

GEORGE WASHINGTON

REGIONAL COMMISSION

George Washington Regional Commission (2021)

21 Emergency Shelter Operations (VHSP)

Empowerhouse Domestic Violence Emergency Shelter FY23



aOwVlKRa

Applicant details

Agency | Empowerhouse

Agency Type | Non-Profit

EIN/TIN | 521142547

Applicant Address

Mailing

P.O. Box 1007

Fredericksburg, VA 22402

Physical

150 Olde Greenwich Dr., suite 101

Fredericksburg, VA 22402

Phone Number | 5403739373

Board of Directors Listing

PDF

[Empowerhouse BOD list.pdf \(59 KiB download\)](#)

Organization Chart

PDF	Empowerhouse Organization... (39 KiB download)
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Organizational Certification and Assurances

PDF	Empowerhouse grantee cert... (106 KiB download)
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Application details

Application Type | Renewal

Project Contact Name | Kathy Anderson

Project Contact Title | Executive Director

Project Contact Phone | +15403739373

Project Contact Email | kathya@empowerhouseva.org

Household Type

Indicate the percentage (%) breakdown of household types targeted by this project.

		New	Renewal	Expansion
1	Households without Children	0	50	0
2	Households with Children	0	50	0
3	Total	0	100	0

DV Participants

What percentage of households will be served through the Victim Service Coordinated Entry Process (including coordinated assessment for shelter/prevention and prioritization for rapid re-housing)?

		New	Renewal	Expansion
1	Households Served	0	100	0

Review Date

| 2022-03-26

The applicant organization's governing board discussed/ will discuss this application for funding at a meeting held on ____ (date).

Acknowledgement

| ✓

The submitting applicant organization will act as the responsible fiscal agent for any funds received and will comply with applicable tax laws, regulations, and CoC policies. By submitting this application, we agree that we have read and approve of the content of this application.

Emergency Shelter Operations Budget

		New	Renewal	Expansion
1	Case Management	0	US\$36,192.00	0
2	Limited Support Services	0	0	0
3	Maintenance	0	US\$2,000.00	0
4	Rent	0	0	0
5	Security	0	0	0
6	Supplies	0	US\$1,000.00	0
7	Utilities	0	US\$4,884.00	0
8	Total	0	US\$44,076.00	0

Budget Narrative

Provide details for each line item requested.

\$36,192- .5 FTE Shelter Services Coordinator -staffing to help homeless Domestic Violence Victims connect with critical and community supports to address their crisis and physical needs upon entering shelter, to stabilize them prior to rapid re-housing support readiness services.

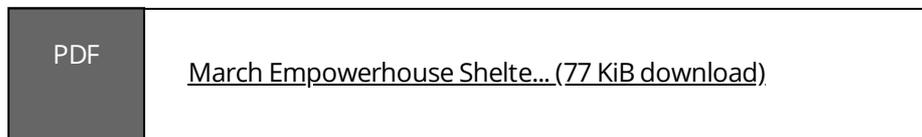
\$2,000 Maintenance

\$1,884 Security

\$3,000 Service location costs

\$1,000 supplies

Match



Other Funding Sources

Detail the other funding sources the agency has access to for this project.

Empowerhouse leverages funding from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, all local governments, private foundations, Federated campaigns through RUW, and private donations to support the shelter program.

Project Scope.

Provide a description that addresses the entire scope of the proposed project.

