

Community Projects

Transitional Housing for Victims of Domestic Violence

Requestor: Providence House Domestic Violence Services

Project Cost: \$276,800

Project description:

Providence House Domestic Violence Services, based in in Ocean County, operates a Safe House facility with six bedrooms to accommodate up to 27 women and children who have left an abusive partner and require safe transitional housing while they seek permanent, independent living.

Unfortunately, over the past 13 months the pandemic has required social distancing within the Safe House, reducing its capacity to only one individual/family per bedroom. To keep the women and children as safe as possible, they've been placed in local hotels and motels which has created additional costs for the organization including food and transportation, all while ongoing stay-at-home orders have caused instances of domestic violence to creep up, requiring Providence House to assist with hotel/motel placement for even more individuals.

Over the course of one year, these funds would allow Catholic Charities to locate and rent safe, affordable housing for approximately 14 women/families, employ security services against unwanted visitors and provide additional case management services to set the women and their families up for success.

Supporting Documents:

- [Letter from US Rep. Chris Smith on FY22 Community Project Funding request for Catholic Charities Transitional Housing for victims of domestic violence.](#)
- [Letter from Rep. Chris Smith \(NJ04\) re: FY22 Community Project Funding request for Catholic Charities Domestic Violence Program Financial Disclosure.](#)

Seeds of Service food and other assistance

Requestor: Seeds for Service

Project Cost: \$60,580

Project description: Seeds for Service is a community outreach center operated by Visitation Roman Catholic Church in Brick, NJ serving nearly 4,000 households across three counties.

The immense need for food services has been exacerbated in the past year and SOS cannot keep up with the demand and subsequent increased donations from local grocers and restaurants, unless it makes electrical upgrades and reconfigures its space. SOS previously offered an open-choice food pantry that allowed families to "shop" for their food, which not only reduces food waste but gives the family a sense of dignity. Due to social distancing requirements, SOS had to close its open-choice pantry and transition to pre-packed bags that are carried outside and loaded into the family's vehicle.

In order to reopen its open-choice pantry, SOS must do construction to reconfigure the layout of its their space to create additional shelving for non-perishable food items, designate a staging area for pre-packing, and ultimately open the space up enough to allow for families into the pantry to choose their food. To accommodate daily donations of perishable foods from local grocers, SOS added additional commercial-size refrigerators and freezers which require an upgrade of its electrical system. A new electrical system, plus the reconfiguration of its space, will also permit SOS to restart other essential programs it offers including addiction and emergency counseling, a warming center for the homeless during cold weather, and its partnership with two local high schools that buses disabled and at-risk students to SOS for academic credit.

Supporting Documents:

- [Letter from Rep. Chris Smith to Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development re: FY22 Community Project Funding request for Seeds of Service food pantry to expand to address the rise in local hunger caused by COVID-19.](#)
- [Letter from Rep. Chris Smith on FY22 Community Project Funding for Seeds of Service anti-hunger initiative Financial Disclosure.](#)

Beth Medrash Govoha combating anti-Semitism/security assistance

Requestor: Beth Medrash Govoha

Project Cost: \$500,000

Project description:

Beth Medrash Govoha (BMG)—the largest Talmudic institution of higher education in the United States and the second largest in the world—located in Lakewood, New Jersey in the Fourth Congressional district, has been the target of disgusting anti-Semitic threats and hate speech. In recent years, threats and hate crimes have been directed toward BMG, its students, and the local Jewish community, including tire slashings and defacement of property, threats to school leaders, and calls to commit violence against Jewish people on BMG's campus.

The funding requested for this Community Project is from the Non-Profit Security Grant. This project will cover the purchase and installation of remote-controlled, electronic locking security doors for the exterior doors on eight of BMG's building.

With approximately 7,000 students and even more faculty and staff members, the ability to remotely lock all exterior doors in the event of an active shooter or anti-Semitic terrorist attack could save lives. Unfortunately, the nation has witnessed this tragedy in synagogues in California and Pennsylvania, some officials in New Jersey, fear that the community of Lakewood—with its large population of Jewish residents—could be next.

