

GEORGE WASHINGTON

REGIONAL COMMISSION

George Washington Regional Commission (2021)

30 Rapid Re-housing (VHSP)

Micah - RRH VHSP - HSNH FY23



gVLEAjQR

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 with Expansion

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	100	0
2	Households with Children	0	0	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.

Rapid Rehousing Budget

		New	Renewal Amount	Expansion Amount
1	Housing Search and Placement	0	0	0
2	Housing Stabilization Case Management	0	US\$114,000.00	US\$17,500.00
3	Housing Stabilization Financial Assistance	0	US\$20,000.00	0
4	Housing Stabilization Services	0	0	0
5	Rent Arrears	0	0	0
6	Rent Assistance	0	US\$88,834.00	US\$8,724.00
7	Services Location Costs	0	0	0
8	Veteran Housing Stabilization Financial Assistance	0	0	0
9	Veteran Rent Arrears	0	0	0
10	Veteran Rent Assistance	0	0	0
11	Total	0	US\$222,834.00	US\$26,224.00

HMIS Budget

		New Amount	Renewal Amount	Expansion Amount
1	Computer Costs	0	0	0

2	Fees and Licenses	0	US\$2,881.00	US\$2,260.00
3	HMIS Staffing	0	US\$4,000.00	US\$3,311.00
4	Training	0	0	0
5	Total	0	US\$6,881.00	US\$5,571.00

Administration Budget

		New Amount	Renewal Amount	Expansion Amount
1	Administration	0	US\$2,500.00	US\$9,952.00

Budget Narrative

Provide details for each line item requested.

Housing Stabilization Case Management budget line (\$114,000) supports 1.75 full-time case managers, plus half of the supervisor's time on this project. Case management and supervisory tasks include conducting initial assessments, facilitating access to mainstream services, developing housing-focused case management plans, monitoring and evaluating participant progress in the program, and other tasks. This is renewal funding.

Housing Stabilization financial assistance (\$20,000) budget line supports security and utility deposits, utility payments, application fees, etc. This is renewal funding.

Rent assistance budget line (\$88,834) goes towards needs-based rent assistance, determined for each individual project participant when housing plans are made. This is renewal funding.

Expansion funding of \$17,500 is requested for case management and \$8,724 for rent assistance. This will take us back to the pre-pandemic award for Rapid re-housing and absorb part of what CHERP will no longer be available to fund after September 2022.

Renewal and expansion funding is sought in HMIS budget. Renewal funding of \$6,881 for fees/licenses and staff, paired with expansion funding of an additional \$5,571, for a total of \$12,452 in the fees and licenses cost for HMIS is requested.

Renewal and expansion funding is sought in administration line item. Renewal cost of \$2500, with an additional \$9,952 in expansion funding, is sought for a total of \$12,452 in administration budget line.

Match



Other Funding Sources

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

The rapid rehousing project at Micah receives funding from several federal and state sources. In addition to this VHSP project, the Housing Locator dedicated to the Micah Housing Team is funded through a VHSP grant.

Micah also receives RRH funding from the Housing Trust Fund Homeless Reduction Grant in the amount of \$92,700, funding RRH case management, a support staff position for housing location tasks, and some administrative costs.

In the last two years, this project has also been supported by CHERP funding. Since April 2020, this project has been supplemented by a more than \$697,456 in RRH funds through CHERP.

Project Scope.

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

Micah's rapid re-housing program focuses on the highest barrier, most vulnerable individuals as determined by the Fredericksburg Regional CoC's prioritization process. The entire team includes a working supervisor, four full-time rapid rehousing case managers and three permanent supportive housing case managers. Each case manager typically manages a caseload of approximately 15 to 20 people.

The supervisor's time is split between RRH, PSH, and income development, (the latter two of which are not funded by this grant). The supervisor also oversees the housing locator, who serves or assists the entire system of providers under VHSP.

Once people are assigned in the community process, staff evaluates whether a roommate match is needed or desired for sustainability. Following that, the barriers assessment and pledge letter is completed and forwarded to the community housing locator.

