

Town of Richmond

Request for Special Appropriations

Request for Fiscal Year: 2025

Organization's Name: Steps to End Domestic Violence
Address: PO Box 1535
City, State, Zip: Burlington Vermont 05402
Website address: www.stepsvt.org

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Program Name: Emergency Shelter & Housing

2. Contact Person/Title: Nicole Kubon, MSW / Executive Director

Telephone Number: (802) 658-3131 ext 1062

E-mail address: nicolek@stepsvt.org

3. Total number of individuals served in the last complete fiscal year by this program:
761 (512 adults, 249 children)

4. Total number of the above individuals who are Town residents: _____
Please, attach any documentation that supports this number. [See attached annual report.](#)

Percent of people served who are Town residents: 18 adults, 23 children

5. Amount of Request: \$1,500

6. Total Program Budget: 1,591,656 Percent of total program budget
you are requesting from the Town of Richmond: 0.09%

7. Please state or attach the mission of your agency: To assist in the transition to a safe, independent life for all those who have been affected physically, sexually, emotionally, or economically by domestic abuse and to promote a culture that fosters justice, equity, and safety.

8. Funding will be used to:
 Maintain an existing program _____ Expand an Existing Program
_____ Start a new program

9. Has your organization received funds from the Town in the past for this or a similar program? Yes, the Town of Richmond has provided past funding to Steps' programming.

If yes, please answer the following:

a. Does the amount of your request represent an increase over your previous appropriation? If yes, explain the reason(s) for the increase.
This request is an increase over previous appropriation to account for continued increase in Steps' operating budget and inflation.

b. Were any conditions or restrictions placed on the funds by the Selectboard? _____
If yes, describe how those conditions or restrictions have been met.
No

B. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1. Statement of Need: Identify the issue or need that the program will address (use statistical data to justify the need for the program). To what extent does this need, or problem exist in the Town of Richmond? [See Attachment 1](#)

2. Program Summary:

a. Identify the target/recipients of program services. Specify the number of Town residents your program will serve during the fiscal year and explain the basis upon which this number is calculated. Indicate any eligibility requirements your program has with respect to age, gender, income or residence. [See Attachment 1](#)

b. Identify what is to be accomplished or what change will occur from participating in the program. How will people be better off as a result of participating in the program? Describe the steps you take to make the project known to the public, and make the program accessible and inclusive? [See Attachment 1](#)

3. Program Funding:

a. Identify how Town funds, specifically, will be used (i.e., funds will provide "X" amount of units of service.) [See Attachment 1](#)

b. List the other agencies to whom you are submitting a request for funds for this program and the amount requested. How would this program be modified should revenues be lost? [See Attachment 1](#)

C. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

1. Describe your agency's capability to provide the program including its history, previous experience providing this service, management structure and staff expertise. [Steps is a 501\(c\)\(3\) non-profit organization in good standing with the IRS. Steps has been in operations since 1974, under the name "Women's House of Refuge". Over the decades, Steps has grown in programs and staffing to respond to community needs. Steps has an active Board of 10 Directors with varied professional expertise and a skilled, motivated, highly engaged Executive Director. Under the ED's supervision are the Directors of Housing and Program Services, who oversee teams of advocates providing direct service. Steps also has administrative staff who provide grant management, data analysis, finance, and operations management.](#)

2. How will you assess whether/how program participants are better off? Describe how you will assess program outcomes. Your description should include: what (what kind of data), how (method/tool for collecting the data), from whom (source of data) and when (timing of data collection). Our empowerment model allows individuals to establish their own goals within the our service provision framework. we collect and analyze data as part of a robust program planning and development effort. We also measure whether individuals who engage in our pogramming become more self sufficient due to Steps' services using a self-sufficiency matrix (SSM). The SSM includes a list of domains (i.e. food, shelter, income) and five levels, ranging from "in crisis" to "employed". Results consistently demonstrate substantial progress towards self-sufficiency.

3. Summarize or attach program and or service assessments conducted in the past two years. Please see annual report in attachment with this application.

