

Journey Center for Safety & Healing

CDBG Applicant Narrative

1. Mission & History

For 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 61.7% African American, 4% Asian, 7.7% Hispanic or Latino, 4.2% multi-racial, <1% Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian/Native American, and 61.7% white.

3. Target Population(s)

Each year, over 11,500 individuals in Cuyahoga County impacted by child sexual and physical abuse, teen dating violence, intimate partner violence and stalking receive services from Journey. While abuse happens in all communities and at all socio-economic levels, the vast majority of domestic violence victims that Journey serves comes from the City of Cleveland or inner-ring suburbs and have incomes below the federal poverty level.

4. Programs & Services

Victims of domestic violence find strength, support, and information through Journey's free array of prevention and intervention services. These include a 24/7 helpline; emergency shelter; assistance with securing permanent housing; trauma therapy; justice system advocacy; support groups; supervised visitation and safe exchange; and services for victims in the Hispanic community.

5. Number & Demographic Profile of Clients Served (FY25)

Journey served 12,078 people between 07/01/25 and 06/30/26. According to the most recently available demographic data, Journey's clients are 83% female and 14% male; 88% over the age of 18, and 12% under the age of 18; 49% African American, <1% Asian/Pacific Islander, 12% Hispanic, 7% multi-racial, <1% Native American, 3% Other, and 34% 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 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 78: 49 full-time and 29 part-time/PRN employees.

The Justice System Advocacy Program (JSAP) is overseen by the Chief Advocacy Officer, Shelly Dudas, who has more than 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.

Beck Chaffins is a Lakewood Justice System Advocate. Beck is a Registered Advocate, and 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. Beck has been with Journey since 2025, starting as a Community Advocate in the Domestic Violence Housing Initiative. Beck has worked in JSAP and has been the Lakewood Advocate since March 2026.

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, 77% of Journey's funding came from government sources. Funders included VOCA/SVAA, VAWA, FVPSA, FVP Baseline Funds, 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), Cuyahoga County (Marriage License Funds, County Levy), Cuyahoga County ADAMHS Board, Cleveland Heights (ARPA, CDBG), and Lakewood CDBG. All compliance and auditing procedures are followed in accordance with Uniform Grant Guidelines.

8. FY26 Organizational Budget

i. Total FY26 Operating Budget \$6,572,702

ii. FY26 Budgeted Operating Expenses (add rows if/as necessary)

Expenditure Category	Amount	% Total Budget
Salaries & Fringe Benefits	3,351,939	50%
Operating Costs	3,220,763	50%
Total	\$6,572,702	100%

iii. FY26 Budgeted Revenue Sources (Top 4)

#	Source	Amount	% Total Budget
1	OHS Supportive Services	2,652,293	40%
2	HUD (EDEN) DV Bonus	839,803	13%
3	VOCA - JSAP	216,642	3%
4	Cuyahoga County Marriage License	206,030	3%
Total		\$3,914,768	59%

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's Board of Directors has approved a new strategic plan, prioritizing ways to diversify and strengthen financial support for the agency's operations, and increase private fundraising efforts and revenue, ensuring the agency can continue providing its essential services to victims of domestic violence in Cuyahoga County.

The Board of Directors, with input from outside organizations, funders, the community, agency leadership, and staff, has prioritized sustainability as a principal goal for the agency. Journey's definition of financial sustainability is to be operating consistently with an annual surplus of at least 1%, have 4–6 months of operating reserve, and increase the percentage of revenue coming from private sources so the agency is less vulnerable to decreases in public funding.