

2020 FRCoC Cover Letter for VHSP Funding

A separate cover sheet is required for each project application.

Applicant

Legal Name: Micah Ecumenical Ministries

Type of Applicant (select one): Non-Profit Housing Authority PDC Unit of Local Government

EIN/TIN: 20-4044884

Address: PO Box 3277 Fredericksburg, VA 22402

Application Contact

Name: Meghann Cotter

Title: Executive Servant-Leader

Phone: 540-479-4116

Email: meghann@dolovewalk.net

Project Name: Hased House

Project Type (select one):

- Coordinated Assessment Outreach Emergency Shelter Operations
 Rapid Re-Housing Targeted Prevention Housing Location
 CoC Planning (Only the CoC Lead Agency is eligible to apply for CoC Planning VHSP funding.)

Type of Application (select one):

- New (requesting funding for new project)
 Renewal (requesting level or reduced funding for existing project)
 Renewal with Expansion (requesting increased funding for existing project)

New Amount Request:

Renewal Amount Requested: \$60,000

Expansion Amount Requested:

Approximate number of people this program will serve: 35

The applicant organization's governing board discussed and/or approved this application for funding at a meeting held on _____ (date). If this application has not yet been discussed, it will be discussed at the next meeting of the governing board, which will be held on ___March 10, 2020___ (date).

The applicant organization named above will act as the responsible fiscal agent for any funds received and will comply with applicable tax laws, regulations, and CoC policies. By signing this application, we agree that we have read and approve of the content of this application.

Board Chair:

David M. Rankin, IV

Signature

Feb. 27, 2020

Date

Executive Director:

Meghann Cotter

Signature

2/27/20

Date

**2020 FRCoC Application for VHSP Funding
Outreach; Emergency Shelter Operations; Rapid Re-Housing; Targeted
Prevention**

Please complete a separate application form for each outreach, emergency shelter operations, rapid re-housing, and targeted prevention project.

Project Name: Hesed House

Line-Item Budget

Please complete line-item budget below. Budget amounts should reflect the VHSP request only.

Note: Renewal projects can apply for renewal HMIS and Administration amounts up to the grantee's total FY20 HMIS and Administration amounts regardless of 5% and 3% caps. HMIS and Administration amounts across all of the CoC's FY21 project applications shall not exceed total allowable HMIS and Administration amounts.

Expansion projects can apply for an HMIS expansion up to the amount where the combined renewal/expansion HMIS request is 5% of the combined renewal/expansion project subtotal and an Administration expansion up to the amount where the combined renewal/expansion Administration request is 3% of the combined renewal/expansion project subtotal.

	Renewal Amount	Expansion Amount
Emergency Shelter Operations		
Case Management		
Limited Support Services		
Maintenance		
Rent		\$48,000
Security		
Supplies		
Utilities		\$12,000
Other (specify)		
Subtotal		
HMIS (up to 5% of subtotal)		
Computer Costs		
Fees and Licenses		
HMIS Staffing		
Training		
Other (specify)		
Administration (up to 3% of subtotal)		
Administration		
Total		\$60,000

Match

Please indicate sources of match. Match must equal 25% of requested amount and must be used to meet the goals of VHSP, but does not need to be of the same VHSP Category as the request. Match must be from local or private sources, must be received and expended within the grant year, and may not be used to meet multiple match requirements. If the project is requesting partial or full waiver of the match requirement, please explain. (See Pages 18-19 of the Virginia Homeless and Special Needs Housing Funding Guidelines 2020-2022 for full explanation of the match requirement.)

Type	Source	VHSP Category	Amount
Cash	Mary Washington Hospital	Emergency Shelter Operations	\$15,000
Choose an item.		Choose an item.	
Choose an item.		Choose an item.	

