

REQUEST SUMMARY

Requested Amount

\$25,000

Type of Support

Program/Project Support

Request/Project Title

Advancing Equity in Healthcare

Project/Program Description (1000 character maximum)

Describe specific purposes for which any grant funds awarded from this foundation will be used (e.g., specific equipment, overall project funding, etc.)

Requested funding will reduce patient costs, shorten hospital stays, and provide proximity to medical care by supporting HHOC's Overnight Lodging Program. The program aims to create equitable access to healthcare by providing lodging for caregivers and medically stable patients seeking treatment at Charlotte hospitals. For a nominal nightly fee of \$50, guests receive a private room and restroom and access to a fully stocked kitchen and pantry, laundry facilities and supplies, parking, and transportation to and from hospital systems.

Recent inflation has increased HHOC's program operating expenses by 20%, and guest fees account for only a portion of these costs. Support from [REDACTED] will keep fees at a minimum for guests who are facing the high expenses of medical treatment. At a program operating cost of \$90 per room, per night, a gift of \$25,000 provides 278 families with accommodations and related support services.

Common Goals (1000 character maximum)

Describe how a grant to your organization would further the foundation's mission and the priorities of the foundation.

A grant awarded to HHOC would further [REDACTED]'s mission by providing a fundamental human service to individuals in need of safe, overnight lodging while receiving life-sustaining medical treatment. When faced with the high costs of medical bills, families should not have to choose between shelter and healthcare.

"My daughter was admitted unexpectedly. We really appreciate Hospitality House. We were having to sleep in our car because we couldn't stay with her and didn't have money for a motel room." (HHOC Guest, 2022)

The vast majority of HHOC guests reside in rural areas of the US where their recommended treatment is nonexistent. HHOC provides a necessary human service that facilitates access to critical medical care to create more positive health outcomes for patients and their caregivers.

Demographics comments (optional) (1000 character maximum)

HHOC serves patients of any age and diagnosis referred to Charlotte-area hospitals from any location. Last year, 84% of guests came from North or South Carolina, 39% came from more than 100 miles away, and 27% lived less than 60 miles from Charlotte.

Although HHOC does not target any particular demographic, 52% of guests surveyed this fiscal year have household incomes less than \$45,000, including 16% from incomes less than \$20,000.

Most guests are facing cancer, transplantation, cardiac issues, or trauma, but a wide variety of diagnoses are served. 21% of all guests served last year were patients who, without Hospitality House, would have to remain in the hospital longer than necessary, pay costly hotel rates, or face the exhaustion of frequent trips back and forth from home.

“A serious illness is so expensive that anything that can reduce the financial impact is desperately needed. Hospitality House made us feel less alone at the most difficult time of my life.” (HHOC Guest, 2022)

REQUEST DETAIL

Describe the objectives of the project or program to be funded. (4000 character max)

HHOC aims to achieve its vision of access to health for all by reducing costs for families in medical crisis, improving health outcomes through shorter hospital stays, and providing proximity to world-class healthcare that is more necessity than convenience.

The high costs of ongoing medical treatment negatively impact patient health. For example, families facing cancer make up the majority of HHOC’s guests each year, and 45% of cancer patients with medical debt delayed or avoided medical care for serious issues (American Cancer Society, 2022). Considering the nightly rates of local hotels, HHOC offset nearly \$2 million in lodging costs for patients and caregivers last year, alleviating some of the financial burdens associated with ongoing medical care. Based on trends in the average length of stay for its guests, HHOC anticipates offsetting an average of approximately \$1000 in lodging costs per family.

Shorter hospital stays reduce medical fees, lower mortality rates and risks of infection, and improve treatment outcomes (National Library of Medicine, 2019). HHOC aims to be a resource to patients who need to remain close to their care but are medically stable enough to stay outside of the hospital. Additionally, this program’s services will help to increase hospital efficiency by ensuring available beds are utilized for patients whose treatment does not allow them to be discharged.

Location causes financial and geographical disparities in health. For example, 96% of guests came from the southern region of the US, which reports the highest share of medical debt (US Census, 2020). Additionally, 91% of guests served last year resided in rural areas of the United States where only 3% of medical oncologists practice (National Cancer Institute, 2022), forcing patients in these areas to travel to unfamiliar cities for life-sustaining medical care. HHOC expects the majority of beneficiaries of the Overnight Lodging Program will reside in these rural areas and aims to increase access to vital medical care for these patients.

Describe the implementation plan for the project or program. Include at least three specific actions your organization will take in order to achieve results. (4000 character max)

The Overnight Lodging Program offers 20 private bedrooms for patients and their caregivers less than two miles from the major campuses of Atrium Health and Novant Health. These local hospitals are the first step in bringing guests to Hospitality House, as patients are directed to the organization through a formal referral process. HHOC’s operations team will continue to work closely with representatives of these hospital systems to educate referring agents and ensure its services are a known resource to patients.

By strengthening community partnerships, growing volunteerism, and increasing donor support, HHOC will work to keep fees at a minimum for its guests.

Collaboration with local businesses brings in-kind goods and services that help HHOC keep operational costs minimalized. For example, HHOC established a relationship with ABM Industries this past year. The

company provided painting services valued at \$7,700 to HHOC at no cost. Utilizing these partnerships offsets a portion of operational expenses associated with facility upkeep so that additional costs do not impact guest fees. HHOC staff will continue to foster existing relationships with local businesses and create new ones that benefit the organization.

