “bed” is a space in a housing unit that serves one person; for example, a two-bedroom apartment that can house a family of four is counted in the Continuum of Care plans as four beds. This allows for comparison with the total number of homeless persons identified in a Continuum of Care region.

Unlike in the 2001 *Rental Market Study*, we have not included emergency shelter beds as part of the housing supply. The Florida Housing Finance Corporation does not consider shelter beds to constitute housing, and persons residing in emergency shelters are counted in the homeless population.

The estimates of the number of people needing housing come from two separate parts of the Continuum plans. First, we used the plans' counts of local homeless populations. HUD calls for the local coalitions to provide "statistically reliable, unduplicated counts or estimates of homeless persons in sheltered and unsheltered locations at a one-day point in time," although the coalitions use varying methods to produce this count. The counts include persons living in emergency shelters, persons in transitional housing, and unsheltered populations.¹

Second, we included estimates of persons residing in permanent supportive housing. These facilities provide housing at a very low rent combined with supportive services for individuals and families who need both in order to remain housed. Most supportive housing serves people who are formerly homeless, and supportive housing constitutes a key element of local homeless housing and service delivery systems. While current residents of supportive housing are not considered to be homeless, they nevertheless constitute part of the constituency for this housing; not counting them would imply that all permanent supportive housing beds are available to serve members of the homeless population.

Because Continuum of Care plans no longer include an estimate of the number of persons in permanent supportive housing, we estimate this population by assuming that

¹ HUD's specific instructions for counting homeless persons are as follows:

Sheltered Homeless. Count adults, children and youth residing in shelters for the homeless. "Shelters" include all emergency shelters and transitional shelters for the homeless, including domestic violence shelters, residential programs for runaway/homeless youth, and any hotel/motel/apartment voucher arrangements paid by a public/private agency because the person or family is homeless. Do not count: (1) persons who are living doubled up in conventional housing; (2) formerly homeless persons who are residing in Section 8 SRO, Shelter Plus Care, SHP permanent housing or other permanent housing units; (3) children or youth, who because of their own or a parent's homelessness or abandonment, now reside temporarily and for a short anticipated duration in hospitals, residential treatment facilities, emergency foster care, detention facilities and the like; and (4) adults living in mental health facilities, chemical dependency facilities, or criminal justice facilities.

Unsheltered Homeless. Count adults, children and youth sleeping in places not meant for human habitation. Places not meant for human habitation include streets, parks, alleys, parking ramps, parts of the highway system, transportation depots and other parts of transportation systems (e.g. subway tunnels, railroad car), all-night commercial establishments (e.g. movie theaters, laundromats, restaurants), abandoned buildings, building roofs or stairwells, chicken coops and other farm outbuildings, caves, campgrounds, vehicles, and other similar places. ["Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs; Supportive Housing Program (SHP); Shelter Plus Care (S+C); Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy Program for Homeless Individuals (SRO)." 69 Federal Register 94 (14 May 2004), pp. 27495 - 27630.]

all currently operating permanent supportive housing beds are occupied, while all beds under development constitute unoccupied future supply. For example, Pinellas County's Continuum of Care plan reports 379 existing permanent supportive housing beds and 18 under development. In our population estimates, we would assume that 379 people in Pinellas County live in permanent supportive housing. In our supply estimates, we would identify a total of 397 existing and future beds.

The analysis below includes figures from 25 Continuum of Care plans from 2003 that cover 52 Florida counties.² These counties contain 97 percent of the state's total population. As homelessness is more prevalent in populous areas, these counties likely contain at least that percentage of Florida's homeless population. The estimates are organized by the county or multi-county region covered by each Continuum of Care plan. The remaining fifteen counties are identified in data tables and maps as "n.a." and are unlikely to affect state totals substantially.³

Population, Supply, and Need Estimates

Table 1 on the following pages lists the estimated number of homeless persons and permanent supportive housing residents, the supply of transitional housing and permanent supportive housing beds, and the gap between supply and homeless population by county. A negative number in the "need" column denotes a shortage of beds compared with the population. Where a Continuum of Care plan covers more than one county, those counties' supply, population, and need figures are listed as a group. For example, Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties are listed as one entity.

² Homeless population figures from the Northwest area Continuum of Care, which includes Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, and Washington Counties, are from the 2004 plan, as comparable 2003 figures were not available.

