Meeting Minutes
City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
700 NW 19th Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33311
October 13, 2025 – 4:00 P.M.

MEMBERS		PRESENT	ABSENT
Christi Rice, Chair	P	16	3
Sharon Hughes, Vice Chair	P	15	4
Tanya Cohn	P	2	0
Wismy Cius	P	13	1
Shelly Goren	P	6	0
Latrinsha Greaves (arr. 4:12)	P	17	2
Gary Hensley	P	11	2

Staff Present
Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager
Jonathan Rogers, HOPWA Administrator

Communications to City Commission

None.

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- **Quorum Requirement – As of October 1st, 2025, there are 8 appointed members to the Board, which means 5 constitutes a quorum**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. and It was noted a quorum was present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

The City Staff members present introduced themselves.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – September 8, 2025

Motion made by Mr. Hensley, seconded by Ms. Goren, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

IV. NEW VICE CHAIR

Motion made by Ms. Hughes, seconded by Mr. Hensley, to nominate herself as Vice Chair. In a voice vote, Ms. Hughes was unanimously elected Vice Chair.

The following Items were taken out of order on the Agenda.

VI. FEDERAL CDBG / HOPWA UPDATES

Ms. Williams advised that due to the ongoing federal government shutdown, there are no official updates at this time. There have been no changes since the previous month on the status of the Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) program, which was eliminated by the passage of a recent federal bill; however, HOPWA was funded through fiscal year (FY) 2025-2026 by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). She emphasized that the 2026 funds are not in jeopardy.

VII. FINAL HOPWA REPORTS

Jackie Selders, representing Mount Olive Development Corporation (MODCO), stated that the agency's incoming clients did not change in the fourth quarter. One person left the service for independent living. Employment rates remain the same. MODCO was able to use all of its funding for the fiscal year.

Edwin Cordova, representing Legal Aid of Broward County, reported that the agency has served a total of 156 unduplicated clients in the previous fiscal year. Most services were used toward foreclosures, evictions, requests for payments, and landlord/tenant conditions issues.

Mr. Cordova continued that Legal Aid's performance indicators required a 60% positive result. He reported the following:

- Foreclosure: 75% positive result for eight clients
- Eviction: 77% positive result for 30 clients
- Requests for payments: 75% positive result for 76 clients
- Landlord/tenant issues: 60% positive result for five clients
- Habitat/conditions: 100% positive result for two clients
- Lease reviews: 70% positive result for 33 clients

Other agencies, including Broward House, Care Resource, and SunServe, continue to collaborate with Legal Aid by referring clients in need of assistance.

Ms. Greaves arrived at 4:12 p.m.

Mr. Cordova continued that there is an increasing trend among landlords to take action with eviction proceedings that must be carried out within one month. In the past, tenants were afforded more time. Landlords are currently less inclined to go through the processes that can allow tenants more time, or to wait for tenants to receive checks. More landlords are also attaching legal fees to their complaints.

Fifty Legal Aid clients served with HOPWA funds were from Fort Lauderdale, while 16 were from Pompano Beach, 16 from Hollywood, 12 from Oakland Park, and 13 from

Lauderhill. These five cities represented 69% of the total population served. Mr. Cordova advised that many residents of Fort Lauderdale are moving elsewhere in South Florida, as they are unable to afford housing in the City.

Ms. Greaves noted that while Fort Lauderdale has indicated that some of its ongoing development is affordable housing, this is not actually affordable to many households. Mr. Cordova replied that while the term “affordable” previously included households with very low or no income, it can now include what is known as workforce housing, which includes households which may earn as much as 120% of area median income (AMI). This means much affordable housing is not affordable for households earning significantly lower incomes.

Mr. Cordova continued that another issue is the concentration of affordability within the private sector through the use of low-income housing tax credits. In these cases, households with no incomes cannot qualify for affordable housing.

