

Completeness Checklist

Applicants must complete chart below and attach as PAGE 1 of the submission.

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<u>Project Applicant:</u> Hope Above Fear	
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1. Applicant Information

Organization Name: Hope Above Fear	Authorized Organization Representative Name/Title: Stephanie Shepard - Executive Director
Address: 47 N Stillman St	Telephone: 480-251-5157
City, State/Zip: Pensacola, FL 32505	Organization Website: https://hopeabovefear.org/
Contact Person Name/Title: Stephanie Shepard - Executive Director	Unique Entity ID (SAM #):
Contract Person E-mail: stephanie@hopeabovefear.org	Federal Employer ID #: 88-4378059

2. Project Information

Project Name: Youth Prevention and Recovery Center	
Project Address (if different from organization address): 1380 N. Palafox St.	
This is a/an: <input type="checkbox"/> New Project or <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expanded Project	
Total Funding Requested for this Project: \$250,000	
Number of Persons to be Served: 300 - 400	
Project Type (check as many as applicable below):	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medication Assisted Treatment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education Program
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prevention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recovery
Treatment (other than medication assisted) (specify model): _____	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Overdose Reversal Medication Distribution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Criminal Justice Training, Prevention, and Treatment
Other (please specify):	

Target Population (check as many as applicable below):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Chronically Homeless <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Single Individuals <input type="checkbox"/> Victims of Domestic Violence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LGBTQI+ Individuals/Families/Youth <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Adolescents aged 12 - 17.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Families <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaccompanied Youth (ages 18-24) <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans <input type="checkbox"/> Individuals with Severe and Persistent Mental Illness
Target Service Location (check as many as applicable below):	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City of Pensacola <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Town of Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unincorporated Escambia County <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All of Escambia County
Is this project using a mobile-based treatment model? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

3. Certification

To the best of my knowledge, I certify that the information in this application is true and correct and that the document has been duly authorized by the governing body of the applicant. I will comply with the program rules and regulations if assistance is approved. I also certify that I am aware that providing false information on the application can subject the individual signing such application to criminal sanctions. I further certify that I am authorized to submit this application and have followed all policies and procedures of my agency regarding grant application submissions.

Authorized Organization: Hope Above Fear

Representative: Executive Director

Signature: Stephanie Shepard

Typed Name: Stephanie Shepard

Title: Executive Director

Date: September 9, 2025

Authorized Organization: Hope Above Fear

Representative: Executive Director

Signature: Stephanie Shepard

Typed Name: Stephanie Shepard

Title: Executive Director

Date: 9/9/25

Executive Summary

Hope Above Fear (HAF) was founded in January 2023 by Stephanie Shepard, just two months after the tragic and preventable loss of her 18-year-old son, Isaiah, to fentanyl poisoning. In the wake of unimaginable grief, Stephanie channeled her pain into purpose, creating a nonprofit dedicated to saving lives through awareness, education, prevention, and compassionate support for youth and families impacted by substance use.

What began as a small grassroots effort has grown into Escambia and Santa Rosa County's only youth-focused substance use prevention and intervention organization. HAF has filled a critical gap in the community by offering fentanyl education and outreach in schools, grief support groups for families, free youth engagement through the *Choose Your Story* initiative, and large-scale awareness events such as National Fentanyl Awareness Day and International Overdose Awareness Day. In 2024 alone, HAF reached more than 3,000 community members and strengthened partnerships with school districts, law enforcement, and health organizations. The *Choose Your Story* program has become a cornerstone of the organization, expanding from monthly to weekly gatherings that provide safe, engaging, and substance-free experiences for youth. In addition, a Youth Advisory Council (YAC) was launched to elevate youth voices, shape peer-driven prevention messaging, and contribute to regional prevention planning through the NWF SafePath Network.

In September 2025, HAF expanded its capacity by signing a three-year lease with the Northwest Florida Community Health Clinic to establish the first **Youth Prevention & Recovery Center** across the Panhandle. This centrally located, transit-accessible facility will serve as the permanent home for HAF programs, offering prevention gatherings, educational awareness workshops, youth advocacy meetings, diversion programming, and community outreach — all under one roof. The Center will also connect youth and families to critical wraparound supports, including healthcare, housing, grief counseling, and treatment referrals through partnerships with Northwest Florida Community Health Clinic, Lakeview's MAT and CORE programs, Valerie's House, Children's Home Society, and Currie House.

The mission of Hope Above Fear is to promote awareness about the dangers of substance use, to extend assistance to youth and young adults struggling with or affected by substance abuse, and to provide support for their families. We inspire and equip young people with the tools, knowledge, and resources needed to make informed decisions. Focusing on positivity, optimism, and resilience, we guide youth and young adults to choose a narrative of strength and self-discovery. While adult services exist, there are no local adolescent treatment options, making HAF's prevention and diversion programming the most accessible resource for this population. By launching evidence-based programs such as *Better Without It* — a diversion program for first-time youth drug offenders — alongside prevention, recovery, and youth leadership opportunities, HAF is creating a sustainable and innovative model that reduces youth substance use and builds a stronger future for Escambia County.

4. Project Description

Scope of the Project

In September 2025, HAF signed a three-year lease agreement with the Northwest Florida Community Health Clinic to establish the first Prevention & Recovery Youth Center across the Panhandle. This centrally located, transit-accessible facility will serve as the residence for HAF, enabling the expansion and enhancement of current programs as well as the launch of new prevention, diversion, and recovery options in Escambia County.

The Youth Center will become the central hub for all of HAF's prevention, diversion, awareness, and youth engagement initiatives. It will host structured prevention gatherings, substance awareness education programs, youth advocacy meetings, diversion programs, 12-step meetings, and community outreach, all under one roof. The project will not only serve as a safe, substance-free space for teens and their families, but will also connect them to housing, healthcare, and recovery support through coordinated partnerships.

Number and Type of Clients to Be Served

HAF anticipates serving 300–400 youth and families annually through a broad range of prevention, diversion, and support services. This includes youth ages 12–20 who participate in prevention programs such as *Choose Your Story* and the Youth Advisory Council, as well as high school students ages 14–18 who are referred to the *Better Without It* diversion program for first-time drug offenses. The center will also provide access for families in crisis, serving as a safe first stop in the steps towards recovery. Parents, guardians, and caregivers will be engaged through prevention workshops and support groups, while community members will benefit from Narcan distribution, awareness events, 12-step recovery groups, and additional outreach efforts. Our programs specifically target at-risk youth, youth experimenting with substances, youth impacted by a family member's substance use, and those facing first-time disciplinary action for drug-related offenses.

Services to Be Provided

Connection & Prevention: Choose Your Story

Free, engaging weekly gatherings, designed by teens for teens, fostering optimism, personal growth, and meaningful connections. Themes rotate monthly, with activities including art, music, sports, and leadership workshops. In addition to monthly teen nights hosted at various locations across Escambia County, the Youth Center will host safe, substance-free hangouts every Friday and Saturday evening.

Educational Awareness

- *EMPOWER* – A youth-focused presentation for middle school through college-aged students, educating them on the realities of fentanyl and substance use, equipping them with refusal skills, and inspiring positive decision-making. During the 24/25 school year, this program reached 950 students; by 25/26, it will reach all of Escambia and Santa Rosa County middle and high schools.
- *Stop Saying Not My Child* – An adult-focused workshop that equips parents, guardians, and community members to break stigma, communicate effectively with youth, and connect to local resources. Since 2024, more than 470 adults have participated, with thousands more reached through digital awareness campaigns.

To strengthen reach and relevance, funding will be dedicated to video production, billboard campaigns, and program supplies. Funding will support sustainability of our programs - ensuring we have a stable and consistent infrastructure in place for the youth and families in our community.

Youth Involvement & Advocacy

Through the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) and volunteer opportunities, HAF empowers teens to lead prevention efforts, share their perspectives, and advocate for peers. The YAC will meet monthly during the school year, with meals and incentives provided to encourage ongoing participation.

Community Outreach

HAF is a certified Narcan distributor for the state of Florida, having distributed more than 700 boxes since 2023. We also host free awareness events, including National Fentanyl Awareness Day and International Overdose Awareness Day, bringing together hundreds of community members and organizations to raise awareness, honor lives lost, and equip families with resources.

Diversion: Better Without It

A skill-based, evidence-based diversion program developed by the Brevard County Prevention Coalition, *Better Without It* provides an alternative to expulsion for first-time youth drug offenders. This 8-week program offered after school Monday through Thursday from 4–5pm, endorsed by SAMHSA principles of prevention science, combines education, coping strategies, accountability, and family engagement. ECPS data shows a 41% increase, with an average of 157 expulsions for first-time drug offenses since 2021, compared to the previous four-year time frame. This underscores the urgent need for a compassionate, effective alternative. Participants are referred through Escambia County Public Schools, with HAF staff providing program delivery, parent/guardian engagement, and referrals to additional supports.

Costs of Proposed Activities

Hope Above Fear requests \$280,186 in opioid abatement funding. Personnel represents the largest portion of the budget (approximately 64%), supporting a Program Director, Case Manager, two Peer Support Staff, and a Prevention Coordinator, with fringe benefits (FICA, unemployment tax, and insurance) at 20% of payroll. This team will oversee program compliance, deliver diversion and prevention programming, manage referrals, track data, and provide school and community outreach. Occupancy costs (approximately 11%) include facility rent, utilities, and insurance to operate the new Youth Prevention & Recovery Center. Marketing and educational expenses (approximately 11%) will fund brochures, billboard campaigns, and the production of awareness videos for school-based presentations. Youth services (approximately 7%) include costs for *Choose Your Story* gatherings, the Youth Advisory Council, field trips, workshops, program supplies, food/snacks, transportation incentives, and *Better Without It* program delivery, including supplies, guest speakers, and participant meals. Administrative costs (approximately 7%) will remain within the allowable 10% cap and cover communication, internet, bookkeeping, office supplies, and *Better Without It* licensure with a required mid-year site visit. By balancing personnel, occupancy, program operations, and administrative needs, the budget ensures that the majority of funding directly supports service delivery, prevention programming, and diversion activities for Escambia County youth and families.

Evidence-Based & Innovative Approach

The *Better Without It* diversion program is grounded in prevention science and endorsed by SAMHSA as an evidence-based approach to reducing youth substance use. HAF's innovation lies in embedding this program within a broader prevention and recovery ecosystem at the Youth Center. By combining diversion with prevention gatherings, school presentations, youth advocacy, and recovery support, we address both immediate risks and long-term protective factors. This integrated model ensures that youth who complete the diversion program remain connected to positive peers, leadership opportunities, and supportive adults.

Coordination with Housing & Healthcare Providers

Hope Above Fear recognizes that substance use prevention must address broader social determinants of health. Through formal partnerships, we connect participants and families to wraparound supports that extend beyond prevention programming. For housing needs, Children's Home Society and Currie House provide safe, temporary housing for youth in crisis, with Opening Doors Northwest Florida available when appropriate. For healthcare, the Northwest Florida Community Health Clinic delivers physical health services, behavioral screenings, and counseling for youth and families. For substance use treatment, Lakeview's MAT and CORE programs offer treatment and recovery support for individuals 17/18+ struggling with substance abuse, while our primary in-patient referral source for youth under 18 remains Lotus Behavioral Health in South Florida. HAF fills the void locally by embedding prevention and diversion within this coordinated network of services, ensuring youth and families have access to the full continuum of care necessary for long-term stability.

