

## Safe Place and Rape Crisis Center, Inc.



### Domestic Violence Housing Stability Program

Safe Place and Rape Crisis Center (SPARCC) exists to stop domestic and sexual violence in Sarasota. Their new initiative, Domestic Violence Housing Stability Program, aims to address a major barrier faced by survivors seeking to escape such violence by addressing their unique needs, working to overcome logistical and financial barriers and enhancing safe housing options available to them and their children.

Housing insecurity and homelessness present the greatest challenge for survivors of domestic violence and is a leading cause of homelessness for women and their children. Survivors face housing challenges including record increases in local rents and a severe shortage of affordable housing units in our community. They also encounter limits in locations and types of housing they can access because of their unique safety and confidentiality needs, and many housing assistance programs have barriers that inadvertently exclude victims of violence.

This initiative will provide financial and programmatic housing support for up to 12 months, to eligible survivors enrolled within the agency's programs. The budget for the Domestic Violence Housing Stability Program is \$185,491, with the \$74,991 amount exceeding the Impact 100 SRQ grant already committed by other sources. The Impact100 SRQ grant award will provide an average of \$15,000 per household for housing expenses, in a step-down program. While individual circumstances will cause variation, on average the grant would pay 100% rent for at least the first 3 months, 50% at 3-6 months, 30% for months 6-9 and taper down to 0% between months 9-12, plus application fee and security deposit. SPARCC will pay utility deposit and 1 month of power and water bills with privately secured funding. While SPARCC will directly pay the landlord each month, the participants will be holding the lease which, in turn, will help them to establish credit. Staff expenses associated with the oversight and implementation this program will be absorbed into existing direct service positions, allowing the full amount of grant funding to flow directly into victim assistance.

Beyond the financial support provided by the Impact100 SRQ grant, the initiative includes extensive case management, with wrap-around services including budgeting and economic empowerment meetings, housing stability services, safety planning, emotional support, employment support, continuing education, credit repair, and access to state and federal benefits.

Initial funding from Impact 100 SRQ will provide critical flexibility as the agency learns how to best meet the needs of survivors who are transitioning from emergency shelter to permanent housing. Once awarded the initial program funding, SPARCC's leadership team will identify federal and state funding that will provide long-term sustainability for this program, and SPARCC believes the generous support of some of the agency's major donors will continue to fund the program, especially with success stories and lessons learned from the initial launch.

This initiative will have a significant, lasting impact on the individuals served by providing safe and stable housing with related support as they transition from an abusive home to independence.