Brenda Rentas, representing SunServe, reported that in the fourth quarter, this agency saw an increase in noncompliance from clients, including combativeness, unwillingness to provide documentation, and unwillingness to work with community partners. The increase in noncompliance began at roughly the same time as funding cuts which affected housing agencies.

Ms. Rentas continued that another complicating issue was landlords. Once landlords become aware of changes to federal poverty levels or rent subsidies, they often increase rents even when tenants’ incomes remain the same.

Ms. Rentas advised that in the previous fiscal year, SunServe closed out many clients for noncompliance. They continue to seek additional resources and coordinate with community partners.

Sharon Alveranga-Jones, representing Broward Regional Health Planning Council (BRHPC), stated that between October 2024 and April 2025, the agency’s Short-Term Rental, Mortgage, and Utility (STRMU) assistance program assisted 111 unduplicated clients. Rental payments passed the annual target of 110 clients within the first seven months of the contract year.

In April 2025, proof of expenditures and client demand were analyzed and revealed that funds were being exhausted before the end of the contract year. To ensure no loss of access to critical support, a decision was made to temporarily pause the permanent housing placement (PHP), STRMU, and other programs and move those funds into the tenant-based rental voucher (TBRV) program.

BRHPC extended its appreciation to community partner Broward House, which provided support in the months of August and September 2025 for 33 clients. Ms. Alveranga-Jones

continued that during the year, she had identified $17,000 in unused funds, which allowed the PHP and STRMU programs to reopen in August 2025.

Ongoing challenges that affect BRHPC's clients include:

- Limited income
- Barriers to ownership
- Inability to supplement income
- Rising costs of living
- Lack of affordable housing
- Limited credit history
- Rental history challenges
- Market rent limitations

Ms. Alveranga-Jones reviewed client demographics, including gender, race, and age. She noted that the TBRV program continues its collaboration with Consolidated Credit, which provides monthly financial literacy seminars to help clients develop stronger financial management skills. BRHPC continues to advocate for clients to provide them with supportive services, strengthen partnerships with other community organizations, and identify additional resources to mitigate challenges and promote long-term stability.

Vice Chair Hughes requested clarification of how many clients were affected when BRHPC paused other assistance programs in order to move funds into the TBRV program. Ms. Alveranga-Jones replied that the agency did not analyze this impact, emphasizing that due to the contractual nature of TBRV, that program required priority. Ms. Greaves suggested that going forward, BRHPC document any clients who may be impacted when these services are not funded.

Ms. Greaves asked if BRHPC has programs in place that can assist clients with respect to their credit history. Ms. Alveranga-Jones replied that Consolidated Credit provides advice to clients on how they can improve this history by ensuring that outdated items are written off and no longer constitute barriers to credit.

Rhode Rosulme, representing Care Resource, recalled that in FY 2024-2025, the Board awarded this agency $341,160 to serve 300 clients. They have served 369 clients and spent $307,725 of the allocated funds, leaving a total of $34,193 unspent.

Care Resource has exceeded all of its benchmarks. All housing case management clients were served successfully, and 69 unduplicated clients were connected with STRMU providers. One unduplicated client submitted an application for PHP.

Barriers to assistance occurred when agencies shifted funds between programs, as well as when clients did not wish to come into Care Resource's offices due to concerns with their immigration status. It is also more difficult for clients to receive approval for assistance. HOPWA can provide first and last months' rent but cannot continuously sustain clients over a longer time period.

Francisco Gomez, also representing Care Resource, advised that the agency has reached out to individual landlords to seek shared space for clients. He reviewed ways in which the agency has assisted clients by helping them find jobs that can help them pay rent, as well as connecting them to the Continuum of Care (CoC).

Vice Chair Hughes requested clarification of how Care Resource's funds were left over. Ms. Williams explained that because Care Resource provides case management services only, the funds they receive can only be used to pay staff salaries; some funds remained due to staff turnover.

