



# MANATEE COUNTY HOMELESS TASK FORCE

Working together to end and prevent  
homelessness in Manatee County

2023 Quarter 4 Report





# Outreach and Coordinated Entry

The Manatee County Homeless Task Force is glad to present the 2023 Quarter 4 report. This quarter's issue features Manatee County data and community needs with a specific focus on **Outreach and Coordinated Entry (CE)**.

The Task Force is comprised of non-profit administrators, law enforcement officers, social workers, school leadership, and County and City of Bradenton elected officials all anchored in the same belief: **that we can and will end and prevent homelessness in Manatee County.**

The following information is based on front-line worker perspectives, lived experiences of residents experiencing homelessness, and expert recommendations. We look forward to continuing this work *with* the community, *for* the community.

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Manatee County Commissioner,  
District 2

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Title IX District Homeless Liaison

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# Key Terms

## Literally Homeless

An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. These residents may inhabit a public or private place not meant for human habitation or a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements. The Task Force utilizes this definition for "homeless".

## Continuum of Care (CoC)

The CoC promotes community-wide organized efforts and funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, states, Indian Tribes, and local governments to quickly rehouse community members experiencing homelessness. The lead HUD-designated CoC agency for Manatee and Sarasota Counties is Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness (SPEH).



## HMIS System

HMIS is a local information technology system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to clients experiencing homelessness. Manatee County's HMIS system is managed by SPEH. Data collected in the HMIS system is readily available upon request.

## Outreach

Efforts designed to meet the immediate needs of people experiencing homelessness in unsheltered locations by connecting them with emergency shelter, housing, or critical services and providing them with urgent, non-facility-based care.

## Coordinated Entry

The process developed to ensure that all people experiencing a housing crisis have fair and equal access and are quickly identified, assessed, referred, and connected to housing and assistance based on their strengths and needs.

## Access Points

A person or place where someone who is experiencing homelessness can connect to the homeless crisis response system to discuss their needs, engage in problem-solving conversations, and receive an Access Point Intake when applicable.



# Resident Needs

Based on Florida Housing Coalition lived experience focus groups and surveys conducted for the 2023 Manatee County Roadmap to End Homelessness

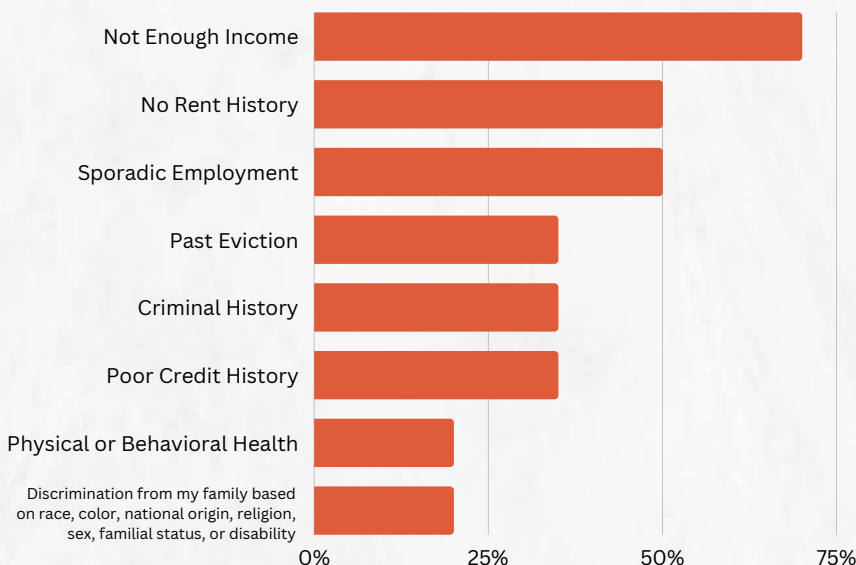


## About Lived Experience Data

The Florida Housing Coalition collected lived-experience data in two ways: a lived experience survey and multiple focus groups throughout Manatee County. For the full breakdown of these data, the Task Force recommends reading the full [Manatee County Homeless Roadmap Report](#).

## Challenges to Housing

Question: What challenges have you experienced when trying to get housing on your own? Choose ALL that apply:



## Top Reasons For Homelessness (Survey):

Question: What were the main reasons that led to your homelessness?

