



Sha'a Ka Atyátx'i Noowú  
DOVE COTTAGE  
A Place of Peace

## Aiding Women in Abuse and Rape Emergencies

"Serving Juneau and Nine Southeastern Communities"

P.O. Box 20809 • Juneau, Alaska 99802-0809

(907) 586-6623 (business)

(907) 586-2479 (fax)

(907) 586-1090 (crisis)

1-800-478-1090 (toll free in state)

E-mail: [info@awareak.org](mailto:info@awareak.org)

Website: [www.awareak.org](http://www.awareak.org)

September 6, 2017

Community Development Department  
155 Seward St.  
Juneau AK 99801

Dear. Ms. McNally,

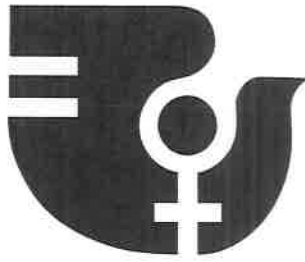
Thank you for the opportunity to submit our **AWARE Shelter Accessibility Project** proposal to the City and Borough of Juneau. We believe this project uniquely fits the funding criteria for the Community Development Block Grant Program, and hope to work directly with the CBJ to put forth a strong application.

If you have any questions or would like clarification about the proposal, please feel free to contact me at 586-6623.

Kindly,

Mandy Cole  
Deputy Director, AWARE





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## **AWARE Shelter Accessibility Project Executive Summary**

### **Project description:**

AWARE is proposing the design and construction of an accessible entrance and 2 accessible rooms, including bathroom and laundry facilities, for our 32 bed emergency safe shelter for victims of domestic and sexual violence. AWARE's emergency shelter was constructed in 1985, with all designated sleeping rooms on the second floor, accessed by stairs only. AWARE currently provides over 10,000 nights of safe emergency shelter per year, which is more than double the amount of nights provided in 2005. AWARE also chairs a local team of providers, Juneau's Disability Abuse Response Team (DART), focused on increasing resources for victims of abuse who also experience disabling conditions. Through this work, AWARE has increased the number of shelter participants served who experience physical disability, including: persons requiring wheelchairs/walkers, persons with visual impairments, persons with seizure disorders and traumatic brain injury, and others who struggle with temporary or permanent injuries from abuse that restrict mobility. The accommodations AWARE has made in order to shelter this population fall short of addressing the ongoing safety and dignity of these participants. AWARE's Shelter Accessibility Project aims to modify our building in order to increase our capacity to serve persons with disabilities, and improve the experience of shelter for those survivors who are served at AWARE's safe emergency shelter.

### **How is the project serving those of low/moderate income?**

Approximately 100% of women and families<sup>1</sup> currently utilizing AWARE's emergency safe shelter are of low income. Of those women, a further 25% identified as low or no income and experiencing a disability that limited activities of daily living. AWARE identified 41 shelter participants as chronically homeless according to HUD definitions during FY17, 100% of whom experienced a disabling condition. These 41 participant's have had more than 4 bouts of homelessness totaling over 12 months in the past three years. Several of those participants identified as no income, with 10+ years of homelessness. AWARE's safe emergency shelter serves as a transition point for survivors of abuse to separate from abusive partners and/or access services needed to achieve greater independence. Shelter provides a safe place to sleep, eat and gain information needed to plan for their future. Most of our participants have experienced poverty as children and adults, and have few models of financial independence available to them. In our shelter, we are able to provide for basic necessities of living, granting survivors the opportunity to think about more than then the desperate need for immediate safety, food and shelter. From a stable base, participants can access public assistance, employment opportunities, and housing resources.

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<sup>1</sup> All data referenced in this section are collected from internal AWARE records. Documentation available upon request.



**Anticipated Total Project Cost:**

The total project cost is estimated at \$315,000. This includes project design and construction costs.

**Matching Funds Available:**

Matching funds are available through the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Rasmuson Foundation and local fundraising efforts.

**Project Readiness:**

During the summer of 2017, AWARE engaged in-kind services from a local architect, Zane Jones, to complete several conceptual plans of potential renovation to achieve accessibility goals. The space was further reviewed by the accessibility specialist at SAIL, confirming the scope of the project. AWARE also has architectural drawings from a prior project that was not implemented, detailing possible expansion to the existing shelter structure. While none of these plans represents a completed set of architectural drawings, they do provide a basis from which to estimate costs and a timeline for construction. Because the renovation would not disturb the main areas of the shelter, including existing bedrooms/bath and kitchen areas, the work can be completed as soon as design and construction are secured.

**Contribution of project:**

AWARE recognizes the differences inherent in “making do” for survivors who experience disabilities versus providing appropriate, dignified facilities that encourage independence and empowerment. For example, persons in wheelchairs cannot access the shelter via the front door. The existing wheelchair ramp enters into a vestibule where the shelter garbage cans are stored. There is no defined “bedroom” space on the ground level, so all participants who cannot navigate stairs are accommodated by a wheeled cot, sofa or twin bed in a partitioned area of the children’s playroom. If we have more than one participant at a time with mobility issues, we often work to relocate the participant because we recognize that the physical space is severely limited. The ground floor accessible bathroom, with the correct turning radius for a wheelchair, does not have a shower. The ground floor restroom with a shower does not have room for a wheelchair. The current physical space represents further indignity for persons with limited mobility. We hope to create a space that better serves the needs of persons experiencing disability, aligns with our philosophy of personal choice and empowerment, and increases our capacity to provide potentially life-saving shelter and advocacy services to survivors.

**Goals of this project include:**

- safety, sobriety and stability for survivors experiencing disabilities
- a welcoming physical shelter environment that encourages survivors with disabilities to access services, rather than presenting additional barriers to service
- increased capacity to serve participants with mobility needs
- autonomy, increased self-confidence and empowerment for survivors with disabilities

For too long, AWARE has “made due” with creative, but temporary and insufficient, physical accommodation for persons experiencing disabilities. Living in shelter is difficult for anyone, but those difficulties become actual barriers when the space is not accessible. The result is that persons experiencing disabilities continue to live on the street, or in unsafe homes, or with abusive caregivers instead of seeking the services to which they are entitled. AWARE’s overriding goal with this project is to increase the likelihood that survivors will make contact with AWARE to engage services, feel comfortable and dignified when utilizing shelter space, and achieve safety and independence as a result of our assistance partnered with their own determination and empowerment.