

2026 WOMEN UNITED GRANT APPLICATION FORM

Organization Information

Organization Name

Clare House, Inc

EIN

22-2723190

Project Name

Health & Housing for Thriving Futures

Address

342-344 E Chestnut St
Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17602
United States

Contact Name

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Eligibility Criteria

Is your organization a registered nonprofit organization with an official letter of determination of 501c3 status from the Internal Revenue Service?

Yes

Has your organization operated in Lancaster County for at least one year (operating in Lancaster before July 1, 2025?)

Yes

Does your organization or program you are requesting funding for in this application serve primarily women and/ or teen girls?

Yes

Does your organization provide services to families at or below the ALICE threshold in Lancaster County?

Yes

Is your organization delinquent on any state or federal debt?

No

Does your organization share United Way's view of collaborative and inclusive service to the entire community, without excluding anyone on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other factor not relevant to a person's eligibility for service or ability to contribute?

Yes

Has your organization update your listing with PA 211 in the last 12 months?

Yes

Application Elements

Executive Summary

Clare House has over 40 years' experience serving women and children experiencing homelessness. During this time, we have seen an integral connection between health and housing. Many women and children have experienced trauma because of their housing instability and precipitating events like domestic violence. The toxic stress of financial insecurity can have a corrosive effect on physical and mental health that impacts both generations in a household. In response to these challenges, our transitional housing provides a safe, nurturing environment where women can focus on healing and planning for the future. The program sets women up for mental health care, sustained employment, affordable housing, and high-quality childcare. After exiting the residential component, they continue to receive sustained support through our Aftercare program. Our program seeks Women United's support to enhance our model in two ways: 1) expand our current mental health offering for residents, by growing the network of partner providers and subsidizing access to care for any un-or-underinsured women; and 2) providing a ten percent rental subsidy for up-to-one year to facilitate continued progress towards savings, credit, and debt reduction goals during the aftercare period. Part of the funds would also cover a proportional percentage of staff time for the Director of Family Services and Program Director.

Organization Description

Clare House's mission is to transform the lives of women and their children through an employment-focused program, providing safety, housing, and supportive services with the goal of financial stability. We envision a community where all women and their children are empowered to build a stable foundation. Clare House transitional housing program serves women with children who are experiencing homelessness in Lancaster County. We can serve up to seven families within the walls of our homes on East Chestnut Street in Lancaster, as well as many families who have already completed the residential program and are then supported by our Aftercare initiative (typically for one year after moving into permanent housing). Clare House provides a safe, clean temporary home in a caring environment, job supports, childcare navigation, life-skills programs, and case management designed to build financial empowerment and literacy (budgeting, savings, credit, and debt-reduction), and aftercare support leading to long-term self-sufficiency. All of our work is done collaboratively with community partners.

Here's an excerpt from a recent graduate to give you a sense of the impact:

"Prior to moving to Clare House, I had no support system. I needed support to heal while becoming the best mom I could be and provide my children with a 'normal life'. Clare House provided my family with resources for school supplies, winter coats, and Christmas gifts, which made me feel supported and cared for. My case manager and I created a budget (that I still follow), and I improved my credit score by over 90 points before leaving Clare House! I created a savings account for myself and for my children. I now have a new reliable car due to the involvement of Clare House. I am looking to buy a house by the end of 2026. This is the most stable, happiest, loving and caring person I ever had the ability to be."

Commitment to Equity

Clare House serves women and children in Lancaster County who have experienced homelessness. 100 percent of our clients meet the ALICE threshold upon entry. Additionally, 47% of clients have experienced domestic violence prior to moving in (FY24-25 data). Our two-generation model helps stabilize the family in the present, thereby mitigating the adverse childhood experiences for the children who could be more likely to struggle as adults as a result of their exposure to trauma. The employment emphasis and financial coaching ensures steady income for planning and reduces the likelihood economic control can be a tool for an abuser in a domestic violence context. The housing search prioritizing affordable communities ensures sustainability. The opportunity for mental health treatment ensures mom is better able to support her own and her children's needs, and the flexibility of the model (in terms of timing of each step) allows for capacity-building tailored to each families' unique circumstances.

