

GEORGE WASHINGTON

REGIONAL COMMISSION

George Washington Regional Commission (2021)

34 Emergency Shelter Operations (VHSP)

Micah - ESO (Hesed House)
VHSP - HSNH FY23



bwLrOAre

Applicant details

Agency | Micah Ecumenical Ministries

Agency Type | Non-Profit

EIN/TIN | 20-4044884

Applicant Address

1013 Princess Anne St
Fredericksburg, VA 22401

Phone Number | 5404794116

Organizational Certification and Assurances

PDF

[Micah_signed_Organization... \(50 KiB download\)](#)

Application details

Application Type | New

Project Contact Name | Meghann Cotter

Project Contact Title | Executive Servant-Leader

Project Contact Phone | +15404794116

Project Contact Email | meghann@dolovewalk.net

Household Type

Indicate the percentage (%) breakdown of household types targeted by this project.

		New	Renewal	Expansion
1	Households without Children	100	0	0
2	Households with Children	0	0	0
3	Total	100	0	0

DV Participants

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)?

		New	Renewal	Expansion
1	Households Served through Victim Service Coordinated Entry Process	0	0	0

Review Date | 2022-03-08

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.

Emergency Shelter Operations Budget

		New	Renewal	Expansion
1	Case Management	0	0	0
2	Limited Support Services	0	0	0
3	Maintenance	0	0	0
4	Rent	US\$164,250.00	0	0
5	Security	0	0	0
6	Supplies	0	0	0
7	Utilities	0	0	0
8	Total	US\$164,250.00	0	0

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	0	0
4	Training	0	0	0
5	Total	0	0	0

Administration Budget

		New Amount	Renewal Amount	Expansion Amount
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Budget Narrative

Provide details for each line item requested.

The rent line item covers the cost of renting roughly 10 hotel rooms year-round in order to provide emergency non-congregate shelter to participants. (Rooms with our preferred hotel provider come at a cost of \$45/night or \$315 per week to our participants.)

The remaining request is for administration.

Match

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

While this is proposed as a new project to be funded by VHSP, it is not a new program. For roughly two years, Micah Ministries has been operating iterations of this project, funded by state and federal pandemic relief funds (primarily CHERP). As we anticipate the emergency funding coming to a close, we are seeking various funding sources to continue to offer this project in a smaller capacity. We are currently awaiting funding decisions regarding this project from our local government. We are hopeful that a minimum of \$225,000 from local government sources will help us sustain some level of hotel shelter, with the expectation that those resources will cover full-time dedicated case management staffing as well as an additional 8-10 hotel rooms and a congregate cold weather shelter.

Project Scope.

Provide a description that addresses the entire scope of the proposed project.

This project, which we have called Hesed House, is a hotel-shelter operation that emerged during CoVid-19. It provides socially distanced hotel rooms as shelter accommodations for those who would otherwise be outside, with the primary goal of providing safe shelter and stabilization support for participants as they prepare for permanent housing. We have been operating this non-congregate hotel-shelter at large scale with emergency funding from federal and state sources due to the pandemic, and are preparing to incorporate lessons learned from the last two years to operate this project at a smaller scale without CHERP or other emergency pandemic funding.

This project is intended to operate a year-round non-congregate hotel-shelter with a target of 10 rooms offered, split between two primary hotel sites, one within walking distance of the Hospitality Center, and one outside of town but still on the bus line. This particular hotel is chosen for long-term use due to a good working relationship developed with hotel staff over the course of the last two years, utilizing this hotel as our primary site for non-congregate shelter.

This project will target individuals who have been through the community's Coordinated Assessment system, determined ineligible for the emergency congregate shelter in our area, but identified through outreach as literally on the street, unable to self-resolve or particularly vulnerable, and assigned for housing placement. This particular group of people will not be the only population eligible for Hesed House, but it will be the primary population that Hesed House seeks to serve.

Each participant will receive an initial length of stay based upon projected amount of time required to find housing. Upon entrance into Hesed House, case management staff will assess the participant 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, case management staff will work with participants in Hesed House to address and improve the top areas that need to be supported in order to be successful in housing.

