

Emergency Shelter for Domestic Violence Survivors

RFP for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

Helpmate, Inc.

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Application Form

Question Group

Buncombe County requests proposals for projects to help the community recover from and respond to COVID-19 and its negative economic impacts.

Buncombe County has been awarded \$50,733,290 in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (Recovery Funding)i, as part of the American Rescue Plan Act. This infusion of federal resources is intended to help turn the tide on the pandemic, address its economic fallout, and lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery.

Buncombe County is committed to investing these funds in projects that:

- Align to county strategic plan and community priorities
- Support equitable outcomes for most impacted populations
- Leverage and align with other governmental funding sources
- Make best use of this one-time infusion of resources
- Have a lasting impact

Proposals shall be submitted in accordance with the terms and conditions of this RFP and any addenda issued hereto.

[Click here for the full terms and conditions of the RFP](#)

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*

Name of Project.

Emergency Shelter for Domestic Violence Survivors

Amount of Funds Requested*

\$3,000,000.00

Recovery Fund Eligible Category*

Please select one:

Address disparities in public health outcomes

Brief Project Description*

Provide a short summary of your proposed project.

Helpmate seeks funding to double the availability of domestic violence shelter in Buncombe County. This request covers costs associated with site infrastructure, architectural design, structural engineering, construction, finishing, furnishing and related costs to build a 30,000 sq. ft. domestic violence shelter on a parcel of land owned by the organization.

Helpmate has provided shelter, safety and support to domestic violence survivors for 42 years. Demand for shelter increased dramatically after the Family Justice Center opened, and more acutely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each year, we are unable to shelter 320 families who are fleeing violence due to lack of space; during the pandemic, shelter options in nearby counties were limited and needs were dire. To address this crisis, Helpmate will build a 40 bed shelter, (best practice for Buncombe's population size) for adult and child survivors to access a full array of services, heal, and create lives free from violence.

Project Plan*

Explain how the project will be structured and implemented, including timeframe.

Helpmate will build an approximately 30,000 sq. ft. shelter; this meets the best practice standard for shelters serving trauma survivors, which says that a community needs 11.5 beds per 100,000 people in the population and should have 500 sq. ft. of building space per bed. These metrics provide adequate beds to reduce homicide rates and enough space to create a therapeutic and healing environment.

Helpmate's design will include features to meet needs of domestic violence survivors and be responsive to pandemic conditions. The building will include 20 efficiency suites which will house 2 survivors in a living space that includes bedrooms, kitchenettes, a private bath and a sitting area. All rooms will meet ADA requirements as many sheltered victims have injuries due to physical abuse. The shelter will include a lobby/intake area, laundry facilities, ample storage and 10 staff offices. Communal areas promote sharing and healing, so plans include a communal kitchen with four kitchen pods, a pantry, a dining room, a computer room, a teen room and a library. A multi-purpose room will be utilized for support groups, classes, fitness activities, community partner meetings, or as overflow bed space when the need arises. Helpmate will provide counseling staff on-site. There will be dedicated children's space, including an indoor play area and an outdoor playground. We aim to house 40 survivors, which should meet the community need for 15-20 years.

We have established a design team of highly respected local professionals with expertise necessary to this project. This team will guide implementation in regular consultation and with approval from Helpmate's leadership staff.

We have been planning a shelter expansion since 2016 but have been previously unable to find a suitable location. In late 2020, Helpmate purchased the 4 parcels of land surrounding our existing shelter, upon which the new shelter will be constructed. Geotechnical reviews completed prior to purchase indicated a viable building site. A topographical survey has been ordered which will allow our civil engineer to finalize site definition this summer. A 10-12-month design process will follow, consisting of 5 phases: schematic, design development, construction documents, bidding and construction administration. Detailed cost-outs will be completed by an independent cost estimator prior to construction documents being drawn. Plans will be adjusted, as needed, to align our capital campaign fundraising goal with the amount already committed by public and private funds.

Contractors will be identified through a competitive process, and the design team will dictate vetting and selection guidelines for sub-contractors to the lead construction agency. Construction, site work and finishing will take 12-18 months, we anticipate moving services in to the new shelter in late 2024.

Statement of Need*

Describe the need that this project will address. Include data to demonstrate the need, and cite the source of the data.

According to an NIH study, domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children, and a significant contributor to childhood poverty and hunger. There is a link between lack of supportive services and domestic violence-related homicides. Nationally, only 4% of domestic violence homicide victims worked with a program like Helpmate in the year prior to their death, demonstrating the protective capacity domestic violence services. According to data sourced from the NC Council for Women and NCSBI, Buncombe, Durham and Guilford counties had the fewest number of available shelter beds per capita in NC over a 10-

year span; these same counties also experienced the three highest rates of per capita domestic violence homicides in the state.

At our current facility, Helpmate only has space to shelter half of the survivors who request safe harbor as they flee violent homes. When shelter is unavailable at Helpmate, referrals are made to nearby counties; from 2015-2020, referrals due to lack of space rose by 144%. Buncombe County, the largest and most resourced county in WNC, is exporting trauma to our neighboring counties on a near-daily basis.

Helpmate's shelter is not currently adequate to the varied needs of survivors. It has one accessible bedroom, meaning that survivors recovering from injury or who have a disability must often be referred elsewhere. Trans and non-binary survivors have consistently reported that group living does not adequately meet their privacy or safety needs. Additionally, our current shelter facility limits our ability to shelter large families, make accommodations for survivors with IDD, and shelter male survivors. Our expanded shelter will be more suited to serve families with these specific needs, and sized to meet the demand in our community. When Helpmate doubles its shelter capacity, we will shelter an additional 5,000 victims over the next 20 years, half of whom will be children.

Link to COVID-19*

Identify a health or economic harm resulting from or exacerbated by the public health emergency, describe the nature and extent of that harm, and explain how the use of this funding would address such harm.

The pandemic has produced unprecedented and ongoing hardships for domestic violence survivors. Especially during the lockdown phase of the pandemic, survivors were trapped in homes with abusers, generally without the escape of work for the adults or school for the children. According to the Danger Assessment Institute, abuser unemployment is the strongest social risk factor for homicide, increasing the risk fourfold; unemployment has skyrocketed over the last year. The added stress of health concerns and economic impacts produced powder keg conditions in abusive homes. Stories we heard from survivors described more lethal violence, and we are now experiencing what the UN has dubbed the "shadow pandemic" wherein survivors who were trapped are beginning to emerge and seek help as economic and social conditions improve.

Local law enforcement data showed an increase in domestic violence incidents during the pandemic, with numbers still rising. At a time when survivors needed the comprehensive services and safety provided by shelter the most, Helpmate's shelter was inadequate to meet the need. As a congregate shelter setting, our already insufficient capacity had to be reduced, based on CDC recommendations, to 5 beds. Additionally, CDC, HUD and NCDHHS recommended non-congregate sheltering as the best approach to decrease health risks and mitigate transmission of COVID-19.

A mix of private and public funds enabled us to relocate our shelter program to a hotel within weeks following the onset of the pandemic. We sheltered survivors safely in that setting for over a year. During COVID the number of bednights we provided increased by 28%. This came at great financial cost, as well as added security and confidentiality concerns relating to operating a private and secure shelter in a public location. The new shelter, with individualized living areas and kitchenettes, will prevent the requirement of such herculean efforts should another public health crisis emerge.

Population Served*

Define the population to be served by this project, including volume and demographic characteristics of those served.

Domestic violence effects all demographics, but its impact, frequency, and lethality is disproportionate. Those with the fewest financial and social resources are the most likely to need shelter and would be most directly impacted by this project.

For those fleeing domestic violence, shelter is usually not the first choice. It is, however, an absolute necessity for many. The population sheltered generally has no other resources, no safe alternative placement, and may stay in a violent and dangerous home until shelter space becomes available.

In a typical year, 225 of the 3250 victims served by Helpmate stay in our emergency shelter. We prioritize intake to our emergency shelter with evidence-based lethality indicators, utilizing the Danger Assessment as a seminal tool during our screening process.

98% of the people who are sheltered by Helpmate identify as female. While national statistics indicate that domestic violence disproportionately impacts women, there is a shelter need for male-identified survivors that Helpmate's current facility has not adequately accommodated due to its congregate structure. This project will increase shelter accessibility to all genders.

Of the 240 individuals sheltered during 2020: 41% identified as persons of color, 61% disclosed a physical, mental, or substance use related disability, and 55% were between the ages of 25-44.

