



2025 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
STATE OF FLORIDA HOMELESS SERVICES GRANTS (LPO42)

Released:
Wednesday
June 18th, 2025

Submission Due:
Wednesday
July 2, 2025
3:00 PM

Homeless Coalition of Polk County, Inc.
1815 Crystal Lake Drive
Lakeland, Florida 33801

Homeless Coalition of Polk County, Inc.
2025 Request for Proposals
State of Florida Homeless Services Grants

In anticipation of funding opportunities that are available through the State of Florida Office on Homelessness, the Homeless Coalition of Polk County, Inc. (HCPC) is issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the following grant-funded projects:

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	\$ 31,574.33
Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)	\$ 201,698.70
Challenge Grant	\$ 666,392.16
ESG Rush	\$273,210.09

HCPC will make funding available to finance projects that 1) use the Housing First philosophy, 2) emphasize rapid exit from homelessness, 3) emphasize permanent housing as the primary strategy for ending homelessness, and 4) will move the Lakeland/Polk County community forward in effectively ending homelessness.

This RFP contains information and required forms for applicants to apply and compete for grant awards. Applicants are advised to read this material carefully.

Agencies wishing to submit a proposal for consideration must complete all submission requirements listed in this RFP.

SECTION I: General Information

Strategic Use and Alignment of Resources

As the designated Lead Agency for the Lakeland/Polk County Continuum of Care, HCPC holds the responsibility of ensuring that resources available to the community to assist those experiencing homelessness and those at-risk of homelessness are strategically used to maximize impact, effectiveness, and alignment with goals to effectively end homelessness. Therefore, HCPC reserves the right to match available funding opportunities to proposals received in order to ensure alignment of resources with community need and appropriate target populations. All proposals received will be evaluated for their appropriateness for each available funding opportunity.

Project Types

HCPC will accept proposals for the following project types (see Section VII for detailed descriptions):

- Rapid Re-Housing (RRH)
- Homelessness Prevention (HP)
- Outreach

Project Completion Timeframes

Projects must be operational by July 9, 2025. Project years end on June 30 2026. Project performance will be evaluated at the end of each project year to determine eligibility for renewal.

Housing First Philosophy

All projects **MUST** embrace a Housing First philosophy. Housing First is a homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, thus ending their homelessness and serving as a platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life. This approach is guided by the belief that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting properly, or attending to substance use issues. Housing First programs share the following critical elements:

- Focus on helping individuals and families access and sustain permanent housing as quickly as possible with very few or no barriers to entry,
- Variety of services available to promote housing stability and individual well-being on an as-needed, voluntary basis,
- Standard lease agreement for housing, as opposed to including mandated services compliance as a condition of tenancy.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

Wednesday, July 2, 2025, 3:00 p.m.

Project Proposals **MUST** be delivered to:

Homeless Coalition of Polk County, Inc.

Attention: Bridget Engleman

1815 Crystal Lake Drive

Lakeland, FL 33801

1 Original Application

3 Copies

1 Electronic

E-MAIL SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

**WITHOUT EXCEPTION, NO PROPOSALS WILL BE ACCEPTED BY HCPC AFTER THE SUBMISSION DEADLINE
STATED IN THIS RFP.**

Critical Dates and Timeline

Wednesday, July 2, 2025	3:00 PM	PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE
Monday, July 7, 2025	9:00 AM	HCPC Staff Threshold Review
July 8, 2025 – July 14, 2025	10:00 AM	CoC Project Selection Committee Review/Score
Wednesday, July 16, 2025	2:00 PM	Notice of project selection or non-selection

SECTION II: Funding Opportunities

All project proposals that are submitted on time and meet threshold requirements will be considered.

State of Florida Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)

The estimated ESG award for each CoC is \$201,698.70 per year until June 30, 2026. However, there is no guarantee that HCPC will receive the maximum award. The Project Selection Committee will determine which projects will be funded (based on successful project applications), and at what funding level. HCPC will award at least one Rapid Rehousing project, a maximum of one Homeless Prevention project, and a maximum of one Outreach project. Please ensure that your project budgets are scalable in the event of a reduced award. A single agency may apply for any or all project types. For information regarding ESG Program eligible activities and expenses agencies are strongly advised to visit the HUD Exchange at <http://www.hudexchange.info/programs/esg>.