Empowerhouse's Shelter provides a safe place for individuals fleeing domestic abuse to reside short term. Domestic violence victims may be referred to Empowerhouse through the FRCoC Coordinated Entry or reach out for services directly to the Empowerhouse 24 hour hotline. As the only domestic violence (DV) shelter serving PD16, victims enter a welcoming and trauma-informed facility (10,000 sq. ft.) specifically designed for their safety and well-being. A survivor and her children (259 last year during the pandemic) enter our crisis DV shelter which includes a bedroom or multiple in a suite with one or two bathrooms depending on family size. The immediate physical and emotional crisis needs are met through safety, secured entrances, shelter, food, children's school stabilization (.75 FTE Children's services), risk assessment, and safety planning including legal remedies. There is a pantry, multiple kitchens in a large dining area, suite kitchenettes with multiple food storage areas, locking physical and storage spaces, and a co-located playroom, laundry, and computer job help center. There is a secured playground (5,000 sq. ft.) with privacy walls. Children usually exceed the adults by number in the DV shelter and last year numbered 122, just under half of the shelter population. Staff provide services throughout the building, in offices, and the victim services center. Residents are also within walking distance proximity to public transportation, groceries, and pharmacy. Victims often enter shelter with feelings of hopelessness and little self-worth. Staff trained on the dynamics of DV and trauma informed care work with clients to help them realize they deserve a life of dignity and respect with safety and hope. Clients begin to open up and staff (.5 FTE VHSP funded case management) help them develop safety plans and identify housing goals that they can work on while in shelter. Once a housing plan and other goals are established, personal strengths are assessed and needed supportive services or assistance is discussed. Shelter staff (1.9 FTE remaining day shelter staff) provide referrals to community resources and advocacy with those referrals as appropriate. This may include connection to resources for benefits (e.g., TANF, Childcare Support, WIC, and SSDI), documentation/IDs, health and mental health services, substance abuse services, legal services, and school systems. Residents utilize generously donated items from the community (e.g., paper goods, clothing, personal hygiene supplies, diapers, food). Empowerhouse may provide financial resources to help clients work toward their goals (e.g., medication, driver's license fees, birth certificates) to help them overcome barriers to obtaining housing and to obtain benefits. Some residents move home safely with protective orders. Shelter staff meets regularly with clients throughout their stay to support them in preparing for their chosen next steps.

Community Need.

If renewal funding is being requested, explain how the project continues to meet a community need and/or fill a system gap. If new/expansion funding is being requested, explain how the additional funds will increase system capacity and justify the community need for additional capacity. Be sure to use data to support the demonstrated need and detail the methodology for determining gaps within the system.

In 2021, Empowerhouse sheltered 259 people, 30% of the area's homeless population, and the highest number in the region, in our domestic violence shelter program. We sheltered and housed, providing 38,279 bed nights at a 51% increase this past year over pre-pandemic levels 2 years ago. We expanded and relocated the Empowerhouse DV shelter in FY17 after much needed expansion of a home that had been built 30 years ago. The former shelter no longer kept pace for the number of people who needed it (per high rate of area population growth) and its heavy duty use. Children are sheltered with adults as DV victims are forced to uproot their children when confronted with violence and abuse. As with all shelters serving the FRCoC, Empowerhouse attempts to divert anyone requesting shelter from becoming homeless. Callers to the 24-hour DV hotline (2,052 calls-FY21; a 32% increase compared with pre-pandemic levels) have a number of needs, and as part of their safety planning our DV shelter is explored. If they are seeking a quick exit from an abusive situation or wish to leave their current residence, we explore all safe options including the social supports of family and friends, FRCoC prevention, and seeking protective orders. A major criterion for requesting shelter and becoming homeless for our population is leaving an unsafe DV situation. If they define their current residence as unsafe and the only step that will increase their safety is coming to the shelter, every effort is made to make shelter available. We received all local requests for safe shelter last year. The average daily census was 25 and every effort is made to not exceed 30 at one time due to limited staffing capacity. When we opened the new shelter, we were able to add 1.3 new FTE staff (including overnight and after hours coverage) thanks to other funding sources to ensure 24-hour coverage and to aid in responding to the 50% increased population. Our goal continues to be sheltering all unsafe DV survivors and their children needing it and supporting them in a trauma informed manner with the case management needed to help them move to permanent housing quickly. In FY21, 128 households (HH) (50% unaccompanied singles) resided temporarily (average 32 days) in the Empowerhouse shelter. Of the 118 HH (230PP) that exited the DV shelter last year, 64 households exited to permanent housing (31 of which were families with children). Last year's academic year was a success even with schools closing for the pandemic, we pivoted our classroom presentations to online, to support students while they were attending school virtually allowing us to reach parents inside of homes where students were attending our virtual presentations. Area law enforcement responds to over 6,500 DV calls on average annually. Our services are voluntary, trauma-informed, aim to increase safety, and seek permanent housing solutions that are safe for each sheltered victim as desired per their individualized self driven plan.

Eligibility.