This increased stabilization time in hotel-shelter with case management support, rather than living in places not meant for human habitation and staying in "survival mode," will increase positive outcomes for these participants as they move into housing.

Other funding sources will cover full-time case management staff and an additional 8-10 rooms, making this project an up to 20 room year-round non-congregate shelter with dedicated case management.

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.

The true need for this project comes in an acknowledgement that a congregate shelter setting is often not a reasonable option for chronically homeless participants, or any participants with significant special needs. Those individuals are not successful in congregate shelter settings, due to disability, serious mental illness, trauma associated with a history of staying in congregate spaces, etc. At the same time that congregate shelter is not a reasonable option for some participants, these participants often rank high in vulnerability and thus priority for housing.

Providing temporary non-congregate spaces for these individuals to stabilize, once they have been prioritized for housing, creates better outcomes when housing units are identified for move-in.

Before COVID funding allowed the widespread use of hotel rooms, our housing staff found themselves working to house those who were living in places not meant for human habitation. It became very difficult for a re-housing process to be rapid when housing staff was not always able to find the individual who is literally without shelter. Living without shelter put them at increased risk of returning to jail or ending up in the hospital.

Dedicated non-congregate shelter beds for those who are highest priority for housing will help reduce the utilization of Micah's cold weather shelter during the winter season, 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 into permanent housing.

The use of non-congregate shelter around the country has now opened eyes to the value of this model as a best practice for sheltering high-barrier and vulnerable people in many communities. Thanks to emergency funding made available during the pandemic, our community has seen the benefits as well. In the two years emergency funding has been available, 615 people have accessed non-congregate shelter. 380 were supported during the cold weather shelter months. Of the remaining 235 who participated in a program with targeted case management, 89 exited to a permanent housing situation. Excluding the 6 who died, 14 who went to long-term care facility or treatment, and 31 who have not exited yet, that's a 48% rate of positive exit. Of note, an additional 19 resumed paying for their own hotel and 15 transitioned to an emergency shelter.

Funding for this Hesed House project would seek to continue to achieve outcomes such as these and more.

If this project is not funded, when pandemic resources are depleted, there will be no shelter option for some of the literally homeless community. Once they no longer have the benefits provided by stable shelter, stabilizing these individuals in permanent housing becomes a much more difficult and longer process. Street homelessness will again become an unavoidable reality for some members of our community, given the reality of the time it takes to locate and access appropriate affordable housing.

Eligibility.

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
- ✓ Collect data through HMIS or a comparable database

Prioritization Process. Describe how the project receives referrals, determines eligibility, and prioritizes clients. How were these prioritization criteria developed?

All those entering the housing program are screened by the community's coordinated assessment. This may happen at the time of their first encounter with Micah, but at a minimum prior to their enrollment in street case management. Once in street case management, they are evaluated for vulnerability, chronic homelessness, and other programs for which they may qualify.

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 prioritization process is based upon a number of factors, including VI-SPDAT score, presence of disabilities, length of time spent homeless, and number of episodes of homelessness.

These prioritization criteria, developed by our CoC system to limit duplication and ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are being served most quickly, helps us to target resources at those most in need.

Those who are deemed ineligible or inappropriate for congregate shelter options are prioritized for enrollment into Hesed House. This ineligibility is determined by the community's local emergency congregate shelter itself, (which no longer receives any funding through HUD or DHCD) often due to criminal history, prior experiences with the shelter, behavioral issues while in the congregate setting, etc. It can also be determined by the severity of mental health diagnoses that make congregate spaces an inappropriate setting for long-term success. These prioritization decisions for Hesed House are incorporated as part of the community's larger prioritization process.

Leveraging Partnerships.

Describe how the project leverages mainstream resources to support client's immediate housing crisis. Provide project and community level examples.

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 who end up in street homeless situations. This means offering space for community services to be provided directly from the Hospitality Center, encouraging home visits of any resource that is willing, and encouraging direct connection within our shelters.