State of Florida Challenge Grant

The estimated Challenge Grant award for each CoC is \$666,392.16 per year until June 30, 2026. However, there is no guarantee that HCPC will receive the maximum award. HCPC will award at least one Rapid Rehousing project and a maximum of one Homeless Prevention project. The Project Selection Committee will determine which projects will be funded (based on successful project applications), and at what funding level. Please ensure that your project budgets are scalable in the event of a reduced award. A single agency may apply for any or all project types.

State of Florida ESG RUSH

The estimated RUSH Grant award for each CoC is \$273,210.09 per year until June 30, 2026. However, there is no guarantee that HCPC will receive the maximum award. HCPC will award at least one Rapid Rehousing project and a maximum of one Homeless Prevention project. The Project Selection Committee will determine which projects will be funded (based on successful project applications), and at what funding level. Please ensure that your project budgets are scalable in the event of a reduced award. A single agency may apply for any or all project types.

State of Florida Homelessness Prevention (TANF) Grant

The maximum TANF Grant award for each CoC is \$31,574.33 per year until June 30, 2026. However, there is no guarantee that HCPC will receive the maximum award. HCPC will award a maximum of one Homeless Prevention project. Please ensure that your project budget is scalable in the event of a reduced award.

SECTION III: Information for Potential Sub-Recipients

For all funding opportunities, HCPC will be the grantee, and the agency provider will be the Subcontractor.

Cost Reimbursement

All contracts will operate on a cost reimbursement basis. Subcontractors will be required to submit supporting documentation to HCPC each month for project eligible expenses as determined by the funding source regulations and requirements.

Match

The required amount of match differs based on funding source. Match is defined as payment of direct eligible costs for a project from a source other than the funding source. Match can be provided through an agency's other-funded projects that also provide services to the funded project or through additional, eligible expenses directly related to the funded project. All match claimed in this RFP must be accompanied by supporting documentation, and subcontractors will be required to document matching funds expended each month.

Match requirements are as follows: Challenge Grant – 100%, State of Florida ESG Grant – 100%, TANF Homelessness Prevention Grant – 0%. ESG RUSH - 100%. Agencies awarded funding as a Subcontractor will be required to provide the full match amount for their entire contract, including Admin funds.

Cost of Submitting Proposals

The cost of preparing and submitting a proposal is the sole responsibility of the applicant and shall not be chargeable in any manner to HCPC. HCPC will not reimburse any applicant for costs associated with the preparation and submission of a proposal.

Conflict of Interest

HCPC requires applicants to provide professional, objective, and impartial advice and at all times hold the CoC's interests paramount, strictly avoid conflicts with other assignments or their own corporate interests, and act without any consideration for future work. Applicants have an obligation to disclose any situation of actual or potential conflict that impacts their capacity to serve in the best interest of the CoC, or that may reasonably be perceived as having this effect. If HCPC, in its sole discretion, determines that a conflict of interest exists, such applicant shall not be considered for funding award. Failure to disclose said situations may lead to the disqualification of applicant or termination of award.

State and Federal Administrative Requirements

All agencies awarded funds through this RFP will be required to comply with a variety of requirements governing the use of State and Federal funds. These include, but are not limited to:

- Standards for Financial Management (OMB Circular A-110)
- Cost Principles and Allowable Costs (OMB Circular A-122)
- Federal Audit Standards (OMB Circular A-133)
- Conflict of Interest (OMB Circular A-110 and 24 CFR 576.79)
- Procurement Principles (OMB Circular A-110)

HCPC staff will monitor each project to ensure compliance with the terms of the funding agreement between HCPC and the agency. This will include monitoring records kept by the applicant to demonstrate client eligibility, services provided, and other information as required by the funder.

Liability Insurance

All agencies awarded funds as a Subcontractor will be required to obtain/maintain liability and worker's compensation coverage that will be further defined in the funding agreement, if awarded.