Certify that the project will adhere to the FRCoC Coordinated Entry Policies & Procedures, including the following requirements of the document:

- ✓ Follow the Housing First model
- ✓ Participate in the FRCoC Coordinated Entry Process and/or the Victim Service Coordinated Entry Process (including coordinated assessment for shelter/prevention and prioritization for rapid re-housing)
- ✓ Adhere to established project standards
- ✓ Collect data through HMIS or a comparable database

Prioritization Process. Describe how the project receives referrals, determines eligibility, and prioritizes clients. How were these prioritization criteria developed?

As part of the coordinated entry process, individuals and their families in PD 16 who are homeless due to domestic violence (DV) are referred to Empowerhouse via the 24-hour hotline (2,052 calls in FY 21). If DV victims cannot be prevented from becoming homeless, they are assessed for shelter using the written Empowerhouse shelter assessment process. Empowerhouse Diversion may include accessing protective orders or reviewing safe family and friend options. Homeless victims are assessed and usually enter our DV shelter first (129 victims and their 123 children in FY 21) but may also connect directly with DV RRH services if they are homeless and are not able to enter the shelter enter shelter. PD16 residents are offered shelter regardless of neighborhood or jurisdiction. There is no limit on the number of stays due to the crisis need for safe shelter. In the current year, when the program reached capacity, the priority became those fleeing domestic violence and their need for safe escape from abuse. This priority measure was instituted as a safety measure to ensure vulnerable survivors at risk of homicide in their homes could safely enter shelter and not be turned away due to lack of space. Once safely in shelter and their immediate physical and emotional crisis needs are met, Shelter staff work with the victim to complete a housing plan. Victims without alternative housing options and interested in RRH can choose to seek participation in the completion of the DV Prioritization Tool (Reviewed by FRCoC). The DV Housing Advocate (HA) reviews the completed tool. Those entering directly from the community meet with the DVHA to complete the prioritization tool. The DVHA meets with applicants who want to enter the program to help the participant understand the program and services available to them and the responsibilities of both parties. Once victims agree to the program and if funding is

available, applicants are immediately accepted to begin necessary forms and may begin working with in-house staff and are referred to the CoC shared Housing Locator (HL), usually the same day. The HL works with the client, uses the referral information to understand the participant's housing barriers and works with area landlords to negotiate housing placements. The victim and their family are placed in permanent housing as quickly as possible. The length of time for placement varies based on the HL's case load and the client specific housing barriers.

Leveraging Partnerships.

Describe how the project leverages mainstream resources to support client's immediate housing crisis. Provide project and community level examples.

Some survivors of DV are safely diverted from coming into shelter if they are referred and accepted into the FRCoC Prevention program in which DV survivors are prioritized (run by LoisAnn's Hope House) . At Empowerhouse all Domestic Violence (DV) survivors are provided safety planning as part of the core services of our DV program, the sole mission of Empowerhouse, a DV agency. Empowerhouse staff provide an extensive resource information packet about services, agencies, and resources available in the community. Once the Shelter Director (SD) works with residents to establish their goals, the shelter staff help survivors identify barriers in obtaining housing and discuss available community resources to help with goal attainment. Empowerhouse has established strong relationships with community organizations throughout PD 16 to quickly connect shelter residents as their needs are identified. Empowerhouse has an RGI Job Help Center at the shelter in a partnership with Rappahannock Goodwill Industries. The SD assists residents in initiating the process with local Departments of Social Services (DSS) to receive benefits (e.g., TANF, Childcare subsidies, health insurance), the Health Department (e.g., WIC), and Head Start. Clients with school age children are provided contact information for McKinney-Vento Liaisons in their school district. For survivors involved in CPS investigations, the close connection with area DSS have helped children stay with their protective parent while in the Empowerhouse shelter where they are safe. Many with transportation barriers receive free bus passes for the FRED bus. Empowerhouse participates in the FRCoC prioritization process for RRH with the providers and the veteran's list. Survivors of domestic violence are offered Empowerhouse resources for their DV when their issues are presented by the homelessness response community partners within the case conferencing process. Many clients have barriers due to mental health and substance use. If not already connected, we help them access RACSB disability and counseling services which continue to be helpful as they move forward. The National Counseling Group provides in-home counseling to some clients. We partner with counseling services at Snowden. Clients with substance use concerns know they can seek treatment at RACSB and their Sunshine Lady House (SLH). Clients connect with free clinics and community health centers, e.g. Moss, Christian. Free legal assistance is available to some income qualifying DV victims, every attempt is made to link survivors with attorneys when civil and criminal legal help is needed. Empowerhouse has applied for and received funds for attorneys for limited supports for their DV related civil needs. Additionally, resource information is regularly shared with clients, such as SERVE which operates a food pantry accessible to our Stafford clients or SECA, Salvation Army, and CVHC, resources they may need to access for utility or housing funds.

