2017 Celebrating Solutions Award Nomination Form

Legal name of organization: LifeWire Year established: 1982

Name of program being nominated (if different): Housing Stability Services

Year established: 2009

Address: PO Box 6398 City/State/ZIP code: Bellevue, WA 98008-0398

Agency phone number: 425-562-8840

Name and title of contact person: Ms. Kelly Becker, Development Director

Phone number for contact person: 425-562-8840 ext. 253

E-mail address for contact person: kellypb@lifewire.org

Website address: www.lifewire.org

How did you learn about the Celebrating Solutions Awards?
We received an email notification from a partner agency. We have applied in past years.

Brief description of organization: Through housing, advocacy, counseling and outreach services, LifeWire assists families who have experienced physical, emotional or sexual abuse and works to prevent domestic violence through community prevention education. We strive to change the culture that tolerates intimate partner violence, while assisting survivors in healing and becoming self-sufficient.

Geographical area served: LifeWire’s primary service area is North and East King County in Washington State, although we serve and support all survivors, regardless of point of origin, gender, age, ethnicity, or religion. We place no geographic/residency limitation or requirement on the survivors we serve, those who call our 24-Hour Helpline may call from anywhere within the country.

Is the organization tax-exempt under IRS 501 (c) (3) guidelines or a public agency/unit of government? Yes.

Please check up to five descriptors that best apply to the program you are nominating:

- Batterer Intervention
- Coalition/collaboration
- Communication
- Counseling
- Dating violence
- Elder abuse
- Employment/training program
- Faith-based
- Health care setting
- Hotline service
- Legal aid/assistance
- Prevention
- Prison based
- Public awareness/education
- School/youth violence
- Shelter-based
- Stalking
- Technology/Internet service
- Transitional housing
- Underserved population
- University setting
- Victim relocation
- Workplace Intervention
- Other – flexible funds for survivor designated needs.
Release of Information

As one of the goals of the Mary Byron Project is to disseminate information about cutting edge programs and best practices, we wish to post exemplary Celebrating Solutions Award nominations on our website (www.marybyronproject.org).

Those posted will include the organization’s website address, telephone number, and email address. If you have concerns about this request, please address them to kathypaulin@marybyronproject.org, prior to submitting a nomination.

By my signature on this letter, I grant the Mary Byron Project permission to use the contents of my nomination for the Celebrating Solutions Award in the manner and for the purposes set above. I further affirm that I am fully authorized to grant such permission to the Mary Byron Project.

Signature

Date 1/4/2017

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Celebrating Solutions Award

Program Outline

Responses to the following questions should be kept to a total of 7 pages – no less than 12-point font size. Please use single-sided paper only.

1. Describe specifically the work of the nominated program and explain how the mission of the program is accomplished. We want to know the “nuts and bolts” of how your program works.

Intimate partner violence is a primary cause of homelessness among women and children in the U.S. Many survivors face an impossible choice - remain in an abusive situation or leave and risk homelessness for themselves and their children. If survivors are not able to secure safe housing, 60% will return to their abusers and 38% will become homeless. When survivors have options for housing and can choose what “safe housing” means to them, they are better able to obtain the life they are seeking and work toward healing.

At LifeWire, we know that the most effective way to support survivors and reduce homelessness is to prevent survivors from becoming homeless in the first place. We also know that survivors face significant barriers to safe, stable housing because of the long-term effects of an abuser’s control that may have involved stalking, sabotaging finances or making threats, leaving them with poor credit, rental and employment histories. Because DV is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children, LifeWire has adopted the philosophy of Housing-First, believing that if safe and stable housing is obtained quickly for a survivor in need, they can then accomplish other goals and address other needs with greater confidence and reduced trauma. This approach has proven successful to both reduce the time people experience homelessness and to prevent further episodes of homelessness as well.

Since housing is the primary need and social services are more effective when people feel safe in their own homes, LifeWire has strengthened and grown our Housing Stability Services. Survivors often have a broad range of needs: shelter, food, money, transportation, childcare and legal assistance; therefore, LifeWire’s Housing Stability Services help meet those needs and include short and long-term rental assistance, flexible funds used to prevent homelessness and trained staff advocates who help survivors obtain and maintain permanent housing, assist with needed resources, economic education, financial tools and income promotion, and support healing from trauma.

Survivors are offered this range of services using a progressive engagement model, such as assistance with affordable housing searches, budgeting and economic self-sufficiency, education, job training, assistance with education and employment certification programs, domestic violence advocacy and support groups, which help participants achieve and sustain stable housing. Our approach for engaging survivors is a trauma informed model that reinforces and enhances the survivor’s autonomy and self-determination. In this model of service, advocates walk alongside the
survivor, assisting with goal planning and resources based on what the survivor has identified as important. Goals are based on both immediate needs and obtaining long-term housing stability. There are no requirements of the survivor to be in services; she or he chooses to engage. For those that have experienced trauma that ability to be free to make their own decisions and have the resourced support of an advocate is essential for healing. Living a life restored from the impacts of trauma is key to long-term housing stability and self-sufficiency.

