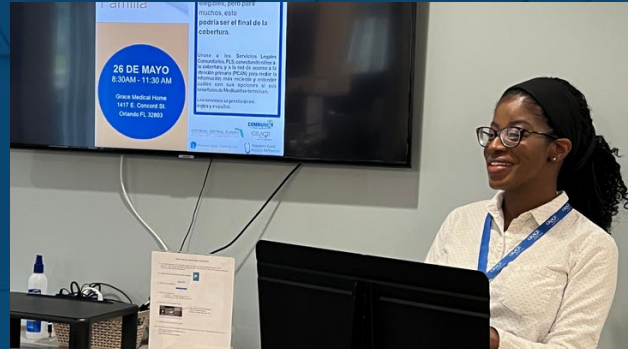




EMERGING ISSUES

# Who We Are



Community Legal Services (CLS) is the primary provider of no-cost civil legal services to the most vulnerable in Central Florida, helping them to protect their families, health, and livelihoods.

Our advocates provide no-cost legal advice, and representation, to more than 10,000 people each year.





# Emerging Issues

- **Student Loan Repayment**
  - Collections resumed on May 5th
  - Studentaid.gov
  - Dept. of Ed. will likely start utilizing third party collection agencies – similar to IRS collections
    - Garnishing wages, tax refunds, and benefits in some cases
    - Defaults being reported to credit reporting agencies



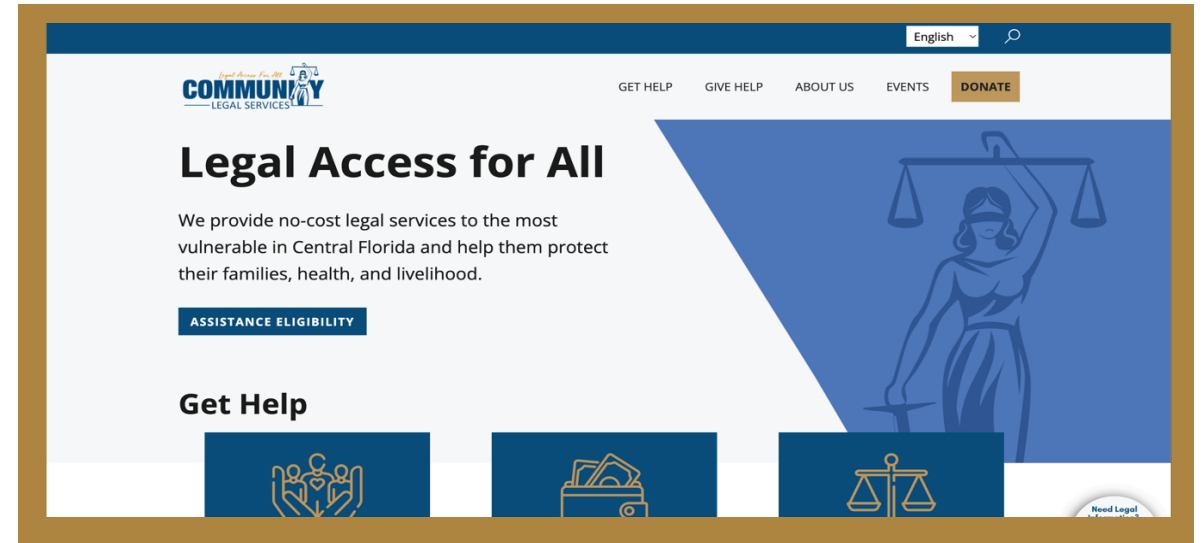


# Contact Us

## HELPline

# 1-800-405-1417

**MONDAY AND THURSDAY 8:30-4:30**  
**TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY 8:30-6:30**  
**FRIDAY 8:30-3:30**



Visit our website  
[LegalAccessforAll.org](https://LegalAccessforAll.org)  
for more information  
including self-help materials

Online Application  
Self-Help Chatbot  
available  
**24 HOURS/7 DAYS A WEEK**

The background of the slide is a gradient of blue. On the left side, there are two large, white, stylized hand silhouettes. The top hand is positioned higher and slightly to the left, while the bottom hand is lower and more centered. Both hands are open, with fingers spread.

