

Challenge Grant REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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

RFP AMENDMENT 1.0

RFP Release Date: Friday, May 30, 2025
Amended to add: RFP Closing Date: July 11, 2025

Amended sections include:

- Due date – July 11, 2025
- Section I: A amended to include the addition of a tiered ranking system
- Section II: B amended to update total available funds to \$600,000
- Section II: E amended to update overall program deliverables to 22 monthly and 271 annually
- Section II: J, b amended to include the due date – July 11, 2025
- Section II: K amended to name of the Scoring Rubric
- Section II: K amended to add tiered system scoring verbiage
- Full Scoring Rubric revised
- Note: Amendments noted in the document with italics

**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 on Homelessness as part of the APZ11 Unified Contract. 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.

Amended to add: A tiered system will be utilized to rank project applications. This tiered prioritization system is implemented in alignment with the CoC Strategic Plan, mission, vision and Board directives. Projects in higher tiers will be prioritized for overall funding allocation. Applications may be funded in whole or in part.

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 submitted proposals.

Contract awards from this RFP are for a 12-month period, July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026. Contract awards may change depending on Unified Contract Award dates from the State of Florida Office on Homelessness. 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 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. Applicants must be current, grant-funded members

of the FL-505 Okaloosa Walton Homeless Continuum of Care.

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 execution of a subcontract agreement.

Prospective grant applicants must demonstrate their fiscal capacity to manage contracts, allocate funds with precision, and track expenses by funding source. 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.

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.

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.

Monthly service invoices and status reports must also be submitted in addition to monthly match roll-up reports as evidence of fulfilling match requirements.

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 (*amended to*) \$600,000 to support the eligible activities of the Challenge Grant Program. The final total amount may differ based on CoC needs, governance directives, and the executed APZ11 Unified Contract. These grant funds are for activities performed from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. 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. Subrecipients may not spend more than 10% of the total award on administrative costs. 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.

a. Eligible Activities

1. Housing Need: Primary activities include rapid rehousing, homeless prevention, homeless hotel/motel vouchers, transitional/bridge housing, minor home repair, and case/care management
2. Service Need: Primary activities include assistance with obtaining vital records, local transportation services to case plan related appointments, relocation assistance, healthcare, street outreach, and case/care management.
3. Program Need: Primary activities include HMIS and case management.

C. Scope of Work

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

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 and will vary based on requirements in the updated APZ11 Unified Contract.

Challenge Grant Activities (FY 25-26)	Anticipated Total Individuals (monthly)	Anticipated Total Individuals (annual)
	22	271

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 12 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, priority consideration will be given to applicants that propose activities and demonstrate ability to 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.

CoCs are charged with providing services that are results-oriented. Therefore, projects must meet the performance criteria defined by the State APZ11 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, 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. Consistent and ongoing support services should be provided to ensure all clients can maintain stable housing.

Trauma-Informed Care

Trauma Informed Care 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 all 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 grant-funded 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 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. Project applicants awarded under this RFP must enroll program participants, track service delivery, and develop progressive case plans in this data system, per HMIS Technical and Data Standards and CoC Data Quality Monitoring Plan. Applicants who receive an award will need to assign key staff

members to complete the required HMIS training in order to enter data into HMIS for their project.

Applicants must comply with all relevant laws regarding the protection of personal information of the individuals they serve.

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 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 to HHA no later than the 15th of the month following service delivery.

All subrecipients should spend one-twelfth of the grant budget each month in order to prevent 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 be subject to performance monitoring. Monitoring and audits may include client record review, customer satisfaction surveys, employee reviews, policies and procedures review, and HMIS performance review.

J. SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Your organizational narrative must 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 implement 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. Use of the provide Section 1: A pplication and Section 2: Challenge Funds forms are required.

The budget narrative in Section 2 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 narrative should also include plans for completing the match requirement. If the proposed match is in-kind, a match MOU must be provided as described in the Match Template. The budget narrative should include both 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 no later than (*amended to add*) July 11, 2025. Late applications will not be accepted or considered for funding.

c. Notifications

Applicants will be generally notified regarding the results of funding decisions within 30 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.

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.

K. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

All applications submitted within the submission period will be reviewed by the CoC Grants Committee. Project applications submitted by organizations must meet all requirements, regulations, eligible activities, priorities, and application instructions of this RFP. The CoC Grants Committee will evaluate project applications per the (*amended to*) Scoring Rubric. Funding is dependent on the number of high-scoring proposals (*amended to add*) in each tiered category 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. 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.

M. CHANGE NOTICES

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

N. 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.

Match Instruction Template

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

MATCH amounts can be put in the same letter and 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.

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.

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 cost