4. Does your organization have a strategic plan and a strategic planning process in place? Yes - If yes, please attach your plan. Strategic planning currently in progress

The strategic plan should include a mission statement, goals, steps to achieve the goals, and measures that assess the accomplishments of the goals.

5. What is the authorized size of your board of directors? No fewer than 5; currently 10 members
How many meetings were held by the board last year? 9 meetings

I, the undersigned, confirm the information contained herein is accurate and can be verified as such. I understand and agree that if the requested funds are approved, the disbursement of funds are subject to all conditions established by the Richmond Selectboard.

Signature of Applicant  Date 9/30/2023

Nicole Kubon, MSW / Executive Director
Print Name of Applicant and Title

1. **Statement of Need:**

The Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission's [2022 report](#) details that from 1994 to 2021, nearly half (47%) of all homicides in Vermont were domestic violence related. Homicide is the terminal escalation of domestic violence; escalation of violent behaviors (frequency or severity of the abuse) is characteristic of many abusive relationships. Steps to End Domestic Violence works to break pervasive, escalating cycles of abuse to eliminate fatality and non-fatal assault for residents of Richmond.

As recently as this calendar year, Chittenden County experienced the terrible impact of a murder-suicide reported by family as domestic violence-related. The murder of [Melissa Bergeron](#) and suicide of her husband left a child without parents. We mourn for Melissa's needless loss of life, for the young child present for the violent death of his parents, and for every Vermonter whose life has been lost from or impacted by domestic violence. Death and injury from domestic violence is completely preventable and avoidable.

From July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 Steps provided services to over 2,000 adults and children. Our Hotline and Chat Lines received nearly 4,400 inquiries, offering crisis intervention, emergency services, support, and referrals. During the year an average of **61 new survivors** per month, people who had never accessed support or services before, reached out to Steps. We provided over 22,000 bed nights of emergency and transitional housing, and over 2,700 hours of playgroups, advocacy, parenting support, and resource connection through our Children's Program.

2. **Program Summary**

- a. In FY23, Steps directly served 41 adults and children who identified as residing in Richmond. This is a stark increase of 32% over the last Fiscal Year and does not reflect the full number of individuals who contacted our agency's hotline, chatline, or who chose not to identify their place of residence. Last year we anticipated the demand for our services from Richmond and other communities would continue to rise, and unfortunately this prediction was accurate. We anticipate the need to continue.

We do not have eligibility requirements regarding age, gender, or residence. If an individual from another county contacts Steps, advocates will first try to connect them with a local domestic violence agency within their county of residence (Steps is one of 15 agencies across the state with one in each county). Generally, we do not have eligibility requirements related to income; however, some federally funded grant programs have income eligibility guidelines that we must follow (e.g., Department of Justice Office of Violence Against Women Transitional Housing grant).

- b. Our data shows that most people seeking our services, including Richmond residents, are low-income and their experience of intimate partner violence is often compounded by co-occurring events. To that end, Steps is committed to working with our community partners to create programming that is accessible, inclusive, and trauma responsive.
 - Steps' Hotline (802-658-1996) - this is the "virtual front door" to all services and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. People experiencing domestic violence, friends and family members, and other community members and service providers are encouraged to contact our hotline at any time for emotional support, crisis

intervention, safety planning, education, referrals to community resources, emergency housing, and more.

- Steps also offers a Chat Line 8am-5pm, Monday through Friday. We recognize not all survivors of domestic violence are able to safely place phone calls. Steps' Chat Line is confidential, end-to-end encrypted, offers a "Quick Escape" button for safety, and messages are not retained after closing the web browser.
- Our Shelter + Housing support provides survivors of domestic violence and their children a safe environment to live in following the decision to flee for safety. Leaving an abusive partner is the most dangerous time for a survivor; threats or actual separation from the abusive partner are often the precipitating events leading to homicide. Lack of safe housing is a barrier for many and may result in them continuing to live with an abusive partner. Steps provides supportive emergency housing, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and economic justice services (financial literacy workshops, emergency financial assistance, and more) for survivors.
- Legal Advocacy for assistance with criminal, custody, divorce, and child support cases, Relief from Abuse Orders, and other proceedings. Legal advocates provide information, paperwork/form assistance, and in-court support.
- Steps' Children's Program supports children and their parents through supportive playgroups, one-on-one parent support, referrals to community and school/childcare resources, weekly programming, and seasonal events at shelter to make it feel as close to "home" as possible for children displaced from their homes due to violence.
- Support Groups allow survivors to connect with peers, feel less isolation, and learn about the dynamics of domestic violence. All groups are facilitated by advocates and are confidential. Steps holds support groups for women, and a gender-inclusive support group.
- Steps provides Education and Prevention services; the only way to end domestic violence is to prevent it occurring at all. We work with businesses, healthcare organizations, community resources and groups, and schools to promote and engage communities in anti-violence work. Additionally, we have an array of existing workshops, ability to create custom workshops, and provide physical materials (i.e. brochures, pull-tab flyers, drink coasters) that are posted and distributed throughout Chittenden County. Steps has provided Education and Prevention Services at MMU!