Vulnerabilities compound, and those with substance abuse disorders, mental illnesses, and physical disabilities face special risks. Those with language barriers and lack of immigration status can face extreme isolation, misinformation from their abusers, and threats of deportation. Other marginalized communities can face a variety of discrimination and compounding traumas that lend the need for more support.

This project would directly impact members of our community who are the most at risk of being killed by their intimate partner and those who are most in need of support to be able to escape this violence.

Results*

Describe the proposed impact of the project. List at least 3 performance measures that will be tracked and reported. If possible, include baselines and goals for each performance measure.

Helpmate currently serves 225 people annually in our 20-bed emergency shelter. We aim to more than double our capacity by having 40 beds plus a multi-purpose space that can accommodate overflow when needed. We aim to serve 475 adult and child victims per year in the new shelter facility by providing 13,000 safe bednights.

Over a 20 year span, an additional 5,000 victims of domestic violence (10,000 total) will be able to escape the physical and sexual violence, emotional abuse, financial control and toxic dominance at the hands of their abusive partner for a total of 260,000 bednights. Of these additional victims, more than 3,000 new victims will be children who will not have to spend another night in a home where one parent harms the other.

Helpmate is committed to the following annual outcome metrics:

75% of survivors will exit our shelter into a known, safe location

75% of adults provided with case management supports will meet at least 1 of 3 case management goals

100% of shelter residents will have an emergency safety plan

100% of shelter residents will have a case management goal related to safe housing

80% of adults in shelter will report upon exit that they felt heard and respected

80% of adults in shelter will report upon exit that they have improved their safety strategies

Currently, we refer about 320 families annually to other WNC counties for emergency shelter due to inadequate bed space. We anticipate within 2 years of opening, we will reduce referrals by 75%, to 80 or lower. This will have a significant local and regional impact, including reducing homicide rates.

Finally, we will be better able to promote gender inclusiveness due to increased private space in the new design. We will increase the amount of male, trans and non-binary survivors sheltered by 15%.

Evaluation*

Describe the data collection, analysis, and quality assurance measures you will use to assure ongoing, effective tracking of contract requirements and outcomes.

Helpmate measures success by using our own internal data to establish trends, then comparing our data to regional, state and national trends. For example, according to the NC Council for Women, Helpmate serves 29% more survivors per capita than the statewide average. Nationally, 35% of victims who first contact a

program like Helpmate via the Lethality Assessment Protocol follow up to receive additional services; in Buncombe County, that rate exceeds 70%. These data tell us we are effective at reaching survivors, and underscore the need to have shelter options ready when survivors reach out for help.

Each survivor entering shelter is supported to create a customized safety plan and goal plan for their self and their children and is assigned a case manager to help them actualize those goals. Progress is tracked on an ongoing basis. Upon exit, each survivor completes an exit questionnaire, which measures their intended destination, service experience and safety strategies. These results are compiled quarterly, and allow us to measure both qualitative and quantitative impacts.

Helpmate uses a customized database to collect data and measure outputs and outcomes, including demographic data, service contacts and survivors' progress towards self-identified goals. Helpmate's Operations Coordinators provides oversight, quality control and continued refinement of all internal data systems. Helpmate's Operations Coordinator conducts internal database and file audits regularly to ensure completeness, organization and availability of required documentation.

Equity Impact*

How will this effort help build toward a just, equitable, and sustainable COVID-19 recovery? How are the root causes and/or disproportionate impacts of inequities addressed?

Access to domestic violence shelter is an equity issue. Marginalized communities bear higher burdens of violence. 11% of Buncombe County's population are people of color, whereas 39% of Helpmate's shelter population identify as people of color. Women of color are twice as likely to be killed by an intimate partner; shelter is protective against homicide.

The CDC says 1/3 of women, 1/10 of men and 1/2 of transgender people will experience intimate partner violence during their lives. We shelter trans and non-binary survivors, but the lack of private space makes the setup uncomfortable for many, so we aim to improve equity in this regard.

Helpmate conducts targeted outreach to communities of color and to LGBTQ survivors, and we participate in a statewide program aimed at bolstering capacity to queer survivors.

