

MINUTES

Purpose: Engage Okaloosa County community members in a health improvement process through an open, two-way dialogue to reduce the number of adults engaged in substance use.

Attendees: Petra Maddens, Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa); Lauren Hobbs, DOH-Okaloosa; Emily Pickens, DOH-Okaloosa; Trisha Dall, DOH-Okaloosa; Mark Ballou, Veterans Affairs; Christopher Carter; Fort Walton Beach Police Department; Deb Willis, West Florida Area Health Education Center; Vashonda Gafford, Bridgeway Center Inc.; Brenda Robinson, Northwest Florida State College; Petra Maddens, DOH-Okaloosa; Sjada Williams, Goodwill Gulf Coast of Fort Walton Beach; Keishla Barrett, Bridgeway Center Inc.; Kylee Gallavan, Freedom Life Compass; Veronica Ebuon, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Emily King, Gulf Coast Sexual Assault Program; Remeeka Wilson, Bridgeway Center; Cheryl Pedone, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Lauren Anzaldo, Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System; Stephanie Wedel, Freedom Life Compass; Cozette Costana, Bridgeway Center Inc.; Victoria Nott, Bridgeway Center Inc.

Welcome & Introductions – Emily Pickens

- Emily Pickens opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.
- Emily reviewed the meeting's purpose and agenda. There were no results from the Community Engagement Survey from the previous meeting.
- Minutes from the May 10, 2023, meeting were reviewed and approved.

Veterans Affairs Presentation – Mark Ballou

- Mark Ballou provided a briefing about Veteran's Affairs (VA) Justice Outreach in the region. He stated services include determining needs and eligibility and creating a discharge plan based on those needs.
 - If the veteran is ineligible for VA services, community resources are provided to help with housing, treatment, and other needs. They can also provide support group services for mental health and substance use.
- He explained Veteran's Treatment Court is only available to service members. The program is designed to help avoid incarceration and a criminal record by connecting veterans to treatment beforehand.
 - Veteran's Treatment Court is open to the public. Please contact Mark to learn more by email (mark.ballou@va.gov) or phone (850-207-6880).

Action Plan Updates – Emily Pickens

Reintegration Discussion

- Emily Pickens opened discussion by asking Stephanie Wedel to share about the GAP initiative.
 - Stephanie stated the GAP initiative is designed to bridge the gap between individuals with specific needs and resources available to them. It also connects them to recovery programs depending on eligibility.

- Stephanie reviewed local statistics used to identify areas of focus.
- She explained Freedom Life Compass provided 24 re-entry briefings to 500 inmates over the past year and placed over 50 people into recovery programs.
 - In 2023, they launched Celebrate Recovery in the Okaloosa County Jail. The program reaches 60 incarcerated men and women weekly. 75 individuals have been placed into programs to date.
- Stephanie stated the GAP Initiative seeks to identify and close gaps in services where intervention can be made. More information can be found in the PowerPoint attached to the meeting minutes.
- Emily reminded the group of priority areas, including reintegration for Okaloosans released from a correctional, mental health, substance use or domestic violence facility or program. She then opened discussion on re-entry services.
- She shared a whiteboard to facilitate brainstorming on the resources available to individuals before, during, and after an event. Attendees gave feedback.
 - Deb Willis shared AHEC provides tobacco cessation resources that address addictive behaviors as well as free nicotine replacement products.
 - Veronica Ebuon stated that Vocational Rehabilitation offers services to youth with disabilities to include career exploration and work experiences.
 - Cheryl Pedone added that Vocational Rehabilitation will help anyone with a disability find work, regardless of age.
 - Victoria Nott discussed case management services available at Bridgeway. She stated they work with the Okaloosa County Jail to get individuals set up for services prior to release. Individuals must be uninsured or qualify for Medicaid and have a mental health diagnosis to be eligible.
 - Kylee Gallavan stated connecting individuals to a community via support groups and Celebrate Recovery has been successful in behavior change.
- Kylee noted there are numerous resources for re-entry that assist someone after release, but very few identified as protective factors or prevention before the event.
- Emily initiated discussion about diversion programs. She shared this is an effective program related to the group's goals and efforts.
 - Emily shared examples of pre-arrest diversion programs from [New York](#) and [Hillsborough County](#) from Chief Bage with Fort Walton Beach Police Department.
 - Stephanie stated Drug Court is a pre-trial diversion program already in place locally. She stated it would be beneficial to learn more about what resources county employees are aware of and which are already being provided to individuals in this program.
 - Kylee suggested the group develop an action plan to train local officials on the resources available.

