

Ashland Shelter Community, A Proposal from Rogue Retreat
Ashland Housing Trust Fund 2022

I. Introduction

Open 24/7 year-round, Rogue Retreat has the capacity to restore the lives of more than 500 homeless and unsheltered people in Jackson County every night! The impact of sustaining 182,500 bed nights on a 12-month basis is significant.

But, warehousing people is not the solution. Instead, Rogue Retreat is called to help people restore their lives and move forward out of homelessness.

“Homelessness is like falling into a well,” says Chad McComas, Executive Director. “It doesn't matter how you get into the well, you can't get out without a hand up.”

This proposal requests funding from the Ashland Housing Trust Fund to provide a “hand up” for homeless individuals in Ashland. The Ashland Shelter Community was launched November 24, 2021. A primary focus is to help homeless individuals – often without a lifeline of hope or a hand up – regain some sense of dignity and stability after falling into that well.

This is accomplished by meeting homeless people where they are – many with addiction or mental health challenges – and providing them with creative and temporary housing at the Ashland Shelter Community: a place to call “home”.

Then, with community partners working hand-in-hand with Rogue Retreat's trained, supportive services staff, the community collectively wraps itself around each program participant to help them achieve their greatest potential.

Unique Quality #1 - Hope

One quality that is unique about Rogue Retreat is its mission to create opportunities for the homeless to have hope. According to Thomas Fischer, Board Chair, “At Rogue Retreat, ‘hope’ is at our foundation. It is one of our strongest pillars because we have seen growth and progress in our participants so often when we can instill hope for the future.”

Andrea, a participant, adds, “I have stability now. I have structure. I have hope, and I have a place to call home. I finally get to be a present mother, and I'm always accomplishing things I can feel proud of.”

Unique Quality #2 - “Secret Sauce”

At the core of Rogue Retreat's supportive services is a progressive 5-level case management system – referred to by many as its “secret sauce.” The Ashland Shelter Community is uniquely designed to promote self-sufficiency for extremely low-income individuals and families by helping them become independent and self-sufficient. Participants like Andrea are able to monitor their own growth and determine the individual goals that they are attempting to achieve.

Unique Quality #3 - Lived Experience

Another unique quality is Rogue Retreat's staff, many of whom come from an addictions background. Some might call it "lived experience," and the difference it makes in our programs is compelling. Why? Because it's hard to say you've walked a mile in someone's shoes unless you truly have. Many of our staff believe in our mission in ways others might not be able to – because they've lived it and made their own journeys back to the community.

Unique Goals

Another unique aspect of Rogue Retreat's goals is that 60% of those enrolled in its programs will transition into more permanent housing. Rogue Retreat provides the opportunity for ongoing case management for up to 6 months.

Participant's on-going housing is tracked for 1 year and entered into HMIS which is then gathered by our local Community Action Agency (ACCESS) and is reported back to the Oregon Housing and Community Services Division for the State of Oregon.

Unique Objectives - Best Practices

One final unique aspect of Rogue Retreat's objectives is that they have been built on "best practices" learned over 22 years. A testament to its success is that over 30 communities have reached out to Rogue Retreat for technical assistance and training to help their leaders learn these "best practices" and provide a "hand up" to thousands of homeless people in their communities.

II. Project Description

A. Agency Capacity

Rogue Retreat was founded in 1998 and began operating a Recovery House for those suffering from addiction soon after its inception. In 2006, Rogue Retreat revised its mission to primarily address the growing homeless epidemic in Southern Oregon through providing housing and relationship-based case management that helps participants overcome the barriers that keep them from obtaining housing and becoming self-sufficient.

Rogue Retreat has expanded to overseeing 44 apartments, a Medford Urban Campground of more than 100 spaces, a 64-bed year-round low barrier shelter (The Kelly Shelter), a 34-bed tiny house village (Hope Village), a 16-bed tiny house village (Foundry Village) and a 40-bed emergency warming center in Grants Pass, women and men's recovery houses, a medically assisted treatment housing for women, recuperative housing for the medically vulnerable (in partnership with AllCare and

Providence), Summit House (partnership with the Medford Livability Team, OnTrack and Providence), a thrift shop, a Clean Sweep job readiness program that is operated in partnership with the City of Medford and local businesses, and Hope University that packages and delivers "best practices" from Rogue Retreat to be replicated by neighboring communities.