Service Availability. Are services available to the entire community? Include how the project ensures services for: 1. Households located in all areas of the CoC service area; 2. Singles/families, men/women, and the following harder to serve populations: sex offenders, large families, medically fragile, LGBTQ+, unaccompanied youth; 3. Households with accessibility concerns including language and mobility; 4. Households with limited or no personal phone or internet access.

Empowerhouse identifies harder-to-serve individuals through the shelter by exploring barriers once in shelter, through outreach, and through partnerships with area community agencies such as RACSB's crisis stabilization, the Sunshine Lady House (SLH), Snowden and the healthcare hospital systems. Snowden contacts Empowerhouse when they have DV survivors receiving in-patient or out-patient services where Empowerhouse goes on site to visit with their patient and coordinate services. We respond on site at the hospital to meet with individuals who disclose DV victimization. Within the DV shelter population FY 21, our households experienced the following rates: substance abuse (7%), severe mental illness (6%) and other disabilities (2%).

To more fully support persons identifying as LGBTQ+, all Empowerhouse employees and volunteers receive a minimum 6-hour training on cultural responsiveness, cultural competence, inclusivity, racism, and other forms of discrimination. We also work closely with FAHASS as an ally in serving LGBTQ+ individuals. We partner with youth serving organizations e.g. Office on Youth, the group home, Juvenile Detention, and Juvenile based probation court services; and we serve young people in our teen girls groups and teen boys groups, 20 unaccompanied youth (18-24 years olds).

With our new expanded shelter, open for 4 years, it is easier to accommodate larger families than it was in the past and multiple larger families at one time when DV victims request it. In the past couple of decades family size determined whether a DV victim could obtain DV shelter if she and her children were unsafe. Now, on average, each family has two children. Families of 9 were in the shelter, two families of 6, and three generation families have entered the DV shelter when unsafe due to DV. Because 4 of the 9 suites are two-bedroom or three with one or two bathrooms in each, the shelter can comfortably accommodate multiple size families easily in a clean and safe environment where food, personal items, and clothing will be provided if needed. Empowerhouse specs for the new shelter included accessibility features, one level, wheelchair accessible, a suite with pocket doors and transfer seat in tub, appliances and roll up sinks, grab bars in showers to help with the needs of fragile individuals, and equipped with devices for the deaf and hard of hearing.

Outreach partnerships include but are not limited to our satellite offices in 2 and soon to be 3 area law enforcement agencies and their handing out Empowerhouse information and phone numbers to DV victims. Healthcare providers increasingly are trained with implementation of connecting DV victims with the Empowerhouse hotline or requesting on-site visits; schools are sites where we annually talk with over 7,000 children who learn of DV services for their families; and area courthouses are where we provide in-person advocacy during DV days.

Housing First.

Describe in detail how your organization implements a Housing First approach. Include specific examples such as organizational or programmatic policies, procedures, guidelines, etc.

Individuals and their families in PD 16 who contact the FRCoC Coordinated Assessment Providers seeking homeless services due to DV are referred by policy to Empowerhouse's Domestic Violence (DV) Hotline (DV Coordinated Entry Process) or Outreach Office. Calls to the Empowerhouse DV hotline (2,052) allow for direct safety planning and assessment for DV shelter. If victims are in a safe place and they are seeking shelter, staff by procedure implement a Shelter Assessment to understand their immediate and ongoing safety, support system, and current living situation. A validated scoring instrument Danger Assessment is also completed which highlights several factors associated with increased risk of homicides (murders) of women in intimate partner violence relationships. Once completed, the next procedure is for Empowerhouse staff (three including at least 1 from shelter) to review the Shelter Assessment and confirm eligibility for placement. By policy, alternative housing options are discussed to help divert the individual or family from becoming homeless including whether the individual has a support system of family and friends that may be an immediate safe housing option or determining if the individual is a candidate for FRCoC prevention services. If prevention services are an option, the individual is connected with the Empowerhouse housing advocate (HA) for possible prevention referral. If it is determined that their current living situation is unsafe and their only option is to enter shelter, then Empowerhouse staff follow the procedure to place them in our DV shelter or an alternative shelter that same day.

