

GEORGE WASHINGTON

REGIONAL COMMISSION

George Washington Regional Commission (2021)

29 Housing Location (VHSP)



BWvadZmD

Micah - Housing Location - HSNH FY23

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 | Renewal

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	0	75	0
2	Households with Children	0	25	0
3	Total	0	100	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.

Housing Location Budget

		New	Renewal	Expansion
1	Rapid Rehousing	0	US\$50,000.00	0
2	Targeted Prevention	0	0	0
3	Total	0	US\$50,000.00	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
1	Administration	0	0	0

Budget Narrative

Provide details for each line item requested.

The \$50,000 in the rapid rehousing line items funds staff costs for housing search and placement. Funds are used for services or activities designed to assist households in our CoC agencies in locating, obtaining, and retaining suitable housing.

Match

XLSX

[VHSPProposedMatch Micah H... \(29 KiB download\)](#)

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

This project also receives funding from the Housing Trust Fund Homeless Reduction Grant, in the rapid rehousing project category. This funding covers a portion of a second staff role involved in this project, namely the Housing Administrator, and additional administration costs.

Through partnership with CoC housing partners, the Agency on Aging, Rappahannock Goodwill Industries, and the Greater Fredericksburg Habitat for Humanity, Micah also funds a furniture bank. This partnership streamlines the move-in process, stocking newly housed neighbors with furniture and basic household items upon move-in. Volunteers heavily support this furniture bank effort. Micah also collects a significant amount of new items, in-kind, from the community to offer welcome home baskets to those transitioning into housing.

Project Scope.

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

The project seeking renewal funding is called the Stable Homes Partnership, representing a consolidated way for our CoC agencies to locate available housing.

The housing location process begins when households (families or individuals or roommate matches) are assigned in the community prioritization process, and staff at participating community agencies make a referral to the shared community housing locator. The locator meets with the individual or family to determine their geographic, space and financial needs, with a special focus on assessing the barriers to attaining housing, such a prior criminal history or poor credit. She then seeks out landlords with available units that may be willing to rent to them.

Building relationships with landlords and identifying new units is an ongoing process of outreach and connection. The locator will take clients to view apartments, negotiate with landlords, and lock in leases. After lease signing, the case goes back to the referring agency for ongoing case management. Furniture for newly housed households is available upon request through Micah's furniture bank.

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.

A shared housing locator remains crucial to community need, as it is a consolidated way for our COC to connect with landlords and available apartments. Having one locator on behalf of all rapid re-housing agencies allows us to speak with one voice and set of marketing materials. This cuts down on multiple agencies presenting mixed messages to a limited pool of landlords.

On average, the locator receives 13 referrals per month, which means approximately 156 households are placed every year. Especially as affordable, available units become more difficult to locate in a difficult housing market, the need for a dedicated Housing Locator who is able to maintain relationships with landlords to secure units quickly is a key part of the CoC's strategy to reduce the time that households spend in homelessness.

One of our goals for the coming year is to host more regular check ins with key points of contact at partner agencies, such as RACSB, Hope House Prevention Program, and Empowerhouse, who are involved in some of their own location work. One primary shared housing locator remains key to the Coc's strategy, but we are engaged in ongoing conversation among agencies regarding how to maximize the number of units located, by adding and coordinating housing location assistance across agencies.

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?

Referrals to the locator are made using a uniform Barrier's Assessment tool, which identifies each household's potential challenges to finding housing (i.e. evictions, income, criminal background, etc.). The locator then works with each household as part of a caseload. Based on severity of barriers, landlord appetite and available units, some may get housed more quickly while others take longer; but the locator continues to work with all situations until placed. Occasionally, priority is given to a participant who is encountering a tight deadline on signing a lease before a newly-obtained housing voucher expires. Exceptions may include times when the referring agency may rescind the referral. A client who refuses multiple viable options may also be referred back to the referring agency for additional support or consideration of other options. In all possible cases, however, the locator works with the household through lease signing.

Landlord Engagement. Describe how the project leverages partnerships within the homelessness response system and with local landlords. Describe the process for engaging and maintaining relationships with landlords.