Supporting Documents:

- [Letter from Rep. Chris Smith NJ04 to Appropriations Subcommittee on Dept. of Homeland Security](#)
- [Rep. Chris Smith Community Project Funding for BMG school security Financial Disclosure statement](#)

Autism NJ—Caregiver assistance hotline

Requestor: AutismNJ, Robbinsville, NJ

Project Cost: \$196,000

Project description: New Jersey's 800.4.AUTISM Helpline has successfully connected parents with providers of effective services their children require. In fact, this Helpline annually assists 1,350 individuals on average, and its companion website had 132,764 unique visitors in 2020. Supported by Autism New Jersey and the New Jersey Department of Health, the Helpline employs three trained individuals to aid callers and digital visitors, including a social worker, a parent of an adult with a developmental disability, and a bilingual attorney. With the support of a Community Project in the amount of \$196,000, for fiscal year 2022 the Helpline could hire three additional staff members including another Spanish speaker, an administrative assistant, and a data/technology coordinator. In addition to the human resources provided by this Community Project, the Helpline would also be in a position to upgrade their hardware and software—new computers, phones, and teleconferencing software for important face to face conversations—as well as make website enhancements including translating more of their content into Spanish—New Jersey's second most spoken language. The need for this Helpline has, unfortunately, become evident in the past year. The impact of COVID-19 on Americans living with disabilities will be long-lasting. Individuals with disabilities and their families often face additional burdens and needs. These individuals and families encountered a severe "services cliff" without any warning or preparation when daily services they relied for their children suddenly became unavailable.

Ongoing stay-at-home orders have shuttered programs and cancelled services, contributing to the record number of visitors to the Helpline's website in 2020. With the benefit of a Community Project, this Helpline—whether over the phone or virtually, and in English or Spanish—can reach more families in need of referral to services that will positively change the trajectory of their lives.

Supporting Documents:

- [Letter of US Rep. Smith to Appropriations Committee](#)
- [Disclosure](#)
- [Letter of Support from the community](#)

Shore Center NJ autism life skills program

Requestor: The Shore Center for Students with Autism

Project Cost: \$56,200

Project description: The Shore Center for Students with Autism, operated by the Bayshore Jointure Commission, is a public, out-of-district placement for students with ASD aged 3 to 21. In addition to teaching general education curriculum aligned with New Jersey's academic standards, the Shore Center also teaches students critical life skills, including vocational training and household management, so that one day the students can live as fully and independently as possible. Additionally, students receive any services they may require such as speech, occupational, physical, or behavioral therapy. A Community Project for the Shore Center totaling \$56,200 would place the students of the Shore Center on a path for success in their adult lives. Specifically, the Shore Center would use this funding to repurpose a large classroom space and create an authentic apartment with bed, dressers, couches, TV, leisure activities, bathroom and other real-life features (\$35,000); create a simulated everyday living experience for students 16-21; expand job training program to include incorporation of financial management, use of public transportation and job retention (\$10,000); and develop a systematic professional development and coaching program for staff to help assist students in mastery of skills (\$11,200).

Supporting Documents:

- [Letter from US Rep. Chris Smith to Appropriations Committee for the Shore Center for Students with Autism](#)
- [Disclosure](#)
- [Letters of support from the community](#)

Visiting Nurses Association Healthcare delivery—Freehold

Requestor: Visiting Nurses Association of Freehold

Project Cost: \$700,000

Project description: With the support of a Community Project approved by Congressional appropriators in the amount of \$700,000 for fiscal year 2022, VNACJ would be able to reconfigure their health center to include a complete dental suite. With federal assistance to reconfigure their Freehold Family Health Center, they would have five dental units, as well as an X-ray machine, sanitation station, and a lab room to complete all dentistry work on-site. Data shows that dental care is often neglected among underserved populations even though annual dental visits have proven helpful for early detection of oral and throat cancers. Additionally, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry states that tooth decay is the most common childhood disease, even though it's completely preventable. By expanding access to dental services for this vulnerable population, this Community Project stands to improve health outcomes in the greater Freehold community. Equally important, VNACJ plans to partner with local Autism awareness groups to begin Saturday dental hours with a focus on those with Autism and other intellectual/developmental disabilities who require competent care from compassionate and patient health professionals in a dedicated setting.

Supporting Documents:

- [Letter from US Rep. Chris Smith to Appropriations Committee for VNA of Freehold](#)
- [Disclosure](#)
- [Letters of support from community](#)

Visiting Nurses Association healthcare delivery—Redbank

Requestor: Visiting Nurses Association

Project Cost: \$400,000

Project description: The VNA of Central NJ Community Health Center (CHC) is a Federally Qualified Health Center which provides free or reduced-cost comprehensive health care to many of constituents of NJ04. Among the services provided by the Red Bank Primary Care Center, patients receive primary, dental, behavioral, and prenatal care. These services are directed towards individuals most in need, including the homeless, mentally ill, elderly, and individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the VNACJ CHC has provided testing and vaccinations to the community—reaching populations which may not have otherwise had access to these services. As the need has grown in the community, however, the current facility has become insufficient. Therefore, VNACJ CHC is seeking funds to build a new Primary Care Center, located at a site that is both more convenient and has an increased capacity to serve more residents of the community. This facility would be located at ground level, enhancing accessibility for patients with disabilities, and also include six additional exam rooms, expanding VNACJ CHC's capacity to serve patients. This project be used for both construction and equipment—including mammogram machines, exam tables, and IT equipment.

