

Horst, Rachel

From: CEER@brevardfl.gov
Sent: Wednesday, January 28, 2026 4:31 PM
To: Horst, Rachel
Subject: A new CEER Recommendation has been submitted as ID #2026037

Recommendation # 2026037

Dear CEER Administrator,

Speak Up Brevard Recommendation ID #2026037 has been submitted. Please login to the CEER Application to start the recommendation evaluation workflow.

Contact Information:

Group/Organization	Citizen
Name	Melissa h Brandt
Address	2517 Palm Ave, Mims FL 32754
Phone	(407) 515-0517
Email	missybrandt1970@gmail.com
Alternate Email	missybrandt1970@gmail.com

Recommendation Information:

Recommendation ID	2026037
Recommendation Title	Project Warm Harbor
Areas Affected	Pilot Program Request for Cold Night Sheltering
Department Affected	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE
Current problem	<p>COLD NIGHT SAFE STAY – BREVARD COUNTY Emergency Freeze Response Motel Partnership Pilot Prepared by: Melissa H. Brandt</p> <p>===== EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ===== Cold Night Safe Stay is a Brevard County–specific, weather-activated emergency housing response designed to protect unhoused individuals during National Weather Service–issued freeze warnings. Brevard County currently lacks scalable emergency shelter capacity during cold-weather events. As a result, individuals experiencing homelessness face life-threatening exposure risks, while Emergency Medical Services (EMS), hospital emergency departments, and law enforcement experience increased strain. This pilot program activates short-term motel partnerships only during declared freeze warnings, providing 1–3 nights of safe lodging with no creation of tenancy. The program is cost-effective, immediately deployable, and aligned with Brevard County Emergency Management and Public Safety objectives. Funding Request: \$25,000 winter pilot allocation</p> <p>===== PROBLEM</p>

STATEMENT – BREVARD COUNTY CONTEXT

===== • No centralized cold-weather shelter capacity countywide • Increased hypothermia risk during multi-night freeze events • Elevated EMS calls, ER visits, and jail diversion • Limited short-notice shelter scalability

===== PROGRAM

OVERVIEW ===== Cold Night Safe Stay partners with 2–3 motels in each major Brevard city: • Titusville • Cocoa • Melbourne • Palm Bay Activation occurs only during: • National Weather Service Freeze Warnings • Declared cold-weather emergencies by Brevard County Emergency Management Participants receive: • One-night stays (renewed nightly, max 3 nights) • Light-touch eligibility screening • Next-day case management referral

===== PARTNER ROLES

===== Lead Administrator: • Recovery Connections or Brevard Homeless Coalition (fiscal agent) Public Partners: • Brevard County Emergency Management • Brevard County Public Safety • Local Municipal Governments • Brevard Sheriff’s Office (support role) Community Partners: • Community of Hope • Hospitals and EMS providers • Faith-based emergency response partners =====

MOTEL PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

===== Motel partners receive: • Guaranteed payment via nonprofit/county funds • Limited activation (freeze-only) • No tenancy risk • Behavioral expectations for guests • Community recognition and documentation for tax purposes Target rate: • \$45–\$65 per room/night

===== PILOT BUDGET – 7 NIGHT FREEZE EVENT

===== Rooms: 10 rooms x 4 cities x \$60 x 7 nights = \$16,800 Support Costs: • Transportation assistance: \$2,000 • Case management staffing: \$3,000 • Administrative & insurance: \$1,200 Total Pilot Cost: \$23,000 (rounded to \$25,000 for contingency)

===== COST

AVOIDANCE JUSTIFICATION

===== Average ER visit: \$2,500 Average jail night: \$150 Average motel room: \$60 Preventing: • 10 ER visits offsets full pilot cost • 50 jail nights saves \$7,500

===== PUBLIC SAFETY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ALIGNMENT

===== • Life-safety intervention • Reduces strain on EMS, hospitals, and jail systems • Rapid deployment using existing infrastructure • No zoning, licensing, or shelter compliance barriers =====

Recommendation

Everything is in documentation provided above

Attachments

Cold_Night_Safe_Stay_Brevard_Complete_Packet-mhb (1).pdf

Please do not reply to this e-mail, as it will go to an unmonitored mailbox.

