



VERA HOUSE
Chief Executive Officer
Syracuse, NY

Vera House, Inc. prevents, responds to and partners to end domestic and sexual violence and other forms of abuse.

BACKGROUND

Vera House was founded in 1977 by a group of concerned individuals led by Sister Mary Vera, CSJ who recognized the need for emergency sheltering services for women in crisis. This original mission blossomed into a wide range of domestic violence services including outreach and advocacy, domestic violence education programming, children's counseling, and a domestic violence education and accountability program for people who cause harm in relationships.

In 2005, Vera House merged with the Rape Crisis Center, which was itself founded in 1974 by committed volunteers who saw the need for crisis, support and advocacy services for adult rape survivors. This mission grew over the years to include services for child victims of sexual assault and their families, preventive education programming and a team of nurses who provide 24-hour response for victims of sexual assault. The merged Vera House, Inc. continues an over 40-year tradition of providing quality service to the Central New York community.

Vera House's programs are firmly grounded upon the organization's five values:

- a) Giving unconditional care to people served and to the community.
- b) Working in community to advance justice and serve all who seek our support.
- c) Providing trauma informed care to the people served and working toward healing for all.
- d) Honoring intersectionality and centering the truths of the historically excluded and oppressed people served.
- e) Embracing accountability for ourselves and our community and striving to interrupt the social norms that cause harm.

Vera House responds to its community's needs through the following programs:

Advocacy Program - Vera House helps people achieve their goal of living free of violence and abuse. Vera House advocates are available to meet at area hospitals, police stations, schools, nursing homes and other locations. They provide short-term counseling to help people understand the dynamics of abusive relationships and develop a safety plan. Advocates act as a liaison between victims/survivors and any systems they may be connected to, provide information and referrals and offer emotional support. Its elder advocate program provides advocacy services to older adults experiencing abuse in later life, including domestic and sexual violence, elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation. Services include emotional support, safety planning and systems navigation.

Legal Services - In collaboration with other community nonprofit law firm partners, Vera House provides free trauma-informed legal services to adults who have experienced domestic and sexual violence. Vera House offers one-time legal consults, as well as comprehensive, direct representation in divorce and family court matters.

Support – Support Groups offers free and confidential support groups for victims and survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence and other forms of abuse. Domestic violence education classes, Real Talk support groups, and children's groups are offered to emergency shelter residents to help them with their healing journey.

Shelter – Vera House operates a 36-bed comprehensive emergency shelter and support services (counseling, medical care, assistance with job searches, referrals for food, clothing child care, etc.) to individuals and families in crisis. Help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at two confidential locations.

Alternatives - A domestic violence education program designed to challenge the beliefs and attitudes of men who have been abusive to their partners or ex-partners. Alternatives works closely with the criminal justice system, advocating that men be held accountable for their abusive behavior.

Hotline – Vera House's hotline provides 24-hour telephone support for people who have been sexually abused, sexually assaulted or raped, recently or at any time in the past, and for family members in need of support.

Crisis Intervention - Victim Advocates provide 24-hour support at Onondaga County hospitals or police stations. Advocates meet victims of sexual abuse, sexual assault or rape at the hospital or police station and help them get through the medical examination and, if the victim chooses to report the assault to the police, the reporting process.

Medical Attention - Vera House's Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) meet patients who have been sexually assaulted at all Syracuse area hospitals. SANEs can complete physical examinations, collect forensic evidence and test for pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Primary Prevention - Seeks to reduce the likelihood that someone will become a victim or perpetrator of domestic violence, sexual violence or elder abuse. So, when engaging in primary prevention work, Vera House works to lessen risk factors and increase protective factors.

Men's Outreach - The Vera House Engaging Men & Boys Program provides opportunities for boys and men to engage in leadership conversations, challenge assumptions, and change cultural norms that allow violence to occur.

Training – Vera House's Workplace Sexual Harassment Prevention Training Program is designed to address the concerns that sexual harassment poses for employers and employees and provides a preventive approach to address workplace culture. Its comprehensive program is compliant with New York State Sexual Harassment Law and meets Federal and New York State requirements.

Vera House accomplishes its mission with a full and part-time staff of 75 and an operating budget of approximately \$4M. For more information about the organization, please visit www.verahouse.org.

POSITION

Reporting to and in conjunction with the Board of Directors, the CEO will be responsible for determining the direction of Vera House, setting its standards, articulating its vision, building its programs and reputation within the community, and building its leadership team. The CEO will be expected to evaluate the organization's structure while providing strategic and tactical leadership. S/he/they have overall strategic and operational responsibility for Vera House staff, programs, finances, and the execution of its mission.

The CEO is responsible for building on the organization's vision and direction with a clarity of purpose to ensure Vera House adheres to its mission of preventing, responding and partnering to end domestic and sexual violence and other forms of abuse. The CEO will further drive the organization's vision of a world free of violence and abuse. Furthermore, the CEO will ensure that the organization, its programs and staff abide by Vera House's five principal values, stated above. S/he/they will be responsible for ensuring superior standards of support and ethical conduct throughout the organization, as well as leading progressive program growth and maintaining a positive reputation with stakeholder groups.

Vera House works with individuals who have faced trauma. Likewise, its dedicated staff are passionate about providing safe havens and supports to individuals and their families in emotionally fragile states. The CEO must be experienced and comfortable in working with trauma survivors, families, and staff with empathy, confidentiality and the highest levels of professionalism and compassion. The CEO will ensure that Vera House develops best practices to recruit, retain, and motivate staff at all levels.

