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## Covered International: A Proposal for Growth

Sarah Shumaker  
sshumak@bgsu.edu

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**Covered International: A Proposal for Growth**

**Sarah Shumaker**

**Honors Project**

**Submitted to the Honors College  
at Bowling Green State University in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for graduation with  
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\_\_\_\_\_, Primary Advisor  
**Dr. Philip Welch, Public & Allied Health**

  
\_\_\_\_\_, Secondary Advisor  
**Joanne Sommers, Human Development & Family Studies**

## **Executive Summary**

This proposal examines the operation of Covered International, a nonprofit organization committed to helping women who have been victims of domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and trafficking (Covered International, 2015). In this proposal, I outline contemporary ideas and suggest changes that will foster the growth of Covered International (Covered) through awareness and education, funding, and expansion. Each initiative is relatively easy to implement and will contribute to specific areas Covered has the capacity to advance. The first initiative involves formulating a partnership with hospitals and medical centers to implement education and training programs for employees on signs of abuse and how to interact and treat these patients. The second initiative is a block party fundraiser to benefit the operation of Covered. The third initiative is starting a new chapter of Covered in Columbus, Ohio. These three initiatives foster an increase in awareness and education, funding, and expansion that is attainable for a nonprofit, such as Covered.

The restoration and healing of women who have been exploited and abused has become a movement I am very passionate about. As a healthcare administration major, I have had the unique opportunity throughout my education at Bowling Green State University to further my knowledge in a variety of fields. Anatomy and physiology, public health, issues in health care, medical terminology, and the business courses have all contributed to my perspective and understanding of human trafficking, nonprofit organizations, and the healing of survivors.

I joined the Covered team in the fall of 2017 and have been an active member and volunteer since I completed training. Through relationships I have built with the Executive Director, Savannah Hine, and other members of the executive team, I am equipped to bring new initiatives to this organization. During my first meeting with Savannah, she said, “I

encourage all members of the Covered family to bring new ideas to the table, so the organization can continually progress and expand. Each volunteer and member of the team has a unique perspective.” I believe this proposal can cultivate one of the most important needs for a nonprofit organization: growth.

## **Introduction**

This section contains an analysis of the problem of human trafficking, domestic violence, and exploitation of women. In addition, a business description of Covered International (Covered) and how this organization seeks to reduce the severity of this problem is included. Furthermore, a comparison between Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the resources Covered provides the survivors of abuse is detailed to provide theoretical grounding. First, I address the problem of human trafficking.

The United Nations (2016) reports that sex trafficking has become the fastest growing criminal industry. In fact, it is estimated that human sex trafficking generates over \$150 billion worldwide (Polaris, 2018). This amount of revenue ranks just behind Ford Motor Company on the Fortune 500's list of Top Ten Companies (Time, 2017). This illegitimate and corrupt industry is spreading mainly in countries with highly industrialized economies which have the money to support a very expensive criminal business. Statistics regarding the human trafficking industry are difficult to obtain and can often be inaccurate because of the illegal nature of this business (Luscombe, 2014). However, some reliable statistics from government sponsored organizations are available.

The International Labour Organization estimates there are approximately 20.9 million victims enslaved in human trafficking; 75% of the victims are women and girls. The other 25% of victims are children (Polaris, 2018). Seventy-nine percent of these women find themselves trafficked into the commercial sex industry; this is where Covered intervenes through outreach (Global Report, 2018). Additionally, 89% of the women have reported they were unable to leave the industry because they had no other means of survival (Covered International, 2015). Survivors of trafficking and abuse report experiencing anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic

stress disorder as the main sources of psychological burden (Zimmerman & Pocock, 2013). As a result, women and children require substantial emotional support after experiencing abuse, exploitation, or trafficking.

The National Human Trafficking Hotline is a service available for victims to call for supportive services. The Hotline also allows other members of the community to call and leave tips that may lead to identification of victims. Unfortunately, trafficked women can be found everywhere. In 2017, the National Human Trafficking Hotline received calls and had a human trafficking case reported for every state. The top states receiving the highest number of calls, in order from most to least, was California, Texas, Florida, and Ohio (National Human Trafficking Hotline, 2017). For victims identified in Toledo, Ohio, additional recovery support is available in the form of Covered.

