

# **Challenge Grant REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**CoC FL-505  
Okaloosa and Walton Counties**

**RFP Release Date: Tuesday, October 1, 2024  
RFP Closing Date: Monday, October 21, 2024**

Homelessness & Housing Alliance  
906 Marwalt Dr., Unit G  
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32547

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request for individuals with disabilities.

# Section I: General Information

## A. Request for Proposals (RFP) Overview

This Request for Proposals announces the opportunity for interested and qualified applicants to apply for Challenge Grant funds disseminated by the State of Florida Office of Homelessness. These grants must be used to develop programs that support the CoC Plan for Continuum of Care (CoC) FL-505 in the Okaloosa and Walton Counties geographic area. These programs will support administrative costs and provide direct client services to individuals and families who are at imminent risk of homelessness or experiencing literal homelessness.

Prospective candidates are invited to present their proposal(s) as per the guidelines mentioned in this RFP.

Awards will be granted based on a competitive process. The quality of the program design, its expected outcomes, the cost per participant, the ability to meet grant requirements, the involvement of collaborative partners, and an understanding of the target population will be considered. All award recipients must demonstrate a willingness and the capacity to serve as an access point for the CoC's Coordinated Entry System despite whether the client will be served through agency funding or referred to an outside agency. The RFP instructions will provide specific criteria to evaluate all the submitted proposals.

Contract awards from this RFP are for an eight-month (8) period, November 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025. Contracts will be performance-based with funding linked to defined performance outcomes, including CoC APR and ESG CAPER measures for the project, contractors' satisfactory performance, achieving benchmarks and contract goals, and other items as applicable.

The applicants to this RFP must provide a proposal per the terms and conditions set forth herein, to provide all or part of services under the Challenge program as described in the Scope of Work.

## B. Eligible Applicants

Organizations submitting proposals must have the ability to receive, disburse, and account for funds per generally accepted accounting practices (as deemed acceptable by the State Office on Homelessness and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development); are licensed or otherwise authorized to do business in the State of Florida; demonstrate the ability to provide program services as specified in the RFP; are not debarred or suspended for participation in state or federal contracts, fidelity bonded; and demonstrate the ability to comply with Challenge and/or ESG regulations.

Organizations eligible to submit proposals for this RFP are limited to **private not-for-profit organizations (including faith and community-based organizations)** operating and

providing services in Okaloosa and Walton Counties.

Any non-profit entity MUST have been incorporated for at least **one** year (as evidenced by a letter from the appropriate governing body certifying incorporation) AND be designated as a 501c-3 tax-exempt organization by the Internal Revenue Service.

Eligible non-profit organizations must have an active Board of Directors, updated bylaws, regularly scheduled meetings, meeting minutes, and financial oversight.

Non-profit organizations seeking funding through this RFP are required to register with the System for Awards Management (SAM). To obtain SAM registration, please visit [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov) and ensure that your registration is publicly searchable. If SAM registration cannot be completed before the RFP Submission Deadline, evidence of the registration process initiation must be provided with your application. Note that successful completion of SAM registration is mandatory for organizations receiving funding.

Further, your organization must be registered with the Division of Corporations ([sunbiz.org](http://sunbiz.org)) and the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services: Solicitation of Contributions ([fdacs.gov](http://fdacs.gov)). These must be completed prior to the completion of a subcontract agreement.

Prospective grant applicants must demonstrate their fiscal capacity to manage contracts, allocate funds with precision, and track expenses by fund. In addition, they should possess liquid cash funds to sustain at least two months of project operations and expenses, as the reimbursement process is dependent on the Okaloosa Walton Homeless Continuum of Care (dba Homelessness & Housing Alliance) receiving payments from the State.

To qualify for a grant, your organization must have financial policies and procedures, including a board-approved annual budget and oversight, an annual single audit as required by law, and cash reserves for grants that reimburse expenses or require matching funds.

The organization's executive director or board president must submit a match letter for the grant applied for within the grant application. Additionally, after the award, a quarterly match roll-up report must be submitted as evidence of fulfilling match requirements. Monthly service invoices and status reports must also be submitted.

Please note that proof of the organization's eligibility requirements must be submitted upon notification of the award grant and prior to the completion of a subcontract agreement.

## Section II: Background Information

### **A. Authority**

The Office on Homelessness was created within the Department of Children and Families as the central point of contact within the state government to address homelessness, under Section 420.622 Florida Statutes. In 2019, the Office on Homelessness consolidated all homelessness-related services funded by legislative appropriation and competitive procurement into the Unified Homelessness Contract, including the Challenge Grant, Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program, and other provisions.