- 1 Problems with friends and family
- 2 Asked to leave/evicted
- 3 Financial crisis
- 4 Unable to pay rent, mortgage, or utilities

## Barriers to Housing (Focus Group):

Question: What have been the biggest barriers to getting back into housing?

During the focus groups, many participants mentioned the cost of housing and utilities, employment (lack of or underemployment), finances, and stable transportation. Other barriers included access to healthy food, lack of safe storage, being around drugs, depression, complacency, and criminal records.

# What is Outreach?

Efforts designed to meet the immediate needs of people experiencing homelessness in unsheltered locations by connecting them with emergency shelter, housing, or critical services and providing them with urgent, non-facility-based care.



## Task Force Outreach

### Manatee County Community Health Program

(941) 744-3951

[Communityhealth@mymanatee.org](mailto:Communityhealth@mymanatee.org)

[Online Referral](#)

### Manatee County Sheriff's Office

941-747-3011 ext. 2089

[Joy.jewett@manateesherriff.com](mailto:Joy.jewett@manateesherriff.com)

### Bradenton Police Department

941-932-9300

[jordan.poulos@bradentonpd.com](mailto:jordan.poulos@bradentonpd.com)

### Centerstone

941-782-4150 ext. 4851

[CentralCallCenter@centerstone.org](mailto:CentralCallCenter@centerstone.org)

## Outreach Needs

The Homeless Task Force outreach subject-matter experts applaud recent shelter developments within Manatee County. Readily available shelter is a key to successful outreach. In addition, the below needs have been identified for the further success of our dedicated Outreach teams:

Readily available detox beds

Medical respite emergency shelter beds

Affordable housing units within the  
0%-30% AMI range

Permanent Supportive Housing units

# Outreach RESIDENT SUCCESS



**“THANK  
YOU FOR  
BELIEVING  
IN ME AND  
ALL THE  
HELP.”**

Following a referral to Emergency Medical Service’s Community Health Team, the County’s Homeless Outreach Case Manager contacted a resident sheltering at an underdeveloped property off Manatee Avenue with assistance from the Sheriff’s Office. After hearing about the services available, the resident agreed to accept assistance the following day. The homeless outreach case manager completed an access point application in the field. After determining that the resident was a veteran, the team coordinated with Jewish Family and Community Services (JFCS) to get a housing referral. The resident and Homeless Outreach Case Manager met with JFCS’s case manager to complete all necessary paperwork to enroll them into their Veteran Housing Program.

A few weeks later, the Veteran contacted staff to inform them that he was having difficulty finding housing he could afford. The team provided housing leads from the Suncoast Housing Collaborative website and was able to find a viable option.

**The Veteran is now housed thanks to the dedication and collaboration of the County’s Community Health Team, Sheriff’s Office, JFCS, and the Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness.**

# Outreach Recommendations



The following outreach team recommendations were created by Task Force subject-matter experts in partnership with Florida Housing Coalition liaisons. The Task Force encourages all organizations intending to develop an outreach team to adopt these measures.



## Adopt a Housing Focused Perspective

Similar to the shelter system, outreach teams are encouraged to execute and track housing system performance measures (reducing the length of time homeless, transitioning into permanent housing, and preventing returns to homelessness) instead of solely diversion-related efforts.



## Work Across Organizational Lines

An outreach team can rarely house a resident from start to finish on their own. Staying up-to-date on local resources is essential. The Task Force recommends attending monthly PATH meetings to keep up-to-date on Manatee County local nonprofit initiatives and services. Contact PATH at [path@tpmanatee.org](mailto:path@tpmanatee.org) for meeting registration.



## Utilize HMIS Software

Centralized data is essential for case coordination, securing competitive funding, and analyzing community-wide gaps. For this reason, the Task Force recommends utilizing Manatee County's CoC-designated HMIS software for consistent, dependable data collection. Please email [SPTEH@suncoastpartnership.org](mailto:SPTEH@suncoastpartnership.org) for information and registration.



## Attend Coordinated Outreach Meetings

Monthly coordinated outreach meetings have been created by Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness. These meetings will have a focus on Outreach best practices, Coordinated Entry, and client case conferencing. Please email [SPTEH@suncoastpartnership.org](mailto:SPTEH@suncoastpartnership.org) for meeting registration.

## How do we know when we have a successful outreach system?

- Outreach is **well coordinated** across all providers with outreach programs.
- All outreach teams within Manatee County attend Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness's **monthly outreach meetings**.
- Outreach teams have a broad enough scope to **serve all subpopulations** of the unsheltered population.
- Outreach teams **collect data** and regularly **assess long-term housing outcomes** within the **HMIS system**.