### **Description of Covered International**

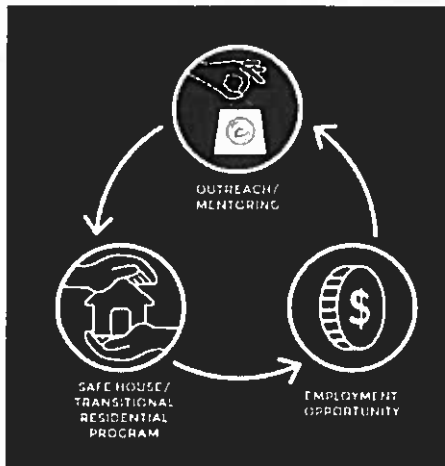
Covered is a 501(c)(3) faith-based nonprofit organization. The Internal Revenue Service classifies 501(c)(3) organizations as tax-exempt, charitable entities. To secure and maintain the status of a nonprofit, the organization must not operate to benefit one individual or shareholder. Earnings are redirected back to fulfill the organization's mission (Internal Revenue Service, 2017). When operating a nonprofit, short-term and long-term sustainability are the continual focus. Short-term sustainability focuses on resiliency of the organization and long-term sustainability focuses on maintaining services. To be an effective enterprise, both focuses are vital to the organization (Bowman, 2011). Through careful planning, business development, and leadership, Covered has been able to sustain itself as a nonprofit organization since 2013.

Covered embarked on the mission of restoration of women because the Executive Director, Savannah Hine, felt a calling to assist women who are being trafficked and abused. Covered has two locations. The first location was launched in Toledo, Ohio in 2013. At the beginning of 2018, a second chapter began active outreach in Toronto, Canada. The long-term vision of Covered is to equip and empower all women, but especially victims of trafficking, abuse, and exploitation. The mission of Covered reads as follows:

“reach and walk the road to freedom with women who are at-risk, or have become victims of domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and trafficking. Our goal is to combat injustice and poverty on every level. Covered INTL aims to empower individuals by bringing the power of people together against adversities. We collaborate with local church bodies, community resources, businesses, and individuals to hand women the tools she needs to overcome cyclical patterns of destruction. We strive to see generations impacted by providing support and opportunity for women, which in turn provides their children a chance to grow in a thriving environment. There is an average of three children impacted per every woman Covered has served.”

Covered’s operation consists of a cycle, pictured in Figure 1 below. The cycle consists of outreach and mentoring, safe houses and transitional residential program, and employment opportunity (Covered International, 2015).

Figure 1. The Covered model of support.



The first step in the cycle is outreach, which is the primary method Covered uses to reach women who are in need of help. Outreach is on the third Friday of every month, excluding January. On Tuesday of outreach week, volunteers meet at the Rustbelt Coffee shop in downtown Toledo for bag stuffing. Over one hundred bags are packaged with a gift along with a connect card and a handwritten note of encouragement. Gifts include various beauty products, hygiene products, or perfume and the connect card is the way women who are victims of exploitation and/or abuse can contact Covered to receive assistance. The gifts are distributed on Friday of outreach week to strip clubs in the chapter's community. Once a woman calls or emails Covered for resources and services, she is called a Pearl to keep her name anonymous to the community. The organization is still able to discuss milestones a woman has made with sponsors through this pseudonym. The Pearl is connected to the resources she needs and is paired with a volunteer in the mentorship program. The mentorship program is designed to build authentic relationships and create a healthy environment for women and children. This environment nurtures and furthers the healing process by building trust. The mentoring relationship begins as a friendship and the mentor is used to show the Pearl she has a community backing her and



someone she can rely on for support. To develop the feeling of community and family, a monthly hangout, usually at Life Chapel, is organized consisting of food, fellowship, and prayer. The hangout can also be a fun outing, such as visiting a pumpkin patch, swim party, and bonfires. Many of the Pearls do not have safe living arrangements and once they reach out to Covered, they are moved from their residence into safe houses and transitional residential programs.

The second step of the cycle is transitional residential programs. The goal of this step is to help women gain their independence and transition into being self-reliant. This step can include finishing or continuing education, job placement support, recovery services, and counseling. Throughout their time in this transition, women are actively working towards obtaining a job and maintaining a steady income in order to support themselves and their families.