Funds for the Challenge Grant are allocated to Continuum of Care and are pass-through Lead Agencies in the State of Florida based on a formula. The applicability of service tasks under the Challenge Grant must comply with the CoC Plan and all applicable rules, regulations, and policies related to the Challenge program, as defined in Section 420.622(4), Florida Statutes.

### **B. Available Funds**

The total amount available through this RFP is estimated at **\$750,000** to support the eligible activities as described in Parts I and II. The final total amount may differ based on CoC needs and governance directives. These grant funds are for activities performed from November 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. Organizations awarded under this RFP must submit one application for their organization. Any additional funding made available after funding awards are made will be distributed based on the percentage of previously allocated funds. Agencies will have the right to refuse additional funding.

Organizations should be sure to draft proposed budgets that can support the greatest number of individuals and families and also feasibly be drawn down by the end of the grant term.

<b>Component</b>	<b>Anticipated Total Available</b>	<b>Eligible Activities</b>
<b>Housing Need</b>	\$472,500	Primary activities include rapid rehousing, homeless prevention, homeless hotel/motel vouchers, transitional/bridge housing, minor home repair, and case/care management.
<b>Service Need</b>	\$101,250	Primary activities include IDs, birth certificates, local bus passes, case management services (linking clients with mainstream resources, street outreach (including case management and basic provisions), healthcare, employment services etc.), and relocation assistance to access support from family/friends.
<b>Program Need</b>	\$101,250	Primary activities include HMIS, and case management
<b>Subrecipient Admin</b>	\$75,000 (Up to 10% of the subrecipient award total)	Primary activities include general management, oversight, and coordination: salaries, wages, and related costs of subrecipient staff whose primary responsibilities involve Challenge program administration assignments (e.g., preparing budgets, schedules, overseeing staff, preparing Challenge program invoice/reports, and coordinating the resolution of monitoring findings.)

## C. Scope of Work

### Challenge Grant Funding

Challenge funds are used locally to assist homeless individuals or households at risk of becoming homeless. The funds may be used to assist those clients defined as homeless and at imminent risk of homelessness by the 2023 Florida Statutes (24 CFR 578.3 “Homeless”). The grant intends to help implement the local homeless assistance plan and help the community reach the goals and objectives outlined in the CoC plan. Challenge Grant allowable activities include housing, program, and service projects.

## D. Catchment Area, Location, and Times

For this RFP, services will occur within Okaloosa and Walton Counties. Awarded subrecipients must deliver services in a manner that is consistent with applicable program requirements.

## E. Performance Expectations: Deliverables

### Challenge Grant

A unit of service is one (1) month of providing housing, service, and/or program needs in a manner consistent with the CoC Plan to eligible individuals.

Each month, the subrecipient must provide eligible housing, program, and/or services to program participants residing in the specified geographic area.

The total monthly and annual deliverables for each participant will be dependent on the number of grant awards in each grant component.

<b>Challenge Grant Activities (FY 24-25)</b>	<b>Total Individuals (monthly)</b>	<b>Total Individuals (annual)</b>
<b>Housing Need</b>	37	444
<b>Program Need</b>	NA	NA
<b>Service Need</b>	NA	NA

It is the goal of the CoC to award these funds to subrecipients that will deliver services to eligible program participants for a specified program for eight (8) calendar months. Subrecipients will be responsible for demonstrating satisfactory performance of the service deliverables. Subrecipients that cannot demonstrate satisfactory performance towards the service deliverables may incur a financial penalty of 10%, and/or may result in termination of the subcontract agreement.

## F. LOCAL PRIORITIES

In keeping with the CoC’s primary purpose of preventing and ending homelessness, applicants that propose activities that assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness to move into permanent housing and provide ongoing supportive services to increase the likelihood that these individuals and families will be able to retain permanent housing once housed will be given priority consideration.

Additionally, prioritization will be given to projects that provide client-focused, trauma-informed, and culturally competent services to historically underserved or marginalized groups.

CoCs are charged with providing services that are results-oriented. Therefore, projects must meet the performance criteria defined by the State Unified Homelessness Contract and CoC performance goals.

Additionally, the following subpopulations are considered a priority within the CoC: Domestic violence, stalking and/or trafficking victims, disabled individuals, families with children, expectant females, youth aged 18-24, chronically homeless, and veterans.

