



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
(RFP) FY24-25 FL-518 DCF
Funds**

CHALLENGE GRANT UNSHELTERED

RFP CLOSING DATE:

November 7, 2024

To receive full support in the submission of your proposal please ensure you have done the following:

1. Be a CoC (Continuum of Care) Member or Commit to Be if Awarded. If you are unsure of your membership status, please contact Suzanne Burris via email at suzanne@unitedwsv.org .
2. Submit a RFP to apply for funding by November 7, 2024, to Suzanne Burris by 5:00 p.m. EST.

RFP Inquiries: Applicants shall submit all questions concerning the scope of services, eligibility, and/or programmatic requirements of this funding opportunity in writing by email only and directed to suzanne@unitedwsv.org no later than 72-hours prior to the RFP Submission Date. To ensure a fair and open process, all questions submitted will be emailed to the party that has submitted the question, along with United Way of Suwannee Valley's written response on the United Way of Suwannee Valley website.

A. INTRODUCTION

The Florida State Office on Homelessness, through the Department of Children and Families (DCF), has made funds available to FL-518 to address unsheltered homelessness. The funding is primarily focused on new/existing shelter support and sanctioned camping site support.

B. ANTICIPATED FUNDING

The total award amount available through this RFP is \$283,217.39 to support the Eligible Activities as described below. These grant funds are for activities performed for the fiscal year of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. This is a single term grant. There is no guarantee that Challenge Unsheltered funding is available after June 30, 2025. Project applicants must submit one application for their organization. Below is a breakdown of the amount of funding available:

Challenge Unsheltered Funding Overview	
<p>Challenge Unsheltered funding shall be used locally to provide the following eligible activities:</p> <p>Mental Health and Substance Treatment at Shelter Sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Management <p>Emergency Shelters and Transitional Shelters/Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating Costs • Staff Costs • Construction • Improvement • Supply Costs <p>Support for Sanctioned Camping Sites (Only sites operated by a local government or an NGO operating with the cooperation of local government.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction • Improvement • Supply costs, • Operating costs • Staff costs <p>Non-Congregate Shelters/Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotel/Motel Costs • Non-Congregate Rapid Rehousing Rental Assistance (deposit and subsequent months rental assistance) • Non-Congregate Rapid Rehousing Utility Assistance • Sheltering Operations • Housing-Focused Case Management Staff Costs 	<p>Amount Available: \$283,217.39 (Tentative)</p> <p>Match Requirement: 25%</p> <p>Applicants are encouraged to submit applications for activities that demonstrate a <u>direct impact</u> to the reduction of unsheltered homelessness in the CoC.</p>

C. PROJECT APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

- 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations
- Florida cities, towns, Counties and other established local government entities

Minimum Qualifications

To be considered for selection, the following minimum qualifications must be met:

- The application is complete and is received by the published deadline.
- 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations must have an active registration

with the System for Awards Management (SAM) to receive funding through this RFP. This registration must be configured to be publicly searchable. Entities may obtain their Unique Entity ID via SAM registration by visiting www.sam.gov. Applicants who are unable to complete the SAM registration process prior to the RFP Submission Deadline must submit evidence that the process has been initiated by email to suzanne@unitedwsv.org prior to the RFP Submission Deadline to be eligible for consideration for funding

- Applicants must demonstrate having the fiscal capacity to successfully and accurately manage multiple contracts, allocate funds, and track expenses by funding.
- Applicants must demonstrate they have liquid cash funds supporting at least 2 months of project operation and expenses.
- Applicants must have Articles of Incorporation.
- Applicants must have an active Board of Directors with the following components:
 - Bylaws
 - Regular Scheduled Meetings
 - Meeting Minutes
 - Financial Oversight
- Applicants must have strong financial policies and procedures, including the following:
 - Board approved annual budget and oversight;
 - Annual audit, annual review, or financial compilation;
 - Designated finance person with separation of duties; and
 - Cash reserves for grants that reimburse expenses or require matching funds.
- Applicants must be registered with the Division of Corporations (sunbiz.org).
- Applicants must be registered with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services: Solicitation of Contribution (fdacs.gov).
- Applicants must submit a match letter in accordance with the grant for which you applied. Post-award, Applicants will submit a monthly match roll-up report as proof of meeting match requirements.

D. LOCAL PRIORITIES

In keeping with United Way of Suwannee Valley's primary purpose of preventing and ending homelessness, applicants that propose activities that assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness to acquire permanent housing and provide ongoing supportive services to increase the likelihood that these individuals and families will be able to retain permanent housing once

housed will be given priority consideration.