- Chris Carter agreed and stated it would be helpful for law enforcement. He shared it can be a struggle to assist people who need help due to lack of knowledge about available resources.
- Veronica shared DCF and NWF Health has resources for individuals with mental health or substance use challenges who are uninsured or underinsured.
 - She added that DCF has other divisions that could assist in outpatient treatment and that Bridgeway has an [outpatient detox unit](#).
 - Emily added Bridgeway has a partnership with EMS where individuals can be discharged into their care rather than admitted to the ER if applicable. This helps with continuity of care and reduces healthcare burden.

Action Items – Kylee Gallavan & Deb Willis

- Emily stated it appears the group wants to focus on establishing a pre-arrest diversion program to support efforts pre-event and work to improve access to services for re-entry post-event. Attendees agreed. Action planning will begin at the next meeting.
- Members discussed the recurring meeting time and date. Attendees stated Wednesday mornings in Niceville are still beneficial. Stephanie will reserve a room at Crosspoint Church for August.

Open Discussion – All

- Stephanie shared the next Anti-Drug Coalition meeting will be held July 28th at 1:00 PM at Freedom Life Compass (401 County Line Road Niceville, FL) and via Zoom.
- Emily King stated the Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) meeting will be held on July 18th at 10:00 a.m. at 650 Chappie James Street, Crestview FL 32536 and via Zoom.
- Stephanie shared the Niceville Bazaar will be held on Oct 21st at the Mullet Festival grounds. Non-profits can register for a free booth at www.FLC.org.

Closing – Petra Maddens

- Petra thanked attendees for participating and asked them to complete the meeting evaluation form to provide feedback.

Next Meeting – Wednesday, August 9, 2023, at 9:00 AM at Crosspoint Church in Niceville and via Microsoft Teams.

Action Items	Owners	Deadline	Status
Reserve meeting room at Crosspoint Church	Stephanie Wedel	August 9 th	Not started
Invite key partners to next meeting	ALL	Next meeting	Ongoing

The Gap
INITIATIVE

BY FREEDOM LIFE COMPASS



FREEDOM LIFE COMPASS, INC.
Recovery Support & Resources



VISION | MISSION | ACTIVITIES

Mission Serving the forgotten and lost in our community, especially those coming out of trafficking, incarceration, homelessness, and addiction, by equipping them to take the next right step.

Vision Change lives by providing Christ-centered recovery and resources to Northwest Florida and the world.

Homeless Outreach | Celebrate Recovery

Online Resource Center

Community Outreach (NS, OCSO, PD)

Jail | Prison Ministry & Re-Entry

Recovery Placements

Emergency Placement/Relocation

Bridging the Gap between need & resource

COMMUNITY WE ARE SERVING:

Average daily inmate population: 725* Jail inmate capacity: 594 Inmates with **substance/mental issues is more than 50%** Every day, more than 250 people in the United States die after overdosing on opioids. Over 950,000 lives have been lost since 1999.

Okaloosa County Jail *Inmate recidivism rate: 65%*

Women's being released are one of the most vulnerable to becoming victims of trafficking, or death by returning to the situations they came from.