Although Helpmate's shelter accepts people from all income categories, 98% of residents in our shelter fall below 50% of the area median income.

Domestic violence is a key social determinant of health, and one of the most prevalent adverse childhood experiences. Research documents that access to shelter is not only preventative of homicide, but also reduces long term health impacts, such as depression, anxiety, heart disease, COPD, substance use and stroke. Over half of Helpmate's shelter residents experience violence concurrently with mental health and/or substance use; we meet people where they are and provide/coordinate wrap-around services. Reducing ACES and toxic stress in children protects their health and stops the intergenerational transmission of violence. Children who are repeatedly exposed to domestic abuse in the home are 4 times as likely to perpetrate or be victimized by a partner as adults; being able to shelter children and work with their parents to wrap early intervention services around them can reduce this intergenerational transmission of trauma.

Project Partners*

Identify any subcontractors you intend to use for the proposed scope of work. For each subcontractor listed, indicate:

- 1.) What products and/or services are to be supplied by that subcontractor and;
- 2.) What percentage of the overall scope of work that subcontractor will perform.

Also, list non-funded key partners critical to project.

Helpmate has an expert Expansion Committee to oversee the design and construction process. Members include an architect (Jane Matthews, Matthews Architecture), landscape architect (Suzanne Godsey, Siteworks Studios), mechanical engineer (Jerome Hay, SUD & Associates), geotechnical engineer (Jill Heimburg, Wood Environmental & Infrastructure), interior designer (Jenn Koss, Parson's Institute), hotelier (Himanshu Karvir, Virtelle Hospitality), structural engineer (Edward Medlock, Medlock & Associates), contractor (David Ross, Falcon Construction), Asheville's former Community & Economic Director (Jeff Staudinger), Buncombe Permits and Inspections Director (Matt Stone), civil engineer (Warren Sugg, Civil Design Concepts), as well as Helpmate board members and staff. The committee is ably led by Bonnie Spradling, Immediate Past President of Helpmate's Board.

To build the shelter, contractors will be vetted through an RFP process overseen by the Expansion Committee. Preference will be given to contractors who will use donated supplies, reduced cost sub-contractors and services negotiated as donations as to reduce project costs while producing high-quality results. Contractors representing HUB/minority owned companies will be prioritized in the selection process and be required to prove good faith efforts to use HUB/minority bidders in their sub-contracting.

Helpmate collaborates to better support victims and holds MOUs with 30 partnering organizations, focusing on survivor needs such as safe housing, childcare, healthcare, and employment. We provide intake services for the Buncombe Family Justice Center, staff an office at the courthouse, work with DHHS to provide the Safe and Together Model for children impacted by domestic abuse, and partner with law enforcement agencies to implement the Lethality Assessment Protocol wherein officers call Helpmate's hotline from the crime scene. We will continue this strategy of partnership to support victims in our expanded shelter.

Capacity*

Describe the background, experience, and capabilities of your organization or department as it relates to capacity for delivering the proposed project and managing federal funds.

Serving 3300 survivors annually, Helpmate is the largest domestic violence service provider in WNC and serves 29% more victims than the statewide average. We have provided innovative leadership to the region and the state for over four decades and have been recognized multiple times by the NC Coalition Against Domestic Violence and by the NC Council for Women with awards for excellence.

Helpmate's Executive Director has worked to end domestic violence for 26 years. Our Finance Director and Development Director each bring over 30 years' experience in their respective fields and our Director of Outreach and Volunteer Programming has been at Helpmate 18 years. Helpmate's Program Director has served for 6 years and worked in each of our service locations. Our Shelter Coordinator has been at Helpmate 26 years; making her one of the most tenured advocates in NC. Helpmate staff members do/have served on the NC Domestic Violence Commission, the NC Coalition Against Domestic Violence board, the Asheville-Buncombe Homeless Initiative Advisory Council, the Community Health Improvement Board and numerous nonprofit boards of directors.

Our Expansion Committee has the top local experts to guide our construction process, and is ably led by Bonnie Spradling, Helpmate's Immediate Past Board Chair who brings more than 40 years of nonprofit experience, including multiple capital projects.

Helpmate has sound fundraising infrastructure, and has grown our contributions each of the past 8 years. Primary fundraising strategies include a major donor program, a planned giving society, a leadership giving society, a monthly giving club, a signature annual event, third-party fundraisers, a business partnership annual campaign, targeted connection with faith communities and civic groups, and a controlled number of mail solicitations.