Narrative Responses

- 1. Provide a description that addresses the entire scope of the proposed project.** (Character Limit: 3,000)

Hesed House will be a 10-bed scattered site shelter that serves homeless individuals who have been through the coordinated assessment system, determined ineligible for shelter, but identified through the community’s housing prioritization process as the most vulnerable and assigned for housing placement. Beds will be located in private 2-3-bedroom apartments throughout the community rented with funds from VHSP. Case management will be provided by existing rapid re-housing staff, who already begin housing-focused case management when people are assigned out of prioritization. Meals will be coordinated through churches and site supervision will be set up through volunteers and street outreach staff. Each person receives initial length of stay based on projected amount of time required to find an apartment. Upon entrance into Hesed House, a Housing Navigator will assess the guest in eight areas, basic needs, community resources, physical health, mental health, barriers to housing stabilization, income, education and social support. Based on information gathered from this strength-based, trauma informed tool, navigators will work with clients to identify the top areas that need to be addressed to support successful transition into housing. Housing-focused goals will most likely include obtaining identification, identifying a path toward income (i.e. employment/disability), setting up public benefits and addressing identified medical or mental health needs, as prioritized by the client. Most enrollment applications are completed at the scattered shelter site. Potential disability cases are proactively supported in applying for social security through an expedited process available to homeless individuals. Patients identified with mental health issues are connected with an internal PATH (Partners Assisting in Transitions from Homelessness) outreach worker who streamlines their entry into the Rappahannock Community Services Board (RACSB). Through Micah’s Hospitality Center, participants may access a community-based eligibility worker who helps with food stamp and Medicaid applications. A Veteran’s Administration representative comes once a week to connect eligible people to housing vouchers, assistance programs and medical benefits. DMV has also started visiting the center each month, and a volunteer is available each week to help clients access free phones.

2. **If renewal funding is being requested, explain how the project continues to meet a community need. If new/expansion funding is being requested, explain how the additional funds will increase system capacity and justify the community need for additional capacity. Be sure to use data to support the demonstrated need.** (Character Limit: 3,000)

New funding is requested to set up five scattered site apartments that will collectively expand the system’s shelter capacity by 8-10 beds. Funds will cover the cost of rent and utilities on these apartments. At the peak of the 2019-20 cold weather shelter season, Micah hosted an average of 50 people in a shelter meant for 37. The highest bed night was 62. Throughout the month of February our staff made a concerted effort to decrease volume at the cold weather shelter through increased diversion efforts and connection to other area shelters. After approximately 30 days of monitoring the situation, we observed the following need:

- 10 people had entered shelter and remained at month’s end
- 18 people remained on the shelter list waiting for a bed. Another four had screened, but were not yet eligible because they had already exceeded their 90 days for the year.
- 27 people had already been to shelter during the winter season, but exited and came back to the shelter (reasons range from unknown/disappeared to voluntarily leaving to rule violation/non-compliance to time expiration)
- 14 had not screened due to variation in shelter stay, disruption by jail or hospitalization, or lack of follow up on intake.
- 4 had previously screened, but were unavailable for the bed when offered
- 10 were ineligible
- 25 refused shelter
- 7 were unlikely to be screen or be viable in shelter
- 6 were diverted

While not all of these individuals stay in the shelter every night, the average number of people consistently using Micah’s cold weather shelter compared to previous years is concerning.

In addition, our housing staff generally finds themselves working to house those that are living in places not meant for human habitation, despite that they have been identified for housing because of their vulnerabilities. These individuals are generally not willing, eligible or likely successful in traditional shelter. However, it is difficult for a re-housing process to be rapid when housing staff do not always know where to find them and they are living in situations that put them at great risk of returning to jail or ending up in the hospital. Dedicating shelter beds to those who are highest priority for housing would help reduce utilization of the cold weather shelter, decrease the number of people sleeping on the street and offer housing staff a more captive audience when they are trying to move people quickly to permanent housing.

