



Broward County A Way Home Update **Addendum**

2020





**Broward
County
Roadmap
to End
Homelessness**

**2020 Update
Addendum**



Assessment of Existing Employment Resources

In 2019, the Broward County Board recognized the need to incorporate an employment tenant into the *A Way Home* plan. As a first step toward creating a revised set of recommendations to end homelessness in Broward, CSH set about to develop an understanding of the county’s existing employment resources. Beginning in October of 2019, CSH engaged in a series of exercises over a three-month period which included in-depth interviews and online surveys with key stakeholders involved in the effort to address employment services in Broward and a scan of Employment Services offered within the county.

Summary

As part of the Broward County employment assessment, we acknowledged the importance of understanding the current community level awareness and prevalence of employment-based programming in Broward. Interviews and surveys were conducted with providers and agencies that both support employment services and serve at risk populations in order to formulate a global perspective of existing resources and opportunities within the county.

Based on feedback from community stakeholders, CareerSource Broward is the most widely recognized resource in the community for connection to employment related services. Arc Broward and Broward Behavioral Health Coalition programs were also well known.

For Broward residents experiencing or at risk of homelessness, several common areas surfaced that service agencies identified as barriers and unmet employment related needs:

- Lack of job skills and education
- Inability to afford or secure consistent transportation
- Challenges due to personal criminal and credit backgrounds
- Disproportionate volume of low-wage vs. livable-wage jobs due to regional economy and tourism
- Need for more one-on-one client support to secure/maintain employment and overall stability
- Insufficient awareness, advocacy and funding for employment services and coordination
- Housing and employment are interrelated but lack coordination and sufficient housing resources

Strengths in the Current System

Variety of Organizations Offering Employment Services

CSH conducted a resource scan and mapping exercise to identify the various employment services offered within the county.



The scan identified at least 31 organizations providing employment-related services and programs such as work readiness, resume development, interview skills, career coaching, job placement services, vocational rehabilitation, job skills training, post-secondary education, transitional and subsidized employment, job retention and follow-up services, financial literacy, financial aid and employer engagement.

While there may be additional organizations offering employment services in the county, the identified organizations included;

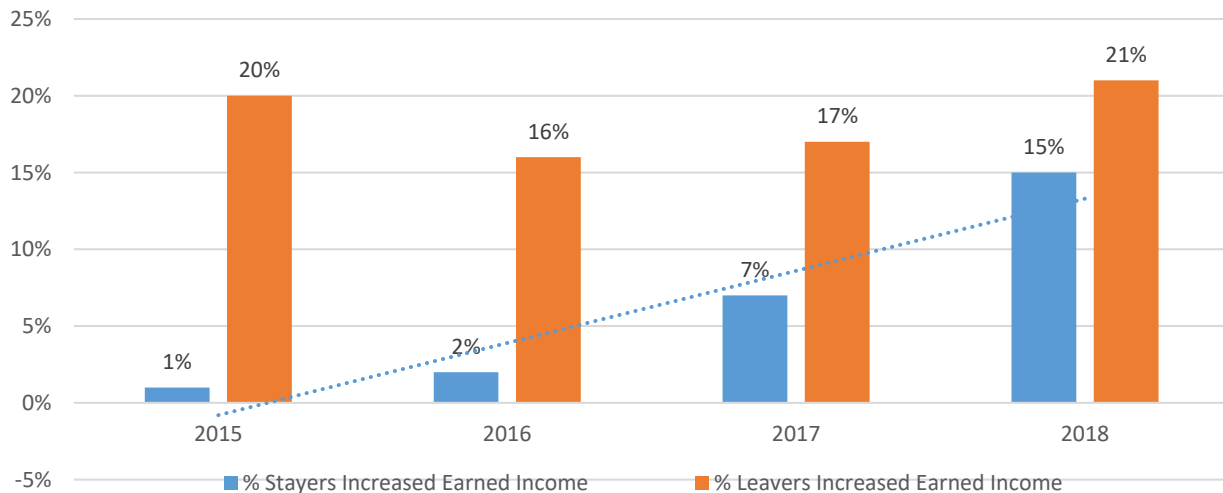
- ARC Broward
 - Arc Works, Youth Links, School of Hire and Youth Career Camp
- Archways
- Atlantic College
- Broward College
 - Partnerships with Urban League and Women in Distress
- Broward Behavioral Health Coalition
 - IPS Supported Employment
- CareerSource Broward
- Care Resource
- Chrysalis
- Community Mental Health
- Broward County
- Broward Outreach Centers (Miami Rescue Mission)
- Broward Partnership
 - Workforce Development Program
- Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)
 - Adult Day Training (ADT), Employment Enhancement Program (EEP)
- Footprints to Success
- Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance
 - Quick Response Training, Incumbent Worker Training, Employed Worker Training
- HAAPE
- Handy, Inc.
 - Youth LIFE Program
- Henderson Behavioral Health
 - Supported Employment Program
- Hope South Florida
- House of Hope
- LifeNet4Families
 - Job readiness preparation
- Millennium
- OIC
- Patriot Placement
- Prosperity Broward
- Site Solutions
- Stepping Stone
- Sun Serve
- Urban League of Broward County
 - Critical Occupation Responses through Education (C.O.R.E.), Urban Tech Jobs Program (UTJP), Center for Working Families (CWF), Workplace Excellence Workshops
- Village on South
- Women in Distress of Broward County, Inc.