Only proposals that focus on adding new bed capacity (with the exception of agencies applying for the first time) for individuals and/or families who are currently unhoused and residing in unsheltered conditions (i.e., camping) will be considered for funding. Failure to meet this requirement will result in disqualification of the application. Proposals that aim to enhance or sustain existing shelter services or capacity will not be funded under this funding opportunity.

This funding opportunity is restricted to projects that serve individuals and/or families currently residing in unsheltered conditions (i.e., camping) within the FL-518 CoC.

Additionally, prioritization will be given to projects that provide client-focused, trauma-informed, and culturally competent services to historically underserved or marginalized groups, including individuals and families with recent history of public institutionalism, seniors, veterans, LGBTQ+, communities of color, and Native and Indigenous communities. Prioritization will be given to applicants that effectively demonstrate how their proposed projects will:

1. Reduce chronic homelessness;
2. Reduce unsheltered homelessness;
3. Prevent homelessness – or – first time homelessness;
4. Reduce the length of time persons' experience homelessness;
5. Reduce returns to homelessness; and
6. Increase housing placement retention.

E. BEST PRACTICES AND SERVICES APPROACH

1. Low Barrier Approach

Low Barrier is an approach through which a minimal number of expectations are placed on persons who wish to participate in services. The aim of a low barrier approach, as it pertains to emergency shelter, supportive services, rental assistance, and any other activity eligible under this RFP is to have as few barriers and rules as possible to allow as many individuals as possible to access services by meeting them “where they’re at” rather than requiring that they meet eligibility milestones, such as abstaining from substance use for a specific length of time prior to being eligible to receive services. This often means that people staying in low-barrier shelters or participating in other eligible services are not expected to abstain from using alcohol, forced to enter treatment or case/care management, or other rules as a condition of continued participation. Provision for low barrier services means not screening people out of services, but rather using assessments and case management to design personalized service plans for each participant. Dismissals (asking a client to leave or discontinuing their services) are to be a last resort only, and used only in cases in which a participant poses imminent danger to other participants or staff. In cases in which a participant is dismissed, the dismissal is not to be permanent.

2. Housing First

Housing First is an approach guided by the belief that housing is the solution to homelessness and that housing should be used as a tool to promote stabilization, rather than a reward for having stabilized. This strategy prioritizes successfully connecting individuals and families experiencing homelessness to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry, such as sobriety, treatment, or service participation requirements. Participants in services at funded programs are to be moved into independent and permanent housing as quickly as is safe and appropriate, then provided with additional support and services as needed. Additionally, Housing First is based on the theory that client choice is valuable in housing selection and supportive services participation.

3. Trauma Informed

Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) is an approach in the human service field that assumes that an individual is more likely than not to have a history of trauma. Trauma-Informed Care recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role trauma may play in an individual's life – including service staff. United Way of Suwannee Valley expects service delivery that is grounded in an understanding of the causes and consequences of trauma and promotes resilience and healing. Trauma-informed organizations ensure that mission, culture, and practice are aligned to recognize and support trauma-survivors.

4. Fair Housing and Equal Access

The CoC is required to affirmatively market all housing and supportive services to eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, familial status, or disability who are least likely to apply in the absence of special outreach. Mandated by the Equal Access Rule, housing assisted by HUD and made available through the CoC must also be made available to individuals and families without regard to actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identify, or marital status in accordance with 24 CFR 5.105 (a)(2). Individual organization policies pertaining to affirmatively furthering fair housing may not be used in lieu of this policy; rather they should be used in conjunction with this CoC mandated policy. United Way of Suwannee Valley CoC FL-518 ensures that persons with disabilities have equal access to services through compliance with the requirements of Title II and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act. United Way of Suwannee Valley CoC FL-518 does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities based on disability in the CoC's services, programs, or activities.

F. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Applicable Law

All activities funded through this RFP must be eligible pursuant to Florida Statue 420.622(4) and all other applicable state and federal law.

2. Continuum of Care Participation

United Way of Suwannee Valley CoC FL-518 is a collaborative of service providers and key stakeholders who are committed to preventing and ending homelessness in Columbia, Hamilton, Lafayette and Suwannee counties in Florida. As a condition of award, grantees must commit to sending representation to the CoC General Membership Meetings, Coordinated Entry Meetings, HMIS and Data Performance Committee Meetings, and participate in the annual Point-in-Time and Housing Inventory Count.