# Heat and its Effect on Health

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Healthcare Center for the Homeless  
Orlando

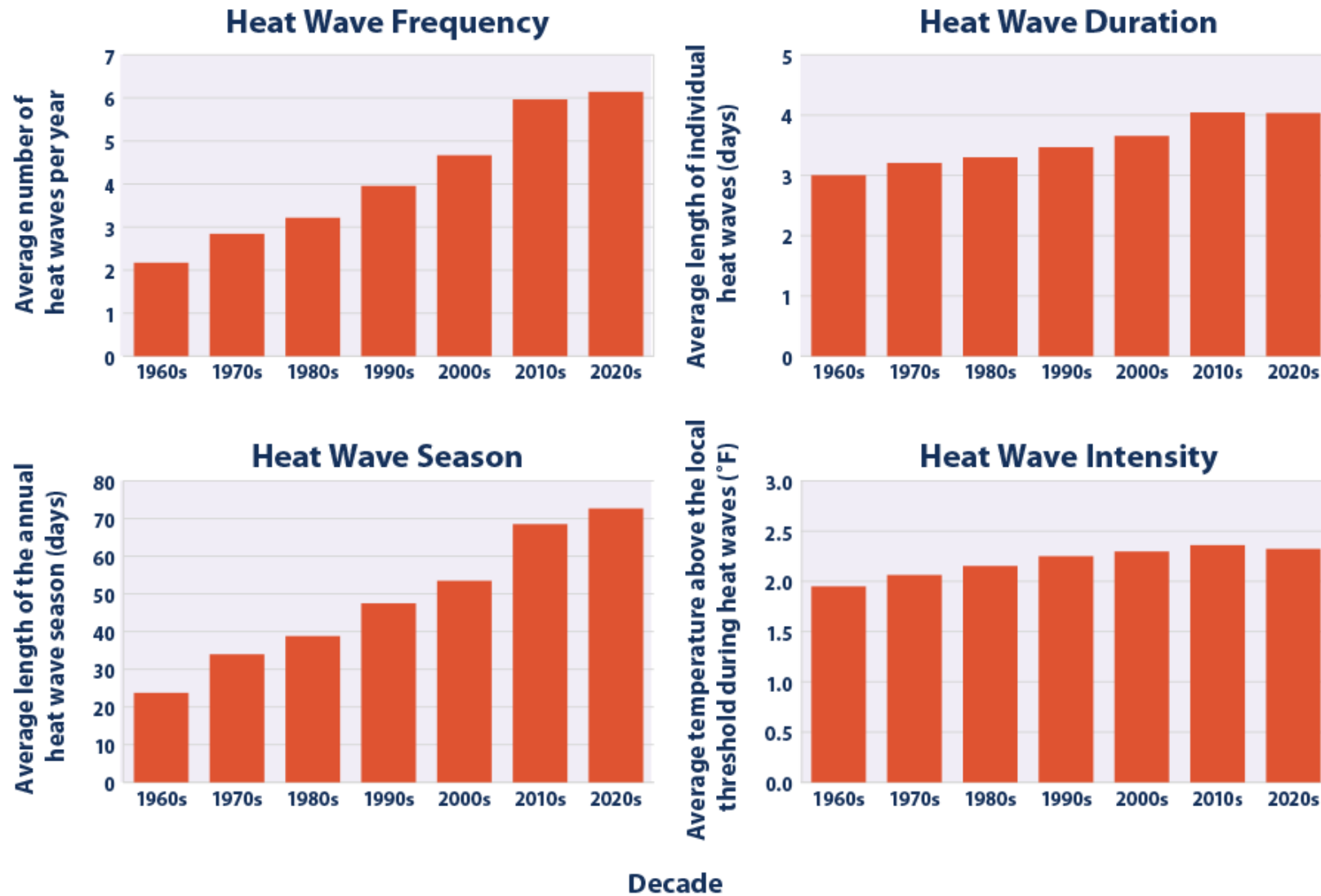
Presented By: Dr. Pia Valvassori and Carla Cox