After immediate crisis needs are addressed, by policy, the shelter director (SD) works with the client to complete a housing plan. This plan documents the client's identified housing options and helps shelter staff provide services and identify resources that can assist clients in obtaining permanent housing as quickly as possible. When completing the plan, residents are first asked if they have a plan for their housing needs following their shelter stay; responses, if any, are recorded. Family and friends are also discussed as an option for permanent housing. If no options are identified, the shelter staff ask if the client would like more information on subsidized and/or Empowerhouse's Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) services. Victims interested in RRH will be assessed with the Empowerhouse Prioritization Tool (created for DV and reviewed by FRCoC) by the Empowerhouse DV Housing Advocate (HA). The assessment demonstrates the highest barriers to obtaining housing will score highest and are prioritized for the RRH. Once housing goals are identified, the SD helps clients think through next steps they can take to reach those goals and ask what other services or assistance might benefit them in reaching those goals. Based on these conversations, the SD makes referrals and provides supportive services to assist clients with their housing goals.

Requirements for Assistance.

Does either the organization as a whole or this project have any rules or requirements for assistance that could act as a barrier to services (i.e. birth certificate or photo ID, residency requirement, service participation requirement, etc.)? Please list each requirement, describe the purpose of the requirement(s), and describe the efforts the organization makes to assist households in need of services that do not or cannot meet the requirement(s).

Empowerhouse has a curfew of 8 PM on weeknights and 11 PM on weekend nights. This serves as a safety precaution at our emergency facility, where the majority of residents are seeking safe shelter from their abusive partners. It is safest for staff and residents to have an overnight period during which people are not coming and going and allows the households to settle in; the alarm is set; and everyone is accounted for and any concerns addressed at a reasonable hour. This minimizes the amount of potential disruptions to those families with children and people who work in the morning. For individuals who have employment that requires a more flexible schedule or another unique situation, accommodations are made by the shelter staff to support individual needs. An emergency may require exit during the curfew and alarmed period. Also entrances to shelter also occur during that period.

No other rules or requirements are in place that might be considered to act as barriers to services. The items mentioned in the question are not required by Empowerhouse, DV RRH, or the DV shelter.

Length of Assistance.

How is the length of financial and/or supportive service provision for households in the project determined? How was this process determined?

Empowerhouse empowers survivors and their children to believe in themselves and build new lives filled with dignity, respect, safety, and hope. We give victims the time, space, and tools to heal their hearts, restore their connections, rebuild their lives, and renew their spirits. We do not designate a set length of time for which a family is required to exit our shelter; that is dependent on each survivor as each household needs vary. As a guide for advocates working with families in our shelter, the determination of time is based on:

- How the client presents upon entering shelter.
 - Do they have the ability to reach out to their support system? Or is the availability of a support system lacking?
 - What is the level of trauma experienced? The level of trauma can range so drastically from client to client; the impact of what they've experienced prior to entering, a brain injury or disability; all play a role in their ability to function upon entering.

Staff members meet with every new resident within the first 24-hours of entry and completes an intake to identify emergency needs and create a safety plan for the survivor; all immediate needs that are assessed are addressed. Some clients enter with what may seem like a clear plan but may quickly change that plan as situations sometimes warrant. Clients come to Empowerhouse with very unique experiences, traumatic life-changing experiences. Most enter exhausted, some with nights and weeks without sleep, malnourished, and scared. We have families as large as a mother with 9 children, leaving everything they've ever known behind. Survivors come in broken down, needing some space and time to recover, we provide the time and space they need. As one client stated, "This place has been like a church for me. You come in and are immediately welcomed without judgment. You dump all your worries, let it all out, and leave stronger and better than ever. This place will always be "my place".

These varying situations will impact their planning processes. With a trauma-informed approach, Staff begins a rapport with the client. Once a housing conversation is able to be had, the SD has a conversation with them about their housing plan. If it is determined that they would like to find a rental property, and if they need help doing so, we would connect them with the housing program through the process already described. We encourage survivors to establish goals and move on to their next best plan whether that is housing, family, friends, a protective order, or moving out of the area. Whatever plan they choose, it is their decision. If they've chosen rapid rehousing, we dedicate resources to helping them find housing, we support them in taking their own actions as quickly and as safely as possible. Therefore, length of stay is flexible and tailored to each individual and household with support to act and not linger to the best of their capability.

