



STATEWIDE PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING WORKGROUP

ACTION PLAN AND RECOMMENDATIONS



SUBMITTED
DECEMBER 2023

OVERVIEW AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021, a statewide needs assessment of housing for Homeless and Special Needs Populations was completed by the Corporation for Supportive Housing, a national nonprofit that works to advance affordable housing aligned with services. The Corporation for Supportive Housing contracted with Florida Housing Finance Corporation to conduct a detailed analysis of the housing needs for homeless households and households of [Persons with Special Needs](#) (as defined in section 420.0004(13), Florida Statutes) throughout the state. At the point in time of this needs assessment, it was determined that the number of households in need of and requiring supportive housing was 12,811. In other words, throughout Florida there were an additional 12,811 affordable housing units required to address the unmet need for permanent supportive housing in the state at that time.

Twelve
thousand
eight hundred
and eleven
(12,811)

Permanent Supportive Housing is affordable rental housing with access to voluntary supportive services that help establish and maintain housing stability and include access to activities of daily living and community-based services. This affordable housing solution is leased to households for continued occupancy so long as the tenant complies with the terms of the lease.

In 2022, the Florida Supportive Housing Coalition convened a Policy Day with stakeholders from numerous state agencies as well as key housing and services providers to discuss the statewide needs related to households utilizing Permanent Supportive Housing. At this Policy Day, representatives from the Executive Office of Governor recommended the formation of a Workgroup consisting of pertinent State Agency designees that would focus on strategies and solutions to improve the overall coordinated approach to the provision of Permanent Supportive Housing statewide, and recommend strategies to streamline efforts, promote best practices, and bring efficiencies to what has historically been, for the most part, a siloed approach to this issue.



This report reflects months of discussion through meetings of this Workgroup, review of housing philosophy and models, examination of data from the aforementioned needs assessment, an assessment of successful programs currently operating in Florida, as well as consideration of existing Florida programs that could be modified and/or enhanced to further support and increase the availability of Permanent Supportive Housing in the state.

The Workgroup recommendations related to Permanent Supportive Housing policy in Florida are as follows:

1. Develop and Implement a Coordinated Interagency Approach, Overseen and Guided by a Coordinated State Entity to Develop and Sustain the Provision of Adequate Levels of Permanent Supportive Housing throughout Florida.

The State of Florida should consider adopting a state governmental interagency data-driven approach to the provision of Permanent Supportive Housing, overseen and guided by a coordinating state entity. A coordinated effort will allow for the best and most efficient use of resources to serve vulnerable households that need Permanent Supportive Housing. Additionally, a coordinated interagency approach will allow Florida to design and implement data-driven statewide public-private approaches that are feasible, sustainable, and predictable.

2. Begin Efforts to Design Coordinated Permanent Supportive Housing Initiatives and Consolidate Related Funding to Create Sustainable Solutions.

A true state governmental interagency approach to addressing the challenges identified in the state's Permanent Supportive Housing approach, would ultimately result in a coordinated effort in both program design, implementation and predictable funding for these support programs. Integrating existing programs related to Permanent Supportive Housing into a more holistic model will allow state agencies to better serve households that need such assistance. A coordinated effort would also allow households to seamlessly move between services – a “no wrong door” approach that eliminates the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of “beginning again” as each program is utilized.

3. Establish New Approaches to Assisting Permanent Supportive Housing Residents in Ultimately Achieving Self-Sufficiency & Moving on to Independent Housing.

Through the state governmental interagency approach described within this report and the resulting coordinated effort to integrate the resources and programs available for Permanent Supportive Housing, the state will be able to better address complex policy issues and provide better services to thousands of Floridians in need of housing stability to be able to meet and achieve their housing needs, goals, and expectations. The ultimate goals of this approach will allow Florida to chart a path that will lead the nation in how to best develop and provide Permanent Supportive Housing to those in need.

4. Implement a Scaled Approach to Improve and Enhance Existing Programmatic Efforts that Currently Supplement Permanent Supportive Housing Initiatives.

The first three recommendations represent a systemic shift in the provision of Permanent Supportive Housing throughout the state. This last recommendation looks to expand on existing initiatives that may be intermittently used to complement Permanent Supportive Housing programs.

The remainder of this report discusses this issue in further detail and provides policy recommendations.

THE PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING WORKGROUP

INTRODUCTION

In 2022, the Florida Supportive Housing Coalition hosted a Policy Day in Tallahassee. Representatives from the Executive Office of the Governor, various State Agencies, and other key stakeholders gathered to discuss supportive housing and the households served. The group focused on the need to increase production of Permanent Supportive Housing units for persons with special needs, how to improve access, coordination and funding for supportive services, and the importance of creating data-driven solutions that cross State Agencies and systems of care.

This group examined data from a recently completed statewide needs assessment for homeless and special needs households and worked to identify and outline short- and long-term strategies to address the needs of households that require supportive housing services.

At this Policy Day, the Governor's Office recommended establishing a statewide Permanent Supportive Housing Workgroup to identify and recommend housing and supportive services policies and actions that could be implemented to best address the needs of Floridians that require Permanent Supportive Housing solutions.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

While the number of Permanent Supportive Housing developments and units becoming available in Florida increases each year, and despite the strong presence of a multitude of supportive services providers in the state, this Workgroup concludes that overall, the needs of the state's population requiring Permanent Supportive Housing is not yet adequately addressed. The Workgroup has also concluded that one of the reasons for this is the lack of a coordinated state-level effort to address Permanent Supportive Housing from both a policy and program perspective. One of the reasons for this is that Permanent Supportive Housing is a complex and multifaceted issue that does not lend itself to "one size fits all" solutions. At the most basic level, Permanent Supportive Housing blends two challenging and often distinct areas within state policy – the development and provision of an adequate number of affordable housing units, and the provision of related supportive services that allow individuals and families who have found themselves homeless or in precarious living situations to address the issues contributing to their predicament, with the ultimate goal of reaching a level of financial and personal stability. There have been previous examples of coordinating pilot programs or demonstration-type efforts to better integrate the provision of Permanent Supportive Housing and related services, but these initiatives have thus far been implemented at the local level and not fully adopted among state partners.