HUD System Performance Measure (SPM) 4:

Many of those interviewed expressed frustration around securing and maintaining employment for clients with high barriers. However, between 2015 and 2018, Broward SPM’s reflected a steady increase in the percentage of stayers¹ who increased earned income – with the numbers effectively doubling in each successive year. The data reflects a strength and indicates that some current strategies are effective in increasing access to employment within the county.

HUD System Performance Measure (SPM) 4

FL-601 CoC Data
2015 - 2018



Source: <https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/5691/system-performance-measures-data-since-fy-2015/>

Gaps and Barriers in the Current System

Lack of Connections to Existing Employment Services

Often, organizations and staff that engage with at-risk populations offer credible insight on improvements and changes which could lead to productive options to assist residents in need. The interviews and assessment identified that low-income residents and those experiencing homelessness in Broward County could be served more effectively through;

- Increased advocacy for employment opportunities;
- Development or expansion of collaborative programs between homeless service providers, technical and job skills training agencies, and employment connectors;
- Improvement of systems that reduce barriers to gainful employment, including transportation, an increase in jobs that pay a livable wage and encouragement of local employers to participate in employment referral opportunities; and
- Increased case management support both during and after job placements.

¹ HUD defines “leavers” and “stayers” as follows: Stayer: Clients who were in the program on the last day of the operating year. Includes clients who exited the program and re-entered the program before the end of the operating year. Leaver: Clients who exited and were not in the program on the last day of the operating year.

As in many US communities, significant barriers to gainful employment prevail in a number of areas for Broward County. For those transitioning from homelessness or living in poverty, common obstacles center around issues with behavioral health, prevalence of criminal histories and poor credit ratings. In addition, many low-income residents lack access to transportation, soft & technology skills and higher levels of education in order to be able to effectively access livable-wage employment. Finally, there exists broadly a lack of awareness of existing workforce programs, limited funding to promote work readiness initiatives and often a drop-off of support by staff to serve clients beyond employment.

Lack of Funding for Training and Job Skills Support

Feedback from this assessment indicates an ongoing need exists to strengthen professional skills for at risk residents; improve training for employment coaches and staff; increase funding for support after job placement; provide free legal advice to address criminal and credit histories; and an increase in employer relationships and livable-wage jobs.

For Broward County, suggestions that could help build workforce resources include improving transportation routes in Low- to Moderate-Income (LMI) communities, utilize housing and employment first policies as a tool to ensure vulnerable populations have their basic needs met in order to be able to focus on enrichment, designate staff or develop programs to assist those experiencing homelessness with employment support, align policies, funding and resources of separate community agencies (i.e.: Florida Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Broward Behavioral Health Coalition, Broward County Human Services, United Way, CareerSource, and Medicaid), address the fiscal cliff on the federal level and increase outreach, education, and awareness.

Scarcity of Living-Wage Jobs

Broward County continues to have the widest metropolitan statistical area (MSA) gap between average wage and cost of housing & transportation in the nation. For greater effectiveness around housing interventions and strategies, incorporating employment at the front end of service engagement is critically necessary. Community respondents also highlighted ways to improve employment services in Broward County including increased collaboration with the private sector and community organizations – specifically Broward UP (Broward College) and Prosperity Broward (Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance Foundation), creating workshops to educate and engage employers around necessary employment supports for special needs populations, hold employment seminars, and have open dialogue between the County, employment agencies and service/housing providers.

“Bring the human back to the search, people need people and sometimes a little hand holding or nudging. Not everyone knows how to look for a job, or if they did years ago, how do they find one now?”

