

ESG 2024:

Total Grant Award Requested: \$117,779.48

1:1 Match: Match comes from existing salaries and CDBG allocation.

Describe in detail the applicant's mission, types of programs and services currently offered and how homelessness programs fit within that mission.

The City of Kingsport has a long-standing reputation of being community-centered, kind, and home to multiple organizations providing services to homeless individuals including feeding programs, shelters, prevention services, and many ministries. Recently, homelessness has become more prevalent as escalating drug addiction and increasing cases of untreated mental health concerns impact unhoused individuals. Navigating the complexity of shelter regulations and long waiting lists for public housing leaves rising numbers of persons unable to obtain housing. In response to this housing crisis, Kingsport is exhausting efforts to end the homeless epidemic. The City is building momentum to provide accessible and consistent resources to vulnerable populations. To honor The City of Kingsport's long-standing commitment to end homelessness, funding is essential. The City of Kingsport currently offers two primary homeless-centered programs. Kingsport City Schools' Homeless Education program, was established in 1995, and The Kingsport Homeless Coalition was established in 2020. These programs were created to thwart homelessness. The City requests ESG funding to expand the services of both.

Describe the experience of the applicant in assisting to help individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

The City of Kingsport will provide assistance to Kingsport City Schools System in congruence with the Kingsport City Schools Homeless Education program, assisting eligible students qualifying under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, title IX, Part A of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The program documents 127 families served thus far during the 2022-2023 school year. Demographics include 280 students and 37 siblings living in shelters, doubled up, living in motels, or completely unsheltered. By the end of that school year, 67 students and 6 siblings from 36 families had obtained housing. During the 2023-2024 school year 216 students have been served. Of those, 36 students and 10 siblings from 20 families now have stable housing.

In 2020, the City of Kingsport in partnership created the Kingsport Homeless Coalition. The Coalition's vision is to create a coordinated, compassionate plan to serve the homeless population of the greater Kingsport Area. This collaboration resulting in the creation of a full-time social worker, provided by the Kingsport Police Department, who works with the homeless population to provide better access to community resources. The city social worker engages with multiple community partners to provide coordination of services. The Homeless Coalition served 293 participants in last grant year. 73 of the participants were discharged into permanent housing.

Describe the experience of the applicant's senior staff in providing assistance to help individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

Jonathan Anderson serves as the Homeless Services Liaison, providing expertise collected over 17 years of working in the faith-based and nonprofit communities. Jonathan Anderson is the founder of Engage Tri-Cities and has worked with nonprofit community focused organizations in both, Kingsport and North

Carolina. The Kingsport Police Homeless Outreach Worker is Erin Gray. A lifelong Tri-Cities native, Erin Gray retains a current TN Master License of Social Worker (LMSW) and provides expertise collected over 16 years including employment with the Department of Children's Services and Camelot. Community Development Planner, Michael Price, has administered THDA programs for five years including the Emergency Solutions Grant providing the following: Street Outreach, Shelter Services, Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing. He is certified in HQS, Lead based paint, Property Management, HCV, and LIHTC. Michele Wilder, coordinator of the Homeless Education Program for Kingsport City Schools, has served in this role since Sept. 1999. She also serves as Kingsport City Schools System's Foster Care Point of Contact and Migrant Liaison. Her experience brings 25 years of commitment to ending homelessness.

Describe the applicant's intake process.

Potential clients are identified by Street Outreach worker and subsequently, the Appalachian Regional Coalition on Homelessness (ARCH) is contacted to complete consolidated entry. Vetted applications are provided from ARCH to Kingsport's case managers for guidance through the application process. New applications are underwritten, and fact checked to ensure qualified population requirements are met. Unqualified applicants are given appeals opportunities to ensure due process is applied.

Does your agency currently have participation of not less than one homeless individual or formerly homeless individual on the board of directors or other equivalent policy-making entity? If not, describe how your agency will implement a plan to consult with homeless or formerly homeless individuals in considering and making policies and decisions regarding any facilities, services, or other assistance that receive funding under the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)?

Yes, the Kingsport Board of Mayor and Aldermen, the Kingsport Homeless Coalition, and the Community Development Advisory Committee consist of diverse individuals with lived experiences. Feedback and public input are frequently sought when policies are made and implemented.

Describe any changes that have been made as a result of participant feedback.

The City of Kingsport's Homeless Coalition and street outreach efforts are structured based on the results of participant feedback. Programs ensure adjustments and adaptability are continuous to provide necessary resources to successfully house individuals in permanent housing options. Referrals to treatment facilities, shelters, and income based housing are guided by participant feedback. Transportation schedules are created modeled and amended based on participant needs.