VIII. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Ms. Williams stated that while she felt there will be positive changes coming for the HOPWA program through advocacy at the national level, she is also working to schedule a meeting with the Director of Florida's Department of Children and Families, as some HOPWA clients may be eligible for services through the Emergency Submissions Grant (ESG) program. The Department of Children and Families is the largest recipient of ESG funds in Broward County. One aspect of the logic behind elimination of HOPWA in the federal bill was that HOPWA clients can be served through the ESG program. She hopes to identify ways to establish a transition plan for the most vulnerable clients.

Ms. Williams recalled that in 2024, HOPWA also transitioned to a new inspection standard, which is also used by ESG. This is expected to help ease the transition between programs.

Mr. Cius emphasized the need to continue to support clients as they work toward self-sufficiency and lessen dependence upon federal sources. Ms. Williams agreed that self-sufficiency has always been the standard for HOPWA clients; however, she pointed out that many members of the HOPWA population have vulnerable mental health status, and recommended caution in encouraging them toward greater self-sufficiency.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Cordova of Legal Aid also addressed self-sufficiency, pointing out that the understanding of this term has changed over the years, as has the amount a household or individual must earn in order to become self-sufficient. He noted that in Broward County, this may require a salary of over $108,000 for a household. Expenses other than housing will affect self-sufficiency as well.

X. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

None.

XI. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION

None.

V. CSB TRAINING

Ms. Williams provided an overview of the responsibilities of the Community Services Board (CSB), explaining that the CSB was formed to make recommendations to the City Commission regarding block grant and HOPWA funding allocations. Unless there are changes to current federal legislation, the Board will need to request that the City Commission review its Ordinance and amend its role.

The Board is asked to review the public service application component for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding as well as HOPWA allocations. Based on their review and discussion, the Board provides ranked recommendations to the City Commission. Ms. Williams recalled that during her tenure with the City, there has been only one instance when the Board's recommendations were overturned.

The CSB is comprised of three residents from each Commission district as well as three at-large positions. One of the at-large positions is occupied by an employee of Broward County's Ryan White Program, one represents a public housing authority, and the third at-large position is held by a resident.

Ms. Williams provided an overview of the HOPWA program, which is operated by the City of Fort Lauderdale but serves the entirety of Broward County. Clients are eligible households that have been impacted by HIV or AIDS. The HOPWA grant is administered to cities on a formulized basis, which considers poverty levels in the community, cases of HIV, and other requirements when determining the City's allocation. In the past, the City's allocation has ranged between $7 million and $9 million.

In order to be eligible for HOPWA services, at least one member of the household must be HIV-positive. This individual is not required to be the head of household. Their income must fall within annual federal income guidelines, which change each year. For HOPWA purposes, income must be at or below 80% of AMI. HOPWA applications must be complete and truthful with supporting documentation to demonstrate income. Recipients must be lawful residents of the United States; however, full citizenship is not required. Because HOPWA is allocated based on jurisdiction, it is not transferable, which means recipients must be current residents of Broward County.

The FY 2025 HOPWA allocation is $7.9 million, which represents a slight decrease in funding. This year's allocation did not come from federal sources, but from funds that were already held by the Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD). Sub-recipients of HOPWA funds in Fort Lauderdale include Broward House, BRHPC, Care Resource, Legal Aid of Broward County, MODCO, and SunServe.

HOPWA sub-recipients are selected by a competitive procurement process which is held every three years. FY 2025-2026 is in the middle of one of these cycles, which means existing agreements are simply extended for this year.

Care Resource and SunServe are case management providers, which means the funding they receive can only be used to pay staff salaries for the processing of applications or connecting HOPWA-ineligible clients to other community resources. Case management providers may not apply to be housing providers in order to ensure financial separation of duties.

Legal Aid provides non-housing support services, specifically including review of lease terms, intervention with eviction issues, or other landlord-tenant disputes.

