



NELIDA
4 GAINESVILLE

OPENING THE DOOR TO

HOPE



A GAINESVILLE HOPE COTTAGES INITIATIVE

**INNOVATING SOLUTIONS FOR A
GREENER, MORE RESILIENT
GAINESVILLE**

**PRESENTED BY
NELIDA JEAN-BAPTISTE PELLOT
CANDIDATE FOR GAINESVILLE
CITY COMMISSION
DISTRICT II**

MEET THE CANDIDATE

My name is **Nelida Jean-Baptiste Pellot**, and I'm running for Gainesville City Commission, District II, because I believe our city works best when everyone has a seat at the table.

Gainesville has always been a place where people care deeply about their neighbors, our environment, and the future we are building together. Through my work in housing and community advocacy, I've seen firsthand how much thoughtful leadership matters in ensuring people can afford to live here, feel safe in their neighborhoods, and have real opportunities to thrive.

I believe leadership begins with listening. Whether I'm speaking with residents about housing challenges, supporting local arts and culture, or working alongside community partners to solve problems, I approach every conversation with collaboration, transparency, and heart.

My journey to Gainesville wasn't a typical one. I was raised in South Florida, and I came here after a life-changing tragedy when my home burned down. During my first months in Gainesville, I lived out of my car. That experience shaped my understanding of housing insecurity and strengthened my commitment to making sure others don't have to face the same hardships alone.

Today, my work focuses on helping people navigate housing systems, advocating for stronger communities, and supporting the values that make Gainesville the quirky, thoughtful, vibrant place we love.

Outside of my work, I enjoy dogs, being the Chaos Coordinator at Theatre Connect, and the creative spirit that defines Gainesville. I'm running for City Commission to build a Gainesville that is affordable, inclusive, and forward-thinking, where every resident feels they belong and has a voice in shaping our city's future.



NAME: NELIDA JEAN-BAPTISTE PELLOT

AGE: 40

PRONOUNS: THEY/THEM

BACKGROUND:

- **BORN IN PUERTO RICO**
- **RAISED IN SOUTH FLORIDA**
- **HAITIAN AND PUERTO RICAN PARENTS**
- **FIRST GENERATION AMERICAN**

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GREENER, MORE RESILIENT GAINESVILLE**

WHY ACCESS MATTERS



Housing is not just a roof. It is stability. It is health. It is safety. It is the foundation that allows people to work, attend school, recover from trauma, reunite with family, and participate in community life.

As someone who has experienced homelessness firsthand, I know what it means to be searching for safety while trying to rebuild your life. I also know that too many Gainesville residents are only one emergency, one medical bill, one rent increase, or one missed paycheck away from losing their housing.

While Gainesville has made important investments in homelessness services and affordable housing, there remains a critical gap between emergency shelter and permanent housing. We need innovative solutions that prioritize dignity, stability, and human connection.

That is why I am proposing the Gainesville Hope Cottages Initiative.

THE VISION

The Gainesville Hope Cottages Initiative would create a community of small private cottages that provide transitional housing for residents experiencing homelessness while they work toward permanent housing.

Unlike traditional congregate shelters, each resident would have a private space where they can safely sleep, store belongings, and begin rebuilding their lives.

Hope Cottages would be paired with:

- Intensive case management
- Mental health support
- Healthcare navigation
- Employment assistance
- Financial coaching
- Benefits enrollment
- Housing placement services
- Transportation- including access to bikes

This is not simply a shelter. It is a pathway home.

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THE PROBLEM



On any given night, hundreds of people in Alachua County experience homelessness.

Many individuals remain unhoused because:

- Affordable housing is unavailable.
- Housing voucher waitlists are years long.
- Fixed incomes cannot keep up with rising rents.
- Emergency shelters are operating at capacity. Shelter closures
- Survivors of violence need safer housing options.
- Seniors and people with disabilities require greater stability and privacy.

The result is a system where people often cycle between shelters, encampments, hospitals, jails, and emergency rooms instead of finding lasting housing solutions.

That cycle is expensive, ineffective, and inhumane.



An abandoned homeless encampment in District II, Gainesville.

WHY TRADITIONAL SHELTERS MAY NOT BE ENOUGH

Traditional Shelter Challenges	Hope Cottages Solution
Shared sleeping spaces	Private, secure units, free of pests
Limited privacy	Personal space and dignity
High noise and stress levels	Trauma-informed environment
Difficulty storing belongings	Secure storage within unit
Challenges for seniors and people with disabilities	Accessible, individualized housing
Limited ability to stabilize and heal	Stable environment for recovery
Residents often cycle back into homelessness	Focus on permanent housing placement



- 40% OF HOMELESS WOMEN REPORT LIFETIME SEXUAL ASSAULT, WITH UP TO 27% EXPERIENCING AN ASSAULT IN ANY GIVEN 12-MONTH PERIOD.**
- APPROXIMATELY 13% OF YOUTH EXPERIENCE SEXUAL ASSAULT AFTER BECOMING HOMELESS, OFTEN AS A MECHANISM OF SURVIVAL OR "SURVIVAL SEX" WHILE TRYING TO SECURE HOUSING.*
- PERPETRATORS CAN INCLUDE NOT JUST OTHER RESIDENTS, BUT ALSO SHELTER STAFF AND PROFESSIONALS WHO EXERT POWER OVER UNHOUSED INDIVIDUALS.*
- CYCLE OF ABUSE: FOR MANY, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL TRAUMA ARE THE ROOT CAUSES OF THEIR HOMELESSNESS. STUDIES ESTIMATE THAT UP TO 92% OF HOMELESS WOMEN HAVE EXPERIENCED SEVERE PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL ABUSE IN THEIR LIFETIMES**

THE TRUE FIGURES ARE LIKELY MUCH HIGHER, AS STUDIES INDICATE OVER HALF OF THE SEXUAL ASSAULTS OCCURRING WITHIN HOMELESS POPULATIONS GO COMPLETELY UNREPORTED DUE TO FEARS OF LEGAL INVOLVEMENT OR A LACK OF TRUST IN AUTHORITIES.

*NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH
**MARYLAND COALITION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT
Political advertisement paid for and approved by Nelida Jean-Baptiste Pellot, candidate for City Commission, District II Gainesville.

THE SOLUTION

Phase One: The Pilot

- Develop 30 Hope Cottage units on publicly owned or donated land.

Priority populations:

- Chronically homeless individuals
- Veterans
- Seniors
- Survivors of domestic violence
- Residents exiting emergency shelters
- Individuals with disabilities

Phase Two: Expansion

Expand to 50–75 units based on community demand and program outcomes.

This isn't a permanent solution, but it's practical, dignified, and necessary for a greener, more resilient Gainesville.



HOW WE FUND IT

This initiative would leverage a combination of:

Federal Resources

- HUD Continuum of Care funding
- Emergency Solutions Grants
- Community Development Block Grants
- HOME Investment Partnerships

Affordable housing trust funds

- City housing investments
- County housing initiatives
- Private Partnerships
- Healthcare systems
- Philanthropic foundations
- Faith communities
- Local businesses
- Individual donors

State Resources

- SHIP Funds (State Housing Initiatives Program)
- Florida Housing Finance Corporation programs
- Local Resources



A hope cottage in Tampa under interior renovation.

THE FINANCIAL BENEFITS TO GAINESVILLE



An abandoned homeless encampment in District II, Gainesville.

Gainesville Hope Cottages community could:

- House hundreds of residents annually
- Reduce unsheltered homelessness
- Improve public health outcomes
- Reduce the environmental impact of homelessness
- Help our Houseless Homies to get their dignity
- Increase permanent housing placements
- Reduce strain on emergency services
- Reduce hospital visits
- Reduce heat related incidents, including forest fires
- Reduce loitering and crime
- Reduce survival based crimes
- Reduce panhandling
- Allow residents to truly rehabilitate themselves
- Allow unhoused pets to get care
- Create stronger pathways to self-sufficiency
- Fill the missing middle gap
- Affordable Home ownership opportunities

Most importantly, it would restore dignity to people who have often been treated as invisible.

WHAT'S NEXT?

WHAT MAKES THIS DIFFERENT

Many communities approach homelessness as a nuisance to be managed.

I believe homelessness is a housing problem to be solved.

This proposal is grounded in three principles:

Dignity

Every person deserves privacy, safety, and respect.

Accountability

Public investments should produce measurable outcomes and housing placements.

Partnership

The City cannot solve homelessness alone. Success requires collaboration between residents, nonprofits, healthcare providers, faith communities, businesses, and local government or as I like to call it, People Power.



Available bikes for residents of Tampa Hope Cottages.



GAINESVILLE
LET'S CREATE SOMETHING
AMAZING TOGETHER

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MY PERSONAL COMMITMENT

I know what it feels like to wonder where you will sleep, eat, rest. I know what it feels like to fight for stability while the system feels impossible to navigate. That experience informs my leadership. That experience leads me to be a voice even though many homeless individual face barriers to voting, they should never be silenced.

Gainesville can become a model for compassionate, practical, and effective housing solutions. We're already a model for being a tree city, a bee city. I have a dream that we could also be a city that centers humanity.

I'm committed to finding solutions regardless of the outcome of this election. And, if you elect me I will have a lot more resources to make this dream a reality.

Hope Cottages will not solve homelessness but they can become an important bridge between crisis and stability.

A bridge built on dignity.
A bridge built on hope.
And a bridge that leads people home.

**Dream with me.
Open the Door to Hope.
Help me build a Gainesville where everyone has a place to call Home.**

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Our first night in our own place



Our First christmas out of homelessness, together

WHAT CAN YOU DO RIGHT NOW?

This campaign was not built by political insiders.

It was built by neighbors who believe Gainesville can be a city where everyone has a fair chance to succeed. I know what housing instability feels like because I have lived it. I know what it means to start over, to depend on community, and to fight for a better future. That experience is why I am running.

- **If you believe** that housing is a human necessity, not a privilege...
- **If you believe** that working families deserve a chance to stay in the community they help build...
- **If you believe** that every person deserves dignity, safety, and a place to call home...

Housing is not a partisan issue. It's a human issue. Every person in Gainesville deserves the opportunity to live safely, age with dignity, and build a stable future.

I want to hear your ideas, concerns, and partnership opportunities. Scan the QR code or:

Nelida4GNV@aol.com

305-767-9825

www.Nelida4Gainesville.com

Donate. Volunteer. Vote. Connect.

Thanks to Team Nelida- Tiffany, Ocean, Marnie and Cai



<https://linktr.ee/Nelida4Gainesville>