Background Screening

All staff who provide direct services to clients or who have access to HMIS are required by Florida law to be screened in accordance with chapter 435, F.S., and meet the Level 2 Employment Screening standards specified by sections 435.04, 110.1127, and subsection 39.001(2), F.S., as a condition of initial and continued employment that shall include but not be limited to:

- Employment history checks;
- Fingerprinting for all criminal record checks;
- Statewide criminal and juvenile delinquency records checks through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE);
- Federal criminal records checks from the Federal Bureau of Investigation via the Florida Department of Law Enforcement;
- Security background investigation, which may include local criminal record checks through local law enforcement agencies;
- Attestation by each employee, subject to penalty of perjury, to meeting the requirements for qualifying for employment pursuant to chapter 435 and agreeing to inform the employer immediately if arrested for any of the disqualifying offenses while employed by the employer.

Handicapped Accessibility

All projects must be accessible to persons with disabilities. Programs, information, participation, communications, and services must be accessible to persons with disabilities. Agencies must comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974 and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Nondiscrimination

All agencies must ensure nondiscrimination. This applies to employment, contracting, marketing, and selection of project participants. Fair Housing laws prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, or familial status. Disability includes persons living with AIDS. The requirements in 24 CFR part 5, Subpart A are applicable, including the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements at 24 CFR 5.105(a). Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, 12 U.S.C. 1701u, and implementing regulations at 24 CFR Part 135 apply, except that homeless individuals have priority over other Section 3 residents in accordance with § 576.405(c).

Formal Termination Policy

Agencies awarded funds must develop a formal Termination Policy that clearly describes a process by which client services may be terminated if program requirements are violated. The process must recognize individual rights and allow termination in only the most severe cases. Termination process for rental assistance, leasing, and/or housing relocation and stabilization services must include: written notice to the program participant with clear statement of reasons for termination, review of decision to terminate with opportunity for the program participant to present written or oral objections to agency, and prompt written notice to the project participant of final decision. Refer to written CoC policy for more information on participant termination.

Agency Compliance

Any agency awarded funding through this RFP must comply with the following requirements:

- Use HMIS to document all project-related services –
Agency must enter project data in accordance with HUD Data Standards and designated workflow for project type, and maintain high level of data accuracy, timeliness, and completeness. Please refer to the CoC's Data Quality Plan for information on acceptable standards. Domestic violence agencies are exempt from entering into HMIS, but are required to have a comparable database to submit reports.
- Participate fully in the Coordinated Entry process –
All projects awarded funding through this RFP are required to participate fully in the Lakeland/Polk County CoC's Coordinated Entry system and follow the established procedure in accordance with project type. Project expenses for clients not referred through Coordinated Entry will not be reimbursed.

Maximum/Minimum Funding Request Amounts

HCPC reserves the right to award less than the amount of funds requested based on funding available.

SECTION IV: Applicant Eligibility Criteria and Proposal Requirements

Applicant Agency Eligibility

CoC members that are public or private non-profit organizations providing services to persons experiencing homelessness and those at risk of becoming homeless are eligible to apply. Private non-profit organizations must have a 501(c)3 certification, and be registered with the State of Florida Secretary of State, Division of Corporations.

In addition, applicants must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- CoC Member in Good Standing –
Agency must have completed an application for membership and paid dues in full for the year.
- Agency in compliance with all awarded funding requirements State or Federal
- Actively Participate in the CoC –
Agency must have attended at least 75% of monthly CoC meetings for the past 12 months.

Proposal Requirements and Submission Order

Proposals MUST contain the following sections, in the order listed below:

- 1) Completed and Signed Application
- 2) Organizational Capacity and Experience Narrative (not to exceed 1 page)
 - demonstrate a history of assessing the needs of and providing services to low-income individuals/households who are experiencing homelessness, are formerly homeless, or are at-risk of becoming homeless
 - describe experience of operating similar projects, including performance outcome data from similar programs operated by the organization that shows the effects of the services provided
 - describe federal, state, and/or local government grant experience and capacity of the organization to administer the project and oversee all compliance requirements
- 3) Project Narrative (not to exceed 2 pages)
 - Overview –
Describe scope of project and services to be provided. Indicate how project will follow a Housing First approach. Describe plan to connect clients to mainstream benefits. If project is an expansion of a current project and/or is to be combined with other available funding sources that are not included in this RFP, detail the additional resources and funding that will be part of the overall project. What problem does this project solve in the effort to end homelessness? How does this project integrate with the CoC's Coordinated Entry System? How does this project provide a connection to permanent solutions?
 - Client Demographics/Target Population –
Detail the demographics of the individuals/households to be served, including target household types (families, single men, etc.) and subpopulations (DV victims, veterans, mental health, etc.).
 - Project Performance Outcomes –
State the anticipated number of clients to be served annually and monthly. Describe measurable outcomes, including the percentage of individuals/households expected to achieve each outcome. Outcomes must refer to client accomplishments resulting from services received, rather than services provided by the agency. For example, "75% of clients assisted will increase their earned income" is an acceptable and measurable outcome. "75% of clients will be referred to CareerSource for employment services" is an agency service, not a client accomplishment, and is therefore not acceptable.
- 4) Housing First/Low Barrier Questionnaire – completed and signed
- 5) Budget Summary Form – complete and sign form included in this RFP
- 6) Detailed Budget Narrative (not to exceed 2 pages)
Explain in detail how the funding requested or listed as match was calculated. For example, in addition to "Case Management", the narrative could say "1 FTE salary at \$30,000/year".