Clare House's Core Values inform all of our work, and a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion are imbedded throughout. These are:

Compassion: We support the whole person and recognize that it is essential to provide trauma-informed care to maximize well-being.

Respect: We believe in inclusion and that each person has dignity, autonomy, value and the right to a safe and healthy environment.

Collaboration: We value our community, partnerships, and the power of relationships.

Integrity: We are honest, fair, and ethical. We hold our community first and are accountable to each other. We believe in breaking the systematic barriers that contribute to homelessness among mothers.

Living Wage: We believe everyone has the right to earn a living wage and support themselves and their families.

Proposal Details

Main Priority Area

Women's and/ or Teen's Health

Grant Dollar Amount Requested

\$19,949.00

What percent of the overall project budget is covered by the Women United grant?

4.52

Will this program/project start or continue to operate if you do not receive 100% of the funding requested?

Yes

Project Description

100% of the clients Clare House serves are low- and moderate-income individuals and families (LMI) as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). All are single women and mothers with children in their custody who are currently experiencing homelessness. Nearly 50 percent have experienced domestic violence. Additionally, 100% of our clients are ALICE (Asset-Limited, Income Constrained and Employed) as they are mothers working full-time employment but still experiencing homelessness and struggle to afford other basic necessities. Clare House is one of the few transitional housing programs in Lancaster that allow families with older children to stay together - as we accept mothers with male and female children up to the age of 18.

For the past 41 years, Clare House has served women and children experiencing homelessness by providing a temporary home in a caring environment, life-skills programs, and aftercare support leading to self-sufficiency. We provide safety, housing, and supportive services that encourage financial stability and empowerment (like budgeting, savings, debt reduction, and credit improvement). Working hard toward a more stable future - Clare House Moms learn how to improve their present situation while building skills for the future, ensuring they will continue their track toward success when they leave the security of the House. Clare House uses a phased approach to better serve our clients. This program is called Clare House Steps to Success and is described in the Implementation section below. This effort removes the constraints of a strict time-based program, allowing our staff to assist families in a more person-centered and trauma-informed way.

Our program seeks Women United's support to enhance our model in two ways: 1) expand our current mental health offering for residents; and 2) providing a small rental subsidy for up-to-one year. Currently, Clare House has a partnership with Samaritan Counseling Services who sends a counselor on-site to provide counseling to our moms (Note: volunteers provide childcare if it's outside of childcare center hours). Client feedback has demonstrated the value of this service. While most moms receive medical assistance, some are underinsured or uninsured. Thus, we want to implement a flexible pool of funds that can follow moms to any behavioral health provider, without ability to pay being the impediment. We have already piloted the ongoing housing subsidy, as well as a matched savings program. We want to expand the number of households we can reach with this intervention, so that all residents can

continue making progress towards savings, credit, and debt reduction goals during the aftercare period. Since our Steps to Success model is time intensive, part of the funds would also cover a proportional percentage of staff time for the Director of Family Services and Program Director. Ultimately, these enhancements to the program model will lead to even greater levels of wellbeing and long term stability for both generations we are fortunate to serve.

Collaboration

Clare House works closely with a large network of community partners, to ensure families are served holistically. We will continue to work with these partners who support our residents with services related to mental health, financial literacy, childcare, housing stability, and employment success, among other needs identified in collaboration with the client. These partners include: Tenfold, CareerLink, Women of Wealth with Goodwill Keystone Area, Lancaster County Children and Youth services, Domestic Relations, Families in Transition, the YWCA, TW Ponessa, Samaritan Counseling, Team Care, Union Community Care, local school districts, CAP's Early Learning Resource Center, County Office of Assistance, Healthy Beginnings, Boys and Girls Club, Teen Haven, and First Presbyterian and many other churches in our community. Columbus Property Management, HDC and Community Basics are key organizations for housing placement, where many Clare House residents have found safe and affordable homes. Key partners for this project's mental health expansion will include Samaritan Counseling, Union Community Care, among others since we ultimately want the client to find the optimal therapeutic match.