# Mortality

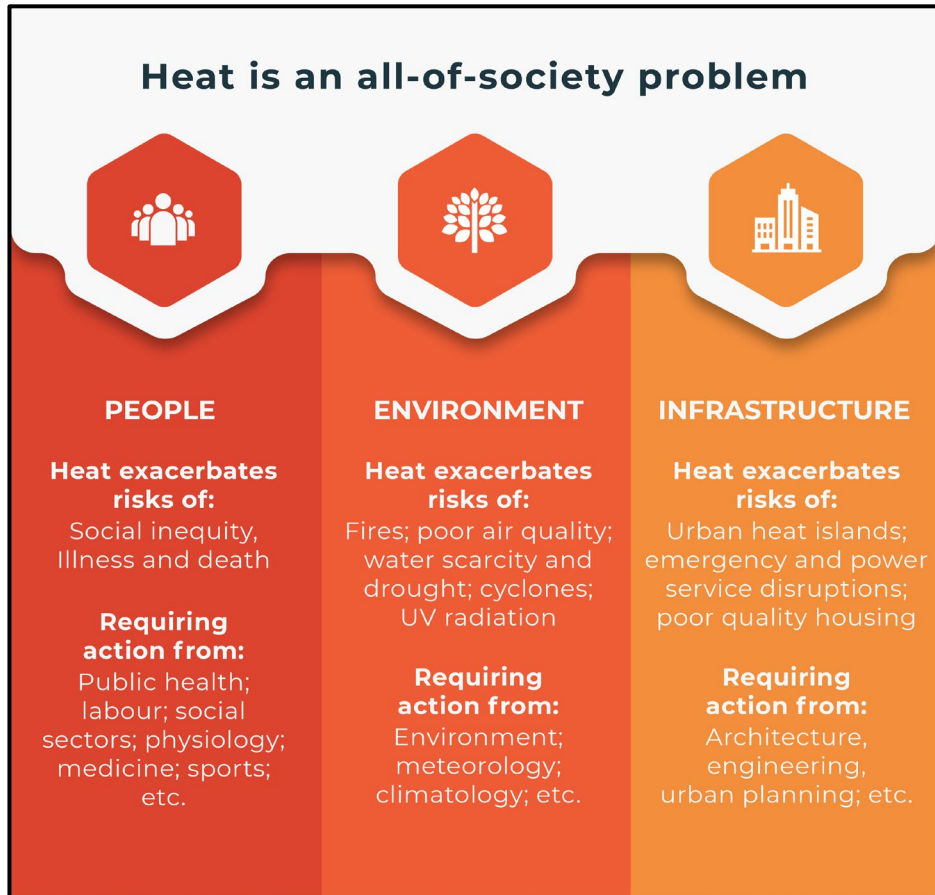


- Deaths due to extreme heat outnumber other disasters
- WHO estimates 125 million exposed to extreme heat stress between 2000-2016
- WHO predicts heat waves will claim 1.6 million lives globally by 2050
- (world economic forum, 2024 report)
- July 2024 hottest month on records globally
- Heat deaths doubled in last decade in US
- Mortality rate from heat related events in 2023 based on findings from 2024 JAMA study





# Extreme Trends

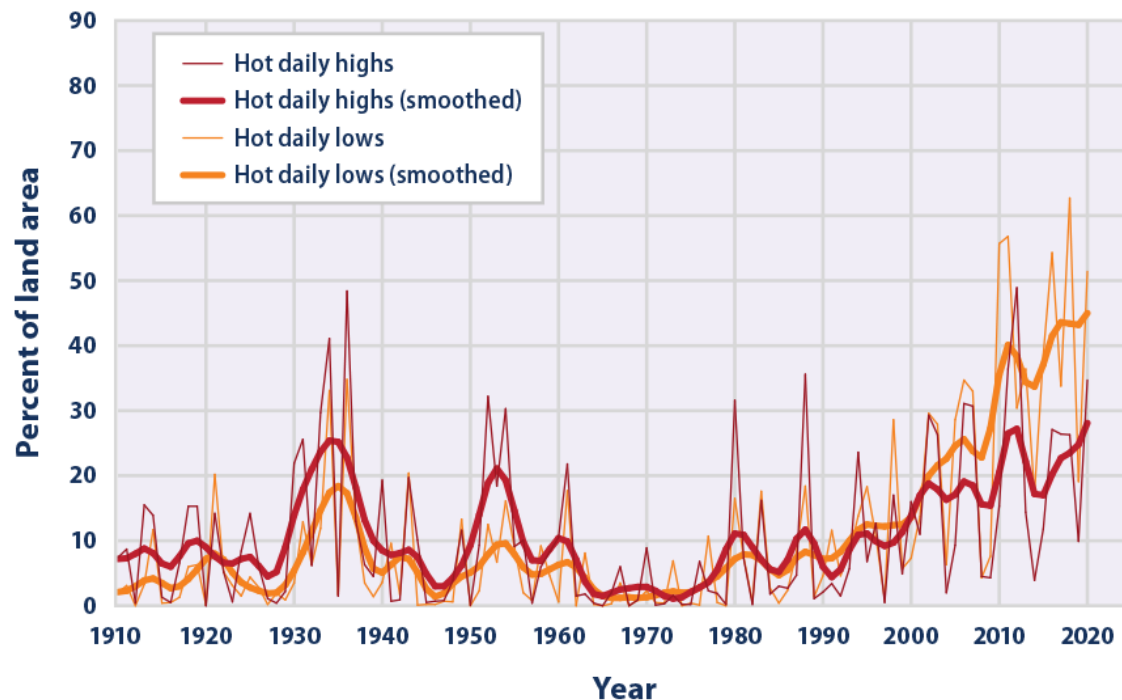


- 3 hottest years on records
- Increased frequency, duration of extreme heat days
- Heat intensity greater in urban areas where PEH congregate to access services
- Humidity exacerbates heat index