The pandemic has obviously presented extraordinary challenges to all agencies in continuing to provide support. Micah Ministries has gone to great lengths to ensure that in-person support services have continued wherever possible. Examples of how these mainstream resources continue to be incorporated into our daily operations include (but are not limited to):

- RACSB's mental health outreach worker (PATH), who works full-time from the Hospitality Center. PATH funds also provide partial funding for the Micah staff person who completes disability applications using the SOAR method.
 - Goodwill Industries partnership, which operates an on-site job help center, providing computers for job search and resume building services.
 - DMV brings a mobile van every other month to support people needing identification and/or vehicle registration services.
 - Germanna Community College's nursing students visit the Hospitality Center weekly, when school is in session, along with a doctor or Registered Nurse, to conduct wellness screenings.
- As the pandemic subsides, we also look forward to welcoming back other community partners, such as Dept. of Social Services, the Veteran's Administration, and probation, which had a presence at Micah before Covid-19 hit.

In addition, we have advocated for and look forward to the return of other resources, such as Social Services, the veteran's administration, and probation/parole who visited the Hospitality Center regularly before the pandemic. We are also working through a grant from DHCD to network and expand how health partnerships are more accessible and supportive of the unique context of our street homeless.

The Hospitality Center serves as the central hub for these and other mainstream resources, as well as the central hub for basic needs services like showers, bagged lunches, and mail pickup. Co-locating resources within the Hospitality Center, where our unsheltered neighbors are accustomed to finding services, helps to meet the various needs of participants as we seek to help them stabilize and find support to resolve the immediate housing crises.

All the services of the Micah Hospitality Center will be easily accessible to those enrolled in Hesus House, as well as dedicated case management support (funded by other sources) to help ensure these services remain accessible to those in hotel-shelter.

Service Availability. Are services available to the entire community? Include how the project ensures services for: 1. Households located in all areas of the CoC service area; 2. Singles/families, men/women, and the following harder to serve populations: sex offenders, large families, medically fragile, LGBTQ+, unaccompanied youth; 3. Households with accessibility concerns including language and mobility; 4. Households with limited or no personal phone or internet access.

As an organization accustomed to serving a high-barrier population, and committed to a Housing First approach, Micah seeks to provide services to the entire community. In fact, the more barriers a person faces, the more likely Micah's programs are to take them on. Vulnerability and time homeless, for example, is actually a pre-qualifier for who is identified for street case management.

This project in particular is designed to serve the particularly vulnerable who have become ineligible for accessing congregate shelter settings.

The Hospitality Center serves as a central location for those without access to phone or internet, providing a space for internet access and making necessary phone calls. For those participants who enter the Hospitality Center without access to a phone, this often means Micah staff assists the participant in making the initial phone call to the Coordinated Assessment line, and often provides space and time to wait for a return phone call, to ensure that Coordinated Assessment completes the screening to allow for enrollment.

Harder-to-serve populations, especially those with sex offenses in their history or who are medically fragile, are prioritized for case management services over less vulnerable or lower-barrier individuals, as their barriers require the additional case management support that fewer organizations are able to provide. This project will particularly seek to serve those with sex offenses in their criminal histories, as the nature of these offenses make them automatically ineligible for the local congregate shelter.

Housing First.

Describe in detail how your organization implements a Housing First approach. Include specific examples such as organizational or programmatic policies, procedures, guidelines, etc.

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, making Micah an organization that is built around Housing First principles, without precondition.

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 member of case management staff 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 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. In other words, the barriers assessment is intended as a tool to determine how to overcome and/or navigate the barriers presented, not as a tool to screen out any participant for a perceived lack of housing readiness.

Requirements for Assistance.

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).

All of Micah's programs have been historically low-barrier.

This is especially true for Micah's street outreach and street case management project, which will serve as the initial source from which participants will be prioritized for Hesed House. For example, the project does not breathalyze, drug test or have other limitations that prevent people from entering. The project prefers higher barriers and more vulnerabilities.

A significant portion of new participants in the street case management project enter without photo ID or other identification documents. Rather than this lack of documentation serving as a barrier to entry, participants are enrolled in the project and are then given assistance and support by case management staff in navigating the barriers so that they can obtain necessary identification documentation in order to secure housing.

