Big Bend Continuum of Care

Homelessness Assistance Plan (HAP) 2021-2025 (v.20210601)

Homeless Definition: HUD defines homelessness as being in one of four categories: 1) Literally Homeless, 2) Imminent Risk of Homelessness, 3) Homeless under other Federal Statutes, and 4) Fleeing/Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence. These categories are more fully defined at the end of this document.

Data Driven Plan: The Homeless Assistance Plan is updated and refined annually through ongoing community and agency feedback as well as a data driven approach using client data collected through the Homeless Management Information System, Coordinated Assessment Tool, System Performance Measures and other needs assessment engagement survey tools. There are three major System Performance Measures that should be improved upon as the goal of this version of the HHAP; Decrease average length of time homeless, decrease returns to homelessness and increase placement and retention of permanent housing.

Improving System	Across all areas of homelessness we need to focus efforts to improve system performance by;					
Performance	Measuring all System Performance Measures frequently to improve specific outcomes tied to	each measure				
	Sys PM 1 - DECREASE the overall average and median length of time a person remains homeless	Target 2021: Average less than 144 nights, Median less than 65 nights Ultimate Goal by 2025: Average is 30 nights or less				
	SysPM2 - DECREASE returns to homelessness	Target 2021: Returns to homelessness with in				
		6 months less that 21%				
		2 years, less than 33% Ultimate Goal by 2025: Returns in 2 years, less than 20%				
	Sys PM 3 - DECREASE number of homeless persons in annual and PIT count	Target: PIT Count is less than 900				
		Annual Count is less than 2900				
	Sys PM 4 - INCREASE or maintain income for persons in housing programs	Target: Increase income for more than 60% system stayers				
		Increase income for more than 30% system leavers				
	Sys PM 5 - DECREASE instances of 1 st time homelessness	Target: first time homeless count is less than 1500				
	Sys PM 7 - INCREASE permanent housing placements from Outreach, ES, TH, PH-RRH programs and retention of permanent housing					
		to be greater than 65% of outreach exits				
		Increase placements to permanent housing from ES, SH, TH and PH-				
		RRH to be greater than 30%				
		Ultimate Goal by 2025: Increase placements to permanent housing from ES, SH, TH and PH-RRH to be greater than 60%				
		Increase rate of retention of permanent housing to be greater than 95%				

	Veteran Homelessness	Chronic Homelessness	Family & Child Homelessness	Youth Homelessness	All Other Types of Homelessness
Coordinated Entry (Intake, Assessment & Referrals)	Veteran Homelessness a. Ensure Emergency Shelters and SSVF and VA Outreach Teams are the primary Access Points for Veterans through Coordinated Entry.	Chronic Homelessness a. Collaborate with agencies serving individuals experiencing chronic homelessness to ensure that agencies are fully utilizing the Coordinated Entry System in HMIS, which will connect clients with appropriate services. b. Increase functionality of Coordinated Entry service referral system by to allow for all HMIS participating agencies to send and receive support services and housing referrals within HMIS.	a. Collaborate with agencies serving families and children who are experiencing homelessness to ensure households are assessed and entered in the Coordinated Entry System in HMIS, within the first 14 days of becoming homeless. b. Expand use of the Coordinated Entry System to other emergency assistance providers for the purposes of case coordination and ensuring duplicative services are avoided. c. Utilize Homeless School Liaisons as an Access Partner for Coordinated Entry in rural communities	a. Collaborate with agencies serving youth who are experiencing homelessness to ensure that agencies are fully utilizing the Coordinated Entry System in HMIS, which will connect clients with appropriate services and housing opportunities. b. Partner with the child welfare, juvenile justice and at-risk youth programs to ensure they can assess youth experiencing homelessness through the Coordinated Entry System.	a. Collaborate with agencies serving individuals experiencing homelessness to ensure that agencies are fully utilizing the Coordinated Entry System in HMIS, which will connect clients with appropriate services and housing opportunities. b. Increase functionality of Coordinated Entry System to incorporate Landlords who have vacant permanent units prioritized for those exiting homelessness.