# Extreme Heat Events



Planetizen News 2024

- In 2024 Orlando had 142 days of temp exceeding 90 degrees, 50 days exceeding 95
- Florida highest number of heat related illness in US
- Florida between 2018-2022 more than 31,000 ER visits
- Phoenix went from 28 days of extreme heat in 2002 to 53 days in 2020
- Heat related ER visits increased 65% from 2011 to 2020
- Deaths increased 294% from 2011 to 2020

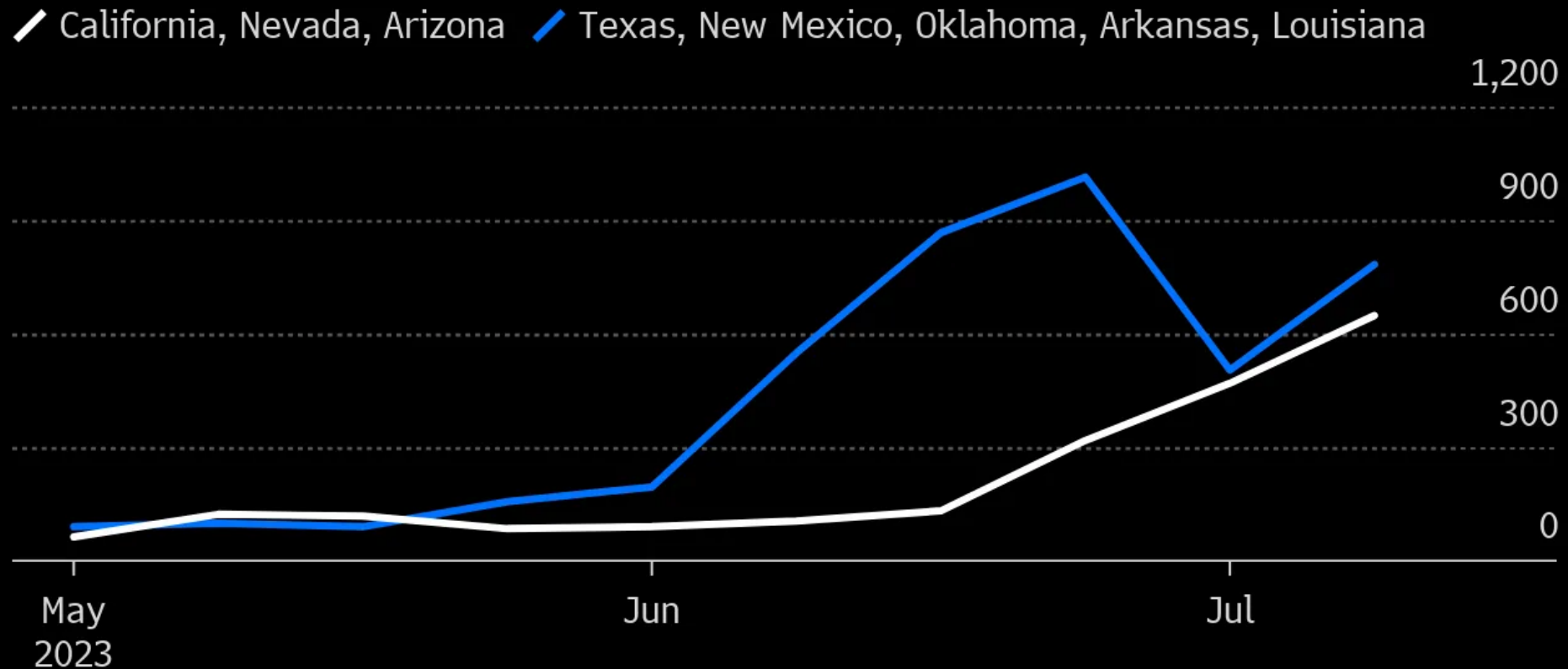


# Implications for Persons Experiencing Homelessness

- Unsheltered population nationally has increased over 35% in the last 7 years, decreased emergency shelter capacity-focus on PSH
- Orlando 75% increase in unsheltered since 2019 due to increase rents, lack of affordable housing and stagnant wages
- Laws criminalizing public camping creating more obstacles for PEH moving further out from where services accessible and more centralized
- Cooling centers location, capacity, proximity to public transport, low barrier, extended hours



# Heat Related ER Trips



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Chart reflects latest estimate as of 4 p.m. in New York. The CDC does not receive data from all emergency rooms.