# What is Coordinated Entry?

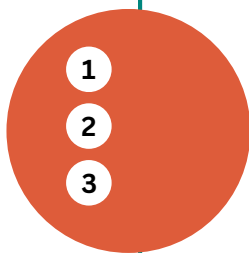
Coordinated Entry (CE) is the essential process through which people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness can access the crisis response system in a streamlined way, have their strengths and needs quickly assessed, and quickly connect to appropriate, tailored housing and mainstream services within the community or designated region. **The Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness manages the CE process for Manatee County.**



**Access** is the engagement point for persons experiencing a housing crisis. Residents might initially access the crisis response system by calling an information and referral resource, walking into an access point facility, or being engaged through outreach efforts.



Upon access, CoC providers will begin assessing the person's housing needs, preferences, and vulnerability. This coordinated entry element is referred to as **Assessment**.



During assessment, the resident's level of vulnerability is documented for **Prioritization**. Prioritization helps the CoC manage its inventory of community housing resources and services, ensuring that those persons with the greatest need and vulnerability receive the supports they need to resolve their housing crisis.



The final element is **Referral**. Residents are referred to available CoC housing resources and services in accordance with the CoC's documented prioritization guidelines.

For a comprehensive explanation of Coordinated Entry elements and best practices, please reference HUD's [Coordinated Entry Core Elements](#) guidebook.

# Community Progress



## **Outreach and Coordinated Entry Group Creation**

To increase coordination and unity amongst Manatee County homeless outreach teams, Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness will begin hosting monthly outreach meetings in November, 2023. Meetings will focus on best practices, case conferencing, and Coordinated Entry protocols. Organizations interested in outreach efforts are highly encouraged to attend. Email [SPTEH@suncoastpartnership.org](mailto:SPTEH@suncoastpartnership.org) for registration.

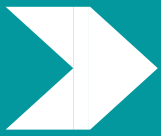
## **Grant Recipient Announcements**

Health Services has applied for and received a SAMSHA grant of nearly \$1.7 million that will support a new program called the Manatee County Overdose Prevention & Education Program (OPEP). This program involves three core goals: increase the availability, supply, and distribution of naloxone to the community; engage the community through training and education to create a prevention-focused network of support; and increase access to support and treatment for those who need it most, particularly individuals experiencing homelessness and those who are incarcerated. Email Health Services at [healthservices@mymanatee.org](mailto:healthservices@mymanatee.org) for more information.

## **MCSO Resource Assistance Program Expansion**

The Manatee County Sheriff's Office Resource Assistance Program (RAP) has expanded to two certified law enforcement officers and three case managers, with growth expected in the near future. The program addresses homelessness, substance abuse, and mental health by providing a hands-on approach to assisting those in need. Case Managers are available to coordinate care with local providers and connect those in need to family supports outside of the state. For more information, please contact Sergeant Joy Jewett at [Joy.Jewett@manateesherriff.com](mailto:Joy.Jewett@manateesherriff.com).

# Next Steps



The Task Force will continue monthly fact-finding meetings to develop ongoing quarterly reports. Our next quarterly report will have a focus on permanent supportive housing models and community partners.



The Task Force will continue to solicit feedback and recommendations from front-line service providers and clients via monthly PATH meetings, regular Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness community meetings, and Homeless Policy Coordinator surveys.



The Task Force will remain available to address questions, comments, or concerns from County Commissioners or community members. Please utilize the Homeless Policy Coordinator as the point of contact: [maria.santos@mymanatee.org](mailto:maria.santos@mymanatee.org).



**Turning Points**  
*Where Compassion Takes Action*



**CENTERSTONE**



# CONTACT US

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For questions about this report:

**Maria Santos, MSW**

**Manatee County Homeless Policy Coordinator**

[maria.santos@mymanatee.org](mailto:maria.santos@mymanatee.org)

For questions regarding Manatee County's  
Continuum of Care:

**Suncoast Partnership to End  
Homelessness**

**Manatee County's Continuum of Care lead agency**

[SPTEH@suncoastpartnership.org](mailto:SPTEH@suncoastpartnership.org)

For opportunities to work with Manatee County non-profits:

**Turning Points PATH**

**People Assisting The Homeless (PATH)**

[path@tpmanatee.org](mailto:path@tpmanatee.org)

