

GEORGE WASHINGTON

REGIONAL COMMISSION

George Washington Regional Commission (2021)

31 Street Outreach (VHSP)

Micah - Street Outreach VHSP - HSNH FY23



rzPywEIM

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.

Street Outreach Budget

| | | New | Renewal Amount | Expansion Amount |
|---|--------------------------|-----|----------------|------------------|
| 1 | Case Management | 0 | US\$26,224.00 | 0 |
| 2 | Limited Support Services | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | Total | 0 | US\$26,224.00 | 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 | US\$1,311.00 |

Budget Narrative

Provide details for each line item requested.

This project requests renewal funding of \$26,224 in case management costs to support the primary staff member overseeing this project, the Hospitality Navigator.

The request for expansion comes from seeking expanded administrative costs. Previously this project has not received any administration expenses.

Match

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

This project is currently supplemented by CHERP funding and funds from our local CoC project (GRWC Unsheltered Homeless). Also PATH support through contracted local CSB mental health outreach worker. Historically, this project has relied on only private funds. As we transition out of the pandemic, access to funding for these activities will determine additional resources that need to be raised from private sources. The advantage of having this project funded at least partially by VHSP is that it allows funds raised to be poured into other support services and direct assistance that cares for this population rather than staffing.

Project Scope.

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

Micah's street outreach is a close complement to CoC-sponsored diversion and housing efforts. The program's 1.5 staff members, with support from a mental health outreach worker from the local CSB, work to assist newer and less vulnerable homeless persons in implementing self-resolutions, pursuing alternatives and accessing shelter as a last resort. More intensive support is offered as options are ruled out. The end goal of street outreach efforts is to minimize the number of people sleeping on the street and lay the groundwork for housing stabilization, through rapid rehousing or permanent supportive housing, when other options cannot be identified. Both levels of support focus on engaging and supporting the highest barrier, most vulnerable individuals on the street prior to their placement in permanent housing.

Everyone who accesses Micah's Hospitality Center and identifies as living on the street is captured in an overarching street outreach program. At this stage, the street outreach case manager (Hospitality Navigator) and a support staff member (Intake Manager) play a crucial advocacy role for vulnerable homeless individuals seeking access to the coordinated assessment and shelter system. Staff will also visit, upon request, those who are identified in the community as living in places not meant for human habitation but not frequenting the Hospitality Center. These individuals are also looped into the street outreach process so that they may be prioritized for housing resources. We are in the process of building a more proactive outreach effort, largely staffed by a coordinated team of trained volunteers, who will make regular visits to known camping areas and will be equipped to provide outreach work when new individuals are identified in the community.

The continued need for street outreach support for each individual is monitored through visits to the Hospitality Center and contacts in the community. A list of individuals receiving street outreach, ranked by vulnerability data (VI-SPDAT, episodes, disability, time spent homeless, etc.) is then reviewed monthly to determine enrollments in the more targeted street case management (SCM) program. Once enrolled in SCM, participants show up on the community prioritization list, where they can be assigned for housing placement.

The Hospitality Navigator works intensively with those newly enrolled in SCM, usually 25-35 people at a time. (Total enrollment hovers at 45-50.)

Once enrolled, the Intake Manager completes documentation of chronic homelessness (if applicable) and begins to identify the best housing intervention. The Hospitality Navigator then begins to establish goals with individuals and connects them to the supports they will need to eventually sustain housing (i.e., income, health care, identification, etc.) The Hospitality Navigator supports the housing team in their efforts to identify and secure sustainable housing, then turns over the case to a housing case manager once housed.

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 will be crucial to allow Micah to continue dedicating staff to street outreach, which has become increasingly important in the effort to move everyone off the street, and help people who are literally homeless to navigate the CoC

coordinated assessment system.

The extraordinary circumstances created by COVID-19 continue to provide challenges and opportunities. With the vast majority of our literally homeless population temporarily finding shelter in hotel rooms due to community COVID response, the last fiscal year found participants remaining enrolled in SCM for longer than in the previous year. This increased length of stay in the project is primarily due to difficulty in attaining appropriate available housing, given the ongoing shortage of affordable housing in the community. As participants remain in the project for longer lengths of stay, the need for case management services increases. Renewal funding allows the staff required for appropriate case management to remain stable, providing appropriate stabilization services while housing solutions are sought.

The expansion funding sought in the form of administrative costs reflects the reality that participants remain enrolled in the project for longer time periods. The administrative funding will allow the Intake Manager and administrative staff to spend more time on administrative work, documentation of housing plans, and prioritization, freeing up the Hospitality Navigator to continue meeting these vulnerable individuals where they are. In particular, the Hospitality Navigator spends substantial time out of the Hospitality Center, traveling to hotels where the COVID funds have sheltered many of our participants. Having increased administrative support will continue to allow this position to be focused on the relational side of case management.

Without continued resources for street outreach and street case management, we would be unable to maintain the necessary advocacy for this high-barrier group, and we would be unable to dedicate enough time to make this advocacy successful and productive. Data indicates that a lack of advocacy for this population will mean less connection with coordinated assessment, fewer shelter entries from those literally on the street, and higher numbers living in places not mean for human habitation.

The population enrolled in this project continues to reflect some of the most vulnerable and highest-need in our community. In the first half of FY22, SCM has served 84 participants. Of these 84, 49 report a mental health disorder, 20 report drug and/or alcohol use disorders, 34 report chronic health conditions, and 29 report physical or developmental disabilities. Renewal and expansion funding to support the complex needs of these high-barrier individuals is crucial to connecting them to long-term stabilization support. The success of those on the street or in emergency hotel-shelter is dependent on available staffing to advocate and make connections.