3. Program Funding

- a. Richmond's financial contribution supports services available to the residents of Richmond and all of Chittenden County. This includes immediate, 24/7 access to all of our programs as described above to every resident of Richmond, regardless of whether they directly seek our assistance through our hotline, chatline, or a referral. Staff and volunteers will be able to continue their outreach efforts in the Richmond community, including attendance at community-based events, and offering prevention workshops and other school-based programming by our education and prevention coordinator.
- b. Steps requests and receives funds from a multitude of State, Federal, community, business, foundations, and other funding opportunities. For a breakdown of funding types, please see Steps' Annual Report (in attachment with this application). Steps works

to maintain a diverse revenue stream including restricted and unrestricted funds. Steps maintains 4-6 months of Operating Reserves on hand and has a socially responsible investment account to ensure program continuity should any individual source be interrupted.

Funding sources include:

- United Way Donor Option
- VT Bar Foundation
- Vermont Community Foundation
- Housing and Urban Development's Continuum of Care Rapid Rehousing
- DoJ Office of Violence Against Women Transitional Housing
- DoJ Office of Violence Against Women Consolidated Youth Grant
- Family Violence Prevention and Services Act
- Victims of Crime Act
- STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program
- Vermont Housing Opportunity Program's Emergency Services Grant Program
- Vermont HOP Coord Housing Navigation
- VCCVS Omnibus Act 174 and HOP 10% Administration
- Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services (VCCVS)
- Town of Bolton
- Town of Charlotte
- Town of Colchester
- Town of Essex
- Town of Hinesburg
- Town of Huntington
- Town of Jericho
- Town of Milton
- Town of Richmond
- Town of St. George
- Town of Shelburne
- Town of Underhill
- Town of Westford
- City of Burlington

The background of the cover is a soft-focus photograph of white cherry blossoms on green branches. Overlaid on this is a large white circle containing the title and subtitle. The title '2023 ANNUAL REPORT' is centered in a bold, purple, serif font, flanked by two horizontal purple lines. Below the circle, the subtitle 'STEPS TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE' is written in a smaller, purple, sans-serif font, with a thin purple line above it.

2023
ANNUAL
REPORT

STEPS
TO END
DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE

Business Sponsors

Bia Diagnostics

The Pomerleau Family Foundation

KeyBank

Birdseye

Ben & Jerrys

Redstone

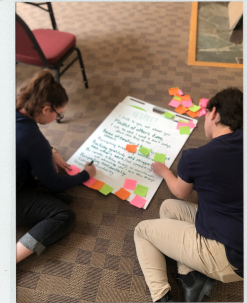
Gravel & Shea

Farrell Distributing

Comcast



The community gathered for our Candlelight Vigil and Speak Out



Team members working on our core values during a staff retreat

Our Mission...

is to assist in the transition to a safe, independent life for all those who have been affected physically, sexually, emotionally, or economically by domestic abuse and to promote a culture that fosters justice, equity, and safety.

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Anyone can be
affected by
domestic violence



A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This is the time of year when we, as a team, make space in our busy schedules to reflect back on the year behind us, what we have done, and how we go about the important work of healing with survivors and building a more engaged community. It's also a time when we plan for the year ahead of us... how do we sustain the work that is best serving survivors and how do we respond to the ever-changing needs of our entire community? Who is helping us get the work done? Who else do we need to join us to make real change happen?