Helpmate manages nearly 40 grant awards annually, and has never had an adverse finding. We are good stewards of public and private funds.

Budget*

Provide a detailed project budget including all proposed project revenues and expenditures, including explanations and methodology. For all revenue sources, list the funder and denote whether funds are confirmed or pending. For project expenses, denote all capital vs. operating costs, and reflect which specific expenses are proposed to be funded with one-time Buncombe County Recovery Funds.

Download a copy of the budget form [HERE](#). Complete the form, and upload it using the button below.

Helpmate Recovery Funds Budget.xlsx

Special Considerations*

Provide any other information that might assist the County in its selection.

Helpmate's domestic violence shelter offers more than a safe place to sleep. We provide 24 hour supportive counseling, we help survivors address legal issues stemming from the abuse, we support children coping with trauma, we offer clinical therapy, and we help victims attend to practical matters of rebuilding a life, such as housing, employment, transportation and childcare.

Helpmate's runs a low-barrier shelter, uniquely suited to the needs of families fleeing violence. We use an extensive security system to help ensure safety and have an established protocol with APD. We provide/coordinate services for survivors with substance abuse or mental health needs that coincide with their experience of violence. All services are free and held to the highest standard of confidentiality, a necessity for survivors who are fleeing abusers who stalk and harass them.

During COVID the number of shelter bednights we provided for victims increased by 28%. Survivors with significant housing barriers struggled, despite intensive case management, to find permanent housing options and some stayed with us 5-7 months. Increased capacity afforded by a larger shelter will allow us flexibility to shelter more people for longer if pandemic conditions reoccur.

Budget estimates have increased since we began planning, due to the greatly inflated cost of materials. Our current estimate is in the \$11M range, which includes an 11% contingency plus seed funding to support expanded operations. During Helpmate's last capital campaign 12 years ago, 55% of new capital donors converted to ongoing supporters after the campaign so the campaign itself boosted funds for ongoing service capacity. To complement this request to Buncombe County, Helpmate has requested \$3M from Dogwood Health Trust and \$2M from the City of Asheville. We will submit additional private grants and conduct a traditional capital campaign to secure the remainder of needed funds.

File Attachment Summary

Applicant File Uploads

- Helpmate Recovery Funds Budget.xlsx

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Proposed Project Budget

Organization Name:	Helpmate, Inc.
Project Name:	Non-Congreate Emergency Shelter for Domestic Violence Survivors
Amount Requested:	\$3,000,000.00

Proposed Project Revenue Funder	Amount	Confirmed or Pending?	Notes
Proposed Buncombe COVID Recovery Funds	\$ 3,000,000.00	Pending	
Dogwood Health Trust	\$ 3,000,000.00	Pending	
City of Asheville	\$ 2,000,000.00	Pending	
Private foundations & grants	\$ 750,000.00	Pending	
Capital Campaign	\$ 1,250,000.00	Pending	
Capital Campaign	\$ 1,000,000.00	Pending	To be reserved to fund ongoing operations after the shelter is complete.
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
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List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
List other sources here			
Total	\$ 11,000,000.00		

Proposed Project Expenses	Proposed Recovery Funds	Other Funds	Total	Capital or Operating Expense?	Notes
Land Purchase	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	Capital	Helpmate owns the land for the building site appraisal value per tax assessor \$719,800.
Permits	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 33,000.00	\$ 47,000.00	Capital	
Architectural & design work	\$ 199,000.00	\$ 465,000.00	\$ 664,000.00	Capital	
Site prep and infrastructure	\$ 210,000.00	\$ 490,000.00	\$ 700,000.00	Capital	
Building construction	\$ 1,995,000.00	\$ 4,655,000.00	\$ 6,650,000.00	Capital	
Furnishings, appliances, security system	\$ 236,000.00	\$ 550,000.00	\$ 786,000.00	Capital	
Contingency	\$ 346,000.00	\$ 807,000.00	\$ 1,153,000.00	Capital	
Reserve for ongoing operations	\$ -	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 1,000,000.00	Operating	
List expenses here			\$ -		
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Total			\$ 11,000,000.00		