Balancing community leadership and passion with operational implementation, the CEO will be responsible for ensuring that the organization is positioned to succeed through the continual examination and development of its infrastructure, program operations and finances, and the recruitment of staff and Board members. Fundraising will also be an integral component of the CEO's responsibilities.

The CEO will serve as a key spokesperson in interacting with donors, media, government leaders, grassroots stakeholders, nonprofit partners, media/news professionals, and other stakeholders. Vera House's work is inherently collaborative; hence, the CEO must be diplomatic yet self-assured in working with external partners in other nonprofits, government social services, courts systems, and law enforcement.

The CEO will also be expected to possess deep knowledge of operations, finance, and business plans. S/he/they will ensure that Vera House fiscal, operations, marketing, human resource, technology, and programmatic strategies are effectively implemented across all segments of the organization to ensure the highest possible quality of service to program participants.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Organizational Leadership

- Build upon Vera House's culture of commitment to inclusive standards of operation at all levels of the organization.
- Create an organizational environment that reflects an absolute commitment to mission and a continual pursuit of quality improvement throughout the organization.
- Ensure ongoing programmatic strength, rigorous program evaluation, and consistent excellence in finance and administration, management, staff development, and communications.
- Develop short- and long-term planning processes to implement the organization's mission and vision.
- Cultivate a strong and transparent working relationship with the Board and staff, including open

communication concerning the measurement of financial, programmatic, and impact performance metrics against established milestones and goals.

- Working with the Board, assess the composition of Board membership, and assist in the recruitment of individuals who would help fulfill Vera House's mission.
- Develop and build authentic relationships within the communities that Vera House serves to monitor and respond to changing internal and external factors that will impact the needs of the communities and clients.
- Ensure that the organization is meeting the needs and high expectations of clients, staff, boards, and other partners on equity, inclusion and accessibility.
- Set and achieve the strategic direction for increased fundraising and for working towards the achievement of the Agency's Vision and Mission.

Fundraising

- Grow successful fundraising program that draws financial support from a multifaceted platform of sources. Ensure that Vera House can rely upon diverse funding streams, including major gifts, corporate sponsorships, foundation support, special events, and government contracts.
- Directly solicit new and repeat contributions.
- Serve as an articulate and highly active and visible spokesperson to the donor community and a variety of key constituencies to enhance recognition and support for Vera House.
- Ensure that internal systems are in place for effective donor acquisition and donor stewardship programs.
- Assure that existing and new development initiatives, campaigns, events, and outreach programs engage Vera House's existing donors, attract new donors, and encourage current donors into higher levels of support.
- Continue to achieve trust and partnerships with leaders from wide range of political and other viewpoints, experiences and perspectives to advance the goals of Vera House's mission.

Management

- Exercise general management of the agency through providing direction support and accountability with the staff.
- Foster an empowering culture that leverages the strengths and lived experiences of the team and develops talent for future opportunities. Encourage a high-functioning organization where people can bring their 360-degree authentic selves to work and through the promotion of increased collaboration, trust, and teamwork.
- Establish steps, timetables, and resources for the accomplishment of short- and long-term objectives.
- Articulate clear goals and responsibilities that result in continuous performance improvement.

- Ensure that the organization acts according to the highest legal, ethical, and professional standards.
- Ensure efficient and effective operations through sound business and fiscal practices throughout the organization.

Finance

- Assume responsibility for the financial health, stability, capacity, and planned growth of the organization.
- Prepare, plan, and project a strategy that is approved by the Board and implemented by the management team, which will ensure a growing revenue stream.
- Direct staff processes for developing the annual budget and collaborate closely with staff members to ensure a financially sound operation.
- Monitor all finances and program objectives by collaborating closely with finance staff and Board.
- Oversee Vera House's compliance with all government and private grants and ensure necessary reporting to all funders and regulatory agencies.
- Meet standards of annual independent audit.

QUALIFICATIONS

- At least five years of successful management experience in an organization of similar size and complexity, ideally in a senior management position with significant exposure to a Board of Directors and/or other key stakeholders.
- Strong human service and/or trauma-informed experience preferred, strong understanding of intersectionality and issues facing marginalized communities.
- Sound judgment/decision-making in order to deal with the complexities of policy/programmatic issues, along with the sensitivity to understand and respect the diversity of opinions of others, especially those with lived experiences.
- Demonstrated effectiveness in building relationships and serving as a spokesperson and representative for Vera House's clients with funders, community leaders, government officials, the media, and other stakeholders.
- Financial and political acumen, business, management and forecasting skills; the ability to link strategy and operational goals to fiscal realities and program priorities.
- Reputation as a structured yet nimble team-builder, with demonstrated success leading, motivating, collaborating, and managing performance and development of staff.
- Proven successful experience in areas of fundraising, planning, implementation, and financial resource development.

- An extensive track record and desire to be personally involved in the cultivation and solicitation of major individual and institutional donors.
- Ability to articulate Vera House's message, its goals and purposes, to a broad range of constituents and the general public.
- Unquestioned integrity and personal values, including an intersectional approach to Cultural Awareness, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility.
- Commitment to change/improvement – creating a culture that always looks to improve.
- Excellent communication skills.
- A Bachelor's degree.

Compensation

Salary range \$135k-\$175k plus employer-paid medical and dental insurance, life insurance, domestic partner benefits, paid time off and holiday time, retirement matching, and other benefits.

Vera House provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, veteran status or genetics. In addition to federal law requirements, Vera House complies with applicable state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation and training.

For more information, to refer a candidate, or to apply in confidence, please contact:

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