

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Atascosa Family Crisis Center, Inc is requesting \$10,000 from Texas Rural Communities, Inc. to fund general operating expenses. Atascosa Family Crisis Center provides services and assistance directly to victims of crime to speed their recovery and aid them through the criminal justice process. Services include: responding to the emotional and physical needs of crime victims, assisting victims in stabilizing their lives after victimization, assisting victims to understand and participate in the criminal justice system, and providing victims with safety and security. We provide services to an average of 700 clients per year with 6 staff and the assistance of 20-25 dedicated volunteers.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) nearly 1 in 5 women (19.3%) and 1 in 59 men (1.7%) have been raped in their lifetime. One in 4 women (22.3%) have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner, while 1 in 7 men (14.0%) have experienced the same. One in 6 women (15.2%) have been stalked during their lifetime, compared to 1 in 19 men (5.7%). Victims living in rural communities experience additional barriers to seeking help not experienced in an urban environment.

Atascosa County is situated in the Eagle Ford Shale oil play. The last 5 years have seen unprecedented growth and change in our community, as well as an increase in crime. The goal of seeking funding from the TRC is to continue providing our services to victims in Atascosa County.

Our services are provided to all, regardless of age, race, sexual orientation, or financial status. Historically we have served approximately 700 persons annually. This year we are projecting to serve 750 people. The additional 50 clients served will be funded by this request.

Outcomes include:

75% of all clients will report an increased sense of safety.

75% of all clients will report a reduction in their feelings of isolation.

Section I. Contact Information:

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Section II Organizational Description:

The primary purpose of The Atascosa Family Crisis Center, Inc is to provide services and assistance directly to victims of crime to speed their recovery and aid them through the criminal justice process. Services include: responding to the emotional and physical needs of crime victims, assisting victims in stabilizing their lives after victimization, assisting victims to understand and participate in the criminal justice system, and providing victims with safety and security. Founded in April 1992, the organization is currently staffed by a diverse group of 6 staff members who are dedicated to changing the world one person at a time.

The Atascosa Family Crisis Center, Inc (AFCC) is one of only 8 agencies in the State of Texas to provide strictly non-residential services that include: 24 hour hotline, safe emergency shelter, emergency food & clothing, counseling, crisis intervention, comprehensive needs assessment, safety planning, legal assistance & referral, protective order assistance, Texas benefits assistance, court/law enforcement/medical accompaniment, case management/life skills, meaningful referrals, and options that lead to informed choices. We provide these services to an average of 700 clients per year with the assistance of 20-25 dedicated volunteers.

The mission of the Atascosa Family Crisis Center, Inc. was created by a group of stakeholders: board members, staff, and victims of family violence. By involving these important constituents, we built a mission statement that reflects our program and a program that reflects our mission. *"To serve as the expert resource of support services for victims; to ensure their safety while encouraging and empowering them to make choices for a life free from abuse. To educate our community on how to meet the unique needs of victims of family violence, sexual assault, dating violence, & stalking".*

Due to increased demand and limited access to services in our area, we are excited to add residential services to our clients within the next 6 months. This will enable us to provide safe, local shelter to our clients and create a more comprehensive approach to case management. We will add financial empowerment, self-defense, and effective decision making classes for adults to our available services. We will work closely with our local schools while keeping children in their school and causing less disruption in their lives. Building a residential shelter in Atascosa county provides a safe place for the necessary changes to create strong families and a stronger community

Section III Program Description:

Our program meets the needs of victims of violent crime seeking support in Atascosa County. The statistics are staggering. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) 2010 National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) nearly 1 in 5 women (19.3%) and 1 in 59 men (1.7%) have been raped in their lifetime. One in 4 women (22.3%) have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner, while 1 in 7 men (14.0%) have experienced the same. One in 6 women (15.2%) have been stalked during their lifetime, compared to 1 in 19 men (5.7%). Further review of this annual study shows that these crimes impact people from all races, ethnicities, and economic backgrounds.

There are no insulating factors making a small, rural environment a place where these crimes are less likely to occur. In fact, in a rural environment there are additional challenges to seeking help not experienced in an urban environment. Interpersonal violence and sexual assault are still a taboo subject that bears the stigma of victim blaming. In a rural environment where there are limited access to resources, and a population largely unaware of the community impact of abusive relationships, seeking aid is often more terrifying than staying with the abuser. The reality of small town living is that we know our neighbors and have family in the area. This connectedness is what makes small town life desirable. But this connectedness often adds an additional barrier to victims seeking help. What if you know the person who answers your crisis call? What if they know your partner? What if they tell someone you're there? Individuals who suffer from these crimes are unable or unwilling to seek the services they need to become safe and keep their children safe. When they do finally gain the courage and ability to reach for help, services are limited in the community and they may be placed on a wait list. The choice becomes does she stay with the devil she knows and therefore feels she has some control over the situation? Or does she step out into the unknown, uncomfortable, terrifying world of strangers and hope they have the ability to keep her and her children safe from harm?