³ The 2001 Rental Market Study included estimates of the number of homeless persons in counties without Continuum of Care plans using a statistical model. That model generated estimates of the homeless population in a county as a function of population density, service sector employment, and federal McKinney funding allocated to that county. However, recent research has called the accuracy of this model into question, and model results have not yet been updated to reflect 2000 Census data. Rather than provide dated and potentially inaccurate estimates for the small numbers of homeless persons likely present in these fifteen counties, we have not provided data for the counties.

Table 1. Population, Supply, and Need for Beds for Homeless Persons by County or County Group, 2003

Counties	Population ⁴	Supply	Need
Alachua-Putnam	1,304	251	-1,053
Baker	n.a.		
Bay-Calhoun-Gulf-Holmes-Jackson-Washington ⁵	1,316	153	-1,163
Bradford	n.a.		
Brevard	1,772	580	-1,192
Broward	7,147	3,552	-3,595
Charlotte	763	64	-699
Citrus-Hernando-Lake-Sumter	335	126	-209
Clay-Duval	2,720	1,366	-1,354
Collier	712	199	-513
Columbia	n.a.		
Desoto	n.a.		
Dixie	n.a.		
Escambia-Santa Rosa	3,076	451	-2,625
Flagler-Volusia	2,414	278	-2,136
Gilchrist	n.a.		
Glades	n.a.		
Hamilton	n.a.		
Hendry	n.a.		
Hillsborough	4,679	1,008	-3,671
Indian River-Martin-St. Lucie	1,609	251	-1,358
Lafayette	n.a.		
Lee	2,096	487	-1,609
Leon-Franklin-Gadsden-Jefferson-Liberty-Madison-Taylor-Wakulla	428	180	-248
Levy	n.a.		
Manatee-Sarasota	3,873	736	-3,137
Marion	3,698	92	-3,606
Miami-Dade	8,341	4,156	-4,185
Monroe	1,737	353	-1,384
Nassau	n.a.		
Okaloosa-Walton	872	189	-683

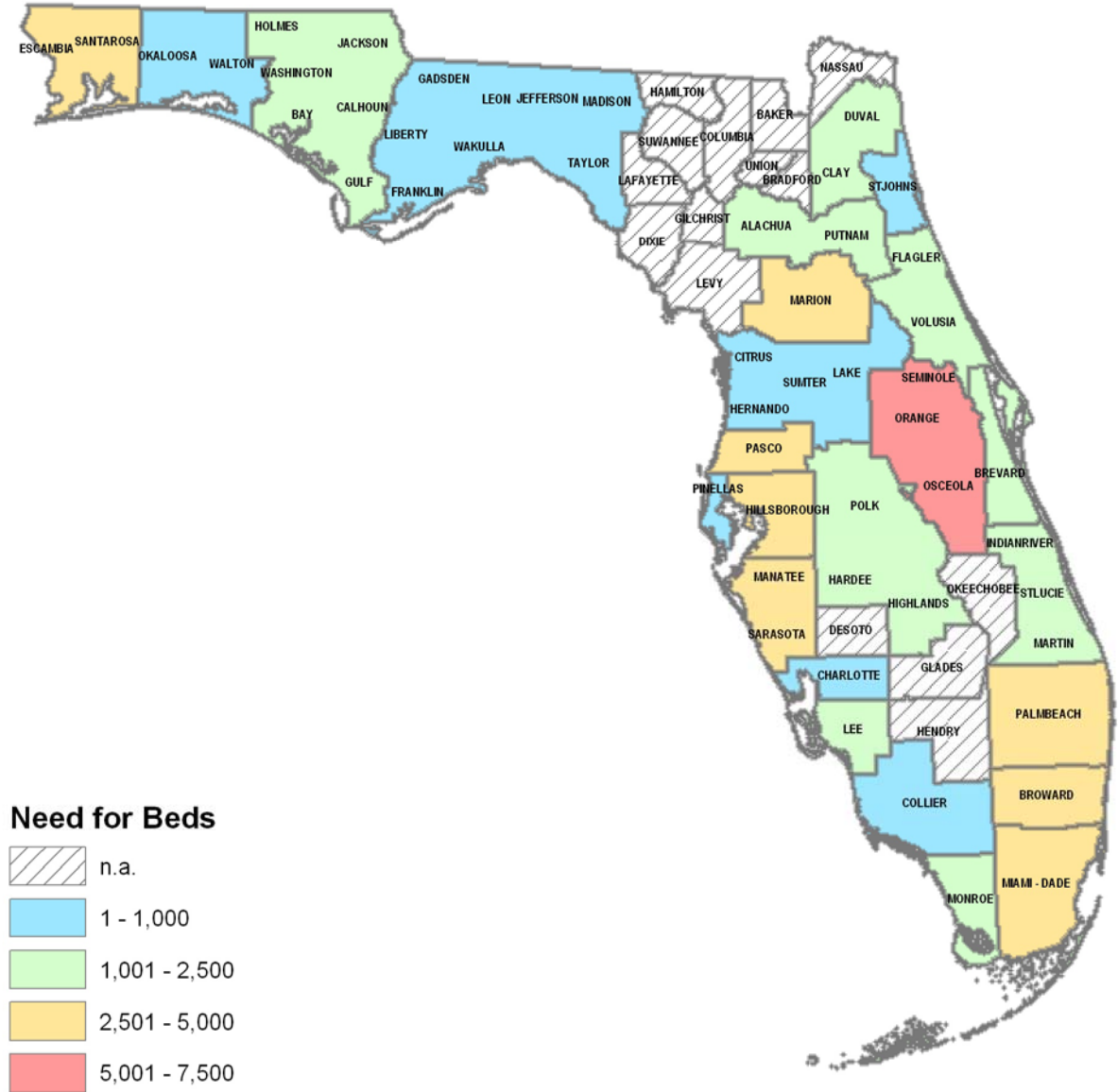
⁴ Includes homeless population plus estimated current residents of permanent supportive housing.