	Veteran Homelessness	Chronic Homelessness	Family & Child Homelessness	Youth Homelessness	All Other Types of Homelessness
Prevention & Diversion	 a. Connect clients to legal aid when necessary to avoid entering homelessness. Specifically adding resources for Veteran's Tax Court and Veteran Justice Outreach. b. Increase financial resources available for homeless prevention and diversion efforts for veterans who do not qualify for VA and SSVF assistance. 	 a. Connect clients to legal aid when necessary to avoid entering homelessness. b. Prioritize individuals with chronic homeless histories for Diversion and Prevention resources in order to keep them from returning to homelessness. c. Create a formal partnership providing mediation and legal expertise for chronically homeless cases that have been permanently housed and face eviction again. 	 a. Dedicate funding for Diversion activities through Family Emergency Shelters and Prevention Providers. b. Create a formal partnership providing mediation and legal expertise for families facing eviction. c. Expand Prevention activities serving our 7 rural counties targeted at families at imminent risk of homelessness. 	 a. Seek funding through the HUD YHDP to implement Host Homes to divert youth from entering homelessness and emergency shelter. b. Increase resources available for homeless prevention and diversion for youth ages 16-24. c. Create a formal partnership with local CBC, Department of Children and Families and Department of Justice to prevent and divert youth 16-24 from entering homelessness. 	 a. Connect clients to legal aid when necessary to avoid entering homelessness. b. Increase resources available for homeless prevention and diversion efforts system wide c. Dedicate funding to Reentry and Discharge planning from county jails and hospitals to avoid discharges directly to the streets or emergency shelters.

	Veteran Homelessness	Chronic Homelessness	Family & Child Homelessness	Youth Homelessness	All Other Types of Homelessness
Unsheltered Homelessness/ Outreach	 a. Utilize SSVF funded Outreach workers as a component of the CoC Coordinated Outreach efforts. b. Assess all unsheltered Veterans through SSVF and VA Outreach for completion of Coordinated Entry Assessment and Referral. c. SSVF and VA Outreach teams to provide support for clients needing access to basic needs items such as hygiene, tarps, survival aid and access to emergency shelter. 	 a. Dedicate case management and outreach services to chronic subpopulation that will follow clients through to support them after the first few months of permanent housing. b. Identify Individuals who are currently residing in primitive camps and prioritize permanent housing options to meet the needs of chronic and unsheltered population with limited income. c. Offer permanent housing to ALL Chronic clients every 14 days. d. Expand outreach coordination to include law enforcement, institutions and hospitals to ensure proper discharge planning to avoid unsheltered homelessness. 	 a. Collaborate with Homeless School Liaisons to identify families needing prevention, diversion, shelter and permanent housing resources. b. Collaborate with local CBC, Department of Children and Families and Department of Justice to identify families with children who are literally homeless needing resources. c. Ensure there is adequate funding to cover hotel/motel vouchers for families needing short term stays to avoid unsheltered homelessness among families with minor children in all 8 counties. 	 a. Utilize youth specific outreach teams to identify and assess unsheltered youth through age 24. b. Provide services and goods to meet basic needs for run away, homeless, and street youth and connect to service providers for youth to exit the streets into stable housing. c. Provide basic needs and assistance to homeless youth to increase youth's personal safety, well-being, and self-sufficiency; and provide positive adult connections. 	a. Expand outreach coordination to include outreach to local county jails and hospitals for those that are likely to be discharged to homelessness. b. Continue to conduct biweekly outreach coordination calls facilitated by the CoC ensuring all "hot spots" for unsheltered homelessness are visited regularly by outreach workers. c. Evaluate the advantages of conducting an unsheltered Point In Time Count simi-annually, once in January and once during June, July, or August to better understand influx of unsheltered homelessness, specifically within Leon County.

	Veteran Homelessness	Chronic Homelessness	Family & Child Homelessness	Youth Homelessness	All Other Types of Homelessness
Emergency Shelter	 a. Increase resources dedicated to emergency shelter operations. b. Increase resources for emergency shelter case management in order to enforce a 30:1 Client: Case Manager ratio. c. Increase use of hotel/motels as emergency shelter when congregate shelters are at capacity d. Create shelter programing for clients with pets. 	 a. Increase resources available for emergency shelter operations. b. Ensure clients nearing chronic homelessness are prioritized for permanent housing opportunities. c. Ensure no client remains homeless and in emergency shelter for more than 12 months. d. Reduce the rate of returns to chronic homelessness by prioritizing use of diversion and prevention for the formerly chronic population. e. Increase resources for emergency shelter case management in order to enforce a 30:1 Client: Case Manager ratio. f. Increase use of hotel/motels as emergency shelter when congregate shelters are at capacity g. Create shelter programing for clients with pets. 	 a. Assess the need for additional shelter capacity in neighboring counties. b. Increase resources for emergency shelter case management in order to enforce a 30:1 Client: Case Manager ratio. c. Ensure no household remains homeless and in emergency shelter for more than 12 months. 	 a. Identify need and potential funding for emergency shelter beds targeting youth ages 18-24, including LGBTQ+ youth. b. Designate a "Safe Place" within the current Emergency Shelter system for LGBTQ+ youth. c. Increase resources for emergency shelter case management in order to enforce a 14:1 Client: Case Manager ratio. d. Evaluate the need for emergency shelter options for minors with children and/or pregnant minors. 	a. Increase resources for emergency shelter case management in order to enforce a 30:1 Client: Case Manager ratio. b. Identify funding required to implement a small 12-18 bed a Safe Haven Shelter option.