With over 22 years experience in the Rogue Valley and over 500 homeless safely and legally sheltered every night throughout Jackson County, Rogue Retreat is open 24/7 year-round.

With 82 full-time and 5 part-time employees, Rogue Retreat has expanded its capacity to sustain 182,500 bed nights on a 12-month basis in 14 facilities in Southern Oregon.

The mission of Rogue Retreat is **to create opportunities for the homeless to have hope!**

B. Program Description

Located at 2082 E Main Street, the Ashland Shelter Community, operated by Rogue Retreat, opened its doors November 24, 2021. It is a low-barrier, gated and transitional shelter open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. With funding from the Ashland Housing Trust Fund, its doors will be allowed to remain open through October 31, 2022. Without this funding, doors will likely close June 30, 2022, if not sooner.

The Ashland Shelter Community is temporary, transitional and emergency housing with 10 non-congregate pallet shelters and congregate accommodations inside the former Baptist Church building at 2082 E Main Street for extremely low income, homeless individuals and families with children. Up to a maximum of 49 individuals at any one time may be accommodated at the facility.

With funding from the Ashland Housing Trust Fund and through transitional shelter, case management, peer support, and wrap-around supportive services, "homeless" individuals and families in Ashland will transition from homelessness to permanent housing and self-sufficiency.

For a complete list of 21 program activities (tasks) with start/completion dates, see *Attachment A - Program Activity Timeline* as well as *Section II.F. Timeline for Program Completion* on the next page.

C. Target Population

Eligible Target Population - 100% of the population served at the Ashland Shelter Community are homeless. 90% of the homeless population in all Rogue Retreat programs fall into extremely low to low-income categories by receiving less than 30% of the Median Family Income (MFI) or less than 50% of the MFI respectively for this area. Included are those who have experienced catastrophic events that have left them homeless, such as the Alameda fire victims. Rogue Retreat uses a 3rd party verification process for income verification (i.e., paystubs, award letters, bank statements, etc.).

D. Number of Individuals Benefiting

With funding from the Ashland Housing Trust Fund, the Ashland Shelter Community will be able to:

1. Sustain the number of homeless individuals in overnight shelter and transitional housing beds **by at least 49 per night** through **October 31, 2022** (Objective #1)
2. Provided supportive services, including case management and peer support to assist **up to 100 participants** in transitioning from homelessness to permanent housing and improved self-sufficiency through **October 31, 2022** (Objective #2)

E. Type & Number of Housing Units

The Ashland Shelter Community is temporary, transitional and emergency housing at 2082 E Main Street for extremely low income, homeless individuals, and families with children. Up to a **maximum of 49 housing units** are available in one of 10 pallet shelters or in the former Baptist Church building on site. With funding from the Ashland Housing Trust Fund, 344 nights of transitional housing or 16,856 bed nights will be provided through October 31, 2022.

F. Timeline for Program Completion

21 program activities (tasks) with start/completion dates are included as *Attachment A - Program Activity Timeline*. Activities that were started in November 2021 will be continued through October 31, 2022, if CDBG-CV and Housing Trust Fund funding is approved. October 31, 2022, is also the end of the current 12-month lease for 2082 East Main Street, Ashland, OR 97520. All activities are performed on an on-going basis and as required.

For example, when there is a bed opening due to a guest's successful placement into permanent housing, the Ashland Police Department, in a unique collaboration with Rogue Retreat, will be notified and as a result make the appropriate referral into the program for the next unsheltered guest.

Program activities include orientations, screening and data entry using the Homeless Information Management System (HMIS), providing case management on weekly and as-needed basis, referring individuals to community partner services (as needed), transporting guests to showers and emergency health services off-site, maintenance and cleaning of facility, de-escalating, creating a steering committee for short- and long-term planning of the Ashland Shelter Community, securing approval of Jackson County for site usage beyond June 30, 2022, and positively exiting individuals who have reached their personal goals including permanent housing.

For example, within one week of opening on November 24, 2021, one of the guests received keys to her new apartment! After being homeless for over a year and battling significant health concerns, she had permanent housing! The guest had received her HUD Section 8 voucher two months prior. Her name came up on an apartment list when she was a guest at the Ashland Shelter Community.