DEFINING PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

To ensure consistency among definitions the Workgroup adopted the following definition of Permanent Supportive Housing:

Permanent Supportive Housing is affordable rental housing leased to households for continued occupancy. Tenancy is based on a lease for term as long as the tenant complies with lease requirements.

Permanent Supportive Housing shall support housing stability, access to activities of daily living, community-based services, and inclusion in the general community through voluntary participation in supportive services.

CHARGE OF WORKGROUP

The Permanent Supportive Housing Workgroup has been identified as a group of key policy makers with knowledge of areas related to affordable housing and supportive services with the initial charge to meet several times during 2023 to discuss the issues and challenges in Florida surrounding the development and maintenance of a statewide supply of Permanent Supportive Housing. These discussions, along with testimony and recommendations from interested

stakeholders outside of state government, formed the basis for this statewide Action Plan's primary recommendation that state entities with a programmatic relationship to those who would benefit from a more efficient and effective provision of Permanent Supportive Housing work within an integrated framework towards this common goal. This framework will require the various state agencies and programs impacted to identify efficiencies, eliminate unnecessary duplication and overlap, improve existing coordination efforts, and develop integrated Permanent Supportive Housing budget and policy recommendations for consideration by the Governor and the Legislature.

HISTORY: THE HOMELESS & SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

During the 2017 session, the Florida Legislature created a short-term Affordable Housing Workgroup to develop recommendations to address the state's affordable housing needs. The Workgroup recommended that Florida Housing find the resources to conduct an assessment that would identify the statewide affordable and supportive housing required for Florida's special needs and homeless populations and perform financial modeling to address the housing needs of each subpopulation within these groups.

Florida Housing contracted with the Corporation for Supportive Housing to carry out this statewide housing needs assessment. The report was designed to help stakeholders better understand the more specific housing needs across these sub-populations. For example, the report identifies how many Permanent Supportive Housing units versus general affordable rental units are needed. The assessment also projects the cost of subsidizing a portion of operating expenses, as well as costs that supportive service providers or property owners subsidize in lowering cost barriers to entry (application costs, security deposits and the like) for the lowest income, hardest to serve population. The assessment did not specify an overall need and cost for the supportive services that many of these households require as assistance to live successfully in affordable independent housing.

Based on the findings from this needs assessment, an estimated 156,962 homeless and/or Special Needs households were identified as requiring either supportive or affordable housing. Of the total number of households in this analysis, 12,811 (8 percent) required Permanent Supportive Housing (affordable housing combined with supportive services), while the remaining 92 percent needed affordable housing only.



The following table summarizes the estimated need for SH and AH for subpopulations examined in this analysis. Please note that throughout this report, numbers reflected may be off by +/- 1 due to rounding.

FIGURE 1: SUMMARY TABLE DETAILING THE ESTIMATED SH AND AH UNIT NEED FOR ALL SUBPOPULATIONS EXAMINED AT THE TIME OF THIS ANALYSIS.

Subpopulations Assessed	Estimated SH Unit Need (households)	Estimated AH Unit Need (households)	Unit Need Totals (SH+AH)
Individuals Experiencing Chronic Homelessness	4,664	518	5,128
Individuals Experiencing Non-Chronic Homelessness	1,580	13,866	15,446
Families Experiencing Homelessness*	296	913	1,209
Families Living Doubled Up or in Hotels/Motels	1,346	43,508	44,854
Individuals Exiting Prison	319	1,278	1,597
Youth Aging Out of Foster Care	625	1,875	2,500
Homeless Individuals with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI) and/or Substance Use Disorder (SUD) in Residential or Inpatient Treatment Settings**	726	1,742	2,468
Persons with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) Requiring Independent Living Services	995	1,990	2,985
Survivors of Domestic Violence	80	1,520	1,600
Child Welfare-Involved Families with an Adult with Special Needs	2,180	***	2,180
Individuals and Families Receiving SSDI, SSI, or Veterans Disability Benefits	****	76,941	76,941
State Totals	12,811	144,151	156,962

Table Note: This table provides a summary of the overall estimated unit need for SH and AH for the subpopulations assessed in this analysis. Duplication across subpopulations has been accounted for in the methodology and removed wherever possible, but the potential for some duplication may continue to persist in the totals listed above. See Appendix I: Methodology for more details. Numbers reflected in this report may be off +/- 1 due to rounding.

*Chronically Homeless Families make up less than 10% of the chronically homeless population and a small percentage of families experiencing homelessness. As such, this category includes both non-chronic family households and those with chronically homeless adults with a qualifying disability. (HUD defines a Chronically Homeless family as a family with an adult head of household with a qualifying disability who meets the definition of a Chronically Homeless individual).

**Assessment of need for individuals for whom no subsequent residence has been identified upon discharge.

***This category assessed child welfare involved families where one or more adults in the household have a Special Need. A rate of 18% was applied to the total number of all child-welfare involved families in the state to estimate the share with Special Needs.

A FOUNDATIONAL PILOT INITIATIVE

Studies around the country show that cost savings to public systems, particularly for crisis services, occur when individuals who are high utilizers of these services are provided with supportive housing.¹ In late 2012, Florida Housing hosted a forum with state agencies and key stakeholders to discuss best practices to integrate supportive housing and community-based services. The group agreed it would be helpful to pursue a pilot to develop Permanent Supportive Housing opportunities targeting people experiencing chronic homelessness who are high utilizers of expensive, publicly funded crisis services, such as emergency rooms and jails. The purpose of the pilot would be two-fold: to evaluate whether cost savings are possible in Florida when providing Permanent Supportive Housing; and to measure whether residents participating in the pilot could also have improved personal outcomes.



