

# GEORGE WASHINGTON

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## REGIONAL COMMISSION

George Washington Regional Commission (2021)

19 CoC/LPG Planning (VHSP)

### GWRC CoC Planning HSNH FY23



pZVQGoYp

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#### Applicant details

Agency | George Washington Regional Commission

Agency Type | PDC

#### Applicant Address

406 Princess Anne Street  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401

Phone Number | 540-642-1578

#### Organizational Certification and Assurances

PDF

[OrganizationalCertificati... \(236 KiB download\)](#)

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#### Application details

Application Type | Renewal with Expansion

Project Contact Name | Samantha Shoukas

Project Contact Title | CoC Program Director

Project Contact Phone | +15406421578

Project Contact Email | shoukas@gwregion.org

**Review Date** | 2022-03-21

The applicant organization's governing board discussed/ will discuss this application for funding at a meeting held on \_\_\_\_ (date).

**Acknowledgement** | ✓

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

**CoC Planning Budget**

		New	Renewal Amount	Expansion Amount
1	Salaries	0	US\$46,328.00	US\$100,000.00
2	Training	0	US\$1,000.00	0
3	Travel	0	US\$1,000.00	0
4	Total	0	US\$48,328.00	US\$124,000.00

**HMIS Budget**

		New Amount	Renewal Amount	Expansion Amount
1	Computer Costs	0	0	0
2	Fees and Licenses	0	0	0

3	HMIS Staffing	0	US\$14,000.00	US\$100,000.00
4	Training	0	0	0
5	Total	0	US\$14,000.00	US\$100,000.00

### Administration Budget

		New Amount	Renewal Amount	Expansion Amount
1	Administration	0	US\$7,672.00	US\$100,000.00

### Budget Narrative

Provide details for each line item requested.

The \$46,328 renewal for salaries will be paired with federal and local funding to support a full-time (1 FTE) CoC Program Director position as well as a portion (0.5 FTE) of a full-time Program Coordinator. The requested expansion amount is looking to increase the CoC planning line item to the full allowable 10%, but without knowing the full project amount of the other applicants (which the 10% cap is based off of) a placeholder for these funds is being requested. These funds support an increase to staff capacity to adequately support the day-to-day needs of the CoC. The \$2,000 for training and travel will continue to be used to send CoC staff to meetings, trainings, and conferences.

The \$14,000 HMIS staffing will be used to support the HMIS oversight that GWRC provides and the HMIS lead for the CoC. The requested expansion amount is looking allocate the remaining 5% of the allowable community amount to GWRC, but without knowing the full project amount of the other applicants (which the 5% cap is based off of) a placeholder for these funds is being requested.

The \$7,672.00 in admin funds support the indirect costs of administering the CoC Planning project. The requested expansion amount requests GWRC receive the community increase in the admin line item to the full allowable 5%, but without knowing the full project amount of the other applicants (which the 5% cap is based off of) a placeholder for these funds is being requested.

### Match

PDF
[VHSP Proposed Match CPB.p... \(150 KiB download\)](#)

### Other Funding Sources

Detail the other funding sources the agency has access to for this project.

This project also receives:

- HUD CoC Planning (\$13,788)
- HUD HMIS funds (\$55,125)
- Local Match (\$17,500)

There are no other funds available outside of these pots for HMIS or CoC planning funds.

### Project Scope.

Provide a description that addresses the entire scope of the proposed project, and how the CoC Lead Agency will use grant funds to comply with the provisions of 24 CFR 578.7.

The George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC) serves as Lead Agency for the Fredericksburg Regional Continuum of Care (CoC). Funding from this CoC Planning project will be paired with HUD CoC Program funding and local match to support GWRC's continued staffing of the CoC. Staff activities include coordinating meetings; informing the CoC of best practices; providing technical assistance; overseeing collaborative applications; monitoring projects; preparing and submitting required data and reports; overseeing annual point-in-time (PIT) count planning and implementation; and ensuring the CoC continues to operate in compliance with the CoC's Bylaws and the provisions of 24 CFR 578.7 (Responsibilities of the Continuum of Care).

The \$46,000 for salaries will be paired with HUD funding and local match to support the full-time (1 FTE) CoC Program Director and part-time (.5 FTE) Program Coordinator position (including salary, fringe). The \$2,000 for training and travel will continue to be used to send CoC staff to meetings, trainings, and conferences. The requested expansion amount is to increase the CoC planning line item to the full allowable 10%, but without knowing the full project amount of the other applicants (which the 10% cap is based off of) a placeholder for these funds is being requested. These funds support an increase to staff capacity to adequately support the day-to-day needs of the CoC.

