FL-500 Manatee & Sarasota County CoC
STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN
October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2028

Introduction

FL-500 is designated by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as the Continuum of Care (CoC) responsible for addressing homelessness within Manatee and Sarasota Counties, Florida. The CoC's governance body, the Suncoast CoC Leadership Council, works in partnership with Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness, the lead agency, which provides administrative support, is the Collaborative Applicant, and serves as the HMIS and Coordinated Entry lead as well.

A primary responsibility of the Suncoast CoC Leadership Council is to develop and implement a CoC-wide strategic plan that achieves measurable goals in reducing and preventing homelessness across both counties. This Strategic Action Plan outlines the objectives, strategies, and actions necessary over a three-year period to strengthen the local housing crisis response system and prevent and end homelessness in the two-county region.

Addressing homelessness is essential to building and sustaining a thriving community for all residents of Manatee and Sarasota Counties. When individuals and families have access to stable housing and support services, the entire community benefits through increased public safety, reduced strain on emergency services and healthcare systems, stronger economic vitality, and enhanced quality of life in our neighborhoods and public spaces. By investing in comprehensive solutions to homelessness, we create pathways for our most vulnerable neighbors to become contributing members of the community while simultaneously strengthening the social fabric and economic prosperity that benefits every resident. This plan recognizes that ending homelessness is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic investment in the health, safety, and well-being of our entire two-county region.

The success of the CoC and this Strategic Action Plan depends on robust community partnerships and collaboration. Critical partners include local governments, HUD, the State of Florida, private businesses, nonprofit service providers, faith-based organizations, community advocates, and individual residents. Homelessness is a complex socioeconomic issue that requires thoughtful strategies and coordinated efforts to develop comprehensive solutions addressing every component of the housing crisis response system, including; street outreach, homelessness prevention and diversion, emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, other permanent affordable housing, coordinated entry, and data tracking and improvement through use of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Locally, our community refers to HMIS as the Community Services Information System (CSIS).

Ending Homelessness

The Suncoast CoC Leadership Council collectively unites around a shared vision of what successfully ending homelessness means in Manatee and Sarasota counties.

Our vision is a community where homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring—where every individual and family in Manatee and Sarasota Counties has access to safe, stable, and affordable housing as a foundation for well-being and self-sufficiency.

Ending homelessness requires a coordinated housing crisis response system that effectively prevents and resolves housing instability through seamless integration of essential components. This system includes Street Outreach to connect with individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness; Coordinated Entry to assess needs and match people to appropriate resources; Homelessness Prevention and Diversion to stop housing crises before they occur; Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, and Bridge Housing to provide immediate safety; Rapid Rehousing to move people into permanent housing with targeted support quickly; Permanent Supportive Housing for those with the most complex needs; and Other Permanent Affordable Housing options that ensure long-term stability. Success depends on the effective coordination and implementation of each component working together as an integrated system.

Through a seamless, fair, transparent, and client-centered Continuum of Care, we will proactively prevent homelessness, rapidly respond to housing crises, and provide comprehensive support that addresses housing instability. By fostering strong partnerships across all regions and sectors, sharing data and resources effectively, and ensuring that every voice is heard and represented, we create an inclusive system that leaves no one behind.

Our vision is a unified community effort where collaboration, innovation, and systemic advocacy transform how we serve those experiencing homelessness—ensuring timely, appropriate assistance that promotes lasting housing stability and independence for all.

SUNCOAST HOUSING COLLABORATIVE

Essential to the effectiveness of the local housing crisis response system is the Suncoast Housing Collaborative (SHC). The purpose of the SHC is to partner with and incentivize local landlords to work with individuals and families who face additional barriers to accessing permanent housing. These barriers include previous evictions, low income, and/or criminal history, which further limit an already small pool of available housing. The collaborative supports a housing focused model by connecting people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity to permanent housing as a step towards self-sufficiency.

