



Grant Proposal to \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of Request: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Program/Funding Need: New Phone System for CHOICES' 24-Hour  
Crisis, Information and Referral Services

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

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# PROPOSAL OUTLINE

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## Attachments

TIMS Digital Phone System Proposal 07.01.09

CRM Digital Phone System Proposal 08.10.09

CHOICES IRS Determination Letter

CHOICES 2009 Board of Directors

CHOICES An Open Letter

COLUMBUS DISPATCH ARTICLE: "It's the first time she's ever been safe."

CHOICES 2008 Operating Budget (with percentages)

CHOICES 2008 Financial Audit

CHOICES 2008 Community Report

# New Phone System for CHOICES' 24-Hour Crisis, Information & Referral Services

## GRANT NARRATIVE

### 1. Proposal Summary

Many people believe domestic violence is not a problem in Columbus or Ohio, but this is not true. For the past five years, the CHOICES' crisis hotline has served over 40,000 individuals (averaging 6,000 to 7,000 a year) who called seeking help with domestic violence for themselves or others.

Founded in 1977, CHOICES is the only agency in Franklin and Delaware Counties to provide victims of domestic violence a temporary shelter, and a crisis, information, and referral hotline that is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

A reliable and effective phone system is essential to providing responsive, life-saving services to those who call the 24-hour hotline. Unfortunately, CHOICES' current phone system, purchased in 1999, has aged, and no longer has the technological capacity to adapt to ongoing organizational change. As a result, it has a direct impact on the quality and effectiveness of our crisis, information, and referral services.

For example, the current phone system only has three "roll over" lines, which means we can only serve three callers at a time. The system also does not have the capacity for voice mail; therefore, callers in crisis cannot leave a voice message when the three phone lines are busy.

In addition, the system does not have a battery back-up system for power failures, and the conference call feature functions intermittently, making it difficult for the staff to help clients connect with support services.

CHOICES' hotline callers are primarily individuals in domestic crisis who are scared for the safety of their life as well as their children. A reliable and effective phone system is critical to our ability to be there for people when they reach out for help.

To provide these life-saving and life-changing services, CHOICES respectfully asks the \_\_\_\_\_ (Foundation/Corporation) for a \$\_\_\_\_\_ grant to cover the \$\_\_\_\_\_ estimated cost for the purchase and installation of a new phone system.

## 2. **CHOICES & [REDACTED] (Foundation/Corporation)**

CHOICES, dedicated to the elimination of domestic violence in Central Ohio, submits this proposal in accordance with the funding guidelines listed with the Foundation Center Online (<http://fconline.foundationcenter.org>) stating that the [REDACTED] (Foundation/Corporation) supports programs for domestic violence run by nonprofit organizations in Ohio.

## 3. **About Domestic Violence**

### A. The Hidden Nature of Domestic Violence

CHOICES defines domestic violence as physical assault, psychological abuse and/or sexual abuse between adult family members.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, many victims do not report incidents of domestic violence but keep it secret due to a variety of complex reasons. Some of the most common reasons are fear of the abuser, denial about the severity of the situation, economic limitations, lack of knowledge about alternatives available through social services, and more.

In addition, victims often do not reach out for help from friends or family due to social stigmas, cultural taboos, feelings of shame or inadequacy, and/or a general lack of understanding about the cycle of domestic violence.

Due to its hidden nature, domestic violence is virtually impossible to measure with absolute precision. It is further complicated by the varying definitions of abuse utilized in case studies. Yet, despite these complexities, research over the past decade definitively supports the following facts and truths:

- Nearly one in four women in the United States will report experiencing an incident of violence by a current or former spouse or boyfriend at some point in their life.<sup>2</sup>
- Domestic violence does not just happen to poor women or women of color; rather persons of any class, culture, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, age, and sex can be victims or perpetrators of domestic violence.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Please visit the CHOICES website at [www.choicescolumbus.org](http://www.choicescolumbus.org) to learn more about the different types of abuse, how to recognize its warning signs, its cycle of violence, what you can do to help, and much more.

