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Community Development Investment & Lending Partnership

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Housing Solutions in Southeast Virginia

Primary Contact	Sharhonda Woods
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Name of organization	ForKids, inc.
Mission statement	<p>ForKids is dedicated to our mission of breaking the cycle of homelessness and poverty for families and children. Established in May 1988 as an 8-family emergency shelter in Norfolk, Virginia, ForKids is now a thriving regional organization providing housing and education services to approximately 290 families and 580 children daily. As one of the largest providers of year-round homeless services for families in Virginia, we deliver quality Crisis Response, Housing & Critical Services and Children's Education programs designed to achieve stability for families and a lifetime of success for children. Averaging about 26 calls per day at its inception in 2011, the Housing Crisis Hotline, operated by ForKids, answered 54,000 calls from individuals and families in need of assistance last year. Our extended services, spanning 14 localities and over 3,000 square miles, touched the lives of nearly 70,000 people last year.</p>
Overview of organization	<p>ForKids provides housing solutions including homelessness prevention, emergency shelter, rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, tenant based rental assistance and supportive services for veteran families to assist families throughout Southeastern Virginia. Today, people in crisis can reach out to the Housing Crisis Hotline to be connected to any one of hundreds of public and private resources. Knowing that families are able to improve their quality of life only when they have a stable place to live, ForKids embraces housing first principles; our holistic approach focuses on the reduction or elimination of barriers for families working to maintain stability. Utilizing the Critical Time Intervention model designed to prevent recurrent homelessness and engaging families from a strength-based perspective, the team works to help families locate housing, employment and other resources to achieve self-sufficiency.</p> <p>Critical Services help families achieve stability. Case Management is designed to assess families' needs, assist with identifying goals, and develop a plan to achieve stability. Housing Placement identifies housing opportunities that meet the family's needs, maintains relationships with over 120 landlords who provide housing despite families' barriers and helps them move from shelter</p>

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	<p>into safe, affordable housing as quickly as possible. Employment Services help to determine an appropriate goal and outline the steps needed to obtain and maintain gainful employment. Medical/Mental Health Coordination helps identify risk factors or any current challenges, facilitates the acquisition of health care and provides referrals to community resources as needed.</p> <p>The Children’s Education program provides customized instruction, enrichment and mentoring while advocating for the needs of the children and their families. Our afterschool tutoring programs work with students to improve their core skills, correctly complete homework assignments and provide enrichment activities to reinforce learning and improve social emotional competencies. Summer programs teach life skills and prepare children for school. Parents are encouraged to fully engage in their children’s education. All school-age children are monitored to ensure continued success. By supporting children’s educational success in their younger years, we can also help reduce the likelihood of repeated experiences of homelessness.</p>
Website	www.forkids.org
State where proposal is located	Virginia - Chesapeake, Franklin City, Hampton, Isle of Wight, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Southampton, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, Williamsburg, York
Proposal title	Housing Solutions in Southeast Virginia
Support request	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investment/Grant
Requested amount	\$25,000
Other significant partners in the proposal	ForKids works closely with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, the Virginia Department of Education, the United Way of South Hampton Roads, the Hampton Roads Community Foundation, the cities of Norfolk, Chesapeake and Suffolk (including Suffolk Public Schools), Towne Bank and the Landmark Foundation.
Proposal narrative	<p>When individuals and families experience a temporary financial shortfall and are at imminent risk of homelessness, they can turn to the Homelessness Prevention Program to determine their best housing stabilization strategy. Every effort is made to keep people in their current housing and financial assistance is available for past due rent or other costs to avoid a lease termination or moving costs to obtain new housing. The Regional Emergency Shelter Program combines housing and critical services at Haven House Emergency Shelter in Norfolk or through hotel vouchers in other areas to reduce or eliminate barriers and help families locate housing as quickly as possible. The Rapid Re-Housing program houses families and provides financial assistance in a declining rental subsidy and to assist with challenges such as security deposits, application fees, utility barrier debts and move-in costs. Housing-stabilization Case Management connects families to community resources and provides employment services and budget counseling to ensure that families have a plan to afford rent when assistance ends.</p> <p>Permanent Supportive Housing provides housing, rental subsidies and individualized case management for families with children who have a disabled</p>

