



**Focus Area:** Family and Individual Support

**Grant Finalist:** Lighthouse MI

**Project:** New Family Emergency Homeless Shelter

**Background:** Lighthouse has the unique opportunity to transform their Center Street facility into a family shelter - adding 54 badly needed emergency shelter beds dedicated to families experiencing homelessness within our community.

Center Street is an 18-unit apartment style complex with onsite offices and shared meeting spaces. The facility design itself is already suited to many of the operational needs of an emergency shelter and is uniquely suited for families. Many rooms are equipped with doors that can lock or unlock to turn a one-bedroom into a two or three-bedroom unit. This versatility allows Lighthouse to serve small or large families more efficiently. Prior to the pandemic, Lighthouse provided emergency shelter through a rotating emergency shelter model known as SOS. Each week, a different congregation would open their doors and host Lighthouse's shelter program. As such, individuals and families would move to a new location each week. This constant movement was especially difficult for families as it interfered with their ability to maintain a sense of normalcy and for children to maintain their school schedules. Having a standalone non-congregate shelter that does not rotate locations each week will not only better meet the needs of families experiencing homelessness but will also create a safer, more dignified, and more comfortable environment for families as they work on regaining stability.

**Unmet Need:** Lighthouse's rotating emergency shelter program was Oakland County's only homeless shelter serving whole families in need. Once open, the new family shelter facility will provide the only dedicated family and children shelter beds in Oakland County that are open to any family makeup. In 2020 Oakland Schools Homeless Student Services identified 2,243 homeless students, in all 28 districts, whose families struggled to find housing and food each day. These children may be living on the streets or staying in shelters, motels, hotels, and/or temporarily staying with family or friends.

**Outcomes:** Success will be defined by how quickly we are able to renovate the facility, fill the units with families experiencing homelessness, and transition those families into permanent housing. Our goal is to complete the renovations to Center Street and fill 100% of the units with families in need of shelter by the end of 2023. We anticipate that these 18 units will serve up to 54 individuals at any given time and will serve approximately 400 individuals annually. Each year, Lighthouse succeeds in securing permanent housing for at least 80% of our shelter guests and we hope to increase the number as a result of this program. The project will also allow Lighthouse to continue engaging the community with hundreds of high-quality volunteer opportunities each year.

**Sustainability:** The total cost of repurposing this facility into a family Emergency Shelter is estimated at \$254,266 with \$137,694 already secured. Major one-time costs include installing an onsite shared residential kitchen to give households the option to prepare meals for their families, an adjacent commercial kitchen for volunteers and staff to prepare and serve communal meals, equipping all the units with metal furnishings, and replacing all the carpets with durable commercial-grade flooring. The commercial kitchen will allow Lighthouse to continue to provide three meals a day to shelter guests and help Lighthouse re-engage volunteers within the shelter program as volunteers can prepare and serve meals onsite, thus reducing Lighthouse's expenses related to purchasing prepared meals. Both the metal furniture and vinyl/tile flooring will help us ensure a safe and sanitary environment long-term since the units will see more turnover and wear and tear. Ongoing costs to maintain and staff the facility will be funded through our regular allocated grants received through HUD, MSHDA, and Oakland County.