

## *Lead Agency Proposal for Doorways of NWFL*

### RFP Questions:

- **Agency capacity** (2-3 pages). Briefly describe the agency's (1) ability to provide organizational support to a large and diverse group of community stakeholders; (2) experience with state and federal grant management and reporting; (3) ability to organize large groups of volunteers to conduct community-wide outreach; and (4) experience with program monitoring and evaluation for highly regulated grants.

*Answer: Pages 2 & 3*

- **Agency budget and budget narrative** (3-4 pages). Provide a brief but complete line-item revenue and expense budget. The expense budget must include all projected expenditures, and provide a narrative explanation for each line item of projected expenditures. The budget section is used to ensure that applicants have the fiscal capacity to support the duties and responsibilities of the CoC Lead Agency and can absorb any shortfall should certain funding not be renewed (i.e. Florida Coalition for the Homeless funding). A budget will be approved and if there are any unexpected deviations of more than 10% of the budget, the Agency will bring this to the attention of the CoC Executive Committee as soon as the Agency is aware of the potential issue.

*Answer: Page 4*

- **Project narrative** (2-3 pages). Provide a concise narrative that clearly describes how the agency plans to support each of the major priorities listed in CoC Lead Agency Requirements section above.

*Answer: Pages 5-7*

- **IRS letter, 990 and Audit Reports.** Provide the previous three years 990 IRS filing report and the Audit reports for the past two years. If the Agency receives \$500,000 or more in federal funds, the last two OMB-133 Audit reports are required

*Attached following proposal*

## Agency Capacity

Doorways of NWFL is a registered 501 C (3) organization that is working to end homelessness in NWFL – Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson and Washington counties. Our mission is as follows:

Doorways of Northwest Florida connects the community with available resources, works cooperatively to develop strategies that fill unmet needs, collaborates with agencies to submit grant proposals, and develops projects with the goal of preventing and ending homelessness.

In 1987, our organization was founded as the Homeless and Hunger Coalition of NWFL (HHCNWFL) and consisted of dedicated and passionate Board members who carried out the work of ending homelessness. This work included advocating for extremely low income families and individuals struggling to maintain housing and informing the community about the harsh realities of homelessness and near homelessness. The face of homelessness has changed over the years and it continues to change. Many families are one major illness, major disaster, or temporary loss of employment away from being homeless. In the NWFL area, there are approximately 1400 students identified as homeless who are enrolled in our schools. We are committed to identifying best practices, appropriate resources and solutions to end homelessness for all our residents. Recently, we signed a letter opposing the Gulf Power proposed increase which would disproportionately negatively impact extremely low and low income households, many of whom are elderly and/or are on fixed incomes. Advocacy such as this helps make our voice heard in the community and begins building the foundation needed to prevent homelessness.

Since the founding of HHCNWFL, there has been more and more attention given to the large number of homeless not only in NWFL, but across the country. As a result of this attention, one important piece of legislature was passed. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) created the HUD Continuum of Care Program (CoC), which is administered through the State of Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). This legislature is titled the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. In response to this legislative action, the resulting CoC Program allows organizations across the country to be designated as a CoC Lead Agency and receive funding for its important work of ending homelessness. To put the scope of this major accomplishment into perspective, there are 27 Lead Agency organizations in the state of Florida alone. Additionally, each day 1,000 people over the age of 60 relocate to Florida. In most cases, there are several years before these individuals are able to collect social security and Medicare, which means that if they are not set up with savings, these people may be added to the ranks of homeless individuals. In our CoC, we have approximately 25% of the homeless that fall into the 60 and over category.

As the current CoC Program Lead Agency, HHCNWFL underwent a recent rebranding and is now doing business as Doorways of Northwest Florida, which better illustrates our work in the field of housing and coordination of resources so that no client reaches a “wrong door” for entry into the CoC service delivery system. Due to the CoC funding that we receive, we were able to add 2 full time staff and one ¾ time Coordinated Entry (CE) Specialist this past year. This financial support allows us to exist solely to facilitate/coordinate services, oversee grant deliverables & services, and administer funding benefiting local CoC agencies. These local agencies identify homeless households and either rapidly re-house them or prevent homelessness. Case Management is provided in all instances. Doorways does not provide direct services other than coordinated referrals to those agencies that can assist them. In fiscal year 2015/16, a total of 13,703 family households and 5,203 single households received services through the NWFL CoC. We are able to track these

services through the use of NWFL's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). HMIS is a shared database and referral system utilized by 75 individual license holders in the CoC who represent agencies that serve homeless and near homeless families. Doorways, as part of its Lead Agency role, manages HMIS and provides education/training for the community on its use, best practices, and confidentiality of client information. HMIS also assists in the facilitation of our Housing Referral Program.

