



# Women's Daytime Drop-in Center

*A home when there isn't one*

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**[www.womensdropin.org](http://www.womensdropin.org)**

September 2, 2020

Dear Reverend Angela and Reverend Molly,

I am providing a brief overview of our programs and current situation during pandemic.

Since 1988 WDDC has provided safe day refuge for more than 20,000 homeless women and children and those who are at risk for homelessness.

We believe that all human beings deserve to have stable housing and to live full and productive lives. To this end we empower women and children to move from the streets to a home by providing caring professional staff, hot meals, counseling, domestic violence services, support groups, children's resources and transitional housing for five single mothers and their children.

Last year Alameda County data counted 8,022 unhoused people including only 170 families. We estimate this represents less than a quarter of the real number since families avoid being identified due to fears of losing child custody or undocumented immigration status and the shame of homelessness. Consequently funding in the county has focussed on single men. Berkeley Unified School District this year has identified 246 school children who are homeless and we know there are more. For many years the high cost of living in the Bay Area has resulted in a lack of low cost housing pushing more families to live in cars and other substandard conditions.

During the pandemic we have seen a growing number of new families utilizing our services, some are homeless and some are at-risk to become homeless due to job loss. Historically, more than 1,300 people use our programs annually, 80% are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; 93% are women, primarily head of household; 56% disabled; 27% are chronically homeless. Fifty percent of our clients are under 17 or over 55.

Our Emergency Grocery Supply demand increased from an average of 10 bags per month to 325 bags each month since the pandemic began. We have provided more than 15,000 free diapers since March. This pandemic threatens to increase homelessness by 40-50% if we aren't able to make some inroads in providing assistance to keep people housed, provide additional support so

that families receive enough food and can access relevant benefits and supportive services and can obtain shelter and supportive housing opportunities.

Our tiny team of nine provides personalized support to help people navigate the overwhelmingly complex homeless care system. We assist people to get into shelters, apply for housing and coordinate with other agencies to get subsidies and to help with move in costs. This year we have increased our Spanish speaking staff by two and may hire additional staff to coordinate services for the growing influx of families.

We expect the impact of the pandemic to last for several years but feel strongly that we need to be prepared to provide expanded family support services during the next two years as we expect the eviction moratorium to end and states will struggle to find funds to make up for job loss.

Currently with a budget of \$683,000, WDDC provides case management for 30 Shelter Plus Care clients (people living in subsidized housing who receive regular contact to ensure that they can maintain housing and do not return to homelessness, frequently these are formerly homeless persons with a disability), operate Drop-In Center providing 10,000 meals annually and 40 hours each week of counseling, case management, workshops and referrals to about 1,300 unique individuals and operate our 5 bedroom Bridget Transitional Housing Program where five single mothers live with their children while seeking permanent housing placements.

Less than 40% of our funding is provided by the City of Berkeley, \$8,000 annually is provided for emergency food supplies from FEMA, the remaining 60% comes from foundations, individual donors and businesses.

We hope to expand affordable housing availability by working with partners in the community and local funders to make sure people have access to subsidies and also supportive case managers to assist them maintaining housing, improving income and improving health and family stability.

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**Charitable Tax I.D. 94-3123986**