

GEORGE WASHINGTON

REGIONAL COMMISSION

George Washington Regional Commission (2021)
28 Rapid Re-housing (VHSP)



dxEwXPEL

Empowerhouse Domestic Violence RRH FY23

Applicant details

Agency	Empowerhouse
Agency Type	Non-Profit
EIN/TIN	521142547

Applicant Address

Mailing
P.O. Box 1007
Fredericksburg, VA 22402
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Phone Number | 5403739373

Board of Directors Listing

PDF	Empowerhouse BOD list.pdf (59 KiB download)
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Organization Chart

PDF

[Empowerhouse Organization... \(39 KiB download\)](#)

Organizational Certification and Assurances

PDF

[Empowerhouse grantee cert... \(106 KiB download\)](#)

Application details

Application Type

Renewal

Project Contact Name

Kathy Anderson

Project Contact Title

Executive Director

Project Contact Phone

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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	75	0
2	Households with Children	0	25	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 through Victim	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.

Rapid Rehousing Budget

		New	Renewal Amount	Expansion Amount
1	Housing Search and Placement	0	0	0
2	Housing Stabilization Case Management	0	US\$52,617.00	0
3	Housing Stabilization Financial Assistance	0	US\$10,000.00	0
4	Housing Stabilization Services	0	0	0
5	Rent Arrears	0	0	0
6	Rent Assistance	0	US\$52,797.00	0
7	Services Location Costs	0	0	0
8	Veteran Housing Stabilization Financial Assistance	0	0	0

9	Veteran Rent Arrears	0	0	0
10	Veteran Rent Assistance	0	0	0
11	Total	0	US\$115,414.00	0

Administration Budget

		New Amount	Renewal Amount	Expansion Amount
1	Administration	0	US\$4,727.00	0

Budget Narrative

Provide details for each line item requested.

\$52,797- rental assistance to rapidly re-house 10-15 domestic violence victim households/year to permanent housing quickly.
 \$52,617.00- .95 FTE Domestic Violence Housing Advocate wages and benefits to work with DV victims fleeing domestic violence at shelter and in the community to link them with other providers and services that will quickly re-house them or help them with barriers to housing assessments, housing plans, and to address their housing barriers to promote housing stability through a dedicated team of voluntary and accessible services with the employment specialist and housing locator, meet at least monthly with rapidly re-housed clients and ensure re-certification function.
 \$10,000.00- financial utility assistance & security deposits for rapidly re-housed DV victims to address housing barriers and support housing stability for 5-8 DV RRH households per year.
 \$4,727.00-administrative support for the Grants Manager who prepares the data, completes and submits the statistical reports.

Match

PDF
[Match Empowerhouse RRH.pd... \(77 KiB download\)](#)

Other Funding Sources

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

Empowerhouse leverages funding from the US Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women Federal Grant for DV Survivors to be RR housed. Empowerhouse manages the FRCoC DV Bonus funds through the Housing and Urban Development CoC grant to benefit the RRH of DV victims. Local government, private foundations, and private donations also support this programming. Currently Empowerhouse also is a CoC DHCD CHERP recipient and manages that grant funding for DV victims as part of the CARES ACT and ARPA funding released from the state for RRH activities during the pandemic.

Project Scope.

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

Empowerhouse Rapid Re-housing (RRH) activities assist homeless victims of domestic violence (DV) in attaining permanent housing quickly and increasing self-sufficiency. DV RRH offers financial assistance and supportive case management to individuals and families homeless from DV in Spotsylvania, King George, Caroline, Stafford Counties, and City of Fredericksburg (PD16). They may be referred through the FRCoC Coordinated Entry or reach out directly to the Empowerhouse 24- hour hotline (FY21-2,052 calls which was a 32% increase from the previous year) through the Victim Service Coordinated Entry process for services. RRH will provide rental, deposit, utilities, and housing assistance subsidies at

participants' chosen and rental lease with landlord scattered site apartments and homes.