	Veteran Homelessness	Chronic Homelessness	Family & Child Homelessness	Youth Homelessness	All Other Types of Homelessness
Medium Term Supportive Housing/Bridge Housing/Transitional Housing	a. Strategize with GPD Transitional Housing Provider to turnover units to Bridge Housing and permanent housing units in order to achieve Functional Zero. b. Create Bridge Housing option with 15 units. c. Identify need and scope of services and support for Respite Living Program.	a. Create Bridge Housing option up to 20 units for chronic population waiting for PSH and working to identify housing. b. Identify need and scope of services and support for Respite Living Program.	a. Identify funding to increase transitional housing options for families with children by 94 beds. a. Increase funding options covering support staff costs for transitional and medium term supportive housing. b. Identify need and scope of services and support for Respite Living Program.	a. Apply for HUD YHDP Grant to implement a 18-24 bed Bridge/Medium Term Supportive Living program for youth ages 16-24. b. Increase funding available for providing life skills training and transitional supports to better prepare them for housing stability in the future.	a. Identify funding and Implement housing options for sexual offenders/predators and those exiting institutions by 18 units. a. Increase funding options covering discharge planning from jails and prisons so that those re-entering can go directly into medium term supportive options rather than shelter or the streets.

	Veteran Homelessness	Chronic Homelessness	Family & Child Homelessness	Youth Homelessness	All Other Types of Homelessness
Permanent Rental Housing (Rapid Rehousing, Rental, Permanent Supportive Housing, Vouchers)	a. Increase the number of VASH Vouchers available to CoC Coverage area. b. Identify funding for 10 additional units of PSH for veterans not eligible for VASH Vouchers. c. Utilize Emergency Housing Vouchers designated through PHAs to serve veterans not qualifying for other assistance. d. Identify housing options with higher levels of care including Assisted Living Facilities and Nursing Homes targeted towards serving veterans that are service eligible and ineligible.	a. Ensure PSH clients are assessed annually and supported to move on to other permanent housing as intensive support services are no longer needed. b. Expand local funding of Permanent Supportive Housing program operations. c. Identify funding of pilot project utilizing 3-4 small quad apartments to house those with SPMI who lack family support. d. Work with local governments to incentivize development/rehab housing stock making a portion of the units available to extremely low income clients exiting chronic homeless. e. Continue the work of the Landlord Liaisons focusing on education, recruitment and support of landlords willing to house those with unstable housing backgrounds. f. Expand access to the landlord mitigation fund as a security measure for landlords housing chronic clients. g. Expand the work of the Landlord Liaison focusing on education, recruitment and support of landlords willing to house those with barriers to housing.	a. Increase funding dedicated to PSH units for families with minor children by 30 units. b. Work with PHAs to identify 300 set aside voucher for homeless families with children and or prioritize section 8 vouchers to homeless families first. c. Utilize Emergency Housing Vouchers designated through PHAs. d. Increase RRH funds available for families with children and couples with no children. e. Increase funding and partnerships to provide component of wrap around services and continued case management to help sustain housing. f. Work with local governments to incentivize development/rehab housing stock making a portion of the units available to extremely low income families exiting homelessness.	a. Apply for the HUD YHDP to fund a pilot Youth PSH program for 18-24 year olds with chronic homelessness, family violence, child welfare involvement, juvenile justice involvement, developmental disabilities or generational homelessness histories. b. Identify or create appropriate housing with supports for pregnant youth and youth with children. c. Implement use of roommate matching criteria to decrease financial burden on youth. d. Expand the work of the Landlord Liaison focusing on education, recruitment and support of landlords willing to house youth needing stable housing. e. Expand financial assistance services to include Direct Cash Transfers (DCT) to youth to cover basic needs, including permanent housing costs.	 a. Increase local funding of PSH operations. b. Identify and partner with Senior Citizen Housing communities and senior service organizations to refer elderly homeless individuals to the most appropriate housing and care options. c. Expand MoUs with Florida Housing Finance Corporation funded tax credit properties setting aside units for seniors, those with disabilities and extremely low incomes. d. Explore use of Sponsor Housing agreements and Master Leasing entities to help permanently house those with backgrounds that prohibit them from attaining a lease on their own. e. Identify or create dedicated housing for sexual offenders/predators in compliance with residence requirements. f. Implement roommate matching criteria to lower cost burden of housing.