The locator meets with the individual or pair to determine their geographic, space and financial needs. She then seeks out landlords that may be willing to rent to them. The process works similarly for other partners funded under VHSP who make referrals, as well. 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.

Micah's housing staff begins the orientation process with new clients even before housing is located for them. Micah's case managers help their clients before move-in in a number of ways, including understanding program expectations, setting goals, working on income development, etc. By the time participants move into their unit, staff generally has a good idea of how much support is needed, and where staff needs to focus their time and resources for each client.

Home visits and check-ins often begin with a high level of frequency, usually once a week. These check-ins often decrease as a client increases in stability and self-sufficiency. Visits may include transportation to appointments, setting up needed services in the community, or problem-solving various life and household issues.

Because many of the community's most vulnerable have spent a long time on the street, it often takes some time to teach them how to live indoors again. Many people need time to heal from the trauma of long-term displacement, re-establish social supports, build up their worthiness, be reminded of how to maintain a home, and how to co-exist in close proximity to neighbors. Case management staff takes the time to build relationships with each participant, help them make connections to mainstream services, help mitigate issues between tenants and landlords, and provide other supportive services to help each participant attain stability, before participants graduate from the project into independence or "time out" of support after two years.

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.

Renewal funding for Micah's rapid rehousing program includes 1.5 full-time RRH case managers and .5 for the portion of the supervisor's time devoted to this project. The remaining balance is for rent and financial assistance.

Micah's RRH program is crucial to community need, as it is currently the only dedicated resource for individuals, rather than families. Because our priority is for those with the highest barriers, our caseloads average about 15-20 per case manager, and often require secondary support from the program supervisor and other members of the staff.

Due to the intensive case management provided by full-time staff and supervisory staff, Micah's RRH project experiences largely positive outcomes. In FY21, of the 39 participants enrolled in the program, 20 exited. Of these 20 exits, 15 exited to positive housing destinations, with only one exiting to homelessness. Importantly, of those 15 participants with positive destinations, none have returned to homelessness since exit, to date. Many of the participants remain a part of Micah's larger community of support, occasionally visiting the Day Center, frequenting community meals pick-up locations, attending

the Micah Job Club gatherings, or attending Micah Street Church for fellowship and community, so none have returned to homelessness. The intensive case management provided by Micah's programs, and the unique wrap-around community that Micah provides, makes this many positive outcomes possible even when working with a particularly vulnerable, high-needs population.

With this renewal funding, we estimate roughly 35 people will be supported in the grant period, with similar positive outcomes expected.

It is worth noting, at this point in time, we are slightly behind schedule on expending state VHSP funds for this project for the grant year. We are confident that we will expend the grant funding without issue; the reason for this anomaly is due to our need to expend the federal funding for RRH first, and the additional CHERP funding designated toward the RRH project. This CHERP funding is temporary and does not indicate a lack of need for these VHSP RRH funds. We will expend the state funds allotted for FY21 before the grant period is over. This grant year is similar to last in terms of where we are with expenditures.

Expansion funding is requested in the area of HMIS costs and administration. The housing team at Micah Ministries has grown significantly in the past two years, due in part to CHERP funding and additional funding added from the Housing Trust Fund for both RRH and PSH projects. Just since this time in 2020, the housing team has added an additional two full-time RRH case managers and an additional full-time PSH case manager. This additional capacity within our housing team comes with a corresponding administrative workload and increased need for HMIS licenses and staffing, prompting us to request expansion funding up to the allotted allowable five percent in both categories.

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.

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 needing assistance. 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 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 we emerge from the pandemic, Micah also looks forward to re-engaging services, such as Social Services, the VA, and Probation, which had onsite presence prior to Covid-19.

Participants enrolled in our housing projects benefit from these resources available through the Day Center, as virtually every participant who is prioritized for housing enrolls first through Street Case Management project, centered around the Hospitality Center. Micah's wrap-around support services continue once the participant enrolls in a housing project, providing the case management to make connections to other programs and resources. Case managers generally walk program participants through the process of connecting to community resources either through a warm handoff or direct connection, rather than handing out referral lists and phone numbers.