In 2021, a [final report](#) including the findings from this pilot was released summarizing the results of the cost savings evaluations, newly identified best practices, as well as residents' personal outcomes. In addition to the pilot's results, the report includes concerns that arose during implementation related to the fragmentation of the housing and services infrastructure in Florida, particularly around coordination and funding of services in supportive housing settings.

Using \$10 million appropriated by the State Legislature, Florida Housing awarded development financing through a competitive application to three experienced non-profit housing providers with committed local supportive service partners. In addition to the applicant's ability to successfully develop and manage a property and experience serving persons experiencing chronic homelessness, Florida Housing sought housing organizations that were part of a broader community partnership with a network of participating organizations that would be able to provide the services and supports necessary for the pilot.

¹ The following studies identify key costs savings for communities when households with significant needs access Permanent Supportive Housing.

- National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2017). Ending Chronic Homelessness Saves Taxpayers Money. Retrieved from <https://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Cost-Savings-from-PSH.pdf>
- Corporation for Supportive Housing. (2018). FAQ's about Supportive Housing Research: Is Supportive Housing Cost Effective? Retrieved from <https://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Cost-Effectiveness-FAQ.pdf>
- RAND Corporation. (2018). Supportive Housing Reduces Homelessness – and Lowers Health Care Costs by Millions. Retrieved from <https://www.rand.org/pubs/articles/2018/supportive-housing-reduces-homelessness-and-lowers.html>
- National Academies Press. (2018). Cost-Effectiveness of Permanent Supportive Housing. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK519595/>
- Hunter, S. B., Scherling, A., Cefalu, M., and McBain, R. (2023). Just in Reach Pay for Success: Impact Evaluation and Cost Analysis of a Permanent Supportive Housing Program. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10187556/>

Each pilot committed to partner with knowledgeable researchers to carry out a multi-year study. The purpose of the research was to evaluate whether cost savings are possible through coordinated local and state public-private partnerships to provide affordable rental housing with supportive services, in the form of Permanent Supportive Housing. The research was also required to provide an evaluation of the residents' health, self-sufficiency, and other outcomes over the study period. Resident participation in the studies was voluntary. Each study included costs of any residency/shelter and services for two years before residency, and for two years after the supportive housing and services were provided. In addition to housing costs, the public system utilization costs include the judicial system, emergency shelters, emergency and inpatient hospital/clinic stays, physical and behavioral health services and other homelessness services.

Each of the pilot sites showed overall costs savings among community-provided services among residents. Consistent findings across each pilot site included:

- **Permanent Supportive Housing for persons experiencing chronic homelessness with high needs can save local and state governments money**, particularly services in the public healthcare system such as emergency care, hospital stays and in-patient behavioral health services serving indigent patients.
- **Moving into Permanent Supportive Housing also reduces interaction with the criminal justice system**, reducing costs borne by both local and state governments along with attendant costs to move someone through the judicial process.



- **Resident stability in housing usually decreases supportive service costs over time.** While initial costs to assist a new resident with tenancy supports and service coordination may be high, across the board studies find that as a resident stabilizes in their home, service coordination costs and even services costs usually decrease. Even if a resident continues to need services such as behavioral health care, these costs typically are lower than the crisis services often incurred before housing was obtained.
- **Permanent Supportive Housing is successful in helping persons experiencing chronic homelessness with high needs achieve and sustain housing stability.** In the Florida pilot, these residents were more likely to increase their incomes, obtain health insurance, and show greater satisfaction with their quality of life.
- **Most pilot residents who had formerly experienced chronic homelessness successfully retained their housing.** All three pilots showed excellent housing retention during and after the two-year study period.

Peer discussions among pilot leaders identified the following best practices that were important to serving residents with high needs, not only to help the individual households, but also to create opportunities for cost savings in related programs.

- **Residents' Expectations and Goals.** Expectations for residents' optimal stability and quality of life must be based on their own expectations and goals. Use of the Housing First approach in tenant selection responds to this person-centered principle.
- **Housing Stability Supports and Resident Services Coordination.** New residents must have immediate access to supports related to developing and maintaining housing stability; addressing trauma and acute issues; and accessing community-based supportive services, health and behavioral health services, peer supports and motivational interviewing. On-site Resident Services Coordinators are the linchpin for success of this approach. These staff should be overseen by the non-profit housing provider with experience in resident services coordination at appropriate staff-to-resident ratios discussed in the report. The "Housing Stability Framework" model is fully described in the report.
- **The first 12-24 months are critical.** Residents with high needs who have been chronically homeless require intensive housing stability and resident services coordination particularly for the first 12-24 months after moving into Permanent Supportive Housing.
- **Experience working with residents with high needs is essential.** Experienced, mission-focused Permanent Supportive Housing providers and Resident Services Coordinators are essential to implementation success.
- **Access to services funding is crucial.** Housing providers must be able to access services funding from an established, integrated housing and services infrastructure to achieve long-term success, including funding for housing stability services and resident services coordination.