Participants begin with the Shelter Services Coordinator who implements the prioritization assessment tool and supports them in creating a housing plan (259 people including children were sheltered in FY21). Households most highly prioritized based on the most significant barriers to obtaining housing will speak to the Housing Advocate (HA) who helps prepare the survivor and her family in obtaining housing. The Empowerhouse Housing Case Manager (HCM) and the Housing Locator (HL) attend lease signings to ensure participants understand all aspects of the process and forms. The HA prepares invoices to pay rent and other financial assistance and continues to promote setting short- and long-term goals to increase independence including measures to strengthen safety and economic well-being related to abuse. Empowerhouse contracts with Rappahannock Goodwill Industries for a DV trained Employment Specialist (ES) that provides voluntary services strictly to DV survivors in housing. The ES works with them on job searches, resume writing and interviewing techniques and also focuses on helping them overcome barriers to employment. The HCM and ES continue to meet with survivors at the residences and other locations to work on housing stability goals and employment including attainment, maintenance, promotion, increasing skills, scholarships, education, and ongoing financial stability. This may include solving barriers such as transportation, childcare, and lack of skills.

DV RRH will pay a security deposit and at least the first two months of rent in full. Each client who needs it will receive a set amount of money monthly for utilities, based on what is included in the rent and the size of the unit. After two months the client's financial status will be reassessed and Empowerhouse will determine if a client is able to start paying a portion of their rent and more utilities. Every 3 months the HA performs recertification to determine their current income and eligibility for rental assistance. Once a client is able to take on full financial responsibility, case management services are still offered and available to ensure stability is maintained.

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.

Empowerhouse served over 3,500 people exposed to domestic violence (DV) last year. Race and Ethnicity Demographics: 47% White, 21% African American, 16% Hispanic, 13% Unknown, 1% Asian, 1% Native American. 11% had LEP and were served by 2 full-time bilingual (Spanish) and bicultural Empowerhouse employees. This past year was the highest number of DV survivors we were able to house and sustain in their own housing for a total of 123 people (76 of which were children) which was a 38% increase in people helped and sustained in housing over pre-pandemic levels. We sheltered and housed clients for 38,279 bed nights at a 51% increase this past year over pre-pandemic levels 2 years ago. Empowerhouse increased rent assistance payments last year with 35% increased expenditures over pre-pandemic levels of spending to keep survivors in housing and to continue to help new families enter housing to change their situation safely and independent from abuse. Renewal funding for Empowerhouse RRH assists individuals and family household DV survivors (42 people in FY21) to re-enter and/or stabilize in housing as soon as possible. They become homeless because they fled or are fleeing DV and have no other options for themselves and their children or they have tried other options and were unable to achieve housing stability and as a result seek entrance to the Empowerhouse DV shelter. As the only DV services organization serving our 5 localities, Empowerhouse maintains the Victim Services Coordinated Entry Process through its existing 24-hour DV hotline. In FY 21, of the 118 adults and children supported in their own housing through the Empowerhouse housing supports, we supported and subsidized 42 households with 76 children with rental subsidies, case management, employment and education as they entered or stabilized in housing. 42 households, 34 of which were households with 76 (4 adults) children and 8 of which were single households, received financial support from Empowerhouse RRH. DV Survivors experience their own barriers to re-housing as well as those experienced within the general homeless population, sometimes compounded. Many DV survivors in housing experienced victimization by multiple relationships with violence and exploitation. For some this has led to substance use to cope with pain and for others, forced substance use was part of the abuse and coercion used by their abusive partners to control them. Once housed, many are coping with mental health needs, other chronic health conditions, and disabilities as they gain stability in their housing. Most of them are voluntarily working on GEDs or certificate programs, employability skill building, transportation, and continued legal matters related to DV, custody, and support as part of their self driven goals. This subset of homeless individuals and families receive the support to enter housing quickly while receiving critical DV trauma informed services for their eventual success in housing stability.

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. 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. Victims without alternative housing options and interested in RRH can choose to be assessed through staff completion of the DV Prioritization Tool (adapted from the FRCoC prioritization tool to be appropriate to DV survivors and includes the DV history and a number of barriers that would compound the challenges of moving toward housing without assistance and reviewed by the FRCoC). The Empowerhouse RRH written Policies and Procedures guide the processes of prioritization, the prioritization tool, and RRH program entry. The DV Housing Advocate (HA) reviews the completed tool. Those entering directly from the community meet with the DVHA to complete the prioritization tool. Clients assessed via score or case conferencing to be least likely to self-resolve will meet with the DVHA. She helps 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; begin necessary forms. The HCM uses the referral information to understand the participant's housing barriers and works with area landlords to negotiate housing placements. 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. Barriers may include previous evictions, judgments, criminal history, lack of immigrant status, lack of income, poor credit, brain injury, large family, significant trauma histories. 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.