3. **Please indicate the breakdown of household types targeted by this project:**

	Renewal	Expansion
Households with Children	%	%
Households without Children	%	100%
Total	100%	100%

4. **Certify that the project will adhere to the *FRCoC Coordinated Entry Policies & Procedures*, including the following requirements of the document:**

- Follow the Housing First model
- Participate in the FRCoC Coordinated Entry Process and/or the Victim Service Coordinated Entry Process (including coordinated assessment for shelter/prevention and prioritization for rapid re-housing)
- Adhere to established project standards (including *FRCoC Rapid Re-Housing Policies & Procedures*)
- Collect data through HMIS or a comparable database

5. **What percentage of households will be served through the Victim Service Coordinated Entry Process (including coordinated assessment for shelter/prevention and prioritization for rapid re-housing)?**

	Renewal	Expansion
Households Served through Victim Service Coordinated Entry Process	0%	0%

6. **Describe in detail how your organization implements a Housing First approach. Include specific examples such as organizational or programmatic policies, procedures, guidelines, etc. (Character Limit: 3,000)**

Policies and procedures for all of our programs begin with the goal of transitioning people to permanent housing, regardless of their barriers, presumed sustainability or background. Upon assignment in the community prioritization process, Micah’s housing team makes a referral to the housing locator who starts identifying units. While the locator works on finding housing, a Housing Stabilization Navigator begins housing-focused case management that continues after move in. This process starts with an assessment in eight areas—basic needs, community resources, physical health, mental health, barriers to housing stabilization, income, education and social support. Based on information gathered from this strength-based, trauma informed tool, navigators will work with clients to identify the top areas that need to be addressed to support successful transition into housing. Housing-focused goals generally include obtaining identification, identifying a path toward income (i.e. employment/disability), setting up public benefits and addressing identified medical or mental health needs, as prioritized by the client and often most relevant to making a case for disability. The process moves forward regardless of how high the barriers.

Prior to being identified for housing resources, Micah staff work with individuals at all levels to help identify housing solutions. Veterans are referred to VA representatives who come weekly to our office or the Volunteers of America (SSVF) program. People with HIV/AIDS access FAHASS program. People who teeter between sleeping in places not meant for habitation, hotels and the home of friends and family are guided through coordinated assessment for possible connection to prevention. When possible, we encourage and facilitate reunification with family,

bus tickets to communities where other housing options exist, connection to treatment programs or other long-term residential options.

- 7. Describe the systems in place to ensure that households experiencing homelessness are moved quickly to permanent housing and remain stably housed. Be sure to use data demonstrating the outcomes of these systems.** (Character Limit: 3,000)

Micah works with the community's prioritization process to identify those most vulnerable in our homeless system. Prioritization considers VI-SPDAT score, episodes, disability and consecutive time homeless. Using this methodology as a guide, households are assigned to the program at monthly meetings of system planning partners. They are then set up with a targeted case manager who begins working intensively on their housing stabilization. Once enrolled in the street case management program, the individual goes onto the community's prioritization list where they are ranked based on vulnerability. Once assigned, they are generally referred to the housing locator within a week's time and housing is identified as quickly as possible. Case managers begin wrap around support services as soon as the individual is assigned. Prior to housing, case management occurs wherever the client feels comfortable—on the street, in a coffee shop, our office or in the shelter they are staying. Once housed, case managers conduct home visits at a frequency deemed necessary by the client's needs and offer whatever support is necessary to connect program participants to the services that will help them remain stably housed.

- 8. Describe the specific strategies used to assist participants with both increasing their employment and/or income and maximizing their ability to live independently. Be sure to include data demonstrating the outcomes of these strategies.** (RRH/Prevention Only; Character Limit: 3,000)

