

Fredericksburg Regional Continuum of Care

FY22 Virginia Homeless Solutions Program Application Narrative Responses

1. Please describe any significant changes in your Continuum of Care/Balance of State local planning group since the FY 20-21 application. Include leadership and/or agency changes, point-in-time count data, trends, and any information you would like to share with DHCD. - Limit response to no more than one page.

On January 27, 2021, the CoC conducted the annual Point-In-Time (PIT) count, administering surveys to all persons experiencing homelessness throughout the region. The survey found 180 persons experiencing homelessness across the region on the night of the PIT count. This is a 13 percent (27 person) decrease over the 2020 PIT count. The decrease is attributed to several factors, including:

- COVID-19 precautions - The CoC has seen a decrease in the number of requests for emergency shelter since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. With COVID-19 safety at the forefront for many, there have been many people who are unwilling to enter emergency shelter due to the increased risk of exposure in those settings. The CoC has seen an increase in the ability of service seekers to find other alternatives to emergency shelter and has been able to divert many who would have otherwise gone forward with accessing shelter.
- Low utilization rates for emergency shelter - The CoC has had an overall decrease in the number of congregate shelter beds in the community, especially for households without children, due to provider COVID-19 restrictions. For example, prior to March 2020, the CoC had an 80-bed congregate facility, which served as the only emergency shelter option for singles without severe medical needs. However, since March 2020, this facility has been operating at a strict 48-bed capacity in order to ensure adherence to CDC guidelines on COVID-19 precautions and safe social distancing. This has limited the number of available congregate beds for households without children in the community. In response, the CoC opened emergency non-congregate beds to target those living unsheltered and has been able to have most people off of the street since March 2020. Decreased number of beds and increased diversion have led to an overall decline in the number of occupied beds in the community. The community had an average utilization rate of 62% on the night of the 2021 PIT count, compared to 85% during the 2020 PIT count.
- Community housing surge - Between August and December 2020, the CoC participated in a housing surge, setting the goal of moving 95 households into permanent housing in 90 days. Using landlord incentives, bolstering housing location outreach, and participating in intentional marketing for the surge, the CoC was able to house 76 households by the end of 2020. This push lowered numbers in emergency shelter and increased exits to permanent housing.

Over the past year, the CoC has also been working to strengthen prevention and community connections for those at imminent risk of homelessness. The CoC has been able to partner closely with Rappahannock United Way, who has been providing Asset Limited, Income Constrained,

Employed (ALICE) assistance funding and state Rent and Mortgage Assistance, and Central Virginia Housing Coalition, who has been providing local prevention funding, to support those on the edge of homelessness in the community. The CoC has integrated warm handoffs and direct referrals from the Homelessness Helpline to these other community prevention programs. This has allowed the CoC to both provide more support to those at risk of homelessness and to better target CoC services to those that are hardest to serve.

2. Funding changes. If the CoC/LPG is requesting to move money between activities and/or agencies please provide details about the process and the rationale for the request.

The FRCoC determined the service providers and funding request for this application through the process outlined in the FRCoC Funding Policies & Procedures, which governs the solicitation, review, selection, and ranking of projects for funding through collaborative applications in order to ensure an objective, transparent, and competitive funding process.

On April 9, 2021, CoC staff released the FY22 VHSP Renewal Application Local Notice of Funding Availability. Notice was posted to the CoC website and distributed to all CoC members via email.

CoC staff hosted an information session for all potential applicants on April 13, 2021 to review the Local Notice of Funding Availability and outline the process for the funding cycle.

The Funding & Performance Committee, with CoC staff support, developed VHSP application forms and scoring sheets; these documents were approved by the CoC Board on April 14, 2021.

Following this approval, CoC staff posted updated applications and scoring sheets to the FRCoC website and distributed them to the full CoC membership.

The FRCoC Funding Policies & Procedures, FRCoC 2019 Policy Priorities, local NOFA, application forms, and scoring sheets are available on the CoC's website at <https://www.fredericksburgcoc.org/our-work/funding/>.

Project applications were submitted to CoC staff by April 19, 2021 at noon. CoC staff submitted all project applications to the Funding & Performance Committee to review and score individually using Board-approved scoring sheets.

The Funding & Performance Committee met on April 22, 2021 to finalize application scores and rank projects. Committee members compiled scores and comments to complete one final scoring sheet for each application. The Committee then determined for each project application whether to accept the application at the full amount, accept the application at a reduced amount, or reject the application. Applications that were accepted were then ranked based on project type, population group served by the project, levels of unmet need, project performance, project compliance with past funding, fit within the community's homelessness strategies and priorities, other available funding, and other parameters. The renewal CoC Planning project and renewal Coordinated Assessment project were placed at the top of the ranking per the guidance in the FRCoC Funding Policies & Procedures, as the system relies on these projects to operate. The final ranking sheet is available on the CoC's website at <https://www.fredericksburgcoc.org/our-work/funding/>.

CoC staff then notified each applicant of the Funding & Performance Committee's ranking recommendations and provided the completed scoring sheet for each project application. CoC staff also included specific instructions regarding the point of contact and deadline for appeals.

No appeals were submitted by the posted deadline of April 26, 2021 at noon, so the Funding & Performance Committee submitted the original ranking recommendations to the CoC Board for final approval. The CoC Board approved the recommended ranking at its meeting on April 27, 2021. CoC staff then notified each applicant of the CoC Board's final approval.

Following the CoC Board's final approval, CoC staff posted to the FRCoC website and distributed to the full CoC membership the completed collaborative application, project ranking, and project applications for public review.

Changes from the current FY21 Year One Request include:

- Empowerhouse shifted \$10,000 from Emergency Shelter to Rapid Re-housing. This returns Empowerhouse funding to what was initially awarded in FY21; Empowerhouse had requested to move FY21 funding from Rapid Re-housing to Emergency Shelter due to COVID-19.
- George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC) shifted \$4,000 from CoC Planning to HMIS. The additional \$4,000 in HMIS funding will allow GWRC to contract out all HMIS training activities, which will greatly reduce GWRC staff time spent on these activities and allow work on other important items.
- Loisann's Hope House (LHH) shifted \$20,000 from Coordinated Assessment to Targeted Prevention. This returns LHH funding to what was initially awarded in FY21; LHH had requested to move FY21 funding from Targeted Prevention to Coordinated Assessment due to COVID-19.