Bloomberg



# Extreme Heat Events

- Prolonged exposures lead to disease exacerbations
- Increased cardiovascular/pulmonary mortality
- Increased infectious diseases-vector borne disease
- Exacerbation of mental illness and increased suicidality
- Increased confusion, decreased sleep
- Increased incidence neurodegenerative diseases
- Increased preterm deliveries, stillbirths
- Food/medication storage challenges




# Symptoms of Heat Exposure

- Heat Cramps-Muscles tighten from lack of fluid and electrolytes
- Heat Exhaustion-Body temp greater than 100, profuse sweating, nausea, vomiting, headache
- Heat Stroke-Most severe-no sweating, skin dry, body temperature greater than 104, nausea, vomiting, seizures
- Effects of prolonged heat exposure can lead to severe dehydration, kidney damage, CV disease, respiratory disease exacerbations, neurocognitive effects
- Effects profound with minimal night time cooling especially in urban areas







**People  
living in  
unsheltered  
conditions are  
at increased  
risk for heat-  
related  
illness.**

#VisualizeHomelessness

## **Heatstroke**

Heat index 130°F +



## **Heat Exhaustion**

Heat index 90-130°F



## **Heat Cramps**

Heat index 90-130°F

**[www.nhchc.org](http://www.nhchc.org)**

Source: Healing Hands: Exposure-Related Conditions: Symptoms and Prevention Strategies

# Florida's First Cooling Center

- July 2023 Orlando had an extreme heat event increasing EMS calls to CSC
- Those more vulnerable required intervention for heat related illnesses, exacerbations to pre-existing conditions, and burns experienced on their feet
- Opened all available indoor spaces to bring as many as possible into air conditioning
- Low barrier, water, snacks, cooling packs, Narcan, activities and education regarding the effects of extreme heat were provided





# *“I feel like I’m in Hell”* - N.Y.T. Video



# 2024 Advocacy Timeline



## March

- **Volunteer-led Programs & Long-Range Planning Committee at CSC choose Extreme Heat as a critical topic**

## April

- Presentation to Continuum of Care with tools and resources for caring for people experiencing homelessness
- Presentation to The CLEO Institute on challenges for caring for homeless community during extreme heat events

## May

- Presentation to Tri-County League of Cities
- Press Conference on Extreme Heat. Includes Florida House Representative Anna Eskamani
- Presentation at National Health Care Center for the Homeless conference in Phoenix, AZ
- Public Opinion piece published in Orlando Sentinel on Extreme Heat and Homelessness
- **Congressman Frost convenes local leaders to emphasize need for emergency management plan**

## June

- Cooling Center opens at CSC
- Cooling Kit distribution begins

## July

- Advocacy Days in Washington D.C. on Homelessness, discuss the Stafford Act with members of Congress and House
- **Cooling Center opens at First United Methodist Church of Orlando**
- **Orange County publishes a PSA**