- **Local partnerships increase the likelihood of success.** From a thoughtful coordinated entry process working with the local homeless Continuum of Care and member organizations, up to the state/regional level with Managed Care Plans and Managing Entities, housing providers need access to an integrated services funding model that ensures residents are efficiently supported. Ideally these entities should be working with housing service providers to clarify roles and responsibilities, as well as how funding can best be used to support residents with high needs.
- **Access to operating assistance for Permanent Supportive Housing that serves residents with high needs will provide for sustainable housing over the long term.** The most successful pilots were able to obtain some type of rental assistance that will assist in maintaining the condition of their housing over time. While affordable housing rent levels are lower than market rate rentals, rents are mostly higher than residents with extremely low incomes can afford, much less households that have not achieved housing stability and are high utilizers of crisis services.
- **Continued predictability and availability of financing to develop Permanent Supportive Housing must occur.** The predictability of housing development funding within an established housing and services infrastructure is important for long-term success. Predictability is an important component to increase the capacity of the supportive housing industry. It is critical that Florida Housing continues to provide reliable annual funding opportunities for such housing.
- **Efforts to coordinate housing and services dollars should be made at the state and local level to support housing providers.** While this has occurred on a limited basis through demonstrations or among a few formal agreements between a housing provider and Managing Entity or Managed Care Plan, there is no state infrastructure in place where housing and services funding streams merge to assist the hardest to serve. Currently the responsibility for braiding funding most commonly lies with individual providers on the ground or with the service recipients trying to navigate multiple systems. Interagency collaboration among state policy makers (including Managing Entities and Managed Care Plans) and an emphasis on how funding is prioritized for services and coordination would greatly benefit individuals with high needs. Florida’s interagency Council on Homelessness could be a useful starting body for state agencies to work together to develop a policy approach, bring funding together and coordinate interagency collaboration to address these issues.
- **The Housing Stability Framework discussed in the report also would be ideal for persons leaving institutionalized settings, because they need strong supports to live independently.** National studies show that savings are garnered from these transitions – supportive housing with a strong housing stability framework is less expensive than institutional settings. In addition, creating housing stability with intensive wrap-around services for families in the child welfare system has shown success in pilots around the country.

The full report and each of the individual pilot reports may be found on [Florida Housing’s website](#).

CURRENT MODELS AND PROGRAMS

This section outlines the foundational elements of Permanent Supportive Housing in Florida, which are followed by the Workgroup's recommendations and strategies for improving the development and provision of such housing.

PILLARS OF PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

There are three core fiscal elements or investments essential to the successful implementation of Permanent Supportive Housing: Development Financing, Supportive Services, and Rental Assistance:

- **Development Financing.** Capital for development financing is the foundation for the creation of Permanent Supportive Housing units. The design and models implemented vary based on individual communities and the needs therein. Permanent Supportive Housing falls into two broad categories: Scattered Site and Site-based Permanent Supportive Housing. The broader design concepts of each model will depend on who is being served, the needs of the households being served, and the community where the housing is placed.

Often as a part of development financing, funding is provided up front to ensure that there are deep cuts to rents for income limited households – e.g., Extremely Low-Income households earning 30 percent or less of the area median income – and that the cost of rent does not exceed 30 percent of a household's gross income. (The [median income for a family of four](#) in Florida is \$85,500 and is adjusted for family size). As a result of the deep cuts provided up front, to ensure that rents are affordable for these households, in the long-term the rents collected do not provide enough support for the ongoing operational costs, which is still a critical need.

- **Supportive Services.** As noted earlier, Permanent Supportive Housing is meant to be paired with supportive services tailored to a tenant's needs and designed to help a tenant maintain housing stability. These supportive services include but are not limited to providing access to activities of daily living, community-based financial and social services, and general community inclusion. The Permanent Supportive Housing model assumes that tenants wish to improve their existing situation but is also based on voluntary rather than compulsory participation in supportive services; as long as tenants follow their lease requirements, they are allowed to remain in their supportive housing environment. Nevertheless, access to and funding for supportive services is another foundational element of the Permanent Supportive Housing model, with the ultimately goal of fostering long-term housing stability and self-sufficiency among those served.

As noted in the summary of findings from the foundational pilot conducted by Florida Housing Finance Corporation, the role of the Permanent Supportive Housing provider, in services coordination and housing stability often plays an important role in the long-term success of the households utilizing the Permanent Supportive Housing and supportive services associated with it. When the Permanent Supportive Housing provider is contracted to provide housing stability services, residents have a higher success rate in maintaining their housing long-term.

- **Rental Assistance.** The complex needs of households that occupy Permanent Supportive Housing units are invariably intertwined with a lack of financial security. Based on various circumstances often related to developmental, physical and/or mental health – many of the individuals and households lack the financial capabilities to access standard affordable or market rate housing, so additional rental assistance may be required in addition to supportive services for housing stability. Depending on this individual situation, this rental assistance may come in the form of short-term rental assistance or longer-term rental assistance vouchers.

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING MODELS

As mentioned earlier in this report, Permanent Supportive Housing is a proven model that is achieved through individual and family access to affordable housing with appropriate supportive services, and is designed to support and increase housing stability, improve access to activities of daily living through community-based services, and integrate individuals and families served into the general community.

An individual’s continued access to the housing is based upon compliance with lease requirements and any participation in supportive services is voluntary.

Best Practices and research studies have established that successful outcomes of Permanent Supportive Housing are achieved through fidelity to the Housing First approach or philosophy.²

- **Housing First Philosophy.** [Housing First](#) is a model for addressing homelessness and housing instability for vulnerable populations. Housing First principles include providing households with decent and stable permanent housing as quickly as possible without required conditions of sobriety or participation in treatment. This philosophy is based in values of individual autonomy, individual choice, and flexibility, while also ensuring that housing stability and well-being are addressed and promoted through the availability of both affordable housing and supportive services as needed.

The definition included in this report emphasizes the environment in which a household accesses Permanent Supportive Housing is truly individualized; this autonomy is fundamental as a base for the long-term development of self-sufficiency for each individual and family being served.

² The following resources identify the effectiveness of Housing First as an evidence-based model for addressing housing instability and homelessness.

