



HOMELESS
EVACUATION AND
SHELTER PLACEMENT
ASSISTANCE PLAN

ABSTRACT

This plan is intended to assist the homeless populations of Manatee County with accessing emergency evacuation shelters during times of disaster.

Record of Changes

Date	Description of Change	Page #	Revision Made By
5.13.20	General format change	All	Tom Kitchen
5.25.20	Appendix A (map) added	7	Tom Kitchen

PURPOSE

This document sets forth the responsibilities and requirements for implementing, activating and operating the Homeless Evacuation and Shelter Placement Assistance Plan for Manatee County, Florida.

SCOPE

This plan will be implemented in Manatee County to assist the homeless population by responding to the need for emergency sheltering during a county-initiated evacuation. It includes education, notification, transportation assistance, sheltering and recovery guidance to be used to assist the homeless populations presently residing throughout the County. Parts of this plan will be implemented continually to provide for education and awareness purposes. Other parts will be implemented when there is the threat of a disaster requiring emergency sheltering operations in coordination with other county emergency actions.

BACKGROUND

According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, **a person is considered homeless only when he/she resides in one of the places described below:**

- In places not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings (on the street).
- In an emergency shelter.
- In transitional or supportive housing for homeless persons who originally came from the streets or emergency shelters.
- Is being evicted within a week from a private dwelling unit and no subsequent residence has been identified and lacks resources and support networks needed to obtain housing.
- Is being discharged within a week from an institution, such as a mental health or substance abuse treatment facility or a jail/prison, in which the person has been a resident for more than 30 consecutive days and no subsequent residence has been identified and the person lacks the resources and support networks needed to obtain housing.
- Is fleeing a domestic violence housing situation and no subsequent residence has been identified and lacks the resources and support networks needed to obtain housing.

Several challenges present themselves with providing sheltering services to transient populations during evacuation operations, especially those resulting from a weather emergency (i.e. tropical storm or hurricane).

CHALLENGES

Communications

Messages communicated through the mainstream media may not reach those who have no permanent residence. Many of these individuals have no access to television, computers, or cellular devices. Additionally, some may be illiterate or non-English speaking which, in turn, creates unique obstacles for communication. Many of the regularly used methods of information dissemination may be ineffective with a subset of this population. Some homeless individuals may be able to be reached through radio, but the most common form of communication employed by this population is word-of-mouth. As a result, special considerations must be taken to curtail the spread of inaccurate information, rumors and misunderstandings that may have serious consequences during an emergency.

Interpersonal Issues

Some homeless individuals may have difficulties interacting with the general shelter population due to the issues resulting from pre-existing medical conditions, limited resources, hygiene, or related to other lifestyle/cultural issues. In the stressful and (relatively) intimate setting of an emergency evacuation shelter, the consequences of such issues may be amplified.

Transportation Dependency

While a small percentage of homeless individuals live in their vehicles, most have difficulty with readily accessing reliable means of transportation and may not be able to reach an emergency evacuation shelter in a timely manner without some type of transportation assistance. As such, Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT) has developed additional routes aimed at connecting homeless individuals with their closest open emergency evacuation shelter with space available. The process for accessing this resource is described below.

PROCEDURES

Communication/Notification

- Informational flyers advertising Transportation Assistance Resources will be posted at community parks, shelters, food pantries/soup kitchens, drop-in centers, free clinics, etc., by the Manatee County Emergency Management and its partner agencies throughout the community serving these individuals.
- In case of an evacuation, "Emergency Notification and Response" cards will be distributed by the staff of the above locations. These will list pick-up points where homeless people in need of transportation can be picked up and taken

to at the closest open emergency evacuation shelter by Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT).

- Law Enforcement Agencies and Manatee County Code Enforcement will provide notification to identified homeless encampments and commonly used congregating areas, through **loudspeaker** drive-by. Additionally, these agencies will assist with the posting of flyers, and distribution of “Emergency Notification and Response” cards.