Barriers to Services.

Are there any existing barriers in the community that would prevent a household from accessing services or permanent housing? What is the project doing to address these barriers?

As part of the coordinated entry process, individuals and their families in PD 16 who are homeless due to domestic violence (DV) are referred to Empowerhouse via the 24-hour hotline (2,052 calls in FY 21). If DV victims cannot be prevented from becoming homeless, they are assessed for shelter. Empowerhouse Diversion may include accessing protective orders or reviewing safe family and friend options. Homeless victims are assessed and usually enter our DV shelter first (129 victims and their 123 children in FY 21) but may also connect directly with DV RRH services if they are homeless and are not able to enter

the shelter. Once safely in shelter and their immediate physical and emotional crisis needs are met, Shelter staff work with the victim to complete a housing plan. If a victim is placed in RRH, they place the victim and their family in permanent housing as quickly as possible. The length of time for placement varies based on the HCM's case load and the client specific housing barriers. For the 42 households served with Empowerhouse DV RRH in FY21, the average length of time between acceptance into the program and entering their own housing was 36 days. This extended period of stay is largely due to the pandemic, causing a strain on clients and the economy, resulting in agencies across the board to feel its negative impact. Though housing options are available, the rental prices continue to rise at a rapid pace, making it even more difficult for clients to obtain affordable housing. While clients work hard towards rebuilding their lives, they fear being able to afford housing on a single salary. Empowerhouse is increasingly helping financially with transportation to include private foundations and other sources to overcome transportation barriers.

The DVHCM works with the participant to develop action plans to address needs in overcoming barriers to maintaining housing. Participation in supportive services (e.g., employment services by Employment Specialist (ES), advocacy and education and scholarship attainment, development of household skills such as budgeting, which are voluntary. To obtain housing units quickly due to the low housing inventory and high rental costs, staff are developing close relationships with area landlords to decrease the competition for these units for DV entrances. Staff are working closely with Compassion Restoration to obtain vehicles to support transportation once in housing.

Racial Disparities. Has your project examined its programs and systems for racial disparities? What was the result of this examination and what is the project doing with this information? Have any actions been taken to address the disparities (if applicable)?

There were no racial disparities in the outcomes of assistance unless accessing RRH services from shelter is an outcome. White DV survivors were less likely by percentage wise to leave shelter for RRH and be represented at the same percentage in RRH than other races. Race and ethnicity did not factor into permanent housing sustainability and returns to homelessness once in housing. There were differences in usage of the program by race compared when examining usage rates and the US Census 2020 population by race. Compared with the 2020 PD16 census data, African Americans (AA) are over represented in sheltering at Empowerhouse by 14% points. The same overrepresentation is present in the Permanent Housing RRH programming. AA represents 34% of sheltered and housed DV survivors at Empowerhouse but make up 20% of the 2020 U.S. Census population in PD16. People of Hispanic ethnicity are identified as 11% of the population in PD16 in 2020. Sheltering of this population is aligned with the census figures at Empowerhouse. In housing, people of Hispanic ethnicity make up 13% of housed DV survivors, 2% points higher than the US 2020 Census. Native Americans make up 1% of PD16 2020 census population while they accounted for 4% of the RRH population. Whites make up 65% of the PD16 2020 census. They are underrepresented in shelter and housing at 47% and 36% respectively, underrepresenting in shelter by 15% points and in housing by 27% points. In housing compared with shelter, 11% of housing clients refused to categorize their race while 3% refused disclosing their race in shelter.

The noted disparities are attributed to requests for shelter, qualifying in, fewer options for people of certain races to divert from homelessness through family and friends. Additionally AA women and Hispanic women are at greater risk of DV homicide in Virginia according to the Virginia Office of the Chief Medical Examiner Family Violence Fatality Surveillance data. This higher risk could contribute to AA DV survivors requesting shelter at a higher percentage locally than their representation in the census rate figures. Their safety and the need for a safe place to go may drive their over representation in sheltering. The same issues of potentially having more supports such as family or friends providing them with alternative options to shelter and housing or their self assessed risk of fatality also could play into decisions by white DV survivors to weigh their options and decide not to enter DV shelter as readily as compared with their overall representation percentage wise in the PD16 2020 census figures of 2020. The same analysis is applied for housing with respect to white DV survivors. There may be less barriers to securing a lease among this population or they may, at a higher percentage than other races, have access to support systems that allow them to seek the RRH support program with less percentage of use request than their percentage representation in the census.