In addition to these core tenets, along with community stakeholders and our Governance Board, we launch an annual CoC wide Point in Time count (PIT). Each year, we conduct the PIT count during the last week of January. PIT is a community based activity where we attempt to complete and collect surveys from individuals facing homelessness. This year we managed a team of 54 volunteers who conducted surveys and "pounded the pavement" in search of homeless individuals. We also coordinate, assemble and distribute care packages at local PIT events where surveys are taken. In the 2016 PIT count, we identified 310 sheltered (emergency or transitional shelters) and unsheltered individuals with the following demographic:

- 182 males and 128 females
- 39 veterans
- 127 of the overall number reported a disabling condition
- 65 of the 127 self-reported a mental disability
- 128 of the overall number reported that they were homeless for over 1 year

The survey helps us identify the largest gaps in services and helps us focus on potential area resources to fill those gaps and put in place long-term solutions. In addition to service Providers in each county helping to complete surveys with their clients, we also hosted local events in each county to bring attention to the importance of the survey and to capture the most accurate count. The 2017 PIT survey results are in the process of being compiled and analyzed. The results for this most recent count will be available in March. Worth noting, is the fact that for the first time this past year, we had participation from all six of our counties, and key relationships and fundamental groundwork are in place for future PIT counts.

One other important aspect of the work we do as required by HUD and for CoC planning purposes, is to the conduct the annual Housing Inventory Count (HIC). During HIC we count the number of beds that were occupied in shelters, transitional shelters/housing, facilities (such as mental health, substance abuse, and corrections) on the night of the PIT count. This information assists us in understanding our utilization rates for these services and identifies any gaps or excess capacity during that point in time. Additionally, once per year we also file the Annual Housing Assessment Report (AHAR), which captures bed utilization on four points in time, one of which is the night of the PIT count, and three other dates selected by HUD. This gives us a score for how well we use the existing emergency beds and which demographic populations use these beds over the course of a year.

## Agency Budget and Narrative

The following budget depicts the funding that is received for administrative functions related to Lead Agency requirements. These requirements include outreach, training, CoC meetings, provider monitoring, monthly invoicing, advocacy, and housing referrals. Although in this fiscal year we received over \$450,000.00 in revenues, due to the high need for services in this community, we pass approximately \$350,000.00 of these revenues directly through to Providers in the continuum in the form of sub-grants for Emergency Solutions (ESG), Temporary Assistance of Needy Families (TANF), and Challenge grants for homeless assistance, homeless prevention, street outreach, case management, emergency shelter/services, and enrollment in mainstream benefits.

**Doorways of Northwest Florida  
Budget FY July 2016 - June 2017**

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Revenue</b>	
<b>4000 Contributions Income</b>	
4010 Restricted	5,000.00
4015 Unrestricted	8,240.00
	\$
<b>Total 4000 Contributions Income</b>	<b>13,240.00</b>
<b>4300 Grants</b>	
4305 Admin Fee	23,577.00
4310 DCF	104,171.00
4315 HUD	42,948.00
	\$
<b>Total 4300 Grants</b>	<b>170,696.00</b>
<b>4400 HMIS</b>	
4405 User Fees	1,080.00
	\$
<b>Total 4400 HMIS</b>	<b>1,080.00</b>
	\$
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>185,016.00</b>
	\$
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>185,016.00</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>	
<b>5000 General and Administrative Expenses</b>	
	\$
<b>Total 5000 General Coalition</b>	<b>48,550.00</b>
<b>5200 Employee Payroll Expense</b>	
	\$
<b>Total 5200 Employee Payroll Expense</b>	<b>93,482.00</b>
5280 Contract Labor	2,119.00
5400 HMIS Expense	
	\$
<b>Total 5400 HMIS Expense</b>	<b>21,550.00</b>
	\$
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>165,701.00</b>
	\$
<b>Net Operating Revenue</b>	<b>19,315.00</b>
	\$
<b>Net Revenue</b>	<b>19,315.00</b>

## Project Narrative

Should we again be designated as the CoC Lead Agency, Doorways will continue to plan, set priorities, recruit community stakeholders, research and promote best practices, educate and share relevant information with the over 70 agencies and hundreds of individuals that comprise the CoC. Our goal is to increase CoC membership by 5% over each of the next three years. The more Providers and community stakeholders who participate in the CoC activates, the better informed we are as a community on implementing solutions to end homelessness. Doorways is governed by both a Board of Directors and a CoC Governance Board. Each Board consist of community stakeholders who guide the work of our organization. The Doorways Board of Directors oversees our work as fiscal agent and grants administrator for the CoC. The Governance Board is responsible for overseeing the scoring and ranking of all CoC projects as well as the creation and implantation of the annual CoC Plan which addresses gaps in service and provides a framework for filling and prioritizing them.

