



**FY21 Emergency Solutions Grant
Funding Request**

Organization	Lakewood Community Services Center
Organization Type	Not-For-Profit
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Project/Program Name	Emergency Shelter Services
Total FY21 Project Budget	\$42,450
FY21 ESG Funding Request	\$25,000

ABSTRACT

Breathing Room offers temporary shelter to homeless Lakewood families and helps these families secure affordable housing in Lakewood when they leave the shelter. The shelter program includes an exhaustive list of essential services designed not only to secure appropriate and affordable housing, but to provide links, referrals, and case management to families with the goal of keeping them housed for the long term. These include:

- Assessments to understand the barriers that resulted in an individual or family becoming homeless
- Connecting individuals/families with mainstream benefits and community organizations that will ease the cost of housing burden (utility assistance, food stamps, cash assistance programs, etc.)
- Participating in the housing search to ensure that families move into safe, affordable, and sustainable housing when exiting Breathing Room
- Ensuring that clients commit to meeting remotely with LCSC case managers at least once each week to measure progress of case plan; housing search, etc.
- Providing cash assistance for security deposit/first month's rent when necessary
- Following up with individuals/families after exiting Breathing Room

Identifying and securing appropriate and affordable housing in Lakewood has become increasingly difficult over the last several years. Most landlords are simply refusing to accept a potential tenant with a court-ordered eviction or an individual with a housing voucher as there is a significantly increased "pool" of renters with no eviction histories or vouchers. The pandemic has exacerbated the problem of identifying suitable housing because of the eviction moratoria and clients' reluctance to move out of fear of contracting the virus.

Breathing Room is the only shelter in the city of Lakewood for displaced Lakewood families. Since opening Breathing Room in January 2012, LCSC (YTD August 2020) has been able to provide short-term temporary shelter and supportive services to 193 literally homeless Lakewood individuals, 178 of whom have exited to permanent housing in Lakewood. Prior to operating Breathing Room, LCSC social workers had no option but to direct homeless Lakewood individuals or families to shelters in Cleveland. With HUD's mandate for Coordinated Intake, homeless individuals/families must present to the Bishop Cosgrove Center at E. 17th and Superior from where they are sent to one of the homeless shelters in Cuyahoga County. Because LCSC is a member of the County Continuum of Care, individuals can be referred to Breathing Room through our shared Homeless Management Information Software, which eliminates the requirement for Lakewood families to present in person to the Coordinated Intake site where they have no control over which shelter they are assigned and where they face a greater risk of coming into contact with persons infected with COVID-19.

Beneficiaries: We expect eight (8) households to apply to Breathing Room and to be remotely assessed for services in 2021. Of these clients, we anticipate sheltering six families (6-14 individuals), which is significantly less than in prior years due to the pandemic. It is important to note that if families do not qualify for shelter, they will receive family-focused case management services and links and referrals to mainstream benefits and service providers.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

1. Community Needs Addressed

Prior to operating Breathing Room, LCSC social workers had no option but to direct homeless Lakewood individuals/families to shelters in Cleveland if there was no possibility for temporary housing with a family member or friend. With HUD's mandate for Coordinated Intake, all homeless individuals/families must present at the Bishop Cosgrove Center at E. 17th and Superior for processing by an intake worker from EDEN, Inc. From the Cosgrove Center, clients are sent to one of the homeless shelters in the county, which continue to operate at or above capacity. While the goal of the program is to rapidly re-house the homeless, priority is given to families. Single women are sent to the Norma Herr Women's Shelter at E. 24th and Payne and single men to the Men's Shelter at 2100 Lakeside. During the pandemic, the Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Office of Homeless Services began using motels throughout the county to accommodate homeless individuals to reduce or control the spread of COVID-19. Whether a family or a single adult, there is little case management for the homeless, a long wait for re-housing for families, and little chance of being re-housed as a single adult. As members of the Cuyahoga County Office of Homeless Services' Continuum of Care, OHS has agreed that LCSC can accept Lakewood families directly at Breathing Room and that our participation in HUD's mandated Coordinated Intake can be accomplished by sending client information to the shelters via our Homeless Management Information Software, which is shared by all members of the Continuum. This agreement eliminates the requirement to direct Lakewood households to the shelters in Cleveland unless Breathing Room is occupied, or a homeless Lakewood family cannot temporarily stay with family or a friend until space is available. Because of the pandemic, friends and family members have become less inclined to allow homeless individuals/families to stay with them, making Breathing Room an even better option than in previous years. Unfortunately, individuals and families are staying in Breathing Room for much longer periods of time, which makes the shelter available to fewer displaced families.