Many of the services and supports that clients need are built into Micah's fabric. Basic needs, income support, health care connections, housing stabilization, educational support, income development and social/spiritual support all exist under the Micah umbrella. Of particular benefit to the housing stabilization program is Micah's income development effort, which not only helps people access disability applications through the SOAR process, it helps people access jobs and explore entrepreneurship, where they can earn non-traditional income through a craft or skill. 69% of those enrolled in this project in the previous grant year maintained or increased their income thanks to this income development program.

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.

Once housing has been located and participants have been into an appropriate unit, part of the task of a case manager is to help each participants overcome specific barriers that have prevented them from being stable in housing previously. This often involves seeking medical treatment and management for chronic health conditions, seeking and continuing to access appropriate treatment for mental health concerns, accessing free phones or discounted internet connections through government programs, and seeking to overcome other barriers that have left participants vulnerable to homelessness in the past.

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, the two projects that feed the prioritization for those entering this RRH housing project.

For example, this 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 enrolling with Micah Ministries projects enter without photo ID or other identification documents. Rather than this lack of documentation serving as a barrier to entry, participants are enrolled in an outreach 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 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.

Micah Ministries makes serving high-barrier, high-vulnerability individuals a priority across all of our programs, taking care to not create any requirements that would prove burdensome to the population we serve.

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?

The recertification process is the primary way that the length of financial assistance and case management assistance is determined for this project. Upon entering the housing project, participants meet with supervisory staff to determine the needs-based levels of financial assistance required, in order to obtain and maintain housing in the short term. Rent assistance is determined on a month-by-month basis with project participants and case management staff, with the goal of financial independence as quickly as possible. As such, connection with income development services is a primary goal of case management, in order to help participants transition away from receiving financial assistance as quickly as reasonably possible.

For the previous grant year, the average length of stay in this project before exiting was 386 days. In accordance with VHSP requirements, no household may receive more than 24 months of rent assistance during any three-year period. On occasion that a person requires more than 24 months of assistance, Micah works to transition that person to other programs, including permanent supportive housing, assisted living or voucher programs.

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 (and all Micah projects) faces is the lack of affordable housing in our community. This reality does not reflect a barrier to entering a Micah project. It simply reflects the reality of longer times spent in the project before affordable housing unit can be obtained.

At times, this has meant that participants enroll in the RRH project in order to receive case management services several months before an appropriate housing unit can be located. Thus, the two-year time limit for case management services begins before rent assistance begins, effectively limiting the amount of time that project participants can receive rent assistance.

In spite of this reality, the project outcomes remain overwhelmingly positive, reflecting the strength of Micah's wrap-around case management support services, even in circumstances where rent assistance is not received for the full two years.

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.

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	0	2.25	.25

to Project (could be fraction)

Caseload.

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	15-20
2	Average Length of Stay for Project Participants	386 days
3	Average Financial Assistance Cost per Household	\$2,941

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 team includes a full-time working supervisor, four full-time rapid rehousing case managers and three permanent supportive housing case managers. Each case manager typically manages a caseload of approximately 15 to 20 people, with some variation between RRH case managers and PSH case managers.

The supervisor's time is split between rapid-rehousing and permanent supportive housing and income development, (the latter two of which are not funded by this grant). A housing locator, who serves the entire system of rapid re-housing providers, also works closely with this program and is funded by VHSP.

Qualifications for the team include psychology, social work and sociology degrees, and a registered nurse. The only positions that routinely work on multiple projects are the working supervisor (called the Home Development Leader) who oversees both the rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing part of the program, and one of the case managers, whose time 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 exclusively on supportive housing are funded by resources from HUD's CoC grant and Housing Trust.

The varied sources that fund the housing team at Micah have helped the team to grow to meet the need and serve our population to best achieve positive outcomes.

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 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

[2022-Housing Policy.pdf \(214 KiB download\)](#)

Job Descriptions

PDF

[two housing job descripti... \(343 KiB download\)](#)

FRCoC Data Sheet

XLSX

[Copy of file-3.xlsx \(19 KiB download\)](#)

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