Project Warm Harbor- BREVARD COUNTY FLORIDA

Emergency Freeze Response Motel Partnership Pilot

Prepared by: Melissa H. Brandt

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Project Warm Harbor is a Brevard County–specific, weather-activated emergency housing response designed to protect unhoused individuals during National Weather Service–issued freeze warnings.

Brevard County currently lacks scalable emergency shelter capacity during cold-weather events. As a result, individuals experiencing homelessness face life-threatening exposure risks, while Emergency Medical Services (EMS), hospital emergency departments, and law enforcement experience increased strain.

This pilot program activates short-term motel partnerships only during declared freeze warnings, providing 1–3 nights of safe lodging with no creation of tenancy. The program is cost-effective, immediately deployable, and aligned with Brevard County Emergency Management and Public Safety objectives.

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PROBLEM STATEMENT – BREVARD COUNTY CONTEXT

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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PUBLIC SAFETY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ALIGNMENT

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- Life-safety intervention
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PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGMENT & VISIBILITY

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Cold Night Safe Stay will be publicly acknowledged as a Brevard County Emergency Management–supported initiative, with recognition of county leadership, municipal partners, and participating motels.

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NEXT STEPS

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- County Manager and Public Safety briefing
- Emergency Management funding approval
- Motel MOUs executed
- Activation during next freeze warning



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

TO: Jim Liesenfelt, County Manager

THRU: Matt Wallace, Public Safety Director

FROM: John Scott, Emergency Management Director

SUBJ: Citizen Efficiency and Effectiveness Recommendation #2026037

CEER #2026037, titled Project Warm Harbor, was received by the County from Melissa h Brandt.

Citizen Statement:

COLD NIGHT SAFE STAY – BREVARD COUNTY
Emergency Freeze Response Motel Partnership Pilot
Prepared by: Melissa H. Brandt

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BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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PUBLIC SAFETY & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ALIGNMENT

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- Life-safety intervention
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=====

Citizen Recommendation:

Everything is in documentation provided above



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Staff Analysis:

Brevard County does not operate cold weather shelters. The current approach is community partner–led, with Emergency Management focused on coordination and communication. Expanding into direct sheltering or motel-based programs would require a significant policy and resource shift.

Background

- Cold weather sheltering in Brevard started with the identification of a communications gap during very cold nights and the need for a more coordinated approach
 - First responders lacked visibility on available shelter options for unhoused individuals
 - Community providers offering safe shelter struggled to get their messages to the right audiences
- Emergency Management assumed a coordination role to facilitate communication

Weather Conditions

- Standard community partner threshold for potential cold weather shelter activities is near or below 45°F
 - Recent Cold Weather Shelter activities (days with at least one shelter open):
 - Fiscal Year 2024: 22 days
 - Fiscal Year 2025: 34 days
 - Fiscal Year 2026: 36 days
- National Weather Service Issues Freeze Warnings when temperatures are forecasted to go below 32°F for a long period of time
 - Note: Emergency Management does not declare “cold weather emergencies”

Current Approach

- **Community Partners:**
 - Operate as self-supporting
 - Independently decide if/when to open shelters
 - Determine capacity, duration, and services
- **Emergency Management:**
 - Serves strictly as an information-sharing hub
 - Does not fund, staff, or resource shelter operations
- **Coordination Process:**
 - EM confirms opening status with partners when days are forecast to be near or below temperature thresholds
 - Information is consolidated and shared with:
 - 9-1-1 dispatch centers
 - Public safety partners
 - Human service agencies serving the unhoused community
 - General public via social media and EOC text alerts

Motel-Based Sheltering – City of Palm Bay Example



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

- In 2022, the City of Palm Bay partnered with the HELPs Community Initiative to provide hotel vouchers on cold nights for individuals experiencing homelessness
- Program funding via the Palm Bay Municipal Foundation at \$8,900
- Program challenges:
 - Limited motel participation (rate and willingness)
 - Client-related property damage to motel
 - Funding was quickly exhausted
- Outcome: Program was not sustained

Staff Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners reject CEER # 2026037 as detailed in the staff analysis and because it does not enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of County government as required by Home Rule Charter.