Micah operates a holistic income development program, called Step Forward, alongside each of its programs. Step Forward supports those staying at respite, in Micah's housing program or accessing street outreach in overcoming barriers to employment and accessing public benefits that provide a sustainable income. The program offers both technical support and intensive case management. A job help center operated by Rappahannock Goodwill is available in Micah's day center for anyone who needs a job. Those identified with significant barriers may access one-on-one assistance, up to and including placement in the mainstream market, job coaching and application for public benefits. At the basic level, staff supports guests by answering questions, making general service referrals, offering job leads, helping on the computer and even supporting them to complete their own applications for public benefits, such as disability or veteran's. People qualify for more comprehensive services when they are assessed to have more significant needs. At this level, staff reviews a participant's interests, skills and abilities related to obtaining and maintaining an income and works with them to identify the best path to achieving it. Once a plan is in place, staff directly connects the participant to a newly launched "Bridge to Work" program. In this model, participants begin by volunteering in a structured setting. As they demonstrate they can be reliable and capable employees they are bridged to a paid internship with a local employer for 30-60 days. The goal, at the end of that time is that participants will be hired permanently by that employer. Once employed, program staff supports both employer and employee for 90 to 180 days to make the sure the hire is sustainable. While in the bridge program, participants attend a weekly empowerment group, case management meeting and evaluation with an Employment Specialist. Based on individual need, help is available for GED

registration or higher education as well as coordinating transportation to and from work. Participants that are more disabled can also access assistance with a disability application through one of several SOAR trained case managers, including housing, respite and street outreach staff. If public benefits are obtained, staff will work with the participant to access incentives, such as ticket-to-work or the agency on aging job program, which can then supplement their fixed income. Step Forward is managed by a full-time income navigator, who supports the development of individual income plans and administers the SSI/SSDI application process for eligible participants. She supports Goodwill in operating the on-site job help center and supervises a full-time employment specialist. The employment specialist is a Goodwill employee who handles much of the technical support, soft skills training and supportive employment activities. The program is funded entirely by local resources.

Last year, Micah's wrap around income development supports achieved the following outcomes:

- 19 people maintained employment for 90+ days
- 33 people hired/obtained employment
- 24 benefit approvals
- 36 people enrolled in certificate, degree, licensure, or work incentive program

9. Describe how the project leverages mainstream resources to support clients as they prepare to move on from project involvement. Provide project and community level examples. (Character Limit: 3,000)

All of Micah's programs are heavily-rooted in a wrap-around support system, which depends on co-locating key community services in the spaces most convenient and comfortable to those needing assistance. This means offering space for community services to be provided directly from the day center at 1013 Princess Anne St., encouraging home visits of any resource that is willing and encouraging direct connection within our shelters. Examples of how these mainstream resources have been incorporated into our daily operations include:

- RACSB's mental health outreach worker (PATH) who works full-time from the day center. They also provide partial funding for the Micah staff person who completes disability applications using the SOAR method.
- Our partnership with Rappahannock Goodwill Industries, which operates an on-site job help center and provides a full-time employment specialist to our team.
- Department of Social Services sends an eligibility worker three days each week to enroll people in food stamps and Medicaid
- The Veteran's Administration comes weekly to connect eligible veterans with homeless assistance and VA benefits.
- Moss Free Clinic maintains a partnership that allows our onsite volunteers to complete eligibility applications for clinic enrollment.
- Germanna's nursing students come with a local doctor twice a month to conduct wellness screenings in the Hospitality Center.
- Virginia Cares offers ex-offender support on a weekly basis.
- The Lion's club conducts monthly on site vision and hearing screenings.
- DMV brings a mobile van every other month to support people needing identification.
- Probation and Parole makes on site visits to decrease violations for transportation and other social reasons,

10. Describe how the project leverages partnerships within the homelessness response system to limit duplication. (Character Limit: 3,000)

All those entering Hesed House will have been screened by the community's coordinated assessment process, determined not eligible for shelter and identified on the community prioritization list as in process for housing. Clients show up on the prioritization list when they are entered into street case management, a targeted outreach program where they are evaluated for vulnerability, chronic homelessness and other programs for which they may qualify and supported in housing-focused goals. Cases are not assigned to the housing program until they have gone through community prioritization, which involves all other partners in the local system. It is determined at those meetings which agency is best suited to work with the individual and what supports will be needed. The existence of Hesed House will not prevent housing navigators from offering the same level of support to individuals identified at prioritization who are eligible and in fact enter shelter. It is simply an alternative "on deck" opportunity for those who are about to go into housing, but cannot go into shelter and are waiting for an apartment.

