

ORGANIZATION: Family Promise of Southwest NJ (Gloucester, Camden, Salem & Cumberland Counties)

PROJECT: Student Transportation Program

POPULATION TO BE SERVED BY PROJECT: In 2019, Family Promise served 75 individuals in temporary housing, many were families with children. This project will enable Family Promise to serve more families with children and keep the children within their original school district prior to moving to temporary housing. The revenue generated from this project will allow Family Promise to serve children other than those directly supported by their own housing programs, and they expect to serve between 50-100 children over the 24-month grant period. The revenue generated through the student transportation program will enable Family Promise to acquire additional properties to serve more families needing temporary housing.

ORGANIZATION'S TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET (CURRENT YEAR): \$315,900

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: This project will serve the children of low-mid income working families who are experiencing housing insecurities. Families have typically lost housing due to a variety of catastrophic financial events (job loss, illness, death of a spouse, divorce, home damaged or deemed uninhabitable). While sheltering temporarily in transitional housing, federal law requires the school district the children were living in prior to become homeless to provide transportation to keep them in their original school district. Keeping children in their home districts allows them to maintain the familiarity and stability of their classmates and teachers, and minimizes disruption to their progress in school.

Funding for this project will allow Family Promise to expand their pilot program by adding four minivans to transport children to their original sending districts, both for children living temporarily in housing provided by Family Promise and those living in transitional housing. This is an expansion of a successful one year pilot project.

By purchasing the additional minivans and contracting with more school districts to transport such students, Family Promise expects to be able to generate enough revenue (\$25,000 annually) within two years to fully fund the transportation program as well as support their shelter and food distribution efforts. This grant would essentially be seed funding to help them better serve the needs of a vulnerable group of children, enable school districts to better comply with federal law, and become a stronger ongoing source of revenue for the organization; thus, decreasing their dependence on contributions from the general public.

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Through their pilot program, Family Promise has already attained all the relevant licenses and approvals from the State of NJ and is registered as a school bus vendor. With the purchase of additional school transport minivans and hiring drivers, they will be ready to expand their bidding and contracting with more school districts in the fall of 2020. Rates for student transport can vary from \$150 to \$450 per student per day generating sufficient revenue for Family Promise.

ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION: Family Promise works with low-mid income families experiencing housing insecurity. The family unit must consist of at least one child under the age of 18, and all families must pass a criminal background check and be drug free prior to admission to their housing program. Parents must have a source of income that will enable them to secure permanent housing within 3-6 months. These are hardworking, everyday families that need a little help to give them safe shelter and a leg up to get back on their feet. Family Promise has a 95% success rate with families that have graduated out of their programs. Family Promise typically has a wait list of families needing temporary housing. As a result of COVID-19, the demand for temporary housing for families has become greater.