**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
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NEWARK, NJ – March 30, 2022 – Today, Essex County Family Justice Center (ECFJC) is pleased to announce that it is the recipient of one in 14 grants awarded this quarter by The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey (HFNJ) that will expand access for marginalized victims of domestic violence to long-term therapeutic counseling and healthcare during 2023-2024.

The $118,000 grant from HFNJ will support a special project that will expand behavioral health access for survivors of domestic violence. For the first time in Essex County, ECFJC will provide victims of domestic violence with trauma-informed, long term counseling service over the next twelve months. The project’s intentional focus is on expanding access to mental and behavioral healthcare for victims who represent Essex County’s most underserved victims of domestic violence. For the 12-month project, ECFJC is partnering with Sanar Wellness Institute, who will dedicate a clinician to project implementation. Individual counseling sessions will be provided to clients, with terms of 3, 6 or 9 months. Significantly, the HFNJ award enables ECFJC to provide counseling to underserved victims representing minority communities (78%), have household incomes under $20,001 (71%); have limited English proficiency (25%), are undocumented (12%), have cognitive, physical, or mentaldisabilities (36%) or substance abuse concerns (40%), and/or have experienced multiple forms of trauma, in addition to domestic violence (37.8%). Notably, from 34% to 45% of ECFJC clients are uninsured or under-insured annually.

“*On behalf of the Board of Trustees and employees of Essex County Family Justice Center, we are profoundly grateful to have this demonstration of confidence from The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey for the work that we do. This grant will further expand critical services to ensure that the victims we serve move closer to independence, resiliency, and hope. The Foundation’s support for the project ensures that we can better serve victims in greater Newark and Essex County who represent underserved and marginalized populations, including minority and immigrant victims who would not otherwise have access to mental healthcare*”.
Mary Houtsma, ECFJC’s Executive Director

**About the HealthCare Foundation of New Jersey.** The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey is an independent, endowed grant-making organization dedicated to reducing disparities in the delivery of healthcare and improving access to quality healthcare for vulnerable populations in the greater Newark, NJ area and the Jewish community of Greater MetroWest New Jersey. The mission of the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey is to improve the health and well-being of vulnerable, underserved populations in greater Newark and the Jewish Community of Greater MetroWest New Jersey, elevate the quality of community healthcare, reduce disparities in access, and promote the infusion of compassion and humanism into our healthcare system.

During first quarter 2023, the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey awarded 14 grants totaling over $2.1 million. The entire list of grantees is listed [here on their website](https://hfnj.org/hfnj-announces-2166697-in-2023-q1-awards-to-strengthen-local-health/).

**About the Family Justice Center Model**

Established in 2010, Essex County Family Justice Center was the first Family Justice Center established in New Jersey. The Family Justice Center Model reduces the barriers and fragmentation of existing services and meets the diverse needs of victims of domestic violence by bringing government and non-government agencies together in one location. The U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women recognizes the Family Justice Center Model as a best practice in domestic violence intervention and prevention, resulting in reduced homicide; increase victim safety, increased autonomy and empowerment for victims, reduced fear and anxiety for victims and their children, increased prosecution of offenders, and increased community support for services to victims and their children. The Family Justice Center movement began with the opening of the San Diego Family Justice Center in 2002. Today there are Family Justice Centers in 43 U.S. states and 25 countries. Today, there are four additional Family Justice Centers in New Jersey, in Morris, Middlesex, Monmouth, and Union Counties.

**About Essex County Family Justice Center (“ECFJC”)**
The mission of Essex County Family Justice Center (ECFJC) is to enhance the safety and autonomy of domestic violence victims and their children by providing accessible and coordinated service in one location. Each victim served is assessed for their domestic violence homicide risk through use of the Danger Assessment Instrument, the evidence-based risk actuarial tool developed by Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell of the John Hopkins School of Nursing. Every year, from 30% to 41% of all victims that ECFJC serves are assessed as being at high risk of domestic violence homicide. While it serves victims of all backgrounds and ethnicities, the majority represent Essex County’s most marginalized, underserved victims of intimate partner violence. They include individuals of African American, African, or Caribbean heritage (36%), Latina or South American heritage (42%),

Since its establishment in 2010, more than 10,300 victims of intimate partner violence have been served by ECFJC, located in downtown Newark, New Jersey. ECFJC’s service partners include the Essex County Prosecutor’s Office, Newark Police Division, Essex-Newark Legal Services, The Safe House, and Rachel Coalition, among nearly 30 others. ECFJC is a community-based organization. Through it’s onsite and offsite service partners, including government, nongovernment, medical-behavioral healthcare, and social service partners, victims served at ECFJC have access to a full array of services developed from evidence-based best practices in domestic violence service delivery. ECFJC’s comprehensive, coordinated services include medical/behavioral health screening with referrals to off-site healthcare providers, civil legal assistance on the restraining order process and family law matters, emergency food, housing, and transportation aid, counseling, prosecution assistance, and advocacy. ECFJC’s culturally competent service delivery is provided by a trained, 100% bi-lingual direct service staff to meet the needs of victims representing all backgrounds.

**About Sanar Wellness Institute.**

 Since 2015, Sanar Wellness Institute (“Sanar”) has provided transformational healing services to survivors of interpersonal trauma, including domestic violence. The Sanar’s mission is to reduce the impact of trauma caused by gender-based violence and the exploitation of vulnerable communities through cutting-edge trauma specific services. The organization’s staff is comprised of professionals who are representative of the diverse communities we serve, including five fluent Spanish speakers and individuals with lived experiences of trauma. Members of our team have been recognized as subject matter experts in the field of trauma-informed service provision. Additionally, Sanar utilizes a secure HIPPA compliant tele-medicine platform for remote services to increase access. Sanar’s services have demonstrated success in reducing future incidences of trauma and violence and high levels of client participation and retention.

Sanar is located in a convenient, confidential location near Newark Penn Station and will also be out-stationing a licensed clinician onsite at Essex County Family Justice Center to serve clients in its culturally sensitive environment. In addition, throughout the 12-month project, long-term counseling services will be available to clients both in-person and virtually, depending upon client needs.

Since its establishment, the Sanar has provided individual therapy to more than 300 clients and provided more than 4,500 hours of direct mental health services. Sanar’s services include individual therapy and counseling, group supports, emotional support, skill development workshops, survivor leader support sessions and case advocacy. These weekly or bi-weekly individual sessions, either in-person or virtually based on the client's availability and comfort level, work on processing survivor’s trauma and reducing further incidences of violence. Trauma-specific evidence-based therapeutic modalities that are offered include: Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) skills, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), Somatic Experiencing (SE) skills, Music Therapy and Expressive Arts, Internal Family Systems (IFS) skills, Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT), Narrative Therapy, Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) skills and Trauma-Sensitive Yoga.