Atascosa County is situated in the Eagle Ford Shale oil play. The last 5 years have seen unprecedented growth and change in our community. We've seen the positives of oil boom life: new community members, new businesses, new employment opportunities, a new sense of general prosperity. However, there is a well documented dark side to oil boom life. Increased substance abuse (particularly amphetamines), escalating property crime, high housing costs that frequently displace locals, increased human trafficking and prostitution, strained interpersonal relationships stretched by distance and shift work, and an increase in domestic violence when the downturn occurs. This pattern of behaviors has been observed in Alaska, Louisiana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, West Virginia, and Wyoming. The Atascosa Family Crisis Center has seen an increase in the demand for services in the last five years. The goal of seeking funding from the TRC is to continue providing our services to victims in Atascosa County.

Our services are provided without regard to age, race, sexual orientation, or financial status. Individuals who request assistance from AFCC are treated with respect and services are individualized to best meet their needs. AFCC has established an understanding within each step of the process to meet persons where they are, and understand their level of fear, commitment, knowledge and awareness of their own circumstances. AFCC advocates are trained to recognize

needs, wants, ideals, and barriers, individually in addition to communally. Some of the greatest barriers are transportation and healthcare. Victims who have been isolated from friends, family, society often are unable to receive the mental and physical healthcare that is needed not only for prevention but also as a correction or cure. AFCC provides the link to those services. Historically we have served approximately 700 persons annually. This year we are projecting to serve 750 people. The additional 50 clients served will be funded by this request.

What makes our program unique are our presence and our partnerships. Atascosa Family Crisis Center, Inc. is the only service provider of its kind within a 50 mile radius. The closest shelters, and often time's safe places for our clients, are in San Antonio, Seguin, or Corpus Christi. While we have a wonderful relationship with these shelters in regards to services offered, we are committed to providing the same residential services here in our county.

Our partners in providing services to our clients represent a concerted effort to meeting clients' needs. AFCC has coordinated services with our local DA'S office investigator. We provide a room for him to hold confidential interviews with victims to minimize further risk of danger by encountering the abuser at the Sheriff's Department. We have extended an invitation to all local law enforcement that our space may be used as a sanctuary for them as well. They too suffer from trauma overload. We have established a Memorandum of Understanding with Children's Alliance of South Texas to provide counseling in our area. In rural communities, lacking dependable transportation, coupled with the distance for clients to travel to seek services present a tremendous barrier. We provide a space for clients of Children's Alliance to come for their counseling sessions without having to travel to Floresville or San Antonio. Atascosa Family Crisis Center, Inc. works closely with our local Women, Infants, & Children office. We share clothing, formula, baby food and other items with the young mothers and children who attend WIC classes. Most recently we have joined the Atascosa Citizens In Action committee to seek grants and other funding sources to advance progress in our community.

We communicate our success through a partnership with our local newspaper, The Pleasanton Express. Each month we report on the number of clients served, the needs we met, and the items we need to continue to provide a safety net for families in crisis. This provides us with publicity, a way to meet direct needs, and with a platform to discuss these issues that are critical to our community's success.

Please see our one page Profit/Loss Statement behind this page.

Proposed Budget for TRC Funds:

Direct service to clients: \$5000.00

Software tools, training resources, and continuing education for staff: \$1600.00

Supplies for Community Education and outreach programs: \$750.00

Vehicle to provide client transportation: \$2000.00

If TRC were unable to fund the total amount, we would accept a smaller grant and each line item would be reduced accordingly.

In order to identify results of the actions taken within our agency we ask clients to participate in confidential client surveys offered during initial intake and at the completion of crisis intervention. Questions on the survey are specific to counseling, safety, and knowledge of services before and after meeting with advocates, the client's sense feeling of being alone against the world before and after meeting with advocates, and any additional services AFCC does not provide that would be helpful to their particular situation. Using these surveys for the period funded by TRC, 75% of all clients will report an increased sense of safety, and a reduction in their feelings of isolation. What is often most difficult to measure but easy to see in our clients is the emergence of hope. Staff at Atascosa Family Crisis Center, Inc create lasting life changes for everyone who seeks our services. Even if all we can provide is a friendly face, a non-judgmental, safe place to cry, talk, and take a weight off their shoulders, we have provided hope. We have planted a seed to grow and strengthen that every person matters and someone out there cares enough to help.

We are requesting a \$10,000.00 grant from TRC to be used for general operating expenses within 1 calendar year from receipt.

Atascosa Family Crisis Center, Inc has never been the recipient of TRC funds.