7) Match Narrative and Documentation of Commitment

Detailed description of in-kind or cash match sources and amounts. If using funding from another grant contract as match, written documentation stating the funding source, contract number, total amount of contract, and amount to be used as match must be provided.

8) Agency Compliance Narrative (not to exceed 1 page)

Describe agency's compliance history, including past compliance findings or concerns from other funding sources and prior audit findings that are unresolved from agency's audited financial reports.

Proposal Format

- One (1) original proposal package and four (4) copies of the proposal package with all required information must be provided to HCPC. In addition, one electronic copy of the original proposal package (to include all required signed signature pages and attachments) must be provided as part of the proposal submission. The electronic copy may be emailed, but will not be considered as officially submitted until the original, signed copy is delivered in person to HCPC. All of the above must be received by the specified proposal submission due date and time to be considered for funding award.
- Each project proposal and its related attachments must be submitted in the order listed above on 8.5" x 11" paper size.
- Original copy should be secured with a staple or binder clip and labeled on the front sheet as the "Original". Each copy should be secured with a staple or binder clip and labeled on the front sheet as "Copy". Original should be single-sided. Copies may be single- or double-sided. Please do not use sheet protectors or spiral binding.
- RFP Application must be signed by an agency official authorized to execute contracts.
- Handwritten proposals will be rejected.
- Cover letter is not required.
- Do not include these instructions with your submission.
- Narratives should be detailed, but concise. Do not include information or attachments not related to the specific project proposal or that are not specifically requested in this RFP.

Fatal Flaws

Proposals that commit the following fatal flaws will be rejected and will not be given consideration for funding:

- Proposal was submitted after the stated due date and time.
- Agency is not eligible (not a 501(c)3, not a CoC member, etc.).
- RFP Application is not signed by agency official authorized to execute contracts.
- Proposal is handwritten. (Proposals that include minimum handwritten items, such as may be required to complete a form, will be accepted.)
- Failure to include one (1) original, four (4) copies, and one electronic copy.
- Proposal does not follow the order outlined in this RFP.
- Proposal does not include all required documents specified in this RFP.
- Failure to complete the Housing First/Low Barrier Questionnaire, including signature.

SECTION V: PROPOSAL EVALUATION

PHASE 1 – Threshold Requirements

Proposals will be reviewed by HCPC staff for adherence to Eligibility Criteria and Proposal Requirements detailed in

Section IV, including Applicant Agency Eligibility, Proposal Requirements and Submission Order, and Fatal Flaws. If Threshold Requirements are not met, the project will be rejected and the applicant agency will be notified by letter. If Threshold Requirements are met, the proposal will proceed to Phase 2.

PHASE 2 – Proposal Review, Scoring and Selection Process

Proposals that meet threshold criteria will be forwarded to the CoC Project Selection Committee for evaluation. Each committee member will score each project proposal using the attached Project Score Card. HCPC staff will provide necessary backup documentation, such as applicant agency's attendance at monthly CoC meetings, System Performance/Monitoring Report and HMIS participation data. HCPC staff will have no input in the selection decision other than application threshold requirement confirmation.

