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By Appointment



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

April 30, 2021

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www.chrissmith.house.gov

The Honorable David E. Price
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Transportation-Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations bill, I write to respectfully request Community Project Funding for Providence House Domestic Violence Services – 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 a safe house facility with six 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.

Over the past 13 months the pandemic has required social distancing within the safe house, reducing their capacity to only one individual/family per bedroom. 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. The urgent necessity of placing some victims in local hotels and motels has increased base housing costs as well as food and transportation expenses for the organization.

The transitional support provided by Providence House helps victims recover, regain their confidence, break the cycle of violence, and avoid potential mental health/substance abuse, chronic homelessness and unemployment/underemployment. Additionally, the organization helps victims rebuild their financial 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 from the Economic Development Initiatives account is \$276,800. Over the course of one year, these funds will allow Catholic Charities to locate and rent safe, affordable housing for approximately 14

women/families (\$209,800), employ security services against threats and unwanted visitors (\$42,000), and provide additional case management services to set the women and their families up for success (\$25,000).

With this positive infusion of federal dollars, we can give these women and children the safety required to permit them to find permanent housing, employment, and attend school so they can rebuild their lives 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 or my staff should you have any questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress