

Unsheltered Challenge Grant REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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

RFP Release Date: Monday, November 11, 2024

RFP Closing Date: Monday, December 2, 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 Unsheltered Challenge Grant funds disseminated by the State of Florida Office of Homelessness. The objective of the Challenge Unsheltered Grant is to mitigate unsheltered homelessness by providing support to homeless individuals and families through mental health and substance abuse treatment at shelter sites, support for emergency and transitional shelters, support for non-congregate shelters, and support for sanctioned camping sites. These programs will support administrative costs and provide direct client services to individuals and families who are experiencing literal homelessness.

Contract awards from this RFP are for a six-month (6) period, January 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025.

Awards will be granted based on a competitive process giving priority to programs that can address key areas of need to reduce gaps in services to unsheltered homeless individuals across Okaloosa and Walton Counties based on the 2024 Housing Needs Assessment. The identified areas of greatest need include expanding bed capacity for emergency shelters and permanent supportive housing, prioritizing chronic homelessness. This RFP allows for additional consideration to be paid to programs that can facilitate substance abuse and mental health treatment for clients.

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.

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 Unsheltered 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 Grant 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 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) and the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services: Solicitation of Contributions (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. Applicants must have the ability to comply with the 25% match requirement of the contract. 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.

If in-kind match is used to support the 25% match requirement, a third-party MOU must be included OR the organization's executive director or board president must submit a letter within the grant application detailing the in-kind service or items to be used as match and verifying the eligibility of such match. Detailed match instructions are provided at the end of this RFP. Match roll-up reports 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 other pass-through Lead Agencies in the State of Florida based on a formula. The applicability of service tasks under the Unsheltered 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 **\$336,449.50** to support the eligible activities as described in the Scope of Work. The final total amount may differ based on CoC needs and governance directives. These grant funds are for activities performed from January 1, 2025, through June 30, 2025. Up to 10% of an agency's awarded budget may be used for administrative expenses. 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.

C. Scope of Work

Unsheltered Challenge Grant Funding

The objective of the Unsheltered Challenge Grant is to mitigate unsheltered homelessness by providing support to homeless individuals and families through mental health and substance abuse treatment at shelter sites, support for emergency and transitional shelters, support for non-congregate shelters, and support for sanctioned camping sites.

Component	Program Activities
Emergency and Transitional Shelters	Provide support to emergency and transitional shelters. This support may take the form of construction, improvement, supply costs, operating costs, staff costs, or other costs as approved.
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment	Provide or support the provision of (through purchasing or subcontracting, etc.) mental health and substance abuse treatment to individuals and families at emergency, transitional, or non-congregate shelters, or sanctioned camping sites, or support such mental health and substance abuse treatment being provided.
Support for Non-Congregate Shelters	Provide or support non-congregate sheltering operations, which includes sheltering individuals or families in non-congregate settings.
Support for Sanctioned Camping Sites	Provide support to Department certified county homelessness encampment sites, or sites operated by an NGO with the cooperation of local government. This support may take the form of construction, improvement, supply costs, operating costs, staff costs, or other costs as approved.
Admin	Primary activities include general management, oversight, and coordination: salaries, wages, and related costs of subrecipient staff whose primary responsibilities involve Unsheltered Challenge program administration assignments (e.g., preparing budgets, schedules, overseeing staff, preparing Challenge program invoice/reports, and coordinating the resolution of monitoring findings.)

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

Unsheltered Challenge Grant Deliverables

A unit of service is (1) month of providing eligible service tasks to individuals suffering homelessness or at risk of homelessness, or homeless organizations (shelters, homeless service organizations). If providing support to homelessness organizations which is not directly tied to specific individuals who are suffering homelessness or at risk of homelessness (i.e. shelter construction, improvement, supply costs, operating costs, staff costs), a unit of service is (1) month of providing eligible service tasks at a rate of one deliverable per \$1,235 spent on providing eligible service tasks. When using this rate to determine the level of deliverables achieved per (1) month unit of service, any partial deliverables achieved should be rounded downward to the nearest whole number.