11. Describe if/how the project identifies harder-to-serve individuals/households, including sex offenders, large families, persons who are medically fragile, persons identifying as LGBTQ+, unaccompanied youth, households with accessibility concerns (including language and mobility), and households with limited or no personal phone or internet access. (Character Limit: 3,000)

By its very name Hesed House speaks to a commitment to harder-to-serve individuals. Hesed is a Hebrew word traditionally translated to mean loving kindness. Biblically it is considered to be the relentless, always pursuing, never give up on you love of God. It is with this sentiment that Micah proposes a new opportunity for people who have otherwise failed out of other community options to find immediate relief from the streets and begin re-orienting to a housing sustainability mindset even before they find an apartment.

All of Micah's programs have been historically low barrier. For example, our programs do not breathalyze, drug test or have other limitations that prevent people from entering. Our Housing program particularly prefers higher barriers and more vulnerabilities. Although the program does not serve families, it is prepared to address the Equal Access and Prohibited Inquiries Rule when it comes to transgender individuals who may require gender specific arrangements. This could include allowing the person to consider a housing match with a person of their preferred gender. Unless the information is offered by the program participant, sexual orientation is not a question that is asked as part of the eligibility process for any of Micah's programs.

12. Describe efforts made by the project to serve those individuals/households identified as being harder-to-serve (as defined in Question 11), including strategies employed, staff training, and/or partnerships with other organizations, either within or outside of the homelessness response system.

The more barriers a person faces, the more likely Micah's program is to take them on. Once people enter Micah's street case management program, they are triaged based on VI-SPDAT score, community prioritization and identified needs. This can mean coordination with veteran

specific programs or problem solve so that a person may relocate or be reunited with family and friends who will take them in. The higher the vulnerability and severity of needs, the more likely the person is to be assigned to a housing case manager. Income, substance usage and mental health are often primary challenges of those being housed by Micah. How and when these issues are addressed is a voluntary part of the program. However, the effects of unaddressed substance abuse, mental health or income deficits can have natural consequences if they result in tenancy issues such as unpaid rent, property damage or neighborhood disturbances. To the extent they are willing, those struggling with addiction and mental health are often given great support in problem solving and connecting to resources before natural consequences occur. Even then, staff will go to great lengths to support the individual in avoiding eviction, making other arrangements, or being re-housed again if necessary. The program often comes in and out of people’s lives as they face cycles of housing crisis.

13. Does either the organization as a whole or this project have any rules or requirements for assistance that could act as a barrier to services (i.e. birth certificate or photo ID, residency requirement, service participation requirement, etc.)? Please list each requirement, describe the purpose of the requirement(s), and describe the efforts the organization makes to assist households in need of services that do not or cannot meet the requirement(s). (Character Limit: 3,000)

Micah understands that, in many cases, the services it provides are a last and only resort. Staff is, therefore, committed to trying all strategies possible before exiting people from a program. All of our supports are voluntary and people utilize the resources we make available to varying degrees. Some are successful at sustainability using a minimum number of supports. Others are significantly impacted by minimal engagement. Our philosophy tends to be offering as many different wrap-around supports as we can come up with and using various methods to engage the person. While the burden of engagement responsibility is on the case manager, the program participant may eventually face natural consequences if they do not participate in what is offered and have not been able to make progress with their own devices. Progress and success, however, are defined very loosely and on an individual basis. In the rare case of termination, we seek alternative arrangements that will reset the course and get them back on track toward sustainability. Although we may give someone a break from our programs for short periods, we do not maintain a permanent “do not admit” list and we often welcome people to return multiple times during their journey back from brokenness. This can mean re-housing people multiple times or bringing them back into shelter, even after a negative exit.

