



Marion County Board of County Commissioners

Marion County Office of Public Information

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\$727,000 IN AID AVAILABLE TO MARION'S MOST VULNERABLE

Immediate Release

MARION COUNTY, Fla. (Nov. 3, 2009) – In the past year, job losses and the poor real estate market have put many families in a position they never thought they'd be in – facing homelessness. Recently, Marion County received more than \$727,000 in federal stimulus money that is slated specifically to help Marion County's "at risk" residents by either preventing homelessness or helping displaced residents become rapidly re-housed.

The Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program stimulus funds came to the Marion County Board of County Commissioners through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The HPRR program aims to provide much-needed services, such as rent or utility assistance, to prevent imminent homelessness. The program also provides Marion County residents who now find themselves homeless with the security deposits necessary to attain rental housing.

The Marion County Homeless Council, as lead agency for the local Homeless Continuum of Care, will administer the program's funds in the community. The Homeless Council expects 450 people to apply to receive the emergency funds. Applicants must be Marion County residents.

Area agencies partnering with the Homeless Council include: Bethesda Worship Center, Beyond the Walls Outreach, Ocala Housing Authority, Pentecostal Full Gospel Crusade Church, Inc., Saint Vincent de Paul Society of South Marion County, Shepherd's LightHouse, Inc., Soul Harvest Word, Worship and Praise Ministries and Xtreme Solutions.

To see if you qualify for services through the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program, call Marion County's "First Call for Help" at 352-732-4444. For more information about the Marion County Homeless Council and the HPRR Program, please contact Deborah Zirkian, Marion County Homeless Council Outreach Coordinator, at 352-732-1385 or deborah@mchcfl.org.

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