The specific components of our Housing Stability Services vary in order to best meet the variety of survivor's self-identified needs:

**Housing Stability Flexible Funds**
Flexible funds can minimize or prevent homelessness, divert survivors from emergency shelter (a costly response and more disruptive for children), help survivors to get or keep a job, assist in stabilizing families and eliminate economic factors as a reason to stay in an abusive relationship. When survivors tell us they need unique, one time funds to retain their housing, we provide these funds quickly. Funds are available to be used in whatever manner a survivor identifies will help to overcome barriers and stabilize their housing.

At an average cost of $1,317 per family, common uses of Housing Stability Flexible Funds are:
- Security - money for locks changes and other safety measures
- Housing - paying for deposits, moving expenses or up to two months' rent
- Income promotion - funding for a class, professional license or training program
- Transportation - car repair that helps them get to work, bus or train tickets
- Childcare costs - including debt owed to a childcare provider

**Rapid Rehousing: Short-Term Rental Assistance with Economic Stability Services**
Through our Rapid Rehousing Services, LifeWire offers service-enriched, short-term rental assistance in permanent housing scattered throughout the community. These funds and services support survivors who need more than a one-time unique financial intervention. These survivors come to us saying they need time to establish an income source that will allow them to self-sustain their housing and they believe they have the means to do so.

Funds are used to pay for move in costs and rent, typically three to six months. In accordance with national best practices for short-term rental assistance, LifeWire developed Economic Stability Advocacy to pair with housing advocacy. The purpose of Economic Stability Advocacy is to support survivors in overcoming the impacts of financial abuse. This means supporting them in taking control of their financial situation by (1) becoming aware of the systemic barriers they face and (2) providing the resources, knowledge and skills to overcome these barriers. The Economic Stability Advocate works as an employment navigator to help participants into employment quickly. We also provide income promotion help and offer assistance with budgeting and economic self-sufficiency education.
Long-Term Rental Assistance Services

Long-Term Rental Assistance Services provides financial assistance and support services for families who come to us saying they need extended support in order to maintain stable housing. By providing long-term rental assistance to help pay for non-time-limited housing we can keep families in housing so they don't become homeless.

The immediate intervention provided by these funds also allows time to connect participants with other community resources and support, such as housing vouchers or other longer-term rental assistance if needed. For example, the funds can be used to pay back rent or settle debt, making it easier to be housed quickly when a survivor has a voucher or another long-term rental assistance option.

LifeWire's focus on shelter diversion and homelessness prevention means that families don't always have to leave and be uprooted from their communities in order to be safe. Survivors are empowered to identify exactly what they need for their situation, with a choice of housing options that enables them to remain in their existing housing or to secure new housing.

2. Describe the most innovative aspects of the program you are nominating for consideration.

By blending multiple programs under a services model, we are able to seamlessly serve survivors based on what they communicate they need rather than try to match them to an existing program. This aspect of our delivery model allows us to better serve survivors and has led to successful changes in the way funders are thinking about supporting programs and funding flexibility.

The most innovative and impactful component of Housing Stability Services is availability of flexible funds and timely financial assistance that can be used for a range of needs or expenses that may be impacting survivor’s safety and housing stability. Funds are available to be used in whatever manner a survivor identifies will help to overcome barriers and stabilize their housing. When survivors tell us they need unique, one time funds to maintain or attain housing, we provide these funds quickly. LifeWire has invested in the internal infrastructure required to provide immediate funding responses specifically so we could get survivors into a safe place. Checks are paid out several times a week, vouchers for housing, gas and debit cards are available for immediate needs in order to quickly secure safe housing and assure survivors that they are being heard and assisted.

The cost effectiveness of choice and flexibility is reflected in the difference in costs between emergency housing and flexible funds. Analysis of our housing services shows that it is far more costly to lift families out of homelessness than to prevent their homelessness in the first place. Compare the average of $1,317 in Housing Stability Services flexible funds spent per family to the average emergency shelter program cost of $22,777 per family in 2016. These
low costs and maximum flexibility allowed LifeWire to serve 4.5 times more households through Housing Stability Services than in our facility-based emergency housing last year.

To continue the success of our Housing Stability Services we consistently review cost-effective and innovative ways to improve services. Funders are also challenged to become innovative and flexible in how they fund programs and agencies. Most impressive has been the response in government funding as Washington State’s King County has incorporated the use of flexible funds in shelter diversion and homelessness prevention. (See question 6.)

3. **Describe your program’s implementation. What barriers did your organization have to overcome? How did you marshal the necessary resources for implementation?**

We now know that we can be most effective and efficient in serving survivors when the Housing Stability Services include flexible funds with these three characteristics:

- Advocates can access the funds quickly.
- Few, if any, restrictions exist on the use of funds.
- Few, if any, restrictions exist related to survivor eligibility for receipt of the funds.