Although the project is not targeted to 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. If families do present as unsheltered, Micah works to provide stop gap assistance and connect the household as soon as possible with other resources targeted toward families in our community.

This project in particular is built around assisting participants who have barriers to congregate shelter access a more appropriate non-congregate setting instead, in order to benefit from the stability that shelter provides. When congregate shelter spaces set requirements that bar participants from access, this project is intended to fill that gap and provide access to appropriate non-congregate shelter instead.

Length of Assistance.

How is the length of financial and/or supportive service provision for households in the project determined? How was this process determined?

Due to the nature of this project, the primary determination for continued enrollment is the availability and accessibility of affordable housing being obtained for participants. In the current iteration of this project being operated by pandemic funds, the average length of stay in the similar project has been 129 days. However, that relatively lengthy time period reflects a significant number of people enrolled in our hotel-shelter program, being assisted by case management staff that is not solely dedicated to the project.

If this project is funded, it will operate in a much smaller capacity (18-20 beds at a time, rather than the 40-50 beds we have been operating for the last year), and thus projected lengths of stay will be shorter. A reasonable goal for length of stay in this project, if funded in this capacity, will be 30-90 days, reflecting the difficulty of acquiring appropriate units in the housing market, and the high acuity of those enrolling in Hesed House.

Note that in the provided data sheet, the numbers provided reflect this significant volume in providing hotel-shelter rooms. Thus, the numbers provided there do not necessarily reflect the projected outcomes when running this project in a much smaller, more manageable capacity, with dedicated case management staffing.

Also note that the policies and procedures for the program referenced on the data sheet operates in a slightly different capacity than this proposed Hesed House program, so the comparison is not perfect. However, numbers are presented for informative purposes and to demonstrate the experience Micah Ministries has already gained in running a non-congregate emergency shelter program through hotels in the last two years.

Barriers to Services.

Are there any existing barriers in the community that would prevent a household from accessing services or permanent housing? What is the project doing to address these barriers?

One significant barrier that this project faces is the lack of affordable housing in our community. This reality does not reflect a barrier to entering the Hesed House project. It simply reflects the reality of longer times spent in the project before exiting to a housing program.

One of Micah Ministries' long-term goals is the establishment of a supportive, affordable housing community in our area. We are actively working towards the goal of building a community of small homes that will be supported by on-site case

management and volunteer support. We are continuing to advocate in our area for the funds, land, and zoning accommodations that would make this community possible, as a long-term solution for our chronically homeless neighbors.

Those targeted for inclusion in the Hesed House project may well be the population that will most benefit from the vision of an affordable housing community, built with the needs of the chronically homeless in mind, those from whom other support system (like congregate sheltering) have proved inadequate in the past.

Another barrier that often challenges Micah's ability to house and maintain individuals in independent apartments is the increasing acuity of those finding themselves in unsheltered situations. There are an increasing number of senior adults becoming homeless, as well, as those who do not yet meet the level of need for nursing home or assisted living but have in home care needs that exceed typical case management responsibilities. Such resources in this community are limited. In partnership With the CoC, Micah has been working to develop new avenues of support so that this group has increased access to support. One of the strategies includes a new grant from DHCD aimed at networking and incentivizing health partners to devise solutions around these needs.

As alluded to earlier in this application, this project seeks the highest-barrier and most vulnerable individuals. In fact, the more barriers a person faces, the more likely Micah's program is to take them on. Seeking out these high-barrier individuals for enrollment in the project, coupled with the reality of a very difficult housing market creates the reality of a project with longer-than-expected lengths of participation.

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)?

Micah has been using racial disparity data to effect change and prioritize services. While we are not aware of racial disparities in the provision or outcome of assistance we provide, we acknowledge that poverty and homelessness impact racial minority populations at higher rates, due to the far-reaching effect of systematic policies that limit access to economic and social equality for minority populations. Thus, strategies include monitoring race among those prioritized for services, recognizing this disproportionate impact.