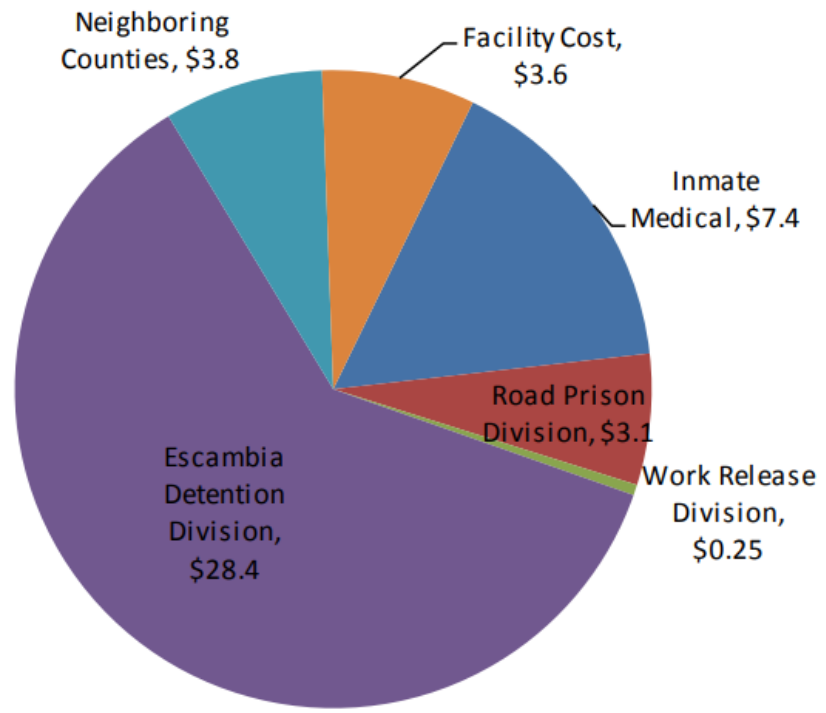
OCJ had over 3,700 drug charges come through their facility in 2021!

Poverty rate is 10% of the population of Okaloosa/Walton Counties

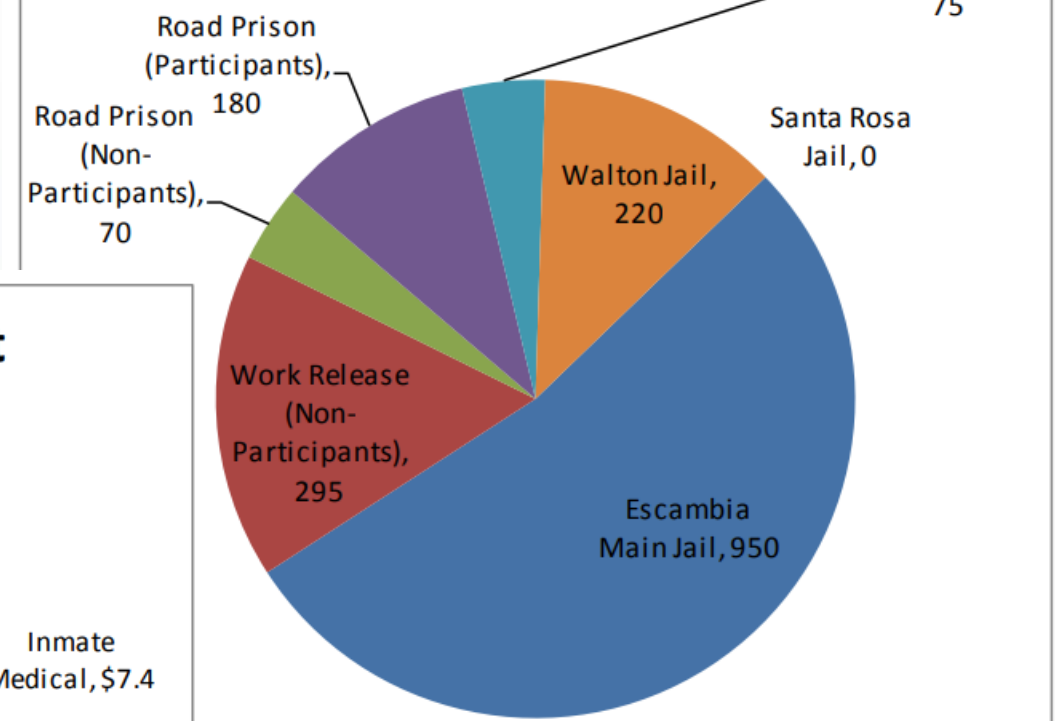
27k homeless in the state of Florida per the US Interagency Council on Homelessness