These three features became visible over several years as the services evolved and the agency adapted its policies to implement and improve. The most effective use of flexible funds involves trusting survivors and their advocates’ decisions on the use of funds and providing them quickly, not creating narrow constraints on how and where the money could be used, and not forming limiting definitions and restrictions on who qualified as a survivor. The use of flexible funds requires a flexible staff as well.

Transferring this control over how funds could be spent to the survivors and their advocates was a paradigm shift for all involved, especially for those who were more familiar with ensuring funding decisions were driven by program requirements rather than survivor needs. Making this shift took a great deal of support and leadership from LifeWire’s staff and Board of Directors. It also required finding funders who were willing to take a chance on this new model. That opportunity presented itself in 2011.

LifeWire was one of four agencies chosen to participate in the first cohort of a Domestic Violence Housing First Initiative pilot project implemented by the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. LifeWire’s Housing Stability Program was developed and expanded through this 2011-2014 project and in now an integral element of LifeWire’s comprehensive services for survivors of intimate partner violence.

That said, securing the funding needed to sustain and grow LifeWire’s Housing Stability Services is an ongoing challenge. While progress continues to be made with the public policy and perception shifts needed to allow for the true flexibility needed in government service dollars, private donations are also a critical part of the solution.
4. How do you know the nominated program is successful? Please site two examples. Although anecdotal examples are helpful, at least one example must include quantitative data.

A study of the cohorts’ 2011-2014 Domestic Violence Housing First Initiative programs found successful outcomes related to survivors’ ability to secure and keep safe and stable housing. Nearly all program participants, including those with very low incomes, maintained permanent housing for a prolonged period of time:

- 96% of program participants were still stably housed 18 months after entering the program, allowing survivors to become self-sufficient quickly and without need for ongoing intensive services
- 84% of program participants reported an increase in safety for their family
- 76% of program participants requested minimal services from the domestic violence program at final follow-up
- Participants also expressed that housing stability had a profound and positive effect on their children, improved the health and well-being of their family, and restored their dignity and self-worth.

The pilot program also focused on ensuring that services were culturally appropriate and delivered by a case manager/advocate who was from the same culture and spoke the same language as the survivor. According to the evaluation, survivors reported that working with an advocate who culturally and linguistically understood them was critical to getting the support they needed to become stable and enabling the survivors to feel understood, accepted and comfortable telling their stories.

*Examples of families served with flexible funds:*

“Sonya” recently fled her abuser but had no job or any way to support herself. She was an accomplished seamstress and loved to sew; however, she had no way of making money and supporting herself without her own sewing machine. LifeWire was able to purchase a sewing machine using flexible funds and now she is able to provide for herself and remain safe and independent by utilizing her own talent and skills.

When “Louise” first came to LifeWire, she and her grandson, Michael, were living out of a motel room. LifeWire’s housing advocates were able to help her secure permanent housing by providing six months of rental assistance and other stability-related supports, such as rent application fees and moving costs.

In 2015, LifeWire turned away 18 households seeking housing for every one we served in emergency shelter. We were, however, able to serve many of these families using our Housing Stability Services, thereby reducing our turn away rate to seven to one. Survivors report that flexible financial housing assistance, paired with survivor driven advocacy, makes the difference in housing retention. Survivors maintain supportive services and rental assistance until they identify that they no longer need assistance and are able to successfully pay rent independently.
5. If funding were not an issue, what (if any) changes or additions would you make to the nominated program in the future? What are the long-term goals for your program? We are interested in hearing both your practical goals in addition to any lofty dreams you have for the future.

Our dream is to reduce our turn away rate from seven to zero. We know that we have a successful, cost-effective and impactful service model that literally saves lives. With the right combination of increased services and funding, we can do more.

We also know we have an innovative replicable model, and we want to share it with other funders and service agencies throughout the United States so that more survivors and communities can benefit. Together we can end domestic violence and homelessness. Currently, our budget does not allow us to invest in extensive travel or training efforts.

LifeWire will continue to work with funders to be flexible, especially government funders, and encourage them to allow program participants to choose the services they need, and for service agencies to provide flexible funds for whatever needs the survivor identifies.

Currently our local County government has embraced this innovation and based their $19 million Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative on the use of flexible funds. This year, as the funds become available, we are facing barriers regarding the public policy need for data collection and restrictions on how the funds are being used. Our goal is to remain a leader within the domestic violence community, by both example and by assisting technical assistance providers. As local funders, policy makers and service providers work to overcome these barriers - we continue to see progress in how we serve survivors.

6. Who are your key community partners? What are their roles?

The Domestic Violence Housing First Initiative was piloted from September 2011 through September 2014 in Washington State with two cohorts. LifeWire was one of the four original agency participants in the first cohort, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and coordinated by the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Since then, LifeWire has had several years to build and improve this new model in domestic violence housing services.

Washington State’s King County’s “Best Starts for Kids Levy,” approved by voters in 2015, includes $19 million for a Youth and Family Homelessness Prevention Initiative that is intended to “prevent and divert children and youth and their families from becoming homeless.” This Initiative is based on the successful 2011-2014 pilot program, acknowledging the successful use of flexible funds in assisting survivors of intimate partner violence in securing stable and safe housing, and using the same approach to address youth and family homelessness.

In 2015, King County Housing Authority (KCHA) began a partnership with LifeWire to develop and implement with their support, a Rapid Rehousing Program applying a Domestic Violence
Housing First (DVHF) philosophy of service provision using flexible funds. This services model being developed with KCHA allows our region to participate in a nationally-recognized evaluation process of the impact short to medium-term rental assistance (between two and twelve months) will have for survivors.

LifeWire maintains close relationships with local partner agencies to ensure that survivors receive all beneficial services and resources available to them. We regularly partner and refer survivors to the YWCA and their Economic Resilience Program and to HopeLink, another Eastside agency that has a robust job placement program. We have a specialized collaboration with Sound Mental Health with our Children's Domestic Violence Response Team. Other partnerships include: Financial Education Partners Network of Seattle/King County, YWCA Employment Program, Landlord Liaison Program, Department of Health and Human Services and WorkSource.

7. **Could/should your program be replicated in other areas of the country? Why?**
Since 2012, LifeWire has been sharing our experience of following a survivor-driven philosophy by using flexible funds for shelter diversion and homelessness prevention with others. This program has been replicated by other agencies – in Texas, Iowa and Washington DC – who have learned from LifeWire's example.

In 2014, our Services Director, Maria Williams, presented this approach to HUD and the Office of Violence Against Women representatives at a conference hosted by the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV) as part of the end product of the first cohort of Domestic Violence Housing First Initiative.

Yes, this successful model should be replicated in other areas of the country. The use of flexible funds promotes survivor self-determination as they make their own housing choices and reduces the need for emergency and transitional shelters that are a more costly intervention as well as more disruptive for survivors and their children.

8. **Does your agency have a workplace policy that addresses domestic violence? If so, please include a copy.**
Yes, LifeWire's workplace policy that addresses domestic violence is integrated into our Employee Handbook, section 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 5.3.; handbook attached.

9. **Has the agency and/or nominated program received VAWA funding? ("Yes" or "No" is sufficient)**
Yes
LifeWire
Housing Stability Services

Semi-finalist Information
October 4, 2017

Ms. Marcia Roth
Executive Director
Mary Byron Project
10401 Linn Station Road
Louisville, KY  40223

Dear Marcia,

We are delighted that LifeWire’s Housing Stability Services Program has been chosen as a semi-finalist for the Mary Byron Project Celebrating Solutions Award. Please find enclosed five copies of additional information about our Housing Stability Services and the requested attachments. We would love to partner with you! Your support will prevent families from becoming homeless, assist survivors living in poverty and support our mission to end domestic violence.

LifeWire’s Housing Services are nationally recognized for their innovative design, cost effectiveness and responsiveness to the critical needs of survivors and their children. As a result, families are able to find safety, attend to their basic needs, rebuild their lives, and become independent.

Domestic violence and its impact is preventable. For 35 years, LifeWire has provided safety and life-changing services, serving more than 136,000 survivors of domestic violence and their children through housing, advocacy, counseling, training and outreach services. LifeWire assists families who have experienced physical, emotional or sexual abuse and works to prevent domestic violence through community prevention education. We strive to change the culture that tolerates domestic violence while assisting survivors in healing and becoming self-sufficient.

Your support will make a profound difference—providing compassionate services, safe housing and hope—to the thousands of survivors and children who come to LifeWire in desperate need of help.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let us know if you need additional information. We’re looking forward to hearing from you!

Gratefully,

Kelly Becker
LifeWire Development Director
kellyb@lifewire.org
Telephone: 425-562-8840 ext. 253
Cell: 206-290-0776
October 3, 2017

Ms. Marcia Roth
Executive Director
Celebrating Solutions Award
Mary Byron Project, Inc.

Dear Marcia,

It is an honor and pleasure for me, as a representative from a collaborative organization, to write a letter of recommendation for LifeWire to receive the Celebrating Solutions Award.

LifeWire was one of the original four agencies funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to pilot a Domestic Violence Housing First project. The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence was charged with coordinating this exciting pilot. Because of LifeWire’s outstanding and innovative work, it was later selected to be part of the five-year Demonstration and Research project for DV Housing First. Out of this body of work, LifeWire has developed its Housing Stability Services, designed to provide safety and stability for survivors in permanent housing. The ultimate goal is to either prevent homelessness completely or to remove barriers for survivors so they may move quickly into a permanent housing option with support from advocates.

