

Oldham County Fiscal Court Grant Application Guidelines

Oldham County Fiscal Court accepts grant applications from non-profit, tax-exempt organizations which meet these criteria:

- Have a significant presence in Oldham County;
- Serve a public purpose in concert with the goals and activities of OCFC;
- Have the capacity to be accountable for use of donated funds;
- Show support from the majority of their clients/beneficiaries.

Funding categories

Arts and Humanities - activities which meet any or all of the following qualifications:

- Contribute to tourism in Oldham County;
- Conduct activity (e.g., record keeping) on behalf of Fiscal Court;
- Support community-wide celebrations;
- Encourage arts activity on the part of Oldham Countians;
- Play an educational role for Oldham Countians, particularly students.

Social Services - agencies which meet any or all of the following qualifications:

- Provide a needed service to disadvantaged Oldham Countians;
- Provide an emergency social service to Oldham Countians;
- Provide a social service not otherwise available to Oldham Countians.

Recreation - activities which meet any or all of the following qualifications:

- Serve Oldham County residents in facilities within the County;
- Activities are largely financially supported by the participants

Timing and Process

In order to process grant applications in a timely and efficient manner, OCFC has established the following schedule:

- Accept grant applications postmarked up to December 30 or the last work day of each year.
- In January, Committee members accept for review the compiled applications.
- In March, the Committee will convene to discuss their individual ratings.
- The Committee will make recommendations to the Fiscal Court for grant awards no later than the first Fiscal Court meeting in June.

Accountability

Any agency or organization requesting funds will be held to a high standard for reporting its current financial situation and its specific intention for use of requested funds. Moreover, any agency or organization requesting funds, and which has previously received a grant from OCFC, will be asked to report in detail on the use to which those funds were put.

Updated October 2025

**Oldham County Fiscal Court
Grant Application**

Date of Application: 11/26/2025

Official Name of Organization: Safe Passage, Inc.

Address: P.O. Box 43993, Louisville, KY 40253

EIN: 83-1503303

Date and Place of Incorporation: April 11, 2019, Kentucky

Name, Complete Address, Email and Phone Number of Contact Person:

Safe Passage, Inc.

3341 Boston Road

Lexington, KY 40503

Cara Starns, President

859-963-6877

Purpose of Organization or Mission Statement and Services Rendered:

Safe Passage exists to fill a critical gap in care for youth survivors of sex trafficking by providing long-term, relational mentorship and holistic support. Our mission is to walk with survivors as they rebuild their lives, offering consistent connection, emotional safety, and guidance that restores hope and strengthens their ability to make healthy decisions. Through trusted mentor relationships, youth experience what it means to be genuinely cared for often for the first time, which promotes healing, stability, and a renewed sense of possibility for their futures.

Alongside mentorship, Safe Passage offers comprehensive prevention and education programs for both youth and the professionals who serve them. We train teachers, law enforcement, caregivers, and frontline workers to recognize grooming, exploitation, and trafficking indicators, empowering them to intervene early and protect vulnerable children before harm occurs. We also equip young people themselves with practical tools to stay safe, understand healthy relationships, and identify predatory behaviors.

To further support long-term stability and independence, Safe Passage recently launched WealthGen, a financial literacy and empowerment program tailored specifically for trafficking survivors. WealthGen teaches essential money management skills including budgeting, saving, credit building, and financial decision-making, giving youth the confidence and knowledge needed to break cycles of poverty and build sustainable futures.

Amount Requested: \$10,000

Proposal for funding. On a separate page, please provide the following:

Updated October 2025

Statement of need for project
Proposed use of funds to remediate the need
Project budget

Attachments:

List of Officers and Directors – Name, Office, Address, Business Affiliation, Compensation from Organization.

- Copy of 501c(3) tax-exempt status letter from IRS;
- Documentation for most recent form 990;
- Documentation for most recent filing with KY Secretary of State;
- Most recent Organization/Agency budget **summary**, or balance sheet, or income/expense statement (Please, no complete budgets!);
- If a recipient of funds for the prior year, a statement of the use of those funds;
- Photographs, videos, letters of support.

Submission Guidelines:

Email complete applications to: Caroline Schoenig CSchoenig@oldhamcountyky.gov no later than 12/30/2025.