CoC Strategic Action Plan Overview

The intention of this comprehensive Strategic Action Plan is to help guide the CoC from October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2028 in achieving measurable outcomes and goals that will make a lasting impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the housing crisis response system, ultimately resulting in reduced homelessness, reducing the duration of homeless episodes, instances of first-time homelessness, and returns to homelessness, while increasing exits from the system to permanent housing opportunities.

It is the charge of the CoC Leadership Council to oversee updates and progress through the completion of the Strategic Action Plan. Committees, Work Groups, Members, and Lead Agency staff will lead and oversee various action steps, but ultimately it is the CoC Leadership Council's responsibility to make sure there is forward momentum and progress made toward achieving the objectives outlined in the Strategic Action Plan. This plan is to be updated often and is intended to be flexible in order to adjust the course to best meet the changing needs of households faced with homelessness. Detailed action steps are provided for the following main objectives:

1. **Strengthen CoC Governance and Leadership**
2. **Improved participation and community reliance on HMIS/CSIS-generated data**
3. **Strengthen Homelessness Prevention and Early Intervention System Components**
4. **Expand Pathways to Permanent Housing**
5. **Improve Housing Stability and Self-Sufficiency**

Each objective has specific strategies and action steps laid out to provide a clear path to success. Committee-level work plans will be developed to drive committee meeting agendas in order to focus all CoC work towards the goals and objectives set forth in this plan.

Improving System Performance

As a system, we want to improve upon our community outcomes, which includes HUD-mandated System Performance Measures, ultimately making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring, while improving efficiency and outcomes within the system.

HUD-designated System Performance Measures include;

1. Decreased Average Length of Time Homeless
2. Decrease Returns to Homelessness
3. Decrease the Number of People Experiencing Homelessness at Point In Time Count and Annually through HMIS/CSIS
4. Increased income among program participants
5. Decreased Instances of 1st Time Homelessness
6. *(Relates to Homelessness Prevention and has not yet been implemented by HUD)*

7. Increased Permanent Housing Placements and Retention of Permanent Housing

Improving System Performance will help position our CoC to be more competitive in funding opportunities available through HUD and the State of Florida, as well as improve consumer experience with wait times for programming and services. This Strategic Action Plan includes strategies and actions that will produce data-driven results and improvements in these System Performance Measures.

Strategic Action Plan 2025-2028

OBJECTIVE 1: STRENGTHEN COC GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Success looks like: An engaged, well-informed Leadership Council that effectively guides the CoC toward achieving measurable outcomes through coordinated, data-driven decision-making and accountability

Objective 1: Strategy 1.1 Enhance Leadership Council Effectiveness

Leadership Council Member Assigned:

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE/ENTITY	FREQUENCY/Target Completion	Status/Updates
1. Develop and implement a comprehensive Leadership Council orientation program for all new Leadership Council members			
2. Restructure meeting agendas to include clear action items with expected impacts from decisions			
3. Provide quarterly education sessions on CoC performance metrics and emerging best practices			

Objective 1: Strategy 1.2 Establish Data-Driven Decision Making

Leadership Council Member Assigned:

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE/ENTITY	FREQUENCY/Target Completion	Status/Updates
1. Set annual community-wide goals aligned with HUD System Performance Measures			
2. Implement standardized reporting templates and dashboards to present outcomes to Leadership Council on a quarterly basis			
3. Create dashboards for real-time monitoring of coordinated entry			

inflow and outflow			
4. Implement Data and System Improvement Strategies			
5. Establish mechanisms to capture and integrate data from non-HMIS/CSIS sources into planning processes (examples include DV, jail data)			
6. Integrate CoC-wide data captured in HMIS/CSIS with other local funders and systems to help align resource allocation outside of the CoC			

Objective 1: Strategy 1.3 Ensure Geographic and Regional Representation

Leadership Council Member Assigned:

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE/ENTITY	FREQUENCY/Target Completion	Status/Updates
1. Establish regional committees for the CoC to address area-specific needs			
2. Conduct annual needs assessments for each region to identify resource gaps			
3. Target resources based on regional data and needs			

Objective 1: Strategy 1.4 Strengthen Community Education and Engagement

Leadership Council Member Assigned:

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE/ENTITY	FREQUENCY/Target Completion	Status/Updates
1. Establish Communications Committee to develop and oversee the CoC Community Engagement Plan that promotes membership and collaboration across sectors			
2. Develop educational toolkits for community stakeholders about homelessness and system resources			
3. Host bi-annual community forums to increase awareness and support for homelessness initiatives			

OBJECTIVE 2: STRENGTHEN HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM COMPONENTS

Success looks like: Reduced first-time homelessness through upstream prevention strategies, effective diversion programs, and cross-system collaboration that addresses housing instability before housing crises occur.

Objective 2: Strategy 2.1 Identify Existing Upstream Prevention Initiatives and understand how they contribute to success in the homeless response system

Leadership Council Member Assigned:

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE/ENTITY	FREQUENCY/Target Completion	Status/Updates
1. Create a comprehensive asset map of programs across systems (healthcare, criminal justice, child welfare, faith community programs etc.) that support prevention of homelessness			
2. Conduct a Gaps and Needs Analysis to identify primary pathways into homelessness in both counties			
3. Establish understanding and education around how cross-system partners contribute to the prevention of homelessness			
4. Develop service coordination protocols between housing and mainstream benefit programs to prevent homelessness where possible			
5. Identify partners outside and inside HMIS/CSIS and enter into data-sharing agreements to better understand homeless prevention needs to hone in on targeted prevention efforts.			
6. Implement targeted prevention programs for populations most at risk of first-time homelessness			

Objective 2: Strategy 2.2 Strengthen Diversion and Housing Problem-Solving Capacity

Leadership Council Member Assigned:

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE/ENTITY	FREQUENCY/Target Completion	Status/Updates
1. Provide annual training for all crisis response staff on housing problem-solving and diversion techniques			
2. Establish system-wide goals for diversion success rates and reductions in shelter entries			

3. Identify and secure flexible financial assistance resources for diversion efforts			

Objective 2: Strategy 2.3 Enhance Coordinated Entry System Efficiency

Leadership Council Member Assigned:

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE/ENTITY	FREQUENCY/Target Completion	Status/Updates
1. Review and update coordinated entry policies to ensure housing-focused, client-centered processes			
2. Incorporate Homelessness Prevention for HUD Category 3 into the CE process			
3. Expand support and resources dedicated to coordinated entry access points			

OBJECTIVE 3: EXPAND PATHWAYS TO PERMANENT HOUSING

Success looks like: Increased exits to permanent housing from all system components, with diverse housing options that match household needs and promote long-term stability.

Objective 3: Strategy 3.1 Fortify and Scale Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) Programs

Leadership Council Member Assigned:

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE/ENTITY	FREQUENCY/Target Completion	Status/Updates
1. Utilize the Suncoast Housing Collaborative to expand landlord participation in RRH programs and increase units usable for RRH programs			
2. Develop progressive engagement models that tailor assistance intensity to household needs			
3. Establish 85% housing retention benchmark at 6 months post-assistance			

Objective 3: Strategy 3.2 Strengthen Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

Leadership Council Member Assigned:

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE/ENTITY	FREQUENCY/Target Completion	Status/Updates
1. Through the Gaps and Needs Analysis and CE data, quantify the need			

for permanent supportive housing by subpopulation, unit type and size (subpopulations may include families, individuals, adult pairs, seniors, young adults, etc.)			
2. Identify alternative funding sources to support the maintenance and expansion of permanent supportive housing			
3. Enhance supportive services coordination with healthcare, mental health providers, and community self-sufficiency services			

OBJECTIVE 4: INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLY AND ACCESS

Success looks like: A comprehensive inventory of affordable housing units across income levels, with coordinated planning between the CoC, Suncoast Housing Collaborative, and housing development partners that increases access for extremely low-income households.

