



Organization	Journey Center for Safety & Healing
Organization Type	Not-For-Profit
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Project/Program Name	Victim Advocacy Services
Total FY27 Project Budget	\$62,953.12
FY27 CDBG Funding Request	\$18,886.10

Journey Center for Safety & Healing

Victim Advocacy Services

CDBG Eligibility Criteria

The *Journey Center for Safety & Healing's Victim Advocacy Services Program* satisfies the following eligibility criteria and is therefore suitable for CDBG funding consideration.

CDBG National Objective

Low-Moderate Income Limited Clientele (LMC): Activities that benefit either a specific group of persons at least 51% of who are documented as low-moderate income or a clientele presumed by HUD to be principally low-moderate income (e.g. battered spouses, senior citizens).

CDBG-Eligible Activity Category

Public Services: The provision of public services including labor, supplies, materials, and the pro rata share of the facilities where these services are provided.

HUD-Designated Performance Objective

Create Suitable Living Environments

HUD-Designated Performance Outcome

- Availability
- Accessibility

I. ABSTRACT

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.

Journey's Justice System Advocacy Program (JSAP) is the only program that serves victims of domestic violence, stalking, menacing by stalking, assault, and felonious assault in the inner-ring suburban courts of Cuyahoga County. Journey has engaged in justice system advocacy on behalf of victims for over 25 years. The agency is committed to advocacy as a principal strategy to improving the justice system to ensure that victims of abuse achieve safety, autonomy, health, well-being, independence, financial restitution, and justice.

The Lakewood Justice System Advocate provides legal and personal advocacy to victims of domestic violence who live in Lakewood, and to those who are involved in Lakewood Municipal Court. Services include: safety planning, connections with counsel, assistance with protection orders, explanation of court processes and options, assistance with securing victim rights, resources and referrals, weekly support groups, and ongoing support. The Advocate collaborates with Lakewood Municipal Court, the Lakewood Prosecutor's Office, and Lakewood Police Department to obtain the best outcomes for clients.

Journey is the only agency specializing in these services for victims in the Lakewood court system. Last year, the project served 111 victims in Lakewood. When a victim leaves a domestic violence situation, their economic status is often altered. The majority of victims served through this project qualify as extremely low, low, or moderate income.

The total cost to provide this service to the City of Lakewood is \$62,953.12/year. Journey is requesting \$18,886.10 in Lakewood CDBG funding to continue providing a designated Justice System Advocate for Lakewood victims of domestic violence and those involved in the Lakewood Municipal Court.

II. PROJECT NARRATIVE

1. Community Needs Addressed/Service Gaps Filled

Domestic violence and child abuse are ongoing crises. Each year in the United States, over 10 million adults experience the trauma of abuse, and in 2024, Child Protective Service agencies across the United States received over 4.3 million referrals alleging child abuse and neglect involving more than 7.6 million children (Child Maltreatment, 2024). The most recently conducted National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (2023/2024) reports that more than 1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men in the United States have experienced sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. In Ohio, 1,508,000 individuals experience some form of sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime (National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2023/2024).

In 2025, Cleveland Police reported 13,674 incidents of domestic violence, stalking, and sex offense related incidents (Cleveland Division of Police, Domestic, Stalking, and Sex Offense Related CAD Incidents). Lakewood Police reported at least 133 incidents of domestic violence that resulted in a domestic violence charge, other charge, or no charge in 2025 (OHIO BCII). During this time, 3,473 families had substantiated abuse and neglect referrals through the Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services (Agency Annual Statistics Report). In FY2026, Journey's 24-Hour Helpline received 6,670 calls, indicating the community's need for services.

Domestic violence victims experience many barriers that prevent safe and effective participation with the criminal justice system, including fear of retaliation from their abuser, lack of resources to safely leave an abusive situation, victim-blaming attitudes of law enforcement officials, and resistance from courts to appropriately charge abusers. Victims experience high rates of trauma and can be easily triggered by court staff, or have feelings of hopelessness over the litigation process. Law enforcement and court personnel's behavior are crucial to victims' decisions to engage in the court process, and victims are more likely to access help and request protective orders if the courts are perceived as legitimate and trustworthy (Center for Court Innovation, 2016). In one survey of domestic violence victims, only 53% reported feeling they received justice (Urban Institute, 2024).

Domestic violence victims receive services which make them safer from the Lakewood Justice System Advocate. Advocates demystify the court process, alert victims to potential consequences of the arrest of the perpetrator, explain court processes and next steps, and – most importantly – provide support and access to resources they may need going forward. When Advocates offer coordinated, early, victim-focused interventions, victims are more likely to participate in court proceedings, access community-based advocacy programs, and report decreases in distress, PTSD, depression, and fear.

Journey is the only agency addressing these issues in Lakewood court systems. Domestic violence victims involved in criminal and civil court proceedings in the City of Lakewood receive personal advocacy, crisis intervention, safety planning, information, and support from the Advocate.