– Broward Community Partner Interviewee

The Way Forward: Recommendation and Action Steps - UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION V:

Increase Access to Employment

Create and strengthen employment and training services for adults and youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability to enter the workforce with targeted services and supports. Successful employment and the ability of vulnerable residents to achieve and maintain stability requires programs that;

- strengthen residents' professional skills;
- employ targeted capacity-building that increases knowledge of employment coaches and staff;
- make no-cost legal advice and counseling accessible to avert resistance to hire based on criminal and credit histories;
- develop collaboration with local employers that support second-chance hiring and source jobs that pay higher wages; and
- identify and secure funding to facilitate pre- and post-employment supportive services.



- ✓ CREATE AND DEPLOY A CROSS-SECTOR EMPLOYMENT TASK FORCE
- ✓ INCREASE KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY OF GOVERNMENTAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE PROVIDER LEADERSHIP AND FRONT-LINE STAFF
- ✓ TARGET EFFORTS TO INCORPORATE MORE PERSON-CENTERED, DEDICATED CASE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT
- ✓ DESIGN A UNIFIED REFERRAL SYSTEM FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
- ✓ DEVELOP A PUBLICIZED, UNIVERSAL DATABASE OF AGENCIES AND SERVICES AT THE NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL
- ✓ INCREASE FUNDING FOR TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND INITIATIVES TO LOWER BARRIERS AND ENSURE THAT TENANTS HAVE THE SUPPORTS THEY NEED TO OBTAIN GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT IN A COMPETITIVE MARKETPLACE.
- ✓ DEVELOP A CRISIS RESPONSE POLICY THAT INCORPORATES MITIGATION STRATEGIES AND RESOURCE CREATION FOR ADDRESSING PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT.

Recommended Action Steps

In order to ensure a cohesive strategy across the continuum, Broward County should begin with the development of a cross-sector **Employment Task Force** leveraging currently engaged partners and fostering relationships with additional organizations and sectors to include county and community-based workforce agencies, the healthcare system, affordable housing providers, real estate developers, the faith-based community, supportive service providers, private sector business owners and others to develop a strategic employment plan which identifies specific goals and leverages and/or increases funding that contributes to increased capacity, effective system integration and sustainable programming.

The Task Force should prioritize **increasing the knowledge and capacity of governmental and community service provider leadership and front-line staff** via community conversations, training, advocacy, and the adoption and operationalization of evidenced-based practices that improve employment-related outcomes of vulnerable populations, such as Individual Placement and Support (IPS).²

Employment strategies that **target efforts to incorporate more person-centered, dedicated case management support for** populations that face high barriers and attentively guide individuals through the training and employment processes which are essential for successful placement and employment sustainability

² <https://ipsworks.org/>

ultimately lead to better outcomes for long-term housing stability. Supported Employment³ is an effective evidence based practice to increase employment for those with the lived experience of serious mental illness. Employment can instill feelings of hope, self-determination, self-respect, social connectedness, responsibility and empowerment to vulnerable individuals and is an important part of achieving independence and improving overall well-being.

Designing a unified referral system for employment services between the Continuum of Care, supportive services/housing providers and county and community-based workforce agencies that supports individual service plans and case managers, collaborative case conferencing and data sharing options will lead to an increase in effective, sustainable outcomes. Additionally, the **development of a publicized, universal database of agencies and services at the neighborhood level** will help increase awareness and facilitate easy access for program participant referrals and coordination between agencies.

A key factor that arose repeatedly during the assessment and interviews with community partners was the need for **increased funding for training and employment services and initiatives** to lower barriers and ensure that tenants have the supports they need to obtain gainful employment in a competitive marketplace. Investing in stabilizing services on the front end helps to reduce costs to public systems by increasing self-sufficiency of the populations served and reducing the utilization of expensive and limited resources. Additionally, engaging local employers and advocating for a livable-wage and reduced barriers to employment will ultimately have an impact by lessening the cost burden of unemployment on public services and contributing to broader housing stability throughout the community.

Finally, in light of the current outbreak of a global health crisis, the county should prioritize the development of a **crisis response policy** that incorporates mitigation strategies and resource creation for addressing housing instability and the effects of pandemic unemployment. Many populations with high barriers to housing and employment have histories of homelessness and are managing multiple physical and behavioral health conditions. These vulnerable populations are most likely to be impacted by COVID-19 and other contagious disease. During a public health crisis, it is critical that supportive housing providers are equipped with the resources⁴ they need to best support their residents, staff, and communities. It is equally critical to have a plan in place to allow a rapid response in real time to quickly evolving situations. To that end, it is critical to develop and implement systemic solutions to manage the long-term impacts associated with COVID-19 and other health crises', including potential increases in homelessness across the county and unavoidable loss of employment.