Conclusion

By combining prevention, education, diversion, and recovery support under one roof, Hope Above Fear will serve an estimated **300–400 youth and families each year**. This project leverages an evidence-based diversion model (*Better Without It*) while innovating by embedding it within a broader ecosystem of youth-led prevention, engagement, and recovery support as the first and only Youth Prevention & Recovery Center in the Panhandle. Requested grant funds will cover lease, utilities, staffing, curriculum, program supplies, and participant supports, with allocations dedicated to prevention initiatives, awareness campaigns, youth leadership, diversion programming, and facility operations. Through strategic partnerships with Escambia County Public Schools, Brevard Prevention Coalition, Northwest Florida Community Health Clinic, Lakeview, CORE, and Valerie's House, HAF will coordinate housing, healthcare, grief, and recovery services to ensure youth and families are connected to the continuum of care they need. According to research published by the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), more than 90% of adults with substance use disorders began using substances in adolescence, and those who start before age 14 face a 34% prevalence of lifetime SUD (NCBI, 2024), furthering the urgency of early intervention. By identifying early substance use and intervening during adolescence, we can prevent lifelong struggles and mitigate enormous burdens on individuals, families, and communities. At this time, Escambia County has no local treatment options for youth under 18, leaving hundreds of adolescents at risk without appropriate services. Hope Above Fear is the only organization in the county offering structured prevention and diversion specifically for this age group, ensuring that adolescents have immediate, accessible, and youth-centered support. This project not only fills a critical service gap for Escambia County but also creates a sustainable, innovative model for reducing youth substance use and opioid abuse that can be scaled across the region.

5. Quality of Service Questionnaire

Describe how the project aligns with Escambia County's Opioid Abatement Strategic Summary (Appendix 1).

Treatment & Recovery:

Hope Above Fear's Youth Prevention & Recovery Center supports Escambia County's strategic goal of increasing access to treatment and recovery by serving as both an entry point and a connector to care. While prevention is our primary focus, the Center ensures that youth and families who need treatment are quickly linked to appropriate resources through partnerships with the Northwest Florida Community Health Clinic, Lakeview's MAT and CORE programs, and Lotus Behavioral Health for inpatient youth referrals. In addition, 12-step meetings hosted at the Center expand recovery pathways and provide a safe, ongoing source of peer support for youth and families impacted by substance use. This alignment with Escambia County's treatment and recovery priorities ensures that no youth or family falls through the cracks once a need is identified.

Prevention:

Prevention is at the heart of the project and directly fulfills Escambia County's priority of reducing opioid use before it begins. Programs such as *Choose Your Story* provide weekly prevention-focused gatherings and safe weekend hangouts that strengthen protective factors, reduce isolation, and promote substance-free lifestyles. Our educational programming, including the *EMPOWER* presentation for youth and the *Stop Saying Not My Child* workshop for parents and caregivers, equips families with practical knowledge, refusal skills, and resources to address risk factors early. These prevention activities not only educate but also create a community culture of openness, reducing stigma and empowering young people to make healthier decisions.

Criminal Justice System:

The project also aligns with the County's priority of expanding prevention and treatment within the criminal justice system by offering *Better Without It*, an evidence-based diversion program for first-time youth drug offenders. This program provides a structured, skill-based alternative to expulsion, helping students understand the root causes of their choices, build coping strategies, and engage their families in the recovery process. With Escambia County Public Schools reporting a 41% increase in first-time drug offenses since 2021, this initiative directly addresses the urgent need for compassionate alternatives to punitive measures. By intervening early, *Better Without It* reduces recidivism, decreases the likelihood of future opioid misuse, and ensures young people remain in supportive educational environments rather than being pushed toward more harmful pathways.

Explain how your agency is actively participating in the Homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) and existing Behavioral Health systems in Escambia County, and how this project will integrate with those systems.

Hope Above Fear is not a formal member of the EscaRosa Homeless Continuum of Care (CoC), as our primary mission and client base focus on youth prevention and early intervention rather than housing services. However, we recognize the critical overlap between housing instability and substance use and have already served unhoused youth through our prevention and diversion programs. For example, when a teen in our care required emergency shelter, we coordinated with Children's Home Society and Currie House to ensure safety and stability. We are committed to strengthening these efforts by formally engaging in the CoC to expand our referral network and contribute youth-specific perspectives and solutions to the broader system. Participation will allow us to improve coordination, reduce delays in service access, and ensure our teens are connected to housing resources as part of a wraparound care plan.

Regarding behavioral health systems, Hope Above Fear actively collaborates with the Northwest Florida Community Health Clinic, which provides physical health services, behavioral health screenings, and counseling for youth and families referred through our programs. We also maintain partnerships with Lakeview's MAT and CORE programs for youth and families needing medication-assisted treatment or recovery services. Our primary referral source for inpatient care for youth under 18 is Lotus Behavioral Health in South Florida. In addition, because grief is a common and profound

behavioral health challenge among the youth we serve, Valerie's House has become one of our most critical referral partners, supporting teens who have lost a loved one to substance use or related causes.

This project will integrate seamlessly into both systems by serving as a front-line point of identification and referral. Our Prevention & Recovery Youth Center will not only deliver prevention and diversion programming. Still, it will also act as a bridge to housing, behavioral health, and recovery services whenever deeper needs are identified. Staff will be trained to assess needs, make warm hand-offs, and track referrals to ensure that youth and families are successfully connected to the services they request. By actively engaging with the CoC and continuing to strengthen ties with Escambia County's behavioral health providers, Hope Above Fear will ensure that every young person we encounter has access to the full continuum of care necessary for long-term stability, recovery, and success.

Describe your procedure for assessing participant's needs and making client referrals to other service providers. Describe how you ensure that participants are connected to the services they request.

Hope Above Fear uses a participant-centered approach to assessing needs and connecting youth and families to services. In our current programs, needs are often identified through casual conversation, self-reporting, or information provided by the referring source, usually a parent, guardian, school counselor, or other trusted professional. These informal but safe conversations create space for youth and families to disclose challenges such as grief, mental health concerns, housing instability, or the need for treatment and recovery support.

Once a need is identified, HAF initiates direct contact with the appropriate partner agency to ensure a warm hand-off, rather than simply providing a phone number or flyer. For example, referrals for grief support are made to Valerie's House, healthcare needs are connected through the Northwest Florida Community Health Clinic, and substance use treatment referrals are made to Lakeview's MAT and CORE programs. When housing is the primary concern, referrals are directed to Children's Home Society and Currie House. By making the first call on behalf of the youth or family, staff help reduce barriers and ensure the participant's request is prioritized.

Follow-up is built into the process. HAF staff maintain communication with participants and/or their parents or guardians after a referral to confirm services have been accessed and troubleshoot barriers such as transportation, waitlists, or eligibility concerns. The upcoming launch of *Better Without It* has allowed HAF to further formalize this process through a shared Google Form developed in collaboration with Escambia County Public Schools. This system provides for structured intake, tracking of referrals, and consistent follow-up, while preserving the relationship-based, personalized approach that has made HAF's referral process successful.

Describe how the project will provide connections to permanent supportive solutions, include the extent to which this project will connect client to mainstream services (i.e. food stamps, SSI/SSDI, Medicare/Medicaid, physical health care, mental health care, substance abuse treatment, recovery support groups, public housing, childcare providers, etc.), and community-based supports (i.e. volunteer opportunities, faith-based organizations, civic groups, etc.) to ensure long term stability.

The Hope Above Fear Youth Prevention & Recovery Center is designed not only to provide immediate prevention and diversion programming, but also to serve as a bridge to permanent supportive solutions that ensure long-term stability for youth and families. Each participant who enters our programs is connected to a network of mainstream services and community-based supports that extend well beyond the walls of the Center.

Through our partnership with the Northwest Florida Community Health Clinic, youth and families are connected to comprehensive physical and mental health care, including primary care, behavioral health screenings, and counseling. When substance use treatment is needed, referrals are made to Lakeview's MAT and CORE programs, which provide outpatient medication-assisted treatment and recovery supports, while Lotus Behavioral Health serves as our primary in-patient referral source for youth under 18. The Center also hosts 12-step recovery groups on-site, ensuring that ongoing peer support is accessible in a safe and youth-friendly environment.

To promote long-term resiliency and social connection, participants are linked to a variety of community-based supports. This includes grief counseling through Valerie's House, youth leadership and volunteer opportunities through our Youth Advisory Council, and community outreach events. Our young adult volunteers have played a significant role in mentorship and service opportunities, and their lived experience provides a level of understanding and security that others cannot offer. By engaging youth in prevention activities, leadership roles, and advocacy, we ensure that they are not only receiving services, but also building a sense of ownership, belonging, and purpose in their community.

By embedding prevention and diversion within a comprehensive referral network that spans healthcare, housing, treatment, grief support, and volunteerism, Hope Above Fear ensures that participants are connected to the full continuum of supports they need. This holistic approach reduces the likelihood of substance misuse, strengthens protective factors, and promotes long-term stability for both youth and their families.

Explain how your agency engages persons with lived experience (i.e. previously or currently homeless, previously or currently experiencing MH/SUD, etc.) and historically marginalized groups (i.e. black, indigenous, people of color, LGBTQ+ populations, etc.) in the design and evaluation of programs and services. Include the number of persons engaged and their role.

Hope Above Fear integrates the voices of individuals with lived experience and historically marginalized groups into the design and evaluation of our prevention, diversion, and recovery programming. Two of our primary boots-on-the-ground staff bring invaluable firsthand perspectives: one is a mother who has lost both a husband and a son to opioid overdose, and the other is a 20-year-old in recovery with over one year of sobriety. Their lived experience informs how we conduct outreach, engage with youth, and break down stigma, ensuring that our services remain approachable and authentic.

Our Board President, a Black woman with over 20 years of professional experience in prevention and recovery, and who also leads Lakeview's MAT program, provides leadership that centers equity and inclusion. Her expertise in navigating cultural, systemic, and community factors that shape substance use and access to care strengthens our organizational capacity and ensures decision-making reflects diverse voices.

In 2025 alone, 35% of the youth we have served identify as Black, youth of color, or LGBTQ+. These participants have actively shaped program development through ongoing conversations, feedback sessions, and surveys. Their input has guided the structure of our Youth Advisory Council, influenced the design of *Choose Your Story* gatherings, and informed the teen-led elements of the Youth Prevention & Recovery Center. This direct involvement ensures that programming reflects a wide range of lived experiences and is responsive to the unique challenges faced by marginalized youth.

By centering the voices of those with lived experience and historically marginalized groups, Hope Above Fear creates prevention and diversion programs that are culturally relevant, inclusive, and impactful. This approach not only strengthens the effectiveness of our services but also builds trust within the diverse communities we serve.

Explain your agency's experience providing services to individuals and families who have substance use or cooccurring disorders, including federal, state, and/or local government grant experience and capacity of the organization to administer the project and oversee all compliance requirements.

Since its founding, Hope Above Fear has been dedicated to prevention, awareness, and outreach for individuals and families impacted by substance use, with a particular focus on youth and their support networks. Our programming addresses both substance use and co-occurring disorders by combining education, early intervention, grief support, and direct linkages to treatment and recovery resources.

Direct services to date have included school-based prevention presentations, community overdose awareness events, Narcan distribution, grief support groups for parents who have lost a child to substance use, and youth gatherings through our *Choose Your Story* initiative, which promotes healthy, substance-free lifestyles. These programs often address co-occurring concerns such as anxiety, depression, trauma, and grief, reflecting our understanding that mental health and substance use are deeply interconnected. With the opening of the Youth Prevention & Recovery Center, HAF will expand these services and formally integrate the *Better Without It* diversion program, creating a continuum of prevention and early intervention supports that directly connect participants to behavioral health and recovery systems when needed.

While this is our first application for Escambia County opioid abatement funding, HAF has successfully managed other grants and formal partnerships requiring compliance, data collection, and reporting. This includes funding from the Children's Trust of Escambia County, which supports youth prevention programming and transportation incentives, and a Sunday's Child grant, which funded a youth-led prevention video project. In both cases, HAF has met all contractual obligations, including timely financial reporting, program evaluation, and participant data tracking.