Escambia County Inmate Population & Cost

**\$46.5M - Incarceration Cost
by Division (in \$M)**



1795 Inmates by Location



ACLU of Florida, August 2017

MONTHLY AVERAGE BOOKINGS

DRUGS

263

VIOLENT OFFENSES

174

PROPERTY CRIMES

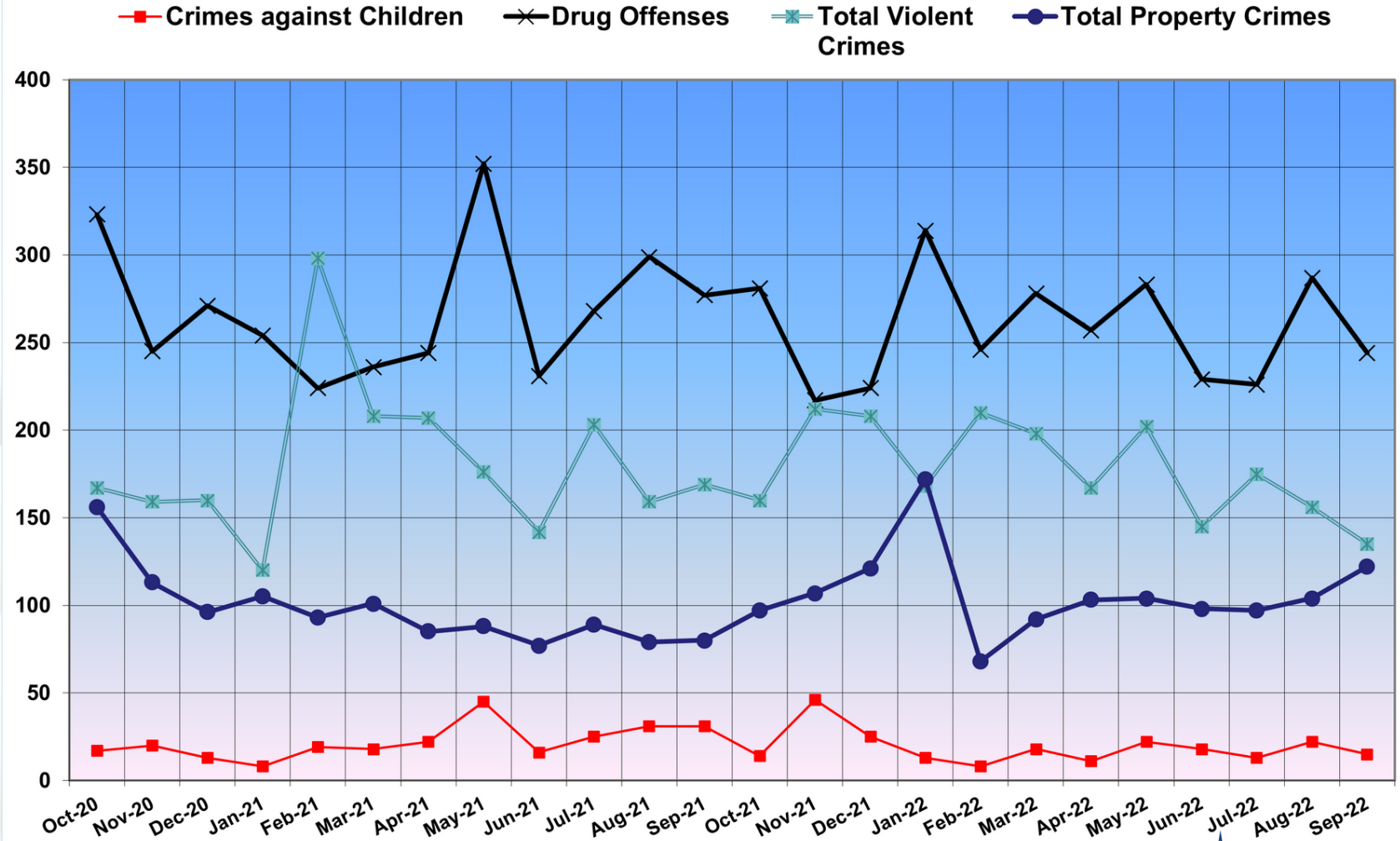
102

CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN

20

County Jail Crimes by Category Oct 2020 - Sep 2022

OKALOOSA



FREEDOM LIFE COMPASS 2022

RE-ENTRY BRIEFINGS

24

MEETINGS

500

INMATES REACHED

OUTREACH

14

EVENTS

20+

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

PLACEMENTS

50+

RECOVERY PROGRAMS

13

HALF-WAY HOUSES

RESOURCES PROVIDED

20,000+

FLYERS/ RACK CARD

OTHER ACTIVITIES

6

EMERGENCY
RELOCATION/HOUSING
PLACEMENTS

80

CELEBRATE
RECOVERY STEP STUDY
GRADUATES IN PRISONS

100+

VOLUNTEER HOURS IN THE COMMUNITY

AWARENESS CREATED
COUNTLESS

2023

