



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 1432-2024, **Version:** 1

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**Background:** This ordinance authorizes the Director of the Office of Violence Prevention to enter into a grant agreement with Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio (LSS) for \$500,000.00 in support of CHOICES for Victims of Domestic Violence.

CHOICES is the only domestic violence focused shelter in Franklin County providing a safe haven and a 24-hour crisis and information hotline. CHOICES offers crisis counseling services and case management, community advocacy and court accompaniment, transitional housing, and domestic violence awareness and prevention education. Target constituencies include victims of domestic and dating violence and their families who must flee their home for safety. Safe shelter is a proven intervention to enhance safety of domestic violence victims. In 2019, CHOICES relocated to a new, larger facility that was designed and built from the ground up to meet the specific needs of domestic violence victims.

Due to community support, LSS has been able to expand, renovate, and build new facilities so that physical spaces match and enhance quality of services. When LLS began operating in the new, larger 120-bed shelter, it was consistently operating at or above capacity within five months. As the need for community services increased, LSS raised additional funding to complete construction on Grace House, a 24-bed expansion and Dignity House, which will bring the final bed count to 168.

However, the high need for domestic violence services combined with the effects of the pandemic, affordable housing crisis, and high inflation is outstripping CHOICES' ability to meet demand. This consistent high capacity in the shelter and extended lengths of stay increases costs in addition to the financial strain caused by high inflation. Additionally, new and different technology and human resources infrastructures are critically needed to better support new and emerging workforce and business practices.

CHOICES will use grant proceeds to maintain core operations, address additional capacity needs, while also expanding and integrating agency-wide technology infrastructure and implementing recommendations of an agency-wide human resources audit so that LSS can better support the community. City employees do not currently provide these services.

**Fiscal Impact:** This ordinance authorizes the expenditure of \$500,000.00 in grant proceeds with Lutheran Social Services for financial support of the CHOICES for Victims of Domestic Violence program.

**Contract Compliance:** Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio, CC-006115, exp. 04-19-25

**Emergency action** is requested to avoid any delay in providing critical resources to sustain the CHOICES shelter.

To authorize the Director of the Office of Violence Prevention to enter into a grant agreement with Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio in support of CHOICES for Victims of Domestic Violence; to authorize the transfer of \$500,000.00 within the General Fund; to authorize the expenditure of \$500,000.00 from the General Fund; and to declare an emergency (\$500,000.00).

**WHEREAS,** safe shelter is a proven intervention to enhance safety of domestic violence victims; and

**WHEREAS**, Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio (LSS) targets victims of domestic and dating violence as well as their families who must flee their homes for safety; and

**WHEREAS**, the high need for domestic violence services combined with the effects of the pandemic, affordable housing crisis, and high inflation is outstripping CHOICES' ability to meet demand; and

**WHEREAS**, CHOICES will use grant proceeds to maintain core operations, address additional capacity needs, while also expanding and integrating agency-wide technology infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the Office of Violence Prevention in that it is immediately necessary to authorize the Director to enter into a grant agreement with LSS to avoid any delay in providing critical resources to sustain the CHOICES shelter for domestic violence victims, all for the immediate preservation of the public health, peace, property, and safety; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:**

**SECTION 1.** That the Director of the Office of Violence Prevention is hereby authorized to enter into a grant agreement with Lutheran Social Services of Central Ohio in support of CHOICES for Victims of Domestic Violence.

**SECTION 2.** That the transfer of \$500,000.00, or so much thereof as may be needed in regard to the action authorized in Section 1, is hereby authorized within the General Fund 1000 from Dept-Div 45-01, Object Class 10 to Dept-Div 40-07, Object Class 05 per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

**SECTION 3.** That the expenditure of \$500,000.00, or so much thereof as may be needed in regard to the action authorized in Section 1, is hereby authorized from the General Fund 1000 in Object Class 05 per the accounting codes in the attachment to this ordinance.

**SECTION 4.** That the monies in the foregoing Sections shall be paid upon order of the Director of the Office of Violence Prevention, and that no order shall be drawn or money paid except by voucher, the form of which shall be approved by the City Auditor.

**SECTION 5.** That the funds necessary to carry out the purpose of this ordinance are hereby deemed appropriated, and the City Auditor shall establish such accounting codes as necessary.

**SECTION 6.** That the City Auditor is authorized to make any accounting changes to revise the funding source for all contracts or contract modifications associated with this ordinance.

**SECTION 7.** That this contract is awarded in accordance with the relevant provisions of Columbus City Code Chapter 329.30 relating to awarding not-for-profit contracts.

**SECTION 8.** That for reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is hereby declared an emergency measure and shall take effect and be enforced from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.