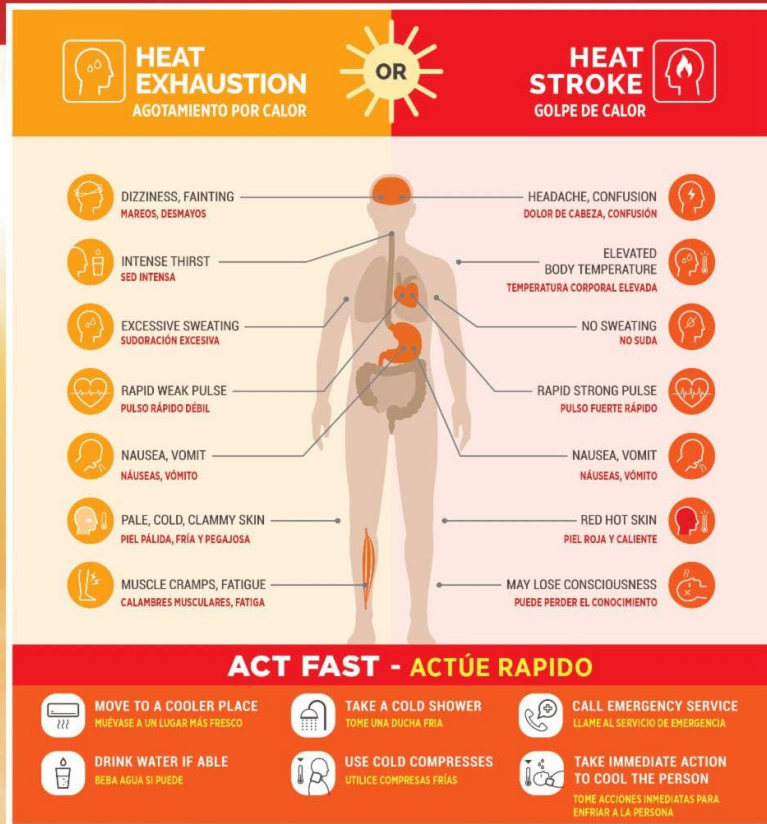
# EXTREME HEAT INFORMATION

## INFORMACIÓN SOBRE CALOR EXTREMO



A **Heat Advisory** is issued within 12 hours when the heat index is expected to reach 108 degrees. Similarly, an **Excessive Heat Warning** is issued when the heat index is expected to reach 113 degrees or when the air temperature reaches 105 degrees.

Se emite un **aviso de calor** dentro de las 12 horas cuando se espera que el índice de calor alcance los 108 grados. De manera similar, se emite una **advertencia de calor excesivo** cuando se espera que el índice de calor alcance los 113 grados o cuando la temperatura del aire alcance los 105 grados.



Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority (LYNX)  
LYNX is offering complimentary transportation for residents to and from designated Orange County cooling locations when a heat advisory is issued by the National Weather Service.

Autoridad Regional de Transporte de Florida Central (LYNX)  
LYNX ofrece transporte de cortesía para los residentes hacia y desde los centros de enfriamiento designados del Condado de Orange cuando el Servicio Meteorológico Nacional emite un aviso de calor.

# COOLING LOCATIONS IN ORANGE COUNTY

## CENTROS DE ENFRIAMIENTO EN EL CONDADO DE ORANGE



### ORANGE COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION (8 AM – 8 PM)

#### PARQUES Y RECREACIÓN DEL CONDADO DE ORANGE

Apopka Station at West Orange Trail	111 S. Forest Ave., Apopka, FL 32703	407-533-4732
Barnett Park/Barnett Gym (Magic Gym)	4801 W. Colonial Dr., Orlando, FL 32808	407-836-6248
Bittho Community Park	18501 Washington Ave., Orlando, FL 32820	407-254-1905
Goldenrod Recreation Center/Goldenrod Park (Magic Gym)	4863 N. Goldenrod Rd., Winter Park, FL 32792	407-254-9025
Lake Apopka at Magnolia Park	2929 S. Binion Rd., Apopka, FL 32703	407-254-9046
Marks Street Senior Recreation Complex	99 E. Marks St., Orlando, FL 32803	407-254-1066
Meadow Woods Recreation Center/Meadow Woods Park (Magic Gym)	1751 Rhode Island Woods Cir., Orlando, FL 32824	407-254-9065
Orlo Vista Park	1 N. Powers Dr., Orlando, FL 32835	407-254-9050
Renaissance Senior Center/South Econ Community Park	3800 S. Econlockhatchee Trl., Orlando, FL 32829	407-254-9070
Silver Star Recreation Center/Silver Star Community Park (Magic Gym)	2801 N. Apopka-Vineland Rd., Orlando, FL 32818	407-254-9250
Tibet-Butler Nature Preserve	8777 Winter Garden Vineland Rd., Orlando, FL 32836	407-254-1940
West Orange Recreation Center	309 S. West Crown Point Rd., Winter Garden, FL 34787	407-254-9245

### COMMUNITY CENTERS (8 AM – 5 PM)

#### CENTROS COMUNITARIOS

East Orange (12-5 PM)	111 South Forest Ave., Apopka, FL 32703	407-254-9245
Holden Heights	1201 20th St., Orlando, FL 32805	407-836-6777
John Bridges, Building A/Edificio A	445 W. 13th St., Apopka, FL 32703	407-254-9449
Maxey	830 Klondike Rd., Winter Garden, FL 34787	407-254-1970
Multicultural Center	7149 W. Colonial Dr., Orlando, FL 32818	407-836-8404
Taft (12-5 PM)	9450 S. Orange Ave., Orlando, FL 32818	407-254-9100
Willow Street	6565 Willow St., Zellwood, FL 32798	352-383-6435