In FY2026, JSAP served a total of 1,170 victims, including 111 in the Lakewood Municipal Court alone. The total cost to provide this service to the City of Lakewood is \$62,953.12/year. Journey is requesting \$18,886.10 in Lakewood CDBG funding to continue providing a designated Justice System Advocate for Lakewood victims of domestic violence and those involved in the Lakewood Municipal Court system. This is a cost of \$170.15/person served.

2. Primary Goals & Objectives

The overarching goal of JSAP is to improve the well-being of victims of domestic violence and/or child abuse by providing support, information, assistance with navigating the justice system, resources, referrals, and systems change advocacy.

Between 01/01/2027 and 12/31/2027:

- 100 households/victims of domestic violence in the Lakewood court system will receive services from the Lakewood Justice System Advocate.
- Monthly Lakewood JSAP reports will be submitted to Lakewood's Development Officer.
- Information will be distributed to Lakewood law enforcement and court personnel.

3. Program Design, Uniqueness & Innovation

Victims of domestic violence in the City of Lakewood will receive services that make them safe, as well as support and access to resources that they may need going forward from Journey's Lakewood Justice System Advocate. The Advocate typically addresses a range of issues that victims must negotiate, including housing, physical and mental health, financial support, and children's issues. Broad-based advocacy results in decreased risk of further abuse as well as increased access to community resources, higher social support, and improved mental health and well-being. Journey is the only agency in the Lakewood court system addressing these issues.

4. Target Population(s)

The Lakewood Justice System Advocate serves all domestic violence victims residing in Lakewood. The Advocate also serves those in the Lakewood Municipal Court who request justice system advocacy services. Journey provides services regardless of race, religion, gender, age, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, disability, income, or veteran status.

While abuse happens in all communities and at all socio-economic levels, the vast majority of the victims Journey serves have incomes below the federal poverty level. When a victim leaves a domestic violence situation, their economic situation is often altered.

5. Geographic Service Area

The service area of the Lakewood Justice System Advocate includes the Lakewood Municipal Court, which encompasses the City of Lakewood, portions of the Cleveland Metroparks, U.S. Interstate 90, and adjacent Lake Erie waters to the Canadian Border. The Advocate meets with clients in the community, and travels to Lakewood as needed to accompany clients to court meetings/hearings, the police department, and/or other meetings related to the justice system.

6. Services Provided & Delivery Strategy

Legal and personal advocacy services are provided based on each victim's unique situation. Services may include:

Legal Support

- Safety planning, including completion of a Danger Assessment.
- Connections with counsel.
- Assistance with filing for a protection order and follow-up hearings.
- Explanation of applicable court processes and options, with a focus on safety and self-determination.
- Court escorts for hearings, communications and meetings.

Personal Advocacy

- Assistance with securing rights provided by Marsy's Law.
- Emergency financial assistance, including intervention with employers, creditors, and others on behalf of the victim; and assistance with filing for losses covered by public and private insurance programs, unemployment benefits, welfare, and more.
- Relief from economic abuse, including advocating to protect shared family obligations including utilities, cellphones, etc.
- Resources and referrals to wraparound services, including housing, financial assistance, and childcare.
- Weekly virtual and in-person support groups.
- Ongoing support to ensure that victims feel supported and informed throughout their time interacting with the legal system.

7. Client Outreach Strategies & Efforts

The Justice System Advocate works in the Lakewood courts providing advocacy, support, information, court escorts, safety planning assistance, and referrals to any victim of domestic violence who is involved in the legal system or who is considering legal options to increase safety. The Advocate continually reaches out to the courts with information about resources for victims through Journey. Through strong relationships with the courts and law enforcement, Journey has built a tremendous presence in the community and increased availability to Lakewood victims. In addition to outreach and information, the Advocate works with law enforcement and judicial systems to implement best practice policies and protocols that are victim-friendly. In doing so, the Lakewood Justice System Advocate not only serves victims but also works to create systems change to improve outcomes and safety. As a result of outreach efforts, JSAP serves as a vital referral source for many social service providers in the City of Lakewood.

Victims are linked with an Advocate after a call from police alerting the Advocate to an incident of domestic violence that has occurred, or after a direct call from the victim to Journey's 24-Hour Helpline. The Lakewood Justice System Advocate works collaboratively with the Lakewood Police Department, which has gone above and beyond this best practice protocol of linking victims directly to services. The Lakewood Police Department regularly calls Journey when responding to a report of intimate partner violence, even if no arrest has been made.

8. Partnerships/Collaboration with Community Organizations Serving Low-Moderate Income Persons

Journey coordinates with a wide array of community partners in the City of Lakewood, many of whom serve low- and moderate- income individuals. The Lakewood Justice System Advocate collaborates almost daily with the Lakewood Prosecutor's Office and Lakewood Municipal Court. Journey's work with the Lakewood Police Department is collaborative and ongoing.

9. Project Staffing

Title	Hours/Week Devoted to Program	% CDBG-Funded	Qualifications & Responsibilities
Lakewood Justice System Advocate	20	30%	Provides advocacy, support, court escorts, information, referrals, and case management services. Facilitates support groups.
Chief Advocacy Officer	1	0%	Prepare monthly reports to Lakewood Development officer.
Justice System Advocacy Director	2	0%	Supervises Lakewood Advocate and provides additional advocacy and support as needed.

