

Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 24, 2020

## **LACASA Center Expands COVID-19 Protective Initiatives**

LACASA Center announces an expanded series of preventative initiatives as it responds to the threat of COVID-19. While victims and survivors of abuse will continue to have 24-hour access to immediate assistance, LACASA's administrative offices are closed to the general public until further notice.

The locally-based, independent nonprofit employs more than 70 staff members and provides numerous around-the-clock services for victims of child abuse, domestic violence and sexual assault. The size, scope and nature of the agency require unique safety procedures to protect the health and well-being of its shelter residents, clients, volunteers, staff, and the general community. While many client services remain in place, a variety of agency programs have been postponed or cancelled.

### **Status of LACASA Services**

- **Crisis Shelter:** Currently, LACASA's 24-hour shelter facility is the only entry-and-exit access point at the agency. The Crisis Shelter—and the shelter's Safe Pet Place—remain open for victims of abuse who are seeking immediate shelter for themselves, their children, and their pets. LACASA has rigorous health and safety protocols in place at the shelter, including a comprehensive intake screening process.
- **Sexual Assault Response Center:** LACASA's sexual assault response team continues to provide 24/7 services for victims and survivors of sexual assault. Our Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners are on-call to conduct forensic exams.

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- **Helpline:** The organization's 24-hour Helpline is open. Victims, survivors, clients, their families, and members of the public are encouraged to reach out for immediate help, resources, information, and assistance by calling or texting the Helpline at 866-522-2725.
- **Personal Protection Orders:** All legal advocacy assistance with Personal Protection Orders is by appointment only. Walk-ins are prohibited at this time. Call LACASA's 24/7 Helpline to schedule an appointment at 866-522-2725.

- **Current Clients:** LACASA counselors and legal advocates are in communication with current clients regarding individual appointments and remote conferencing options.
- **Volunteers:** LACASA has notified all volunteers that they should adhere to Michigan’s shelter-at-home policy and not report for their regularly assigned duties.
- **Staff:** Stringent protocols are in place to mitigate the spread of the virus within the agency’s facilities. Supervisors are collaborating with staff members to arrange staggered scheduling, work-from-home options, and remote conferencing capabilities as needed.
- **General Public:** LACASA’s administrative offices are closed. The public is asked to call LACASA’s 24/7 Helpline at 866-522-2725 and leave a message for any of our team members.
- **LACASA Collection Store:** LACASA’s charity resale shop in Howell is temporarily closed until further notice. Donations are prohibited at this time. The store’s online “Shop for Good Boutique” is open for business at [www.shopatlacasa.org](http://www.shopatlacasa.org).
- **Classes & Workshops:** All client classes and workshops are cancelled or postponed indefinitely.
- **Events:** The agency’s community awareness events scheduled for March and April are postponed. Scheduling of summer fundraising events is being discussed at this time.
- **Donations:** All donations of goods (food, clothing, dry goods, etc.) are prohibited at this time. Supporters can contribute much-needed monetary donations online at [lacasacenter.org](http://lacasacenter.org).

LACASA Center is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. The agency provides all services for abuse victims and their families at no charge. Donations to LACASA stay local and help vulnerable victims of abuse from the community. For more information, visit [lacasacenter.org](http://lacasacenter.org) or call 866-522-2725.

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