LifeWire has an outstanding record of providing client-centered, trauma informed, mobile services which is a cornerstone for their Housing Stability Services. As a part of these services, LifeWire pairs an Economic Stability Advocate with the Housing Advocate so that participants may secure the skills and tools they need for employment and the necessary budgeting and economic education to retain and to thrive in their housing. We know from the first pilot that when survivors are safe and stable in their homes, the health and well-being of their children also improves.

In particular, LifeWire led the country with its use of flexible financial assistance to help address, with relatively small amounts of money, issues identified by survivors as jeopardizing their housing stability. We found, through LifeWire’s groundbreaking work, that roughly half of survivors seeking assistance with shelter or housing want to stay in their own home, safely secured from an abusive ex-partner and often with some financial assistance to briefly support immediate needs. This approach has been replicated in Washington D.C., Colorado, and California, as well as being an expectation for all of our DV Housing First organizations in Washington State.

I am fully confident that with the Mary Byron Project Celebrating Solutions Award, LifeWire will continue to strengthen our community through the support they provide for survivors and their children to be valued, productive—and happy—community members!

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Linda Olsen, MA, MSW
Housing Project Director
206-389-2515, x205
linda@wscadv.org
Ms. Marcia Roth  
Executive Director  
Celebrating Solutions Awards  
Mary Byron Project, Inc.

Dear Ms. Roth,

On behalf of New Beginnings, I am pleased to write this letter of support for LifeWire for their consideration for the Mary Byron Project's Celebrating Solutions Award. As a sister organization, we could not be more thrilled to have the important work LifeWire does recognized by your organization.

Founded in 1976, New Beginnings' mission is to empower survivors and mobilize community awareness and action to end domestic violence. We serve survivors in the Seattle area through a full range of services including individual and legal advocacy, a 24-Hour Helpline, housing services, mental health therapy, teen and youth intervention and prevention, and community education and training.

We are fortunate to work closely with LifeWire through the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Coalition Ending Gender Based Violence. Through these collaborations, New Beginnings, LifeWire, and other domestic violence programs advocate with a united voice to the cities, counties, and state to ensure that policies, legislation, and funding better protect survivors. Additionally, through these coalitions and more informal conversations between our two agency's leaders, we are able to discuss trends, successes, challenges, and opportunities. We also collaborate with each other to place participants in appropriate housing, to access needed resources, and to ensure the safety of survivors.

LifeWire's Housing Stability Services are deserving of this award because they offer survivors immediate solutions to their housing problems while also giving participants the tools they need to be financially secure and free from violence for the rest of their lives.

One way they do this is by providing flexible funds to survivors as part of their Housing Stability Services. These funds can be used to help with moving expenses, application fees for housing, security, changing locks, classes or training, professional license renewal, bus tickets, car repairs, other transportation needs, child care, and much more. This aspect of the program is vital to helping survivors get back on their feet after experiencing domestic violence as LifeWire is able to help them solve immediate needs so that survivors can focus on their next step to stability and independence.
September 26, 2017

Ms. Marcia Roth
Executive Director
Celebrating Solutions Award
Mary Byron Project, INC.

Dear Ms. Roth,

My name is Bob Hurlbut and I’m the Director of the Ellison Foundation in Bellevue, Washington. The foundations giving priorities are medicine/medical research, education and human services. Within the human service “arena” we’ve focused on issues impacting vulnerable women and children. An issue we’ve spent a lot of time investigating and funding is the “prevention of and response to domestic violence”.

“LifeWire” is a domestic violence agency we chose to support for numerous reasons. One of the primary reasons we support “LifeWire” is because of the “Housing Stability” services provided to domestic violence survivors. Since 2015, we’ve invested $178,000 toward these services and we are more than satisfied with how the money has been used and the results we’ve seen.

Domestic violence is one of the most traumatizing events a person can experience. In addition to being “physically harmed” the victim and their family are thrown into chaos. One of the ways to “limit” the chaos is to find secure housing quickly. “Housing Stability” services which include “Flexible Funds, Rapid Rehousing and Rental Assistance” is one of the most efficient and cost effective ways to deal with this crisis.

The Ellison Foundation is particularly supportive of the “Flexible Funds” program. “Flexible Funds” are used to pay rent, change locks, day care bills, or moving expenses allowing survivors to remain in their home or find new housing quickly. “Flexible Funds” allows the agency and the survivor to work together to keep the survivor and their family stably housed. Traditionally, domestic violence survivors are put on a waiting list to access “housing services”. This results in agencies having to turn away 20 to 25 victims for every one they’re able to help. “Flexible Funds” has allowed “LifeWire” to dramatically reduce their “turn away ratio” and serve more survivors effectively.

I have no reservations stating “awarding LifeWire a “Celebrating Solutions Award” to fund “Housing Stability” services is one of the best investments you could make”. Please know, I’m happy to answer any questions you might have regarding our support of “Housing Stability” and “LifeWire”

Sincerely,

Bob Hurlbut
Director
Ellison Foundation
bhurlbut@ellison-foundation.org
206-226-3471
1. The Celebrating Solutions Awards application states, "If survivors are not able to secure safe housing, 60% will return to their abusers and 38% will become homeless." Was this statistic obtained from research in your community, or was this cited from another source?  