	Veteran Homelessness	Chronic Homelessness	Family & Child Homelessness	Unaccompanied Youth Homelessness	All Other Types of Homelessness
Home Ownership	a. Provide education on Veteran's Home Loan assistance programs.	a. Assess if there is any participant in the THA voucher program or PSH programs that could transition to home ownership. b. Educate those identified to move towards home ownership on mortgages, subsidies, and other home ownership opportunities through relationships with community partner organizations.	 a. Provide opportunities for education on federal, state and local incentive programs to qualify low-income households for home purchases. b. Encourage local incentives for developers creating low-cost, smaller sized housing to be created for home ownership. 	a. Offer connections to budgeting, saving and future planning education to youth, sparking interest in homeownership goals.	b. Create formal partnerships with local organizations specializing in home ownership preparation and first-time home buyer education.

	Veteran Homelessness	Chronic Homelessness	Family & Child Homelessness	Unaccompanied Youth Homelessness	All Other Types of Homelessness
Employment & Income Support Services	 a. Identify programs focused on vocational training and certification programs at free or substantially reduced cost. b. Expand veteran involvement in employment and income support services. c. Ensure that SSVF programing offers the services of a SOAR processor to improve system access for veterans trying to secure/restore SSI/SSDI benefits. d. Partner with CareerSource Capital Region and the VET program to assist all veterans seeking employment. 	 a. Expand participant involvement with employment and income support services. b. Increase number of SOAR processors dedicated to chronic clients, to improve system access for individuals trying to secure/restore SSI/SSDI benefits. c. Increase referrals to WIPA programs to ensure access to work incentive programs. d. Increase referrals to programs offering job readiness and employability training support services (including financial literacy supports) to help individuals access employment programs/efforts. e. Increase number of representative payees available for chronic clients. f. Create training on gaining part time employment and maintaining disability benefits for PSH participants. 	 a. Expand participant involvement with employment and income support services. b. Ensure case managers serving families are SOAR certified to improve system access for families trying to secure/restore SSI/SSDI benefits. c. Create training on gaining part time employment and maintaining disability benefits for PSH participants. 	 a. Explore the development of a vocational training program for youth experiencing homelessness. b. Increase number of SOAR processors dedicated to youth, to improve system access for individuals trying to secure/restore SSI/SSDI benefits. c. Build partnerships with local businesses to pair youth with internships and apprenticeships. 	 a. Increase access to SOAR processors to improve system access for individuals trying to secure/restore SSI/SSDI benefits. b. Expand participant involvement with employment and income support services. c. Create training on gaining part time employment and maintaining disability benefits for PSH participants.

	Veteran Homelessness	Chronic Homelessness	Family & Child Homelessness	Unaccompanied Youth Homelessness	All Other Types of Homelessness
Transportation Assistance	 a. Increase transportation options for cross county travel (outer counties to Leon for services) when services cannot be delivered in rural counties. b. Encourage public transportation services to allow homeless veterans to receive free or reduced fare bus passes. 	 a. Continue to collaborate with public transportation services through the partnership with StarMetro to ensure organizations serving the chronically homeless can purchase reduced fare bus passes for clients. b. Provide education on reduced fare bus transportation services options for individuals in PSH programs. 	 a. Increase transportation options for cross county travel (outer counties to Leon for services) when services cannot be delivered in rural counties. b. Continue to collaborate with public transportation services to ensure homeless services programs can receive vouchers/discounted rates for clients who are homeless. c. Continue partnership with County Schools to provide transportation to and from school through the McKinney Vento Act. 	 a. Continue to collaborate with public transportation services to ensure homeless services programs can receive vouchers/discounted rates for clients who are homeless. b. Continue partnership with County Schools to provide transportation to and from school through the McKinney Vento Act. c. Increase transportation options for cross county travel (outer counties to Leon for services) when services cannot be delivered in rural counties. 	 a. Continue to collaborate with public transportation services to ensure homeless services programs can receive vouchers/discounted rates for clients who are homeless. b. Increase free and reduced transportation services options for individuals accessing homeless services and exiting the homeless system of care to permanent housing. c. Increase transportation options cross county travel (outer counties to Leon for services) when services cannot be delivered in rural counties. d. Provide homeless families with education about the McKinney Vento act and accommodations for bus travel to maintain school placements.