The homeless population also has a higher rate of serious mental illness, substance abuse, and chronic illness. Organizations like Micah exist because of breakdowns in equality/inclusion in mainstream services. Everything we do, therefore, is about helping those left out, or for whom traditional support systems were not effective.

Micah has also advertised employment positions in networks of color and intentionally looked for qualified candidates of non-Caucasian races, in order to benefit from the perspectives of minority populations at the staff and leadership levels.

Project Staffing.

	New	Renewal	Expansion
1 Number of FTE Case Managers Dedicated to Project (could be fraction)	0	0	0

Caseload (ES)

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

1 Ideal Caseload for 1 FTE Case Manager	20
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2	Average Length of Stay for Project Participants	30-90 days
3	Shelter Beds for Households without Children (Shelter Operations Only)	20
4	Shelter Beds for Households with Children	0
5	Shelter Units for Households with Children	0

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?

This project will seek to add a full-time case management position, the Shelter Navigator, funded by local government grants. This position is currently unfilled, as we face the reality of dwindling pandemic resources and seek to reduce the number of non-congregate shelter beds we are currently supporting, in order to stretch pandemic resources farther. We are still awaiting the final decision of local government funding to determine when we will be ready to fill the position. Once funding decisions are announced, we will seek qualified case management staff to fill the position. The job description is attached to this application, although this request is not seeking funding to support that position.

The Shelter Navigator will operate under the supervision of the Hospitality Navigator. The Hospitality Navigator has a Bachelor's degree and many years of experience in nonprofit social services. She has been the primary case manager for the street homeless population at Micah for more than three years. At the current time, she is the staff member dedicated to case management at our hotel-shelter sites, and so is in a uniquely experienced position to provide supervision to the new Shelter Navigator based on her experience of the needs of those in hotel-shelter. The Hospitality Navigator is funded by VHSP for outreach work.

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?

Micah is governed by a 13-member Board of Directors, comprised of appointees of each of the nine founding churches. The Board of Directors currently contains members that include a property manager, an attorney, a realtor, a retired CIO for US Hud/Treasury, a public relations counselor, several members of the clergy, volunteers, and others, utilizing a vast array or relevant experience and knowledge. The Board follows a current Strategic Plan for the growth and success of the organization.

Micah has a full-time staff of 19, plus five part-time employees. 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. These written policies are followed and reviewed actively by our Board of Directors and particularly the Finance Committee of the Board. Our organization submits to an annual audit from an independent auditing agency and publishes our financial data, including yearly 990s, to our publicly-accessible website for transparency.

Although this is a new project application, the primary activities of this project are currently ongoing, as we utilize dwindling pandemic funding resources. We will have expended these resources by July 1, and will be prepared to continue providing assistance with this new VHSP funding source at that time.

Prior Experience.

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

Micah's target population has always been the street homeless, particularly those experiencing chronic homelessness, to include those who do not meet the exact HUD definition of "chronic homelessness" due to time spent in institutions, jails, and prisons.

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.

When Micah's housing program began, it was supported entirely by private dollars. Since beginning to receive federal and state grant funding to support housing programs, the capacity within Micah's housing programs have continued to grow.

Even as other members of our CoC have struggled to access federal funding, or have been forced to decrease their capacity due to the challenges posed by the pandemic, Micah Ministries has continued to grow and serve our population. With the benefit of CHERP funding (among other new funding sources), Micah's work has become bigger and more effective since the start of the pandemic. We continue to expend our grant funding year and year and remain on schedule with federal grant reporting each year.

Micah's experience in administering grant funds received from state and federal sources, as well as being a steward of private community grants and donations, has established us as a trusted nonprofit in our community.

Spending Rates.

| Yes

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

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

Project Policies and Procedures

PDF	1-Shelter Policies & Proc... (110 KiB download)
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Job Descriptions

PDF	10.19.Hotel Shelter Manag... (297 KiB download)
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FRCoC Data Sheet

XLSX

[FRCoC-Data-Form for COVID... \(18 KiB download\)](#)

Log in to gwregion.grantplatform.com to see complete application attachments.