- Section 420.6275, Florida Statutes. (2023). *Housing First*. Retrieved from http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=0400-0499/0420/Sections/0420.6275.html
- Community Solutions. (2022). *What is Housing First?* Retrieved from <https://community.solutions/what-is-housing-first/>
- National Low-Income Housing Coalition and National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2023). *The Case for Housing First*. Retrieved from <https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/Housing-First-Research.pdf>
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research. (2023). *Housing First: A Review of the Evidence*. Retrieved from <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/spring-summer-23/highlight2.html>

As mentioned earlier, there are two basic models for Permanent Supportive Housing.

- **Scattered Site Permanent Supportive Housing Model.** The [scattered site housing model](#) places households experiencing or at-risk of housing instability in apartments scattered throughout a community. Rental assistance often covered through vouchers connected to the individual renting the apartment. Supportive services are not part of the housing development itself but are otherwise made available to individuals and families.
- **Single Site (or project-based) Permanent Supportive Housing Model.** A single site (or [project-based](#)) housing model utilizes rental assistance and/or vouchers to support a specific apartment complex or development. This approach ensures that affordable housing remains available within the broader community on a long-term basis. Supportive services may be available on-site or off-site as needed.

EXISTING PROGRAMS WITH THE ABILITY TO STRENGTHEN PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING EFFORTS

The State of Florida administers a myriad of programs that were created to assist those who have experienced hardship in various forms and ultimately help them achieve and maintain self-sufficiency, many of which support the goals of Permanent Supportive Housing. As noted earlier, Florida adds additional Permanent Supportive Housing units each year, and continually works toward providing a strong foundation of supportive services needed for the Permanent Supportive Housing model to be successful. The following are examples of existing programs and initiatives by Florida state agencies that support vulnerable individuals and families with their housing stability needs.

Development Financing

- **Florida Housing Finance Corporation High Utilizer Housing and Services Pilot with Housing Providers and Managing Entities.** In 2022, Florida Housing awarded \$40 million in financing to three Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) properties for a [new pilot](#). A small portion of the units – 20% or a minimum of 15 units – will house “High Utilizers” of public behavioral health crisis services or individuals that are a high priority for diversion from acute health care services and institutional settings. The focus of this new 3-year pilot is on those High Utilizers who part of the state’s behavioral healthcare system through the Managing Entities and are facing housing instability due to their behavioral health care situation. The long-term objective of the pilot is to create a collaborative approach to state-administered funding for both housing and services to build a replicable model for the future.
- **Florida Housing Finance Corporation use of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and the State Apartment Incentive Loan Program to Create Permanent Supportive Housing.** Over the last decade Florida Housing has dedicated a portion of its [Low-Income Housing Tax Credits](#) (LIHTC or Tax Credits) to support the development Permanent Supportive Housing for households at-risk of or currently experiencing homelessness, households where an adult has a disabling condition and can live independently, and for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Additionally, Florida Housing sets aside a portion of the [State Apartment Incentive Loan](#) (SAIL) funding to serve homeless and Special Needs households. To date Florida Housing has helped finance more than 200 developments that provide nearly 6,800 units to vulnerable Floridians.
- **Florida Housing Finance Corporation’s Link Strategy: Link to Permanent Housing.** Florida Housing’s [Link Strategy](#) enhances the ability of extremely low-income (ELI) households with special needs to access

and retain affordable rental housing in their communities. Florida Housing requires developers to provide a specified percentage of a development's ELI units for special needs households receiving community based supportive services who are referred by a designated supportive services agency in the community where the development is located.

Supportive Services

- **Agency for Persons with Disabilities iBudget Program.** The [iBudget Florida waiver](#) administered by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities offers supports and services to assist individuals with developmental disabilities to live in their communities. Services are provided based on need. The primary categories include different levels of Life Skills Development, Medical Supplies and Equipment, Personal Supports, Residential Services, Supportive Services Coordination, Transportation, Dental Services and Therapeutic Supports and Wellness Services.
- **Agency for Health Care Administration 1115 Medicaid Waiver Program.** In collaboration with select Managed Care Organizations, the Agency for Health Care Administration implemented a [housing assistance pilot](#) beginning in late 2019. Through this program, Florida Medicaid is providing evidence-based community supports and services that assist in securing housing for Medicaid recipients ages 21+ who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness or substance use disorder. Covered services include but are not limited to tenancy sustaining services, mobile crisis management, self-help/peer support services, and limited incidental coverage.



- **Florida Housing Finance Corporation High Utilizer Housing and Services Pilot with Housing Providers and Managing Entities.** In 2022, Florida Housing awarded \$40 million in financing to three Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) properties for a [new pilot](#). A small portion of the units – 20% or a minimum of 15 units – will house “High Utilizers” of public behavioral health crisis services or individuals that are a high priority for diversion from acute health care services and institutional settings. The focus of this new 3-year pilot is on those High Utilizers who part of the state’s behavioral healthcare system through the Managing Entities and are facing housing instability due to their behavioral health condition. The long-term objective of the pilot is to create a collaborative approach to state-administered funding for both housing and services to build a replicable model for the future.
- **Department of Children and Families Hope Florida: A Pathway to Prosperity.** The [Hope Florida: A Pathway to Prosperity program](#) is designed to provide individualized supports to ensure economic self-sufficiency. Staff of this program help connect individuals and families to supportive services in the private sector, faith community, and nonprofit organizations while developing long-term goals to address the needs, including housing, identified by the participating households.
- **Department of Children and Families and Continuums of Care Collaboration.** The Department of Children and Families’ State Office on Homelessness administers funding to [27 Continuum of Care \(CoC\) lead agencies](#), and serves as a single point of contact for the CoCs and other agencies, organizations, and stakeholders serving individuals at-risk of or experiencing homelessness.
- **Department of Children and Families Independent Living Program for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care.** An example of [Permanent Supportive Housing for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care](#) includes scattered site placement into individual apartments throughout the community. These efforts are aimed at supporting youths exiting the foster care system who are Extremely Low-Income. The Community Based Care agencies support youths through continual communication with the property, as well as offering additional supports. Eligible young adults ages 18-23 receive wrap-around services including financial assistance and help navigating adulthood through Extended Foster Care, Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS), and Aftercare programs.
- **Florida Housing Finance Corporation Housing Stability for Homeless Schoolchildren Initiative.** This [initiative](#) pairs federal rental assistance with wrap around supports from a network of local providers including Public Housing Authorities, School District homeless liaisons, and a case management organization. A local network of providers supports families with school-aged children through improved employment opportunities, access to community-based supports and services, and educational supports. Participating households have seen marked improvements in school attendance, academic performance, and increased housing stability.