	Veteran Homelessness	Chronic Homelessness	Family & Child Homelessness	Unaccompanied Youth Homelessness	All Other Types of Homelessness
Childcare	a. If needed, connect veteran families to various childcare opportunities through setaside vouchers available through ELC.	a. Ensure chronically homeless families are prioritized for ELC vouchers if requested.	a. Refer homeless households needing childcare to the Early Learning Coalition for vouchers.	a. Connect pregnant youth with childcare options upon birth of child through ELC.	Ensure families with minor children have access to childcare vouchers in all 8 counties if they are experiencing homelessness.
Healthcare/Benefits	 a. Initiate partnership with health care providers and hospitals and increase collaboration on discharge policy and procedures. b. Identify health care and benefit resources for veterans who do not qualify for veteran's assistance due to dishonorable discharge, etc. c. Connect Veterans with a dishonorable discharge with VA access to Mental Health Services now available. d. Identify need and funding for service ineligible veterans needing temporary respite housing 	 a. Access Medicaid benefits for those who qualify to cover cost of case management and peer support services among individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. b. Initiate partnership with health care providers and hospitals and increase collaboration on discharge policy and procedures. c. Ensure healthcare supports and services for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness are accessible. d. Ensure behavioral healthcare supports and substance abuse treatment services for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness are available through partnership with providers and the area Managing Entity. 	 a. Assess how access to Medicaid benefits can be used for case management services among families experiencing homelessness. b. Initiate partnership with health care providers and hospitals and increase collaboration on discharge policy and procedures. c. Ensure healthcare supports and services for families experiencing homelessness are available through partnership with mainstream providers and providers operating in the Kearney Center. d. Work to improve access of families and children without insurance to ongoing behavioral health services. 	 a. Connect youth experiencing homelessness with managed care plans for education on accessing benefits of health insurance and acquiring health insurance. b. Initiate partnership with health care providers and hospitals and increase collaboration on discharge policy and procedure. 	 a. Initiate partnership with health care providers and hospitals and increase collaboration on discharge policy and procedure. b. Complete data analysis on need for temporary respite housing to decrease use of emergency departments as primary health care.

	Veteran Homelessness	Chronic Homelessness	Family & Child Homelessness	Unaccompanied Youth Homelessness	All Other Types of Homelessness
Education/Advocacy	 a. Implement PR campaign and Action Plan promoting reaching Functional Zero for Veteran Homelessness by 2024. b. Implement standardized education to clients on budgeting, how to be a good roommate/tenant and life skills needed to retain housing. c. Provide seminars for case managers and clients on fair housing laws through local partner organizations. d. Collaborate with local substance abuse providers to offer education on Harm Reduction for clients with SA issues and housing stability issues. 	 a. Implement PR campaign and Action Plan promoting reaching Functional Zero for Chronic Homelessness by 2025. b. Conduct Landlord education and engagement to reduce common barriers to housing for individuals with criminal backgrounds, eviction and damage histories c. Implement standardized education to clients on budgeting, how to be a good roommate/tenant and life skills needed to retain housing. d. Collaborate with local substance abuse providers to offer education on Harm Reduction for clients with SA issues and housing stability issues. e. Provide seminars for case managers and clients on fair housing laws through local partner organizations. 	 a. Provide educational seminar to Homeless School Liaisons on existing prevention and homelessness resources in September each year. b. Implement standardized education to clients on budgeting, how to be a good roommate/tenant and life skills needed to retain housing. c. Provide seminars for case managers and clients on fair housing laws through local partner organizations. d. Collaborate with local substance abuse providers to offer education on Harm Reduction for clients with SA issues and housing stability issues. e. Partner with DCF and the CBC to offer training on family safety practices. 	 a. Implement standardized education to clients on budgeting, how to be a good roommate/tenant and life skills needed to retain housing. b. Provide seminars for case managers and clients on fair housing laws through local partner organizations. c. Collaborate with local substance abuse providers to offer education on Harm Reduction for clients with SA issues and housing stability issues. d. Continue outreach efforts to hotels, restaurants, and businesses to educate on how to identify and help trafficked/exploited youth and individuals. e. Provide education to local entities interesting in serving as a Sponsor or Master Lease Holder for youth who do not have access to cosigners and are experiencing homelessness. 	 a. Partner with Florida Coalition to End Homelessness to advocate for increased DCF Challenge and Staffing Grant funds dedicated to BBCoC b. Advocate at the federal and state level to increase funding allocations and further explain the complexity of being an 8 county CoC, with one city that is an ESG entitlement jurisdiction. c. Provide an Annual Homelessness Update report to each county commission within the CoC coverage are with recommendations about allocation of resources to prevent and end homelessness. d. Encourage local funders to measure performance of homelessness specific projects through the 6 identified HUD System Performance Measures and partner with the CoC to administer and allocate funding of homeless prevention and homelessness services.