

Town of Richmond

Request for Special Appropriations

a. Request for Fiscal Year: 2024

Organization's Name: **Steps to End Domestic Violence**

Address: **PO Box 1535**

City, State, Zip: **Burlington Vermont 05402**

Website address **www.stepsvt.org**

b. A. GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1. Program Name: Emergency Shelter and Housing support services as well as other support services described herein**
- 2. Contact Person/Title: Nicole Kubon, MSW / Executive Director**

Telephone Number: **(802) 658-3131 extension 1062**

E-mail address: **nicolek@stepsvt.org**

- 3. Total number of individuals served in the last complete fiscal year by this program:**

The emergency shelter and housing programs are an integral part of the continuum of services that Steps to End Domestic Violence (Steps) offers to individuals and families. Advocates also provide children's programming, legal advocacy, support groups, and community based education and prevention. Individuals make initial contact with advocates, and schedule appointments, through the hotline, which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Individuals may also use the end-to-end encrypted chatline, which is available Monday-Friday, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm. In the last year, Steps received 4486 calls, emails, and web chats, and of those, 1,272 individuals were in crisis.

In fiscal year 2022, Steps provided emergency housing to 189 adults and 98 children in our 21 unit shelter. Our transitional housing program offers rental assistance for 6 to 24 months, and in fiscal year 2022, the program served four households. When an individual enters the shelter, or transitional housing program, advocates will offer additional supportive services including personal finance, and employment readiness skill building, developing self-care strategies, navigating community systems, securing child care, and obtaining permanent, safe, and stable housing.

Individuals or families residing in our emergency shelter or who are participating in a Steps' housing program often access support from the legal advocacy and children's program. The legal advocates provide education and support to individuals in family court, and assist individuals in obtaining relief from abuse orders or navigating divorce, parentage, child custody, and child support. The children's program offers trauma responsive support to the entire family including parenting skills, assistance securing childcare, and activities for children and youth who are exposed to intimate partner violence.

Note: we use intimate partner violence (IPV) in this application. IPV is often used interchangeably with domestic violence or abuse.

4. Total number of the above individuals who are Town residents:
13 adults and 18 children (31 people total)

Please, attach any documentation that supports this number.

Our Annual Report is attached in the email with this application.

Percent of people served who are Town residents: **1.49%**

5. Amount of Request: **\$1,250**
6. Total Program Budget: **\$1,591,858.70**
Percent of total program budget you are requesting from the Town of Richmond:
0.078%

We ask for municipal contributions in proportion to each town's fraction of the county's population.

7. Please state or attach the mission of your agency:
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.
8. Funding will be used to:
Y Maintain an existing program
Y 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**

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.
Last year's request (\$1,200) was based on a smaller annual budget.
- b. Were any conditions or restrictions placed on the funds by the Selectboard? **NO**
If yes, describe how those conditions or restrictions have been met.

c. 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?

Intimate partner violence is a pervasive human rights issue stemming from the unequal power dynamics within family structures and social constructs. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence report

(<https://ncadv.org/STATISTICS>) that 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner. Vermont is not immune. Vermont's Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission's most recent report from 2020 includes staggering data, *of the 15 homicides in Vermont, eight were deemed intimate partner related*. However, it is also important to note that intimate partner violence is not always physical. An abusive partner will often use other tactics to maintain power and control before escalating to physical violence. These tactics may include emotional abuse, financial or social isolation, and threats of violence. As such, it is critical that agencies like Steps continue to offer a continuum of support services to those fleeing intimate partner violence and to the community-at-large.

In fiscal year 2022, Steps directly served 31 (thirty one) adults and children residing in Richmond who were actively fleeing intimate partner violence or sought support services from Steps. We invite you to review our current (attached with this letter) and historical Annual Reports: <https://www.stepsvt.org/what-we-do> .

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.

In fiscal year 2022, Steps directly served 31 (thirty one) adults and children who identified as residing in Richmond. This number is alarming, but does not reflect the number of individuals who contacted our agency's hotline, chatline, or who chose not to identify their place of residence. We anticipate that the demand for our services from Richmond and other communities will continue to rise including an increased need for emergency housing for individuals fleeing intimate partner violence. It is important to remember that the things that made the past few years of COVID difficult for all of us were particularly burdensome for those affected by intimate partner violence – the isolation from support systems; the challenges of leaving one's home and community; and the level of stress in the home.

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. 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?

Our records show that a vast majority of individuals who seek support through 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.

- 1. Steps provides a 24 hour, seven days a week hotline that includes safety planning, emotional support, assessment for eligibility for emergency housing, educational information, and referrals to other services made available by partner agencies such as the Association of Africans Living in Vermont, the Howard Center, and the Pride Center. We also provide follow up support to ensure that an individual is connected to a support network.**
- 2. The Emergency Shelter and Housing Programs provides immediate and safe emergency housing for individuals who are fleeing intimate partner violence. Our new shelter is larger, and includes more accessible living spaces and rooms, and an elevator.**
- 3. Steps' Transitional Housing program includes supportive services and offers temporary rental assistance. The supportive services are designed to help individuals regain their agency and economic independence.**
- 4. The Economic Justice Program works with survivors to help regain confidence in personal finance, build employment readiness and secure transitional and permanent housing.**
- 5. The Legal Advocacy program supports survivors in district and family courts including relief through abuse orders, divorce, child custody and child support needs.**
- 6. The Education and Prevention programs raises public awareness about the complex effects of intimate partner violence on individuals, children and communities. We achieve this through a highly effective social media network, ongoing fundraising efforts throughout the year and our relationships with community leaders and organizations to ensure our programs are meeting the needs of the community.**

Staff and volunteers speak at local schools, community groups and in houses of worship. Steps also provide brochures, resources and other materials to educate the community, such as placing these in waiting rooms at medical offices, high school classrooms, offices of clergy, corporation offices and resource tables at community organizations and events.