_This information came from the National Network to End Domestic Violence website, 2013 Domestic Violence Counts: a 24-hour Census of Domestic Violence Shelters and Services._

2. What are the eligibility requirements to become a client of Housing Stability Services? Are the clients required to report and/or cooperate with the criminal justice system on criminal or civil cases against their perpetrator in order to qualify for services? What happens if they reunite with the offender?  

_LifeWire’s only requirement for services is that individuals identify themselves as survivors of domestic violence (DV). We do however, have contracts with funders such as King County Housing Authority (KCHA) that have eligibility requirements for the specific programs they support. For example, KCHA requires that participants receiving Rental Assistance have incomes below 50% Area Median Income (AMI); are US citizens or legal immigrants; have never been convicted of producing methamphetamines in Federal assisted housing and are not registered State Sex Offenders._

3. What documentation must a survivor provide in order to receive rental assistance, flexible funds, transportation, childcare costs, etc.?  

_LifeWire makes a conscious effort to maintain low barriers to our services to ensure that all survivors get the help they need. Survivors complete a Housing Stability Assessment with their LifeWire Advocates and this identifies the strengths and needs of each survivor and their situation. For the use of Flexible Funds (for transportation, childcare, moving expenses, etc.) backup documents such as receipts and invoices are required for bookkeeping purposes._

_Contract funders for Rental Assistance may ask for documentation, such as a Pay Form or Vacate Form before assistance is provided, but we have not had to provide these forms to date._

4. Is there a maximum amount of financial assistance, or number of times, a survivor can receive assistance?  

_LifeWire does not have a maximum dollar amount or number of times that a survivor may receive assistance, understanding that surviving is a process and is unique to each individual. Our contract funders may have their own limitations that we follow. For example King County Housing Authority has a $7,000 cap on rental assistance per family._


Advocates are mindful of these limitations and balance the survivors’ needs with each programs’ restrictions.

5. Is one advocate assigned to assist a survivor, or do multiple advocates work with the same survivor according to her specific needs?

There is one primary advocate assigned to each survivor, but because we have a small team they all work together depending on the scope of each survivor’s needs. For example, a survivor may work with our Rental Assistance Advocate, our Legal Advocate, as well as our Children’s Domestic Violence Response Team Advocate all at the same time or with different advocates over a period of time. LifeWire Advocates share skills and referrals with each other as well as with their survivors so that no one works in isolation.

6. Please describe the ways in which the safety of the survivors and staff is assessed while survivors are receiving services. Are security systems part of the services that survivors may access?

Autonomy and self-determination is of utmost importance in the provision of LifeWire services and this concept also applies to our survivors and staff safety. Safety planning is one of the first things Advocates address with survivors as they explore each survivors’ needs and strengths. If new locks on their home or an alarm system is what a survivor requests to feel safe, we can provide money from our Housing Stability Flexible Funds to provide them.

LifeWire’s main office has a security system with coded locks to protect staff and participant’s safety when they are in the building or meeting with their advocates, participating in a training, support group, or mental health therapy session. We also provide mobile advocacy for survivors if they prefer meeting at another site that is not associated with LifeWire or their home.

Advocates’ relationships are based on trust and honesty with LifeWire survivors. This is important for everyone’s safety; being able to express when they do not feel safe and making accommodations to ensure everyone’s safety.

When needed, LifeWire enrolls the survivor in the Address Confidentiality Program to keep the participant’s location secret. Their personal mail is sent to LifeWire’s Program Participant’s PO Box and we ensure that it is delivered to the survivor.

LifeWire does not keep unnecessary documents or documentation. We follow the guidelines laid out by the Washington Administrative Code regarding confidentiality. We are allowed a domestic violence exception to the data that LifeWire provides to HMIS (i.e., we provide no personally identifiable information).
7. How is it determine who is “stably housed” after 18 months of being in the program? Are homeless management systems reviewed or do you have a more intensive follow-up to make this determination?

Survivors receiving Flexible Funds have a check-in every three months regarding their housing status for at least one year following assistance. All program participants have quarterly check-ins with their Advocates and the stability of their housing status is one of the subjects covered. We use a working definition of “stably housed” to mean that the survivor is no long in danger of losing their housing; they have a reliable source of income to pay for their housing and/or no longer feel that finding housing is their primary need.

8. The application states, “84% of program participants reported an increase in safety for their family.” How is “increase in safety” measured/defined?

This was an outcome from the 2011-2014 Domestic Violence Housing First Initiative, of which LifeWire was one of the original cohorts.