Describe how your agency makes known that use of facilities, assistance, and services are available to all on a non-discriminatory basis, including steps to make individuals aware of the availability of the facilities, services, and assistance, including those with disabilities. (Applicant should make sure to answer each part of the question)

The City of Kingsport uses a multi-channel approach relative to announcing the availability of assistance and services. First of all, the City of Kingsport's participation in local CoC meetings ensures participating local service agencies and nonprofits are aware of available resources. Secondly, awards and programs are discussed at public hearings and Board of Mayor and Alderman Meetings. Thirdly, the City of

Kingsport uses an array of social media, print media, news outlets, and the City's website to announce all new opportunities. Finally, all City of Kingsport offices are fully accessible to ensure every citizen has an equal opportunity to utilize programs and services.

Describe how your agency assists participants with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). How does the agency make known its services to LEP participants within the service area?

As of June 26, 2023, the city has contracted with Language Line Solutions for our interpretation and language needs. Services included are video/in-person meetings, telephone interpreter services, as well as document translation.

The service is capable of providing deaf or hard-of-hearing translation.

Also, Michele Wilder--Coordinator of the Homeless Education Program for Kingsport City Schools serves as the Migrant Liaison.

Provide information about the board of directors and/or advisory council, such as the regularity of meetings, list of subcommittees, goals and planning, and their involvement in the agency's activities.

The Community Development Advisory Committee was established to oversee the conduct of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from U.S. Housing and Urban Development and other grant-based programs. Kingsport is an entitlement city per the Community Development Block Grant Program which serves to primarily benefit low- and moderate-income persons and aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight. The Committee also serves to guide planning and implementation of community service grants. The Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC) consists of five members. All members are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. All appointees to the Community Development Advisory Committee shall serve three-year terms. All meetings are open to the public and held every month at City Hall. Meetings are held monthly. The Committee represents members from, the development district, faith-based community, housing, and at large members.

Describe the applicant's process for ensuring project-level and agency-wide data quality in HMIS, or if a victim service provider, the comparable database.

Data quality is the extent to which the information contained in HMIS accurately represents the real-world clients and situations intended to be described. The City's data quality process ensures that information is complete, timely, accurate, consistent, and descriptive of coverage and utilization. HMIS data is reviewed at the COC level by ARCH staff, and errors are quickly addressed to ensure quality data is created.

How does the applicant use data and reporting to inform agency decision making?

The data collected in HMIS and reported by participating agencies guides the City of Kingsport in every aspect of community service. Information collected influences grants applied for, as well as funding levels sought. Accurate numbers of homeless and at-risk individuals help the City know where to apply existing resources and when to invest in additional opportunities.

Describe the CoC top priorities for addressing homelessness.

ARCH CoC's top priorities for addressing homelessness priorities: 1. Ending homelessness for all person by identifying, engaging in, and effectively serving all persons experiencing homelessness (Outreach). 2. Using a Housing First approach that prioritizes rapid placement (RRH) and stabilization (HP) in permanent housing without preconditions or requirements. 3. Reducing unsheltered homelessness by identifying permanent housing options for people who are unsheltered (Coordinated Entry, Housing Navigation, Case Management, etc.) 4. Improving system performance to measure the average length of homeless episodes, rates of return to homelessness, rates of exit to permanent housing determinations, to determine how effectively we are serving people experiencing homelessness. 5. Partner with Housing, Health and Service Agencies to maximize the use of mainstream and other supportive services. 6. Address racial equity to ensure successful outcomes for all persons experiencing homelessness. 7. Improving assistance to LGBTQ+ Individuals. 8. Including Persons with Lived Experience to improve the effectiveness of homelessness assistance programs. 9. Increasing Affordable Housing Supply.

How does the applicant contribute to activities within their CoC? (Committees, subcommittees, CE/By Name List meetings)

City of Kingsport staff serve on the Appalachian Regional Coalition on Homelessness Board of Directors and participate in all monthly meetings. Staff also participates in the annual Point In Time Count and Continuum of Care activities.

Street Outreach services target individuals and families living unsheltered, meaning those who qualify under 21 CFR Part 576.2 paragraph (1)(i) of the definition of "homelessness." Services are described under 21 CFR Part 576.101. Services for eligible program participants are provided on the street or in parks, abandoned buildings, bus stations, campgrounds, and in other such settings where people living unsheltered are staying.

Describe the proposed Street Outreach program to be provided using ESG funds.

The Street Outreach program, to be provided using Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds, aims to address the needs of unsheltered individuals in the City of Kingsport by offering targeted outreach services focused on engagement, support, and ultimately, the transition to permanent housing.

Funding will go to hire a full-time caseworker to be embedded with the Community Policing Department.