G. Map of Project's Location

The Ashland Shelter Community is located at 2082 E Main Street. Included is a map: *Attachment B - Map of Project Location*.

On July 29, 2021, with authority granted by House Bill 2006, Jackson County Development Services provided site approval for Rogue Retreat and the City of Ashland in a Type 1 Land Use Interpretation for the additional use of ten pallet shelters to be consistent with previously approved use on the site of 2082 East Main Street, Ashland, for shelter and services. Therefore, approval was granted at this location to provide emergency shelter opportunities for individuals experiencing homelessness. This authorization is set to expire on June 30, 2022, unless further permission is granted.

At the time of this application, the Oregon State Legislature has indicated plans to extend the deadline of House Bill 2006 through June 30, 2023. Once the authorization has been passed and signed into law, Rogue Retreat will work directly with the City of Ashland and Jackson County to secure additional approval to continue services at this location beyond June 30, 2022.

H. Ready for Implementation

Located at 2082 E Main Street, the Ashland Shelter Community opened its doors November 24, 2021. It is a low-barrier, gated and transitional shelter open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Data has already been collected and entered into the Homeless Management Information System from its beginning (November 2021) through February 4, 2022. See *Attachment C - HMIS Data To-Date*.

With funding from the Ashland Housing Trust Fund, the Ashland Shelter Community doors will be allowed to remain open through October 31, 2022.

21 program activities (tasks) with start/completion dates are attached in the *Attachment A - Program Activity Timeline*. Activities that were started in November 2021 will be continued through October 31, 2022.

I. Alignment with Ashland Housing Needs analysis or Consolidation Plan

According to the Spending Priorities from City of Ashland Consolidated Plan, this proposal and the Ashland Shelter Community addresses a High Priority goal:

- Goal: Support services for homelessness outreach, prevention and transition.
- Goal Outcome: Outreach/direct services to homeless populations

With funding from Ashland Housing Trust Fund, the Ashland Shelter Community will be able to:

1. Increase the number of homeless individuals in overnight shelter and transitional housing beds **by up to 49 per night** through **October 31, 2022** (Objective #1)
2. Increase the number of extremely low income and homeless individuals **by at least 100** who receive supportive services, including case management and peer support to assist participants in transitioning from homelessness to permanent housing and improved self-sufficiency through **October 31, 2022** (Objective #2)

J. Affordable Housing

With funding from the Ashland Housing Trust Fund and through transitional shelter, case management, peer support, and wrap-around supportive services, “homeless” individuals and families in Ashland will establish stability and improve their self-sufficiency through case management, peer support and wrap-around services to enable them to transition from homelessness to permanent, affordable housing, as units become available.

K. Energy Conservation

The Ashland Shelter Community conserves energy by having most meals prepared off-site and delivered on-site.

Both laundry and showers are handled off-site, as well. This maximizes the use of existing off-site industrial-strength machines and facilities that reduce the impact on the property sewer and energy grid. Transportation is provided to/from facilities for cleaning laundry and taking showers.

III. Project Experience

A. Applicant's Framework, Special Resources and Experience

Framework - Rogue Retreat uses a framework of housing that consists of six tiers of housing: Transitional Camping (Medford Urban Campground), Transitional Shelter (Kelly Shelter, Ashland Shelter Community), Transitional Housing (Hope Village, Foundry Village, Gateway RV Park, Redwood Inn), Shared Housing including the Summit House and Haven Houses (Amy's Haven, Cindy's Haven, Harold's Haven, Heather's Haven), Apartments with subsidy (Housing Retreat) and Apartments (without subsidy). See *Attachment D - Six Tier Framework*.

Resources - Special resources supporting the Ashland Shelter Community have come from in-kind contributions, cash contributions and partnerships with multiple organizations (i.e., Ashland Police Department, faith-based institutions, Peace House, meal donors, etc.).

\$25,240 in meals will be donated. Whenever possible, local faith-based groups, individuals and restaurants step up and donate meals. For example, the following churches initially stepped up to provide weekly meals: First Presbyterian (Mondays), Rogue Valley Unitarian Universalists Fellowship (Thursdays), United Church of Christ (Fridays).

The Peace House received a \$47,040 CDBG-CV grant to provide weekly meals on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays through March 31, 2022.

