Escambia County Homelessness

09/01/2022

Community Homelessness

2022 Homeless Survey Static's
Provided by Community Health Northwest Florida and Area Health Education Centers
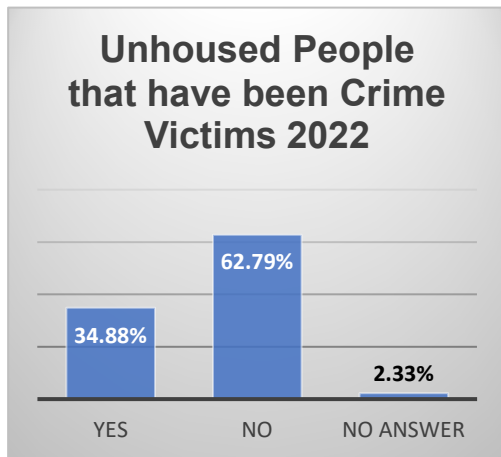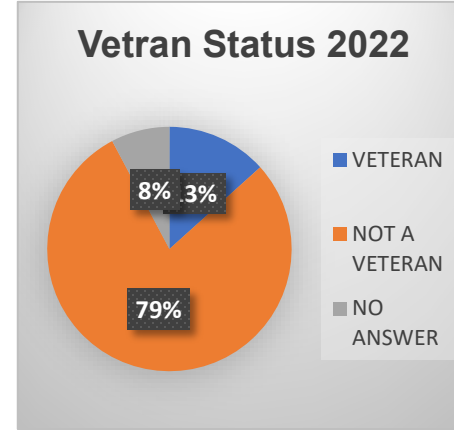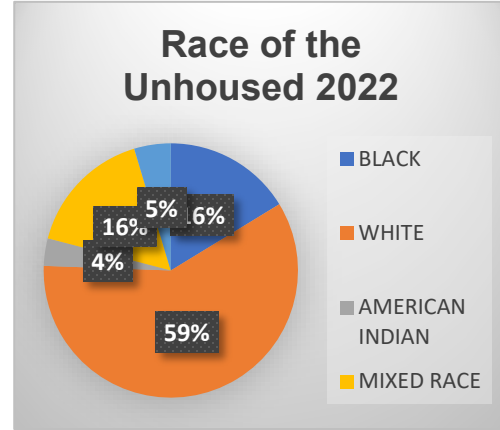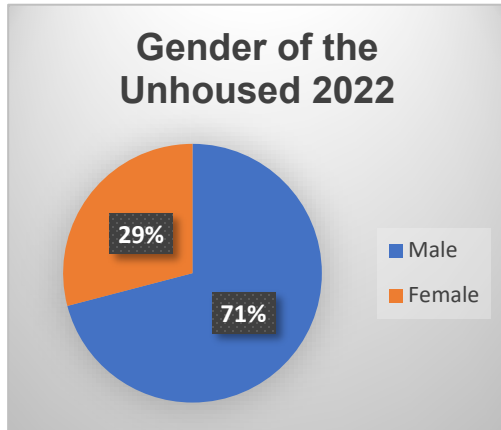
Gender of the Unhoused 2022

- Male: 71%
- Female: 29%

Race of the Unhoused 2022

- BLACK: 16%
- WHITE: 59%
- AMERICAN INDIAN: 4%
- MIXED RACE: 16%
- (5%, 6%)

Vetran Status 2022

- VETERAN: 8%
- NOT A VETERAN: 79%
- NO ANSWER: 3%

Disability Status 2022

- DISABLED: 48.84%
- NOT DISABLED: 47.67%
- NO ANSWER: 8.11%

Unhoused People that have been Crime Victims 2022

- YES: 34.88%
- NO: 62.79%
- NO ANSWER: 2.33%

Length of Homelessness 2022

- 1 OR LESS YEARS: 29.07%
- 1-5 YEARS: 37.21%
- 5 OR MORE YEARS: 30.23%
- NO RESPONSE: 3.49%

Number of Unhoused Surveyed that were past I-110 Encampment Residents

- PAST I-110 CAMP RESIDENT: 33.72%

The statistics are representative of a 1500-person homeless population (no children). That is with in a 95% confidence interval with a margin of error of +1.5/-1.5. Basically, you can apply these statistics to the whole population in of Escambia County and it is a solid representation of the wider population.
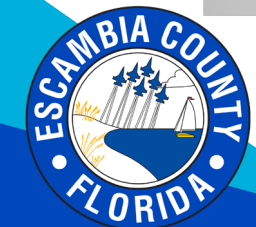
Homelessness Grant – HOME ARP

In September 2021 , HUD awarded the Escambia County, FL HOME Consortium (Which consists of Escambia County, Santa Rosa County, the City of Pensacola, and the City of Milton) $4.1 Million in HOME-ARP Funds.   The funds need to be expended by 09/30/2030.

