



**The Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board, Inc.**

647 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue N., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Phone: 727-582-7916

www.pinellashomeless.org

May 16, 2016

Copy Mark  
Bill

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CEO, St. Vincent de Paul

South Pinellas

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CEO, St. Petersburg Area

Chamber of Commerce

**Karen Seel**

Pinellas Board of

County Commissioners

**Cliff Smith**

Manager of Homeless Services

City of St. Petersburg

**Executive Staff:**

Susan D. Myers, CEO

Karen Seel, County Commissioner  
Clearwater Courthouse  
315 Court Street  
Clearwater, FL 33756

Dear Commissioner Seel:

In late March of this year, the Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board passed a resolution pronouncing housing as a basic human right; and, committed to ensuring that homelessness among Pinellas County citizens is *rare, brief and nonrecurring*. Additionally, the resolution established a commitment to the philosophy and practice of Housing First with a letter and copy of that resolution going to all mayors in Pinellas County, including those who provide funding for homeless services.

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, the HLB amended the resolution (enclosed) that “encourages all non-CoC housing programs within Pinellas County to adopt the Housing First philosophy and fully participate in the Coordinated Entry System by **April 1, 2019**”. On May 11, 2016, the HLB announced, via a press release, both this resolution and the recent HUD award of \$4,036,255, which will primarily fund the implementation of Housing First strategies.

As an elected official in Pinellas County, the commitment to Housing First means the opportunity to mirror the success of other communities such as Phoenix, AZ and Salt Lake City, UT, which have reduced their homeless populations by implementing Housing First principles. The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness reports a 21 percent reduction in chronic homelessness and a 33 percent reduction in veteran homelessness by connecting “evidence-based solutions” like permanent supportive housing, affordable housing, and rapid re-housing” to the Housing First philosophy. This is a proven path to increased self-sufficiency, increased income, and reduction in emergency hospital visits and jail time. In addition, financial savings occur for local governments and taxpayers. A study by the National Alliance to End Homelessness showed that in Denver, permanent supportive housing saved \$15,733 per year, per person, in public costs for shelter, criminal justice, health care, emergency room, and behavioral health costs. The savings were enough to completely offset the cost of housing (\$13,400), and still save taxpayers \$2,373 on average per person.

We ask for your commitment to encourage the county commission to support and adopt the standards of Housing First, in alliance with other partners in our county, by adopting a Housing First resolution. Additionally, we encourage

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you to consider including stipulations in your contracts for homeless services funding that require recipients to incorporate Housing First strategies and participate in the Coordinated Entry System. On behalf of the Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board, I would like to extend an offer to meet with you and/or the county commission to further explain Housing First and how this strategy will reform and improve the homeless system in our community. If you are interested in learning more about Housing First, my contact information is (727) 582-7916 or [susanmyers@pinellashomless.org](mailto:susanmyers@pinellashomless.org).

I thank you for your time and the consideration of bringing renewed support and attention to the most vulnerable citizens in our community.

Sincerely,



Susan D. Myers, CEO  
Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board

## RESOLUTION

### RESOLUTION OF THE PINELLAS COUNTY HOMELESS LEADERSHIP BOARD ENDORSING HOUSING FIRST AND THE COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM

**WHEREAS**, the Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board, Inc. has an interest in improving the quality of life of all homeless citizens in Pinellas County; and

**WHEREAS**, the Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board, Inc. agrees that housing is a basic human right; and

**WHEREAS**, the Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board, Inc. is committed to developing a homeless services system which ensures that homelessness among Pinellas County citizens is *rare, brief, and nonrecurring*; and

**WHEREAS**, the Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board, Inc. is the designated Continuum of Care (CoC) for Pinellas County through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); and

**WHEREAS**, HUD established a commitment to Housing First, defined in Notice of Funding Availability for the 2015 Continuum of Care Program Competition FR-5900-N-25, as “an approach to homeless assistance that prioritizes rapid placement and stabilization in permanent housing and does not have service participation requirements or preconditions such as sobriety or a minimum income threshold” and includes the minimum components: 1) removing barriers to entry; 2) establishing a coordinated entry system; 3) practicing client-centered service delivery; 4) prioritizing households most in need; and 5) ensuring inclusive decision-making.

**WHEREAS**, HUD established a requirement for each CoC to implement a Coordinated Entry System as outlined in CoC Program Interim Rule 24 CFR 578.7(a)(8); and

**WHEREAS**, the Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board, Inc. is developing a Coordinated Entry System for full implementation in FY 2016 in order to effectively assess and prioritize housing needs and mitigate recurrences of homelessness; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 22, 2010, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness released the nation's first comprehensive strategy for ending chronic homelessness entitled *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, which endorsed Housing First as a best practice.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE HOMELESS LEADERSHIP BOARD:**

**Section 1.** The Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board, Inc. endorses the best practice model of Housing First and believes it will greatly assist in the goal of making homelessness *rare, brief, and nonrecurring* for Pinellas County citizens.

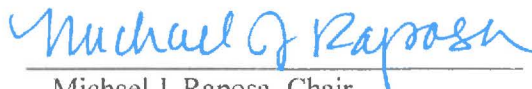
**Section 2.** The Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board, Inc. calls on all CoC-funded entities to implement a Housing First philosophy in their housing programs.

**Section 3.** The Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board, Inc. requires the full participation of all CoC-funded entities in the Coordinated Entry System.

**Section 4.** The Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board, Inc. encourages all non-CoC housing programs within Pinellas County to adopt the Housing First philosophy and fully participate in the Coordinated Entry System by April 1, 2019.

**Section 5.** This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED ON THIS 1<sup>st</sup> DAY OF APRIL 2016.



Michael J. Raposa, Chair  
Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board

ATTEST:



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Virginia Rowell, Secretary  
Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board