Leveraging Partnerships.

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

The team will divert DV victims to the FRCoC diversion and prevention program which prioritizes DV households if this will keep clients from entering shelter. Once in the RRH housing team works with each client to assess their individual barriers to maintaining housing and identify their needs, available community resources are discussed. Empowerhouse has established strong relationships with community organizations and agencies throughout Planning District 16 to quickly connect RRH participants as their needs are identified. The DVHA and DVHCM provide referrals, accompaniment and advocacy as needed (and as allowed by confidentiality rules and client's written permission). The dedicated Rappahannock Goodwill Industries (RGI) DV Employment Specialist works with most clients on their education, job skills and employment needs. The connections established with the ES, related to any workforce services available at RGI, the tutorials, certifications, and area Colleges are continuing relationships that they will be able to access and benefit from long term. Local DSS Departments coordinate benefits e.g., Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Childcare subsidies for DV victims. Clinics and health centers are connected to clients while in the program. We hired a part-time SOAR Case Manager (Social Security Outreach, Access, and Recovery) to seek SSI/SSDI disability benefits when they or their children have profound medical conditions. This will establish a long term Social Security connection of support. Some members of area churches attend the Empowerhouse 40 hour DV volunteer training. They help to connect some of our housing clients in further ways to jobs and military connections. Empowerhouse partners with the school systems and encourages parents in the program to be partners with teachers and PTAs. The ES will meet clients in local libraries in an effort

to ensure they have a connection to books, computers, and information.

Many have barriers due to mental health and substance use. If not already connected, we help clients access RACSB disability and counseling services which has and will help them maintain stability in housing. The National Counseling Group provides in-home counseling to some clients. Our participants also utilize counseling services at Snowden. Clients with substance use concerns know they can seek treatment at RACSB and their Crisis Stabilization.

Additionally, resource information is regularly shared with clients. SERVE operates a food pantry accessible to our Stafford clients. SECA, Salvation Army, and CVHC are resources they may need to access if they get behind on a housing or utility bill. Legal Aid Works prioritizes assisting DV victims in civil proceedings such as POs, custody; a procedure to expedite intake when we have an undocumented victim. RUW provides free tax preparation.

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.

The Empowerhouse Domestic Violence (DV) Shelter is on one level with bedrooms and suites which lock for privacy, space, and peace of mind. The shelter often is the first stop when accessing DV RRH Services. Serving individuals and families in this one-level building with wheelchair accessibility: it has accommodated people with disabilities, large families with additional bedrooms, bathrooms, and living areas, fewer bunk beds allowing for easy access for injured or less mobile individuals, more space to move about, less crowded conditions, and less concern about gender identification with less sharing of bedrooms and bathrooms. The size was increased which allows for more peace of mind and less anxiety by people already traumatized by domestic violence. The building has a suite with additional modifications to allow the deaf or hard of hearing to be signaled by various needs to interact and be alerted. The building has a communal phone and computers with internet access for residents. A number of Empowerhouse RRH clients have criminal backgrounds which creates barriers for entering housing but not in accessing Empowerhouse services.

There have been several families with 8 children in the shelter who also were able to go into the DV RRH program. Of the individuals served by VHSP DV RRH services, 6 were mentally ill; 3 were abusing substances; 2 had chronic health conditions; and one had a physical disability. DV RRH served several families with adult children keeping them housed despite their efforts to become independent and unaccompanied youth.

During COVID-19, the majority of participants had setbacks maintaining employment due to illness or new childcare needs related to schools turning to remote instruction and lack of available childcare due to daycare closings. Empowerhouse responded by increasing rental assistance amounts and increasing the number of months of payments when income otherwise would have been flowing. Additionally increased financial deposits were paid to secure housing leases in the competitive market. Additionally, rents, on average, have increased over COVID as a result of the low housing inventory due to the eviction moratorium. Many RRH clients were provided phones, computers, and internet or assisted to connect with programs that helped them obtain personal technology. Some of the households not only contracted COVID-19, but their illnesses persisted making chronic conditions worse and even debilitating. Empowerhouse facilitated their entry into voucher based housing through FRCoC coordination.

Empowerhouse has satellite offices in Sheriff's Offices in King George County, Stafford, and soon in Spotsylvania. Its outreach to schools, court systems, and the hospitals help people from all of the localities access the services.

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.