A grant proposal was submitted in March 2022 for \$100,000 in Emergency Food and Shelter Funding (EFSF) on behalf of the Ashland Shelter Community to assist in covering food expenses for seven months after the Peace House partnership ends at March 31, 2022.

Experience Overall - With over 22 years experience in the Rogue Valley and over 500 homeless safely and legally sheltered every night throughout Jackson County, Rogue Retreat is able to stay open 24/7 year-round.

With 82 full-time and 5 part-time employees, Rogue Retreat has expanded its capacity to sustain 182,500 bed nights on a 12-month basis in 14 facilities in Southern Oregon.

Experience with Case Management & Self-Sufficiency - Case managers do self sufficiency assessments at entry, interim and final exit for every participant at the Ashland Shelter Community. 15 different key life domains, such as shelter/housing, employment, mobility, safety, are assessed on a scale of 1-5 (from “crisis” to “thriving”).

Please refer to *Attachment E - Self-Sufficiency Outcomes Matrix (SSOM) Definitions*. Participants’ average scores are recorded.

Rogue Retreat’s case management is “progressive” in that one level of self-sufficiency builds on another. Participants have their immediate needs taken care of first and foremost, such as addressing mental and addiction issues. The Oregon Health Plan greatly benefits many participants, too, as does helping secure IDs and birth certificates.

Ultimately, their success rates are reported using the HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) known as Service Point. Within Service Point, Rogue Retreat tracks program and program housing placement, services provided, and permanent housing placement. Positive exits include reuniting with family, moving in with family on a permanent basis, going into drug treatment, buying a house, etc.

B. Similar Programs or Activities

Similar homeless clients are served at the OHRA Center (currently with 39 housing units) operated by Options for Helping Residents of Ashland (OHRA). However, since the homeless needs are far greater than both organizations could address on their own, there are many opportunities for collaboration between OHRA and Rogue Retreat.

For example, one guest at the Ashland Shelter Community received keys to her new apartment within one week of opening on November 24, 2021! After being homeless for over a year and battling significant health concerns, she had permanent housing! That part is known.

What is not commonly known is that that guest timed out of her stay at the OHRA Center. Before she timed out, OHRA navigation staff successfully assisted her in getting her HUD Section 8 voucher two months prior. Her name finally came up on an apartment list when she was a guest at the Ashland Shelter Community.

It will be through partnerships like this between the two similar programs that will ensure that more homeless individuals like this guest will be taken off the street and successfully placed in affordable, permanent housing as units become available.

C. Collaborations and Maximizing Partnerships

In the previous example above (section #III.B.), assistance that the client received from the OHRA Center resulted in her receiving her HUD Section 8 Voucher in the first place. However, she could not use her voucher until more time had passed and her name made it to the top of the waiting list at the apartment complex. This happened “after” she timed out at the OHRA Center and was once again on the streets.

However, when she became a guest at the Ashland Shelter Community, she received word that there was an opening for the apartment. It often takes collaborations over time between multiple service providers – including Section 8 vouchers from the federal government which take time to secure – to help homeless individuals navigate the complexity of the affording housing system.

Another example of a successful partnership is between the Ashland Shelter Community and the Ashland Police Department. The selection of homeless individuals for transitional housing in empty beds at the Ashland Shelter Community is provided by the Ashland Police Department in collaboration with Rogue Retreat.

Examples of additional collaborations and partnerships with the Ashland Shelter Community include in-kind contributions, cash contributions, and partnership with multiple organizations and individuals (i.e., faith-based institutions, Peace House, meal donors, etc.).

Whenever possible, local faith-based groups, individuals and restaurants step up and donate meals. For example, the following churches initially stepped up to provide weekly meals: First Presbyterian (Mondays), Rogue Valley Unitarian Universalists Fellowship (Thursdays), United Church of Christ (Fridays).

The Peace House also applied for and received a \$47,040 CDBG-CV grant to provide weekly meals on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays through March 31, 2022.

IV. Funding Request

A. Amount of Request

This request is for \$170,000, which is 21% of total funding required for the overall project to continue through October 31, 2022. This indicates that Ashland Housing Trust fund is not the sole source of funding for the Ashland Shelter Community and fulfills the requirement that its “contribution shall not exceed more than 50% of the total project, or program, cost.” (source: Requests for Proposals)

B. Amount of Other CDBG Grants Requested

A request for \$81,347 in CDBG-CARES Act funding was submitted on February 18, 2022. The request for CDBG-CARES Act funding represents 10% of total funding required for the overall project to continue through October 31, 2022.