To ensure the successful administration of the Better Without It diversion program and related prevention activities, this grant will fund the hiring of a Case Manager and Peer Support Staff, supported by a Program Coordinator. Together, this team will manage logistics, parent/school communication, intake, data tracking, and service referrals, while ensuring that compliance and reporting requirements are consistently met. Oversight will be further strengthened by our Executive Director and Board of Directors, which includes leaders from education, healthcare, behavioral health, and community services: the Director of Lakeview's MAT program; the EMS CORE Supervisor; the Escambia County Public Schools Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction; a University of West Florida English professor; teachers and coaches from local schools; and other community advocates.

Our Executive Director brings lived experience, strong community partnerships, and a proven record of developing and implementing prevention and intervention programs in collaboration with schools, healthcare providers, and community organizations. This combination of staff capacity, board expertise, and prior grant experience ensures that Hope Above Fear has the infrastructure and accountability systems in place to successfully administer this project, oversee all compliance requirements, and deliver measurable outcomes for Escambia County youth and families.

Describe how your agency has worked to remove traditional barriers (i.e. no income, no insurance, no transportation, etc.) to services for individuals and families who have substance use or co-occurring disorders.

Hope Above Fear is committed to ensuring that traditional barriers such as income, insurance status, or transportation never prevent individuals or families from accessing prevention, diversion, and support services. All of our programs — including *Better Without It*, *Choose Your Story* gatherings, the Youth Advisory Council, community-wide awareness events, and other support activities — are offered completely free of charge. This not only eliminates financial barriers but also reduces stigma, making access immediate and equitable for all youth and families.

Transportation challenges are addressed through strategic planning and partnerships. With funding from the Children's Trust of Escambia County, we currently provide \$10 gas card incentives to all youth participants in *Choose Your Story* and Youth Advisory Council gatherings (May 2025 – April 2026). Because we see the value in eliminating this barrier and offering it as a participant incentive, we have included the continuation of this incentive in this grant for an additional eight-month period. We also rotate prevention program locations across multiple zip codes in Escambia County, ensuring geographic equity and recognizing that substance use impacts every neighborhood. Moving forward, the Youth Prevention & Recovery Center is intentionally located in a central, transit-accessible area, creating a consistent and welcoming hub for prevention and recovery-focused activities.

For needs beyond our immediate scope, Hope Above Fear ensures that participants experience a warm hand-off to trusted partners such as the Community Health of Northwest Florida, Lakeview's MAT and CORE programs, Valerie's House, and Children's Home Society. Staff make the initial contact with the partner agency on behalf of the participant, reducing the complexity of navigating multiple systems and significantly increasing the likelihood of successful engagement.

By systematically addressing financial, transportation, and access barriers, Hope Above Fear ensures that prevention, education, diversion, and early intervention services are available to the youth and families who need them most — regardless of income, insurance coverage, or location.

Describe how your agency evaluates program success.

Hope Above Fear evaluates program success through a combination of measurable outcomes, participant feedback, and continuous program refinement. Each program, including *Better Without It*, is guided by clear objectives and performance indicators that align with Escambia County's opioid abatement priorities.

For *Better Without It*, evaluation will include enrollment and completion rates as well as recidivism tracking for 6–12 months following program completion. Pre- and post-program surveys from both youth and their guardians measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, and self-reported behaviors related to substance use, decision-making, and coping skills. Attendance logs and referral records will further document increased access to prevention programming and connections to treatment, healthcare, or housing resources.

For prevention and engagement activities such as *Choose Your Story*, the Youth Advisory Council, and community-wide awareness events, success is measured by participation levels, geographic reach, and the diversity of youth and families served. Participant surveys, feedback sessions, and focus group discussions are used to gather qualitative data on program relevance, accessibility, and the impact on youth decision-making and resilience.

All quantitative and qualitative data are reviewed quarterly by staff and the Board of Directors to identify trends, celebrate successes, and address challenges. Feedback from youth, families, and partners directly informs program adjustments, whether in content, delivery methods, or scheduling. This ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement process ensures that Hope Above Fear's prevention, diversion, and recovery programming remains responsive, effective, and deeply aligned with the needs of the youth and families we serve in Escambia County.

Describe how the agency will continue to provide quality services in the community in the case of reduced or loss of funding.

Hope Above Fear is committed to maintaining the highest quality of prevention, diversion, and support services for youth and families, even in the event of reduced or lost funding. Our sustainability plan is built on diversified funding sources, strong community partnerships, and a flexible program structure that allows us to adapt to changing financial conditions without compromising the integrity of our mission.

We actively pursue multiple revenue streams, including private donations, corporate sponsorships, local business partnerships, community fundraising events, and grants from foundations and government agencies. This diversification reduces dependence on any single source of funding. Our annual awareness events, targeted fundraising campaigns, and established donor base provide consistent operational support that strengthens long-term sustainability.

In the event of a funding reduction, we would prioritize core services that have the greatest direct impact on our mission, including *Choose Your Story*, the *Better Without It* diversion program, and critical youth engagement activities at the Prevention & Recovery Youth Center. We would also lean on collaborative partnerships with the Escambia County School District, Northwest Florida Community Health Clinic, Lakeview's MAT and CORE programs, and Valerie's House to share resources, co-host programming, and leverage in-kind contributions to maintain essential services.

The Executive Director, engaged Board of Directors, and trusted volunteers provide additional stability by offering the capacity to continue programming with streamlined staffing when/if necessary. By combining careful financial planning, collaborative partnerships, and a mission-driven focus on essential services, Hope Above Fear will remain a reliable and impactful resource for youth and families in Escambia County, even in the face of funding fluctuations.

6. Ability to Complete Activities Outline

Timelines of critical tasks to be accomplished for each proposed activity

Hope Above Fear (HAF) is currently in the brainstorming stage of this expansion with the goal of launching new program services between November 2025 and January 2026. As there is no set timeline of when grant funding will be available, for the purposes of this grant, we have used January 1, 2026 as our start date. If funding is released prior to January, HAF could adjust reporting accordingly without disruption. Monthly reports will be submitted beginning February 5, 2026 and on the first Thursday of each following month. Reports will include the number of participants admitted into the *Better Without It* diversion program, as well as completion rates; service encounters across all grant-supported programs, including *Choose Your Story* gatherings, Youth Advisory Council, educational workshops, and Youth Prevention & Recovery Center activities; and running totals of participants served (new admissions and cumulative). Additional data will include participant race and residential ZIP code to ensure equity and geographic reach.

This reporting will demonstrate progress toward the project's annual goal of serving 300–400 youth and families, including a minimum of 30 youth prevention gatherings (*Choose Your Story* and Youth Advisory Council) and at least 15 *Better Without It* diversion cohorts.

Monthly spending plans and proposed drawdown schedules

HAF proposes a monthly drawdown schedule whereby the total grant award is divided across 12 months. Monthly invoices will be submitted by the first Thursday of each month, beginning February 5, 2026, for reimbursement of the prior month's expenditures.

Invoices will include:

- Personnel costs (Program Director, Case Manager, Peer Support Staff, Prevention Coordinator).
- De-identified line items for non-personnel expenses, including curriculum licensing, program supplies, youth incentives (gas cards, gift cards), facility operations (lease, utilities, insurance), and awareness campaign costs (video production, billboard placement).
- Administrative and compliance costs, not to exceed 10% of the award, itemized quarterly.

Projected drawdowns will remain steady to support ongoing staffing and program delivery, with modest peaks in Q1 (curriculum licensing, initial supply purchases) and Q2–Q3 (awareness campaign rollouts).

Reporting schedule for outcomes achieved

Monthly reports (beginning February 5, 2026): Participant admissions and completions, service encounters across prevention and diversion programs, referrals made, expenditures, and results of **pre- and post-program surveys** measuring changes in knowledge, attitudes, and coping skills.

Quarterly reports (March, June, September 2026): Aggregated outcomes tied to Escambia County opioid abatement performance measures, including number of youth diverted, number of prevention participants, number of families engaged, and referral outcomes to healthcare, housing, and recovery supports. **Participant surveys** and focus group feedback will also be included to evaluate program accessibility, relevance, and impact.

Annual report (December 2026): Comprehensive summary of total youth and families served, program completion rates, recidivism tracking, geographic reach, outcome evaluation from surveys and assessments, and fiscal reconciliation of grant expenditures.

7. Budget Narrative

Sources of Leveraged Funds

Hope Above Fear will leverage multiple committed funding sources to program expansion and related Youth Prevention & Recovery Center activities. Confirmed funding includes an **Escambia Children's Trust Grant**, which provides staffing support for youth prevention programming, funds the entire Choose Your Story initiative which includes participant transportation incentives through **May 2026**. Additional leveraged funds include committed donations from private donors, such as the **the twelve-step recovery** group that will be providing regular contributions for renting our space to host their homegroup three days a week. Due to the anonymous nature of twelve-step programs, a letter of support has not been provided. Proceeds from ongoing community fundraising initiatives will also play a role.

Justification of Personnel - Including Fringe Benefits (\$179,136)

Personnel represents the largest portion of the proposed budget, reflecting the staffing capacity required to deliver intensive diversion and prevention programming. The Program Director (\$50,000 at 100% FTE) will oversee program compliance, staff training, interagency coordination, and partner engagement. In addition, the Director will conduct school- and community-based education and awareness presentations, actively participate in the instruction of *Better Without It*, and manage all aspects of grant reporting. A Case Manager (\$34,000 @ 75% FTE) will manage participant intake, parent/guardian engagement, data tracking, warm hand-offs to partner agencies, and follow-up on referrals. Two Peer Support staff (\$24,000 each, \$48,000 total at 50% FTE) will support program facilitation, provide youth mentoring, manage evening and weekend programming. The Prevention Coordinator (\$17,280 at 50% FTE) will oversee monthly *Choose Your Story* gatherings, Youth Advisory Council meetings, and community outreach events. This position is covered by the Escambia County Children's Trust through April 2026, with this grant sustaining them beyond that date.

Fringe benefits, including FICA, unemployment insurance, and workers' compensation, are calculated at 20% of payroll (\$29,856) to ensure staff retention and compliance with employment standards. Together, this staffing structure ensures consistent program delivery, close coordination with schools and partners, and personalized support for participants and families.

Justification of Occupancy (\$30,600)

A safe, central, and youth-friendly space is essential for consistent programming. This category covers facility rent for the Youth Prevention & Recovery Center, budgeted at \$1,500 per month through August 2026 with an increase to \$2,225 per month moving forward. Utilities are estimated at \$500 per month, ensuring that the facility remains operational and accessible for daily youth and family programming. General liability insurance, budgeted at \$300 per month, is included to maintain a safe and compliant environment for staff, youth, and community partners. These occupancy costs directly support the stability and sustainability of the Center, which serves as the anchor for all prevention, diversion, and recovery-supportive programming.

Justification of Marketing & Educational (\$30,750)

This category ensures that both prevention messaging and program visibility reach a wide audience. Program brochures (\$750) will provide accessible information to parents, schools, and referral partners. Billboard campaigns (\$10,000) will include four youth-led and awareness-focused designs across the county to amplify prevention messaging and promote key events. Awareness videos (\$20,000) will enhance educational presentations in schools, ensuring that content remains relevant and impactful while incorporating local youth voices and lived experiences. These investments expand HAF's ability to educate both youth and adults, reduce stigma, and promote early intervention at the community level.

Justification of Youth Services (\$18,130)

Youth Services directly fund prevention and diversion programming, ensuring that participants have the resources, activities, and incentives necessary to engage fully. For prevention, *Choose Your Story* gatherings and the Youth Advisory Council are supported through field trips and in-house workshops (\$5,000), program supplies and incentives (\$5,000), food and snacks (\$1,400), and gas card incentives (\$1,330) to eliminate transportation barriers. This program is covered by the Escambia County Children's Trust through April 2026, with this grant sustaining this initiative beyond that date. For diversion, *Better Without It* costs include printables and supplies (\$3,370), motivational guest speakers (\$1,500), and food for teens (\$2,400, calculated at \$2 per student per class for up to 150 participants). These line items ensure that both prevention and diversion programming are interactive, engaging, and accessible, while directly addressing the needs and interests of youth participants.