## **G. BEST PRACTICES AND SERVICES APPROACH**

### [Low Barrier Approach](#)

The purpose of a low barrier approach to access services is to have as few rules and conditions as possible to meet clients in their current situation. Rather than using rules to screen them out of services, assessment and case management are used to determine appropriate services for the client's individual situation. An example would be not to eliminate an individual from a low barrier shelter by requiring he/she to abstain from substance use.

### [Housing First](#)

The Housing First model believes that stable housing is the first step in creating stability rather than being the reward for improvement. Homeless clients should be moved into permanent housing as soon as possible and provided with wrap around services to make the transition successful. As stated above, barriers should be kept at a minimum.

### [Trauma-Informed Care](#)

Trauma Informed Care (TIC) recognizes that the majority of clients needing services are more likely than not to have experienced some sort of trauma in their lives. Providers need to be knowledgeable regarding the symptoms and underlying causes of trauma and be prepared to address underlying issues in the client with appropriate services.

### [Fair Housing and Equal Access](#)

The housing policies of FL-505 CoC are governed by, but not necessarily limited to, The Fair Housing Act, the Equal Access Rule, and the Americans with Disabilities Act Title II and Title III. Fairing Housing guarantees that individuals will not be discriminated against by race, color, national origin, religion, sex, family status, or disability. The Equal Access Rule states that access to housing will not be determined based on perceived or actual sexual orientation, gender identity, or family status. Persons with disabilities may not be discriminated against due to their disabilities. Federal regulations also dictate that individuals may not be discriminated against "on the basis of religion, a religious belief, a

refusal to hold a religious belief, or a refusal to attend or participate in a religious practice". These policies apply to services, programs, and activities of the FL-505 Continuum of Care.

### Prohibition Against Involuntary Family Separation

The age of a child under age 18 must not be used as a basis for denying any family's admission to an emergency shelter that provides shelter to families with children under age 18.

Thus, project applicants must describe a plan to address gaps in service delivery to families with children, regardless of protected characteristics.

## H. MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

### a. Continuum of Care Participation

The Continuum of Care (CoC) is a group of service providers and stakeholders working together to prevent and end homelessness in Okaloosa and Walton Counties. Subrecipients must be members of the CoC in good standing.

### b. Coordinated Entry System (CES) Participation

The Coordinated Entry System (CES) is a community-wide system through which people experiencing homelessness or who are at-risk can access the crisis response system in a streamlined way. Individuals and families needing housing interventions enter the CES by undergoing a standardized assessment that measures their needs and strengths and adding them to the community-wide By-Name List for housing. Participating providers then use the list to identify potential participants for their housing and housing-related services.

Grantees will be required to accept referrals from the CES into its emergency intervention services, assess, and enter participants into the CES, and fill openings in the Rapid Rehousing/Prevention assistance programs through the CES case staffing process.

Any funded provider must agree to serve as an access point for the CES, by assessing those who need to be entered and referred through CES whether or not agency funds will be used to support that individual/family or if a referral will be given. Grantees will be expected to participate further in developing the system and to incorporate CES into its service delivery system to the greatest possible extent.

### c. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Participation

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a local information technology system, required by both HUD and the State of Florida, which is used to collect client-level data and data on providing housing and other services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness on a community-wide basis. CoC FL-505 participates in the PromisSE HMIS implementation with the software vendor, Wellsky. Project applicants awarded under this RFP must enroll program participants, track service delivery, and develop progressive case plans in this local, community-wide data system, per



HMIS Technical and Data Standards and CoC Data Quality Monitoring Plan.

Applicants must comply with all relevant laws regarding the protection of personal information of the individuals they serve. Applicants must actively participate in the local HMIS or begin participation post-award, according to HMIS Data Standards and the applicable rules of the state or federal funder.

Applicants who receive an award will need to assign key staff members to complete required HMIS training in order to enter data into HMIS for their project.

It is the applicant's responsibility to notify HHA in their response to this RFP of any restrictions that prevent them from entering client data into the local HMIS.

Per federal regulations, the only exceptions to utilizing HMIS are for victim services providers and legal services providers. Applicants in these two categories must commit to utilizing a comparable database that collects client-level data over time (*i.e.*, longitudinal data) and generates unduplicated aggregate reports based on the data. Applicants would then be required to provide the aggregate reports as requested by the CoC for reporting to the State and HUD.

