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# October 15, 2020 - DCF Division on Women has been awarded the Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA) Grant

**Federal Grant helps to increase emergency shelter, housing capacity and other supports for survivors of DV during COVID-19 Pandemic**

TRENTON—The New Jersey Department of Children and Families' (DCF) Division on Women has been awarded the Family Violence Prevention Services Act (FVPSA) Grant. The supplemental funding will enhance the state's services and prevention programs in support of children and families impacted by violence during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

"The COVID-19 Pandemic has impacted families in unimaginable ways, exacerbating already unstable or untenable environments for victims of domestic violence," said NJ DCF Commissioner Christine Norbut Beyer, MSW. "Elevated stress, financial struggles, social distancing and isolation from family and social supports are significant factors in escalating violence in a home, particularly in those already vulnerable to intimate partner violence, sexual assault, domestic violence and maltreatment."

The FVPSA Grant of $935,733 is part of the 2020 Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act and will augment the Division on Women's (Division) prevention efforts, particularly among traditionally marginalized groups that may be unaware of or distrustful towards government intervention or assistance. The funding will also enhance emergency shelter capacity, counseling services and access to community-based programs.

"Working with our system partners, the Division will focus its efforts on meeting the needs of our most impacted communities, in which people's health and safety continue to be disproportionately affected, " said Anna Martinez, Director of the Division. "This includes culturally-specific groups such as African, Black, Latinx, South Asian, Muslim and Arabic-speaking communities. We want all residents to know that there is no excuse for abuse and that while life circumstances may mean that leaving the situation isn't possible right now, help is always available."

Since the onset of the pandemic, New Jersey - as well as other states across the nation - has seen a rise in the reporting of domestic violence and intimate partner violence incidents. Providers of services to individuals seeking help for domestic violence are following CDC-recommended safety guidelines and protocols to ensure the safety of staff and individuals served.

**ABOUT THE DCF/DOW**

The New Jersey Department of Children and Families' mission is to ensure that all New Jersey residents are safe, healthy and connected. Through its wide service array, the department touches the lives of over 100,000 men, women, children and families, in a given month.

The department's Division on Women (DOW) focuses on women's issues, equality, and empowerment. The DOW offers an array of county-level programs and services to help prevent violence against women, support survivors of physical and sexual violence, and provide educational training opportunities for individuals looking to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

For more information about DCF/DOW programs, services and supports to victims of domestic violence and intimate partner violence visit https://www.nj.gov/dcf/women/index.html. If you or someone you know is in an unsafe situation and need immediate help, call the Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-572-SAFE (7233).

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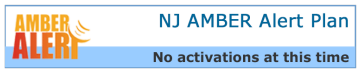

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