Statement of Need for Project

Kentucky is experiencing a profound child-welfare crisis that places thousands of young people at heightened risk for trafficking and exploitation — risks that have intensified with the rise of social media grooming, online enticement, sextortion, and AI-generated sexual abuse material targeting children. As of 2025, more than 8,600 children are living in out-of-home care across the state, reflecting both the scale of family instability and the overwhelming demands on an already strained system. In the most recent federal reporting period, Kentucky recorded 14,484 child victims of abuse or neglect, a rate nearly double the national average. Children who have experienced maltreatment, removal from home, or chronic instability are among the most vulnerable populations for manipulation both offline and online. Traffickers and predators increasingly exploit digital platforms — leveraging anonymity, access, and technology — to groom, recruit, and coerce youth whose unmet emotional and material needs make them easy targets. Within Oldham County specifically, public records and law enforcement reports show that trafficking and sexual exploitation do occur locally, including documented convictions for sex trafficking of a minor and arrests for possession and distribution of child sexual abuse material in recent years. Because confidentiality laws and limited reporting obscure the full scope of these crimes, it is likely that publicly available data understate the prevalence of exploitation and trafficking in Oldham County, as they do across Kentucky.

The Commonwealth is seeing a **devastating** rise of reports of child trafficking. In 2024, the state documented **557** alleged child victims of human trafficking — a 12.5% increase from the previous year — alongside an 18.5% rise in trafficking-related investigations. These data likely represent only a fraction of the true scope, as many youth who are homeless, in foster care, or cycling through juvenile justice settings remain unidentified. Most known victims are between 13 and 17 years old, with growing recognition of boys among those affected; however, boys are far less likely to come forward, meaning their true numbers are likely underreported, alongside cases involving younger children and girls. The upward trend underscores that trafficking is not a distant or hidden issue; it is a growing, measurable crisis impacting Kentucky children in our schools, communities, and child-welfare systems.

Yet even when exploitation ends, the crisis does not. Research and on-the-ground experience show that child survivors often exit trafficking into a void — no stable family support, no trusted adult to help them regulate trauma responses, and no pathway to rebuild their lives. Without long-term, trauma-informed care, many youth turn to survival behaviors such as running away, returning to exploiters, substance use, self-harm, or entering unsafe relationships. These are not choices rooted in delinquency, but symptoms of trauma and unmet needs. Healing requires consistency, safety, and supportive relationships — the very elements most missing in the lives of these young people.

This is where Safe Passage fills a critical gap. By providing stable, trauma-informed mentorship; emotional support; crisis navigation; empowerment programs such as financial literacy; and consistent, caring adult relationships, Safe Passage offers what the broader system often cannot: long-term, relationally grounded support that promotes real healing. These services not only reduce the immediate risk of re-trafficking or further harm but also build resilience, independence, and stability that can alter a child's entire trajectory.

In a state where maltreatment rates remain among the highest in the nation, and where trafficking reports are actively rising — both offline and online — the need for sustained, specialized support for vulnerable youth has never been greater. Investing in this project is not just a compassionate act — it is an urgent, evidence-driven response to one of Kentucky's most pressing child-safety crises.

Proposed Use of Funds:

Funds from this proposal will be used to support our comprehensive strategy to combat large-scale child trafficking. This strategy involves proactive prevention to at-risk youth through education and outreach programs, alongside providing specialized support services for those already affected.

I. Youth Trafficking Prevention: Safe Passage's prevention program empowers at-risk youth by providing education on risks, warning signs, and preventative measures against child abuse and trafficking. Conducted at partner sites, such as group homes and schools, the program fosters awareness and helps children identify predatory grooming tactics. This prevention strategy raises awareness of dangers while reframing manipulations and lies used by abusers, helping children recognize and identify the threats they currently face. It offers a safe space for seeking help and reporting abuse while reinforcing each child's intrinsic value.

II. Community Training: Safe Passage also coordinates with youth service professionals, including staff of group homes, schools, social workers, and others who might be able to recognize signs of exploitation and trafficking. This program is one of our largest areas of expansion for multiple reasons. First, with more professionals that work with children aware of warning signs of sexual exploitation, more children will be engaged with interventions early, which minimizes harm caused by their exploitation. Second, training sessions nearly always result in referrals and comments like, "I had no idea child trafficking looked like this. I have a kid in need of your services!"

