



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Yesterday, First Lady Casey DeSantis launched Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity. This major new initiative has been spearheaded by First Lady DeSantis and implemented by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), utilizing ‘Care Navigators’ to guide Floridians on an individualized path to prosperity by focusing on community collaboration between the private sector, faith-based community, nonprofits and government entities to break down traditional community silos, to maximize resources and uncover opportunities.

“Having the privilege of traveling the state, our team saw an immense value in bringing together public and private groups to collaborate and communicate with and on behalf of Floridians,” said **First Lady Casey DeSantis**. “Essentially, we are bringing good people together to work with and on behalf of good people in need. To accomplish this, the program will empower ‘Care Navigators’ to collaborate with community partners to create a customized plan for success, tailor-made for the individual.”

‘Care Navigators’ are essential in helping individuals identify their unique and immediate barriers to prosperity, develop long-term goals, map out a strategic plan and work to ensure all sectors of the community have a ‘seat at the table’ and are a part of the solution.

Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity was piloted in August 2020 in six counties as a voluntary program available to DCF customers receiving public benefits. To date, the initiative has served more than 10,000 Floridians.



[Click the image above to watch a video on Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity](#)

As a result of today’s announcement, services will now be available statewide and will include the following:

- Children aging out of foster care;
- Pregnant mothers contending with substance abuse disorders;
- Other Families in need of assistance.

Additionally, those seeking help and hope will now have a dedicated hotline and website to contact for support.

- Hotline: (850)300-HOPE
- Website: www.HopeFlorida.com.

Today's expansion also includes the following commitments from community partners:

- Faith and Community Based Organizations: My Florida My Family's CarePortal is expanding to allow faith and community based organizations to serve the needs of Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity customers. To learn more about how the CarePortal meets individualized needs, please [click here](#).
- The Business Community: A growing number of businesses across Florida have committed to work with CareerSource Florida and Care Navigators to support Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity clients by helping them find employment. The list includes but is not limited to:
 - *The Florida Chamber of Commerce*
 - *The Jacksonville Jaguars*
 - *PNC Bank*
 - *Crystal Automotive, Motorcycle and Tractor Group*
 - *The Moore Agency*
- Non-Profit Partners: Nonprofits and other critical community service providers should register their service or program listing with Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity's social care network to ensure that Care Navigators have the largest possible rolodex of community partners and are able to connect customers based on their unique needs. To register today, [click here](#).
- Floridians: Anyone wanting to provide help and hope can visit Volunteer Florida's Volunteer Connect Portal to find opportunities to engage in community service with 501(c)(3) organizations and governmental entities that work with volunteers. Organizations should also utilize this tool to recruit additional volunteers. To find opportunities to volunteer, [click here](#). To sign up to recruit volunteers today, [click here](#).

"We are thrilled to have the support of the First Lady and the opportunity to expand Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity to further partner with Florida families who are ready to achieve their goals," said **DCF Secretary Shevaun Harris**. "The successes of the program are dependent on partners across our state who respond with urgency to our customers' needs and who are committed to making a meaningful impact on the families we serve. We are thankful to partner with the First Lady, the business community, the faith community and other community partners who are pivotal in our expansion efforts."

“Governor and First Lady DeSantis have brought the right players to the table time and time again to bridge the private, non-profit, faith and government sectors together,” said **Erik Dellenback, Liaison to the Governor for Faith and Community**. “A Pathway to Prosperity is one more example of this, and by working with Florida’s incredible faith and community partners who serve on the front lines of our vulnerable populations day in and day out, we will be able to do more for the families of Florida that are in need.”

“Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity” ties into DCF’s vision to provide holistic services to families early on to build resiliency and prevent crisis,” said **David Nassar, President of For Others**. “This initiative aligned with CarePortal and For Others’ vision of leveraging faith and community networks to empower local communities through building strong communities and families is an ideal partnership. For Others remains committed to investing in Florida to support the Governor and First Lady DeSantis’ steadfast efforts in strengthening the families of Florida.”

“Ending generational poverty has long been an initiative of the Florida Chamber,” said **Mark Wilson, President and CEO of the Florida Chamber of Commerce**. “It is our honor to bring private sector partners to the table to provide commitments to offer employment and job training opportunities for Floridians who are eager to engage in the workforce. Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity ensures individuals are poised and ready to bring their many talents and abilities to Florida businesses.”

“The non-profit community fits hand in hand with the mission of Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity, and it is United Against Poverty’s vision to ensure families have access to basic needs so they can achieve a future filled with hope and possibilities,” said **Gwendolyn Butson, CEO of United Against Poverty**, which has three campuses across Central Florida.

“We are honored to partner on this journey with First Lady DeSantis and the Department of Children and Families and will continue to empower people living in poverty to lift themselves and their families to economic self-sufficiency,” said **Erika Garcia, Programs Director of United Against Poverty Orlando**.

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