Supporting Documents:

- [Letter from US Rep. Chris Smith to Appropriations Committee](#)
- [Disclosure](#)
- [Letters of Support from the community](#)

Hamilton YMCA Afterschool program

Requestor: The Hamilton Y, Hamilton N.J.

Project Cost: \$193,189

Project description: The Learn, Grow, Thrive Program at the Hamilton Area YMCA is designed to help students at local schools—which remain mostly virtual—transition back to in-person learning and recover any academic, social, or emotional loss that may have occurred during this very difficult time. Eligible students are enrolled in grades K-8 at one of Hamilton Township's 13 schools, which are highly diverse, with more than half of students at 8 schools being children of color. Additionally, two are Title I schools, and four other schools have more than 30 percent of students utilizing a free or reduced lunch program. In terms of performance, more than 50% of Hamilton's schools fall in the bottom half in New Jersey's public school rankings, and many expect students' performance to continue to decline due to pandemic-related educational disruptions. The highly-trained program staff in the Live, Grow, Thrive Program seek to fill these educational gaps. With a student-to-faculty ratio of 3:1, students receive the attention and mentoring they need to improve academic performance, while also improving social and emotional skills—especially critical during this time of online learning and social isolation. Specifically, the program includes academic support and tutoring in language arts, math, and science, following the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards. Students also receive mental health support, physical and health education, and enrichment classes in art, music, yoga, and dance. The requested funds would be used to pay 13 homework teachers, as well as for food, supplies, and fees.

Supporting Documents:

- [Letter of US Rep. Smith to Appropriations Committee for the YMCA afterschool program](#)
- [Disclosure](#)
- [Letters of support from the community](#)

Lakewood Community Services Corporation—mental health services

Requestor: Lakewood Community Services Corporation

Project Cost: \$400,000

Project description: Funds provided for this project will be used to expand mental health services provided by Lakewood Community Services Corporation (LCSC). This project is critical in addressing the need for such services in the Lakewood area, which has been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and recent attacks on the area's Orthodox Jewish population. Lakewood Township, moreover, is a federally-designated Medically Underserved Area, with 24.2% of residents living under the poverty line, and is also the fastest-growing municipality in New Jersey. Specifically, LCHSC is seeking to construct a new, 5,000 square foot mental health facility, which would enable it to provide services such as individual and family psychotherapy, group therapy, and dialectical behavioral therapy. It is important to note that LCHSC has already purchased land and drawn up architectural plans for the construction of this facility. Community Project Funding provided for this project would be used for the construction of this facility.

Supporting Documents:

- [Letter of US Rep. Smith to Appropriations Committee for Lakewood Community Services Corp.](#)
- [Disclosure](#)
- [Letters of support from the community](#)

Brookdale Community College Center for Excellence in Cybersecurity Education

Requestor: Brookdale Community College, Monmouth County, NJ

Project Cost: \$439,456

Project description: The establishment of a Center for Excellence in Cybersecurity Education (CECE) will allow Brookdale Community College to develop new courses and training programs to supplement and expand its existing programs, which include a degree program in Network Information Technology AAS, in addition to certificate programs in Cybersecurity, Local Area Networks/Wide Area Networks, and Computer Repair, all of which are increasingly in demand among students and employers. Particularly, the CECE will allow the college to establish additional certificate programs in Cybersecurity Management and Cybersecurity Auditor. It will also increase the College's virtual lab environment from 32 concurrent users to 128 to provide much-needed hands-on training, as well as provide additional classroom space, allowing more students to be trained using state-of-the-art technology, in an environment updated and equipped to prepare students for immediate employment.

These funds will specifically be used to hire a CECE Director and a Net Lab Administrator, as well as to purchase virtual lab licenses, virtual lab hardware and Cisco connectivity, and furniture, equipment, and technology for classrooms and community spaces.

Supporting Documents:

- [Letter from US Rep. Chris Smith to Appropriations Committee for Brookdale Community College](#)
- [Disclosure](#)
- [Letters of support from the community](#)