⁵ Incorporates homeless population figures from 2004.

Counties	Population⁴	Supply	Need
Okeechobee	n.a.		
Orange-Osceola-Seminole	8,763	1,760	-7,003
Palm Beach	4,170	1,040	-3,130
Pasco	3,173	333	-2,840
Pinellas	1,927	1,260	-667
Polk-Hardee-Highlands	2,780	618	-2,162
St. Johns	1,064	123	-941
Suwannee	n.a.		
Union	n.a.		
State of Florida Total	70,769	19,606	-51,163

Figure 1 on the following page is a map of the need for beds by county. Note that in areas where more than one county collaborated on a Continuum of Care plan, the same amount is displayed for each; this represents the total across all of the counties participating in the plan. For example, Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties fall within the “5,001-7,500” category. This represents the total need across all three counties, not the need in any one county.

Figure 1. Need for Beds by County or Group of Counties, 2003



Thus, the nine counties or groups of counties with a need of more than 2,500 beds are Orange-Osceola-Seminole, Miami-Dade, Hillsborough, Marion, Broward, Manatee-Sarasota, Palm Beach, Pasco, and Escambia-Santa Rosa. These areas contain 76 percent of the state's need for this type of housing.

The Continuum of Care plans divide the population between homeless single adults and persons in families with children, and the supply of beds in transitional and permanent housing facilities between each of these populations. Therefore, it is possible to divide the need for beds between those designated for single adults and those appropriate for persons in families with children. Table 2 on the following page shows this more detailed needs analysis for the 52 counties covered by Continuum of Care plans.

Table 2. Population, Supply, and Need for Beds for Homeless Single Adults and Persons in Families by County or Group of Counties, 2003

Counties	Single Adults					Persons in Families				
	Population	Transitional Housing Supply	Permanent Supportive Housing Supply	Total Supply	Need	Population	Transitional Housing Supply	Permanent Supportive Housing Supply	Total Supply	Need
Alachua-Putnam	910	71	54	125	-785	394	94	32	126	-268
Bay-Calhoun-Gulf-Holmes-Jackson-Washington	1,146	52	38	90	-1,056	170	36	27	63	-107
Brevard	1,469	249	34	283	-1,186	303	246	51	297	-6
Broward	3,960	1,537	528	2,065	-1,895	3,187	443	1,044	1,487	-1,700
Charlotte	447	30	16	46	-401	316	6	12	18	-298
Citrus-Hernando-Lake-Sumter	195	107	0	107	-88	140	19	0	19	-121
Clay-Duval	2,092	462	548	1,010	-1,082	628	316	40	356	-272
Collier	648	53	55	108	-540	64	79	12	91	27
Escambia-Santa Rosa	1,419	189	88	277	-1,142	1,657	124	50	174	-1,483
Flagler-Volusia	1,465	100	0	100	-1,365	949	174	4	178	-771
Hillsborough	2,155	358	157	515	-1,640	2,524	326	167	493	-2,031
Indian River-Martin-St. Lucie	878	12	62	74	-804	731	116	61	177	-554
Lee	1,726	266	161	427	-1,299	370	26	34	60	-310
Leon-Franklin-Gadsden-Jefferson-Liberty-Madison-Taylor-Wakulla	279	34	42	76	-203	149	79	25	104	-45
Manatee-Sarasota	2,014	337	219	556	-1,458	1,859	175	5	180	-1,679
Marion	1,538	28	6	34	-1,504	2,160	42	16	58	-2,102
Miami-Dade	5,236	962	867	1,829	-3,407	3,105	1,376	951	2,327	-778
Monroe	1,395	163	119	282	-1,113	342	68	3	71	-271
Okaloosa-Walton	462	80	40	120	-342	410	44	25	69	-341
Orange-Osceola-Seminole	4,647	577	482	1,059	-3,588	4,116	701	0	701	-3,415
Palm Beach	2,758	373	236	609	-2,149	1,412	385	46	431	-981
Pasco	477	18	259	277	-200	2,696	28	28	56	-2,640
Pinellas	1,442	407	271	678	-764	485	456	126	582	97
Polk-Hardee-Highlands	1,994	375	15	390	-1,604	786	143	85	228	-558
St. Johns	935	0	83	83	-852	129	40	0	40	-89
State of Florida Total	41,687	6,840	4,380	11,220	-30,467	29,082	5,542	2,844	8,386	-20,696