GWRC also serves as Lead Agency for the CoC's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), the database required by an expanding list of state and federal funders to track and report on clients served. HMIS activities include contracting for HMIS software; overseeing local HMIS implementation and participation; providing training and troubleshooting assistance to HMIS users; and performing regular data quality monitoring and project and system performance evaluation.

The \$14,000 HMIS staffing will be used to support the HMIS oversight that GWRC provides and the HMIS lead for the CoC. The requested expansion amount is looking allocate the remaining 5% of the allowable community amount to GWRC, but without knowing the full project amount of the other applicants (which the 5% cap is based off of) a placeholder for these funds is being requested.

The \$7,672.00 in admin funds support the indirect costs of administering the CoC Planning project. The requested expansion amount requests GWRC receive the community increase in the admin line item to the full allowable 5%, but without knowing the full project amount of the other applicants (which the 5% cap is based off of) a placeholder for these funds is being requested. GWRC's indirect costs include office space, office equipment and supplies, salaries and fringe for the Executive Director, Deputy Director, and Director of Finance and Personnel, GWRC's annual audit, and other agency-wide overhead costs. The Administration category is the only line item available to cover these costs.

### **Community Need.**

If renewal funding is being requested, explain how the project continues to meet a community need and/or fill a system gap. 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 and detail the methodology for determining gaps within the system.

GWRC's role as CoC Lead Agency ensures that the CoC complies with state and federal requirements and that providers work together as one homelessness response system, reducing duplication. GWRC's project and system oversight and technical assistance also ensures that the community stays competitive for grants, as funders increasingly base decisions on outcomes data. Each year, GWRC submits collaborative grant applications to state and federal funders on behalf of the CoC; in the last year the community was awarded a total of \$1,386,037 through these applications. GWRC also secured another \$4.5 million in COVID-19 dollars for the community over the past two years and funding from local sources on the CoC's behalf for the Unsheltered Homelessness Initiative (\$20,000), the Homelessness Helpline (\$20,000), COVID-19 hotel vouchers for the Health Department (\$5,000), and Community Eligibility Worker Program (\$21,000).

The CoC Planning renewal request will allow GWRC to maintain current staff capacity. Without current CoC Planning funds, GWRC would not be able to support current staffing levels (1.5 FTE). The CoC Planning expansion request would be paired with HUD funding and local match to expand staff capacity even further in the day-to-day running of the CoC and coalition building. Overall, this would allow the CoC Program Director to spend more time on higher-level CoC work. Current staff levels are able to meet the basic requirements of the CoC but are not sufficient to fully address CoC priorities vital to moving the needle on ending homelessness in the community. Priority items have remained on committee action plans year after year as the CoC staff time is consumed by CoC compliance activities.

In addition, over the past 2 years, the CoC has been asked to grow their capacity to coordinate more homeless and housing initiatives. This has included assisting in developing community affordable housing, emergency management, mental health and substance use, human trafficking, and criminal justice initiatives. All of these efforts have an intersection with homelessness as many of those experiencing homelessness also have experience with one of these other issues. However, GWRC has traditionally not increased CoC staffing as to not take away from other direct homeless service projects. However, in order to continue to work of the CoC and and create an effective and sustainable effort, additional capacity is needed.

The regional HMIS facilitates information-sharing among homeless service providers, increasing coordination and reducing duplication of services. HMIS allows providers to better track and report on client needs, services provided, and outcomes; this data informs strategic planning and funding decisions within the CoC. As HMIS participation is required by several state and federal funders, GWRC's ongoing HMIS administration ensures providers continue to be eligible for funding.

### **CoC and ESG Evaluation**

Explain how the requested funds will improve the CoC's ability to evaluate the outcome of CoC and ESG projects.

The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program are both federal programs administered by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that provide funding for homeless services. Currently, Micah Ministries receives CoC Program funding for permanent supportive housing and Empowerhouse for rapid re-housing for domestic violence survivors. In addition, Empowerhouse, Micah, and Loisann's Hope House receive ESG funding as part of their VHSP rapid re-housing allocation from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

Over the past year, CoC staff has focused on updating and adopting community-wide policies and procedures (Bylaws, Coordinated Entry Policies & Procedures, Funding Policies & Procedures, and Project Performance Standards). These documents set standards for operating the CoC and homelessness response system. Additionally, the CoC's current AmeriCorps VISTA member has developed a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. This plan requires ongoing project and system evaluation, more refined data quality monitoring, and technical assistance at the agency and project level by the CoC. The implementation of this plan will be beginning in the next quarter. CoC staff has also worked with the Funding & Performance Committee to develop local project performance standards to evaluate the outcomes of not just CoC and ESG-funded projects, but VHSP-funded projects as well. Staff use data from HMIS or comparable databases to monitor project outcomes and provide targeted technical assistance to individual projects. Project outcome reports are provided to the Funding & Performance Committee to be considered by the committee during future funding reviews.