Rental Assistance

- **Continuum of Care and Housing Authority Rental Assistance Programs.** In each community the local homeless [Continuum of Care](#) lead agency, as well as the [local Housing Authority](#), provide critical rental assistance for income qualifying households. Rental assistance may be provided directly to the individual household through tenant-based rental assistance or through project(site)-based rental assistance.
- **Department of Children and Families and Continuums of Care Collaboration.** The Department of Children and Families' State Office on Homelessness administers funding to [27 Continuum of Care \(CoC\) lead agencies](#), and serves as a single point of contact for the CoCs and other agencies, organizations, and stakeholders serving individuals at-risk of homelessness and individuals experiencing homeless.
- **Department of Elder Affairs Home and Community-Based Programs.** The Department administers multiple programs across the state that provide [community-based and in-home services](#) to help elders with functional impairments to maintain their safety and independence while living in the least restrictive and most cost-effective environment suitable to their needs. Services include, but are not limited to case management, chore assistance, respite, assistive devices, personal care, home delivered meals, transportation and legal assistance.
- **Florida Housing Finance Corporation Housing Stability for Homeless Schoolchildren Initiative.** This initiative pairs federal rental assistance with wrap around supports from a network of local providers including Public Housing Authorities, School District homeless liaisons, and a case management organization. A local network of providers supports families with school-aged children through improved employment opportunities, access to community-based supports and services, and educational supports. Participating households have seen marked improvements in school attendance, academic performance, and increased housing stability.

Note: While the projects described above provide critical services to the households served, not all households with needs are eligible to participate in any given program; as with all state and federal resources, funding is often restricted to households that meet eligibility criteria of the funding sources and/or the administering agency/organization.

The following table provides a summary of how the existing programs described above supports the three core elements of Permanent Supportive Housing:

PROGRAM/ACTIVITY	DEVELOPMENT FINANCING	SUPPORTIVE SERVICES	RENTAL ASSISTANCE
High Utilizer Housing & Services Pilot			
LIHTC & SAIL Funding to Create Permanent Supportive Housing			
Link Strategy: Link to Permanent Housing			
iBudget Program			
Medicaid 1115 Wavier Program			
HOPE Florida: A Pathway to Prosperity Program			
Continuum of Care Collaboration			
Independent Living Program for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care			
Housing Stability for Homeless Schoolchildren Program			
Continuum of Care & Public Housing Authority Rental Assistance Programs			
Elder Home & Community-Based Programs			

CHALLENGES FACED WITH EXISTING EFFORTS

As mentioned in the Problem Statement section of this report, the number of Permanent Supportive Housing units available in Florida increases each year, and there is a strong presence of related supportive service providers in the state. However, as the above listing of individual programmatic initiatives illustrates, there is a good deal of effort being undertaken to address different elements that contribute to the precarious housing position many Floridians find themselves in, but less in the way of coordinating various program elements into an integrated programmatic approach that addresses the development of new Permanent Supportive Housing units, the integration of supportive services and targeted rental assistance to help combat housing instability among those with special needs. This disconnect often leads to unnecessary duplication of services, missed opportunities for the individuals being served, and inefficient systems of service delivery. Because of this, the Workgroup must conclude that on an overall basis the needs of the state's population requiring Permanent Supportive Housing are currently not being adequately addressed. The Workgroup has also concluded that creating and providing state funding for initiatives that will establish a coordinated effort for both the development and provision of Permanent Supportive Housing units, AND the establishment and provision of adequate levels of support services, will be a significant step forward in meeting the housing needs of many vulnerable Floridians.

The Workgroup recommendations that follow are designed to provide policymakers and stakeholders in the Permanent Supportive Housing space to create an integrated data-driven system for state-level integrated data-driven system development and support, one in which state agencies are able to self-assess and reflect on missing opportunities, as well as asking the broader question of "what are we not addressing, and why?"



WORKGROUP RECOMMENDATIONS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE INNOVATION & SOLUTIONS

The following continually emerged as strategies for improvement and for creating a coordinated approach that would allow Florida to serve as a model to the nation for the provision of Permanent Supportive Housing:

1. Develop and Implement a Coordinated Interagency Approach, Overseen and Guided by a Coordinating State Entity to Coordinating Develop & Sustaining the Provision of Adequate Levels of Permanent Supportive Housing throughout Florida;
2. Begin Efforts to Design Coordinated Permanent Supportive Housing Initiatives and Consolidate Related Efforts to Design Programs & Braid Funding Streams to Create Sustainable Solutions;
3. Establish New Approaches to Assisting Permanent Supportive Housing Residents in Ultimately Achieving Self-Sufficiency & Moving on to Independent Housing; and
4. Implement a Scaled Approach to Improve and Enhance Existing Programmatic Efforts that Currently Supplement Permanent Supportive Housing Initiatives.