**d. Personnel Requirements**

All staff members who are paid by the grant or complete grant activities must pass a DCF Level 2 Background Screening before the hire date, performing any work related to the grant, and/or gaining access to the live HMIS. In addition, all new hires must complete E-Verify within three days of the start date with an awarded subrecipient.

All staff members who are paid by the grant or complete grant activities must attend and complete annual training to include, but are not limited to, HMIS Privacy and Security Training, HMIS Basics Training, Case Management, DCF Trainings, etc.

**I. INVOICING & REPORTING**

Challenge subrecipient grants are cost-reimbursement; thus, the subrecipient will be reimbursed based on the actual amount of expenditures for the month. Subrecipients are expected to submit monthly invoices, status reports, roll-up reports, and expenditure-supporting documentation and receipts no later than the 15th of the month following service delivery.

All subrecipients should spend one-eighth of the grant budget each month in order to prevent an overage or shortage at the end of the grant cycle. Failure to expend funding according to the monthly budget could result in a reallocation of funding.

Subrecipients are also expected to monitor the quality of their data through Annual Performance Reports and CAPER reports to ensure accurate monthly reporting.

All services subcontracted in this RFP will require three performance monitoring periods. This will include client record review, customer satisfaction surveys, employee reviews,

policies and procedures review, and HMIS performance review.

## **J. SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

Your organization must write a grant application and narrative that identifies the following:

- The proposed grant opportunity and eligible activities
- The program design, target population, and number of individuals to be served.
- The proposed budget, including itemization of staffing, benefits, program costs, etc.
- A plan and strategies to adopt and enhance the CoC local priorities.

This RFP lacks all the necessary information to perform the grant. Additional details concerning grant implementation will be provided through a comprehensive technical assistance training with CoC Lead Staff after award notification.

### **a. Required Forms**

The online Application can be accessed via the HHA website: [www.hhalliance.org/funding-opportunities](http://www.hhalliance.org/funding-opportunities). Use of the provided General Application, Budget Templates, and Match Letter Template is mandatory.

The Budget Narrative (within the Budget Template) should adequately explain the plan for staffing costs (including the number of individual positions that will be supported by the grant), operations costs, a list of estimated costs for equipment to be purchased with grant funds, and details regarding the cost of providing direct financial assistance to the target population, where applicable. The Budget Narrative should include a minimum budget the agency would accept and a maximum budget the agency can feasibly utilize during the grant period.

### **b. Submission Dates and Times**

Each entity desiring to submit a proposal is required to submit a grant application via email at [admin@hhalliance.org](mailto:admin@hhalliance.org) no later than October 21, 2024. Late applications will not be accepted or considered for funding.

### **c. Notifications**

Applicants will be generally notified regarding the results of funding decisions within 10 days of the application submission deadline. Delays in responding to requests for clarification or additional information on the part of an applicant may delay such decisions. Please review the section for "Curable Deficiencies" to understand the potential clarification or additional information that may be requested.

### **d. Technical Considerations**

- a. Applicants with disabilities in need of reasonable accommodation to access and/or submit the Application Form may send a Reasonable Accommodation Request to [admin@hhalliance.org](mailto:admin@hhalliance.org).
- b. Deadline extensions may be granted to Applicants who experience unforeseeable difficulties during their submission process, including those caused by severe weather conditions, natural disasters or other acts of God. In the event of unforeseeable difficulties during the submission process, applicants must notify HHA by email at [admin@hhalliance.org](mailto:admin@hhalliance.org) within 12 hours of the resolution of the difficulty and be prepared to submit evidence of the occurrence and duration of the unforeseeable difficulty. Decisions on deadline

extensions due to unforeseeable difficulties will be made by the Ranking and Review Committee and will be final.

## **K. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

All applications that are submitted within the submission period will be reviewed by the CoC Performance Review and Ranking Committee. Project applications submitted by organizations must meet all requirements, regulations, eligible activities, priorities, and application instructions of this RFP. The CoC Project Review and Selection Committee will evaluate project applications per the Evaluation Matrix. Funding is dependent on the number of high-scoring proposals and may result in an award either higher or lower than the initial proposal.

## **L. TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Applicants shall submit all questions concerning the scope of services, eligibility and/or programmatic requirement of the DCF Funding in writing by email only and directed to [admin@hhalliance.org](mailto:admin@hhalliance.org). Such questions concerning the RFP process shall be submitted no later than 72 hours before the last day of application acceptance.

