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**Lee County enhances outreach for residents in need of assistance**

Fort Myers, FL, Dec.19, 2022 – Lee County Human & Veteran Services has enhanced its resources in an effort to reach out to those who may need assistance with resources after Hurricane Ian.

The department's Coordinated Entry team is now expanded to help complete assessments for those experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness as a result of the storm, which made landfall in Lee County on Sept. 28. The phone number remains the same, but new resources are available. This is critical because some residents who previously were not familiar with services may now need them post-disaster and may be new to the process.

Coordinated entry is the gateway to all housing and services for persons who are experiencing homelessness in Lee County. To access street outreach services, emergency shelter, rapid re-housing, or permanent supportive housing, call 239-533-7996. The number is answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week. People also can visit the Homeless Resource Day Center at the Salvation Army, 2450 Edison Ave., Fort Myers, FL 33901.

Another tool Lee County Human & Veteran Services developed and launched post-Ian is the Lee REACH app for the local community.

This comprehensive app was created to deliver information to the community quickly via a preferred form of notification among Lee County residents. Now, people with the app can connect with resources at the click of a button. The app is available for download on the Apple App Store and Google Play.

Residents can find applications for help with rent, electric, water, housing rehabilitation and down-payment assistance. They can find their closest food pantry along with directions. There also is a schedule for mobile food pantries. Persons experiencing homelessness can sign up for push notifications for severe weather outreach, such as cold fronts this winter. The push notifications also help residents learn about events happening throughout the county for those in need of services.

The Lee Board of County Commissioners has expressed its commitment to social services in both policy and financial aspects. The Lee County Department of Human & Veteran Services serves as a hub for government, private and nonprofit resources designated to aid individuals and families. For more information, call 239-533-7900 or visit [www.leegov.com/dhs](http://www.leegov.com/dhs).

For Hurricane Ian response updates and information, check [www.leegov.com/storm](http://www.leegov.com/storm) or follow Lee County Government on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/leecountyflbocc](http://www.facebook.com/leecountyflbocc). To receive updates from Lee County Government, sign up for the newsletter here: [www.leegov.com/resources/newsletters](http://www.leegov.com/resources/newsletters).