Permanent housing placement (PHP) provides first and last months' rent as well as security deposits and moving costs. Clients are responsible for their rents moving forward. The Short-Term Rent, Mortgage, and Utility (STRMU) program provides assistance with those specific items for clients who are independently renting their housing units but have experienced a loss, such as unexpected loss of income or emergency expense. STRMU-eligible clients can be provided with 21 weeks of assistance each year.

Facility-based housing is provided by Broward House. This is a short-term residential program which can be similar in nature to an assisted living facility. Project-based rental (PBR) assistance is a longer-term program with a typical stay of 24 months; subsidies in this category are restricted to the building in which an individual is housed rather than to the clients themselves. These subsidies may not be used on the open market.

The tenant-based rental voucher (TBRV) program is modeled on the Section 8 program. Clients are placed on a waiting list and vouchers are issued, typically for life. These vouchers are not portable outside the HOPWA area in which they are issued.

Ms. Williams explained that TBRV provider agencies must make funding decisions based on how many clients they have, as well as projected rents based on the previous year's rents. They are typically funded at least at the same level as the previous year, as they must sustain active clients' vouchers indefinitely. PBR vouchers are maintained with at least the same amount as well, as they will typically have the same number of units available in their facilities from one year to the next. These are considerations that must be kept in mind when making funding decisions for these programs.

Ms. Williams stated that the Board is also asked to review applications and make funding decisions for the Public Services and Community-Based Development Organization (CBDO) categories of CDBG funding. While CDBG is a flexible program, there are also certain "set-asides" that must be taken into consideration.

The CDBG program has three primary categories, each of which has sub-categories. These categories are as follows:

- The project offered or proposed must benefit low- and moderate-income persons (LMI) in the subject area
- The project must aid in the prevention of slum or blight
- The project must meet a need of particular urgency

Ms. Williams further clarified that HUD's definition of an urgent need includes events such as natural disasters or disease outbreaks. CDBG funds may also be used for acquisitions, public facilities improvements or rehabilitation, public service projects, and fair housing activities. The Board is asked to review Public Services requests related to public service and Fair Housing Act activities.

The other category that comes before the Board is CBDOs or Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs). These are often considered together because their qualifying criteria are similar; in some cases, a CBDO may also be a CHDO.

Federal law allows for 15% of the City's total CDBG award to be used for Public Services. This is the amount the Board is asked to allocate when funding Public Services applications. CBDO applications are typically funded with monies left over after all set-asides have been funded. While CBDO funding is treated similarly to a public service, it is not considered as such, which means they are not limited to $50,000 per organization.

Ms. Williams recalled that in FY 2025, HOMES Inc. was the CBDO funded by the City at roughly $125,000. CBDOs often use CDBG dollars for job creation by ensuring that their clients have the necessary skills to be placed into employment.

The difference between CBDOs and CHDOs is that CHDOs must be nonprofit entities. CBDOs may be nonprofit or for-profit.

Ms. Williams advised that on December 24, 2024, the Supplemental Relief Act appropriated $88,051,000 in CDBG disaster recovery funds. This was in direct response to the April 12, 2023 flood which affected Fort Lauderdale. The entire City was considered to be an actively distressed area, which meant there were no limits on how the funds could be provided to agencies. Limitations included the requirement that 70% of the award must meet the LMI objective.

Ms. Williams explained that there is a Public Services component to this appropriation, as the grant funds will be used to mitigate against future disaster impacts or to address needs that are still unmet based on the April 12, 2023 flood. A website has been created specifically for the use of these grant funds and tracks the City's planning process, Action Plan, and proposed activities.

Ms. Williams advised that Housing and Community Development has developed an Action Plan and attempted to submit it to HUD, although the federal government remains shut down at present. Staff is awaiting feedback on this Plan.

Unlike common CDBG funds, the disaster recovery funds may be used for new construction of affordable housing. This provides the City with an opportunity to take actions such as purchasing and repurposing properties for affordable housing, and to upgrade critical infrastructure such as drainage systems and street elevations. All work is subject to competitive processes.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:24 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]