Currently, LifeWire measures:
- Participants access the community resources to which they are referred.
  In 2016, 100% of participants achieved this outcome.
- Participants will strengthen skills and strategies that support on-going safety.
  In 2016, 100% of participants achieved this outcome.
- Participants will increase their housing stability.
  In 2016, 75% of participants exiting our homeless shelters and 97% of Rental Assistance participants moved to permanent housing.
  In 2016, 96% of participants receiving flexible funds and 90% of Rapid Rehousing participants remained in permanent housing six months after receiving assistance.

Survivors complete LifeWire’s Housing Stability Assessment Form, which helps Advocates recognize these predominantly survivor-identified outcomes. Advocates check in with survivors frequently to assess progress on their goals and report quarterly on their status.

9. The application states, “The pilot program also focused on ensuring that services were culturally appropriate and delivered by a case manager/advocate who was from the same culture and spoke the same language.” What are the specific cultures that are referenced by this statement? How do you address the needs of deaf, hard of hearing and LGBTQ victims?

LifeWire consistently employs people with a range of racial identities and ability to speak languages representing many of those spoken by the survivors we serve. One third of our advocates and staff are ethnically diverse; all of our services are language accessible by phone and in person through paid staff or contracted interpreter services. Currently, LifeWire employees speak 11 languages: Hebrew, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Kikuyu, Malay, Punjabi, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog and Vietnamese. In addition, survivors of
domestic violence are represented throughout the organization. We are Text Telephone (TTY) accessible for people who are hard of hearing, and we have a collaborative relationship with the Abused Deaf Women’s Advocacy Services (ADWAS).

We also maintain co-advocacy agreements with culturally specific DV agencies like API Chaya (South Asian), ADWAS (Deaf), Consejo (Latino), Jewish Family Services, Korean Women’s Association, Northwest Network (LGBTQ), Refugee Women’s Alliance and the Seattle Indian Health Board, which increase our ability to provide culturally competent services to survivors.

We collaborate with The Northwest Network to provide quality services to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community in need of domestic violence services, shelter, support and advocacy. We recently received a grant from the Pride Foundation to provide services specifically for survivors referred to LifeWire from The Northwest Network.

10. Please feel free to briefly share any additional information about your program that may be helpful for our reviewers to know.

It’s our 35th Anniversary this year! Over these 35 years, LifeWire has grown to become the largest, most comprehensive domestic violence service agency in Washington State helping more than 136,000 survivors and their children. Your support will make a profound difference—providing compassionate services, safe housing and hope—to the survivors, children and families who come to LifeWire in desperate need of help.

11. Please provide copies of any evaluation forms, screening tools or assessments used to determine client eligibility.

LifeWire Advocates prefer to use the Housing Stability Assessment Form to guide their conversations with survivors as they discover each survivor’s strengths, weaknesses and needs that LifeWire services can help fill. Advocates are hesitant to rely too heavily on forms, finding that they can be limiting when working with individual survivors. The process of working through the Housing Stability Assessment helps to guide advocacy, create a timeline and find gaps that can be filled with referrals or other services.

12. Please include copies of any tools or forms used for safety planning with clients and determining danger and/or lethality.

LifeWire’s Housing Stability Assessment Form is attached.

Respond to the following questions:

1) What is the approximate number of individuals served annually by Housing Stability Services?

Approximately 226 individuals are served annually through LifeWire’s Housing Stability
Services. These individuals are direct service recipients of either Flexible Funds, Rental Assistance, or Rapid Rehousing Services.

2) How many paid staff and volunteers are used to administer Housing Stability Services? Six paid LifeWire staff members serve survivors through Housing Stability Services, all working as a team to best serve each survivor and their children. LifeWire does not incorporate volunteers into this service at this time.

3) Are there past awards, accolades, and grants furnished upon the applicant or nominee which would further exemplify its success in combating intimate partner violence?

Accolades:
At a press conference held at LifeWire last year, King County Executive Dow Constantine promoted LifeWire’s Housing Stability Services Flexible-Funds as a model for the county’s $7 million dollar Kids, Youth and Family Homelessness Initiative, recognizing LifeWire’s innovative services and successful use of flexible funds to prevent homelessness.

As one of the four original cohorts in the 2011-2014 Washing State Coalition Against Domestic Violence’s DV Housing First Initiative, LifeWire continues to provide technical assistance nationally for our homelessness prevention project, which is built around the model of using flexible funds to prevent homelessness.

Grants:
- City of Bellevue Grant – $10,000 awarded for Housing Stability Services Flexible Funds for Homelessness Prevention and Diversion.
- United Way of King County Grant awarded for Streets to Homes, Flexible Funds for Homelessness Prevention and Diversion.
- King County Best Starts for Kids Grant awarded for Housing Stability Services Flexible Funds: Originally awarded $75,000 in 2017 then increased to $125,000 because of demonstrated successful outcomes.
- Building Changes Grant – Shelter Re-Housing Funds $44,000 awarded in 2013-2016.

4) In what ways is the composition of your staff and Board of Directors reflective of your client population?

