



# Pinellas County

## Staff Report

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### **Subject:**

Notice of grant award for year two from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration for the Cooperative Agreement to Benefit Homeless Individuals.

### **Recommended Action:**

Approval by the County Administrator of the grant award for year two of three with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for the Cooperative Agreement to Benefit Homeless Individuals (CABHI).

### **Strategic Plan:**

Ensure Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

2.2 Be a facilitator, convener and purchaser of services for those in need

Deliver First Class Services to the Public and our Customers

5.1 Maximize partner relationships and public outreach

5.2 Be responsible stewards of the public's resources

### **Summary:**

SAMHSA has awarded the County year two funding for the Cooperative Agreement to Benefit Homeless Individuals for the budget period starting 9/30/2017 through 9/29/2018. In 2016, the County was awarded a three-year grant totaling \$2,400,000.00 (\$800,000 per year) beginning 9/30/2016 - 9/29/2019. The County contracted with three treatment providers including Operation PAR, Inc., Directions for Mental Health, Inc., and WestCare Gulfcoast-Florida, Inc. for services under this grant agreement. Referrals from housing providers began on February 2, 2017 and through July 15, 2017, the program has submitted 39 intakes into SAMHSA's Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) reporting system. A Local Government Steering Committee began meeting monthly in December of 2016 and transitioned to quarterly meetings in February 2017. A Program Coordination Committee consisting of contracted providers began meeting weekly in January 2017. This committee is tasked with coordinating program referrals and grant related activities. An SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) Specialist is available to assist eligible clients with benefits enrollment and inquiries.

The purpose of this program is to enhance and/or expand the infrastructure and mental health and substance use treatment services. CABHI grants increase the capacity to provide accessible, effective, comprehensive, coordinated, integrated, and evidence-based treatment services; permanent supportive housing; peer supports; and other critical services for individuals, Veterans, families, and youth who experience chronic homelessness and have substance use disorders, serious mental illness, serious emotional disturbance, or co-occurring mental and substance use disorders.

**Background Information:**

Since 1988, medical, dental, and behavioral health care referrals have been provided to the homeless population in the County. Primary health care is provided at no charge to homeless patients with incomes at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level. In 2016, the County served 2,308 unduplicated homeless patients through the Mobile Medical Unit and Bayside Health Clinic.

The County, a Federally Qualified Health Center serving homeless individuals, has recognized that behavioral health continues to be a pervasive concern within the community, often affecting the physical health and safety of the most vulnerable citizens. A critical lack of funding has impacted the availability and integration of services and information sharing, inhibiting stability for many individuals. The result is a greater demand for deep-end, expensive crisis care and repeated entry into the criminal justice system and emergency rooms. The County's internal data from its Health Program for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 indicates that there were 6,764 total emergency room visits by 3,440 clients.

The County sought this additional federal funding to address this critical health care need among the homeless population served by its Health Care for the Homeless program. One hundred percent (100%) of clients served in the program are screened for behavioral health issues including substance abuse. Of the patients referred, a small percentage of clients actually overcome the barriers and receive treatment. Barriers to treatment for this target population include lack of adequate transportation, lack of insurance, and lack of assistance with follow up treatment.

Funding from this grant opportunity will increase capacity to provide evidence based mental health and substance abuse treatment services for individuals who experience homelessness and have serious mental illness, substance use disorder, serious emotional disturbance, and/or co-occurring disorder.

The County has contracted with three local agencies providing services including agencies that work with homeless youth, families, and veterans. This funding opportunity also strongly encourages a commitment to permanently house eligible clients. While funding does not support housing, program staff continue to work with local housing providers to assist clients who have recently transitioned from homelessness into permanent housing with the provision of mental health, substance abuse, and SOAR benefits services to eligible clients. The purpose of this program is to assist in coordinating behavioral health services further reducing their likelihood to use the emergency room for behavioral health and linkage services.

**Fiscal Impact:**

Year two federal grant funding in the amount of \$800,000.00. No match is required. Funding is included in the anticipated Human Services FY18 budget.

**Staff Member Responsible:**

Lourdes Benedict, Director, Human Services

**Partners:**

Boley Centers, Inc  
Catholic Charities, Inc.  
Directions for Mental Health, Inc.  
Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County  
Homeless Emergency Project, Inc.

Health Care for the Homeless Co-Applicant Board  
Operation PAR, Inc.  
Pinellas County Housing Authority  
WestCare Gulfcoast-Florida, Inc

**Attachments:**

SAMHSA Notice of Award  
SAMHSA Non-Competing Continuation Application PDF  
SAMHSA Non-Competing Continuation Project Narrative