SECTION VI: FUNDING PRIORITIES, SCORING and SELECTION

Project Scoring

Proposals will be scored using the attached Project Score Card. In the event that two or more applicants achieve identical scores, the Committee may consider the past performance of the applicant in terms of grant administration and CoC participation. Additionally, the Committee may consider other factors, including but not limited to how the proposed project relates to serving the best interest of the CoC in reducing the overall number of homeless persons in its catchment area. The Committee will select proposals that are determined to be the most advantageous to the CoC.

Notice of Decision

HCPC will provide notice of selection or non-selection of proposals to each applicant within five business days of the CoC Project Selection Committee decision. Projects not initially selected for funding may be selected later if a selected project application is withdrawn.

APPEALS PROCESS

Eligible applicants may appeal a decision of non-selection for funding. Appeals must be received by HCPC no later than five business days following the date of notice of non-selection. Any organization that is adversely affected by the selection decision or intended decision must follow the Appeals and Grievances procedure approved by the CoC and posted on the HCPC website: www.polkhomeless.org.

SECTION VII: PROJECT TYPES

Rapid Rehousing

Rapid rehousing (RRH) is an intervention designed to help individuals and families to quickly exit homelessness, return to housing in the community, and not become homeless again in the near term. The core components of a rapid rehousing project are housing identification, move-in and rent assistance, and case management services. **These core components represent the minimum that a project must provide** to households to be considered a rapid rehousing project.

ESG Grant:

The ESG Program will fund activities that meet the definitions contained in the HUD regulations published in 24 CFR 576, as amended. Please refer to the ESG Interim Rule posted on the HCPC website for detailed information on eligibility requirements. Eligible costs include providing housing relocation and stabilization services (rental

application fees, security deposits, last month's rent, utility payments, moving costs, housing search and placement, housing stability case management, mediation, legal services, and credit repair); and short-term and/or medium-term rental assistance.

Challenge Grant:

Will follow ESG regulations generally but may be more flexible in terms of client eligibility and allowable expenses. Refer to CoC policy related to referral process, length of service, and financial assistance limits posted on the HCPC website.

Homelessness Prevention

The purpose of Homelessness Prevention is to assist eligible families to avoid becoming homeless and to maintain stable housing following the assistance from the grant.

TANF Grant:

To be eligible for assistance under this grant, families must reside in Florida; have at least one household member who is a United States citizen or a lawful permanent resident; have a minor child living in the household full-time; and have a household income less than two-hundred percent (200%) of the federal poverty level as annually published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Providing agency must complete the following tasks:

- 1) Develop a written case plan and conduct mandatory case management for each family applying for financial assistance. The family's case plan shall set forth all of the costs that will be covered by the grant, as well as the total dollar amount of assistance to be provided to the family. The case plan shall spell out the family's goal for housing stability, the anticipated date the case plan will be completed, the agency's schedule for monitoring the family's housing stability following the cessation of grant assistance, whether the family was able to avoid becoming homeless, and whether the family remained in permanent housing.
- 2) Develop, maintain, and retain a case file on each family applying for assistance. The case file shall contain all information required to determine the eligibility of the family, along with the determination decision of eligibility. The file shall include documentation of household income. In addition, if eligible, the file shall include copies of all payments made, the case plan, follow up monitoring of the family, and the housing outcome achieved.
- 3) Track, monitor, and report on each family assisted for at least 12 months after the last assistance is provided to the family. The goal for the homelessness prevention program is to enable at least 85% of the families assisted to remain in their homes and avoid becoming homeless during the ensuing year.

ESG Grant:

The ESG Program will fund activities that meet the definitions contained in the HUD regulations published in 24 CFR 576, as amended. Please refer to the ESG Interim Rule posted on the HCPC website for detailed information on eligibility requirements. Eligible costs include providing housing relocation and stabilization services (rental application fees, security deposits, last month's rent, utility payments, moving costs, housing search and placement, housing stability case management, mediation, legal services, and credit repair); and short-term and/or medium-term rental assistance.

Outreach

Outreach projects include essential services necessary to reach out to unsheltered homeless people, connect them with emergency shelter, housing, or critical services, and provide urgent, non-facility-based care to unsheltered homeless people who are unwilling or unable to access emergency shelter, housing, or an appropriate health facility. Eligible costs include engagement; case management; emergency health services; emergency mental health services; transportation; and services for special populations (homeless youth, victim services, and people living with HIV/AIDS).