2. Primary Goals & Objectives

The goal for Breathing Room is to offer short-term temporary shelter to Lakewood families who qualify for this assistance and to provide the services and supports to help these families remain stably housed in Lakewood when they leave the shelter. There are multiple objectives that need to be met to reach these goals. These objectives include:

- Thoroughly understanding the barriers that resulted in an individual or family becoming homeless
- Connecting individuals/families with mainstream benefits and community organizations that will ease the cost of housing burden (utility assistance, food stamps, cash assistance programs, etc.)
- Connecting individuals with services available to them through LCSC including food, case management and mental/behavioral health services provided by Murtis Taylor Human Services System
- Participating in the housing search to ensure that families move into safe, affordable, and sustainable housing when exiting Breathing Room (working with known landlords whenever possible)
- Ensuring that clients who are in Breathing Room commit to meeting remotely with LCSC case managers at least once each week to measure progress of case plan; housing search, etc.
- Providing cash assistance for security deposit/rent when necessary
- Following up with former Breathing Room clients on a regular basis to ensure housing stability, to intervene if necessary and to provide additional supports as needed.

Identifying and securing affordable and appropriate housing in Lakewood for an individual or a family with a court ordered eviction has become more and more difficult as there is a significantly growing pool of potential renters eager to move into Lakewood. Also, during the pandemic there has been less renter movement throughout the city because of the federal eviction moratorium and more recently the CDC moratorium, making available units even scarcer. This of course is good news for those in housing, but an additional barrier for those who have become homeless.

3. Program Design, Uniqueness & Innovation

LCSC is uniquely qualified to provide HUD's eligible services and to deliver on the terms of the MOU because: we have two full-time Licensed Social Workers with a combined 26 years' experience working with individuals with mental/behavioral health issues; we can offer mental/behavioral health services through our partnership with Murtis Taylor Human Services System (providing assessments, counseling and case management remotely as this time and for the foreseeable future unless psychiatric and/or pharmaceutical assistance is necessary); and we can access ESG Homelessness Prevention funds to move Breathing Room participants into appropriate and affordable housing. Through over 13 years of providing homelessness prevention programs and programs for literally homeless Lakewood residents, LCSC had established a network of Lakewood landlords willing to work with us. This network continues to shrink as developers continue to purchase what had been affordable Lakewood rental units, issuing 30 Day Notices to Quit to tenants, rehabbing the units and placing them back on the market at significantly increased costs to rent. Lakewood landlords have a glut of potential renters eager to move into Lakewood, which means they are no longer interested in renting to individuals with eviction histories or with housing vouchers (EDEN or Housing First). Having said that, LCSC continues to have success in reaching out to those landlords who still offer affordable units in Lakewood and convincing them to work with our client families exiting Breathing Room. Since LCSC began managing the City of Lakewood's ESG-CV CARES Act rental assistance program, we have written over \$300,000 in rent checks to Lakewood landlords whose tenants are delinquent as a direct result of financial hardship due to COVID-19. We have had considerable success in negotiating with some of these landlords to accept clients who do not meet their stringent requirement for monthly income of at least three times the monthly rental – an unexpected positive and one we leverage at every opportunity!

After exiting Breathing Room, families usually have established a relationship with their LCSC social worker who will follow up with them on a regular basis for as long as needed and will continue to link them to services and supports to help them stay stable in their new housing.

4. Target Population(s)

As an Emergency Solutions Grant-funded program, Breathing Room can serve Lakewood residents of extremely low income (30% of the Area Median Income, which equates to a maximum of \$16,000 per year for a single person household). Successful applicants must prove that they have sufficient income to remain stable after their stay, which as I noted earlier is becoming much longer than the original 30-day target. We also are finding that homeless Lakewood families need more than the original security deposit and once month's rent, which used to be a condition of participating in the program. To align with the Continuum of Care, LCSC gives priority to homeless families over individuals if there is a waiting list for shelter.