Transportation

- Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT) will coordinate with the Manatee County Emergency Management Division to provide buses for transporting individuals needing transportation to the designated emergency evacuation shelters. This will be done based on closest open shelter with available space at the time an individual is picked up. There is no guarantee that the destination shelter will be geographically near the area where a homeless individual was first contacted.
- The following sites have been selected to serve as ‘**Pick-up Points**,’ where homeless people may go and be transported to the nearest emergency evacuation shelter and receive supplies. [See **Appendix A – Site Map**]

Name	Address
The Salvation Army	1204 14th St W, Bradenton, FL 34205
Turning Points	701 17 th Ave W, Bradenton, FL 34205
MCAT Bus Depot (DeSoto Station)	820 301 Blvd W, Bradenton, FL 34205
Manatee County Sheriff’s Office (District 2)	407 57th Ave E, Bradenton, FL 34203
Palmetto Police Department	1115 10th St W, Palmetto, FL 34221

Sheltering Support for Homeless Persons

- Homeless individuals may go to any emergency evacuation shelter that is listed as open (with available space) on their own if they have the ability to transport themselves. These individuals, if able, are not required to use MCAT’s transportation assistance resources to enter shelters.

Recovery

- Under normal shelter closure conditions, homeless individuals will be returned to pick-up points as appropriate by EOC dispatched buses. Every effort will be made to return individuals to the location where they were originally contacted. However, plans may need to be altered to reflect access and re-entry concerns.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Manatee County Emergency Management (MCEM)
 - Insure overall program is updated and in place prior to the beginning of hurricane season each year.
 - Produce flyers and handouts in multiple languages, based on need.
 - Data collection, analysis, and evaluation
 - Creation of an After-Action Report to be shared with all involved parties.
- Manatee County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)
 - Declare and announce Local State of Emergency.
- Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT)
 - Provide staff for Emergency Operations Center (EOC).
 - Provide buses and drivers, through normal EOC transport coordination, for use in transporting the homeless population to and from shelters.
- Manatee County Sheriff's Office (MCSO)
 - Coordinate training for in-house staff and provide information to municipal police departments (MPDs) to include knowledge of this program and responsibility to provide handouts to homeless individuals as appropriate.
 - Assist with distribution of flyers, "Emergency Notification and Response" cards and drive-by announcements.
- Manatee County Code Enforcement (MCCE)
 - Coordinate training for in-house staff to include knowledge of this program and responsibility to provide handouts to homeless individuals as appropriate.
 - Assist with distribution of flyers, "Emergency Notification and Response" cards and drive-by announcements.
- School District of Manatee County (SDMC)
 - Coordinate training for general shelter staff and manage the provision of services to all populations sheltered within their facilities.
- Turning Points
 - Coordinate training for homeless program staff, volunteers and homeless citizens.
 - Distribute informational flyers and cards to appropriate locations throughout the community.
 - Act as liaison with Manatee County departments and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) on homeless sheltering issues.
 - Publicize this program throughout the homeless community and agencies supporting these populations.

REVIEW PROCESS

To enhance this program over time and to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the homeless population of Manatee County, a data collection / analysis / evaluation process will be instituted as a component of this program.

Evaluation






- Outcome data, if emergency sheltering operations are conducted, will be collected at the end of each hurricane season and will be analyzed to provide an assessment to be used for updating this plan for the following year.
- Focus groups, questionnaires, or surveys will also be provided in the shelters to determine whether the environment was 'homeless-friendly.' Results from these will be evaluated to determine whether the experience had an impact on either the decision to seek shelter, or satisfaction with shelter arrangements for both homeless and general populations.
- An evaluation will be distributed to all planning and operational partners. These individuals will be encouraged to provide comments or suggestions for improving the plan in the future.

Appendix A – Pick Up Site(s) Map

Homeless Evac. Sites

Locations where the homeless population are able to be picked up by MCAT and brought to an emergency shelter during an evacuation.
8 views
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Pick Up Site for the Homeless

-  1204 14th St W
-  701 17th Ave W
-  820 301 Blvd W
-  407 57th Ave E
-  1115 10th St W