Justification of Administration (\$19,700)

Administrative costs remain lean, ensuring compliance while dedicating the vast majority of funds to direct services. Communication which includes our email domain, website, and newsletter platform (\$2,100), internet & two work phones with data (\$4,100) to support program coordination, communication with clients & the community at large, and reporting success. Accounting and bookkeeping (\$3,000) provide necessary financial oversight for grant compliance. Office supplies, including copier, ink, and paper, are budgeted at \$3,000 for the year to support day-to-day program delivery. Finally, \$7,500 is budgeted for *Better Without It* licensure and the required mid-year site visit to ensure fidelity to the evidence-based model. Altogether, these costs ensure proper financial management, program accountability, and compliance with Escambia County grant requirements.

Timeframes and Methods for Obligating Funds

Hope Above Fear is prepared to obligate and expend grant funds immediately upon award, with all activities scheduled to ensure full utilization between **January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026**.

- **Quarter 1 (Jan–Mar 2026):** Personnel will be hired or reassigned to funded positions, *Better Without It* curriculum licensing secured, and youth program supplies purchased. Costs for field trips and prevention workshops will also be incurred. Facility rent, utilities, and insurance will begin immediately. The first monthly invoices will be submitted starting February 5, 2026, with the first quarterly report due April 1, 2026.
- **Quarter 2 (Apr–Jun 2026):** Ongoing payroll, program delivery, and occupancy costs continue, with the addition of awareness initiatives such as billboard campaigns and the production of educational videos. Quarter 2 reporting will be submitted July 1, 2026.
- **Quarter 3 (Jul–Sep 2026):** Steady operations continue, including salaries, occupancy, and participant incentives. Community-wide awareness events and youth engagement programs peak during the summer months. The mid-year site visit for *Better Without It* licensing obligations will be completed. Quarterly reporting will be submitted October 1, 2026.
- **Quarter 4 (Oct–Dec 2026):** Final program cycles and prevention gatherings will be held; awareness campaigns conclude; staff salaries, facility costs, and administrative compliance costs continue. The final annual report and last reimbursement request will be submitted by January 5, 2027.

The Director will monitor expenditures monthly against the approved budget. Quarterly internal financial reviews with the Board Treasurer will verify that spending remains aligned with both program goals and County guidelines. This layered oversight ensures that all grant funds are fully obligated and spent before the grant deadline.

Additional Services Outside of This Grant

In addition to the prevention, diversion, and recovery programming supported by this application, Hope Above Fear also organizes two large-scale community awareness events each year: **National Fentanyl Awareness Day (May)** and **International Overdose Awareness Day (August)**. These events are not included in the proposed grant budget but represent a vital extension of our mission to prevent substance use and support families impacted by the opioid crisis.

Both events are free to the public and bring together hundreds of community members, youth, and local partners. They feature educational booths, resource sharing, youth-led activities, and opportunities to honor the lives lost to overdose. In 2024, more than 200 attendees participated in each event, with dozens of partner organizations represented. These gatherings expand community knowledge about fentanyl and substance use, reduce stigma, and promote access to local treatment and recovery resources.

Funding for these awareness events comes from a combination of private donations, community sponsorships, and targeted fundraising campaigns, as well as in-kind contributions from local partners who provide food, supplies, and volunteer support. Sponsorship contributions in 2024 were provided by the Escambia County Sheriffs Office and in 2025 the Florida Department of Health. By hosting these events annually, Hope Above Fear strengthens community engagement and ensures that prevention messages extend far beyond the walls of the Youth Prevention & Recovery Center.

8. Proposed Budget

1. PERSONNEL

- a. Program Director: \$50,000
- b. Case Manager: \$34,000
- c. Peer Support: (2 x \$24,000) = \$48,000
- d. Prevention Coordinator: \$17,280
Subtotal = \$149,280
- e. Fringe Benefits: FICA, Unemployment Tax, Insurance: 20% of payroll = \$29,856

PERSONNEL TOTAL: \$179,136

2. OCCUPANCY

- a. Facility Rent: 8 months at \$1500 and 4 months at \$2250
- b. Utilities: \$500 per month
- c. Insurance: General Liability at \$300 per month

OCCUPANCY TOTAL: \$30,600

3. MARKETING AND EDUCATIONAL

- a. Program Brochures \$750
- b. Billboard Campaigns \$10,000
- c. Awareness Videos for School Presentations \$20,000

MARKETING & EDUCATIONAL TOTAL: \$30,750

4. YOUTH SERVICES

- a. Prevention: Choose Your Story Teen Gatherings & Youth Advisory Council
(200 participants: May - December)
 - i. Field Trips & In House Workshops \$5,000
 - ii. Program Supplies & Incentives \$5,000
 - iii. Food & Snacks \$1,400
 - iv. Transportation/Gas Cards (estimated 133 participants during an 8-month period) \$1,330
- b. Diversion: Better Without It (150 participants)
 - i. Program Supplies \$3,370
 - ii. Motivational Guest Speakers (20 cohorts) \$1,500
 - iii. Food & Beverages (\$2 per teen per class, total of \$16 eight classes for up to 150 teens) \$2,400

YOUTH SERVICES TOTAL: \$20,000

5. ADMINISTRATION

- a. Communication: \$2100
- b. Cox Cable & Internet: \$1900
- c. Accounting/Book Keeping: \$3,000
- d. Office supplies, copier, ink, paper \$3,000
- e. Better Without It Licensure and mid year site visit \$7,500

ADMINISTRATION TOTAL: \$19,700

TOTAL EXPENSE: \$280,186

Budget Template

Notice of Funding Availability

Complete ONLY BLUE fields. Do not edit grey fields.

Year 1 (Dates will be based on award date)		
Eligible Costs	Quantity AND Description (max 400 characters)	Annual Assistance Requested
Case Management	1 - 75% FTE Case Manager (\$34,000) + fringe at 20% (\$6,800)	\$40,800
Peer Support Staff	2 - 50% FTE Peer Support (\$24,000) each + fringe at 20% (\$4,800)	\$57,600
Nursing Staff		
Peer Specialist Certifications		
Mobile Service Delivery Vehicles and Associated Costs (i.e. mileage, maintenance, etc.)		
Computers, Phones, and other equipment for program staff		
Program Related Supplies (i.e. harm reduction materials, PPE, medications)		
Marketing and Educational Materials	Program brochures, awareness billboard campaigns, educational videos	\$30,750
Other Expenses	1 - Program Director at 100% FTE (\$50,000) + fringe at 20% (\$10,000) 1 - Prevention Coordinator at 50% FTE (\$17,280) + fringe at 20% (\$3,456)	\$80,736
Other Expenses	Occupancy	\$30,600
Other Expenses	Youth Services - Prevention/Diversion	\$20,000
Subtotal Requested		\$ 260,486
Admin Requested (MAX 10%) (i.e. accounting costs, contract management costs, facility costs)	Communication, Accounting, General Office Supplies, and Licensure Contract Fees	\$19,700

Total Amount Requested

\$ 280,186

9. Project Outcomes

Applicants must provide anticipated outcomes for each of the following performance measures.

(Response provided on pages 21 and 22)

Performance Measure	Baseline Data <i>(must include source)</i>	Desired Outcome	Describe the project component(s) that will be used, and how the outcome will be achieved and monitored.
1. Reduced number of fatal overdoses.			
2. Reduced number of EMS overdose responses.			
3. Increase in substance use disorder treatment to reduce opioid overdoses.			
4. Increase in access to substance use disorder treatment programs.			
5. Increase access to substance use prevention programs.			
6. Increase in substance use disorder training, treatment, and prevention in the Criminal Justice Departments.			
7. OTHER: _____			
If awarded, applicants will be required to submit detailed reports include de-identified and de-duplicated demographic, service, health, and outcome data.			

1. Reduced Number of Fatal Overdoses

Baseline Data (Source): In 2023, Escambia County reported 189 fatal overdoses (Escambia County EMS/Florida Department of Health).

Desired Outcome: Contribute to a measurable reduction in youth-related overdose deaths over the grant period.

Project Component(s): *Better Without It* diversion program and *Choose Your Story* prevention gatherings directly target early-stage substance use among youth, equipping them with refusal skills and healthier coping strategies. Success will be monitored through participant surveys, pre/post assessments, and tracking of referrals to treatment for higher-risk youth.

2. Reduced Number of EMS Overdose Responses

Baseline Data (Source): Escambia EMS reported 4,621 overdose-related calls between January–July 2024 (Escambia EMS Dashboard).

Desired Outcome: Support a downward trend in EMS overdose responses by decreasing initiation and progression of opioid misuse in teens.

Project Component(s): Prevention education (*EMPOWER* presentations, awareness campaigns, Narcan distribution) combined with diversion for first-time offenders reduces the number of youth advancing to high-risk use. Monitoring will include tracking the number of Narcan kits distributed, number of youth reached through presentations, and follow-up data from schools on reduced disciplinary events.

3. Increase in Substance Use Disorder Treatment to Reduce Opioid Overdoses

Baseline Data (Source): According to Lakeview and CORE, local MAT enrollment has grown steadily; however, *neither program provides services for youth*, leaving a significant gap in local treatment options for adolescents. Additionally, Escambia County has no residential treatment programs for minors under 18. This gap means that most at-risk youth in our community have no accessible pathway to treatment.

Desired Outcome: Expand the number of adolescents and families connected to appropriate supports through warm hand-offs, while acknowledging the absence of local treatment services for minors. HAF will fill this gap by providing robust prevention, diversion, and early intervention services as the most accessible and youth-centered option in the county.

Project Component(s): Through *Better Without It*, *Choose Your Story*, and case management supports, HAF will directly intervene with adolescents experimenting with or misusing substances. Families will be connected to available behavioral health supports through the Northwest Florida Community Health Clinic, while inpatient treatment referrals for minors will continue to be made to Lotus Behavioral Health in South Florida. For youth 17 and older, HAF will connect families to Lakeview’s MAT and CORE programs when appropriate. Monitoring will include the number of referrals made, percentage of successful connections to services, and follow-up outcomes for both youth and families.

4. Increase in Access to Substance Use Disorder Treatment Programs

Baseline Data (Source): Escambia County has established treatment programs, but access for youth is extremely limited. According to Escambia Co. CoC reports and local provider data, **no treatment options currently exist for youth under 17**, and there are no residential facilities for minors under 18 in the county. This gap leaves families with few local options and often forces referrals out of the region.

Desired Outcome: Improve equitable access to care for adolescents and families by formalizing referral pathways for older teens (17+) into existing programs, while providing structured prevention and diversion as the most realistic “treatment pathway” for minors under 17 until more youth services are available locally.

Project Component(s): Hope Above Fear will address this gap by embedding the *Better Without It* diversion program within its Youth Prevention & Recovery Center. For youth under 17, *Better Without It* functions as both an evidence-based prevention/diversion model and a bridge to eventual treatment, reducing risk factors before substance use escalates. For

youth 17 and older, referrals will be coordinated to Lakeview's MAT and CORE programs for treatment. Families will also be connected to outpatient behavioral health services at the Northwest Florida Community Health Clinic, with inpatient referrals to Lotus Behavioral Health in South Florida when necessary. Outcomes will be monitored through referral logs, follow-up with families, and program completion data, ensuring that participants are connected to the most appropriate supports available despite system-wide gaps.

5. Increase Access to Substance Use Prevention Programs

Baseline Data (Source): In 2024, Hope Above Fear prevention programs directly served 139 youth through *Choose Your Story* gatherings and reached 950 students through school-based *EMPOWER* education and awareness presentations (internal program data).

Desired Outcome: Expand prevention reach to 300–400 youth annually through center-based programming, diversion, and youth engagement initiatives, and to an estimated 20,000 students countywide through school-based SUD/Fentanyl education and awareness campaigns in collaboration with Escambia County Public Schools and Tier One Billboards.

