



**Homeless
Leadership
Board**

The Pinellas County Homeless Leadership Board, Inc.

647 1st Avenue N., 2nd Floor, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Phone: 727-582-7916

www.pinellashomeless.org

May 16, 2016

Executive Committee:

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CEO, St. Vincent de Paul
South Pinellas

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Clearwater Regional
Chamber of Commerce

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Bay Pines VA Healthcare System

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Chris Steinocher

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

County Commissioner Karen Seel

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 1st, 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 your city to support and adopt the standards of Housing First, in alliance with other partners in our county, by

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adopting a Housing First resolution. Additionally, we encourage 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 your city council 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.

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