You are the people helping us get the work done. You are also the people who can help us determine who else needs to be at the table to bring about the change we want to see in our community – to work from a more peaceful, caring, non-violent, non-judgmental place.

Answering these questions and making these plans, together with our community, is always at the forefront of our work – and this year it is particularly important. As we approach our 50th anniversary, we are investing our attention and resources in learning from our past work and strategizing for our future.



We hope you will join us in the journey ahead as we maintain our commitment to serving survivors while moving towards an increased commitment to preventing violence from happening in the first place. We trust that you will hold us accountable and speak up for your families and community – tell us what you'd like to see and how you can help us get there.

Yours in community,



Nicole Kubon, MSW

Executive Director

Board of Directors

Mariah Ogden, **Chair**

Ana Burke, **Vice Chair**

Gail Beck, **Treasurer**

Keiga Matsumoto, **Secretary**

Susan Gordon

Erica Dean

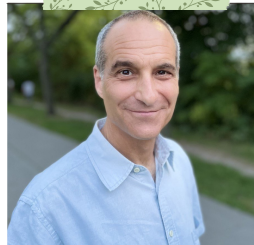
Agnes Cook

Jonathan Chapple-Sokol

Sarah Howe

Emily Fredette

Scott Cohen



BOARD MEMBER
SCOTT COHEN

Imagine a society where people are not subject to abuse, violence, or death from an intimate partner. Imagine a society where intergenerational cycles of misogyny and trauma no longer exist.

As a general pediatrician, I know that a healthy society, a very good society, is one where people are safe and autonomous. Steps offers people the realization of self efficacy, while liberating them from the terror of violence and abuse. When people live with agency and peace, their children, future grandchildren and great grandchildren will thrive beyond measure. The fabric of our community is healthier because of the work here at Steps.

- Scott Cohen

PET-FRIENDLY SHELTER PROJECT



As many as

65%

of domestic violence victims are unable to escape abusive situations because they are concerned about what will happen to their pets.

When it comes to emergency housing, we are always working to reduce the barriers survivors face in fleeing an unsafe situation and making a new start. Steps recognizes that the lack of pet-friendly shelter options is a huge barrier for many survivors as they consider making that exit plan. Many survivors are unwilling to leave their pets behind and even more return to unsafe homes because the instability that comes with fleeing, without the companionship of their pets and with the worry for their safety, is too much to handle.

This past year, we had the opportunity to make a deep investment in overcoming this barrier by applying for funding from the Red Rover Foundations' Safe Housing grant program to create a more pet-friendly space in our shelter. We were awarded over \$50,000 to turn these dreams into a reality.



“We are extremely grateful to be chosen as a recipient of the RedRover Safe Housing grant. Steps to End Domestic Violence has seen the barriers that are created when a survivor is unable to flee with their companion animals. By creating a more supportive shelter environment for survivors and their companion animals, the healing process can truly begin.”

- Ciara, Director of Housing Services

As of 2023, our shelter is officially able to house survivors who are fleeing with their pets. Some of the things we are doing during this transition are...

- Replacing carpets and furniture in rooms that make cleaning up after pets more manageable
- Building a fenced-in pet area for pets to get exercise
- Providing supplies such as food, leashes, toys, and more when a survivor has to flee with limited items
- Maintaining a reserve fund for veterinary bills to make sure that all pets are healthy

We are so grateful for the support from the Burlington Obedience Training Club and the Chittenden County Humane Society for partnering with us on this effort!

91% of survivors indicated that their pets' emotional support and physical protection are significant in their ability to survive and heal.

With your help...