Project Component(s): Prevention expansion will include weekly and monthly *Choose Your Story* gatherings, monthly Youth Advisory Council meetings, safe weekend hangouts, and expanded school-based education presentations across all middle and high schools. To extend reach beyond in-person programming, HAF will launch video and billboard campaigns designed with youth input to engage peers and the broader community in prevention messaging. Outcomes will be monitored through sign-in sheets, pre/post surveys, cumulative participation reports, and school system reporting on the number of students reached through countywide education days.

6. Increase in Substance Use Disorder Training, Treatment, and Prevention in the Criminal Justice Departments

Baseline Data (Source): ECPS reports a 41% increase in first-time student drug offenses since 2020, with nearly all resulting in expulsion. No youth-focused diversion currently exists.

Desired Outcome: Divert at least 150 students from expulsion through *Better Without It* during the grant year.

Project Component(s): Partnership with Escambia County Public Schools to provide an evidence-based alternative to expulsion. Outcomes monitored through enrollment/completion data, recidivism tracking at 6–12 months, and school disciplinary reports.

7. OTHER: Strengthened Community Awareness

Baseline Data (Source): Since 2023, HAF has distributed 750+ boxes of Narcan and reached 3,000+ community members through awareness events.

Desired Outcome: Expand public knowledge of opioid risks and reduce stigma through annual events (*National Fentanyl Awareness Day*, *International Overdose Awareness Day*) and partnerships with Valerie's House for grief support.

Project Component(s): Public events and billboard campaigns. Outcomes tracked by event attendance, number of Narcan kits distributed, and qualitative feedback from families served.

10. Required Attachments

Letter of Support & MOU's

- ☒ Community Health Northwest Florida
- ☒ Escambia County Public School Assistant Superintendent
- ☒ ECPS Alternative Education Director
- ☒ Brevard County Prevention Coalition
- ☒ Lakeview MAT
- ☒ Lakeview OPUS
- ☒ Valerie's House
- ☒ Escambia Children's Trust

Financial Documents

- ☒ Documentation showing the applicant is located in and provides services Escambia County (Lease)
- ☒ Applicants Annual Operating Budget
- ☒ Proof of 501c3 Status
- ☒ Current W-9
- ☒ 2022 and 2023 Tax returns (**Form 990 for 2023 & 2024 have been provided**)
- ☒ Two most recent years' financial statements (**Annual Financial Report for 2023 & 2024 have been provided**)



Phone
(850) 475-4982



Address
1000 College Blvd
Bldg. 26, Suite #2686
Pensacola, FL 32504

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Pediatrician, Retired

Vacant

Vacant

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Circuit Court

David Williams
Escambia County School Board

Lumon May
Commissioner, Escambia County
Board of County Commissioners

Tina Cain
Director of Child Protection
Department of Children &
Families

Keith Leonard
Superintendent, Escambia County
School District



ESCAMBIA
CHILDREN'S TRUST

Our Children. Our Community. Our Future.

September 9, 2025

Stephanie Shepard, Executive Director
Hope Above Fear
1380 N. Palafox St. Pensacola, FL 32505

Letter of Support for Hope Above Fear Escambia County Opioid Abatement Grant Application

On behalf of the Escambia Children's Trust (ECT), I am pleased to offer this formal letter of support for Hope Above Fear's application to the Escambia County Opioid Abatement Grant.

Since May 2025, ECT has proudly partnered with Hope Above Fear to expand prevention programming and youth engagement initiatives throughout Escambia County. Through this partnership, ECT currently funds two 10-hour youth prevention staff positions, fully supports the *Choose Your Story* initiative, and provides transportation incentives for program participants—support that will continue through April 2026. These investments have been instrumental in promoting equitable access to prevention services and reducing barriers for youth and families affected by substance use.

Hope Above Fear is a valued partner of the Trust, and although they have just begun work with our organization, they consistently deliver high-impact prevention, diversion, and support services to at-risk youth. Their forthcoming Youth Prevention & Recovery Center represents a significant advancement in community-based care, offering safe, substance-free environments and evidence-based programming such as *Better Without It*, *Choose Your Story*, and other awareness and education initiatives. These efforts align directly with ECT's mission to ensure that all children and youth in Escambia County have the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

The Escambia Children's Trust strongly endorses Hope Above Fear's application for opioid abatement funding and encourages Escambia County to invest in their vital work. Together, we can prevent substance use, mitigate risk factors, and build a healthier, more resilient community for our children and families.

Sincerely,

Lindsey Cannon
Executive Director



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ESCAMBIA COUNTY
75 NORTH PACE BOULEVARD
PENSACOLA, FL 32505
PH (850)432-6121 FX (850)469-6379
<http://escambiaschools.org>
KEITH LEONARD, SUPERINTENDENT

September 5, 2025

Ms. Stephanie Shepard
Executive Director
Hope Above Fear
1380 N. Palafox St.
Pensacola, FL 32501

Dear Ms. Shepard:

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Escambia County School District to offer our support of Hope Above Fear's application to expand youth prevention, diversion, and recovery programming through opioid abatement grant funding.

This expansion aligns directly with the Escambia County Opioid Abatement Strategy by targeting critical areas outlined in the plan, particularly prevention, education, and early intervention for youth. Each of the proposal's components is designed to reduce opioid misuse and its consequences by creating stronger pathways of prevention, while also integrating seamlessly with the community's broader systems of care.

Since its founding in 2023, Hope Above Fear has demonstrated a compassionate commitment to addressing youth substance use through awareness campaigns, prevention education, grief support, and community outreach. The organization has been a trusted partner to our district, delivering impactful school-based presentations, expanding youth engagement opportunities through *Choose Your Story* gatherings, and developing the evidence-based *Better Without It* diversion program to provide an alternative to expulsion for first-time drug offenders. These programs directly address the needs of our students while strengthening protective factors and resilience.

The new Youth Prevention & Recovery Center represents a significant step forward in providing a safe, centrally located hub for prevention and recovery services. We believe this project will be an important asset in reducing youth substance misuse and providing the supportive services our students and families need.

We are pleased to offer support for Hope Above Fear's opioid abatement grant application to ensure that resources are made available to help our community address the opioid crisis, protect our youth, and create a healthier future for Escambia County.

Sincerely,

Denny Wilson
Assistant Superintendent – Curriculum and Instruction
Escambia County Public Schools

Affirmative action/equal opportunity employer



ESCAMBIA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

KEITH LEONARD, SUPERINTENDENT
<https://www.escambiaschools.org>

Department of Alternative Education

J. E. Hall Educational Center
30 E. Texar Drive, Room 143
Pensacola, Florida 32503 Phone: (850) 430-7437

Kerri L. Coots, Director

September 5, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of Escambia County Public Schools, I am pleased to provide this letter of support for our partnership with the Hope Above Fear (HAF) and its important work in the area of substance use prevention and recovery.

As a district, we are committed to reducing substance use and promoting prevention, recovery, and long-term stability for youth and families in Escambia County. Substance use impacts not only the health of our students but also their academic success and overall well-being. We recognize that addressing these challenges requires collaboration across schools, families, and community organizations.

Escambia County Public Schools and HAF share a strong commitment to these goals, and we value the ways in which we are working together. Our partnership includes co-hosted programs and shared resources that help ensure students and families have access to the support they need. We look forward to new opportunities in the near future to partner with HAF.

We also express our full support of HAF's new Youth Prevention & Recovery Center and its evidence-based programming, including *Better Without It*, *Choose Your Story*, educational presentations, and community outreach initiatives. These programs provide meaningful tools and opportunities for our students, equipping them to make informed choices and build healthy, resilient futures.

Escambia County Public Schools is proud to stand alongside HAF in this effort, and we look forward to continued collaboration to address substance use and its ripple effects across our community.

Sincerely,

Kerri L. Coots

Director, Alternative Education

Escambia County Public Schools



321-426-1644
info@brevardprevention.org
www.BrevardPrevention.org
1916 Dairy Rd., Melbourne, FL 32935
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 320460, Cocoa Beach, FL 32932

September 5, 2025

Ms. Stephanie Shepard
Executive Director
Hope Above Fear

Dear Ms. Shepard,

I am pleased to provide this letter of support on behalf of the Brevard Prevention Coalition (BPC) for Hope Above Fear's application to the Escambia County Opioid Abatement Grant.

BPC co-developed the *Better Without It*® diversion program and was the first organization to implement it in a school district (Brevard Public Schools). Now entering its third consecutive school year, we have observed how this program can provide an effective and compassionate alternative to expulsion for first-time youth drug offenders. It has contributed to reducing recidivism and equipping students with tools to make healthier, more informed decisions.

BPC is supportive of Hope Above Fear's efforts to implement and expand this evidence-informed, skill-building intervention for youth in Escambia. We also recognize the potential value of integrating the *Better Without It*® diversion program into Hope Above Fear's new Youth Prevention & Recovery Center. This may help address adolescent service needs in the area and serve as a model with potential for broader application across the Panhandle.

We have been encouraged by Hope Above Fear's leadership and innovation in prevention, education, and early intervention, including initiatives such as *Choose Your Story*, *EMPOWER*, and large-scale awareness events. The *Better Without It*® diversion program has demonstrated promise as a tool in helping to prevent youth substance misuse, reduce overdose risks, and promote healthier futures for young people and their communities. Hence, we believe incorporating the program with Hope Above Fear's work would strengthen the continuum of care in Escambia County and expand access to meaningful prevention and diversion services for youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stanley Brizz".

Stanley Brizz, MS
Executive Director
Addictions and Substance Misuse Counselor
Brevard Prevention Coalition



1221 W. Lakeview Ave.
Pensacola, FL 32504
LifeViewGroup.org

Date: 09/02/2025

Please accept this letter of support on behalf of Hope Above Fear 501C. Honorably I serve as the current board president for the organization, but I write this letter as a community partner and advocate for its mission. Before having become a board member, I attended several community outreach events over the past 2 years organized and/or attended by Hope Above Fear. Through that lens I observed the tenacity and heartfelt approach the organization takes towards reducing the rate of youth and families being victim of the trauma of substance use. I began to wonder if the Executive Director, Stephanie, had a body-double because of the number of hours I witnessed her put into the mission of the organization with grace and a smile. I came to admire the organization most when I saw the results which included the growing number of youth eager to attend the evidence-based programs such as the educational trainings on Narcan and *Chose Your Story*. The feedback tells us that this program is working and is needed in our community. I have collaborated with the organization to connect families to resources at Lakeview Center and have been able to refer several families to Hope Above Fear for prevention strategies and support.

There are phenomenal opportunities on the horizon that Hope Above Fear is ready to embark upon including a diversion program partnering with at risk youth and the school district, brick and mortar Hope House that will offer safe haven and resources to the people they serve and many more outreach event to promote resources and recovery. I believe in the mission and values of Hope Above Fear and its executive leader inspires me daily to go with hope and believe in the resilience of our community. Thank you for your time and consideration and the role you play in the healing of our community.

Sincerely,

Sweneda D. McDonald LMHC
MAT Director
8504663400



Cindy C. McLaughlin
Special Programs Manager
Lakeview Center, Inc.
1924 N Palafox Street
Pensacola, FL 32501

Stephanie Shepard
Executive Director
Hope Above Fear
1380 N Palafox Street
Pensacola, FL 32505

Dear Ms. Shepard:

Please accept this letter on behalf of the **Lakeview Center, Inc. OPUS Program**, in support of Hope Above Fear's application for opioid abatement grant funding. As a trusted community partner, we recognize the critical role that Hope Above Fear plays in prevention, diversion and support for youth and families impacted by substance use in Escambia County.

Lakeview has long been committed to addressing substance use disorders through Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), outpatient services and recovery support programs. However, as you are aware, treatment options for adolescents under the age of 17 remain limited in Escambia County.

Hope Above Fear's innovative approach directly addresses this gap by providing early prevention, education and diversion opportunities through programs like *Better Without It* and *Choose Your Story*. These efforts ensure that youth have immediate access to structured support and positive alternatives before substance use escalates to dangerous levels.

