

THE CENTER FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Center for Women and Families' (CWF) mission is to help victims of intimate partner abuse and sexual violence to become survivors through supportive services, community education and cooperative partnerships that foster hope, promote self-sufficiency and rebuild lives. CWF was founded in Louisville in 1912, expanded services into southern Indiana in the 1980's, and opened our Southern Indiana Campus emergency shelter in New Albany in 1999. CWF is the only provider of domestic violence and sexual assault services in Clark and Floyd Counties. All of CWF's direct services are free and confidential to survivors and their children.

CWF provides support to victims and their families through every stage of their healing process. CWF's priority for immediate crisis response is to assist our most vulnerable clients as they flee stressful or dangerous situations. The crisis phone line, walk-in services and hospital advocacy are accessible 24/7. Emergency shelter is available for individuals and families with severe safety concerns and provides support for victims as they take that critical first step to leave a dangerous situation. While in shelter, clients have access to case management, peer counseling, support groups, financial success activities, and assistance in securing employment/housing. Our community-based services include: peer counseling, group support, referrals to community resources, court and hospital advocacy and medical accompaniment.

Statistics show that rape and sexual assault disproportionately impacts women and children in Indiana and the rate of these horrific crimes is higher than the national average. In fact, Indiana has the second highest rate of rape in the nation among girls in grades 9-12. It is well-documented that intimate partner and sexual violence leads to a myriad of negative health and educational outcomes. Therefore, efforts to improve community health and education must include intimate partner and sexual violence prevention strategies. CWF's vision is to eliminate intimate partner violence and sexual assault in the communities that we serve. To further our important prevention work, CWF requests \$50,000 to expand our current violence prevention program, Green Dot, which has been proven to reduce intimate partner and sexual violence in schools.¹ An award from Impact 100 will help us address two Meaningful Metrics, Promoting Health and Supporting Education, by addressing some of the underlying reasons for women and children's poor health and education outcomes: domestic and sexual violence.

The Green Dot program addresses violence by empowering individuals with knowledge and skills to recognize and interrupt potential violence and encourage an environment intolerant of violence. Green Dot achieves a reduction in violence by increasing positive bystander intervention behaviors (e.g., stepping in to help or speaking up) and increasing participants' confidence in their own ability to intervene to prevent violence. Green Dot's programming counters the reasons people fail to act in dangerous, risky, or emergency

¹ A CDC-funded study in Kentucky high schools found rates of violence perpetration were reduced by 17-21% in Green Dot schools.

situations by acknowledging common barriers to intervening (“I am too shy”; “I don’t like confrontation”; “Someone else will act”; “I fear retaliation”). Green Dot training teaches participants options for intervening (reactive green dots) despite these barriers such as creating a distraction, finding help, or directly intervening when it is safe to do so. Most importantly, it also encourages behaviors, choices, words, or attitudes that promote safety and communicate utter intolerance for violence (proactive green dots). The program’s success is rooted in its approach, based on social diffusion theory, which engages early adopters (influential/popular opinion leaders) who create culture change by spreading the imparted new behaviors and norms throughout the entire community. As the ideas spread and more people engage in creating green dots, the community becomes more intolerant of violence.

The goal of our project is to reduce dating/domestic violence and sexual violence among youth and adults in Southern Indiana through a comprehensive, community-wide Green Dot strategy that expands our current efforts.² Currently, CWF oversees implementation of Green Dot in two southern Indiana high schools. To expand and enhance the program’s effects, CWF seeks support to build the capacity of other schools in Clark and Floyd Counties to launch Green Dot on their own as well as implement Green Dot within the community to complement the efforts within the schools. With Impact 100’s support, CWF will select 3-5 additional high schools and train their staff as Green Dot facilitators at The Green Dot Institute. The schools will be the primary facilitators of the program and CWF will provide expertise and technical assistance to these schools as their staff implements the program. CWF’s efforts will focus on organizing and leading the implementation of Community Green Dot. Similar to the structure of the Green Dot program in schools, CWF will identify community members outside of schools and train them to facilitate bystander intervention trainings. Those facilitators will then train influential community members in bystander intervention programming as explained above.

Green Dot will change the culture and climate of schools and communities to support safer, healthier relationships and environments. By organizing around one comprehensive, community-wide prevention plan, students and adults will receive the same skills and messaging across the entire community. Everywhere they go, they will be surrounded by the same positive messages and encouraged to do green dots. The end result is a transformational change as seen in a shift in the social norms of the community to no longer tolerate violence.

² Note: Harrison County is not included our primary target for this project. CWF’s service area includes only Clark and Floyd Counties and Harrison County is served by Hoosier Hills PACT, another domestic violence agency. To avoid duplication of services and efforts, CWF limits the scope of this project to Clark and Floyd Counties that are within our service area. However, if awarded, CWF will invite Hoosier Hills PACT as well as Harrison County communities to participate in the Green Dot Institute.