The requested CoC Planning expansion would allow CoC staff to focus on the outcomes of CoC, ESG, and VHSP-funded projects, above the level that this is already being performed, and provide the staff capacity needed to implement the monitoring and evaluation plan. If the CoC Planning expansion request is funded, a portion of the additional staff hours would be dedicated to deeper project evaluation, monitoring, and technical assistance.

**Racial Disparities.** Has your project examined its programs and systems for racial disparities? What was the result of this examination and what is the project doing with this information? Have any actions been taken to address the disparities (if applicable)?

In 2019, the CoC conducted an analysis of racial and ethnic disparities within the community's homeless population and services. This analysis revealed differences in racial and ethnic composition within the homeless population in comparison to both the general population and the population living in poverty. African Americans are overrepresented in the homeless population compared to the population in poverty as well as the total population of the region, while Whites are underrepresented. However, the analysis showed no difference in racial groups' access to homeless services or positive housing outcomes; entries into housing programs and successful exits to permanent housing for each racial group were similar.

The CoC is working to better understand the role of race in homelessness within the region. The CoC is currently partnering with the University of Mary Washington to assist with further data analysis on racial disparities using recent HMIS data. Further analysis on the root cause of these disparities is needed. The CoC will analyze other disproportionately represented groups to see if there is a connection. The CoC will look to understand the intersection between the homelessness response system and other public systems such as corrections, foster care, and healthcare to better understand how disparities in

those sectors may affect disparities in homelessness. The CoC will use this data to develop an updated action plan for racial equity within the CoC.

In developing the current revision of its strategic plan, the CoC is looking at how to be more involved in community conversations around issues impacting homelessness, including those that contribute to racial and ethnic disparities within the community's homeless population. Participation may include advocacy and providing CoC data, as appropriate. The CoC has also been intentional about ensuring the CoC leadership is representative of the homeless population. In the current election of new CoC Board members, the CoC will be adding 3 people of color to the 15 person Board. These members include representatives from the local Black Lives Matter chapter and the local NAACP.

The CoC and provider staff have also participated in racial equity trainings provided by DHCD and federal partners. The CoC is also evaluating how to best utilize available technical assistance with DHCD to help move the conversation and efforts around racial equity further in the community.

### **Staff Capacity.**

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?

Sam Shoukas is the CoC Program Director and staffs both the CoC and HMIS implementation. Sam has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of Mary Washington and a Master's in Social Work from Virginia Commonwealth University. Prior to joining the CoC in May 2017, she worked as an Adult Protective Services Worker with Fauquier County Department of Social Services for 4 years and worked with Homeward, the Lead Agency for the Greater Richmond CoC, conducting research and facilitating lived experience input sessions. Sam has attended several conferences, including annual conferences hosted by the National Alliance to End Homelessness and Virginia Housing Alliance (VHA), and several trainings, including the 20-hour Excellence in Leadership course through the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) and the 40-hour domestic violence training through Empowerhouse. This full-time (1 FTE) position is fully dedicated to staffing the CoC, and is supported through VHSP CoC Planning funding and match (45%), HUD CoC Program CoC Planning funding and match (5%), and HUD CoC Program HMIS funding and match (50%).

Anne Marie Kluempfen is the GWRC Program Coordinator and supports the CoC as a with administrative tasks such as meeting coordination, membership support, by-name list maintenance, funding process support, and other day-to-day CoC needs. Anne Marie has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of Mary Washington. In 2019, Anne Marie served as the CoC AmeriCorps VISTA working with local providers to provide technical assistance for compliance and performance. Anne Maire worked as a Housing Case Manager at Empowerhouse, the community domestic violence provider, for one year before returning to the GWRC as the Program Coordinator. Anne Marie is a full-time GWRC employee working with the CoC (50%), economic development (33%), and GWRC (17%).

If the CoC Planning expansion is awarded, GWRC would expand staffing by .5 FTE position. This position would be supported through VHSP CoC Planning funding and match (50%), HUD CoC Program CoC Planning funding and match (20%), and HUD CoC Program HMIS funding and match (30%). If awarded, GWRC would begin recruiting and work to fill the position as quickly as possible. The position would be posted on the CoC and GWRC websites, distributed through the CoC newsletter, and sent to community partners directly. If the expansion is awarded, GWRC stands ready to fill the new position in a timely manner.

In addition to permanent staff, GWRC is currently hosting a VISTA through the VHA AmeriCorps VISTA Program. Mike West, the current VISTA, started in August 2021 and will be with the CoC for one year. His role is to assist with implementing the CoC's Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. Mike is has Bachelor's and Master's in Special Education and a PhD in Urban Services Leadership. Mike has over 30 years of experience in research and evaluation. Mike will be the CoC's last VISTA as the position is not renewed in FY23.