3. Program Funding:

- d. Identify how Town funds, specifically, will be used (i.e., funds will provide "X" amount of units of service.)**

Richmond's financial contribution supports services available to the residents of Richmond and all of Chittenden County. This includes immediate 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 expand 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. Please also see the financial component of our Annual Report.

- e. 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?

Steps requests and receives funding from town councils and select boards throughout Chittenden County. These requests are based on the number of residents in each Town, our projected expenditures, and, if notified, the Towns' own budget forecasts and resources. Town funding is critical in supporting residents across the county who seek immediate support. Steps also supplements its grant revenue with financial support from local and national foundations. Some foundation grants include unrestricted funds which can be used to support emergency shelter and housing programs if any other program specific funding streams are lost.

Federal funding received to support housing programs:

- **Housing and Urban Development's Continuum of Care Rapid Rehousing (HUD CoC RR)**
- **Department of Justice Office of Violence Against Women Transitional Housing**

Federal funding to support other programs:

- **Department of Justice Office of Violence Against Women Consolidated Youth Grant**
- **Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA)**
- **Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)**
- **STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant Program (STOP)**

State funding to support housing programs

- **Vermont Housing Opportunity Program's Emergency Services Grant Program (HOP ESG)**
- **Vermont HOP Coord Housing Navigation**
- **VCCVS Omnibus Act 174 and HOP 10% Administration.**

State funding to support other programs:

- **Vermont Center for Crime Victim Services (VCCVS)**

See also the annual report.

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 to End Domestic Violence is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in good standing with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The organization includes the formal agency led by an Executive Director who oversees a staff and volunteers. The Executive Director is supported by a dedicated and well-informed board of directors. A complete list of the board members can be found at <https://www.stepsvt.org/who-we-are>.

We formed in 1974, as Women's House of Refuge, by a group of volunteers working together to provide safety and support to individuals experiencing intimate partner violence. These advocates provided shelter and answered crisis calls from their home. Their community centered advocacy laid the foundation for the agency we now call Steps to End Domestic Violence. You might have known us as Women Helping Battered Women, which we became in 1980. In 2016, we changed our name to Steps to End Domestic Violence to better reflect our commitment to violence prevention work and to expanding the services we provide to everyone impacted by intimate partner violence.

Our Executive Director, Nicole Kubon, successfully expanded our organizational capacity to meet the growing need for supportive services for individuals and families experiencing intimate partner violence within Chittenden County. She hired additional staff, secured supplemental funding to support competitive salaries, and offered more comprehensive benefits to staff in alignment with rising inflation and living costs.

Prior to her becoming Executive Director, Nicole served as Director of Program Services at Steps, where she oversaw the delivery of direct services for the entire organization; hired and supervised direct service staff; and developed and monitored program budgets. Nicole gained experience working with households experiencing homelessness or housing instability as the Housing Resource Center Coordinator at the Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS) in Burlington, Vermont, working with families, single adults, veteran populations, and residents of the agency's transitional and permanent housing programs. There she supported the development of the agency's strategic planning, translating appropriate goals into operational plans and models. In that position, she gained experience developing collaborative relationships with community partners, state funders, landlords, school liaisons, and other COTS programs.

Her social justice background includes time as the Program Director at Queens Community House in Queens, New York, where she supervised the Generation Q Program, an after-school drop-in program for LGBTQ youth ages 13-19 and created a 16-week social justice youth training program. Nicole holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Michigan, where she majored in women's studies and sociology; and a Master of Social Work from the University of Michigan School of Social Work, with concentrations in interpersonal practice and mental health.

Steps' leadership team includes two directors who oversee program operations, service provision, and supervise program staff. The Housing Director manages the emergency, shelter-based, and transitional housing programs. The Director of Program Services manages the additional direct support programs including the hotline, children's program, legal services, and groups). The housing director has experience working as a housing navigator with COTS, and is very familiar with the housing systems within Chittenden County. The Director of Program Services worked at the Howard Center and Laraway Youth and Family Services so she is familiar with designing and supporting programs that support individuals, family units, and youth.

The direct service teams include experienced and dedicated staff who help individuals navigate complicated systems. The current staffing structure also

allows for everyone to build relationships with community partners to enhance service provision.

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 To that end, outcomes are highly dependent on the circumstances and the individual. That being said, we collect and analyze data as part of a robust program planning and development effort. We also measure whether individuals who engage in our programming become more self sufficient because of our services using a self-sufficiency matrix (SSM). The SSM includes a list of domains (shelter/housing; employment; income; food, etc) and five levels from in-crisis to empowered. The data driven results consistently demonstrate significant self-reported progress on self-sufficiency.

3. Summarize or attach program and or service assessments conducted in the past two years. **Please see above and our Annual Report, attached in the email with this application.**
4. Does your organization have a strategic plan and a strategic planning process in place? **YES:** <https://www.stepsvt.org/what-we-do> . - If yes, please attach your plan.

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? **Our bylaws state there can be no fewer than 5 board members. We currently have 9 members.**

How many meetings were held by the board last year? **9 (we do not meet in July, August, and December unless we need an emergency meeting).**

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 10/3/2022

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