Project Staffing.

New

Renewal

Expansion

1	Number of FTE Case Managers Dedicated to Project (could be fraction)	.52
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Caseload (ES)

Provide the following data. These numbers will be used to calculate anticipated number of households served by the project.

1	Ideal Caseload for 1 FTE Case Manager	30
2	Average Length of Stay for Project Participants	32
3	Shelter Beds for Households without Children (Shelter Operations Only)	7
4	Shelter Beds for Households with Children	23
5	Shelter Units for Households with Children	7

Staff Capacity.

Provide a description of project staff capacity to include experience and training. Include a list of the applicable certificates of training for direct program staff. If any staff dedicated to the project are also dedicated to other projects, explain the breakdown of hours by project. If any portion of the funding request is to pay for a new staff position, how will the agency ensure position is filled in a timely manner?

Rose Leone has been the Empowerhouse Domestic Violence (DV) Shelter Director since 2012. She is dedicated to the housing focused case management at .6 FTE. She previously worked at Empowerhouse beginning in 1996 as a Shelter Night Resident Manager then became a Court Advocate, ultimately holding a supervisory role and interim Executive Director position.

Recent training highlights include:

- Dignity Health - Human trafficking – dispelling the myths
- Spotsylvania Sheriff Dept drug training
- Crisis intervention De-Escalation training-City Schools
- Children resiliency training-Empowerhouse
- Virginia Anti Violence Project-Serving LGBTQ+ people
- SAMSA- Trauma Informed Services
- CoC – Family SPDAT Case Management

During her time away from Empowerhouse, Rose worked for six years as a trainer and helped implement coordinated response teams across the state for the statewide coalition: The Virginia Sexual and Domestic Action Alliance in Richmond, VA. She continues to work with the Action Alliance as a trainer on DV and Crisis Intervention. Under her guidance, a new and expanded shelter facility opened in FY 2017 and she successfully transitioned residents and staff into the new environment. Rose’s passion for her work can be seen in the way she approaches each new victim that has the courage to enter our doors and break free from abuse. Once clients have their immediate physical and emotional crisis needs met, she is able to help them find the strength to envision and take steps toward a life that is safe and filled with dignity, respect, safety, and hope. All other shelter staff are not funded by DHCD, however, they are dedicated to providing domestic violence services at the shelter and are committed to maintaining low barriers and a safe building where residents have an opportunity to recover from domestic violence and find safe housing and financial stability in their future. The DV Shelter Director is supported by the Shelter Services Coordinator, Ashley Kinney, and the Children’s Coordinator, recently vacant after an 8 year service by the

former employee. Ashley joined Empowerhouse in 2012 as a Night Resident Manager before beginning her current position in August 2016. The shelter team also includes 5-8 part-time hourly shift Night Resident Managers who rotate to provide support to residents in the evenings, at night, and weekends. All members of the shelter team have completed Empowerhouse's 40 hour volunteer training and full-time Empowerhouse staff complete at least 20 hours of training each year focused on best practices in DV, housing, and providing domestic violence supportive services.

Organizational Capacity.

Provide evidence of organizational capacity to administer the requested funding and implement VHSP-funded activities, to include governance, leadership, experience, and financial management. Will project activities be ready to begin on July 1, 2022?