These recommendations provide a broad overview of the strategies that can be used to better coordinate and facilitate the delivery of Permanent Supportive Housing throughout the state of Florida. These recommendations seek to ensure that a holistic system is designed that addresses the development financing needs required to create new Permanent Supportive Housing units throughout the state, coordinate and fund the array of housing stability and supportive services utilized by individuals living in Permanent Supportive Housing, and ensure that rental assistance is available for income constrained households living in Permanent Supportive Housing.

1. DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A COORDINATED INTERAGENCY APPROACH, OVERSEEN AND GUIDED BY A COORDINATING STATE ENTITY TO DEVELOP & SUSTAIN THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE LEVELS OF PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING THROUGHOUT FLORIDA

The Workgroup contemplated various approaches to the development of an interagency collaboration. This could come in the form of more intentional coordination and data sharing or through the creation of a new Office within the Executive Office of the Governor or another state entity, whose purpose would be to facilitate alignment and coordinate the efforts of state agencies for the delivery and implementation of Permanent Supportive Housing and related services throughout Florida.

These efforts should explore formal interagency agreements aimed at prioritizing Housing First referrals and providing additional supportive services for vulnerable households living in Permanent Supportive Housing. Interagency coordination could take several forms, including but not limited to the following:

- ***Increase Permanent Supportive Housing Stock.*** The shortage of affordable housing is evident for all populations. An emphasis should be placed on utilizing existing state affordable housing programs to develop additional Permanent Supportive Housing units for populations identified in the Florida Assessment of Housing for Homeless and Special Needs Populations. Specific efforts should consider age demographics within each of these populations, specifically vulnerable seniors.
- ***Housing Stability/Supportive Services Funding.*** Identify types of funding streams that yield flexibility in the types of services that can be administered and funding streams that could potentially be consolidated into a dedicated funding source designed to ensure housing stabilization supports and services for individuals living in Permanent Supportive Housing.

- **Rental Assistance & Arrearages Funding.** State agencies should examine their regulatory and statutory authority to determine if eligible uses of funds include rental assistance and/or rental and utility arrearages. When the costs of short-term rental assistance may prevent higher cost services and/or disrupt the household, rental assistance should be prioritized. State agencies should examine eligible uses of funds to determine if arrearages assistance may be provided.
- **Data Sharing Agreements.** Efforts should be made to increase collaboration between state agencies and contracting entities through data sharing agreements. Improved coordination can help facilitate smooth transitions of the funder of service while minimizing disruption in services regardless of the funding source.
- **Public Permanent Supportive Housing Dashboard.** Develop a public facing dashboard that integrates eligibility requirements, so households can determine what housing options they qualify for.

2. BEGIN EFFORTS TO DESIGN COORDINATED PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING INITIATIVES AND CONSOLIDATE RELATED FUNDING STREAMS TO CREATE SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

In an effort to build upon the initial recommendation to develop an interagency approach, the Workgroup recommends further coordination for the purposes of program planning and design as well as taking an intentional integrated approach to funding. Taking a true interagency approach will help to create more comprehensive services model designed to support individuals and households by reducing the duplication of services, while also ensuring that key resources are invested in each community and that specific needs are not overlooked.

A fully integrated state program and policy effort to develop and (re)design programs that best serve vulnerable Floridians will also create a more efficient and effective statewide delivery system. Examples of how this can be achieved may include but are not limited to the following efforts.

- **Long Range Program Planning.** State agencies participating in the interagency efforts to coordinate Permanent Supportive Housing should take into account and review the Long Range Program Plan for each respective agency. This level of coordination and collective planning will ensure that efforts are not duplicative in an unnecessary manner, nor are there key services that are missed for households accessing Permanent Supportive Housing.
- **Evidence-Based and Best Practices.** Policy makers and program providers should collaborate to ensure that program design is rooted in Evidence-based Best Practices, while also allowing for customization. Joint consultation in program design will allow for the maximization of innovative program and potential for consolidated funding streams to prioritize housing stability, supportive services, and create new programs.
- **Flexible Services Funding.** Funders that provide resources dedicated to supportive services should explore pairing resources or dedicating flexible resources to create innovative approaches through pilot programs. This process should allow services providers to customize evidence-based and best practices in ways that further an individual's or household's housing stability and self-sufficiency.
- **Provider Enrollment & Capacity Building.** Targeted efforts to expand provider enrollment and capacity building will allow agencies to establish new partnerships while also increasing the number of community partners and growing local expertise for Permanent Supportive Housing and supportive services providers. Examples of capacity building measures may include Permanent Supportive Housing development institutes, or an intensive training program aimed at helping prepare providers to engage in all aspects of this work. Concerted efforts to build capacity should be accompanied with the financial investments needed to ensure adequate efforts are provided and providers are supported in getting connected with future funding to develop Permanent Supportive Housing and/or serve the households benefiting from these services.

- **Sustainability Planning.** State agencies should explore permanent funding options for any rental assistance and supportive services. Additionally, a sustainable model for operational funding should be considered given that in cases where individuals and households attain stability and work toward self-sufficiency the billing for supportive services will likely decline, yet the infrastructure will likely need to remain in place should the individual or household need to come back from additional supports.
- **Healthcare Assistance Available Onsite.** Policymakers and funders should consider ways to address the complex healthcare needs of residents of Permanent Supportive Housing. In developments where individuals or households with more acute medical and/or behavioral health needs there is value of having healthcare assistance (i.e., nurse practitioners) available. This is often best accomplished through partnerships with other community organizations/agencies. Sustained funding for these types of positions would be helpful.
- **On the Ground Collaboration Amongst Stakeholders.** Encourage supportive housing entities, healthcare providers, supportive services providers, community members, and advocates to engage with key stakeholders at both the local and state level to provide real-time feedback and insight to the evolution of the issues faced by these populations to better optimize the program(s). Communication and coordination will help ensure an effective and efficient implementation of these strategies.