C. Committed Revenue Sources

Other sources of income for operation and maintenance expenses include contracts with Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) like AllCare and Jackson Care Connect, approved state grant funding from the Oregon Housing and Community Services, a family grant, in-kind donations of food and meals as well as local in-kind donation of work performed by the Ashland Police Department (PD) including four hours of outreach weekly on Wednesdays as well as drop-in processing at the Police Station for referrals.

For a list of committed revenue sources, please refer to *Attachment F - Source(s) of Funds* and *Attachment H - 3 Funding Commitments*.

Also, please note that the projected amount of the in-kind donation by the Ashland PD is not available at the time of this writing.

D. % of Matching Funds = 79%

E. Project Expenses

Funds will be used toward direct services for 24/7 coverage, protection and safety of and supportive services for more than 100 homeless individuals in Ashland. Funds will help cover costs of the overnight Guest Hosts at \$16/hour and Peer Support Specialists at \$17.50/hour. Guest Hosts and Peer Support Specialists, as well as the Manager, Assistant Manager and Case Manager, devote 100% of their time to the Ashland Shelter Community.

Wages and benefits constitute a “living wage” and comply with the City of Ashland Living Wage Ordinance. Wages for Guest Hosts start at \$16 per hour. Wages for Peer Support Specialists start at \$17.50.

Total project costs include **personnel** expenses: a manager, an assistant manager, a case manager, a peer support specialist with “lived experience,” guest hosts required for 24/7 coverage for up to 49 homeless individuals, and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data entry and reporting. Wages for all staff are based on established wages at Rogue Retreat. Included are payroll taxes (10%) and health insurance at \$708.30 per person for all employees.

Also included in total project costs are **non-personnel** items including space rental through October 31, 2022, utilities, supplies, purchase of 10 pallet shelters, building repairs, well pump replacement, new electrical meter box, electrical connection to pallet shelters, food, and food supplies.

Additional food supplies averaging around \$200-\$250/week are also required. Items include plates and spoons, breakfast items not covered by donations, noodles, bread, coffee, sugar and pre-cooked items that can be heated or reheated.

At the 2082 East Main Street facility, upon occupancy, the well pump had to be replaced, as well as the electrical meter. Electrical access had to be added to connect the 10 pallet shelters to electricity. Costs were covered by an individual donation and grant funding.

See *Attachment G - Program Budget* for an itemized list of direct (non-personnel), direct (personnel), and in-direct costs.

F. Why Affordable Housing Trust funds?

Ashland Housing Trust Fund supports the “creation or preservation of housing that is affordable.” One of the priorities of funding includes “transitional and emergency housing for homeless individuals and families through an established program to move people toward self-sufficiency.”

With over 22 years experience in the Rogue Valley, Rogue Retreat is indeed an established program with an extensive track record of 24/7 year round case management leading to self-sufficiency. Using “best practices” like coordinated entry, low barrier shelters, lived experience, peer support, and equity/racial justice, over 500 homeless individuals are safely and legally sheltered every night throughout 14 facilities in Jackson County.

This new partnership between the Ashland Housing Trust Fund will allow for a “hands up” through October 31, 2022, for over 100 homeless neighbors in the Ashland community who have fallen into the well of homelessness and cannot get out.

G. Avoiding Duplication

The OHRA Center run by Options for Helping Residents of Ashland (OHRA) currently has 39 rooms available and a “time out” period for stays. Even at full capacity of 49 individuals at the Ashland Shelter Community, with both the OHRA and Ashland Shelter Community operating at full capacity, there are still many more unhoused neighbors without shelter.

However, since the number of homeless and unique needs of the homeless population far exceed services that either organization can provide, there are many opportunities to avoid duplication and collaborate.

A Steering Committee is being created for the Ashland Shelter Community that will include a representative from OHRA, as well as representatives from local faith-based institutions, nonprofits and governmental agencies.

H. Family Relocation

All efforts will be made to minimize relocation of existing residents unless doing so will be to their advantage and a choice they welcome.

With a grant that supports Family Reunification, Rogue Retreat has resources to assist individuals whenever appropriate to reunite safely with family members locally and in other parts of the country.