Objective 4: Strategy 4.1 Quantify and Define Housing Supply and Need

Leadership Council Member Assigned:

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE/ENTITY	FREQUENCY/Target Completion	Status/Updates
1. Collaborate with partners to create a comprehensive housing unit inventory by income category (30% AMI and below, 30-50% AMI, 60-80% AMI)			
2. Develop clear definitions and public education materials on what "affordable housing" means at different AMI levels			
3. Develop community education materials describing different supportive housing types and needs.			
4. Conduct an analysis comparing housing need to available supply, including vouchers and LINK units, as well as other supported units.			

Objective 4: Strategy 4.2 Integrate Housing Data for Coordinated Community Planning and Resource Allocation

Leadership Council Member Assigned:

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE/ENTITY	FREQUENCY/Target Completion	Status/Updates
1. Establish data-sharing agreements with local housing authorities and developers			
2. Utilize GIS mapping tools to visualize affordable housing distribution and gaps across both counties			

3. Encourage and incentivize reliance on and utilization of HMIS/CSIS and CE data for planning and allocation of resources.			

Objective 4: Strategy 4.3 Advocate for Increased Extremely Low-Income (ELI) Housing

Leadership Council Member Assigned:

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE/ENTITY	FREQUENCY/Target Completion	Status/Updates
1. Educate and empower CoC membership and Leadership Council organization representatives to advocate for ELI need and local policies that support affordable housing preservation and development			
2. Strengthen partnerships with Public Housing Authorities to prioritize homeless households for vouchers			
3. Through the Suncoast Housing Collaborative, create multi-partner investments for incentives available to landlords who house extremely low-income tenants			

Objective 4: Strategy 4.4 Strengthen Cross-Sector Housing Partnerships

Leadership Council Member Assigned:

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE/ENTITY	FREQUENCY/Target Completion	Status/Updates
1. Rely on partnership with Suncoast Housing Collaborative to coordinate affordable housing development across partners through coordinated investment planning			
2. Create a unified advocacy agenda for affordable housing across both counties			
3. Identity opportunity for ongoing partnerships that can advocate for housing needs for the CoC (i.e. CoC members participating in Community Advisory committees across both counties)			
4. Engage faith communities and private sector partners in housing solutions and expansion of YIGBY			
5. Provide education and introduction to faith partners on YIGBY's use of land for the development of affordable housing for the CoC population			

OBJECTIVE 5: IMPROVE HOUSING STABILITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Success looks like: Reduced returns to homelessness and increased income for both system stayers and leavers through comprehensive wraparound services and employment support.

Objective 5: Strategy 5.1 Enhance Case Management and Wraparound Services

Leadership Council Member Assigned:

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE/ENTITY	FREQUENCY/Target Completion	Status/Updates
1. Provide ongoing training on housing-focused case management and trauma-informed care			
2. Implement a Housing Stability Case Conferencing, monthly across permanent housing programs, and coordinate aftercare to reduce returns to homelessness and increase stability.			
3. Explore best practices and evaluate incentives for retaining case management and front-line service staff			

Objective 5: Strategy 5.2 Increase Employment and Income Opportunities

Leadership Council Member Assigned:

ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF STRATEGY	RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE/ENTITY	FREQUENCY/Target Completion	Status/Updates
1. Identify workforce partners and their eligibility criteria and referral processes in order to formalize referral partnerships among CoC programs and clients.			
1. Formalize partnerships with workforce development agencies and employers			
2. Rely on agreements with workforce partners for employment navigation services within housing programs			
3. Work with workforce and employment partners to expand employment opportunities for subpopulations, including seniors, youth, and those receiving SSDI.			