Following are the requirements for the use of the funds in the HOME-ARP Program:

Qualifying Populations – HOME-ARP funds must be used to primarily benefit individuals or families from the following qualifying populations:
- Homeless
- At-risk of homelessness
- Fleeing, or attempting to flee, domestic or dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking
- In other populations where providing supportive services or assistance under section 212(a) of the Act (42 U.S.C. 12742(a)) would prevent the family's homelessness or would serve those with the greatest risk of housing instability
- Veterans and families that include a veteran family member that meet one of the preceding criteria

Eligible Activities – HOME-ARP funds can be used for the four eligible activities:
- Production or Preservations of Affordable Rental Housing
- Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)
- Supportive Services, including services defined at 24 CFR 578.53(e), homeless prevention services, and housing counseling. (Attachment A, Supportive Services)
- Purchase and Development of Non-Congregate Shelter. These structures can remain in use as non-congregate shelter or can be converted to 1) emergency shelter under the Emergency Solutions Grant Program; 2) permanent housing under the Continuum of Care; or 3) affordable housing under the HOME program.
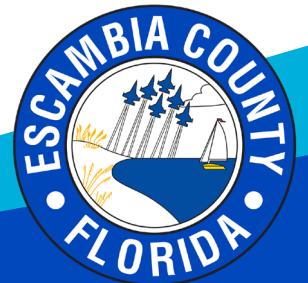
Homelessness Grant – HOME ARP

Before developing our plan, the Escambia HOME Consortium must consult with:

- the local Continuum of Care (CoC),
- homeless service providers,
- domestic violence service providers,
- veterans' groups,
- public housing agencies (PHAs),
- public agencies that address the needs of the qualifying populations, and
- public or private organizations that address
  - fair housing,
  - civil rights, and
  - the needs of persons with disabilities

Escambia County's Neighborhood and Human Services Department is currently meeting with the above Community Partners to seek their input.

We also developed a survey that was sent out to the Homelessness Task Force seeking their input on Tuesday, August 23rd, 2022, with a due date of end of day Wednesday, August 31st. (Attachment B)

Homelessness Grant – HOME ARP

The Escambia HOME Consortium must also provide for and encourage public participation in the development of the HOME-ARP allocation plan. Before submission of the plan, the Consortium must provide residents with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment on the proposed HOME-ARP allocation plan of no less that 15 calendar days.

We are currently in the process of:
- Developing a "Homelessness" webpage
- Developed a dedicated email address at **homelessness@myescambia.com**
- Deploying a public survey that will be available in English (Attachment C) and Spanish (Attachment D) at:
   - Community Centers
    - Libraries
    - Online

In addition, the Consortium must hold at least one public meeting during the development of the HOME-ARP allocation plan prior to submission. We are working on securing a location and date.
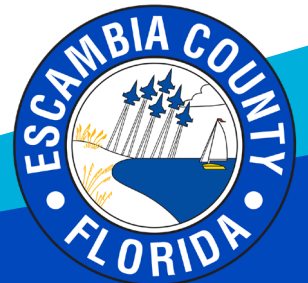
Homelessness Funding Options

While we are still in the process of consulting with both Community Partners and the Public, we have heard consistent feedback so far on the community needs:

- Low-Barrier Shelter – The definition of a "low-Barrier" shelter varies greatly depending on who you ask however it essentially means that the requirements for entry are minimal. These shelters encourage homeless individuals to seek resources by eliminating obstacles to housing. Some of the most common barriers to shelters are:
    - Sobriety
    - Strict curfews (without exception)
    - Background checks
    - Mandatory program participation
    - Criminal Records
    - Credit Checks
    - Income Requirements and Verification
    - Forced labor participation
- Family Shelter – There are very few shelters that allow not only space for families but for the dad to stay as well.
- Vouchers – There is not enough transitional housing for those that qualify for rent vouchers. There are several homeless people that qualified for the paid rental vouchers, but they can not find housing that will accept it.
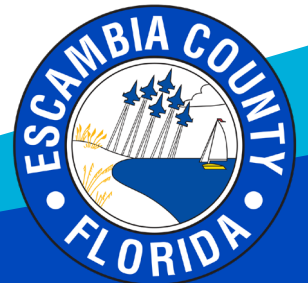
Homelessness Funding Solutions

Based on Commissioners input and our findings we are suggesting the following HOME-ARP eligible options:

- **Voucher and Family Shelter:**
    - Purchase old hotel or apartment complex:
        - OYO (6911 Pensacola Blvd)
            - 144 Rooms
            - $4,500,000.00
        - Motel 6 (5829 Pensacola Blvd)
            - 115 Rooms
            - $8,450,000.00
    - Put out an RFP for a community partner that can come in take over and run the property
    - Mandatory acceptance of the housing vouchers and provide supporting services
    - Families welcome
- **Low-Barrier Shelter:**
    - Find some land that we already own in an acceptable location
    - Put out an RFP for a community partner or partners that can come in and take over and run the property
    - Build shelter and provide supporting services
- **Community Partner Applications:**
    - Allow community partners that qualify apply for funding (DRAFT application Attachment E)
    - Our team will evaluate the applications on a points system and present to the board

Homelessness Funding Discussion

Open discussion on direction to staff to move forward.