The majority or 84% of our LifeWire Board Members identify as Caucasian corresponding to 44% of our LifeWire program participants who identify as Caucasian; 11% of our Board Members are African American corresponding to 14% of our African American program participants and 5% of our Board Members are Hispanic representing 21% of our Hispanic program participants.

The majority or 66% of our LifeWire Board Members identify as female corresponding to 79% of our LifeWire program participants identifying as female.
The majority or 83% of our LifeWire Board Members are between age 35 and age 55 corresponding to the majority of our adult program participants. We recognize that 36% of our adult program participants are younger than 35 and we are actively recruiting additional board members to fit this age demographic.

LifeWire serves low and very low income families. While none of our board members are currently in that income bracket, they all come from very diverse backgrounds: economically, geographically and ethnically.

As LifeWire furthers its racial and social equity work, we will be paying greater attention to both understanding and reconciling the demographic discrepancies between who we serve and our agency leadership. The intentionality around this improvement effort is reflected, in part, by our Executive Director who has the demonstrated leadership abilities and passion for racial and social equity work which directly impacts individuals as well as the systems and social constructs that perpetuate oppression. Bridging the current demographic gaps between leadership and service participants is a recognized need and through purposeful inclusion we will improve our service delivery ensuring quality, responsive and effective inclusive services.
Housing Stability Assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to have a guided conversation about how domestic violence has impacted a survivor’s housing stability. This information should make it easier to create a housing stability plan with the survivor.

Where are you currently living?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day shelters</th>
<th>Sleeping in car</th>
<th>Hotel/Motel</th>
<th>Couch surfing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residing with family/friends</td>
<td>Substance abuse facility or Detox center</td>
<td>Emergency shelter</td>
<td>Transitional housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent with temporary assistance</td>
<td>Public housing</td>
<td>Rent with Section 8 voucher</td>
<td>Rental on your own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own your own home</td>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How long have you been residing in your current living situation?

Do you pay for your current living situation? (If applicable)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes:</th>
<th>Yes, but only a portion:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount:</td>
<td>Amount:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finances

What is your monthly income and source of income?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Time Employment:</th>
<th>Allimony:</th>
<th>ABD:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part Time Employment:</td>
<td>Child Support:</td>
<td>Pension:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary Employment:</td>
<td>SSI:</td>
<td>Unemployment:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TANF:</td>
<td>SSDI:</td>
<td>Other:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Describe your current or recent work history:

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Previous Housing History

Has your name ever been on a lease?
☐ Yes
☐ No

Circumstances why your name was not on the lease:

Do you have a positive rental history:
☐ Yes
☐ No

Describe below.

Describe the last 2-3 years of your rental history:
## Potential Barriers to Housing

### Have you ever faced an eviction?
- **Yes**
  - Reason for eviction?
- **No**
  - Year of eviction?
  - Do you owe money to the landlord/housing authority?
    - **Yes**
    - **No**
    - If yes, how much is still owed?
    - Is it in collections?

### Have you ever had a rental application denied?
- **Yes**
  - Reason for denial:
  - How many times has it occurred?
  - When was the last time it happened?

- **No**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you consider yourself to have a good credit history?</td>
<td>□ If no, please explain □ If yes, please describe:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have any debts?</td>
<td>□ Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of debt and amount owed:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiated payment plan?</td>
<td>□ Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have any interest in consulting with a credit counselor/coach?</td>
<td>□ Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever seen your credit report?</td>
<td>□ Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When was the most recent time that you reviewed it?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have any outstanding and/or upcoming legal issues that could affect your housing?</td>
<td>□ Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please explain.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have a valid I.D/Driver's license?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Are there any other factors that have impacted your ability to stay stably housed?
• In the last 6 months to 2 years (please explain):
  □ Employment/Education
  □ Debt
  □ Legal
  □ Health
  □ Children
  □ Other

Do you foresee any factors that might impact your ability to be stably housed in the next 3-6 months (please explain)?
  □ Employment/Education
  □ Debt
  □ Legal
  □ Health
  □ Children
  □ Other

Please tell us your plan to maintain stability once housed.
• How long do you think it will take for you to take over the rent and/or pay your rental portion on your own?
• What will you need to make that happen?
• What can we do to support you?

3-6 months

6-12 months

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After 12 months

## Housing Search

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are you on any waiting lists for low-income housing options?</th>
<th>Would you be interested in hearing about different housing options? (Explain options and provide resources.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where would you like to live next? Is there a neighborhood you have in mind?

- Any neighborhoods that aren’t safe for you?
- Where do you have family, friends, or other support networks?
- Where is your childcare set up? Your children’s schools?
- Job options?
- Transportation options? Do you have a car or do you need to be on a bus line?
What kind of apartment are you looking for? Do you need any special accommodations? What size unit?

- What do you need and what can you do without?

What monthly rent are you trying to target? How much do you think you can afford each month, including utilities?

- Review plan on the previous page. What you can afford each month might differ depending on the interval.