The CDC provides guidance for homeless services providers to plan and respond to COVID-19; <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/plan-prepare-respond.html>. Additional guidance is also offered by USICH <https://www.usich.gov/covid-19/> , HUD <https://www.hud.gov/coronavirus> and CSH <https://www.csh.org/covid19/> to assist communities in preparing their crisis response policies.

While COVID-19 has impacted the world in severe and unexpected ways, focusing now on policies and procedures to address ongoing and future outbreaks will help ensure that Broward County is prepared to address the needs of its vulnerable residents and mitigate the long-term impact on public systems.

The recommendations provided in this addendum are designed to guide the county in the creation of a robust and effective county-wide employment strategy which will increase the housing stability and self-sufficiency of the most vulnerable residents and support them through the final mile on their road home.

³ <https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Supported-Employment-Evidence-Based-Practices-EBP-Kit/SMA08-4364>

⁴ <http://www.csh.org/COVID19/>

Appendix A: Summary of Stakeholder Interviews

CSH conducted a series of in-depth individual and group interviews with stakeholders, as well as an online survey, as a means to inform increasing access to employment in Broward. Direct feedback from leading community partners which contributed to this assessment and subsequent recommendations is described below.

CSH interviewed 10 community partner stakeholders and providers via phone and online surveys in 2019 to gather feedback on the challenges, barriers and needs around accessing employment in Broward. A summary of feedback from the stakeholders selected for interview by the Broward County Continuum of Care is presented below.

Provider Stakeholder Interview Questions

- What employment programs and initiatives in the County are you aware of? Please describe.
- What opportunities do you see to improve/expand employment services to people experiencing homelessness and/or accessing housing services?
- In your opinion, what are the greatest barriers to accessing employment services in the County?
- In your experience, what are the greatest employment needs of the vulnerable populations in the county?
- What opportunities (policy trends, resources, partnerships) do you see to enhance workforce strategies for Broward County?
- Do you have any additional feedback you would like to provide?

List of Stakeholders Interviewed

Sylvia Quintana, CEO, Broward Behavioral Health

Tiffany Garcia, Assisted Housing Manager, Broward County Housing Authority

Lilly Gallardo, Director of Program Services, The Salvation Army

William Byrd, Program Administrator, Broward Outreach Center

Lisa Vecchi, CEO, Broward Housing Solutions

Steve Werthman, VP of Operations, HOPE South Florida

Yamaris Arbitman, Director of Housing Initiatives, United Way of Broward County

Sandra Veszi Einhorn, Executive Director, Coordinating Council of Broward

Robin Cuddemi, Supervisor Special Programs, Broward County Housing Authority

Neva Whittaker, Grant Coordinator, Broward County Housing Authority

Summary of Responses to Interview Questions (in no particular order)

What employment programs and initiatives in the County are you aware of? Please describe.

- “Career Source Broward.”
- “CareerSource, OIC, college career centers. Atlantic College and Sheridan, Broward College”
- “Broward Behavioral Health Coalition.”
- “Employment programs through CareerSource.”
- “Arc Broward, BBHC’s IPS, Career Source, Patriot Placement.”
- “Minimal knowledge of agencies that focus on employment such as career Source, as most of my previous clients were veterans we would refer to VA employment programs.”

- “CareerSource, OIC, Prosperity Broward, ARC Broward, HAAPE.”
- “CareerSource, Voc-Rehab, Urban League has a return to work program, Chrysalis and Henderson have employment initiatives, as well as Millennium, offer Voc-Rehab. Site Solutions.”
- “Footprints to Success, House of Hope, Care Resource, Archways, Village on South.”
- “Community Mental Health has one for youth. Henderson Behavioral Health, Sun Serve helps the LGBTQ population and has an employment program for youth. OIC of south Florida is an employment program for justice involved youth. Stepping stone employment program – uses a step model.

What opportunities do you see to improve/expand employment services to people experiencing homelessness and/or accessing housing services?

- “Short term technical training.”
- “Bring the human back to the search, people need people and sometimes a little hand holding or nudging. Not everyone knows how to look for a job, or if they did years ago, how do I find one now? How they can get into school (how does it get paid, where do I start, am I able to do this). Great, I can work in food service/retail - I can't live on that. How do I place myself in a management track? Learning about skill sets - put them together and do what? I have personally tried many 'quizzes', books, magazine articles and still lost as to where my skills might transfer in the future.”
- “Use evidenced based practices to support individuals with special disabling conditions as appropriate to obtain and sustain employment for example IPS.”
- “More awareness of any initiatives taking place, more open communication between employment vendors and shelter vendors.”
- “Advocacy and awareness of employment opportunities for community's low-income and homeless.”
- “As a community we need to reduce the barriers to affordable public transportation, encourage and provide incentives for potential employers to hire from county employment agencies. As a community we can address affordable housing and create communities, however without employment those communities will not be able to succeed.”
- “More funding for housing, additional requirements for hiring un /underemployed populations in County and municipal contracts.”