The DV Shelter staff support every sheltered DV victim with a voluntary housing plan. On occasion the survivor may directly enter housing if they are literally homeless but not having entered the shelter. Per Empowerhouse RRH Policies, except for minimum eligibility requirements, there are no pre-conditions for enrollment which is a standard and important housing first approach. The minimum per policies are as follows:

- A survivor of domestic and/or sexual violence, dating violence, or stalking;
 - Eighteen years old or legally emancipated minor;
 - Literally homeless and in need of housing without the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing.
- Once accepted and prioritized, the DV RRH case management team attempts to connect to housing the individual or family

first who is least likely to self resolve using our prioritization tool with questions related to barriers to housing entry and their DV situation. The DV Housing Advocate (DVHA) and DV Housing Case Manager (DVHCM) begin working with the participant. Per Empowerhouse Policies, "The goals of RRH case management are to help households obtain and move into permanent housing, to support households to stabilize in housing, and to connect them to community and mainstream services and supports. Once the client chooses a location, with the application fee paid with Empowerhouse subsidies if requested, the DVHCM attends the lease signing and helps as needed with supporting the entrance into housing with utility connections and payments if needed, the deposit and first month's rent." The DVHA works with the participant to select furniture if needed from the Furniture Bank. Empowerhouse pays a quarterly contribution to Micah through an MOU with Micah, Habitat, and Hope House to ensure the continued availability and delivery of items is provided as they are often needed in setting up a household and necessary to facilitate quick entry to housing.

Empowerhouse also subcontracts with Rappahannock Goodwill Industries to support a DV trained Employment Specialist (DVES) dedicated to the Empowerhouse DV clients in RRH. The DVES serves and meets the DV survivor entering housing as soon as practical for the participant and makes them aware of the services available.

Additional supports during the initial phase to facilitate quick access to DV RRH include (and in policies):

- Safety planning including assessing new rental unit and its location
 - Court and hospital accompaniment
 - Obtaining necessary identification
 - Services in Spanish through available staff and in Spanish and other languages through Language Line
- Supporting access to legal remedies for crime victims to obtain documented immigration status
- Education on tenant rights and responsibilities
 - Emergency transportation
 - SOAR services
 - Helping to connect with mainstream benefits and McKinney Vento School supports

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).

The Empowerhouse DV shelter has a curfew of 8 PM on weeknights and 11 PM on weekend nights. This serves as a safety precaution for our clients as the majority of residents are seeking safe shelter from their abusive partners. It is safest for staff and residents to have an overnight period of time when people are not coming and going at night, a time that allows the household to settle in; the alarm is set; and everyone is accounted for and concerns are addressed at a reasonable hour. This also benefits families with children and those who work in the morning by reducing the amount of disruptions. 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. Shelter entrances are accommodated at all hours. Emergencies necessitate leaving during curfew hours.

No other rules or requirements are in place that might be considered as a barrier 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?

The recertification of income process, every three months, will determine whether a participant continues to receive financial assistance. Supportive services are more flexible and dependent on client need, choice, and desire. Services are voluntary. Rather than mandating a length of time, client choice is paramount, and participation varies. Each participant is assessed at program start to determine needs, dreams, goals, and voluntary services available in house and in community. The DV Housing team including the dedicated RGI Employment Specialist (ES) helps participants develop personal budgets and goals including their timeline for obtaining and or retaining employment and/or benefits. It is a choice to work with the ES, she assesses their education, job skills, employment needs, barriers, and helps create a client driven action plan. The ES also assists in identifying potential jobs, writing resumes, cover letters, and preparing job applications. She helps them overcome

barriers to employment such as transportation (53%), childcare (33%), disability (40%), little to no work history (30%)/education (73%), LEP (14%), substances use, and a criminal background (30%) often stemming from abuse. She assists survivors with computer tutorials via the mobile and on-site Job Help Center. The team also links them and facilitates their application, entrance, financial aid, and participation in college programs as they identify career paths. A former DV ES now heads WIOA Career Services.

Familiar with DV RRH, participants have extra help navigating education and career services. The team assists women in applying for the DV Women's Independence Scholarship Program which provides educational support including stipends, housing payments, computers, etc. through personal grants. Empowerhouse, the co-applicant, writes checks for items requested by

the client recipient.