3. Coordinated Entry System (CES) Participation

The Coordinated Entry System (CES) is a community-wide system through which people experiencing homelessness or who are at-risk can access the services in a streamlined way. Individuals and families in need of housing interventions enter the CES through undergoing a standardized assessment that measures their needs and strengths adding them to the community-wide By Name-List for housing.

The CoC then use the list to identify potential participants for their housing and housing related services. Grantees will be required to accept referrals from the CES into its emergency intervention services, assess, and enter participants into the CES.

United Way of Suwannee Valley also requires that any funded provider through United Way of Suwannee Valley funds serve as an access point for the CES, by assessing those who need to be entered and referred through CES. Grantees will be expected to participate further in developing the system and to incorporate CES into its service delivery system to the greatest extent possible.

4. Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Participation

The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a local information technological system used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and other services to homeless individuals and families and persons at risk of homelessness on a community-wide basis. United Way of Suwannee Valley CoC FL-518 administers the local HMIS with the software vendor being Wellsky/Community Services. Project applicants awarded funds must enroll program participants, track service delivery, and develop progressive case plans in this community-wide data system, in accordance with HMIS Technical and Data Standards.

Applicants are responsible for adhering to all applicable laws with regards to safeguarding the personal information of the persons they serve. The applicant is responsible for informing United Way of Suwannee Valley in the narrative section(s) of their responses to this RFP of any restrictions that may preclude them from entering client data into the local HMIS. However, the project applicant must identify and purchase software for a comparable database for the client-level data collection and reporting to the HMIS Lead per HUD guidelines.

Applicants must actively participate in HMIS or begin participation post-award, according to HMIS Data Standards and applicable rules of the state or federal funder.

Your organization's HMIS Agency Admin and Security Officer must regularly attend HMIS and Data Performance Committee meetings.

5. Organizational Functions Requirement

Organizations who are awarded grant-funding must have staff to perform key functions with job descriptions and/or resumes for the following positions, including but not limited to:

- Program Management
- Case Management and/or Outreach Duties
- Accountant or Bookkeeper
- HMIS Data Entry (Agency Admin and Security Officer)
- Quality Control

All staff members who are paid by the grant or complete grant activities must pass a DCF Level 2 Background Screening prior to hire date, performing any work related to the grant and/or gaining access to the live HMIS.

All staff members who are paid by the grant or complete grant activities must attend and complete annual trainings to include, but not limited to, HMIS Privacy and Security Training, HMIS Basics Training, Case Management, DCF Trainings, etc.

G. INVOICING AND REPORTING

This grant is cost-reimbursement, meaning that the grantee must expend their own funds first before submitting for reimbursement. Grantees will be expected to provide monthly invoices, status reports, roll-up reports as well as expenditure supporting documentation and receipts no later than the 5th of the month following service delivery. Grantees are expected to monitor their data quality through Annual Performance Reports and CAPER reports to ensure monthly reporting is accurate. On a monthly basis, the provider must certify that the data quality in HMIS is maintained according to CoC standards and with no more than a 3% error rate in any data quality measurement. Certifications will be validated by the CoC HMIS Administrator.

H. RISK MANAGEMENT

1. Reporting of Critical Incidents

All providers are required to report critical incidents to the Continuum of

Care (CoC) within 24 hours. Reports must be submitted in writing ensuring that all necessary details are captured and that the CoC is promptly informed of any incidents that may impact the safety and well-being of clients, staff, or any member of the community.

2. Insurance Requirements

All providers must maintain comprehensive insurance coverage to protect against potential risks. Proof of insurance coverage will be required during the award and contracting process. Failure to maintain adequate insurance coverage may result in the termination of the provider's contract with the CoC. The following coverage is required for all providers:

- Commercial General Liability Insurance with minimum limits of \$1,000,000 per occurrence combined single limit for bodily injury and property damage and \$2,000,000 annual aggregate. The policy must be without restrictive endorsements excluding or limiting coverage for:
 - Premises and/or operations
 - Independent contractors
 - Products and/or Completed Operations for contracts
 - Broad Form Contractual Coverage applicable to this specific Agreement, including any hold harmless and/or indemnification agreement

- Personal Injury Coverage with Employee and Contractual Exclusions removed, with minimum limits of coverage equal to those required for Bodily Injury Liability and Property Damage Liability.