Empowerhouse has been providing services including shelter for the past 44 years in this community as a 501(C)3 nonprofit organization since 1978. Supporting victims of domestic violence (DV) to obtain their own permanent housing with case management and rental assistance has been in place with grant funding starting in 2009. The organization currently manages 8 grants from the Federal government and State government. This includes a grant from DHCD, originally granted in the 1980s. The Federal grants are from the US Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women Transitional Housing Assistance for Victims of DV, Improved Criminal Justice Responses, and HUD. The other competitive grants and contracts are with the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Virginia Department of Social Services. Most of the State funding sources include some Federal funds flowing through Virginia. The Executive Director and Assistant Director (AD) provide financial management, personnel administration, programmatic functions, and grants management. They have led the organization for 17 years. The Executive Director led another domestic violence nonprofit in Virginia for 5 years. The organization has written financial procedures and internal controls to account for grant funding that support the tracking of program budgets by revenue and expenses. Treasurer's reports are routinely provided to the Finance Committee and the Board. The Executive Director (ED) reviews finances monthly and supervises grant expense reports and invoicing via reviewing reports and signing invoices. Multiple individuals are involved in the handling of funds in order to provide a separation of duties across the staff using best practices to minimize or eliminate the possibility of mishandling funds. The ED and AD completed the DOJ Online Grants Financial Management Training, a 16-20 hour course. The organization has not experienced any legal proceedings or suspension of funds for any reasons by any authority. The organization has strong policies and procedures including a personnel policies manual, ethical responsibilities statement, and robust training for all staff. The board by-laws and responsibilities are routinely evaluated for updates and the board members update their conflict of interest policy annually. The Board has members that represent many sectors including legal, business, healthcare, real estate, sales, contracts, and financial management. The organization receives an external audit annually from a reputable accounting firm, Robinson, Farmer, Cox, and Associates. The organization tracks financial transactions in accounting software in an electronic ledger and tracks grant budgets additionally in an excel grant tracking spreadsheet. The organization receives periodic monitoring visits from state funders and the Federal government's Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women which provided great verbal feedback and written reports to follow.

Prior Experience.

Describe experience in utilizing state funds, performing proposed eligible activities, and serving proposed target population.

Empowerhouse has been providing shelter to victims of DV and their children since 1977. In that year, volunteers provided shelter in their own homes bringing individuals and families who were in danger home with them. In 1978, Empowerhouse opened the first area shelter at the request of area partners in law enforcement, social work, the legal community, and other community organizations. Over the years, Empowerhouse has increased services and its funding portfolio to increase and improve services and coordination. Empowerhouse now manages 8 Federal and state grant programs and more during the pandemic. These grants support sheltering, housing, the hotline, children's services, court advocacy, healthcare coordinating efforts, Latinx services, and satellite services in each of our localities.

With three direct federal grants, two from the US Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women, and one from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Empowerhouse has amassed nearly 14 years in managing federal grants directly as a recipient and through State Grants from Virginia's Department of Social Services, Virginia's Department of Criminal Justice Services, and the Department of Housing and Community Development through the partnership with the FRCoC. Empowerhouse built the first domestic violence shelter in the state built from the ground up, designed for that purpose, in 1988. Empowerhouse was a pioneer in low barrier entry removing unnecessary rules and barriers to entry long before that was promoted statewide. Empowerhouse sought a much needed expansion to its shelter due to outgrowing its

location, the area growth, and the demand of victims of DV for more and better sheltering options. The organization sought to design a new building and raised funds to buy and build out a building 4 times as large as its 1988 location in 2014. The new expanded shelter opened in 2016 and was made accessible, more central, more easily accessed to each of the 5 localities due to its central location, and provides greater access in numbers, increased privacy and dignity and has served the community well during the pandemic due to its suites, number of bathrooms and private accommodations within an overall congregate shelter model. Empowerhouse has experience sheltering in many configurations and models and has adapted well over time and still again during the pandemic. Empowerhouse increased support for sheltered homeless domestic violence victims in 2009 when it obtained a competitive Federal American Reinvestment and Recovery Act Grant to provide housing to survivors of domestic violence in a scattered site model with rental assistance and staffing supports. Soon after, Virginia, and our local community began to promote this model and it became known as Rapid Re-Housing. The 2009 grant gave Empowerhouse the experience to continue these services through new grant opportunities that became available to help hundreds more for nearly 14 years.

Spending Rates.

| Yes

Was the project able to fully expend 100% of the funds initially contracted for this project in FY21?

Projected Spending.

| Yes

Does the project expect to fully expend 100% of the funds currently contracted for FY22?

Findings.

| No

Are there any unresolved monitoring or audit findings for any grants operated by the applicant or potential subrecipients?

CoC - Attachments

Project Policies and Procedures

PDF	Empowerhouse Shelter poli... (759 KiB download)
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Job Descriptions

PDF	Empowerhouses Shelter Dire... (31 KiB download)
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FRCoC Data Sheet

XLSX	final FRCoC-Shelter Data-... (18 KiB download)
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Log in to gwregion.grantplatform.com to see complete application attachments.