Applicants who fail to do so will waive all further rights to protest, based on these specifications and conditions. To ensure a fair and open process, all questions submitted will be posted weekly without attribution to the party that has submitted the question, along with HHA's written response, on the RFP Competition Page. Doorways will make a good faith effort to redact any information contained in the question that could reasonably be expected to be used to identify the party that has submitted the question, provided the redaction is not material to communicating the meaning or scope of the question. Doorways makes no guarantees that the party submitting the question will not or cannot be identified by another party.

## **M. Change Notices.**

HHA may modify the RFP, prior to the submission deadline, by issuing an Addenda to the RFP, which will be posted at the RFP Competition Page. The Applicant shall be responsible for ensuring that its application reflects all Addenda issued by HHA before the submission deadline regardless of when the application is submitted.

## **N. Financial Responsibility**

HHA accepts no financial responsibility for any costs incurred by an entity in responding to this RFP. Submissions of the RFP will become the property of HHA and may be used by HHA in any way deemed appropriate.

## **O. Conflicts**

All provisions of the Challenge Grant Funding must align with Florida Statutes, namely Section 420.622(4), and all Federal Statutes governing CoCs. If any statement in this RFP conflicts with State or Federal Statutes, the Statutes will prevail.



## Okaloosa Walton Homeless Continuum of Care FY2024 Challenge RFP Ranking and Review

Homelessness & Housing Alliance ensures project applicants meet basic threshold requirements for eligibility to apply for Challenge Funding. Overall scores will determine the Notice of Intent to Award.

**Reviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Applying Agency:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Amount Requested:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Total Score:** \_\_\_\_\_ / **125**

<b>Service History</b> The applicant must demonstrate the ability to utilize funds to serve eligible populations.  <b>70 Points Possible</b> <b>Points Awarded:</b> _____		
Project narrative clearly demonstrates a history of successfully serving homeless or imminently homeless populations through housing stabilization services.	0-10 pts.	
Project narrative clearly describes services to be prioritized utilizing grant funds.	0-10 pts.	
Project narrative demonstrates a commitment to equity, cultural competency, and collaboration.	0-10 pts.	
Services described in the project narrative are consistent with the grant scope of work and eligible activities.	0-10 pts.	
The applicant described the use of housing-first best practices to support homeless or imminently homeless populations.	0-10 pts.	
The applicant described successful participation or plans to participate in the CoC's Coordinated Entry System.	0-10 pts.	
Project narrative clearly describes how special populations will be served through Challenge Funding.	0-5 pts.	
Applicant has a history of successfully utilizing Challenge Funds.	0-5pts.	

**Service to Priority Populations**

The applicant must demonstrate a history of and/or plans to serve target populations.

**9 Points Possible**

**Points Awarded: \_\_\_\_\_**

Chronically Homeless (100% Dedicated)	YES 1 point	NO 0 points
Domestic Violence Survivors (100% Dedicated)	YES 1 point	NO 0 points
Families with Children and/or Expectant Females	YES 1 point	NO 0 points
Unaccompanied Youth (Age 18-24)	YES 1 point	NO 0 points
Disabled Individuals	YES 1 point	NO 0 points
Veterans	YES 1 point	NO 0 points
The project is proposing new services not currently offered in the Okaloosa Walton CoC.	YES 3 points	NO 0 points

**Project Objectives**

The applicant must outline clear goals for project outcomes.

**20 Points Possible**

**Points Awarded: \_\_\_\_\_**

The proposal outlines clearly identified and measurable goals for the project.	0-10 pts.	
Project narrative clearly outlines how Challenge Funds will decrease or prevent homelessness in the CoC.	0-10 pts.	

**CoC Participation**

The applicant should demonstrate participation in the CoC.

**10 Points Possible**  
**Points Awarded:** \_\_\_\_\_

CoC Stakeholder Meeting Attendance (75% or more)	YES 5 points	NO 0 points
Participation in CoC Committees or Working Groups	YES 5 points	NO 0 points

**Service Area**

The applicant should serve homeless or at-risk clients in the CoC geographic area.

**16 Points Possible**  
**Points Awarded:** \_\_\_\_\_

In-person Services Okaloosa County 5 points	Virtual Services Okaloosa County 3 points	No services provided in Okaloosa County 0 points
In-Person Services Walton County 5 points	Virtual Services Walton County 3 points	No services provided in Walton County 0 points