### **Organizational Capacity.**

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, 2022?

GWRC has been the HMIS Lead Agency since 2008 and the CoC Lead Agency since 2014. GWRC administers several state and federal grants, and has administered HUD CoC Program grants since 2008 and VHSP grants since 2014. GWRC maintains consistent drawdowns and does not have any unresolved monitoring or audit findings. GWRC's Board of Commissioners, comprised of elected officials from the five local governments of Planning District 16, meets monthly to oversee operations and current initiatives. As this grant is a continuation of GWRC's current VHSP funding, activities will be ready to begin on July 1, 2022.

### **Prior Experience.**

Describe experience in utilizing state funds, performing proposed eligible activities, and serving proposed target population.

GWRC has been providing regional planning services to Planning District 16 since 1961. With a budget over \$3 million dollars, 40.4% of the funds come from state contract grants. GWRC has administered HUD CoC Program grants since 2008 and VHSP grants since 2014. GWRC maintains consistent drawdowns and does not have any unresolved monitoring or audit findings.

GWRC has been the HMIS Lead Agency since 2008 and the CoC Lead Agency since 2014. Though the CoC began in the 1990s, it was not until GWRC took over as lead agency and devoted a full-time staff member to the effort that the CoC has been able to be more formalized and grow into a coordinated network of over 60 member agencies and organizations.

GWRC has been the lead for this strong regional partnership for many years, but that partnership became even stronger because of the COVID-19 pandemic. GWRC was able to provide over \$4.5 million to local partners to ensure that homelessness was address throughout the pandemic. This included:

- Using hotels to provide emergency shelter for those who would have otherwise been on the street to have a safe place to socially distance;
- Partnering with the Rappahannock Area Health District, the Medical Reserve Corps, and area hospitals ensured that those who tested positive for COVID-19 and could not safely isolate at home (due to homelessness or overcrowding) had somewhere safe to go;
- Collaborating with community mainstream resources to provide prevention funding to hundreds of households on the verge of losing their housing because of the pandemic;
- Administering the Keys for Christmas campaign to incentivize landlord partnerships during the difficult housing market of the pandemic, allowing for 76 households to be housed in 90 days; and
- Partnering with Central Virginia Housing Coalition, the community's local voucher administrator, to provide housing vouchers to the community for the first time in 15+ years.

Because of these efforts:

- The CoC was able to offer emergency shelter to every single person who was living unsheltered. For over a year, we had only about 5-7 people living unsheltered; these individuals had refused services.
- The CoC was able to provide 85 housing vouchers to vulnerable households experiencing or recently experiencing homelessness.
- The CoC had the lowest Point-In-Time count ever in 2021 with only 180 total people experiencing homelessness.
- The CoC has finally housed the community's most chronically homeless individual. After 27 years living unsheltered, the individual was able to see a new opportunity for housing through the CoC's COVID-19 efforts and has just hit his 1 year mark in housing.
- The community perception of what is possible in ending homelessness has changed. GWRC and the CoC are now beginning conversations with locality officials about the role that they play in ending homelessness and how the region can continue to target efforts toward finally ending homelessness in the region.

### **Spending Rates.**

| No

Was the project able to fully expend 100% of the funds initially contracted for this project in FY21?

**Spending Rate Explanation.**

If no, how much was left unspent? Explain the reason(s) for not being able to expend 100% of funds.

Samantha's maternity leave (April 21-June 21) did not allow for a fully expending of funds. However, the funds that were left over were distributed to other providers in the community and funds were fully expended from there.

**Projected Spending.**

| Yes

Does the project expect to fully expend 100% of the funds currently contracted for FY22?

**Findings.**

| No

Are there any unresolved monitoring or audit findings for any grants operated by the applicant or potential subrecipients?

CoC - Attachments

**CoC Bylaws**

PDF	<a href="#">1. Bylaws.pdf (378 KiB download)</a>
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**HMIS Policies & Procedures**

PDF	<a href="#">2. HMIS Policies and Proc... (957 KiB download)</a>
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**CoC-Level Policies & Procedures/Service Standards**

PDF	<a href="#">3. CoC Level Policies and... (591 KiB download)</a>
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**Homelessness Response System Flow Chart**

PDF	<a href="#">4. Homelessness Response... (86 KiB download)</a>
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**CoC Certification and Assurances**

PDF	<a href="#">ContinuumofCareCertificat... (277 KiB download)</a>
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**Job Descriptions**

PDF	<a href="#">6. Job Descriptions.pdf (273 KiB download)</a>
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