Refinement of a dedicated outreach team comprised of individuals with experience and training in social work, mental health, substance abuse counseling, and homelessness services. Ensuring diversity within the team to better connect with individuals from various backgrounds and communities. Conducting comprehensive needs assessments to identify immediate needs such as food, clothing, medical care, mental health support, substance abuse treatment, and access to basic services. Providing direct assistance and referrals to appropriate resources and services based on identified needs.

By implementing this comprehensive Street Outreach program funded through ESG, we aim to effectively engage unsheltered individuals, address their immediate needs, and support their journey towards stable housing and improved quality of life. This program will not only provide vital assistance to those experiencing homelessness but also contribute to the overall well-being and vitality of the City of Kingsport.

Engagement is key to administering the street outreach component with the goal of moving clients from living unsheltered to shelter.

How will the applicant find unsheltered clients? (ex. PIT, visit encampments, community policing, city or county service agency, etc..)

The City of Kingsport Homeless Coalition liaison and outreach worker are in the community five days a week. Coalition team members participate in the PIT count, visit encampments, and work with all local service agencies. The street outreach worker is embedded with the Kingsport City Police Department and spends time with law enforcement to provide assistance and referrals where they are needed the most.

Unsheltered populations may require multiple contacts in order to build a relationship with the goal of moving clients into permanent housing. Outline a clear plan how the applicant will build relationships to engage unsheltered individuals? Building relationships with unsheltered individuals is crucial for effective engagement and eventual transition into permanent housing.

The City of Kingsport's Homeless Coalition has a dedicated street outreach team comprised of individuals with experience and training in social work, mental health, substance abuse counseling, and homelessness services. Outreach team members are trained in trauma-informed care to understand and respond to the unique needs and experiences of unsheltered individuals with empathy and sensitivity. The team conducts regular street outreach sessions at predetermined times and locations known to have high concentrations of unsheltered individuals. They utilize a non-intrusive approach, respecting personal space and boundaries while offering assistance and support. The liaisons show genuine interest in their stories, experiences, and needs without judgment or pressure. By using these interactions as opportunities to listen, understand, and identify support needs. The team demonstrates reliability and consistency in providing support over time. Personalized support plans outlining steps toward housing stability and self-sufficiency are developed based on individual needs.

Efforts are made to facilitate access to a range of support services including healthcare, mental health treatment, substance abuse counseling, employment assistance, and legal aid. Caseworkers accompany individuals to appointments and provide advocacy and support.

Explain service that Applicant will be providing.

Individualized Support Plans:

Conduct comprehensive assessments to understand each individual's circumstances, challenges, and goals. Collaborate with individuals to develop personalized support plans outlining steps towards housing stability and self-sufficiency.

Linkage to Services:

Facilitate access to a range of support services including healthcare, mental health treatment, substance abuse counseling, employment assistance, and legal aid. Accompany individuals to appointments and provide advocacy and support throughout the process.

Housing Navigation Assistance:

Provide intensive support in navigating the housing system, assisting with housing applications, locating affordable housing options, and securing necessary documentation. Offer ongoing guidance and advocacy to address any barriers or challenges encountered during the housing search process. Peer support and mentorship through community engagement and partnerships.

Transportation Services

Explain service that Applicant will be providing.

Transportation is provided by accompanying individuals to appointments and providing advocacy and support throughout the process.

Also, bus passes are provided on a daily and monthly basis to assist in transportation to appointments and employment.

Describe any planned expenses to be paid for with ESG funds during the upcoming program year for equipment, hardware, software, or HUD-approved or HUD-sponsored training related to HMIS.

Of the funding allocated for HMIS, a two percent portion will be paid to the COC lead agency for HMIS access. The remaining funding will go towards the purchase of a laptop, printer and software package for the Homeless Coalition to use exclusively for ESG efforts.

Explain in detail how your agency monitors for data quality. Share details of any Data Quality Plan in place.

Data quality is the extent to which the information contained in HMIS accurately represents the real-world clients and situations intended to be described. The City's data quality process ensures that information is complete, timely, accurate, consistent, and descriptive of coverage and utilization. HMIS data is reviewed at the COC level by ARCH staff, and errors are quickly addressed to ensure quality data is created. Client information must be entered into HMIS in accordance with the data quality, timeliness and additional requirements found in the HMIS Policies and Procedures manual and implemented in the CoC Performance Standards.

Describe any HMIS or data-related training provided within the agency and to CoC partner agencies.

ARCH COC has provided HMIS training in the past. The City of Kingsport Homeless Coalition staff participates in all COC-level HMIS training.

Describe efforts to provide technical assistance to partner agencies, including Victim Service Providers or those agencies who use Comparable Databases.

The Homeless Coalition routinely helps partnering agencies with grant applications, HMIS assistance and other needs as they occur.