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	<p>family member and are unable to maintain fair market housing without support to assist families until they can access housing in the community. Through the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program, veterans and their families benefit from outreach, housing search and case management services to end or prevent homelessness. Tenant Based Rental Assistance provides short-term financial assistance and case management to help families regain stability.</p> <p>Utilizing housing first principles means families are able to stabilize their income and improve their quality of life once they have stable housing. ForKids leverages rental subsidies to maximize families' opportunities for education or training and allows them to establish realistic goals for the future. Family Case Managers coordinate the team of specialists essential to establishing and encouraging families' positive working relationships with landlords, employers, and other formal and informal partners to increase the support network necessary to maintain housing long term. As one of the largest providers of year-round homeless services for families in Virginia, ForKids can assist more families in more ways and work to end homelessness in our community.</p>
Issues addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Affordable Housing ▪ Community Services and Facilities
Geographic impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City-wide
Population served	<p>Hampton Roads is the fourth most expensive area in Virginia in which to live but over 12% of the population of nearly 1.7 million people lives in poverty and 34% of households are cost burdened. The rate jumps to over 90% for renters earning less than \$35,000 per year. Single mothers head 87% of ForKids' families, 48% of families have a child age 3 or younger and 92% of households have income below the poverty level; some have no income at all.</p>
Population income	<p>100% of people served by ForKids qualify as Low- to Moderate-Income</p>
Anticipated outcomes or impact	<p>Family homelessness has become more prevalent and pervasive among low-income families. The ForKids team addresses the complex challenges of homelessness and poverty, implementing evidence-based practices and innovative program models that enhance people's lives every day. Stable housing is the foundation upon which people build their lives; through the dedication and persistence of our staff, volunteers, partners, and families, ForKids provided Housing & Critical Services to nearly 450 families, including over 900 children from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019.</p> <p>Income improves access to food, healthcare, transportation and childcare and increases personal, family, and community wellbeing. ForKids established a new Economic Mobility team with the vision of helping to equip families with the resources and skills necessary to maintain a family-sustaining wage and break the cycle of poverty by identifying existing certificate, apprenticeship, job-training and degree programs that are accessible/attainable within the timeframe of goals set by the families in housing programs. With the goal of non-recurring homelessness, ForKids measures the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of families will meet their basic needs

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 90% of families in housing programs will exit to appropriate housing <p>ForKids is now at a turning point and has embarked on a capital campaign to fund our Center for Children and Families (CCF), a 60,000 s.f. mixed-use complex which will replace inefficient, outdated buildings, expand service capacity, and improve our families' access to public transit and regional highways. The CCF will open in 2021 and be the nexus of ForKids' work to create solutions for poverty and homelessness. The CCF will include a Regional Services Headquarters with 100+ employees, an Education Center tutoring up to 120 children in creative learning spaces, a 24-seat Hotline, a 135-bed Family Shelter, and a new Research and Advocacy Center.</p>
Evaluation methods used to measure success	<p>While many measures track the performance of our housing programs, the measure with the single strongest long-term impact is exits to housing. When families succeed in moving from homelessness to housing, they have the stability necessary to advance to self-sufficiency. Increased income from employment allows families to pay off past debts, access reliable transportation and secure reliable childcare.</p> <p>ForKids utilizes two different databases to collect client and program-level information. The Homeless Management Information System collects basic demographics at program entry, progress reports and exit and provides monthly internal reports that track key program management data. ForKids transitioned to an online case management system called Collaborate in order to allow for shared electronic records and more effective data collection. All services and education team members utilize the system which allows for better coordination of care, increased communication and easier file monitoring by supervisors. In addition, data regarding services being provided can be collected more easily which allows senior leadership to connect inputs and outputs with positive and negative outcomes. The system is also utilized to map out caseloads, track referrals and assess outcomes based on various populations.</p> <p>Program evaluations are shared with senior staff, funders and the Board of Directors. The ForKids leadership team evaluates overall program effectiveness, identifies gaps in services and researches best practices toward improvement. We publish information about outcomes in our annual report and share evaluation information with other local organizations. ForKids plans to hire additional staff in 2020 to analyze and share our data and the stories of our families, to educate community leaders about the impact of family homelessness and offer practical solutions to affect large scale change.</p>
Project timeframe. Is your request for an existing or new program?	Existing Program