In your opinion, what are the greatest barriers to accessing employment services in the County?

- “Mental Health, substance use, limited skills, criminal background.”
- “With computers taking on more tasks and now reviewing resumes for key words, the human is taken out of the equation. Gone are the days of going to or cold calling seeking an opportunity.”
- “Background checks criminal histories, lack of education, funding supports and other flex funds for work readiness.”
- “Clearing low criminal background through Legal services or having employers hire individuals with background, evictions, and low credit rating. Educating the homelessness population on long term employment skills.”
- “Barriers to accessing employment services in Broward County is awareness that they exist, and recruiting skilled individuals who help with outreach for those seeking employment.”
- “Transportation, Community agencies who are really focused on employing the participants. We should follow the housing first model and create intensives for the participates who gain employment to maintain housing.”
- “Lack of transportation options in LMI areas, the fiscal cliff does not incentive gainful employment at a self-sufficient level, lack of soft skills and a sense of entitlement for many job seekers, and Low wage/low

skill jobs are appropriate for many vulnerable populations based on their ability and skill level but it is not a livable wage.”

- “Funding is the greatest barrier – the more funding for evidence based practices, we could serve a lot more people.”
- “We have some participants that do get jobs, but can’t keep them due to mental disability. The issue isn’t always finding the job, but keeping the job.”
- “There is a perception about homelessness by employers, a stigma.”

In your experience, what are the greatest employment needs of the vulnerable populations in the County

- “Jobs that pay a living wage.”
- “Real guidance from people who specialize in helping others find their aptitude, who can coach and mentor others to move forward, and be an encouragement.”
- “The greatest need is the funding for follow along supports once employed and an employment WRAP plan.”
- “Access to fair employment initiatives, continued education services, free legal services for background checks and fingerprinting fees.”
- “The greatest employment needs of the vulnerable population are skilled individuals who are skilled at working with special targeted folks while knowing who the employers are that are willing and able to hire the vulnerable.”
- “Skills, and education that translate to available employment.”
- “Supporting efforts like Prosperity Broward and Broward UP, addressing the fiscal cliff on a federal level is imperative, and improving transportation routes in LMI communities should be much more of a priority in Broward than it is.”
- “Skills are lacking, so skill building efforts would really help, may have never worked before then it is very difficult getting employment for the first time. Lack of education, skills. Lack social skills as well, and aren’t able to communicate properly with employer.”

What opportunities (policy trends, resources, partnerships) do you see to enhance workforce strategies for Broward County?

- “Have a designated program-employee who assists clients experiencing homelessness and are referred by a case manager from a shelter or other provider working with the homeless population.”
- “I really haven't followed the policy trends recently.”
- “Florida Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Broward Behavioral Health Coalition, Broward County Human Services, United Way, CareerSource, and Medicaid need to further align policies, funding and maximize resources to support special needs populations that homeless or at risk of homelessness.”
- “More connection with Employment sources such as CareerSource. Viewing the housing first policy as not an ultimate solution but as a tool to be used among other approaches.”
- “Outreach, education, awareness, advocacy.”
- “Supporting efforts like Prosperity Broward and Broward UP, addressing the fiscal cliff on a federal level is imperative, improving transportation routes in LMI communities should be much more of a priority in Broward than it is.”

Is there anything else you would like to share?

- “Work with the private sector to provide opportunities for employment to persons experiencing homelessness.”

- “In considering movement toward employment, I must remind everyone that some people are unable to work. It could be age or disability. In the programs we have, some could possibly work if they wanted to, but many really just cannot. Punishing a program(s) because it cannot get a 70-year-old or a 23-year-old disabled person to go to work is just defeating for the clients and leaving the program provider to devastating failure. There needs to be exception to any policy being created for the elderly and disabled.”
- “Create workshops for employers to be educated on working with special needs populations and become award of employment supports provided via supportive employment specialists.”
- “Open dialogue between employment service provider, shelter/housing providers and County.”
- “Conduct more employment seminars that feature employers who are willing and able to hire vulnerable populations.”
- “The new president of Broward college is very interested in bringing higher education to everyone and make it more accessible. Right now, people can sign up for one free course, working to get grants so people can take more than one. One person took a course and was able to keep their job due to the class.”
- “Push the exemptions for people with disability – a lot are 60 and older. Majority are SPMI – SSI or SSDI is their only possible income. Requirement is coming from CES written standards – it was approved as a fluid document, but has a 35% increase earned income.”