



## **DTE Energy Foundation continues to support state's domestic violence shelters with grants totaling \$1.8 million over three years**

*Grants will help 45 shelters funded by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) create safe havens and empower survivors*

**DETROIT, NOV. 5, 2021** – The DTE Energy Foundation today announced it will award a third round of grants to all 45 domestic violence shelters funded by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to help provide safe havens needed by survivors to find hope and heal. The Foundation's \$420,000 donation follows its previous awards, bringing the amount of support to shelters funded by MDHHS to \$1.8 million.

"Safe, nurturing homes are the foundation for a healthy, vital Michigan because they enable people to give their full energy toward their families, communities and jobs. The DTE Foundation has the ability to step in, bring the domestic violence epidemic to the forefront and make a significant difference for shelters and the Michiganders they support," said Lynette Dowler, president of the DTE Foundation. "We chose to undertake this grant because many domestic violence victims are forced to seek refuge in homeless centers when domestic violence shelters are unavailable, and these alternative housing options do not offer the necessary training or programs needed for victims. Early intervention can help victims and their children chart a new path of independence and safety."

The pandemic has exacerbated the problem of domestic violence, with women and children needing access to shelters now more than ever. Domestic violence calls continue to surge during the pandemic. National data shows an 8% increase, and Michigan is no exception.

"Domestic violence shelters save lives," said Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist II. "They provide critical services to survivors and come to them with help and wraparound support at some of the darkest points in their lives. Governor Whitmer and I are incredibly thankful for the work the DTE Energy Foundation continues to do to support domestic violence shelters throughout Michigan. We are confident this third round of grants will go far towards supporting the professionals working on the front lines to lift up survivors and communities and end domestic violence in Michigan."

As COVID-19 continues to require shelters to modify operations and incur higher expenses while also decreasing fundraising opportunities, these grants will be

divided across nonprofit shelters that provide 24/7 emergency housing and comprehensive services to domestic violence survivors.

"Every Woman's Place has been providing essential services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and sex trafficking for over 45 years. These services include both residential and non-residential services like emergency shelter, crisis lines, housing programs, financial assistance, legal advocacy, and obtaining critical documents," said Emily Erickson, director of programs at Every Woman's Place. "What makes these services crucial is that they strengthen and empower survivors to be independent of their assailants and to take back control of their lives and their futures. It is through EWP's services that our values are clear: Being a place of hope, safety, and healing. With the support and contributions of agencies like DTE, EWP continues to provide survivors with services that will empower them towards a life free from violence."

Grants will be awarded to Michigan's 45 MDHHS-funded shelters based on bed count to support critical expenses at each location. The funds will also allow shelters to deliver holistic survivor-centric services and support that develop independence and empowerment. These initiatives include employment, housing, transportation, and support services that help survivors navigate the complex criminal justice and health care systems – two primary barriers to independence.

"The unfortunate reality is that domestic violence and sexual assault isn't something that happens over 'there' in that 'other' community. It's present here, at home, in Michigan," Elizabeth Sawielski, executive director of Blue Water Safe Horizons. "Blue Water Safe Horizons exists to provide emotional support, shelter, individual counseling, advocacy, support groups, referrals, and so much more to survivors. We're able to continue the life-saving work that we do, in part, due to the support of the DTE Foundation. We are sincerely grateful for their generosity and support."

Each year, domestic violence shelters receive more than 80,000 requests (primarily for shelter) they cannot meet. Dowler encourages the Michigan business community to join the DTE Foundation in the fight against domestic violence.

"These shelters' reputations and bodies of work give us confidence that the support and services they provide to survivors is top notch, and the funding we're providing will allow them to continue to help so many people in need," said Dowler. "We're not only offering assistance to a strained shelter system struggling to cope with the impact of the pandemic, we're shining a bright light on an issue that affects many of our friends, family members and neighbors."

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### **About the DTE Foundation**

The DTE Foundation is the philanthropic arm of DTE Energy, continuing the legacy of community support and involvement of its electric and natural gas utilities, which serve 2.3 million electric customers in Southeast Michigan and 1.3 million natural gas

customers in Michigan. In 2020, the DTE Energy Foundation provided more than \$16 million in grant support and approximately \$21 million in COVID relief to nonprofits where the company has a business presence. As one of Michigan's leading corporate citizens, DTE Energy is a force for growth and prosperity in communities across Michigan in a variety of ways, including philanthropy, volunteerism and economic progress. Visit [DTEFoundation.com](https://DTEFoundation.com) to learn more.

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