10. Implementation Schedule

Milestone	Completion Deadline
Lakewood Justice System Advocate provides safety planning, referrals, court escorts, and services to participants.	Ongoing.
Lakewood Justice System Advocate facilitates support groups for domestic violence victims in Lakewood.	Weekly.
Journey marketing materials distributed by Lakewood Justice System Advocate to Lakewood Court personnel, law enforcement, and other pertinent stakeholders in the community to promote Journey's services, 24-Hour Helpline number, and Justice System Advocacy Program (JSAP).	1/1/2027 and when needed.
Chief Advocacy Officer (JSAP) sends reports to Lakewood Development Officer.	Monthly

11. Projected Beneficiaries (January 1 – December 31, 2027)

	Persons	Households
Total Unduplicated Persons & Households to be Served	100	100
Unduplicated Low-Moderate Income* Persons & Households to be Served	70	70

* < 80% Area Median Income

12. Program Evaluation (data collection & analysis, outcome measurement procedures & methodology)

Journey maintains all accurate statistics and records for all services, including number of clients, demographic data, and types of services provided. All data is entered into a comprehensive database system (Osnum) which is monitored by the Chief Advocacy Officer. Data is collected at the end of service via client surveys. Journey utilizes IMPROVE surveys, which are distributed by Justice System Advocates and are analyzed by the Chief Advocacy Officer.

13. Additional data/information that strengthens the organization's case for CDBG funding support.

Journey works to educate justice system personnel and other professionals about the impact and dynamics of domestic violence, building partnerships to ensure that victims receive coordinated, comprehensive services and access to systems. With this in mind, Justice System Advocates provide information, education, and materials about domestic violence to law enforcement and justice system personnel and work to advocate both for individual victims and for procedures and processes in each court that emphasize the safety of victims.

Journey is aware that awards are dependent on the City of Lakewood's level of federal funding and the number of proposals submitted. This request and the budget shown reflect the real cost of providing justice system advocacy services to the citizens of Lakewood.

III. FY27 PROGRAM BUDGET

i. Expenses

Expense Category	Total Project (A)	CDBG Funds (B)	CDBG As % of Total (B/A)
Personnel			
Salaries	\$41,818.02	\$12,545.40	30%
Fringe Benefits	\$19,303.11	\$5,790.93	30%
Sub-Total Personnel	\$61,121.12	\$18,336.50	30%
Overhead & Operations			
Rent/Lease			
Insurance			
Materials & Supplies			
Professional Services			
Postage			
Travel	\$1,580.00	\$474.00	30%
Utilities/Telephone	\$252.00	\$75.60	30%
Insurance			
Equipment			
Sub-Total Overhead & Operations	\$1,832.00	\$549.60	30%
Total Project Costs/Program Budget	\$62,953.12	\$18,886.10	30%

ii. Funding Sources/Revenue

Source	Requested	Committed	Total
Agency Funds			
FY26-FY27 CDBG Carry Forward Funds (est)			
Other (Non-CDBG) Federal Funds	\$18,147.56		\$18,147.56
State Funds			
Local Funds			
County Funds			
Private (Foundations, Individuals, Other) Funds			
Earned Revenue/Fees			
In-Kind/Volunteer Support (@ \$15/Hour)	\$25,919.46		\$25,919.46
FY27 City of Lakewood CDBG Funding Request	\$18,886.10		\$18,886.10
Total Funding Sources/Program Budget	\$62,953.12		\$65,953.12

IV. FY27 BUDGET NARRATIVE

1. How will City of Lakewood CDBG funds will be utilized to support the proposed program.

City of Lakewood CDBG funds will be utilized to support the salary and fringe benefits of the Lakewood Justice System Advocate, as well as associated travel and cellphone costs. Travel funds will cover the mileage necessary to meet with clients and accompany them to meetings. Cell phone funds will be used to communicate with clients and the court system to provide advocacy services.

Personnel costs of \$18,336.50 are calculated at 30% of salary, FICA, and health/dental insurance of the Lakewood Justice System Advocate.

Travel costs of \$474 are calculated at 30% of an estimated 2,701 miles x \$.585/mile

Cell phone costs of \$75.60 are calculated at \$6.30/month x 12 months.

2. How will the proposed program function if the agency does not receive the full amount of requested funding.

Without the support of Lakewood CDBG funding, Journey would continue to provide this service but would have to reduce the number of hours that the Lakewood Justice System Advocate devotes to serving Lakewood residents.

3. Describe the agency's efforts to develop/leverage other sources of funding to support the proposed program.

Journey is dedicated to the sustainability of its programs, including the Justice System Advocacy Program. 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, have 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.

Journey annually applies for and receives funding from the U.S. Department of Justice Victims of Crime Act/State Victims Assistance Act (VOCA/SVAA) through the Ohio Attorney General's Office for the Justice System Advocacy Program.