- Business Automobile Liability Insurance, if driving will be required in the performance of duties under the Agreement, with minimum limits of \$500,000 per occurrence, combined single limit for bodily injury and property damage. The policy must be without restrictive endorsements excluding or limiting coverage for:
 - Owned Vehicles
 - Hired
 - Non-Owned Vehicles, including Employers' Non-Ownership
 - Any Auto
 - Scheduled Autos (Scheduled autos must be listed on the Certificate of Insurance)

- Workers' Compensation Insurance applies for all employees in accordance with state statutes and all federal laws. Operations in Florida must comply with Florida Statutes, Chapter 440 as amended from time

to time, Florida laws and all federal laws. The policy must include Employers' Liability with minimum limits of \$100,000 for each accident. Elective exemptions or coverage through an employee leasing arrangement will not satisfy this requirement.

- Professional Liability Insurance is required for any medical treatment, diagnosis, assessment, medical services, including psychological assessment, treatment, counseling, therapy, prescription of drugs, contact with juveniles, elderly, persons with special needs, or other vulnerable populations with minimum limits of \$1,000,000 per occurrence. Coverage must remain in force for one (1) year after the administration of such services.

I. SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Applicants must write a grant application and narrative that identifies the grant component and eligible activities you intend to use to serve eligible program participants in accordance with all applicable statute, regulation and law.

Organizations that are currently contracted to provide services on behalf of the CoC will have a condensed application process.

This RFP does not contain all the necessary information required to perform the grant.

1. Required Forms

There is a requirement to submit a Budget Narrative explaining the plan for costs (including the number of individual positions that will be supported by the grant), operations costs, a list of estimated costs for equipment to be purchased with grant funds, and detail regarding the cost of providing direct financial assistance to the target population, where applicable.

2. Proposal applications will be accepted no later than 5:00 p.m. EST, on November 7, 2024. Please consult the United Way of Suwannee Valley DCF RFP Timeline (Attachment A) in this document to ensure your proposal meets all the required responses in the identified time frames.

3. Notifications

Applicants will be generally notified regarding the results of funding decisions by November 25th, 2024. Delays in responding to requests for clarification or additional information on the part of an applicant may delay such decisions.

6. Technical Considerations

7. Applicants with disabilities in need of reasonable accommodation to access and/or submit the Application Form may send a Reasonable Accommodation Request to suzanne@unitedwsv.org. United Way of Suwannee Valley suggests that Reasonable Accommodation Requests be submitted at least 7 days prior to the submission deadline.

8. Deadline extensions may be granted to Applicants who experience unforeseeable difficulties during their submission process, including those caused by severe weather conditions, natural disasters, or other acts of God. In the event of unforeseeable difficulties during the submission process, Applicants must notify United Way of Suwannee Valley by email at suzanne@unitedwsv.org within 12 hours of the resolution of the difficulty and be prepared to submit evidence of the occurrence and duration of the unforeseeable difficulty. Decisions regarding granting deadline extension due to unforeseeable difficulties will be made by the United Way of Suwannee Valley Executive Committee and will be final.

J. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

All applications that are submitted within the submission period will be reviewed by a CoC Rank and Review Committee. Project applications submitted by organizations must meet all requirements, regulations, eligible activities, priorities, and application instructions of this RFP. The CoC Rank and Review Committee will evaluate project applications. Project applications scoring below the threshold may not be considered for funding. Funding is dependent on the number of high scoring proposals and may result in an award either higher or lower than the initial proposal.

K. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Inquiries

Applicants shall submit all questions concerning the scope of services, eligibility, and/or programmatic requirement of the DCF Funding in writing by email only and directed to suzanne@unitedwsv.org. Such questions concerning the RFP process shall be submitted no later than 72 hours prior to the last day of application acceptance.

Applicants who fail to do so will waive all further rights to protest, based on these specifications and conditions. To ensure a fair and open process, all questions submitted will be posted on a daily basis without attribution to the party that has submitted the question, along with United Way of Suwannee Valley's written response at www.unitedwsv.org. United Way of Suwannee Valley will make a good faith effort to redact any information contained in the question that could reasonably be expected to be used to identify the party that has submitted the question, provided the redaction is not material to communicating the meaning or scope of the question. United Way makes no guarantees that the party submitting the question will not or cannot be identified by another party.

2. Objections to Terms

Should an Applicant object on any ground to any provision or legal requirement set forth in this RFP, the Applicant must, no later than 72 hours prior to the Submission Deadline, provide written notice to United Way of Suwannee Valley setting forth with specificity the grounds for the objection. The failure of

the Applicant to object to the manner set forth in this paragraph shall constitute a complete and irrevocable waiver of any such objection.