The Housing staff will periodically implement voluntary seminars that include the Allstate Moving Ahead through Economic Empowerment curriculum specifically for DV victims, educational opportunities, dynamics of DV, physical and mental health resources, parenting and childcare resources, and others as identified by clients.

They develop a monthly newsletter to include job listings, scholarship opportunities, affirmations, healthy recipes, announcements, etc. Over 3 fiscal years: 77% (108 DV victims) of DV RRH clients pursued voluntary employment services and worked to overcome many barriers. (48) 66% of them gained employment within one year. Of those already employed, 77% maintained employment (33 of 38). These numbers do not speak to other successes of promotions, income gain, scholarships, certification, and educational attainment (27% furthered education in FY 19: 45% in FY 20). This is impressive given the odds and things they have had to overcome and continue to overcome.

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?

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. Clients may be referred through the FRCoC Coordinated Entry or reach out directly to the Victim Service Coordinated Entry Process through the Empowerhouse 24-hour hotline (FY21- 2,052 calls). Barriers our clients face include lack of employment and work history, transportation, substance use, health challenges, criminal records, bad credit, many of which are outcomes of abuse experienced at the hands of their intimate partners. The Housing team aims to assist homeless victims of domestic violence (DV) in attaining permanent housing quickly and increasing self-sufficiency. Our services offer financial assistance and supportive case management to individuals and families homeless from DV in PD16. Rental, deposit, and utilities housing assistance subsidies at participant chosen and rental lease with landlord scattered site apartments and homes. With the unique needs of DV victims', housing case management and financial assistance support their quick journey to housing annually with a trauma informed approach despite their many barriers. For these clients, most unlikely to self-resolve, we use case management and financial assistance to help them re-house quickly.

During the first few months of the pandemic and over the summer, we increased rental assistance for 27 survivors and their 60 children in our Housing Program to 100% of their costs, which was not budgeted. These clients usually provide a portion of their housing costs, but some had been laid off while others fell ill through exposures working in healthcare settings. We spent more to keep our Housing clients and their children in stable housing and went over budget. We sought help from the Community Foundation and localities to help increase supports during COVID. Empowerhouse spends increased financial assistance on the transportation barrier to help clients access supports. DVHCM is also working with Compassion Restoration to secure donated cars for RRH clients. With low housing inventory, Empowerhouse has increased partnerships with landlords to make entry to permanent housing as easy as possible.

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 to leave shelter for RRH at the same percentage than other races. Race and ethnicity did not factor into permanent housing sustainability and returns to homelessness once in housing. There were no disparities in outcomes.

There were different rates of usage in the program by race compared with the US Census 2020. 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 RRH. AAs represent 34% of sheltered and housed DV survivors at Empowerhouse but they make up 20% of the 2020 Census 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 2020 Census. 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% and in housing by 27%. It is noted that 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 rate locally than their census rate. Their safety and the need for a safe place to go may drive 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 compared with their overall representation percentage wise in the PD16 2020 census figures.

Empowerhouse staff will examine and consider services aimed at increasing referrals to attorneys and increased court advocacy services specifically geared toward AA DV survivors in an effort to divert, when it is safe to do so, DV survivors to remain in their homes by accessing protective orders. Otherwise, the percentage of disparity of usage is not so high in any category to warrant a plan of action to eliminate the disparities. It is encouraging that DV survivors of color feel welcome as they turn to services available to them to increase their safety.

Project Staffing.

	New	Renewal	Expansion
1	Number of FTE Case Managers Dedicated to Project (could be fraction)		.95

Caseload.

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	14
2	Average Length of Stay for Project Participants	471
3	Average Financial Assistance Cost per Household	\$5,795 supports one household within 1 year. Exiting households average \$11,185 over the course of their entire RRH stay (more than one year) during the pandemic.

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?

The RRH Housing Team is led by Tammy Torres, the Assistant Director. Mrs. Torres has been with Empowerhouse for 17 years and has supervised the housing program for the past 11 years. Over the years, Mrs. Torres has completed the following training: OVW Housing, National Alliance to End Homelessness, National Network to End DV, just to name a few. She is a dedicated .1 FTE to the DV RRH service. With a vacancy for a full-time Housing Case Manager position, Mrs. Torres is currently performing housing functions with the utmost supportive and assistive skills and expertise. In addition to Mrs. Torres, Daphne McIntosh is our full-time Housing Advocate. She is a dedicated .95 FTE to DV RRH as the Empowerhouse Housing Advocate since 2010. Daphne helps prepare clients for housing, prepares invoices to pay rent and other financial support and continues to work with clients on setting and moving forward with their goals. She has received DHCD (housing), CoC (SPDAT Case Management), CVHC, VHA, National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) (Housing and DV) and National Center on Domestic Violence trainings (NCDV) trainings. Daphne attended Legal Aid Works- U-Visa and VAWA training and NNEDV's (OVW) Transitional Housing webinars:

- Sexual Violence in Black Women
- Misuse of the internet for DV victims
- Data Breaches and Victim Service Providers
- Building and Sustaining Partnerships
- Safe Housing for Immigrants

Recently hired in December 2021, Kim Lally, at a dedicated .5 FTE to DV RRH as the part-time Housing Case Manager. Ms. Lally comes to us from Thurman Brisben Center, the PD16 year-round residential emergency homeless center. In addition to over 15 years of experience with working with the underserved population, Ms. Lally has completed the following training: Trauma-informed case management-SAMSA, RRH National Alliance to End Homelessness, SPDAT-Org code, CoC case management training, and the Empowerhouse DV training. Partnering with our Housing team, we have the RGI Employment Specialist (ES)- Housing program, Paola Kery, a dedicated 1FTE (not VHSP) member of the Empowerhouse's housing team. She has been ES since 2019. In the past she worked as a domestic violence advocate. She was an Empowerhouse volunteer before her position as ES. Paola also is bilingual and bicultural which helps with Latinx housing clients. Some highlights of her training:

- Major Clarity
- CPR/First Aid
- Tech Summit, Innovative Tech Approaches to Addressing Abuse and Safety: A Panel Discussion with Representatives From Tech Companies - Facebook, Google, Uber, Pinterest, AirBnB, Amazon NNEDV Technology Summit in Domestic Violence
- OVW TH Grant Southern Meeting-Economic Security, Databases and Confidentiality, TH models, Disaster Planning, Serving Youth, Jacksonville FL

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 Services, 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 out of area DV nonprofit 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 provides expertise in areas of financial management, legal, business, sales, contracts, healthcare, and real estate.. 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 a written report to follow.

Prior Experience.

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

Empowerhouse has been providing services to support DV victims including shelter for the past 44 years as a 501(C)3 nonprofit organization in the Fredericksburg, Virginia area. Supporting victims of DV to obtain their own permanent housing with case management and rental assistance has been in place with grant funding since 2009. The organization currently successfully manages 8 grants from the Federal government and State government with an annual budget of over 2 million dollars. This includes a Virginia Homeless Solutions Program (VHSP) grant from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Funding from DHCD was originally granted in the 1980s. The Federal grants are from the US Department of Justice (DOJ), Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) providing Transitional Housing Assistance for Victims of DV, Improved Criminal Justice Services, and HUD. The other competitive grants and contracts are with the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS). Most of the State funding sources include some Federal funds flowing through Virginia. CARES ACT and ARPA funds were also managed and continue to be managed during the pandemic. Many of the grants require matching funds. Empowerhouse has successfully committed and utilized both private (foundations, individual donations, fundraising events) and public (local, state and federal) funding sources as match when appropriate. The VHSP, HUD and OVW grants provide funding to house DV victims through a Rapid Re-housing (RRH) model. Staff at all levels of the organization have attended multiple grants management training and topic area training nationally, in Virginia, and locally to support a housing first and housing focused approach. Empowerhouse has provided both housing case management and rental assistance to DV victims for almost 14 years supporting hundreds of households to achieve permanent housing through RRH supports. Every new volunteer and staff member is required to complete the 40-hour volunteer training, as well as additional hands-on training with a trained staff member, prior to working with clients. The housing application and program guidelines have been updated to ensure a trauma-informed and victim-centered approach and approved by the National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) as the TA provider for DOJ OVW. The Empowerhouse staff understands how overwhelming the process of obtaining and maintaining housing can be and ensures delivery of voluntary services, mindful to take a trauma-informed approach. Clients can have many barriers and may be dealing with mental illness and substance abuse concerns. The housing team understands that this may be brought on by the trauma experienced and staff let victims know that they are there to help them make informed choices to get the services that they need when they are ready.

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 RRH Policies... (102 KiB download)
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Job Descriptions

PDF	Empowerhouse Housing Advo... (38 KiB download)
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FRCoC Data Sheet

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