<sup>2</sup> "Adverse Health Conditions and Health Risk Behaviors Associated with Intimate Partner Violence, Morbidity, and Mortality" published in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Weekly Report February 2008. To read the full report, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

<sup>3</sup> "The Facts on Domestic, Dating and Sexual Violence" produced by the Family Violence Prevention Fund. For details, visit [www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org).

- On the average more than three women are murdered each day by their husbands or boyfriends in the United States. In 2005, over 1,180 women were murdered by an intimate partner.<sup>4</sup>
- Domestic violence is learned, criminal, generational, cyclical, and is correlated with substance abuse.<sup>5</sup>

### B. Domestic Violence in Columbus OH

Many people believe domestic violence is not a problem in Columbus or Ohio, but this is not true.

- The Ohio Domestic Violence Network<sup>6</sup> reported that 120,388 adults and children received domestic violence services in Ohio in 2007.
- The Ohio Attorney General's Office<sup>7</sup> reported 9,091 incidents of domestic violence requiring law enforcement intervention in 2008 for Franklin County (excluding seven municipalities that did not file a report).
- In 2007, there were 4,795 domestic violence cases prosecuted in Franklin County Municipal Court.
- The 2004 United Way Community Matters Report states that domestic violence is responsible for one in five misdemeanor charges.

In addition, the FY2008 CHOICES' services records document that we provided temporary shelter to 275 families consisting of 510 women and children from Central Ohio, and counseling services to 157 individuals who were victims of domestic violence but did not utilize our temporary shelter. An additional 687 individuals also participated in our domestic violence support groups or advocacy services (but did not require case management).

### C. The True Cost of Domestic Violence

Truly domestic violence leaves physical, emotional, and psychological scars upon its victims. However, there are other costs to consider.

Many people do not consider what cost domestic violence brings to bear upon a community. Community tax money is utilized whenever a victim of domestic violence places a 911 call, files charges, has evidence gathered, and/or goes to court. In addition, the economic life of a community is weakened whenever local

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<sup>4</sup> "Intimate Partner Violence in the United States" from the U.S. Department of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics is available at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov).

<sup>5</sup> For details, see the Family Violence Prevention Fund at [www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org).

<sup>6</sup> For a complete list of statistics on Domestic Violence in Ohio, visit [www.odvn.org](http://www.odvn.org).

<sup>7</sup> The 2008 Domestic Violence Report from the Ohio Attorney General's Office is available at [www.ag.state.oh.us/victim/domestic.asp](http://www.ag.state.oh.us/victim/domestic.asp).

businesses experience employees who are habitually absent, less productive, or lose their jobs due to domestic abuse.

But this economic cost of domestic violence in a community (as described above) is relatively easy to grasp. What is more difficult to determine is the social cost of domestic violence and how it shatters an individual's sense of well-being.

First, the costs of domestic violence do not necessarily end when a cycle of violence is broken. Unfortunately, many victims of domestic violence and their children may require medical, mental health, and/or other social services for years after the violence ends.<sup>8</sup>

Second, statistics from the Family Violence Prevention Fund verify that children from homes with domestic violence are less successful at school, are twice as likely to abuse their partners in the future, are more inclined to aggressive behaviors, have a higher incidence of physical and mental illness, and have a greater chance to abuse illegal substances.<sup>9</sup>

Domestic violence is not just a private family matter; it touches everyone in our community with its immediate and long-term effects and requires that community leaders in all sectors partner together to break its ongoing cycle.

#### **4. Introduction to CHOICES**

##### **A. Our Mission, Background & Distinguishing Features**

The mission of CHOICES is to interrupt the cycle of domestic violence and to advocate for social change. Domestic violence is a difficult subject, a reality not addressed by every community. Fortunately, this is not true for central Ohio. CHOICES' was born out of an initiative started by various community groups who had the courage to look at the harmful and deadly effects of domestic violence in their neighborhoods.

