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*For Immediate Release*

### **GLS Receives Funding Provide Pandemic Eviction Relief**

St. Petersburg, FL – Gulfcoast Legal Services (GLS) recently received Pinellas Community Foundation CARES Act funding to further address the eviction crisis created in Pinellas by COVID-19. The project will reduce the number of evictions filed within the county and will also provide GLS clients with expedited, direct rent payment assistance. The funds are part of the Pinellas CARES Nonprofit Partnership Fund, which provides a total of \$30 million in CARES Act funds for qualifying nonprofit organizations.

COVID-19 caused spikes in unemployment during lockdown. Many individuals were or have been out of work for months. Many more are still struggling to find employment and/or access unemployment benefits. GLS has worked with a string of hardworking clients in the last few months who, through no fault of their own, are now having difficulty paying their rent.

The work done through the Pinellas CARES Nonprofit Partnership Fund project will help these clients by providing them with sustainable solutions to the problems they are facing. GLS will work with landlords to prevent evictions, as they can harm a person's ability to obtain future housing and can also negatively impact their credit score.

GLS will work with Pinellas Opportunity Council to facilitate payment of rent owed since the shutdown in March. This will help ensure any back rent is paid, reducing a client's probability of running into the same issue with nonpayment in the future. Tenants who have received funding from other sources may qualify for this funding as well, but they must work with a GLS attorney to access the rent assistance. Once eligibility is determined and the amount owed is verified, a check can be available to the landlord in approximately three business days.

“This project is designed to complement the great work being done by 2-1-1 and other local providers. The difference is that it puts legal advocates in the tenants' corner and significantly shortens the process. The goal of our project is to get money into the hands of landlords quickly, so no eviction is even filed. We want to prevent as many eviction lawsuits as possible because the courts are expected to be flooded by a tsunami of filings in the coming months,” said Tammy Greer, Executive Director for GLS.

GLS is able to address certain non-COVID related eviction and foreclosure legal issues as well. To see if you are eligible for services or for more information, visit the GLS website at [www.gulfcoastlegal.org](http://www.gulfcoastlegal.org).

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### **About Gulfcoast Legal Services**

Gulfcoast Legal Services, Inc. (GLS) is a regional 501(c)3 non-profit organization providing free, comprehensive civil legal aid through counsel, advice, representation, advocacy, and education for vulnerable individuals and families in the greater Tampa Bay area. GLS is dedicated to serving vulnerable individuals living in poverty, low-wage workers, persons with disabilities, veterans, the homeless, victims of domestic violence or human trafficking, the LGBTQ+ community, and the elderly who otherwise may not have access to an attorney. For more information, visit: <http://gulfcoastlegal.org>.

### **About Pinellas Community Foundation**

Pinellas Community Foundation (PCF) was founded in 1969. With over \$120 million in charitable assets, PCF seeks effective solutions for Pinellas County's most challenging social, environmental, and educational issues, while supporting the advancement of arts and culture. More than 262 charitable organizations have received \$60 million in donor-funded grants to support their community programs. PCF's mission is made possible thanks to the generosity of donors. For information, call 727-531-0058.