3. Change Notices

United Way of Suwannee Valley may modify the RFP, prior to the Submission Deadline, by issuing Addenda to the RFP, which will be posted at www.unitedwsv.org. The Applicants shall be responsible for ensuring that its application reflects all Addenda issued by United Way of Suwannee Valley prior to the Submission Deadline regardless of when the application is submitted. Therefore, United Way of Suwannee Valley recommends that the Applicant consult the website weekly, including shortly before the Submission Deadline, to determine if the Applicant has downloaded all RFP Addenda.

5. Errors and Omissions

Applicants are responsible for reviewing all portions of this RFP. Applicants are to promptly notify United Way of Suwannee Valley, in writing, if the Applicant discovers any ambiguity, discrepancy, omission, or other error in the RFP. Any such notification should be directed to United Way of Suwannee Valley promptly after the discovery. Failure by United Way of Suwannee Valley to object to an error, omission, or deviation in the application will in no way modify the RFP or excuse an Applicant from full compliance with the specifications of the RFP if awarded.

6. Financial Responsibility

United Way of Suwannee Valley accepts no financial responsibility for any costs incurred by an entity in responding to this RFP. Submissions of the RFP will become the property of United Way of Suwannee Valley and may be used by United Way of Suwannee Valley in any way deemed appropriate.

Attachment A

**2024 United Way of Suwannee Valley FL-518 RFP CHALLENGE
UNSHELTERED Timeline**

Date	Task	Details
October 29, 2024	Posting of Application	To apply for FY24-25 DCF funding, please visit our website at unitedwsv.org
November 7, 2024 5:00pm EST	RFP Submission Due	All proposals and required documents must be submitted
November 14, 2024	United Way of Suwannee Valley Rank and Review Finalization.	The CoC Rank and Review Committee will review all proposals. The Committee will submit any clarifying questions to United Way staff to have applicants provide responses for evaluation and scoring. The Committee will evaluate and score all proposals, will review projects, evaluate, score, and rank proposals.
November 18, 2024	Applicant Notification of Ranking Score	United Way of Suwannee Valley will notify all project applicants
November 25, 2024	Appeals Due By	Applicants with lower scores may appeal their scoring

November 26, 2024	Notice of Awards	United Way of Suwannee Valley staff will issue notices of awards to Applicants point of contact and Collaborative Applicant

Attachment B

CONFLICT OF INTEREST INFORMATION SHEET

There are two types of conflict of interests that organizations must be aware of:

1. Individual Conflict

- a. An individual conflict of interest arises when individuals with specific relationships to a recipient or sub recipient directly or indirectly benefits financially or otherwise by the activities carried out using grant funds and/or on behalf of the organization. This includes any decision or activity made by a recipient or subrecipient that gives the appearance of impropriety. Identifying and documenting actual and perceived conflicts of interests is a mechanism used to ensure accountability of program funds. (§ 578.95; § 576.404) Individuals in this definition include employee, officer, board member, volunteer, and any representative of the organization.
- b. No covered individual who participates in the decision-making process may obtain financial interest or benefit from an activity, have a financial interest in any contract, subcontract, or agreement, either for themselves or immediate family member or business ties, during their tenure or the one-year period following their tenure at the organization.

2. Organizational Conflict

An organizational conflict of interest arises when, because of activities or relationships with other persons or organizations, its representatives or its subrecipient(s) is unable, or potentially unable, to render impartial assistance or perform objectively. Federal regulations identify specific situations when an organizational conflict or the appearance of a conflict, would arise:

- a. When a board member of an applicant organization participates in an organizational decision concerning the award of a grant or provision of other financial benefits, to that applicant organization that the board member represents (578.95(b)).

- b. When the recipient or subrecipient participates in making rent reasonableness determinations and housing inspections on units that the recipient, subrecipient, or related entity owns (§ 578.95(b)).
- c. When the provision or amount of financial assistance is conditioned on an individual's or family's acceptance of emergency shelter or housing owned by the recipient, subrecipient, or parent or subsidiary of the subrecipient (§ 576.404(a)).
- d. When the recipient or subrecipient provides an individual or family with any type of Homelessness Prevention (HP) assistance when the participant is living in housing owned by the recipient, subrecipient, or parent or subsidiary of the subrecipient (§ 576.404(a)).
- e. When the recipient or subrecipient carries out the initial evaluations for Rapid Re-housing (RRH) or Homeless Prevention (HP) assistance for an individual or family when the participant is living in housing owned by the recipient, subrecipient, or parent or subsidiary of the subrecipient (§ 576.404(a)).

Project Applicant Requirement

Organizations who receive grant funding must submit a copy of their conflict-of-interest policy upon request and must comply with the conflict-of-interest requirements, including for the procurement of goods, supplies, equipment, or services.