### HOMELESS CENTERS

#### REFUGIOS PARA PERSONAS SIN HOGAR

Christian Service Center	808 W. Central Blvd., Orlando, FL 32805	407-425-2523
Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida	18 N. Terry Ave., Orlando, FL 32801	407-652-5300
Mathew's Hope Ministries (Tuesdays & Thursdays)	611 Business Park Blvd. #101, Winter Garden, FL 34787	407-905-9500

### ORANGE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM 407-835-7323

#### (Call on hours/ Llame para el horario)

#### SISTEMA DE BIBLIOTECAS DEL CONDADO DE ORANGE

Alafaya Branch	12000 E. Colonial Dr., Orlando, FL 32826
Chickasaw Branch	870 N. Chickasaw Trl., Orlando, FL 32825
Eatonville Branch	200 E. Kennedy Blvd., Eatonville, FL 32751
Fairview Shores Branch	902 Lee Rd., Suite 26, Orlando, FL 32810
Hiwassee Branch	7391 W. Colonial Dr., Orlando, FL 32818
Maitland Public Library* (407 647-7700)	501 S. Maitland Ave., Maitland, FL 32751
North Orange Branch	1211 E. Semoran Blvd., Apopka, FL 32703
Orlando Public Library	101 E. Central Blvd., Orlando, FL 32801
South Creek Branch	1702 Deerfield Blvd., Orlando, FL 32837
South Trail Branch	4600 S. Orange Blossom Trl., Orlando, FL 32839
Southwest Branch	5575 S. Semoran Blvd., Orlando, FL 32822
Washington Park Branch	7255 Della Dr., Orlando, FL 32819
West Oaks Branch	5151 Raleigh St., Suite A., Orlando, FL 32811
Windermere Branch	1821 E. Silver Star Rd., Ocoee, FL 34761
Winter Garden Branch	530 Main St., Windermere, FL 34786
Winter Park Library* (407 623-3300)	805 E. Plant St., Winter Garden, FL 34787
	1052 W. Morse Blvd., Winter Park, FL 32789

\* Not affiliated with the Orange County Library System. No afiliado con el Sistema de Bibliotecas del Condado de Orange.



### FREE SPLASH PLAYGROUNDS FOR EXTREME HEAT RELIEF (8 AM – 8 PM)

#### ÁREAS DE JUEGOS CON FUENTES DE AGUA GRATIS PARA UN ALIVIO DEL CALOR EXTREMO

Barber Park	3701 Gattlin Ave., Orlando, FL 32812	407-254-6860
Barnett Park/Barnett Gym	4801 W. Colonial Dr., Orlando, FL 32808	407-836-6248
Bittho Community Park	18501 Washington Ave., Orlando, FL 32820	407-254-1905
Capehart Park	715 Capehart Dr., Orlando, FL 32822	407-254-9160
Downey Park	10107 Flowers Ave., Orlando, FL 32825	407-254-9180
Dr. P. Phillips Community Park	8249 Buenavista Woods Blvd., Orlando, FL 32836	407-254-9038



Denotes a pet-friendly location. Indica una ubicación que admite mascotas.

For people that are trying to escape the heat, dogs are allowed at all the Parks and in their lobbies if they are on a leash. Service animals are always welcome. Para las personas que intentan escapar del calor, se permiten perros en todos los parques y en sus vestíbulos si están atados. Los animales de servicio siempre son bienvenidos.





# Client Feedback

“I feel a mix of emotions going to a public cooling center like everyone is looking at me with sympathy because they know I’m homeless.”

“The heat really makes me irritable and drains my energy. I had a head stroke two weeks ago because I was just too tired to get anywhere else.”

“We really need more cooling centers and places that open earlier and stay open later.”

“The heat just makes it hard to sleep. And the cops keep you moving at night, making it even harder to get sleep.”

“Getting things done is harder when it’s hot outside because my priority is finding shade and cool places instead of other things.”

“The heat affects all my relationships, especially with my boyfriend. I just get so moody.”

“There’s just nowhere to get water but [CSC].”

“Cooling centers aren’t very helpful because you can only use them for a short time before you go right back into the heat.”

“Please tell the government to help homeless people during these hot days. We need more housing.”

“I’m a big guy, so sometimes I take advantage of the heat and just let myself sweat. I tell myself it’s good for me to get through it.”

“The break-offs are great at night. Cars just pull up where you are sleeping and start handing out water.”

“If I have a few dollars then I will get a ticket to the movies and just jump around to different theaters to stay cool.”

