

**FY2023 Adult Treatment Court Discretionary Grant Program:
Accountability Court Housing Grant**

Department: Treatment Services

Program to be served by grant: Hall County Drug Court and Veterans Track, Hall County H.E.L.P. Program, Hall County DUI Court, Hall County Family Treatment Court, Dawson County Treatment Court (Drug/DUI), Dawson County H.E.L.P. Program, and Dawson County Family Treatment Court

Grant Solicitation Release Date: April 30, 2024

Grant Application Deadline: May 30, 2024

Total Budget Request: \$99,320

Match Requirement: 25% using CACJ state-funded accountability court grant Case Manager salary.

Project Description

The accountability courts of the Northeastern Judicial Circuit (Hall and Dawson County) will collaborate with local extended stay hotels and recovery-transitional housing partners to provide affordable housing options to program participants. Each week, our programs deny admittance to eligible participants simply due to the lack of stable housing in our counties. This barrier to treatment has lasting negative effects, on not only the participant, but also their family and our communities. Funding through the FY2023 Accountability Court Housing Grant will allow us to serve a much larger network of qualified candidates, which, in turn, will reduce recidivism rates and provide direct cost-savings to our local communities. Grant funding is available to provide temporary shelter at local motels/hotels for up to 180 days per program participant and up to 24 months of funding per participant for recovery-transitional housing. Treatment Services intends to request funding in both available areas to directly benefit our program participants and increase the overall census.

Needs Statement

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs indicates that basic needs such as stable shelter must be met before any individual can obtain growth in other areas such as professional and personal development. Knowing where one will lay their head at night is a basic human need and one that individuals suffering from substance use and mental health disorders regularly struggle to maintain. To qualify for enrollment in our accountability court programs, individuals must have stable housing in Hall or Dawson counties. This is imperative so they can attend daily drug testing appointments, daily counseling sessions, and weekly court review sessions. Our data indicates that a large portion of referred candidates are denied admittance due to no other reason than housing issues. Additionally, individuals with criminal backgrounds are often disqualified by many property owners, which also serves as a great barrier for many individuals referred to the accountability courts. Our program census would greatly increase if we were able to better assist clients with housing, especially our low-income clients and clients belonging to racial and ethnic minorities. According to the Norton Agency, the average home costs approximately \$423,500 which is 5.5x the amount of the median household income of \$67,571. The average income of a newly enrolled participant in the Northeastern Judicial Circuit accountability court programs is

approximately \$24,000 - \$28,000 annually. The current home buying disparity paired with increased rental prices proves a significant barrier to many individuals referred to the accountability courts in the Northeastern Judicial Circuit (Hall and Dawson Counties). Each week our programs deny admittance to otherwise eligible candidates simply due to the lack of stable housing in our jurisdiction. It is our goal to partner with local hotels/motels and sober living housing options to foster relationships which will open doors for our participants to secure more permanent housing options while being afforded an opportunity to stabilize in early recovery. The structure and oversight of our programs helps create an ideal tenant for property owners (i.e. drug screened regularly, participants must maintain employment, and obey all applicable laws). By providing this type of assistance, individuals will gain access to treatment at a much faster rate than at any other time in our agency's history. This ripple effect of program enrollment touches numerous aspects of our local communities including reduction in incarceration costs, additional candidates in the local job workforce pool, and overall increase in tax revenue as participants will be contributing members to society. The ability to assist eligible participants with emergency shelter (i.e. extended stay hotel up to 30 days) and recovery-transitional housing (for approximately 2 months) is crucial to the overall success of our program participants.

Our agency has established a relationship with Motel 6 to negotiate a discounted weekly rate for program participants. This partnership will be instrumental in providing stable emergency shelter for many individuals in our programs and will reduce incarceration costs absorbed by our local counties. Funding through this grant will allow us to place up to 26 individuals in an extended stay suite for 30 days while they seek long-term housing solutions. While we have established this initial partnership, we will continue to seek partnerships with similar emergency shelter options in our community.

In addition to providing emergency shelter for eligible participants, we will provide funding to allow participants an opportunity to reside in local recovery-transitional housing programs, while they receive services for drug and alcohol-related issues, peer services, holistic services, case management services, and ancillary services. We expect to provide financial assistance for up to 19 individuals to cover the average cost of \$1000 for sober living environment initial fees plus the cost of \$1060 per month of rent for 2 months. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the average rental price for a basic apartment unit in Gainesville totals \$1,167/month with multi-room apartments ranging upwards of \$2,500/month. For many individuals referred to our programs, this serves as a significant financial barrier as they may be unemployed at time of arrest or are underemployed with a monthly income that will not support such expenses. Grant funds will be used to directly assist those individuals meeting the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition of literally homeless. More than any other population, those suffering from substance use and mental health disorders face housing issues at an alarming rate. This funding project directly aligns with the mission of our agency in that it will assist all individuals with securing access to treatment, create a foundation for contributions to our local communities, reduce recidivism rates, and provide a significant cost-savings to our local economy.

Project Goals

1. Increase program census by admitting qualified candidates who historically would not be granted admittance due to insufficient housing. By assisting participants with securing appropriate housing options, we will be able to address racial and ethnic disparities and enroll more participants at a faster rate thus reducing overall incarceration costs to our communities.

Additionally, we will grant faster access to treatment to qualified individuals thus reducing recidivism rates.

2. Provide immediate assistance to emergency shelter placement for those individuals who are literally homeless according to HUD's definition.
3. Provide funding to support linkage of accountability court participants to local recovery-transitional housing programs for specialized support through peer services and substance-use related treatment resources.

Project Activities and Services

Our agency will partner with local hotels/motels, and sober living housing programs to provide stable and suitable housing for accountability court participants. By providing financial assistance for emergency shelter and recovery-transitional housing for participants who otherwise qualify for our programs, we will reduce recidivism rates, reduce racial and ethnic disparities, increase program census, enroll participants at an expedited rate with enrollment to treatment faster, and provide a significant cost-savings to the local communities by reducing incarceration costs. Funds will be used to provide short-term (30 days) emergency shelter as well as up to 2 months of rental assistance for participants in a sober living environment. Funds for this grant will serve approximately 45 total participants during the period of this grant period.

Resources Needed

This grant will provide the funds necessary to house 26 participants in a short-term (30 days) emergency shelter (i.e. Motel 6) and provide 19 participants with rental assistance for 2 months in a sober living environment for a total of 45 participants served.