III. Survivor Mentorship: Survivors of child trafficking often endure recurring trauma throughout their lives. Many trafficked youth have endured a myriad of childhood adversities, making them targets for traffickers seeking to exploit their vulnerabilities for profit. However, the adverse effects of trafficking don't cease once the exploitation ends. Often they intensify, leading to a host of post-trauma challenges including criminal activity, substance abuse, mental illness, and more which can profoundly impact the survivor's life. By providing a mentor who can walk alongside them through their post-trauma journey, offering consistent guidance and empowering survivors to reclaim agency over their lives, Safe Passage enables survivors to rebuild their self-esteem and envision a hopeful future outside of sexual exploitation.

IV. Support Services: For all children referred, whether they have been trafficked, exploited, groomed, or are at risk, Safe Passage offers comprehensive support services. Our person-centered approach starts with advocacy, safety planning, and needs assessments, so that interventions are tailored to individual needs. From here, the youth engage in various programs and services aimed at building self-esteem, fostering financial independence, and promoting emotional and mental healing. These essential life skills are crucial in fortifying them against re-victimization.

A few of the courageous children we've helped include two brave girls who fought suicidal thoughts throughout the year are still with us, holding on to hope. Three sisters, once drugged and exploited by their father, are now safe and healing. Two other sisters are finding restoration after being trafficked by a boy who claimed to love one of them but exploited them both. Two courageous boys are rebuilding their lives after enduring unspeakable violations by trusted adults. These are just a few of the 70+ children referred to us this last year—each carrying a story of deep pain but also immense courage. One 15-year-old asked, "How could a mother traffick her own child?"—a question no child should have to ask. In these dark moments, our team brings hope for a different future.

As exploitation continues to surge, AI is rapidly intensifying the threat of sextortion, further endangering vulnerable youth. You may have heard of a suicidal incident that hit close to home.

Elijah "Eli" Heacock, a 16-year-old teen from Glasgow, Kentucky, tragically died by suicide on February 28, 2025 after falling victim to a financial sextortion scheme. He was targeted by online predators who used artificial intelligence (AI) to create fake explicit images of him, which they threatened to distribute unless he paid \$3,000. Despite his family's vigilance in monitoring his online activity, the sophistication of modern technology allowed the sextortionists to manipulate and terrorize Eli, leading to his tragic decision. Eli's family said from the creating the fake photos to his heartbreaking death was one hour.

The FBI became involved in the investigation, determining that Eli was a victim of a broader sextortion network. Shockingly, the "predator" is believed to be a group of 19-year-olds operating out of Nigeria. Eli's story is a devastating reminder of the profound impact sextortion has on young lives. Since his passing, we can't help but wonder — would Eli have taken his life if he had known those threats didn't have to hold power over him?

Tragically, not long after, we received another referral. A 14-year-old had fallen into a similar scheme and, overwhelmed by shame and the pressure of an anonymous predator demanding \$5,000 in exchange for her explicit videos, attempted to end her life with two handles of vodka and a bottle of painkillers. Through crisis intervention and immediate medical attention, she survived and is now receiving care and support through our program.

As exploitation continues to surge — rapidly intensified by AI-driven sextortion schemes — Safe Passage remains committed to meeting the growing need, reaching youth with prevention, intervention, and hope before it's too late. Every dollar will directly provide rapid-response services to referrals, including specialized assessments, safety planning, and ongoing mentorship and intervention. Your partnership enables us to expand these life-saving efforts and deliver hope, healing, and transformation to youth whose lives have been shattered by exploitation. Thank you for standing with us as we work to end trafficking and build a safer, brighter future for every child.

Project Budget

Category	Cost Estimate
Employee Salaries & Benefits	

Mentorship Coordinator	\$2,000
Youth Prevention & Community Awareness Training Facilitators (2)	\$3,000
Mentor Training & Development	\$1,000
Mentee Support	
Youth Meals and Personal Care Costs	\$2,000
Program Materials & Resources	\$1,000
Youth Events & Activities	\$1,000
Total	\$10,000

Commonwealth of Kentucky
Michael G. Adams, Secretary of State

1029698
Michael G. Adams
KY Secretary of State
 Received and Filed
6/27/2025 10:59:23 AM
Fee receipt: \$15.00

Michael G. Adams
 Secretary of State
 P. O. Box 1150
 Frankfort, KY 40602-1150
 (502) 564-3490
<http://www.sos.ky.gov>

Annual Report
Online Filing
For the Year 2025

ARP

Company: Safe Passage, Inc
Company ID: 1029698
State of origin: Kentucky
Formation date: 8/10/2018 12:00:00 AM
Date filed: 6/27/2025 10:58:22 AM
Fee: \$15.00
Principal Office

