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Local relief campaign to raise \$1 million for the homeless in Central Florida



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Unhoused individuals living on the grounds of the Orange County Administration building, on Friday, August 26, 2022. (High-dynamic-range composite image by Ricardo Ramirez Buxeda/ Orlando Sentinel)



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The Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida has partnered with Morgan & Morgan to raise \$1 million to assist unhoused individuals and help families at risk of homelessness.

The [campaign](#), which officially launched on Sept. 7, will run through Veterans's Day on Nov. 11 and National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week from Nov. 12 to Nov. 20.

Matt Morgan, an attorney at the firm, donated \$250,000 to the coalition. His parents, John Morgan and Ultima Morgan, matched his donation to further the cause.

"Many people, many of our friends and neighbors will have no option but to find shelter wherever they can, in the near term, and when we think about that, it compels action," Matt Morgan said.

He said the decision to launch an early and longer relief campaign came from concerns of a housing crisis in Central Florida and the national economy.

"The perfect storm truly is approaching our community with the stimulus programs running out, with the Fed increasing rates to restrict the economy," Matt Morgan said.

In an attempt to control inflation, the [Federal Reserve](#) increased interest rates by 0.75 percentage point for the third time this year on Sept. 22.

Matt Morgan said the campaign's special emphasis on veterans is related to the injustice he sees in service members being unsupported, which can be accentuated during the holiday season.

"The thought of walking around Orange Avenue with their children at Christmas time is unbearable, and the coalition provides a safe place for them to go," Matt said.

Data from the [National Coalition for Homeless Veterans](#) shows 7% of the general population can claim veteran status, but nearly 13% of the homeless adult population are veterans.

The coalition provided services for more than 100 homeless veterans in 2021, according to the organization.

Allison Krall, CEO of the Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida, said the organization has seen a greater need for funds and services in the last year.

“I will say that this past fiscal year 33% of the folks who we saw were homeless for the first time,” Krall said. “Now, that’s not necessarily more than previous years, but it just shows that people who never thought they would become homeless, have found themselves in that position.”

In Central Florida, there are only 17 affordable rental units for every 100 low-income households, according to data from the CHCF.

Other factors that can push an individual to homelessness include domestic violence, substance abuse, mental illness and aging out of foster care, according to the organization.

In addition to distributing rental assistance, Krall said the coalition has one shelter that serves men only and another one for women and families. The organization also provides meals and access to showers, laundry rooms, clothing and personal hygiene products for the unsheltered population.

Krall said the donations will help the organization with the costs of service and with homelessness prevention, a key factor in their mission.

“If you can capture somebody, before they ever become homeless, and provide them with the assistance to be able to remain housed, it reduces the trauma on that family, it reduces the impact on the overall homeless services system,” Krall said.

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