Our hotline fielded 4,397 calls, emails, and webchats, assisting 1,199 individuals in crisis, and offering emergency services, support, and referrals

117 male-identified adults were served

An average of 61 new survivors called the hotline each month

We provided emergency shelter to 247 adults and 159 children

30% more households than last year

Service Users by Location

	Adults	Children
Bolton	1	4
Burlington	535	623
Charlotte	4	2
Colchester	107	156
Essex	53	56
Essex Junction	47	62
Hinesburg	24	53
Jericho	10	15
Milton	48	73
Richmond	18	23
Shelburne	38	55
South Burlington	95	88
St. George	2	5
Underhill	6	8
Westford	2	2
Williston	29	39
Winooski	72	79

Laurie's Experience

An interview with a Steps' volunteer



"EVERY TIME I COME IN
(THE SHELTER) I LEARN
A LOT, INCLUDING THE
IMPORTANCE OF HAVING
GOOD BOUNDARIES."

Why did you choose Steps to volunteer for?

"I was new to Vermont and seeking an opportunity to connect with the community in a meaningful way. I researched non-profits who were doing good work and was so excited to learn about Steps. I am interested in the intersection of domestic violence and housing insecurity, a devastating combination. I was impressed with the work Steps is doing to provide emergency housing to people fleeing abuse."

How was your experience going through training?

"Honestly, my hotline training was much more involved than I expected. My respect for Steps grew during training because the team takes all interactions with survivors very seriously. Before I started, my hands and heart were ready to go, but I was humbled by the training. I'm honored to have an opportunity to connect with callers on the hotline."

How have you seen Steps providing for survivors through the hotline?

"You never know what someone might be seeking when they call. Empathic listening is important, and providing a nonjudgmental, respectful ear is validating. The agency does a great job at validating survivors' feelings and experiences while providing resources within the organization and local community."

How do you see Steps cultivating community?

"The Shelter itself is a beautiful community. Service users and staff can exchange a "Good morning" or "How are you" when we see each other in the hallway. I feel like we are sharing a building, a community, a connection with each other that I wouldn't feel if our offices were off-site. We're all in this together. Another way Steps creates community is through support groups. There can be a lot of shame around abuse – and isolation. To find and connect with others going through similar struggles through a support group is powerful."



#THATSNOTOK Coaster Campaign

1.

Brainstorm

Early last Fall we started brainstorming an awareness raising campaign we could explore for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Something that could spark conversations about the common signs we see and hear about in unhealthy relationships. We wanted to do something unconventional and approachable that could help our community explore the topic together and on their own terms. We often talk about these examples as “red flags” and we knew that the term was popular on social media so an idea started to come together...

2.

Development & Design

At a staff meeting, we created a LONG list of “red flags” or examples of things that we often came across in our work that were signs of an unhealthy or abusive relationship. From this list, we worked through ideas for the best medium for getting these examples out in the public view. Vermonters love their local breweries, bars and restaurants and we thought that coasters might be an approachable way to start all sorts of conversations while also being discreet enough for a survivor to tuck away in their pocket or bag if they wanted to keep our contact number for use later.

3.

Launch!

So we designed and printed 6 different coasters that shared examples of “red flag” behaviors in relationships with the hashtag #THATSNOTOK. We rallied local restaurants, bars and breweries to join our coaster campaign, distributing over 10,000 coasters. The campaign even made the local news! People responded enthusiastically and we were happy to hear the feedback...



What people had to say about the campaign...

Ali N.

Monkey House

"Our staff were really excited to be able to have [the coasters] and bring awareness to Steps. They were all happy to be a part of a community that supported your mission."

Laura V.

Education and Prevention Advocate

"The coaster campaign is a really unique, beautiful way to get the message out to the community about how prevalent intimate partner violence is. Every time I saw a coaster out in the community, I smiled, and hoped that it was making a difference of at least one person to start taking the steps of leaving an abusive relationship."

Kylie C.

Team Member

"It's great to have these in the community to normalize talking about domestic violence and introduce those in need to our services."





STEPS SOCIAL KALEIDOSCOPE

Even before the pandemic, our team envisioned separating our one major annual event into two: one with a focus on physical wellness and self-care (Steps for Social Change) and one on emotional wellness and creativity.

COVID had other plans for us and, while we were able to launch Steps for Social Change virtually back in 2020, it was not until this past Spring that we finally hosted our first Steps' Social: Kaleidoscope.