Additionally, HHOC will work with local organizations to create customized, engaging volunteer programs serving guest needs. Volunteers provide nutritious meals, donated supplies, and other services that reduce operational expenses and allow guests to focus on self-care and recovery rather than everyday stressors.

Staff will continue practices outlined in HHOC's comprehensive, three-year development plan. Fundraising efforts include diversified revenue streams and intentional focus on donor cultivation and stewardship. Through creative outreach strategies and continued education of best practices, HHOC will fortify existing relationships with donors and establish ones that increase revenue for the program.

What criteria does (or will) your organization use to measure the success of the project or program?
(4000 character max)

All 2,080 guests HHOC anticipates serving this fiscal year will benefit directly from safe, overnight lodging in close proximity to their necessary healthcare. Through a post-stay survey, guests directly evaluate the facility, illustrate program impact, and affirm the essential need for HHOC's services.

"If it wasn't for Hospitality House, I wouldn't have been able to get my two weeks of radiation treatments. The pain was so bad from the cancer in my bones that I couldn't care for my family and things at home as a mother. I live in the woods in the mountains of NC, and we live on one minimum wage income for our four-person family." (HHOC Guest, 2022)

HHOC compares guest survey results to national statistics through its membership in the Healthcare Hospitality Network (HHN), an organization consisting of medical hospitality houses throughout the country. HHOC considers its services successful if internal survey responses regarding patient health and stress level align with results achieved at peer organizations.

HHOC also looks to direct feedback from valued community partners to ensure its services are beneficial. Families are referred to HHOC's offered accommodations through partnerships with Charlotte's major hospital systems. HHOC aims to be a critical part of each medical journey and improve patient outcomes.

"Hospitality House is such a natural extension of Atrium Health's mission to improve health, elevate hope, and advance healing for all. The synergy and partnership of Atrium Health and Hospitality House is making a positive difference in the lives of those we serve." (Vicki Block, SVP; Market President, Charlotte Market, Atrium Health)

Collaboration (4000 character max)

Briefly describe any formal or informal collaborative ventures your organization has established (or will establish) with other entities serving similar purposes that may be relevant to this grant request

Hospitality House values its many, mutually beneficial relationships with local nonprofits. In 2021, HHOC established a partnership with Community Culinary School of Charlotte (CCSC), which provides workforce development training and job placement assistance for adults who face barriers to long-term successful employment. Since then, CCSC students have been preparing healthy meals for various holidays throughout the year for HHOC guests. This partnership brings meaningful impact to families facing medical crises and contributes to CCSC students' culinary training.

"I [spent] Christmas and New Year's away from home. I was deeply touched by the meal that awaited me - pork roast, rice, grilled vegetables! Thank you for your effort, labor, and preparation to care so well for a stranger." (Pam, HHOC Guest)

Hope Haven has been providing weekly laundry services to Hospitality House since 2013. The organization provides a foundation of recovery for those impacted by substance use disorder so they can build healthy, independent lives. The services they provide contribute to workforce development training within their programs and reduce operating costs for Hospitality House. Additionally, Hope Haven recently invited HHOC staff to attend a self-care day at their facility.

Hospitality House is a resource to Madelyn's Fund, which provides housing support to families of infant and pediatric patients of Charlotte-area hospitals.

"Many of the families we work with find themselves far from home, taking unexpected time away from work and incur additional expenses related to transportation and lodging. Because of Hospitality House, these families were able to be at their baby's bedside every day and were present for many 'firsts' they might have otherwise missed, such as their child's first smile or first feeding." (Sarah Turza, Madelyn's Fund Program Manager)

Ronald McDonald House of Charlotte is the only other healthcare hospitality house in the Charlotte area. Though they specifically serve families of patients who are under 21 years of age, their mission is similar to HHOC and therefore collaboration provides an opportunity for sharing industry best practices and helpful insights. HHOC maintains regularly scheduled meetings with Ronald McDonald House leadership.

Project background (4000 character maximum)

If this grant request relates to an ongoing project or program, how long has the project or program been operating?

For the last 37 years, HHOC has advanced equitable access to healthcare through private, low-cost accommodations in close proximity to Charlotte's hospital systems. HHOC opened in 1985 as a safe, dignified alternative to sleeping in hospital waiting rooms or personal vehicles after a survey of local medical personnel cited an overwhelming need for housing families of patients. When the need for HHOC's services quickly outgrew its 14 available beds, the current facility was built considering not only family members but also medically stable patients who need to remain close to their care. Today, HHOC can hold up to 80 patients and caregivers per night as they navigate difficult medical journeys.

Other project funding

List other sources that may fund this project. Include other pending grant requests, providing entity name, amount requested, and current status of each. If these sources do not fully fund the project, what other sources of funding will your organization pursue?

HHOC works to diversify funding, with support coming from dedicated foundations, corporations, individual donors, and former guests.

HHOC is fortunate to have received funding for its current fiscal year from generous organizations including:

- Foundation (\$25,000.000)
- Foundation (\$20,000.00)
- Foundation (\$20,000.00)
- Foundation (\$11,000.00)
- Foundation (\$10,000.00)