3. ESTABLISH NEW APPROACHES TO ASSISTING PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING RESIDENTS IN ULTIMATELY ACHIEVING SELF-SUFFICIENCY & MOVING ON TO INDEPENDENT HOUSING

After working to design a truly coordinated interagency approach to Permanent Supportive Housing, and exploring ways to design programs and interweave funding, the Workgroup recognizes that conducting evaluations and assessing for new innovative approaches will allow Florida to lead the nation in the quality provision of Permanent Supportive Housing.



In addition to understanding successful programs, Florida should invest in new, innovative approaches that help its most vulnerable citizens achieve housing stability and self-sufficiency, when possible. To accomplish these efforts there must be an introspective approach to evaluating existing programs, defining success, and exploring new ways to achieve results. Examples include but are not limited to the following.

- **Analyze Existing Programs.** State agencies participating in this Workgroup should conduct a careful analysis of existing programs and identify both successful and unsuccessful metrics of programs identified within this report and others that may be related to Permanent Supportive Housing.
- **Additional Affordable Housing Units.** Many households exiting a Permanent Supportive Housing program may be able to operate in a self-sufficient manner based on the skills acquired through the supportive services offered but face the challenge of finding an affordable unit. Additional efforts need to ensure that there are more units available for households with Extremely Low-Incomes, to encourage more “move-on” strategies and approaches.
- **Re-evaluate Success.** Any analysis of existing programs must also consider the definition of success. Recognizing that success is defined differently by each program, funder, and individual can present a challenge; however, taking a holistic approach can provide opportunities to re-assess criteria and discover new approaches for assessing metrics and outcomes.
- **Interagency Discussion & Planning.** By following the recommendations laid out in this report, the Workgroup recognizes the cyclical nature (and importance) of collaborative planning to design the most effective approaches. After reviewing existing programs and determining efficacy and identifying new possibilities for targeted approaches, continued discussions about future programmatic evolution and innovation is essential.



- **New Program Funding (or Repurposed Funding).** For new approaches and programs, state agencies should identify new funding resources. In cases where older programs are not meeting the intended outcomes the state agency should explore other eligible uses and reallocate these funds to newer and/or more successful projects.
- **Develop Strategies for Expanding & Enhancing Successful Pilot Projects.** With an emphasis on investing in new and innovative strategies to address Permanent Supportive Housing, there must be an intentional effort to maintain success. An interagency effort to identify opportunities to continue new projects is essential. Efforts should be made to codify newly identified programs and best practices in state policy and statute to ensure that funding is available to support high performing projects and providers.

4. IMPLEMENT A SCALED APPROACH TO IMPROVE AND ENHANCE EXISTING PROGRAMMATIC EFFORTS THAT CURRENTLY SUPPLEMENT PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING INITIATIVES.

The prior recommendations look to address Permanent Supportive Housing through sweeping and system changes that would change the service delivery infrastructure in Florida. A more subtle process, but equally as important, is examining programs where slight modifications can be made (or similar programs can be replicated from these examples) to improve upon or further the tenets of Permanent Supportive Housing in a way that does not unnecessarily duplicate efforts or detract from the existing program(s). Below are examples that have been discussed by the Workgroup that can be addressed at the individual State Agency level.

- **Increased supports as needs increase.** Establish a continuous feedback and evaluation component, with measurable outcomes, within Permanent Supportive Housing supportive services as a way to identify changes in tenant needs and ensuring there is a way to adjust services with needs over time to maintain stability for households that are in Permanent Supportive Housing.
- **Updates to the Certified Peer Support Program.** The Certified Peer Support Specialist Program provides a valued service and perspective. However, the current program includes significant barriers that prevent interested individuals from serving as a Certified Peer Support Specialist such as criminal history. Possible enhancement may include revisiting existing requirements to ensure that there are not unintentional barriers that prohibit interest and utilization of this valuable service.
- **Expanding Definitions of Community Health Workers and Peer Specialists.** In order to provide a broader level of support for individuals living in Permanent Supportive Housing that also utilize medical and/or behavioral health supports, consider revising and/or defining specific terms that will allow for a broader use of existing federal and state resources.
- **Moving to Independence Link Referral Program.** Consider establishing a similar program to [Florida Housing's Link Referral Program](#), that assists households moving out of Permanent Supportive Housing to independent housing.
- **Housing Providers as Medicaid Providers.** Conduct outreach to Permanent Supportive Housing providers to determine interest in adding Medicaid as a possible source of billing for supportive services provided. Examine ways to encourage (and simplify) enrollment for nontraditional Medicaid providers.
- **Resident Councils.** Promote and provide funding for the implementation of Resident Councils in Permanent Supportive Housing Developments. Resident Councils are positioned to welcome new members to the community and build a more collective shared environment. Resident Councils often provide a platform for residents to discussed common needs or observations with owners and property management.

MEMBERS OF THE PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING WORKGROUP

- Agency for Health Care Administration;
- Agency for Persons with Disabilities;
- Department of Children and Families;
- Department of Elder Affairs;
- Department of Veterans Affairs;
- Executive Office of the Governor, Office of Policy and Budget; and
- Florida Housing Finance Corporation (Florida Housing).

In addition to serving as a member of the Workgroup, staff from Florida Housing provided administrative support.



ATTRIBUTION LIST OF PROPERTIES

GRAHAM AT GRACEPOINT
FRONT COVER

SABAL PLACE
FRONT COVER

GANNET POINTE
PAGE 2

ARC VILLAGE
PAGE 5

COMMONS AT SPEER VILLAGE
PAGE 14

SULZBACHER VILLAGE
PAGE 18

DUVAL PARK
PAGE 21

KARIS VILLAGE
BACK COVER

SEVEN ON SEVENTH
BACK COVER