14. Provide the following data. These numbers will be used to calculate anticipated number of households served by the project.

*Case management will be provided by existing staff who already providing housing focused case management to these individuals while they are living on the street. This application purely provides a place for these individuals to stay while they are looking for an apartment and working with the staff who would be supporting them anyway. It is estimated that a minimum of 35 people will benefit from the program in a given year.

Renewal	New/Expansion
---------	---------------

Number of FTE Case Managers Dedicated to Project (could be fraction)		
--	--	--

Ideal Caseload for 1 FTE Case Manager	10
Average Length of Stay for Project Participants	90-120 days
Average Financial Assistance Cost per Household (RRH/Prevention Only)	
Shelter Beds for Households without Children (Shelter Operations Only)	
Shelter Beds for Households with Children (Shelter Operations Only)	
Shelter Units for Households with Children (Shelter Operations Only)	

15. Provide a description of project staff capacity to include experience and training. Include a list of the applicable certificates of training for direct program staff. If any staff dedicated to the project are also dedicated to other projects, explain the breakdown of hours by project. If any portion of the funding request is to pay for a new staff position, how will the agency ensure position is filled in a timely manner? (Character Limit: 3,000)

As Hesed House exists as place for people who have been assigned for housing placement while they are looking for an apartment, the housing team will provide the needed staff capacity. In fact, working with soon-to-be housed individuals in dedicated shelter spaces will decrease the time that housing navigators are having to spend looking for clients and dealing with complexities of street life that distract from housing stabilization goals. The housing team includes a working supervisor, two full-time rapid rehousing case managers and two supportive housing case managers. Each case manager typically manages a caseload of approximately 15 to 20 people. The supervisor’s time is split between rapid-rehousing and permanent supportive housing and income development, which is not funded by this grant. A housing locator, who serves the entire system of rapid re-housing and prevention providers, also works closely with this program. Qualifications for the team include psychology, social work and sociology degrees, and a registered nurse. The only position that works on multiple projects is the housing supervisor who oversees both the rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing part of the program and one of the case managers, which is split between VHSP and Housing Trust. The portion of her salary devoted to permanent supportive housing is funded outside of VHSP. The case managers who work on supportive housing are funded by resources from HUD’s CoC grant and Housing Trust

16. Provide evidence of organizational capacity to administer the requested funding and implement VHSP-funded activities, to include governance, leadership, experience, and financial management. Will project activities be ready to begin on July 1, 2020? (Character Limit: 3,000)

Micah was founded in 2005 by a group of churches whose history with the homeless population extends back to the 1980s. It is governed by a twelve-member board of directors, comprised of appointees of each of the nine founding churches. It has a full-time staff of 15, four part-time and three seasonal for cold weather shelter purposes. Finances are managed by a fulltime bookkeeper/administrative position and supported by an Executive Director. Between these two positions, checks are cut on an at least weekly basis, remittances are submitted for grant reimbursement monthly and quarterly reports are compiled as requested. Financial and risk management policies govern financial practices. Micah’s housing program has existed in an official capacity since at least 2010. In that time, its targeted efforts

for housing and supporting the most vulnerable has resulted in an 56% decline in community chronic homelessness.

17. **Are there any unresolved monitoring or audit findings for any grants operated by the applicant or potential subrecipients? If yes, please explain.** (Character Limit: 1,000)

Yes No

Attachments (each project)

Project Policies and Procedures

Project Job Descriptions (must be housing-focused)

MOU(s) (if applicable)

For DV Renewal Projects ONLY: FRCoC Data Sheet (template provided)

Attachments (once per agency)

Board of Director Listing

Organizational Chart

990 (if applicable)

Profit and Loss Statement (prior year and most recent YTD)

Spending Plan (template provided, please submit in Excel format)

Organizational Certification and Assurances (template provided)