Each year we as a CoC are required to submit a proposal to HUD on which we are scored on our ability to meet the objectives of the CoC Program. This past year we saw an increase of 3 points on our score over the previous year. We have identified specific activities that will help increase our score in the next CoC Competition. Following are identified as top priority for the remainder of this year:

- Further integration in community planning with the SHIP/CDBG provider;
- inclusion of the VA in our HMIS/CE system- earlier this month we trained VA case managers on HMIS and going forward we will be able to include the 60 HUD VASH vouchers that are being utilizing by homeless veterans to obtain housing on our HUD application for the first time in the next competition;
- increased monitoring of HUD performance standards by Providers – this is a new HUD requirement, so additional training in the community is needed to increase knowledge by Providers of these standards;
- in conjunction with the Governance Board, utilization of a more robust scoring matrix for CoC funded projects;
- enforce stricter reporting by Providers for AHAR and HIC data by meeting with Providers quarterly to ensure that HMIS is reflecting the accurate number and type of beds (family, youth, individual, etc.), and,
- increased diversionary solutions and planning for those entering/leaving facilities (jail, mental health, ER, substance abuse, etc.). The 2017 PIT marks the first year that the Sherriff's Office participated in the count by adding those in jail who are known as homeless in their system to our PIT count. This helps us plan for appropriate solutions as people are released so that they have viable alternatives other than recidivism.

In FY 2015/16, we were awarded a TANF grant in the amount of \$41,000 and a Challenge grant in the amount of \$79,000. This represents an increase over the prior year. In FY2016/17, Doorways applied for and received over \$350,000 in funding for CoC Providers to use for homeless prevention, rapid rehousing, emergency shelter/temp housing, mainstream benefit enrollment, HMIS licensing, emergency hotel vouchers, transportation costs, and, importantly case management services which is critical to long term client self-sufficiency. With this year's funding we are the grant administrator for 8 sub-grantees. As administrator, we are responsible for periodic monitoring of Providers, overseeing client service delivery, compiling the monthly consolidated invoice for each grant and administering the funding to agencies based on performance of grant deliverables.

Another major tenet of our work is that we act as the centralized repository for homeless providers through the Coordinated Entry (CE) System. The CE system connects homeless individuals with the best possible resource for his/her specific need. With the use of the system, connections are seamless and efforts are not duplicated. CE allows for a single point of entry/assessment that results in real-time resources and housing based on need. It also ensures that the best match to Providers and services are made, which allows Providers to focus on what they do best and not trying to do it all themselves. CE is a great example of how by working together as a community we can leverage one another's strength and see immediate measurable results for those we serve. The CE system is possible through staffing and use of HMIS. CE consists of planning, assessment, prioritization, referral, access, data management and evaluation. It is a fluid system which is adapted according to available resources in the community and continual evaluation of our success in serving clients.

Serving the homeless population in NWFL is a community wide effort, where Doorways serves as the facilitator, educator, and funding source for Providers and community stakeholders. Understanding the unique characteristics of each of the distinct 6 counties we serve is paramount to building a highly efficient and effective CoC. What works in one community does not necessarily work for another. Therefore, in an effort to build relationships and foster communication throughout the CoC we participate in the following monthly/quarterly community meetings as well as other relevant ad-hoc meetings.

- Calhoun County Children's Coalition;
- Holmes County CASE;
- Washington County Family and Community Council;
- Bay County Interagency meeting;
- Circuit 14 Alliance;
- Mental Health Summit;
- VA/PHA/CoC Call;
- FACT Advisory;
- SART;
- Crisis Intervention Training;
- CoC calls w/ DCF;
- Jackson County Strong Families;
- Coordinated Intake & Referral project meetings with Healthy Start, Healthy Families, Life Management, EEC, CARE, and Early steps
- CDBG/SHIP residential, and,
- Legislative Delegation sessions for all six counties. Communication with elected officials is the best way of ensuring that funding for this community remains in place.

Finally, we also attend periodic conferences throughout the state of Florida such as the Florida Housing Coalition's (FHC) monthly webinars, quarterly workshops, and annual conference; Florida Coalition for the

Homeless quarterly convening where all 27 Florida Lead Agencies come together to share best practices and information and their annual housing conference and periodic training offered by HUD and DCF. It is imperative to remain up to date on changing trends, best practice for ending homelessness, HMIS, CE, community engagement, and landlord development so that we can realize positive results in the entire CoC. In addition, on a monthly basis we provide two training/education sessions for individual stakeholders, two community outreach events such as the community meals and food pantries across the CoC, staff, coordinate and facilitate Board of Directors and CoC Governance Board meetings, and CoC General Assembly meetings in Bay and Jackson counties including the taking of meeting minutes and timely distribution of those minutes.

In closing, the Doorways website [www.doorwaysnwfl.org](http://www.doorwaysnwfl.org) is an additional source of information for community stakeholders. All CoC sponsored events and funding are posted on the site as well as a listing of resources around the CoC, a schedule of monthly meetings, PIT results, and upcoming events of interest.