Implementation Plan

Clare House utilizes a person-centered model called Steps to Success.

Step 1: Building the Foundation

- Secure reliable childcare
- Obtain full-time employment.
- Establish care with a mental health provider.
- Establish Goals:

Financial goal planning (saving, credit repair, budgeting, debt reduction, etc.)

Mandatory Savings set at 50% of income after necessary bills (program fees, transportation, food, phone, etc.)

Housing goal planning (affordable housing, first-time homebuying, etc.)

Personal goal planning (transportation, mental health, self-care, education, etc.)

Step 2: Strengthening Supports and Goal Attainment

- Apply for affordable housing.
- Continue mental health services.
- Continued budgeting efforts.
- Work on reducing debt and/or building credit.
- Attend workshops with community partners to build social capital.

Step 3: Transitioning into Housing

- Move into housing.
- Begin receiving monthly rental subsidy (10% of the rent per month for up to one year).
- Ensure employment and childcare is maintained during the transition.

Step 4: Aftercare

Upon successful completion of the residential program, residents are offered 1 year of ongoing case management and monthly personal/cleaning supplies.

Continue receiving mental health services.

Utilize the monthly rental subsidy while continuing progress towards savings and debt reduction goals (and by extension, credit score improvement).

During the Aftercare period, clients continue working with staff for at least one year after they complete the program and move into permanent housing to ensure that they are still meeting their goals and do not fall back into

homelessness. Clients continue to meet with the Director of Family Services to reinforce goal progress (e.g. budgeting, debt reduction, continuing education, building an emergency fund) and connect them to other community resources to grow their support system. Clare House can provide a small rental subsidy to free up more resources for savings or other household needs. Clare House also provides them with both household and personal supplies to help mitigate the costs associated with running their household.

Outcomes & Evaluation

Goals that residents work on while in the program align with each element of Steps to Success, described in the Implementation section. These include employment status, engagement with counseling (e.g. with an in-house counselor from Samaritan Counseling), applying for affordable housing, adherence to budgeting, and maintaining a savings account. Additionally, goals are tailored to each residents' priorities. Some residents are working on obtaining a driver's license, buying a car, practicing self-care, establishing credit, reducing debt, securing services for a child, among other goals specific to a family. Weekly case meetings are held for support and accountability for goal-attainment.

Finding and/or maintaining full-time employment helps women secure housing with Low-Income Tax Credit Communities (affordable housing). While residents are living at Clare House, they budget their weekly/bi-weekly income with the case manager and eventually manage their finances independently once they become more comfortable. This preparation equips them with the necessary tools to successfully manage their finances once they settle into their own housing. Starting and building a savings account while in the program is mandatory, so they are prepared for any unexpected expense.

Clare House currently measures residents' income, length of stay in the program, savings amount, whether they move into sustainable housing and whether they remain in housing while in Aftercare. If a resident has experienced domestic violence, it is also recorded. Currently, the program performance indicators are being updated to include employment hours worked, debt reduction, credit score, social support, wellbeing and perceived parenting quality.

FY24-25 data:

Outputs:

Total Clients Served in FY24-25: 58

Total Families Served in FY24-25: 20

The average length of stay in the program is 261 days.

Outcomes:

82% of clients served last year increased their income while in the Clare House Program.

The average savings balance for clients upon program graduation is \$3,276.

100% of clients in FY 24-25 moved into sustainable housing.

100% of clients in Aftercare in FY24-25 have remained housed by the end of the first year (after leaving Clare House).

Documents

Required Documents

- [Clare-House-Board-Roster_FY26.pdf](#)
- [Clare-House-990.pdf](#)
- [determination-letter-1992-1.pdf](#)
- [CH-FY-25-26-Org-and-Grant-Budget_Women-United_032726.pdf](#)