Clients accessing Breathing Room and the supportive services associated with this short-term shelter must meet the following criteria:

1. Last permanent residence or residence from which evicted/given Notice to Quit must be in Lakewood
2. Must meet HUD's extremely low-income guidelines
3. Must document sufficient income to be stable after temporary stay and cash assistance
4. Must agree to and sign the Participation Contract which includes the following provisions:
 - Must meet with LCSC social worker at least weekly - remotely
 - Only individuals on the contract may stay overnight
 - Must agree to weekly inspections of apartment by LCSC staff
 - Clients are responsible for any damages
 - Applicants receiving mental health/substance abuse treatment are encouraged to continue receiving services during their stay
 - No illegal drugs or alcohol are permitted
 - No smoking is permitted
 - No weapons are permitted
 - No pets are permitted

5. Geographic Service Area

ESG-funded Shelter Services are available to Lakewood residents only.

6. Services Provided & Delivery Strategy

Breathing Room is a complex program with a wide range of services available to those clients who are eligible. Every client engages in an intake and assessment by one of LCSC's licensed social workers. Based on ESG guidelines, those clients who are eligible complete an application package and usually are placed on a waiting list. When the unit becomes available, a client family then has an additional barriers assessment, signs the Participation Contract and is given a move-in date. All information is then sent to EDEN, Inc. for entry into the county's Coordinated Intake database in Clarity and entered here at LCSC into our agency's Clarity profile so that demographic data, progress milestones and exit data can be tracked by HUD and shared among community service providers after the client family signs a Release of Information.

There is an exhaustive list of ESG-eligible emergency shelter services that LCSC social workers provide to homeless Lakewood families to move them out of shelter, to connect them to mainstream benefits, to help them access education services, employment assistance, mental health services, etc. with the goal of increasing their housing stability and sustainability. (See Attachment B) LCSC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with partner county agencies with the overarching goals of both rapid exit from shelter and zero families returning to shelter. Shelter partners agree to work toward the completion of four milestones, which are: 1. To develop a detailed exit plan with the client; 2. To address client income needs (link to mainstream benefits, link to employment resources, links to supportive services, completion of public assistance paperwork and assistance to seek and secure child care); 3. To help with housing search and placement and help to secure basic furniture, bedding, etc.; and 4. To resolve utility issues.

Note: the milestones have not officially been changed/modified in response to the pandemic, but shelter partners understand that COVID-19 has disrupted the completion of these milestones, especially employment-related activities, and access to childcare.

7. Outreach Strategy & Efforts

Community outreach efforts are similar to those for all programs and services offered at LCSC. The LCSC social workers have ongoing relationships with staff at the City of Lakewood Division of Youth and Division on Aging, with Neighborhood Family Practice, Family Resource Coordinators at the City of Lakewood schools, social workers at the Westerly Apartments and at Fedor Manor. Direct referrals are simple and ongoing. Information is available at the Lakewood Public Libraries, all schools, churches, City Hall, etc. and in these organizations' social media. All LCSC services are listed with United Way's 211 First Call for Help.

8. Community Partnerships & Stakeholders

LCSC works with all the community partners indicated in the Outreach Strategy above. In addition to these local partners, LCSC also works with CMHA and EDEN for clients with housing vouchers, other members of the Cuyahoga County Continuum of Care, Murtis Taylor Human Services System and other mental/behavioral health providers, hospital systems (and in particular, MetroHealth), the AIDS Taskforce, and the Veterans Administration.

9. Staffing

Title	Hours/Week Devoted to Program	% ESG Funded	Qualifications & Responsibilities
Senior Manager, Client Services	2	100%	Client intake, assessment, case management, assistance with housing search, follow up, data entry into Clarity
Manager, Client Services	2	100%	Client intake, assessment, case management, assistance with housing search, follow up, data entry into Clarity
Executive Director	.50	100%	Program oversight, reporting to City of Lakewood. Management of HMIS data entry, fundraising

10. Implementation Schedule

This does not apply to Shelter Services. Program is ongoing

11. Projected Beneficiaries (January 1 – December 31, 2021)

	Persons	Households
Total Unduplicated Persons & Households to be Served	6-14	6
Unduplicated Very-Low Income* Persons & Households to be Served	6-14	6

*<30% Area Median Income

12. Program Evaluation

(data collection & analysis, outcome measurement procedures & methodology)

Data Collection Tools: LCSC as an ESG recipient is mandated to enter all client data into the County's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) software program, Clarity. Client information is entered at intake and assessment and throughout the engagement to create a progress report for each client. Exit data include date of exit; destination; referrals to benefits; amount of cash assistance. In addition, all clients who receive Emergency Shelter services are also entered into our own proprietary Access client database which captures demographic information; length of time in our community; source of income; and number of clients with special needs. This information informs the monthly Accomplishment Report LCSC provides to the City of Lakewood for their reporting to HUD.