All those entering the housing program are screened by the community's coordinated assessment system and prioritized through the local prioritization process. It is determined at prioritization meetings which agency is best suited to work with the individual and what supports will be needed. Referrals by the rapid re-housing agency are then made to the locator. The locator also identifies housing for veterans receiving section 8 vouchers. This past year, thanks to the release of mainstream housing vouchers to our community, the locator spent significant time locating appropriate units for those who received a housing voucher, and ensuring that lease signing occurred while individual vouchers were still eligible to be used. The locator is constantly networking with local landlords, sharing information about the program and convincing them to offer their units to people being rapidly re-housed. Strategies have included outreach events, landlord/property manager meetings, and attending eviction court. Workflow for maintaining these relationships includes regular check-ins with participating landlords to maintain a pulse on units coming available, challenges that may be occurring with previously placed household, and sharing information about placement needs we have. One of our goals for the coming year is to host more regular check ins with key points of contact at partner agencies, such as RACSB, Hope House Prevention Program, and Empowerhouse, who are involved in some of their own location assistance.

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 program is to take them on. Vulnerability and time homeless, for example, is part of our prioritization process.

The housing locator receives referrals from the prioritization process, after participants are enrolled for agency support, regardless of preconditions or prior difficulty in accessing housing. Part of the task of the housing locator is to find available, accessible units for those with particular needs, especially those with criminal history (i.e., sex offenders) that preclude them from some available housing. The locator is also tasked with finding accessible units for those who have accessibility concerns, seeking first-floor or single-story units for those with medical concerns that makes stairs difficult or impossible, for example. The task of the housing locator is to find appropriate units for all referred households, regardless of barriers.

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 at each agency begins housing-focused case management that continues after move in.

Based on information gathered from this strength-based, trauma informed tools, case managers 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.

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 being referred to the Stable Homes Partnership for housing location support. It simply reflects the reality of the difficult housing market.

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.

The existence of the shared housing locator position itself is an ongoing attempt to address the barrier of the difficult housing market. With a dedicated locator whose primary role is to forge and maintain relationships with landlords willing and able to rent to our participants, we have the advantage of contact from landlords when appropriate units are about to become available. Building on these relationships further is a key part of the housing locator position.

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.

Staffing - HL

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

1	Number of FTE Housing Locators Dedicated to	1
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Project (could be fraction)

2	Ideal Caseload for 1 FTE Housing Locator	13
3	Average Length of Stay for Project Participants	30-90 days

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?

The Stable Homes Partnership is supported by two full time employees, funded between VHSP and Virginia’s Housing Trust grant. The full-time employee funded by this application is the housing locator. The other full-time position, the housing administrator, is funded by the Housing Trust Fund Homeless Reduction Grant. Under the Micah umbrella, these two employees function as part of our housing team, which currently includes a working supervisor, four full-time rapid rehousing case managers and three full-time permanent supportive housing case managers. The location staff serves the entire system of rapid re-housing providers. The position funded by VHSP is the primary real estate agent for those being placed, while the housing administrator position under Housing Trust Fund is an administrative support role and handles the office work associated with housing location. Qualifications for the team include real estate experiences, technology expertise and familiarity with the MRIS system. At the current time, the housing locator position is vacant, as the previous housing locator left Micah employment in January to pursue a new position elsewhere. The housing administrator is currently doing location work to fill the gap, while Micah actively seeks a qualified housing locator.

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.

The activities of this project are established and ongoing, and we will be prepared to administer awarded funds in the upcoming fiscal year as well.

Prior Experience.

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

Micah was founded in 2005 by a group of churches whose history with the homeless population extends back to the 1980s. These churches had been serving the needs of the homeless population as individual congregations, and decided to make the most meaningful and effective change by coming together to form Micah Ministries.

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	2022-Housing Policy w Loc... (563 KiB download)
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Job Descriptions

PDF	6.17 Housing Locator.pdf (460 KiB download)
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FRCoC Data Sheet

XLSX	FRCoC-Data-Form for Micah... (18 KiB download)
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Log in to gwregion.grantplatform.com to see complete application attachments.