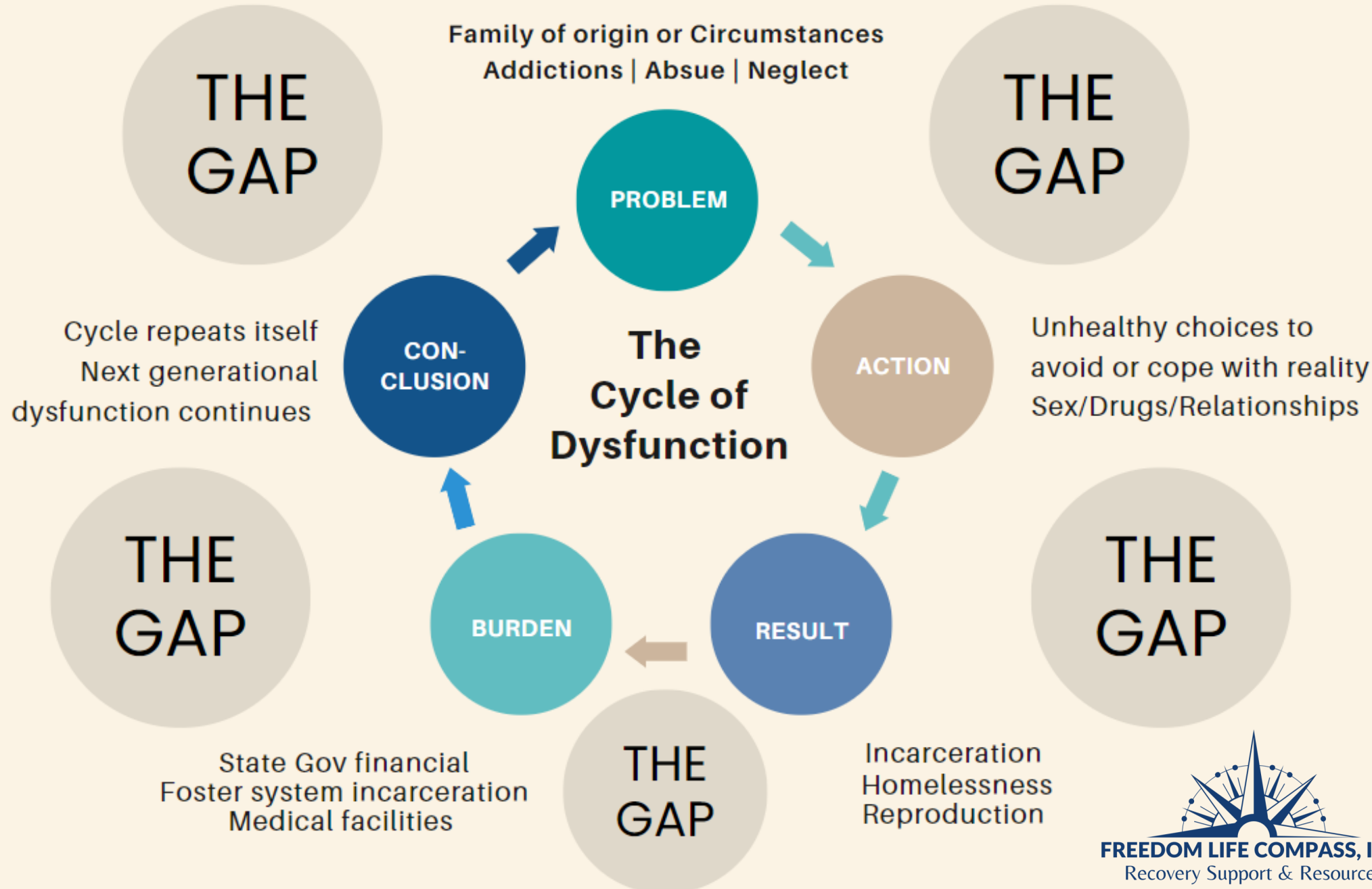
LAUNCHED CELEBRATE RECOVERY INSIDE AT
OKALOOSA COUNTY JAIL DEC 9

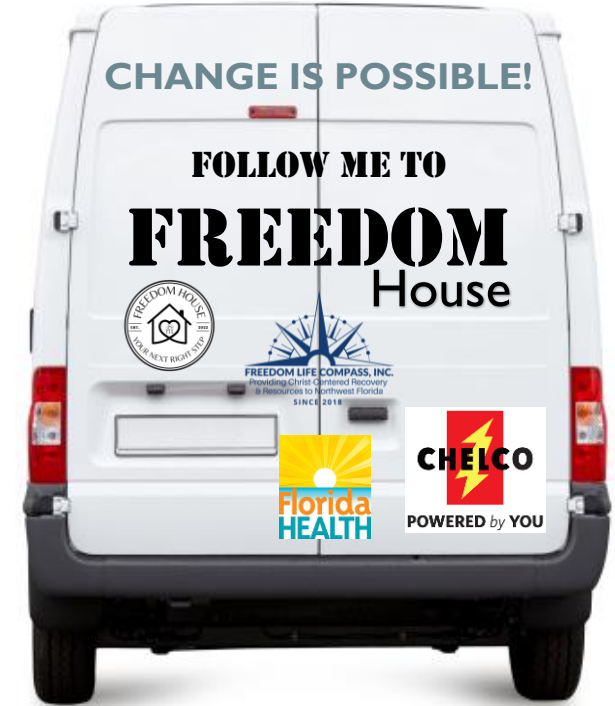
REFERED 150+ INMATES TO PROGRAMS

75 PLACED INTO PROGRAMS

50% AWAITING COURTS TO APPROVE

We work with attorneys to help with placements in leu of incarceration





**BRIDGING THE GAP
RESPONSE VAN**

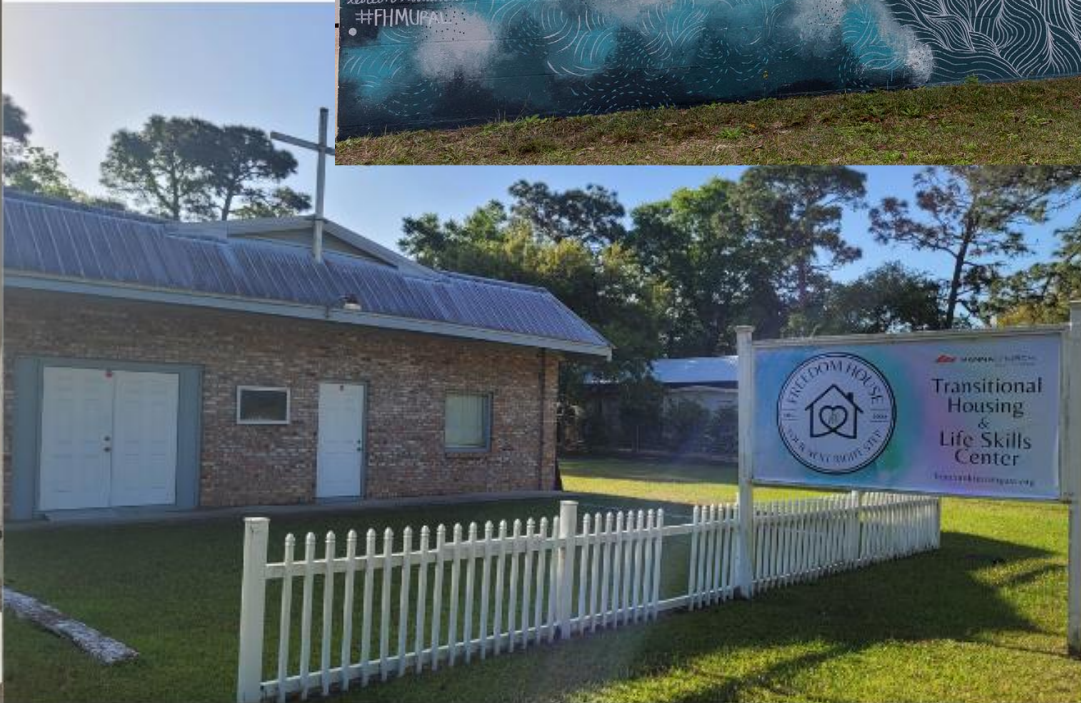


FREEDOM LIFE COMPASS, INC.
Recovery Support & Resources

Transport to and from Celebrate Recovery meetings at the jails, churches, and shelters. Conducting community outreach (NS, OCSO, PD), Transport Inmates for re-entry into recovery programs, provide transport to safe houses for those in need, provides a mobile billboard that change is possible.

Thank you!

 **MANNACHURCH**
WEST FLORIDA



Organizations Helping Bridge the Gap



CROSSROADS CENTER

FamiliesFirst
NETWORK
