



Breaking Barriers: Empowering Domestic Violence Survivors to Access Aid and Achieve Financial Stability



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PROBLEM

How might we support domestic violence survivors in Hamilton's temporary shelters by assisting them with aid applications and offering financial education?

Patty's life changed when her partner betrayed her, erasing proof of her investment in her home and leaving her homeless and jobless. She found support at Emma's Place shelter in Hamilton, where a System Navigator helped her access resources and apply for housing, allowing her to rebuild her life.⁴

- Similar to Patty, survivors in Hamilton face barriers like lack of awareness, complex applications, and financial dependency when accessing aid.

SOLUTION

Core Functions

Offer One-on-one Mentorship

Budget Planning Support

Aid Application Assistance

How It Works

Recruit Volunteers

- Recruit female students

Understand Demands

- Identify aid programs

Weekly Visits

- In-person meetings

Budgeting, applications

- One-on-one meetings

Empower Survivors

- Tailored support

User Journey

1. Arrival

- Survivors meet volunteers at the shelters

2. Assessment

- Volunteers learn about their financial needs

3. Support

- One-on-one guidance on budgeting, saving and accessing aids

4. Action

- Help with filling out financial aid applications

5. Ongoing Growth

- Continued mentorship and resource-sharing



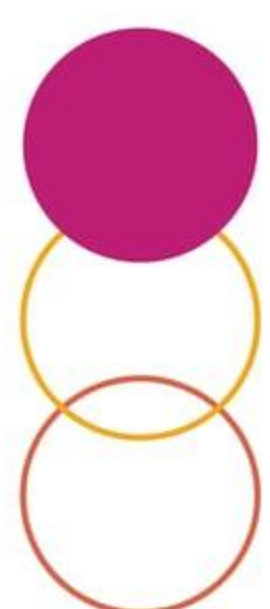
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obstacle to safety for survivors is financial security.



\$104,000

average cost associated with being a female survivor of domestic violence.



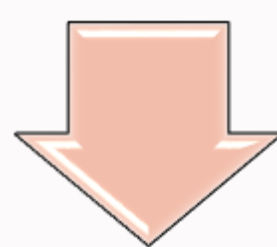
99%

of domestic violence cases involve some form of economic abuse.

NEXT STEPS

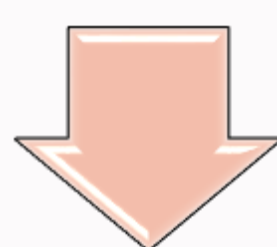
Pilot Phase

1 shelter, 5-10 survivors
(Months 1-6)



Growth Phase

Multiple shelters
More volunteers
(Months 6-18)



Scaling Phase

City-wide reach
City Partnerships
(Months 18+)

REFERENCES

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- [2] "hidden in the Everyday" - financial abuse as a ..., https://womanact.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/WomanACT_Hidden-in-the-everyday_Financial-Abuse-Report-1.pdf (accessed Mar. 17, 2025).
- [3] C. Peterson et al., "Lifetime economic burden of intimate partner violence among U.S. adults," American journal of preventive medicine, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6161830/> (accessed Mar. 17, 2025).
- [4] Missionservices, "A safe space in a Dark Place," Mission Services of Hamilton, <https://mission-services.com/a-safe-space-in-a-dark-place/> (accessed Mar. 11, 2025).
- [5] "An economic path to safety: Credit Union model of support," Filene Research Institute, <https://www.filene.org/blog/an-economic-path-to-safety-credit-union-model-of-support> (accessed Mar. 11, 2025).

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