

# **2021 COVID-19 Recovery Grant** **Request Summary**

## **COVID-19 Recovery Grant Application**

In response to the strain the COVID-19 virus pandemic is placing on the local healthcare system and community-based organizations, the Desert Healthcare District and the Regional Access Project have made available grant funds to provide additional support and resources to our local healthcare and service providers.

## **The LGBT Sanctuary Palm Springs Inc, Grant #1207**

### **About the Organization**

The LGBT Sanctuary Palm Springs Inc  
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### **Organization Type:**

Other

### **Contact:**

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### **Proposal**

**Project Title:** The LGBT Sanctuary Palm Springs

**Total Project Budget:** \$411,476.00

**Requested Amount:** \$10,000.00

**Start Date:** 1/1/2020

**End Date:** 12/31/2021

### **Project/Program Description**

**Community Need:** *Define a specific need(s) for the project and describe the alignment to ongoing COVID-19 relief, recovery, and assistance efforts.*

Sanctuary Palm Springs was founded in 2014 to address the residential, emotional, vocational, and educational needs of LGBTQ transition age foster youth (TAY) by providing a home where they feel safe, supported, and respected. We began welcoming residents in 2017 as a fully licensed Transitional Housing Placement Program for Non-Minor Dependents (THPP- NMD) for youth ages 18-21 who are enrolled in extended foster care through California's Fostering Connections to Success Act. Sanctuary is the only THPP-NMD designed specifically to support LGBTQ transition age foster youth in

the Coachella Valley. LGBTQ youth are significantly overrepresented in foster care, making up 18-20% of the 60,000 youth in California's foster care system. In real numbers, this means that approximately 12,000 foster youth in California identify as LGBTQ. Most children enter foster care after experiencing significant abuse and/or neglect. While some LGBTQ youth enter foster care after coming out to family, which can lead to violence or expulsion, most enter for the same reasons as other children. As they age and begin to disclose their LGB or T identities, they experience additional levels of resistance and rejection. While abuse and neglect occur within families spanning all income levels, the overwhelming majority of those taken into foster care are from economically disenfranchised families and communities, nearly all from communities of color.

Adding to their disenfranchisement, LGBTQ youth also face significant family rejection, lower rates of family reunification, and are less likely to achieve permanent families than their straight and cisgender peers. It is not uncommon for these youth to be bullied or worse during their upbringing in foster care. Sanctuary was created to counter the rejection and harassment our residents have experienced by treating them with dignity and respect as we prepare them to lead healthy, happy, and productive adult lives.

**Project Description:** *What program/service are you performing or providing that is vital to your target population during the current COVID-19 public health crisis and describe its importance.*

Sanctuary Palm Springs is licensed by the California Department of Social Services' Community Care Licensing Division to operate our Transitional Housing Program for Non-Minor Dependents. Our mission is to address the residential, emotional, vocational, and educational needs of LGBTQ transition age foster youth (TAY), ages 18-21. By providing a home where they feel safe, supported, and respected we prepare our residents for safe, stable, and sustainable adulthood. Life skills form the foundation for independence and are a vital component of our program. Our staff works tirelessly with our residents to teach them the life skills they will need to live independently and facilitate socio-emotional growth, wellbeing, and positive social and community connections. Our "in-the-life" approach, akin to on-the-job training, allows residents to try out their newfound skills with guidance from our caring staff. We see ourselves as the training wheels that provide stability and support until our youth are ready to ride the road of life on their own. In order to qualify for extended foster care, all TAY are required to spend at least 20 hours per week working, going to school, or volunteering. At Sanctuary, we work with all of our residents to ensure they remain in compliance with this state mandate. We help them with job seeking by connecting them to local employers, helping them put together a resume, picking out clothes to wear to interviews, conducting mock job interviews; we help them complete their GED and enroll in classes at College of the Desert; and we help connect them to volunteer opportunities. Together, these interventions reduce barriers to success, increase the opportunities available to our youth, and provide equitable access to being fully engaged, active participants in community and society.

**Is this a new project or an expansion of a preexisting project? Please describe if the proposed project has been developed recently or if a preexisting program has been modified to address the impact of the COVID-19 virus**

Our program has operated with residents since 2017, so it is a continuation of the existing services we provide to LGBTQ transition age foster youth. The revenue Sanctuary receives from the CA counties from where our residents are referred accounts for less than half of the true costs associated with running the organization. This revenue is designed to support costs directly related to the care of boarding of our residents. It does not cover administrative costs such as most of the salary of the agency's executive director, office manager, and our development consultant. Nonetheless, these three positions are crucial to the administrative oversight and support necessary to keep the organization going. So we are tasked with raising significant funding from outside sources. The majority of this funding has come from the many successful fundraising events we hold throughout the year, including our annual Holiday Socks event held each year at Spencer's restaurant. This event has been a reliable source of funding for us, particularly our 2019 event where our net revenue increased 600% from previous years. The COVID-19 pandemic has severely limited our ability to raise the funds we need because we are no longer able to hold the fundraising events on which we have relied. As a result, anticipated loss of revenue directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic totals more than \$270,000. In addition to this lost revenue, the pandemic has forced us to keep one bedroom empty (the only room with its own bath) in case we need to use it to quarantine any resident who may become infected with the coronavirus. Loss of revenue we will suffer as a result of not filling this room will total nearly \$42,000 in 2020.

**How will the grant funds be used? Please describe specifically how the grant funds will be used towards operational and/or programmatic support?**

If awarded, Sanctuary will use these funds to continue to address the residential, vocational, and educational needs of LGBTQ transition age foster youth by providing them with the tools they will need in order to live safe, stable, healthy, and productive lives once they turn 21 and go out into the world.

**Geographical Area Served**  
Palm Springs

**Population Served**  
Youth (18-24 years old)

**How many residents will be served? Please provide the number of unduplicated number of individuals and/or number of services provided**  
6

**Evaluation Please describe how the success and/or impact of on-going operations or the proposed project will be evaluated**

## Evaluation

Sanctuary's full-time Case Manager meets with each resident to develop a plan of action during their time with us based on their individual goals. All residents are required to work, attend classes, and/or volunteer in the community for a minimum of 20 hours per week. Some of our residents prioritize their educational pursuits while others opt to get a job and save as much money as possible before they emancipate. Some choose to tackle both work and school. Whatever their personal goal, our Case Manager holds weekly progress meetings with each resident in order to track their progress toward reaching their stated goals. Progress notes are kept in the resident's file. In addition, we use CareSoft software to track their progress daily, with each staff member writing notes about the residents' daily activities toward reaching their goals. We track their behavioral health progress (from the weekly therapy they are provided) by using HARC's data assessment tools through our grant from the RAP Foundation.