An Affiliate of LifeView Group



HOMELESSNESS
& HOUSING ALLIANCE



Point Washington
MEDICAL CLINIC

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- SPONSOR A RESIDENT FOR THE 3 WEEK GRACE PERIOD \$375
- HELP WITH THE COST OF HOUSING WOMEN AT FREEDOM HOUSE
- CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS



\$7,500 X PLATINUM	2 TABLES at Banquet & Soiree, 6 posts, Logo on Website and Event Flyers, Tickets to any other events.
\$5,000 PLATINUM	1 TABLE at Banquet & Soiree, 4 posts Logo on Website and Event Flyers, Tickets to any other events.
\$2,500 GOLD	2 Pairs of tickets to the Banquet & Soiree, 3 posts Logo on Website and Event Flyers, Tickets to any other events.
\$1,250 SILVER	1 Pair of tickets to the Banquet & Soiree, 2 social media posts per year, Logo on Website
\$500 BRONZE	One social media post per year 1 Pair of tickets to the banquet Logo on Website

Host a Company Serve Day
programmanager.flc@gmail.com

CREATE A CULTURE OF SERVICE AND CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR ASSOCIATES!

Your business can become a sponsor of the Freedom House & FLC support services. Host a serve day at the FH for employee engagement in civic service!

FREEDOM LIFE COMPASS, INC. RE-ENTRY & ADDICTION RECOVERY RESOURCES



- 01 JAIL/PRISON RE-ENTRY
- 02 AWARENESS & OUTREACH EVENTS
- 03 ONLINE RESOURCE CENTER
- 04 COMMUNITY RESOURCE EDUCATION & RACK CARDS
- 05 **FREEDOM HOUSE WOMENS HOME**

Helping women identify their passion & turn it into their purpose!

Freedom House Needs

LAPTOP COMPUTERS | PRAYERS
CELL PHONES | PANTRY ITEMS | TOILETRIES

Call Mary at 813-781-6279 for Pick up/Drop off info.



SEND DONATION ITEMS TO
401 COUNTY LINE RD NICEVILLE FL 32578
@FREEDOMLIFECOMPASS.ORG