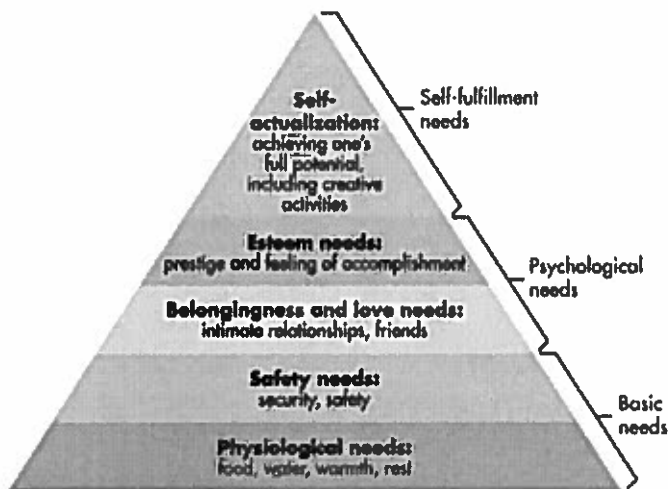
The third step is employment opportunities. Covered is working on developing new businesses that will employ only Pearls during their transitional phase. One example is a hair salon that would provide jobs for Pearls during the transition period. This step allows women who have been helped by Covered to also give back to the organization to help other women and children in need (S. Hinline, personal communication, October 24, 2017).

The long-term vision of Covered is to combat injustice and poverty on all levels (*Covered International*, 2015). This mission is not exclusive to victims residing in Toledo and Toronto, but worldwide as well. Currently, Covered is assisting fifty active Pearls with twenty-five children. There are approximately thirty active outreach volunteers and also an event planning committee (S. Hinline, personal communication, October 24, 2017).

## Theoretical Foundation

Once a woman has been rescued or is able to leave the industry or their abusive circumstance, many burdens are faced. Her basic human needs still require attention. Adequate housing, income, and clothing can be the most basic needs a survivor faces. Abraham Maslow (1954) has presented a theory on the needs of humans starting with the basic physiological needs and ending with self-actualization. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Figure 2) depicts the needs a woman who has been abused and exploited requires to improve her circumstances. The theory suggests she must satisfy her physiological needs while also addressing safety needs, belongingness and love, esteem, and self-actualization.

Figure 2. Maslow's hierarchy of needs.



The base of the pyramid addresses physiological needs, such as food, water, shelter, warmth, and rest. Covered addresses these needs by locating safe housing for the survivors and bringing in donations for food, clothing, and warmth. The second level is safety and security, which Covered helps provide by removal from abusive circumstances. Legal counsel is also

available if needed depending on each woman's individual case. If a woman is experiencing suicidal thoughts, counseling is available and recovery and rehab facilities are available for recovering drug abusers or alcoholics. The third level of Maslow's pyramid is belongingness needs, such as the need for relationships and friendships. Covered has a mentorship program in place to partner each woman with a person she can rely on and consult for advice and with whom she can foster a safe friendship. Additionally, Covered has a "hangout" once each month. A "hangout" is a 1-2 hour meeting where Pearls, children of Pearls, and Covered volunteers join together, exchange stories, pray, and develop a sense of belongingness. Esteem needs are the fourth level of Maslow's pyramid and relate to feeling a sense of prestige or accomplishment. Covered has assisted many women with education, locating jobs, and various life skills such as budgeting, cooking, and parenting. These services allow the women to see and feel a sense of improvement and accomplishment in their lives based on the advances made towards independence. The final level is self-actualization, which Covered does not specifically address. However, through all its services and partnerships, Covered has the unique opportunity and structure to intervene in the lives of survivors and help each woman achieve self-actualization, although the journey is difficult.

### **A Proposal for Growth**

The proposal consists of the following three aims:

1. Education and awareness
2. Fundraising
3. Expansion

### *Aim 1: Awareness and Education*

Education is the key to knowledge. Learning new information to incorporate into one's life is how we as humans expand our understanding of the world. This is also how we spread awareness and change our society for the better. How can we help women who are being abused, exploited, and trafficked? The first step is awareness and education. If people are unaware of an issue, they are unable to contribute in solving the problem. By continuing to educate large audiences on the prevalence of human trafficking, we are able to help cripple this industry and provide aid for the women who have been affected.

Hospitals and medical facilities are critical institutions that have the capability to intervene in the trafficking process. Victims often receive medical care while being trafficked for health issues such as sleep deprivation, sexually transmitted infections, dental disease, and forced substance abuse. Improving education among health care providers on recognizing the signs and symptoms of an abused or trafficked woman can help medical personnel identify a woman in need of assistance so that her physiological needs can be addressed. A study conducted on female survivors between the ages of fourteen to sixty discovered that 87.8% of these women reported receiving medical care at one point and were not identified as a trafficked victim (Macias-Konstandtopoulos, 2016). Educational seminars for medical personnel aimed at improving identification of victims could lead to improved care and support for survivors. Not only will effective training and education help identify victims, but the health sector can also be more equipped to respond to the victim's needs when seeking care (Macias-Konstandtopoulos, 2016). If the medical community becomes more effective in intercepting victims, women could be referred to resources such as Covered for further assistance in the journey to self-actualization.