Founded in February 1977 under the name of the Phoenix House, CHOICES was the first organization in Ohio solely dedicated to providing temporary shelter and comprehensive services to battered women and their children. Because no models

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<sup>8</sup> *Making the Case for Domestic Violence Prevention Through the Lens of Cost-Benefit: A Manual for Domestic Violence Prevention Practitioners* prepared by Transforming Communities Technical Assistance Training (San Rafael, CA) for the Office of Emergency Services, Domestic Violence Section, Family Violence Prevention Program in FY2005-2006. Last revised February 25, 2008. To download a free copy, visit [www.transformcommunities.org](http://www.transformcommunities.org).

<sup>9</sup> For details, see the Family Violence Prevention Fund at [www.endabuse.org](http://www.endabuse.org).

for domestic violence programs existed at that time, CHOICES took a leadership role and pioneered its own structure, programming, and policies in response to the needs of the individuals and families served in its shelter.

Since that time, CHOICES served as a model to many of the 72 domestic violence agencies that now operate in Ohio. And we have remained the **only agency in Franklin and Delaware Counties to provide a temporary shelter and a 24-hour information hotline to victims of domestic violence.**<sup>10</sup>

Highlights of our **accomplishments and distinguishing features** include:

- CHOICES provides the only crisis and information line in central Ohio that is open 24 hours, 365 days a year with trained staff capable of connecting callers to a comprehensive range of services and programs.
- In 1980, CHOICES became one of the first shelters to receive funding from United Way and has consistently earned its continued annual support since that time.
- As a leader in public policy for domestic violence, CHOICES assisted in the development of legislation, such as the Ohio Domestic Violence Law, as well as public funding mechanisms for domestic violence survivors.
- In 2004, the Center for Child and Family Advocacy at Nationwide Children's Hospital and CHOICES became partners and were among the first in the state to provide community advocacy services that integrate child abuse and domestic violence programs.
- CHOICES is the only agency in Ohio, and one of the few nationally, to offer services to women in prison who suffered from domestic violence prior to their incarceration.
- Over 200,000 individuals and children have utilized CHOICES' programs and/or services since its founding in 1977.

#### B. Programs & Service Locations

CHOICES serves victims of domestic violence, friends and family members of the victims, and our local business community with the following programs/services:

- 24-Hour Crisis, Information & Referral Line (Phone number: 614-224-4663)
- Temporary Shelter

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<sup>10</sup> A common misperception is that CHOICES is part of the Columbus Coalition Against Family Violence. The distinguishing feature between these two important, Columbus-based agencies is that CHOICES provides direct services to victims of domestic violence, and the Columbus Coalition Against Family Violence does not. Rather, the Coalition focuses on prevention and education, and supports local task forces dedicated to creating a culture that does not tolerate domestic violence.

- Counseling & Support Groups
- Legal Advocacy
- Community Advocacy
- Outreach Programs for Special Populations
- Community Education and Training Programs

Currently CHOICES utilizes 16 sites to provide these services and programs:

- CHOICES Shelter (Not listed for safety purposes)
- Two Outpatient Counseling Sites: Saint Ann’s Hospital and the Center for Child and Family Advocacy at Nationwide Children’s Hospital
- One Site for Legal Advocacy Services: Columbus City Prosecutor’s Office Domestic Violence and Stalking Unit
- Three Outreach Program Sites: Franklin Pre-Release Center, Ohio Reformatory for Women, and the Scioto Juvenile Complex
- Seven sites for CHOICES Support Groups (Not listed for safety purposes)
- CHOICES administrative building (also an additional counseling site)
- One Site for Community Advocacy Services: The Legal Aid Office of Columbus

#### C. Geographic Area & Populations Served

CHOICES serves the geographical area of Franklin and Delaware Counties. The ethnicity of the populations we served in 2008 is listed below, representing an average of our all the participants in our programs and services.