Outcome Measurement Procedures/Methodology: Client services are also entered into the County's HMIS system, Clarity. This software tracks length of time receiving shelter services; services received (from LCSC and from other community providers); and objectives at entry and exit points. This software was recently introduced by the Cleveland/Cuyahoga County of Homeless Services, so we have not been able to determine what outcomes reporting capacity the system has. We will begin to look at this in 2021.

13. Additional Data and/or Information Not Previously Requested That Strengthens the Organization's Case for ESG Funding Support

Although we are forecasting a lower occupancy rate in Breathing Room than we have in past years, a Lakewood shelter continues to be a far better and safer alternative to the shelters available in downtown Cleveland or at motels scattered around the city because of the pandemic. Even though interaction is remote, residents in Breathing Room know that because our offices are in the same building, they can access services and emergency services immediately. If a family with children are continuing with home learning, Breathing Room has access to LCSC's Wi-Fi, which can be a value added during these extraordinary times.

FY21 Project Budget

Expenditures

Expense Category	Lakewood ESG Funding Request	Agency Matching Funds	Other Matching Funds	Total
Shelter Operations				
Rent	6,600			6,600
Utilities	1,200			1,200
Routine Maintenance & Repairs	500	500		1,000
Property Insurance		250		250
Housekeeping (cleaning between residents) *	1,200			1,200
Supplies**	800			800
Furnishings (replacement, if needed)	1,000			1,000
Food		6,000		6,000
Pest Control	1,500	1,000		2,500
Liability Insurance		1,700		1,700
Total Shelter Operations				22,250
Essential Services (Staff & Fringe)				
Staff Salaries	7,644			7,644
Fringe Benefits	2,101			2,101
Total Essential Services				9,745
HMIS				
Staff/Administration		400		400
Hardware, Equipment, Software		1,500		1,500
Total HMIS				1,900
LCSC Program Oversight/Administration				
Staff Salary	1,720			1,720
Fringe Benefits	175			175
Total LCSC Program Oversight/Administration				1,895
LCSC Occupancy**				
Rent		3,780		3,780
Utilities/Phone		1,000		1,000
Property Insurance		100		100
Cleaning		720		720
Equipment		200		200
Materials/Printing/Copying		200		200
Total LCSC Occupancy				6,000
Financial Consultant				
Financial Consultant	560	100		660
Total Financial Consultant				660
Grand Total	25,000	17,450		42,450

*COVID-19 protocols include professional disinfectant cleaning between occupants. This service is provided by Jani King Commercial Cleaning.

**Each occupant is provided with a housekeeping pack, which they can take with them when they leave. In the past, we washed laundry, dishes, pots, and pans, but have changed protocol so that each family receives sheets, blankets, pillows, dishes, cutlery, one saucepan, one frying pan, etc. to minimize any health risk.

Funding Sources

Source	Requested	Committed	Total
FY20-FY21 ESG Carry Forward (<i>est</i>)		7,000	7,000
Other (Non-ESG) Federal			
State/County Government			
Private Sector (<i>Foundations, etc...</i>)			
Earned Revenue			
Other: Agency Funds		10,450	10,450
FY21 ESG Request	25,000		\$25,000
Totals	25,000	17,450	42,450
<i>Include letters from all sources of already committed funds.</i>			

FY21 BUDGET NARRATIVE

- 1. Describe how City of Lakewood ESG funds be utilized to support the proposed program.**
 ESG funds will be used for: shelter operations and social workers' salaries/benefits for the delivery of essential services, which is an exhaustive list of services provided to Lakewood families (see Attachment B); salary relief for Executive Director's oversight; time devoted to HMIS data entry; partial support for counting firm monthly reporting to City of Lakewood.
- 2. Describe how the proposed program would function if it does not receive full amount of requested funding.**
 LCSC would have to secure foundation funding for the program because there are no non-essential expenses in the shelter budget. Should those efforts be unsuccessful, LCSC would have to contribute additional agency funds.
- 3. Describe the agency's efforts to develop/leverage other sources of funding to support the proposed program.**
 As described in 2. Above, LCSC continually seeks foundation and individual support for all our programs.