Our first social, hosted at Hotel Vermont, was everything we could have hoped for and more. It was attended by almost 100 community members, including survivors, staff, community partners, our local sponsors, artists, musicians and our Vermont Attorney General, Charity Clark. We dressed up, ate food, laughed, cried and connected around the shared value of healing survivors and our greater community. We were overjoyed by the success of this gathering and we cannot wait to see you all again this Spring.



LOCAL ARTIST, SAVANNAH, LIVE
PAINTS DURING THE EVENT



DID YOU SPOT US IN THE COMMUNITY??

We love attending local events to meet and talk with our community.

We think it's important to connect with community partners, have a presence around town, and meet as many folks as possible to:

- show survivors and their loved ones that we are here to help,
- spread the word about the services we have available and,
- make sure anyone can easily learn more about how they can make a difference to end violence in their community.

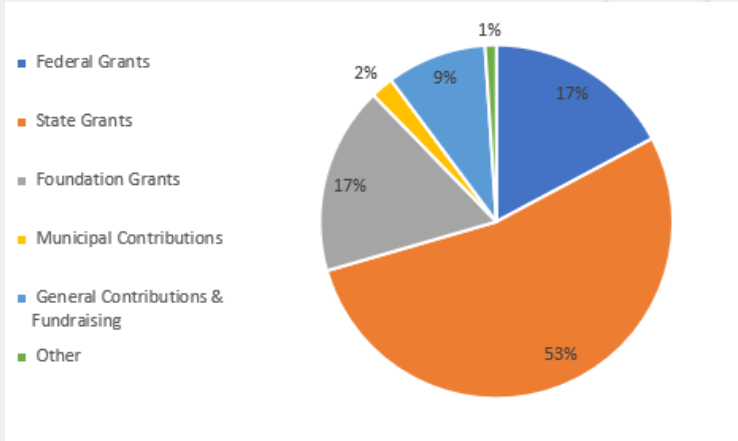


#K9 DUKE

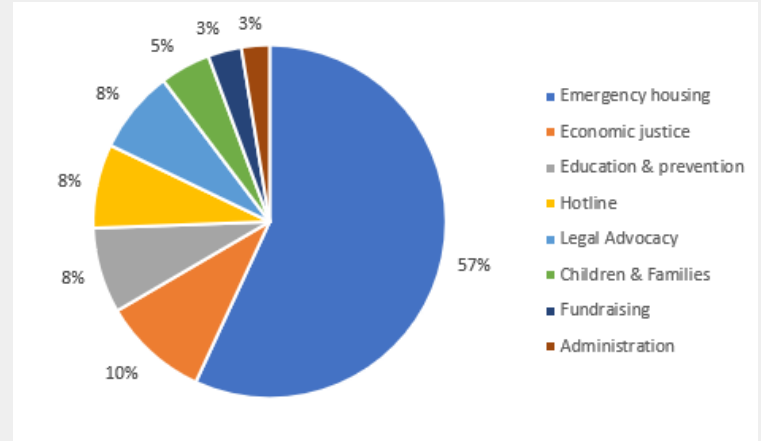


FINANCES

Revenue



Expenses



Get Involved

Register for the Steps for Social Change 5K run/walk

Join us for our community event this Fall! Set your own physical wellness goal or register for our 5k and raise funds for Steps! Join us to celebrate at our Field Day on September 30th!

Become a Sustaining Donor...

In any amount – help us continue our work by offering free, life-saving services to those who have been impacted by domestic violence by committing to a monthly donation.

Dedicate Your Event

Birthdays, bridal showers, and barbecues – Ask guests to donate in lieu of gifts or host an event to help teach your community about what we do. Contact us if you need brochures or to collaborate with us to create custom signs!



Give Today!
stepsvt.org



Help with our wishlist

12



We are often in need of common household items. We help about 4,000 individuals each year with services, support, and the things they need to create and maintain a safe home.

Be sure to check out our current needs list and Amazon Wishlist for items we're most in need of.



Ready to take the leap?

Join the anti-violence movement and start feeling more prepared to stand up against intimate partner violence.

Contact Us:



(802) 658 1996



steps@stepsvt.org



www.stepsvt.org



[@stepsvt](https://www.facebook.com/stepsvt)



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