



# Grant Finalist Summary

SafeSpace, Inc.

Project: Indian River County Emergency Shelter

Category: Health and Wellness

**What They Do:** SafeSpace offers victims of domestic violence safety, support, and education, empowering them to create an independent life, free from violence. They are the only certified domestic violence agency on the Treasure Coast staffed and able to help survivors of intimate partner violence 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

**Project Summary:** The grant will help to open and staff a 19-bed emergency shelter in Indian River County. Currently, the nearest shelter for IRC adults and children is 42 miles away in Martin County. Their Advocate staff are trained specialists in crisis management, risk assessment, safety planning, advocacy, education, and community-based outreach.

**Population Served:** The primary service population are those who have or are experiencing physical, emotional, psychological, or financial abuse in an intimate partner relationship. These adults and children represent all cultures, races, ethnicity, ages, economic and educational backgrounds, sexual orientations, genders, physical abilities, spoken language, and religious beliefs. In FY 2019-2020, SafeSpace served 114 adults and 30 children from Indian River County and provided 414 crisis hotline callers with immediate life-saving information and support.

**Impact:** While there are a many factors impacting the increased incidence of Intimate Partner Violence in our region, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a perfect storm for victims because of the decreased opportunities to find the support needed. It is projected that over 280 domestic violence victims will benefit from the opening of the IRC shelter.

**In Their Own Words:** “Women, men, and children fleeing abusive relationships need a safe space to begin rebuilding their lives in order to transition to safety and freedom. They need to access these services in their own communities, where they can maintain the highest sense of normalcy possible, as they find the courage, hope and skills to transition to a violence free life.”

– Dr. Teresa Albizu, Chief Executive Officer

**From the Grant Panel Team:** “This project helps stop the cycle of violence. If women have to leave their jobs and social networks, take their children out of school, and go to a shelter that is 42 miles away, they are less likely to leave their abusers.”

**Use of Funds:** Salaries for Advocate staff

**Sustained** by anticipated funding from State and Federal grants, (i.e., DCF and VOCA - Victims of Crime Act), which support the operation of domestic violence centers in the State of Florida. They will also continue strong and passionate fund-raising efforts in addition to grants procurement.

**Website:** [www.SafeSpaceFL.org](http://www.SafeSpaceFL.org)