Data Limitations

By nature, estimates of the number of homeless persons contain a great deal of uncertainty. In this case, the population estimates from the Continuum of Care plans were created by local coalitions using a variety of methods. Therefore, caution must be used in comparing or aggregated results across counties. For example, Miami-Dade County and the group of Orange, Osceola and Seminole Counties each show the population of homeless persons and residents of supportive housing equaling 8,000-9,000 persons. Given that Miami-Dade County's total population of 2.3 million people is nearly double that of the other counties combined, the true number of homeless persons is unlikely to be so similar. Moreover, the lack of population data from counties without a Continuum of Care implies that these counties do not have any homeless persons; in fact, each is likely to have a small homeless population.

Because they are based on counts of actual beds provided by local agencies, the supply estimates in the Continuum of Care plans should be more reliable. The assumption that counties without Continuum of Care plans do not have any beds for homeless persons may mask the existence of a limited supply of beds in these counties. However, the counties without plans are smaller counties that are unlikely to have large numbers of transitional and permanent supportive housing beds. Those counties that do have these types of housing have a strong incentive to create Continuum of Care plans in order to apply for federal and state funding for the facilities. Therefore, it is likely that this analysis includes most if not all of the state's supply of transitional housing and permanent supportive housing.

Nevertheless, the supply data has both obvious and more subtle limitations. One clear omission in the supply data is the availability of housing for homeless persons other than the transitional and permanent supportive housing beds reserved specifically for them. For example, some of the supply of public and subsidized housing identified elsewhere in Rental Market Study also may be available to some homeless individuals and families.

In other ways, however, the supply numbers may mask the true housing needs of Florida's homeless population. First, homelessness is a fluid characteristic. Estimates reported in this section of the assessment reflect the magnitude of the homeless population only at a single point in time. However, individuals and families move in and out of homelessness at varying rates. Some are homeless only for a brief period due to a short-term crisis or transition, while others are cyclically or chronically homeless. Consequently, a greater number of persons are homeless during the course of a month or year than at any given instant, and more housing may be needed throughout the year to accommodate them.

Second, the various types of beds for homeless persons are not interchangeable. Housing facilities serving the homeless often are directed toward a specific population, and these facilities and their services may not be appropriate for other populations. For example, a supportive housing facility for single adults with HIV/AIDS is not

interchangeable with a facility for persons with mental illness, but both would be counted in the general supply of housing for single adults. Therefore, the aggregate supply numbers may mask the need for a number of types of facilities matching the different types of services needed by homeless individuals and families.

Finally, as noted earlier, this report does not reflect the impacts of the hurricanes that impacted the state in 2004. The loss of homes caused by the hurricanes, particularly among lower-income residents living in less hurricane-safe housing, is likely to increase homelessness in the counties most affected by the storms.

References

“Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs; Supportive Housing Program (SHP); Shelter Plus Care (S+C); Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation Single Room Occupancy Program for Homeless Individuals (SRO).” 69 Federal Register 94 (14 May 2004), pp. 27495 - 27630.

Office on Homelessness, Florida Department of Children & Families. *Annual Report on Homeless Conditions in Florida, Fiscal Year 2002-2003*. Tallahassee, FL, June, 2004.

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