- 47% White
- 38% African American
- 4% Bi/Multiracial
- 4% Hispanic
- 1% Asian Pacific Islander
- 1% Native American
- 5% Unknown

#### D. Partnerships & Affiliations

Rooted in a strong history of community collaboration, CHOICES has had partnerships and/or affiliations with wide range of organizations and agencies in Central Ohio over the past 32 years. The following is a partial listing of our current partnerships and affiliations:

- ASHA - Ray of Hope
- Asian American Community Services
- Center for Child and Family Advocacy
- City of Bexley Police Department



- City of Dublin Police Department
- Columbus City Prosecutor's Office Domestic Violence and Stalking Unit
- Columbus Coalition Against Family Violence
- Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence
- Defense Construction Supply Center
- Delaware County Domestic Violence Response Team
- DWAVE - Deaf Women Against Violence Everywhere
- Franklin County Prosecutor Abuse Unit
- Huckleberry House
- National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Mt. Carmel Hospital System
- Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction
- Ohio Department of Youth Services
- Ohio Domestic Violence Network
- OSU College of Social Work
- Riverside Methodist Hospital
- SARNCO - Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio

## **5. CHOICES 24-Hour Crisis, Information & Referral Services**

### **A. Brief Program Description**

CHOICES receives thousands of calls each year from people living in fear from the threat of domestic violence. To meet this incredible demand, CHOICES provides a crisis and information line (614-224-4663) that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

This resource is the only one of its kind in central Ohio and is available to anyone in need of domestic violence information or assistance without regard to race, creed, gender, or age. Trained in crisis intervention, CHOICES' hotline staff members help callers by asking questions, listening carefully, discussing alternatives, developing safety plans, and making referrals to specific programs and services based on individual needs.

CHOICES' crisis hotline services started shortly after the CHOICES temporary shelter began in 1977 and have remained continuously open since that time. Over the past five years, our crisis and information services have served an average of 7,000 individuals a year.

## B. Key Staff & Qualifications

Key staff members responsible for overseeing the CHOICES' 24-hour crisis hotline and other services are:

- CHOICES Executive Director, [REDACTED]
  
- CHOICES Program Director, [REDACTED]

## C. Need for a New Phone System

A reliable, efficient, and adaptable phone system is a basic requirement of any business or service organization. But, when the primary callers are individuals in crisis who are scared for the safety of their life (and often their children's), then a reliable phone system takes on a greater significance.

To serve in a reliable manner the individuals who call our 24-hour crisis hotline, CHOICES' needs to replace its complete telephone system, a NEC Dterm Series E, which was installed in 1999 at the CHOICES shelter and office locations. Due to age and changing technology, the NEC Dterm Series E no longer has the capacity to keep up with organizational growth and needs. Specifically, the current phone system:

- Does not connect the main office with our 24-hour shelter which is at a separate location (which means that CHOICES has the added expense and inconvenience of the outgoing calls placed between the staff at the main office and shelter each day);
- Is restricted to only three "roll over" phone lines (which means we only have the capacity currently to serve three callers at one time);
- Does not have voice mail capability (so that callers in crisis can not leave a voice message when the three phone lines are busy);
- Has limits on the number of phone extensions (restricting the number of staff members who can receive calls);
- Does not provide a wireless or mobile phone for allowing staff to roam freely through the shelter and not miss a crisis call;
- Shuts down when the electricity is cut off (because there is no battery or power back-up system);

- Has an unreliable conference call feature (which functions intermittently making it difficult for the staff to help clients connect with medical and legal professionals); and
- Does not allow LEP (Limited English Proficiency) callers to hear the interpreter when the conference call feature is connected to Language Line service.

Through research CHOICES has identified the NEC UX5000 Digital Phone System as the best in technology and equipment for meeting our communication needs and satisfying the issues listed above.

#### D. Project Budget, Funding Strategies & Timetable

In 1999, CHOICES paid \$10,720 to have its phone system installed at the shelter and office locations. Today, CHOICES projects a cost of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for a new NEC UX5000 Digital Phone System. The projected budget is based on proposals received from TIMS and CRI Digital.

To respond effectively to all who call our 24-hour crisis hotline, CHOICES respectfully requests a grant of \$\_\_\_\_\_ from the \_\_\_\_\_ (Foundation/Corporation) to help provide a new digital phone system that insures a reliable and effective communication system.

Currently, grants are pending for proposals submitted in \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_ (Foundations/Corporations) for comprehensive program services (including \$\_\_\_\_\_ for a new telephone system).

CHOICES plans to install a new phone system as soon as sufficient funding is received for the project. Ideally, our goal is to receive funding by the second quarter of 2010.