We believe that Hope Above Fear's new Youth Prevention & Recovery Center will be an invaluable asset for our community, offering a safe and supportive hub for prevention gatherings, the *Better Without It* diversion program, school-based education and referrals to treatment (when appropriate). By working together, OPUS and Hope Above Fear strengthen the continuum of care in Escambia County, ensuring that families struggling with opioid misuse are supported not only with treatment, but also through prevention and early intervention for their children.

The OPUS Program is proud to partner with Hope Above Fear and is pleased to provide this letter of support for their opioid abatement grant application. Together, we can reduce substance use, prevent overdose deaths and create a safer and healthier future for our youth and families.



Sincerely,

Cindy C. McLaughlin, MPA, CPP, IHPLF
Special Programs Manager/Specialty Programs
Lakeview Center, Inc.

Ms. Stephanie Shepard
Executive Director
Hope Above Fear
1380 N. Palafox St.
Pensacola, FL 32501

Dear Ms. Shepard:

Please accept this letter on behalf of Valerie's House to offer our support of Hope Above Fear's application for opioid abatement grant funding to expand prevention, diversion, and recovery support services for youth and families in Escambia County.

This proposal aligns strongly with the Escambia County Opioid Abatement Strategy by addressing prevention, education, and early intervention, while ensuring that families affected by substance use are connected to wraparound supports that promote long-term stability.

Valerie's House exists to provide support for children and families grieving the loss of a loved one. Substance use and overdose have had a devastating impact on many of the families we serve. Through our collaboration with Hope Above Fear, we have been able to connect youth and parents to grief support services that complement HAF's prevention, education, and diversion programming. Our shared approach ensures that young people not only gain the skills to avoid substance use but also receive the compassionate care needed to process loss and build resilience.

We believe that Hope Above Fear's new Youth Prevention & Recovery Center will be an invaluable asset for our community, providing a safe and supportive hub for prevention gatherings, the *Better Without It* diversion program, awareness education, and continued access to grief services through their ongoing referrals.

Valerie's House is proud to partner with Hope Above Fear and is pleased to provide this letter of support for their opioid abatement grant application. Together, we can create a stronger safety net for youth and families, helping them heal from loss while building hope for the future.

Sincerely,



Crista Brandt
NWFL Director
Valerie's House

Jackson Street Main Site
2315 West Jackson Street
Pensacola, FL 32505
T 850.436.4630 F 850.436.2095



September 2, 2025

Ms. Stephanie Shepard
Executive Director
Hope Above Fear
1380 N. Palafox St.
Pensacola, FL 32501

Dear Ms. Shepard:

Please accept this letter on behalf of Community Health Northwest Florida to offer our support of Hope Above Fear's application for opioid abatement grant funding to expand prevention, diversion, and recovery services for youth and families in Escambia County.

This proposal aligns with the Escambia County Opioid Abatement Strategy by addressing prevention, early intervention, and access to behavioral health and recovery supports. The expansion of services through the new Youth Prevention & Recovery Center will complement the continuum of care already available in our community and ensure that young people are connected to the right services at the right time.

Community Health Northwest Florida has a long history of providing comprehensive primary care, behavioral health screenings, and counseling to uninsured, underinsured, and medically needy residents.

For many families, our clinics are their first point of access to health services. Our partnership with Hope Above Fear strengthens this safety net by creating a direct pathway from prevention and diversion programming into health care, counseling, and recovery supports when needed.

We believe this new program will be an invaluable asset for Escambia County, providing a safe and supportive hub for prevention gatherings, the "Better Without It" diversion program, awareness education, and coordinated referrals to healthcare and recovery services. Together, our organizations can ensure that youth and families not only receive critical prevention programming but also have access to the wraparound supports needed for long-term stability and health.

Community Health Northwest Florida is pleased to partner with Hope Above Fear and strongly supports their application for opioid abatement funding. We look forward to continuing this collaboration to reduce substance use and promote healthier futures for our youth and families.

Sincerely,

Chandra Smiley, CEO
Community Health Northwest Florida

SUBLEASE AGREEMENT (Triple Net Lease)

STATE OF FLORIDA

COUNTY OF ESCAMBIA

THIS SUBLEASE AGREEMENT (this "Sublease") is made and entered into effective the first day of September 01, 2025, by and between Escambia Community Clinics, Inc. dba Community Health Northwest Florida ("Sub lessor") and Hope Above Fear ("Sub lessee").

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, Greater Union Baptist Church as Landlord, and Sub lessor, as Tenant, have entered into that certain Florida Commercial Lease dated April 1, 2022 (the "Prime Lease") whereby Sub lessor has leased from Landlord certain real property and improvements located at 1380 North Palafox, Pensacola, Florida (the "Leased Premises");

WHEREAS, Sub lessor desires to sublease a portion of the Leased Premises to Sub lessee, and Sub lessee desires to sublease a portion of the Leased Premises from Sub lessor;

Sub lessor, for and in consideration of the payment of the rent herein reserved and the performance of all other covenants herein contained, does hereby lease unto the Sub lessee the real and/or personal property described below.

1.

DESCRIPTION OF PREMISES: The premises subleased hereby consist of the non-shaded portion of the real property located at 1380 North Palafox Pensacola Fl. 32501 as depicted in Exhibit "A" attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

2.

TERM OF SUBLEASE: The primary term of this Sublease shall be for a period of one (1) year and Nine (9) months years commencing on September 01, 2025 and terminating on May 31, 2027.

3.

RENTAL: During the primary term of this Sublease, Sub lessee shall pay Sub lessor monthly base rental payments of One thousand five hundred dollars (\$1500) payable in advance and rental shall increase to \$2250.00 and actual calculated utilities taxes and insurance rate in year two and three. Beginning September 1, 2026. In addition, Sub lessee shall pay to Sub lessor monthly in advance of Five hundred dollars (\$500) for shared electricity and trash/garbage pickup

A.

OPTIONS TO RENEW: The Sub lessee is hereby granted One (1) option(s) to extend the term of this lease for a period of three (3) years. (Extended term) upon the same covenants and conditions as the primary term except that the rental for each month of the extended term shall increase Three (3%) percent annually on May 31, 2027 of each year during the extended term. If the Sub lessee desires to continue this lease for the extended term, the Sub lessee must give written notice to that effect to the Sub lessor on or before 120 days prior to the expiration of the primary term, this time period to be considered of the essence. If Sub lessee gives timely written notice as provided in the preceding sentence, then within ten (10) days after such written notice from Sub lessee, Sub lessor shall exercise its renewal option under the Prime Lease to extend the term of the Prime Lease for three (3) years.

5.

PURPOSE: The leased premises shall be used for the sole and exclusive purpose of general office use and for no other business or use whatsoever unless the written consent of Sub lessor is first had and obtained.

6.

SHARED SPACE: Sub lessor and the Sub lessee will share the parking lot, side parking and restrooms. Sub lessor will need access to the main communication IT closet in the main building.

7.

ASSIGNMENT: Sub lessee shall not assign or transfer this Sublease, or any interest herein, or sublet the subleased premises in whole or in part without the prior written consent of Sub lessor, which shall not be unreasonably withheld. Any such assignment or subletting without such consent shall be void and shall, at the option of Sub lessor, terminate this Sublease. Neither this Sublease nor the sublease hold estate of Sub lessee nor any interest of Sub lessee hereunder in the subleased premises or any buildings or improvements thereon shall be subject to involuntary assignment, transfer or sale, or to assignment, transfer or sale by operation of law in any manner whatsoever, and any such attempted involuntary assignment, transfer or sale shall be void and of no effect and shall, at the option of Sub lessor, terminate this Sublease.

8. REAL ESTATE TAXES: During the primary or any extended term of this Sublease, the Sub lessor shall be responsible for the prompt reimbursement to Sub lessor of all real property taxes levied and paid on the subleased premises, excluding any public improvement assessment. Sub lessor shall provide Sub lessee with written notification and verification of said taxes levied and paid. Sub lessee's obligation for all real estate taxes shall be adjusted on a prorate basis for any fractional lease year. Sub lessor and Sub lessee acknowledge that the subleased premises constitute only a portion of the premises leased by Sub lessor under the Prime Lease and that under the Prime Lease the Landlord is obligated to pay real estate taxes and Sub lessor (as Tenant under the Prime Lease) is obligated to repay such real estate taxes to Landlord as additional rent in monthly installments. Under this Section, Sub lessee shall be obligated to reimburse to Sub lessor one-half of such monthly payments on or before the first day of each month.

9. UTILITIES: The Sub lessee shall, during the term of this Sublease, pay to Sub lessor its portion of the charges for water, gas, electricity, garbage, sewerage, and other utility services.

lessee to defend, indemnify, or hold harmless Sub lessor, its agents, employees, guests, or invitees with respect to their own actions or negligence, nor shall such indemnity apply to any property that is not part of the subleased premises. The provisions of this paragraph shall be an addition to any other obligations and liabilities of Sub lessee which Sub lessee may have to Sub lessor at law or in equity and shall survive the transactions contemplated herein and shall survive the termination of this Sublease.

31. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY ACT: Notwithstanding anything contained in this Sublease to the contrary, Sub lessor represents that it is currently making good faith efforts to bring the common areas into compliance with the requirements of Title III of the ADA. Sub lessee represents and covenants that it shall conduct its occupancy and use of the subleased premises in accordance with the ADA (including, but not limited to, modifying its policies, practices and procedures, and providing auxiliary aids and services to disabled persons). If this Sublease provides that Sub lessee is to complete certain alterations and improvements to the subleased premises in conjunction with the Sub lessee taking occupancy of the subleased premises, Sub lessee agrees that all such work shall comply with the ADA. Furthermore, Sub lessee covenants and agrees that any and all future alterations or improvements made by Sub lessee to the subleased premises shall comply with the ADA.

32. ANNUAL ESTIMATED FIRE AND EXTENDED COVERAGE INSURANCE EXPENSE: Sub lessor shall present Sub lessee estimated annual pass through fire and extended coverage insurance expenses at such time as such expense changes. Such annual expense will be divided into twelve (12) monthly payments to be paid each month as additional rent added to the base rental payment, plus applicable sales tax. Lessor to provide to Lessee, in writing, a reconciled statement of the annual estimated property insurance expense.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned have set their hands on the dates below written,

Executed by Sub lessor on 8/26/2025, 2025.

SUBLESSOR:

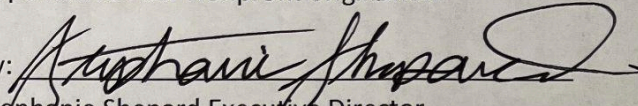
ESCAMBIA COMMUNITY CLINICS, INC. a
Florida not-for-profit corporation
dba Community Health Northwest Florida

By: Chandra Smiley
Chandra Smiley, Its CEO

Executed by Sub lessee on 8/29/25, 2025

SUBLESSEE:

Hope Above Fear Nonprofit origination.

By: 
Stephanie Shepard Executive Director



Annual Buisness Expenditures	2025	
GENERAL EXPENDITURES		
Google Domain	\$172.80	
Publicate (newsletter)	\$180	
Website	\$419.88	
Quickbooks	\$80	
Office Expenses	\$200	
Liability Insurance	\$1,419	
Contract & Professional Fees	\$1,500	
Bookkeeper	\$3,600	
Accountant	\$750	
Fundraising Expenses	\$2,000	
Total General Expenses	\$8,322	
PROGRAM SERVICE FEES		
Choose Your Story	\$6,000	
Group Meetings	\$150	
Advertisement	\$500	
Additional Support	\$500	
Community Events	\$800	
Gallery Night	\$250	
Outreach Supplies	\$1,000	
Program Coordinator	\$12,810	
Total Program Service Fees	\$22,010	
Total Buisness Expenditures	\$32,332	
ANNUAL REVENUE		
Escambia Children's Trust Grant	\$50,000	Admended in May
Fundraising	\$5,000	
Donations	5,000	
Total Annual Revenue	\$60,000	

2025 FLORIDA NOT FOR PROFIT CORPORATION AMENDED ANNUAL REPORT

DOCUMENT# N22000013603

Entity Name: HOPE ABOVE FEAR INC.