# Partner Feedback

The Chapman Clinic is a student led wound care clinic from UCF serving at the Christian Service Center monthly.

“We saw first- and second- degree burns on areas of exposed skin, most commonly on the feet, from walking barefoot.”

“We called EMS at least 3 times, that I am aware. It was patients with chronic conditions worsened by the extreme heat. We also saw more skin complaints than usual.”

“We provided fans and cooling sheets and encouraged everyone to stay hydrated.”

“Subjectively, this year was much worse than previous years. We’d not seen days with temps over 100F in past summers.”

“This is my second summer at Chapman and the heat related illnesses were worse this summer comparatively to last year. This includes a few times I thought I was going to “pass out” while seeing patients due to the heat.”

# Critical Outdoor Resources

## Primary Needs

Shade

Fans

Ice

Water

Bathrooms

## Secondary Needs

New Clothing

Showers





# Let's Build Summer Survival Kits



UMBRELLA  
OR HAT



SUNSCREEN



FLIP FLOPS



INSULATED  
CUP



COOLING NECK  
TOWEL



ELECTROLYTE  
PACKETS



LIP BALM

Extreme heat impacts the health of our unsheltered neighbors. Help us keep them safe by building Summer Survival Kits with these items! Place one of each item in a bag then deliver to our office address below Monday-Thursday 9am-4pm, or Friday 9am-12pm.

What supplies  
would someone  
experiencing  
homelessness  
need to stay cool  
during extreme  
temperatures?



# Nuanced approach is needed for people experiencing homelessness

- Not welcome in places traditionally open to public (personal belongings, pets, identification, hygiene, need to sleep)
- No public access to running water for hydration (or bathrooms)
- Urban homelessness has limited access to shade (heat islands)
- Cooccurring disorders exacerbated by heat (physical, mental, and behavioral)
- Medications make individuals more susceptible (current medications are not stored at correct temperatures; occurrence of side effects increases)
- Access to dry, clean clothing (summer rains)



# Biggest Challenge:

## No standardized plan to address extreme heat

- What temperature is extreme heat?
- What length of exposure is considered dangerous?
  - People experiencing homelessness do not have the ability to escape the heat unless cooling centers are established
- At what temperature do bodily systems start breaking down?
  - Municipalities are looking at healthy humans not necessarily at vulnerable populations
  - Because of the physical trauma associated with homelessness, its estimated someone 55 years of age is physically closer to a 65–70-year-old (contingent on length of homelessness)
- How do we pay for it? No designated funding for extreme heat
  - Recommend a change in language to the Stafford Act to include extreme heat to declare a state of emergency and access FEMA funds

## Next Steps

- Advocate for national standards for addressing public health concerns during extreme heat events, including practices for people experiencing homelessness
- Measure impact of extreme heat in mortality reports
  - Are there correlations between temperature and death rates?
  - Is this tracked for people experiencing homelessness?
  - Heat is often not listed as a cause of death due to pre-existing conditions being listed as primary cause
- Educate the Orange County personnel at the community centers on how they can make a more welcome and safer place for people experiencing homelessness

# Thank You



**Dr. Pia Valvassori**

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[Pcval33@gmail.com](mailto:Pcval33@gmail.com)  
407-428-5751



**Carla Cox**

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[Carla.Cox@ChristianServiceCenter.org](mailto:Carla.Cox@ChristianServiceCenter.org)  
[Carla.Cox@UCF.edu](mailto:Carla.Cox@UCF.edu)  
407-454-2834

# Creative Solutions

- Development of Heat Action Plans, improved urban planning reduce heat island effect
- Miami appointed Chief Heat officer-city has highest number of chronic disease due to high Medicare population
- Relationships with CoC, public health, emergency management
- Phoenix has heat active plan that coordinates programs/policies to mitigate heat and protect public
- Phoenix tracks trends, collects data
- Collaborates with faith community, academic partners, city, ME office
- LA-heat action plan investments in green spaces, cool buildings and surfaces
- Uniform Standards and regulations to protect vulnerable populations
- States wide monitoring system to identify heat illness, monitor trends and track illness



# Creative Solutions

- City of Houston collaborates with CoC, faith community, parks department devising heat action plan allocating spaces/staffing
- Targeted outreach to high need localities
- Extended cooling center hours ensuring transportation
- Focus on sustainable solutions=housing



# References

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# Announcements

# Extreme Weather and Disaster Prep Committee

Interest Form



# Next Meeting:

Tuesday, June 24th

**10am to 11:30 am**

Location: Hybrid

