



National Association for County
Community and Economic Development

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR COUNTY
COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Success Story Submission

County/Organization Bergen County, NJ - Center for Hope and Safety

Project/Program Name Handicapped Lift Project

Point of Contact:

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1. **BRIEF SUMMARY:** Briefly describe the problem and solution for the project or program.
2. **RESULTS:** Describe the tangible results of the project or program. Describe how the project or program will be sustained over the long term. If the project or program is not currently operating, please explain why not.
3. **PARTNERS:** List the names of the agencies and organizations involved in the project or program.
4. **COSTS AND SOURCES OF FINANCING:** Describe the source(s) and use(s) of funds to construct the project or start up the program, as well as the sources and uses of ongoing operating funds if applicable. Please indicate which agency or organization secured the source of funding.
5. **PICTURES:** Please include any relevant pictures of the project or program—especially before and after pictures.

**Please submit forms and questions to:
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1. Summary

Forty years ago, Center for Hope and Safety (formerly Shelter Our Sisters) was founded on the belief that every human being has the right to live free from violence and the fear of violence. We remain focused on our mission to save lives, and in the process have strengthened our services for abused and battered women and their children. Today we offer an expanded and comprehensive continuum of care that includes both residential and non-residential services.

For women and children who come to us in need of housing, CHS offers a three-step approach: Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing (THP) and a Follow-Up Program. The agency's focus is to assist and support our clients' desire to remain independent, empowered and free from violence. CHS' services include a 40-bed confidential emergency shelter (two beds were added recently), five transitional homes, individual and group counseling, assistance with court proceedings and housing searches, Project Self-Sufficiency - a work-readiness program, community referrals and advocacy, bilingual services and extensive children's programming.

But not all clients require housing, so CHS offers community and outreach services. Community programs include a 24-hour hotline, Project CHILD (community-based creative arts therapy program for children who have witnessed DV and counseling for the non-offending parent), follow-up services for former clients, community education and training, two Domestic Violence Liaisons (DVL) working with the State's DCP&P offices (local child protective services) to improve services in the area of domestic violence, and Outreach & Multicultural Services Program, established in 2013, which serves individuals and families in the community who are in need of case management and bilingual assistance.

The Legal Services Program, which was established in 2016, serves both residential and non-residential clients, by offering legal representation, advice and counsel to survivors of domestic violence in Bergen County.

In June 2013, CHS purchased an approximately 10,000 square foot building in Rochelle Park to accommodate the present and expanding needs of our programs. A \$400,000 Community Development capital renovation grant was received and utilized toward the renovations of the first floor. The agency also completed minor renovations on the 2nd floor, and the building was opened in May 2014.

Programs on the first floor of the facility are Project CHILD, Transitional Housing, Follow-up Services, and Outreach & Multicultural Programs, as well as a conference room and community space. New space for Project CHILD is used to accommodate the creative arts therapy program for children and to enhance the individual and group counseling to non-offending parents, often the mothers. Clients and their counselors in the community programs now have more privacy which fosters greater opportunity for confidentiality and effective dialogue.

The second floor houses the Legal Services Program, new in 2016, in addition to administrative and development staff. The 2nd floor also houses a large conference room that is used for full-staff meetings, the volunteer/staff training program, client/community trainings, board meetings and educational events. With the support of Rebuilding Together, we have updated one half of the second floor for additional group programs for clients. We use this space for yoga, art classes and support groups, as well as webinar trainings for staff/clients.

We find that our building is truly being used as a "community center". Women's clubs and HSAC have been invited to hold meetings at our facility, 'beauty days' for clients been provided in the

building; client giveaway events for gifts/food/school supplies take part in the building and presently we hold a parenting webinar in collaboration with the Nurtured Parent once a week.

The first floor of the building is fully handicapped accessible, but as the second floor is used more and more for client services, accessibility to that floor becomes increasingly important. CHS has renovated a bathroom on the second floor so that it is handicapped accessible.

The grant we have received from Community Development for a handicapped elevator lift will make the second floor fully handicapped accessible, to the benefit of clients, community members and staff.

2. Results

The lift is expected to be fully installed in approximately two weeks and CHS is very excited to be able to offer it to our clients, community members, stake holders, and staff.

Of course, CHS serves all individuals, and when someone cannot use the stairs, we have accommodated them on the first floor. With the lift, all individuals will be able to receive services and have meetings where the programs they are using are housed.

Wheelchair-bound individuals, and those on crutches, will obviously benefit from the lift. But it will serve many others as well. The stairs to the second floor are a challenge to many; that will no longer be the case.

Many clients have meetings on the second floor and struggle to bring their young children up the stairs with them. Some individuals that participate in groups and webinars carry canes and will surely benefit from using the lift rather than managing the stairs. Staff has watched funders slowly navigate the stairs. Staff will appreciate large deliveries to the second floor, that will now be able to be loaded into the lift, rather than carried.

3. Partners

The Columbia Bank Foundation partnered with Community Development to provide the architect's fee for the lift, as well other lift-related expenses, such as painting and wall papering after the project is finished.

4. Costs and Sources of Funding

Costs

Contract for lift installation \$60, 608

Architect Fees \$8,396

Painting/Finishing work \$1,500 - \$2,000

Sources of Funding

CDBG Grant \$60, 608

Columbia Bank Foundation Grant \$10,000