Current Principal Place of Business:

47 N STILLMAN ST
PENSACOLA, FL 32505

Current Mailing Address:

47 N STILLMAN ST
PENSACOLA, FL 32505

FEI Number: 88-4378059

Certificate of Status Desired: Yes

Name and Address of Current Registered Agent:

SHEPARD, STEPHANIE C
47 N STILLMAN ST
PENSACOLA, FL 32505 US

The above named entity submits this statement for the purpose of changing its registered office or registered agent, or both, in the State of Florida.

SIGNATURE:

Electronic Signature of Registered Agent

Date

Officer/Director Detail :

Title EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Name SHEPARD, STEPHANIE
Address 47 N STILLMAN ST
City-State-Zip: PENSACOLA FL 32505

Title BOARD MEMBER
Name WHITEHURST, JEFFREY
Address 2118 SCHWAB CT.
UNIT A
City-State-Zip: PENSACOLA FL 32504

Title PRESIDENT
Name MCDONALD, SWENEDA
Address 3212 PATRICIA DR.
City-State-Zip: PENSACOLA FL 32526

Title BOARD MEMBER
Name FAIST, LINDSEY
Address 7441 NORTHPOINTE BLVD.
City-State-Zip: PENSACOLA FL 32514

Title SECRETARY
Name SKIPPER, SARAH
Address 5255 DURANGO CIRCLE
City-State-Zip: PENSACOLA FL 32504

Title BOARD MEMBER
Name GARRETT, RAINA C
Address 1904 E. LEONARD ST
City-State-Zip: PENSACOLA FL 32503

Title BOARD MEMBER
Name KERMAN, WALTER
Address 5959 HERMITAGE DR.
City-State-Zip: PENSACOLA FL 32504

Title BOARD MEMBER
Name GIFFORD, ALICIA
Address 211 SCHWAB CT.
UNIT A
City-State-Zip: PENSACOLA FL 32504

Continues on page 2

I hereby certify that the information indicated on this report or supplemental report is true and accurate and that my electronic signature shall have the same legal effect as if made under oath; that I am an officer or director of the corporation or the receiver or trustee empowered to execute this report as required by Chapter 617, Florida Statutes; and that my name appears above, or on an attachment with all other like empowered.

SIGNATURE: STEPHANIE SHEPARD

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

04/20/2025

Electronic Signature of Signing Officer/Director Detail

Date

Officer/Director Detail Continued :

Title TREASURER
Name TRAHAN, RACHEL
Address 1146 ELLISON DR
City-State-Zip: PENSACOLA FL 32503

Title BOARD MEMBER
Name WILSON, DENNY
Address 5600 TRAFALGAR DRIVE
City-State-Zip: PENSACOLA FL 32504



Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service
Tax Exempt and Government Entities
P.O. Box 2508
Cincinnati, OH 45201

HOPE ABOVE FEAR
C/O STEPHANIE SHEPARD
47 N STILLMAN ST
PENSACOLA, FL 32505

Date:
02/13/2023
Employer ID number:
88-4378059
Person to contact:
Name: Customer Service
ID number: 31954
Telephone: (877) 829-5500
Accounting period ending:
December 31
Public charity status:
170(b)(1)(A)(vi)
Form 990 / 990-EZ / 990-N required:
Yes
Effective date of exemption:
January 1, 2023
Contribution deductibility:
Yes
Addendum applies:
No
DLN:
26053441005543

Dear Applicant:

We're pleased to tell you we determined you're exempt from federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501(c)(3). Donors can deduct contributions they make to you under IRC Section 170. You're also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under Section 2055, 2106, or 2522. This letter could help resolve questions on your exempt status. Please keep it for your records.

Organizations exempt under IRC Section 501(c)(3) are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. We determined you're a public charity under the IRC Section listed at the top of this letter.

If we indicated at the top of this letter that you're required to file Form 990/990-EZ/990-N, our records show you're required to file an annual information return (Form 990 or Form 990-EZ) or electronic notice (Form 990-N, the e-Postcard). If you don't file a required return or notice for three consecutive years, your exempt status will be automatically revoked.

If we indicated at the top of this letter that an addendum applies, the enclosed addendum is an integral part of this letter.

For important information about your responsibilities as a tax-exempt organization, go to www.irs.gov/charities. Enter "4221-PC" in the search bar to view Publication 4221-PC, Compliance Guide for 501(c)(3) Public Charities, which describes your recordkeeping, reporting, and disclosure requirements.

Sincerely,

Stephen A. Martin
Director, Exempt Organizations
Rulings and Agreements



Consumer's Certificate of Exemption

Issued Pursuant to Chapter 212, Florida Statutes

DR-14
R. 01/18

85-8019193934C-4	07/28/2023	07/31/2028	501(C)(3) ORGANIZATION
Certificate Number	Effective Date	Expiration Date	Exemption Category

This certifies that

HOPE ABOVE FEAR INC
47 N STILLMAN ST
PENSACOLA FL 32505-7843

is exempt from the payment of Florida sales and use tax on real property rented, transient rental property rented, tangible personal property purchased or rented, or services purchased.



Important Information for Exempt Organizations

DR-14
R. 01/18

1. You must provide all vendors and suppliers with an exemption certificate before making tax-exempt purchases. See Rule 12A-1.038, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.).
2. Your *Consumer's Certificate of Exemption* is to be used solely by your organization for your organization's customary nonprofit activities.
3. Purchases made by an individual on behalf of the organization are taxable, even if the individual will be reimbursed by the organization.
4. This exemption applies only to purchases your organization makes. The sale or lease to others of tangible personal property, sleeping accommodations, or other real property is taxable. Your organization must register, and collect and remit sales and use tax on such taxable transactions. Note: Churches are exempt from this requirement except when they are the lessor of real property (Rule 12A-1.070, F.A.C.).
5. It is a criminal offense to fraudulently present this certificate to evade the payment of sales tax. Under no circumstances should this certificate be used for the personal benefit of any individual. Violators will be liable for payment of the sales tax plus a penalty of 200% of the tax, and may be subject to conviction of a third-degree felony. Any violation will require the revocation of this certificate.
6. If you have questions about your exemption certificate, please call Taxpayer Services at 850-488-6800. The mailing address is PO Box 6480, Tallahassee, FL 32314-6480.

Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification

Give Form to the
requester. Do not
send to the IRS.

► Go to www.irs.gov/FormW9 for instructions and the latest information.

Print or type.
See Specific Instructions on page 3.

1 Name (as shown on your income tax return). Name is required on this line; do not leave this line blank. Hope Above Fear	
2 Business name/disregarded entity name, if different from above Hope Above Fear	
3 Check appropriate box for federal tax classification of the person whose name is entered on line 1. Check only one of the following seven boxes. <input type="checkbox"/> Individual/sole proprietor or single-member LLC <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> S Corporation <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Trust/estate <input type="checkbox"/> Limited liability company. Enter the tax classification (C=C corporation, S=S corporation, P=Partnership) ► _____ Note: Check the appropriate box in the line above for the tax classification of the single-member owner. Do not check LLC if the LLC is classified as a single-member LLC that is disregarded from the owner unless the owner of the LLC is another LLC that is not disregarded from the owner for U.S. federal tax purposes. Otherwise, a single-member LLC that is disregarded from the owner should check the appropriate box for the tax classification of its owner. <input type="checkbox"/> Other (see instructions) ► _____	4 Exemptions (codes apply only to certain entities, not individuals; see instructions on page 3): Exempt payee code (if any) _____ Exemption from FATCA reporting code (if any) _____ <small>(Applies to accounts maintained outside the U.S.)</small>
5 Address (number, street, and apt. or suite no.) See instructions. 47 N. Stillman St.	Requester's name and address (optional)
6 City, state, and ZIP code Pensacola, FL 32505	
7 List account number(s) here (optional)	

Part I Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN)

Enter your TIN in the appropriate box. The TIN provided must match the name given on line 1 to avoid backup withholding. For individuals, this is generally your social security number (SSN). However, for a resident alien, sole proprietor, or disregarded entity, see the instructions for Part I, later. For other entities, it is your employer identification number (EIN). If you do not have a number, see *How to get a TIN*, later.

Note: If the account is in more than one name, see the instructions for line 1. Also see *What Name and Number To Give the Requester* for guidelines on whose number to enter.

Social security number									
			-				-		
or									
Employer identification number									
8	8		-	4	3	7	8	0	5 9

Part II Certification

Under penalties of perjury, I certify that:

1. The number shown on this form is my correct taxpayer identification number (or I am waiting for a number to be issued to me); and
2. I am not subject to backup withholding because: (a) I am exempt from backup withholding, or (b) I have not been notified by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that I am subject to backup withholding as a result of a failure to report all interest or dividends, or (c) the IRS has notified me that I am no longer subject to backup withholding; and
3. I am a U.S. citizen or other U.S. person (defined below); and
4. The FATCA code(s) entered on this form (if any) indicating that I am exempt from FATCA reporting is correct.

Certification instructions. You must cross out item 2 above if you have been notified by the IRS that you are currently subject to backup withholding because you have failed to report all interest and dividends on your tax return. For real estate transactions, item 2 does not apply. For mortgage interest paid, acquisition or abandonment of secured property, cancellation of debt, contributions to an individual retirement arrangement (IRA), and generally, payments other than interest and dividends, you are not required to sign the certification, but you must provide your correct TIN. See the instructions for Part II, later.

Sign Here	Signature of U.S. person ► _____	Date ► _____
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General Instructions

Section references are to the Internal Revenue Code unless otherwise noted.

Future developments. For the latest information about developments related to Form W-9 and its instructions, such as legislation enacted after they were published, go to www.irs.gov/FormW9.

Purpose of Form

An individual or entity (Form W-9 requester) who is required to file an information return with the IRS must obtain your correct taxpayer identification number (TIN) which may be your social security number (SSN), individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN), adoption taxpayer identification number (ATIN), or employer identification number (EIN), to report on an information return the amount paid to you, or other amount reportable on an information return. Examples of information returns include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Form 1099-INT (interest earned or paid)

- Form 1099-DIV (dividends, including those from stocks or mutual funds)
- Form 1099-MISC (various types of income, prizes, awards, or gross proceeds)
- Form 1099-B (stock or mutual fund sales and certain other transactions by brokers)
- Form 1099-S (proceeds from real estate transactions)
- Form 1099-K (merchant card and third party network transactions)
- Form 1098 (home mortgage interest), 1098-E (student loan interest), 1098-T (tuition)
- Form 1099-C (canceled debt)
- Form 1099-A (acquisition or abandonment of secured property)
Use Form W-9 only if you are a U.S. person (including a resident alien), to provide your correct TIN.

If you do not return Form W-9 to the requester with a TIN, you might be subject to backup withholding. See What is backup withholding, later.

Form 990-N

Electronic Notice (e-Postcard)

OMB No. 1545-2085

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

for Tax-Exempt Organization not Required to File Form 990 or 990-EZ

2024

Open to Public Inspection

A For the 2024 Calendar year, or tax year beginning 2024-01-01 and ending 2024-12-31

B Check if available

☐ Terminated for Business☒ Gross receipts are normally \$50,000 or less

C Name of Organization: HOPE ABOVE FEAR

47 N Stillman St, Pensacola,

FL, US, 32505

D Employee Identification

Number 88-4378059

E Website:

Hope Above Fear

F Name of Principal Officer: Stephanie Shepard

47 N Stillman St, Pensacola,

FL, US, 32505

Privacy Act and Paperwork Reduction Act Notice: We ask for the information on this form to carry out the Internal Revenue laws of the United States. You are required to give us the information. We need it to ensure that you are complying with these laws.