3341 Boston Rd
 Lexington, KY 40503

Registered Agent Name/Address

Kyla Beck
 12300 Ridge Rd
 Louisville, KY 40223

Current Officers

President	Amy Hieb	10613 Alderbrook Place, Louisville, KY 40299
Secretary	Becky Beanblossom	3516 Sasse Way, Louisville, KY 40245, United States
Treasurer	Chris Vaughn	34 Indian Springs Trace, Shelbyville KY 40065

Directors

Director	CARA STARNES	3341 Boston Rd, Lexington KY 40503
Director	BRANDON SOWDER	13058 Mount Eden Rd Mount Eden, KY 40046
Director	BETH STUCKER	7402 Abbott Glen Drive, Crestwood, Kentucky 40014,
Director	ANDREA CLEMONS	1012 Squirrel Nest Lane Lexington, KY 40509
Director	DARREN FOOTE	12519 Deer Lake Lane Louisville, KY 40299

County:	JEFFERSON
Business size:	Small
Business type:	Social Services

Signatures

Signature	Cara Starnes
Title	Founder and President

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
P. O. BOX 2508
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: APR 11 2019

SAFE PASSAGE INC
3341 BOSTON RD
LEXINGTON, KY 40503-4303

Employer Identification Number:
83-1503303
DLN:
17053283316008
Contact Person: ID# 17187
TINA M MARTINI
Contact Telephone Number:
(877) 829-5500
Accounting Period Ending:
December 31
Public Charity Status:
170(b)(1)(A)(vi)
Form 990/990-EZ/990-N Required:
Yes
Effective Date of Exemption:
August 10, 2018
Contribution Deductibility:
Yes
Addendum Applies:
No

Dear Applicant:

We're pleased to tell you we determined you're exempt from federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501(c)(3). Donors can deduct contributions they make to you under IRC Section 170. You're also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under Section 2055, 2106, or 2522. This letter could help resolve questions on your exempt status. Please keep it for your records.

Organizations exempt under IRC Section 501(c)(3) are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. We determined you're a public charity under the IRC Section listed at the top of this letter.

If we indicated at the top of this letter that you're required to file Form 990/990-EZ/990-N, our records show you're required to file an annual information return (Form 990 or Form 990-EZ) or electronic notice (Form 990-N, the e-Postcard). If you don't file a required return or notice for three consecutive years, your exempt status will be automatically revoked.

If we indicated at the top of this letter that an addendum applies, the enclosed addendum is an integral part of this letter.

For important information about your responsibilities as a tax-exempt organization, go to www.irs.gov/charities. Enter "4221-PC" in the search bar to view Publication 4221-PC, Compliance Guide for 501(c)(3) Public Charities, which describes your recordkeeping, reporting, and disclosure requirements.

Sincerely,

Stephen A. Martin

Director, Exempt Organizations
Rulings and Agreements



Safe Passage Board of Directors

- Darren Foote, **Chairman**, Informatica, 12519 Deer Lake Lane, Louisville, KY 40299
- Beth Stucker, **Secretary**, Anthem, 7402 Abbott Glen Drive, Crestwood, KY 40014
- Chris Vaughn, **Treasurer**, Family Wealth Planning Partners, 34 Indian Springs Trace, Shelbyville, KY 40065
- Brandon Sowder, ABS Global, 13058 Mount Eden Rd, Mount Eden, KY 40046
- Andrea Clemons, Rector Hayden Homes, 1012 Squirrel Nest Lane, Lexington, KY 40509
- Brad McMahan, *Adventure Christian Church*, 3321 Ruckriegel Pkwy, Louisville, KY 40299

Safe Passage Budget Summary

2024 Income: \$438,750

- 22% Monthly Partners
- 16% Grants
- 32% Foundations
- 8% General Donors
- 3% Churches
- 9% Annual Gala (Night of Hope)
- 4% Micro Fundraising Events
- 1% Other

2024 Expenses: \$238,780

- \$150,657 Program (66%)
- \$40,440 Fundraising (17%)
- \$39,682 Operating (17%)

Statement of the Use of 2025 OCFC Grant Funds

In 2025, Safe Passage, Inc. was honored to receive a grant of **\$3,500** from Oldham County Fiscal Court. These funds were directly applied to enhance our mentorship services for at-risk youth who are survivors of child sex trafficking in Oldham County, ensuring that youth in our programs received safe, consistent, and trauma-informed support.