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 six (6) calendar months with the ability to substantially contribute to the overall deliverable. 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.

The Unsheltered Challenge Grant will serve, at a minimum, the following number of individuals, or organizations at the rate specified above, each fiscal year.

Fiscal Year (FY) FY24-25	Total Deliverables 108
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Local Priorities

The goal of the CoC is to award these funds to subrecipients that will deliver services to eligible program participants for a specified program for six (6) 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.

A third-party consultant recently delivered the 2024 Housing Needs Assessment and Analysis for the Okaloosa Walton Homeless Continuum of Care. The goals of the assessment were to determine how effectively the CoC is addressing the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness, identify any gaps in services or resources, and make recommendations on areas needing increased focus.

To address the recommendations in the 2024 Housing Needs Assessment, priority for this RFP will be given to programs focusing on the expansion of bed capacity for emergency shelters and permanent supportive housing, facilitation of substance abuse and mental health treatment for clients, and prioritization of chronically homeless.

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: Chronically homeless, victims of domestic violence, stalking and/or trafficking victims, disabled individuals, families with children, veterans, and youth aged 18-24.

F. 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.

G. 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.

H. INVOICING & REPORTING

Unsheltered 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-sixth 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 one monitoring period. This will include client record review, customer satisfaction surveys, employee reviews, policies and procedures review, and HMIS performance review.

I. SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Your organization must include three items with the grant application submission:

- SECTION 1: Basic Information regarding the agency and overall program details
- SECTION 2: Details the program design, target population, and number of individuals to be served
- BUDGET: A proposed budget, including itemization of staffing, program costs, and match requirements in addition to a brief budget narrative adequately explaining the budget request. The budget narrative should include a minimum budget the agency would accept and a maximum budget the agency could feasibly utilize within the grant period.

NOTE: Partial submissions that do not include all three items will not be considered.

a. Required Forms

The online application can be accessed via the HHA website: www.hhalliance.org/funding-opportunities. Use of the provided SECTION 1 and SECTION 2 forms is mandatory.

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 no later than December 2, 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 15 days of the application submission deadline.

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.
- 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 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.

J. 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 amount requested.

K. 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. 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 Funding Opportunities page. HHA 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. HHA makes no guarantees that the party submitting the question will not or cannot be identified by another party.

L. 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 Funding Opportunities 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.

M. 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.

N. Conflicts

All provisions of the Unsheltered 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.

Match Requirement Information

Match is the amount above and beyond what the CoC or Challenge Grant reimburses.

MATCH amounts may be one or both of the following:

1. **Cash** = funds directly received by Sponsor/Subrecipient - grant, donations/fundraising, etc.
2. **In-Kind** = services or donations provided by other entities (FL Medicaid); needs documentation of MOU and/or letter provided by the agency Executive Director or Board President.

MATCH = 25% is the required *minimum threshold* that must be used to support all CoC and Challenge subcontracts; the Match amount must pay for an eligible service (see examples below); and the Match must be tracked, documented, and reported on a quarterly basis.

What Counts as Match

Match must be used for eligible program costs from either public or private funds. Funds may not be used as match for any other program. Cash or in-kind-fairly evaluated.

WHAT IS NOT MATCH?

- Cash or any in-kind contributions used as match for another grant/otherwise obligated.
- Cash or any in-kind statutorily prohibited as match.
- Savings or benefits that belong to program participants, not the recipient/subrecipient.

If utilizing a match MOU:

What must be included in the In-Kind Match MOU?

- The MOU must establish the unconditional commitment, except for selection to receive a grant, by the third party to provide the services and must include:
- Should be on the agency letterhead of third-party;
- Name of the program and agency receiving services;
- Name of the third-party providing services;
- Date resources will be available; time frame of services;
- Specific service to be provided;
- Profession of the persons providing the service; and
- Hourly cost of the service to be provided.

What are Match Record-Keeping Requirements?

The subrecipient must keep records of the source and use of match. Records must indicate the grant and fiscal year for which each matching contribution is counted. Records must show how the value placed on third-party in-kind match was derived. Volunteer services must be allocated using the same methods used for regular personnel costs.