The organization is not required to provide information requested on a form that is subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act unless the form displays a valid OMB control number. Books or records relating to a form or its instructions must be retained as long as their contents may become material in the administration of any Internal Revenue law. The rules governing the confidentiality of the Form 990-N is covered in code section 6104.

The time needed to complete and file this form and related schedules will vary depending on the individual circumstances. The estimated average times is 15 minutes.

Note: This image is provided for your records only. Do Not mail this page to the IRS. The IRS will not accept this filing via paper. You must file your Form 990-N (e-Postcard) electronically.

Form 990-N

Electronic Notice (e-Postcard)

OMB No. 1545-2085

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

for Tax-Exempt Organization not Required to File Form 990 or 990-EZ

2023

Open to Public Inspection

A For the 2023 Calendar year, or tax year beginning 2023-01-01 and ending 2023-12-31

B Check if available

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C Name of Organization: HOPE ABOVE FEAR

47 N Stillman St, Pensacola,

FL, US, 32505

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FL, US, 32505

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WILTON SIMPSON
COMMISSIONER

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Division of Consumer Services

**SOLICITATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS
ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORTING FORM**

Chapter 496, Florida Statutes
Rule 5J-7.004, Florida Administrative Code
1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352) • (850) 410-3800

Remit completed form to:
charities@FDACS.gov

or

FDACS
Solicitation of Contributions
2005 Apalachee Pkwy.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-6500

Hope Above Fear

CH# CH72039

DTN

Organization Name

(Registration #)

(as listed on the preprinted
renewal application)

47 N Stillman St.

Pensacola,

FL

32505

Organization Physical Address

City

State

Zip

FISCAL YEAR ENDING 12 / 31 / 2024

☐ Yes ☒ No Is this a proposed budget? (newly formed organizations only)

☐ Yes ☒ No Is this a consolidated financial statement for chapters, branches and affiliates?

REVENUE

1. Federated campaigns:	1. 0
2. All Fundraising events:	2. 11,523.01
3. Related Organizations:	3. 0
4. Government Grants:	4. 0
5. All other contributions, gifts, grants & similar amounts:	5. 20156.03
6. In-kind contributions (non- cash contributions):	6. 0
7. Program service revenue:	7. 0
8. Income from gaming activities:	8. 0
9. Sales of inventory revenue:	9. 0
10. Misc./Other revenue	10. 0
11. Membership Dues and assessments	11. 0
12. TOTAL REVENUE	12. 31739.86

EXPENSES

1. Program services (including payments to affiliates)	1. 16506.51
2. Management and general	2. 4474.88
3. Fundraising	3. 2135.55
4. TOTAL EXPENSES (add lines 1 through 3)	4. 23116.94

Statement of Functional Expenses for Hope Above Fear

(Organization Name)

CH CH72039

(Renewals Only)

ITEMS	(A) Program Services	(B) Management & General	(C) Fundraising	TOTAL for A, B, C
Grants & allocations (cash ⁰) Non cash ⁰) Attach schedule				
Assistance to individuals	0			
Benefits to or for members	0			0
Compensation to officers, etc.	0	0	0	0
Other salaries, wages, etc.	0	0	0	0
Fees for service non employees	0	\$375	\$1,452.15	\$1827.15
Other benefits, pensions, etc.	0	0	0	0
Payroll taxes	0	0	0	0
Professional fundraising fees	0	0	0	0
Investment management fees	0	0	0	0
Accounting fees	0	0	0	0
Management	0	\$87.65	0	\$87.65
Legal fees	0	0	0	0
Lobbying	0	0	0	0
Office supplies	0	\$59.28	0	\$59.28
Telephone	0	0	0	0
Postage & shipping	0	0	0	0
Equipment rental	0	0	0	0
Occupancy	0	0	0	0
Printing	\$5563.78	0	\$317.72	\$5881.50
Travel	0	0	\$132	\$132
Conferences & meetings	0	0	0	0
Interest	0	0	0	0
Insurance	0	0	0	0
Advertising & promotions	0	0	\$18.68	\$18.68
Information technology	0	\$563.37	0	\$563.37
Royalties	0	0	0	0
Payments to affiliates	0	0	0	0
Depreciation, depletion & amortization	0	0	0	0
Other (List Item)	\$10,942.73	\$3,367.58	\$215	\$14,525.31
Other (List Item)		\$22		\$22
Other (List Item)				
TOTAL EXPENSES	(A) \$16,506.51	(B) \$4474.88	(C) \$2135.55	TOTAL \$23116.94

BALANCE SHEET:	(A) BEGINNING OF YEAR	(B) END OF YEAR
CASH, SAVINGS AND INVESTMENTS	\$21,330.69	\$29,954.61
TOTAL ASSETS	\$21,330.69	\$29,954.61
EXCESS (OR DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	0	0

Statement of Functional Expenses for Hope Above Fear
(Organization Name)

CH CH72039
(Renewals Only)

SUPPLEMENTAL CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENT

You must submit financial statements for the parent organization and **each** chapter, branch, or affiliate listed in question 4 on the Registration Application. However, *if* all contributions received by the chapters, branches, or affiliates are remitted directly into a depository account which feeds directly into the parent organization's centralized accounting system from which all disbursements are made, the parent organization may submit one consolidated financial statement and IRS form 990 with all attachments, or form 990-EZ and Schedule O, for the parent organization and each chapter, branch, or affiliate that is required to file such forms. If submitting one consolidated financial statement, financial information for all branches should be combined into the amounts requested below. Please note: this form is required and may be reproduced to accommodate all affiliate locations. Additional pages using the same format may be attached if more space is needed.

Chapter, Branch, or Affiliate Name: _____

Street Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Email: _____

Total contributions received in the name of the Chapter, Branch or Affiliate \$ _____

Total administrative costs assessed by Parent to Chapter, Branch or Affiliate \$ _____

Total payments to Chapter, Branch or Affiliate \$ _____

If a professional fundraising consultant, professional solicitor, or commercial co-venturer was utilized during any portion of this reporting period, please provide the following information for each contract entered:

☐ Professional Fundraising Consultant

☐ Professional Solicitor

☐ Commercial Co-Venturer

Name: _____

Street Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Amount Received following the campaign, fundraiser, promotion or event: \$ _____

PLEASE NOTE: Financial statements from organizations that receive at least \$500,000 but less than \$1 million in annual contributions must be audited or reviewed by an independent certified public accountant. Financial statements from organizations that receive \$1 million or more in annual contributions must be audited by an independent certified public accountant. If this applies to your organization, you must submit the review or audit with this document.

I am authorized to complete this financial reporting form.



Signature

Executive Director

Title

480-251-5157

Telephone Number

Stephanie Shepard

Printed Name

5/9/25

Date

stephanie@hopeabovefear.org

Email Address



WILTON SIMPSON
COMMISSIONER

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Division of Consumer Services

**SOLICITATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS
ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORTING FORM**

Chapter 496, Florida Statutes
Rule 5J-7.004, Florida Administrative Code
1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352) • (850) 410-3800

Remit completed form to:
charities@FDACS.gov

or

FDACS
Solicitation of Contributions
2005 Apalachee Pkwy.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-6500

Hope Above Fear

Organization Name

CH# CH72039

(Registration #)

DTN 3918041

(as listed on the preprinted
renewal application)

47 N Stillman St Pensacola, FL 32505-7843

Organization Physical Address

City

State

Zip

FISCAL YEAR ENDING 12 / 31 / 23

☐ Yes ☒ No Is this a proposed budget? (newly formed organizations only)

☐ Yes ☒ No Is this a consolidated financial statement for chapters, branches and affiliates?

REVENUE

1. Federated campaigns:	1. 0
2. All Fundraising events:	2. 5331.86
3. Related Organizations:	3. 0
4. Government Grants:	4. 0
5. All other contributions, gifts, grants & similar amounts:	5. 10741.68
6. In-kind contributions (non- cash contributions):	6. 0
7. Program service revenue:	7. 0
8. Income from gaming activities:	8. 0
9. Sales of inventory revenue:	9. 0
10. Misc./Other revenue	10. 0.00
11. Membership Dues and assessments	11. 0
12. TOTAL REVENUE	12. 16073.64

EXPENSES

1. Program services (including payments to affiliates)	1. 4706.53
2. Management and general	2. 1619.38
3. Fundraising	3. 1551.35
4. TOTAL EXPENSES (add lines 1 through 3)	4. 7877.26

Statement of Functional Expenses for

Hope Above Fear

(Organization Name)

CH CH72039

(Renewals Only)

ITEMS	(A) Program Services	(B) Management & General	(C) Fundraising	TOTAL for A, B, C
Grants & allocations (cash _____ Non cash _____) Attach schedule				
Assistance to individuals				
Benefits to or for members				
Compensation to officers, etc.				
Other salaries, wages, etc.				
Fees for service non employees				
Other benefits, pensions, etc.				
Payroll taxes				
Professional fundraising fees				
Investment management fees				
Accounting fees				
Management		1200		1200
Legal fees				
Lobbying				
Office supplies		49.95		49.95
Telephone				
Postage & shipping				
Equipment rental				
Occupancy				
Printing	744.33			744.33
Travel				
Conferences & meetings				
Interest				
Insurance				
Advertising & promotions			1551.35	1551.35
Information technology		369.43		369.43
Royalties				
Payments to affiliates				
Depreciation, depletion & amortization				
Other (List Item)	3962.20			3962.20
Other (List Item)				
Other (List Item)				
TOTAL EXPENSES	(A) 4706.53	(B) 1619.38	(C) 1551.35	TOTAL 7877.26

BALANCE SHEET:	(A) BEGINNING OF YEAR	(B) END OF YEAR
CASH, SAVINGS AND INVESTMENTS	13134.31	21330.69
TOTAL ASSETS	13134.31	21330.69
EXCESS (OR DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR		

Statement of Functional Expenses for Hope Above Fear
(Organization Name)

CH CH72039
(Renewals Only)

SUPPLEMENTAL CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENT

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Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email: _____

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Total administrative costs assessed by Parent to Chapter, Branch or Affiliate \$ _____

Total payments to Chapter, Branch or Affiliate \$ _____

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☐ Professional Solicitor

☐ Commercial Co-Venturer

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Amount Received following the campaign, fundraiser, promotion or event: \$ _____

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I am authorized to complete this financial reporting form.

Stephanie Shepard
Signature

Executive Director
Title

480 251 5157
Telephone Number

Stephanie Shepard
Printed Name

April 12, 2024
Date

Stephanie@hopeabovefear.org
Email Address

Statement of Financial Position

Hope Above Fear
As of December 31, 2024

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL
Assets	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
BUSINESS CHECKING (0021) - 1	29,953.61
Total for Bank Accounts	\$29,953.61
Accounts Receivable	0.00
Other Current Assets	0.00
Total for Current Assets	\$29,953.61
Fixed Assets	0.00
Other Assets	0.00
Total for Assets	\$29,953.61
Liabilities and Equity	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	0.00
Credit Cards	0.00
Other Current Liabilities	0.00
Total for Current Liabilities	\$0.00
Long-term Liabilities	0.00
Total for Liabilities	\$0.00
Equity	
Retained Earnings	21,330.69
Net Income	8,622.92
Total for Equity	\$29,953.61
Total for Liabilities and Equity	\$29,953.61

Statement of Financial Position

Hope Above Fear
As of December 31, 2023

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	TOTAL
Assets	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
BUSINESS CHECKING (0021) - 1	21,330.69
Total for Bank Accounts	\$21,330.69
Accounts Receivable	0.00
Other Current Assets	0.00
Total for Current Assets	\$21,330.69
Fixed Assets	0.00
Other Assets	0.00
Total for Assets	\$21,330.69
Liabilities and Equity	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	0.00
Credit Cards	0.00
Other Current Liabilities	0.00
Total for Current Liabilities	\$0.00
Long-term Liabilities	0.00
Total for Liabilities	\$0.00
Equity	
Retained Earnings	13,134.41
Net Income	8,196.28
Total for Equity	\$21,330.69
Total for Liabilities and Equity	\$21,330.69