

Journey Center for Safety & Healing

FY26 CDBG Applicant Narrative

1. Mission & History

For nearly half a century, Journey Center for Safety and Healing (Journey) has been a leader in Cuyahoga County around issues of domestic violence and child abuse. Journey's mission is to provide services that foster safety and healing to those affected by child abuse and domestic violence; and to prevent abuse through education, advocacy, and systemic change. The agency envisions a community where safety and well-being are achieved by empowering people to find a path toward healthy, thriving relationships.

2. Geographic Service Area

Journey primarily serves Cuyahoga County, Ohio, but coordinates with organizations in Lake, Geauga, Summit, Medina, Lorain, and Portage counties when appropriate. Demographically, the population of Cuyahoga County is 28.6% African American, 3.22% Asian, 6.79% Hispanic or Latino, 3.04% multi-racial, <1% Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian/Native American, and 57% White.

3. Target Population

Each year, Journey serves more than 17,000 individuals in Cuyahoga County who are victims of child sexual and physical abuse, teen dating violence, intimate partner violence, and stalking. While abuse happens in all communities and at all socio-economic levels, the vast majority of domestic violence victims that Journey serves come from the City of Cleveland or inner-ring suburbs and have incomes below the federal poverty level.

4. Programs & Services

Journey provides an array of prevention and intervention services that help people experiencing abuse find strength and support as they determine their best path toward health and safety. Services include a 24/7 helpline; emergency shelter; assistance with securing permanent housing; trauma therapy; justice system advocacy; support groups; supervised visitation and safe exchange; prevention, education, and training events; parenting classes; community advocacy; and services for victims in the Hispanic community.

5. Number & Demographic Profile of Clients Served (FY24)

Journey served 18,094 people between 7/1/24 and 6/30/25. According to the most recently available demographic data, Journey's clients are 83% female and 15% male; 89% over the age of 18 and 11% under the age of 18; 45% African American, 13% Hispanic, 8% multi-racial, 2% other, <1% Native American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and 32% White.

6. Qualifications to Implement Proposed Project

Journey is the most comprehensive domestic violence agency in Northeast Ohio and is unique in combining domestic violence and child abuse in its mission. Staff are experts in both domestic violence and child abuse. Journey has a strong infrastructure, considerable ability to manage both core services and new initiatives, and an experienced and dedicated staff. The agency has a 15-member voluntary Board of Directors who guide and make recommendations to the Chief Executive Officer. The CEO is responsible for the everyday operations of the agency and the oversight of a staff of 87: 62 full-time employees and 25 part-time/PRN employees.

The Justice System Advocacy Program (JSAP) is overseen by the Chief Advocacy Officer, Shelly Dudas, who has 25 years of experience working with both victims and perpetrators at Journey. Shelly holds a B.A. in Criminology/Sociology and is responsible for hiring, training, and oversight of Advocates.

Janice Smith is a Lakewood Justice System Advocate. Janice is a Registered Advocate with more than 25 years of experience working with children and families. She is trained and certified in administering the Danger Assessment, which quantitatively determines the level of danger a victim of domestic violence faces of being killed by their intimate partner. Janice has been with Journey since 2010, starting as a monitor in the Safe & Sound Visitation Center. Janice has worked in JSAP since 2017 and became the Lakewood Advocate in May 2018.

7. Experience Administering Government Contracts & Complying with Federal Regulatory Requirements

Journey has considerable experience in managing government grants and contracts, which are a main revenue source for the agency. Last year, nearly 80% of Journey's funding came from government sources. Funders include VOCA/SVAA, VAWA, FVPSA, FVPSA Baseline, OVW (Justice for Families), HUD (DV-Bonus, Rapid Rehousing), OHS Supportive Services, Ohio Attorney General (DV Baseline), Ohio Department of Development (Supportive Housing Program), City of Cleveland (ESG, ARPA), Cuyahoga County (Marriage License Funds, County Levy), ADAMHS Board, Cleveland Heights (ARPA, CDBG), and Lakewood CDBG. All compliance regulations and auditing procedures are followed in accordance with Uniform Grant Guidelines.

8. FY25 Organizational Budget

- i. Total FY25 Operating Budget \$6,995,332
- ii. FY25 Budgeted Operating Expenses

Expenditure Category	Amount	% Total Budget
Salaries & Fringe Benefits	4,250,205	61%
Operating Costs	2,745,127	39%
Capital Costs		
Indirect Costs		
Total	6,995,332	100%

- iii. FY25 Budgeted Revenue Sources (Top 4)

#	Source	Amount	% Total Budget
1	OHS Supportive Services	2,318,107	33%
2	HUD (EDEN) DV Bonus	839,803	12%
3	Cuyahoga County Marriage License	285,602	4%
4	VOCA - JSAP	216,017	3%
	Total	3,659,529	52%

9. Does Your Organization Maintain the Following Documents?

- i. Personnel Manual/Grievance Procedures Yes ☒ No ☐
- ii. Affirmative Action Policy Yes ☒ No ☐

10. Does Your Organization Have the Capacity to Serve Non-English-Speakers? Yes ☒ No ☐

11. Do Your Facilities Comply with ADA Accessibility Requirements? Yes ☒ No ☐

12. Additional Data and/or Information that Strengthens the Organization's Case for CDBG Funding Support

Journey is in the final year of its strategic plan, a primary goal of which is to have adequate resources to maintain high-quality services, innovate to meet community needs, and strengthen organizational capacity. To achieve this goal, Journey has developed and executed a resource development plan with a goal of increasing overall fundraising by an annual average of at least 4% from diversified sources. From FY 2019 to FY 2024, Journey increased individual donations by an annual average of nearly 10%. Total giving to the agency increased by nearly 17% since FY 2019.

Journey's Chief Executive Officer is developing a new strategic plan in 2025, seeking ways to diversify and strengthen financial support for the agency's operations. Journey has worked to reduce expenses for the current fiscal year and is working to increase its private fundraising efforts and revenue.