The grant was used to support the following critical areas:

1. Mentor Training and Development

Funds helped provide trauma-informed and specialized training for our volunteer mentors, including Trafficking Awareness, response, and Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) training. This training ensured mentors were fully equipped to support survivors in a safe, effective, and empathetic manner. We trained **40 new mentors** to walk with youth in 2025.

2. Mentee Support and Direct Assistance

A portion of the funds was allocated to meet immediate needs for youth in our programs, including food, clothing, and other essential items. Additionally, the grant contributed to our emergency support fund, allowing us to respond quickly to urgent situations such as temporary housing, medical needs, or safe transportation. We offered **rapid response to over 70 identified youth survivors** in 2025.

3. Program Coordination and Operations

Grant funds helped cover part of the salary for our Mentorship Program Coordinator, who manages logistics, matches mentors with mentees, and tracks progress. This support ensured that all mentorship activities ran smoothly and that youth received consistent, reliable guidance.

Impact of the Grant

With the support of Oldham County Fiscal Court, Safe Passage was able to provide rapid response to over 70 identified youth survivors, launched 16 new mentorships, reached over 1,200 youth through trafficking prevention trainings, and provided 25

at-risk youth with support services across Kentucky in 2025, helping them build trust, stability, and resilience after experiencing trauma. We were able to closely walk with 7 youth residing in Oldham County through long-term survivor mentorship and support services. The grant also strengthened our overall program capacity, enabling us to deliver more effective mentorship and create a stronger foundation for long-term healing.

Your Impact

Lilah (alias) is a 15-year-old who ran away from home and was located two hours away with an adult male who had groomed her into believing they were in a safe relationship. She was missing for 3 weeks, when local authorities were alerted of the suspicious pair and the reality of the situation was discovered. This man assaulted her, and then sold her to another man who had also assaulted Lilah, leaving her with STDs and a call from the Health Department to her parents, alerting them of the potential of an HIV diagnosis.

Our team met Lilah and offered her a long-term relational mentor, which would eventually be the first safe, stable adult in her young life. Within a few months of her program involvement, Lilah called her mentor in a panic, stating, *"I'm pregnant and I don't know what to do, but I need you. Can you come over?"* The mentor arrived to a chaotic scene; Lilah's family was engaged in a heated conflict over the news. Lilah's mentor was able to mediate the conversation and offer insight to Lilah and her overwhelmed family.

The fighting ended.

Deep breaths were taken.

Safe Passage is providing support services, where Lilah and her mentor will learn together about independence, early motherhood, healthy relationships, protective factors, and more. Lilah will also be connected to wrap-around resources to navigate her next steps as a young mother, including medical support and parenting services.

While Lilah faces the challenges of early motherhood and ongoing trauma recovery, mentorship provides consistent support, guidance, and connection, helping her build resilience and navigate her next steps.

Thanks to your generous support, Safe Passage has made measurable progress in both prevention and recovery efforts. Many youth we serve face the devastating realities of running away, suicidal ideation, and ongoing risk of exploitation. Your partnership not only facilitates healing and recovery for survivors but also serves as a literal lifeline for youth on the brink. By supporting Safe Passage, you help equip youth to protect themselves, reclaim their dignity, and embrace hopeful futures.

Together, we are transforming lives, preventing abuse, and safeguarding vulnerable children. We extend our deepest gratitude for your commitment to this mission—your support makes essential services, mentoring, and life-changing opportunities possible for youth in crisis.

We are deeply grateful for Oldham County's support, which directly contributes to our mission of walking alongside survivors of child trafficking and empowering them to reclaim their lives.

(Memories from 2025 on the next page!)



Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax

2024

Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service

Under section 501(c), 527, or 4947(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code (except private foundations)

Do not enter social security numbers on this form as it may be made public.

Go to www.irs.gov/Form990 for instructions and the latest information.

Open to Public Inspection

Header section A-M containing organization details like name, address, EIN, and tax-exempt status.

Part I Summary

Table with 22 rows detailing financial and operational data, categorized into Activities & Governance, Revenue, Expenses, and Net Assets or Fund Balances.

Part II Signature Block

Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this return, including accompanying schedules and statements, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete.

Signature area for the officer, including name and title.

Preparer information section including name, signature, date, and firm details.

May the IRS discuss this return with the preparer shown above? See instructions [X] Yes [] No