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?

Street Outreach is, by default, its own form of prioritization. There is no better way to measure vulnerability and risk of homelessness than active presence with those who end up sleeping literally outside.

Outreach through Micah is two-fold:

1) In-reach, through the Hospitality Center, gives those who end up displaced an easy connection point. Micah's long-standing reputation with community partners and those living in places not meant for human habitation has made it a place that many send people for help. 2) Community referrals and outreach: The community also sees Micah as a place they can call when they encounter persons who may not be connected. Micah's outreach team then seeks out those individuals to make sure they know the resources and have the relationships necessary to connect.

As people are engaged in Street Outreach, Micah moves those whose vulnerabilities require targeted assistance to a more intensive project with a dedicated case manager. As part of that project, individuals show up on a community prioritization list, which considers VI-SPDAT score, episodes, disability, and consecutive time homeless as measures of vulnerability. Using

this methodology as a guide, households are assigned to a housing intervention at monthly meetings of system planning partners.

This project also seeks to expand upon a nascent volunteer outreach team, to better provide direct outreach to those who are staying in places not meant for human habitation, but who have not yet accessed the Hospitality Center for services and support. This volunteer team will respond to referrals received from the CoC and larger community, to provide outreach to those who do not seek services on their own.

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.

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.

Micah case management and administrative staff has been successful in the past year in assisting qualified participants to obtain mainstream housing vouchers. In the first half of FY22, 10 participants enrolled in SCM obtained an Emergency Housing Voucher or Housing Choice Voucher with the support and advocacy work of Micah staff. As part of our targeted case management efforts with unhoused neighbors, we also make active referrals and advocate for people to be housed through other programs, such as Rappahannock Area Community Services Board and Veteran's Programs.

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. Even when people are identified as unsheltered in rural Caroline or King George, we will make efforts to find and outreach those individuals. The more barriers a person faces, the more likely Micah's program is to take them on. Vulnerability and time homeless, for example, is actually a pre-qualifier for who is identified for street case management.

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 that allows access to shelter.

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 and resource navigation that fewer organizations are able to provide. In general, Micah seeks to meet neighbors where they are, geographically or otherwise, work through limitations and build relationships necessary to get them back into housing.

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 neighbors 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. 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.

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?

This project does not have a maximum length of time for which supportive services can be accessed. Especially for the chronically homeless in our community and those with significant mental health needs, Micah recognizes that street outreach services need to be available to participants based on establishing trust and comfort, not a pre-established timeline. Historically, some of our participants have taken years of relationship-building before they have been willing to accept a supportive housing plan.

In prior years, the street case management project has operated under a goal of working with a newly-enrolled participants and exiting them into a housing program within 90 days. In the last grant year, that timeline has extended to an average of more than 200 days before being able to successfully exit into a Micah housing program. This reality is a result of both the opportunity to care for people in a stable place, hotel shelter, and the lack of available, affordable units in a competitive market into which they could be transitioned. It remains Micah's philosophy not to exit an individual simply due to a lack of available units or time in the program, but to continue to provide supportive services until appropriate units can be found and obtained for our participants.

In general, the Micah team engages and re-engages with people as long and as often as necessary. Neighbors often develop supportive relationships with the street outreach team and may continue to lean on them for specific things long after they have transitioned into housing.

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?

As alluded to elsewhere in this application, 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 street outreach and/or street case management projects. 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.

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 | | .65 | |
| Number of FTE Case Managers Dedicated to Project (could be fraction) | | | |

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 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. The Intake Manager also has a Bachelor's Degree as well as lived homeless experience. She is currently working to become a certified peer specialist.

She is supervised by Micah's Community Care Leader, who also manages the Residential Recovery Program and Cold Weather Shelter operations, which have been run out of hotel-shelter for the last two winters due to the impact of COVID-19. (The Community Care Leader is not funded by this VHSP project.) She has a Bachelor's Degree in Human Services.

The Hospitality Navigator has seen some evolution in her responsibility and her primary location for providing services in the last two years due to COVID and the emergency funding provided as a result of the pandemic. Rather than the Hospitality Center being her main location, she now spends significant time at the hotels that Micah utilizes as hotel-shelter, working directly with those enrolled in SCM at the satellite Micah hotel office.

Due to the reality of the housing market and the increased average length of participation in the project, the Hospitality Navigator now has an average of 45-50 participants enrolled in SCM and receiving case management services at any given time.

As her work with those on the street and in hotel-shelter is not as intense as housing case management, she is able to manage this increased workload.

The Intake Manager, located at the Hospitality Center, provides the staff support needed at the Hospitality Center, allowing the Hospitality Navigator to provide the relational case management needed to help our most vulnerable homeless navigate the CoC system.

This new reality of more participants enrolled at any given time reflects the need for the expansion portion of this grant, in increased administrative funding.

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 of 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 they 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. Since then, 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 COVID-19, 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-Neighbor Engagement Pro... (154 KiB download) |
|-----|---|

Job Descriptions

| | |
|-----|---|
| PDF | Two job descriptions.pdf (403 KiB download) |
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FRCoC Data Sheet

| | |
|------|--|
| XLSX | FRCoC-Data-Form for Micah... (20 KiB download) |
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Log in to gwregion.grantplatform.com to see complete application attachments.