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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

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April 25, 2022

The Honorable David E. Price  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation,  
Housing and Urban Development, and  
Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
2108 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation,  
Housing and Urban Development, and  
Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
374 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Catholic Charities Diocese of Trenton  
Providence House  
88 Schoolhouse Rd  
Whiting, NJ 08759  
[catholiccharitiestrenton.org](http://catholiccharitiestrenton.org)

Dear Chairman Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

I write to respectfully request Community Project Funding for renovation of the ***Providence House Ocean County Safe House***, which provides safe shelter and transitional housing for women and children who are victims of domestic abuse.

Operated by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Trenton, Providence House Domestic Violence Services owns and manages this (and another) safe house facility with six large communal bedrooms to accommodate up to 27 women and children who have fled an abusive domestic environment and require protected transitional housing while they seek permanent, independent living.

However, over the past two years, the pandemic has reduced capacity in each room as social distancing protocols were enforced, and non-familial individuals were not permitted to share a room. At the same time, the pandemic's stay-at-home orders have led to an increase in domestic violence requiring Providence House to seek alternate safe spaces for more individuals. This caused numerous Providence House clients to be housed in local motels—which is not ideal when trying to protect women from their abusers.

The transitional support provided by Providence House helps keep victims safe as they work to recover, regain their confidence, break the cycle of violence, and avoid potential mental health/substance abuse, homelessness, and unemployment/underemployment. Additionally, the organization helps victims rebuild their financial stability and credibility—something desperately needed when finding affordable housing is thwarted by proprietors who are unwilling to rent to victims citing poor credit, insufficient income, or previous evictions. Providence House Domestic Violence Services helps stabilize their clients' housing and overcome such biases for future opportunities.

The total amount of funding requested for this Community Project is \$750,000. This figure is based on a similar project in the agency's Burlington County Safe House that has the same occupancy and includes \$100,000 in architectural fees and \$650,000 in construction and renovation. The funding will be used to renovate and reconfigure the large communal bedrooms of the Ocean County Providence House and return it to its original 27-bed capacity. Included are all construction costs, permitting, architectural services and fixtures.

With this positive infusion of federal dollars, we can give domestic violence-surviving women and children the safety required to permit them to find permanent housing, employment, and attend school so they can rebuild their lives, break the cycle of violence and thrive.

Catholic Charities' Providence House is widely supported by community partners including the Ocean County Board of Social Services and is well-respected by numerous mental health professionals in the Ocean County area. Their work has been commended by the New Jersey State Police, and Providence House leaders have been relied upon to testify before the New Jersey State Assembly to offer expertise and guidance on the importance of safe, affordable housing for survivors of domestic violence—and possible solutions.

Thank you in advance for your full and fair consideration of this priority request. Please do not hesitate to be in touch with me should you have any questions regarding this request.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has any financial interest in this project.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH  
Member of Congress