Covered has the tools in place to improve the identification of victims in their community. The resources are available and formatted in an educational manner. The next step is building partnerships with local medical centers and hospitals. Covered has existing partnerships with ProMedica in Toledo to provide women with medical attention. These partnerships have the capability to expand to include education and training of staff. Once this partnership is expanded to include educational seminars, an educational committee can be formed within Covered to organize these seminars and training sessions. The outcome of aim 1 is to train medical personnel who interact with patients to recognize the signs of abuse and how to interact and treat these women.

#### *Aim 2: Funding*

A crucial component for maintaining the viability of a nonprofit is funding. The leadership team of any business, including nonprofits, are constantly investigating how to acquire additional funds. Covered is classified as a faith based nonprofit and therefore is unable to obtain government funding. Currently, Covered maintains funding through community sponsorships, the donation link on Covered's website, and annual fundraisers. One way to raise funding for Covered and continue the familial aspect of the organization is by holding a block party as a back to school event. This event can consist of a potluck, carnival, and an exposition show with various vendors from the community. Planning a block party would allow the organization to obtain a large revenue with little to no overhead cost for Covered. The plan for this fundraiser is outlined below.

First, Covered will enlist the help of its volunteers in planning this event. The event can be held at the Life Chapel in Walbridge, which has sponsored many of Covered's "hangouts"

throughout the year. A potluck dinner can be organized with a suggested donation of \$10 per plate. All food items, paper plates, and utensils will be donated by volunteers. Each volunteer can sign up to bring one item; this will eliminate any overhead cost for Covered.

A carnival can be set up to attract families and their children to join the event. Face painting, laser tag, bounce houses, and carnival games will all be set up at the event. Tickets can be purchased for \$1 per ticket and each game will be priced by a specific ticket amount. The games and supplies will be donated through community sponsors, such as RFS Behavioral Health, Rustbelt Coffee, and volunteers. This donation approach limits the expenses for Covered for staging this carnival at the block party.

Another way to receive donations for the organization is to send out a list of needed items to the volunteers and sponsors before the block party. This list can include items used for outreach or items the Pearls need, such as clothes, shoes and household goods. The sponsors or volunteers with the most donations will be awarded a special raffle basket or prize. This aspect of the block party allows items Covered needs to be assembled without any cost for the organization.

Another fun aspect is to allow vendors to attend the block party. Vendors could be affiliates of apartment complexes, staffing agencies, and health agencies related to nutrition and medical care. A rental space fee can be charged to each business who wishes to be present at the event. Sponsorship levels could range from \$50 to \$1,000 based on the type of business. Not only would this allow vendors to market their goods and services to the community, but increase the funding for Covered. This fun event allows members of the Covered family and community sponsors and businesses the opportunity to come together in fellowship, reinforcing the psychological need of belongingness according to Maslow's theory. New partnerships and

relationships can be built and the mission of Covered can be advanced through increased funding.

*Aim 3: Expansion*

Ohio ranks fourth highest on the list of reported calls of human trafficking in the U.S. Shockingly, on a per capita basis, four of Ohio's major cities (Columbus, Cleveland, Toledo, and Cincinnati) are ranked in the top twenty-five for cities receiving calls to the national hotline about issues related to human trafficking (Hotline Statistics, 2017). My final initiative for Covered is expanding the organization to Columbus, Ohio by beginning a new Covered chapter there.

Columbus, Ohio is ranked number eight by the National Human Trafficking Hotline in terms of number of calls pertaining to human trafficking. Hang-ups, missed calls, calls without a stated reason, and wrong numbers do not contribute to the ranking (Hotline Statistics, 2017). Expanding the Covered organization to Columbus extends support to more survivors and increases funding opportunities, community sponsorships, and helps address the issue of human trafficking in a city of over 2 million people.

The first step in implementing a new Covered chapter is organizing outreach. For expansion to be attainable, volunteers and donations will be required. However, there is a solution to both of these issues. Numerous churches exist in the Columbus area and building partnerships with a minimum of two churches will help spread the word about the mission of Covered and obtain a following among the congregation and community. Crossroads.Tv is a church on the outer belt of Columbus that is dedicated to community service and outreach. This would be the perfect church to obtain volunteers for outreach. Additional churches would be

Rock City and H2O on Ohio State's campus. Not only would this be a great way to recruit student volunteers, these locations can also spread awareness and education regarding the problem of human trafficking to an affluent audience. One way to spread the mission and need for volunteers is for a member from Covered to speak to multiple congregations and describe the immediate needs, which will be for volunteers. A minimum of five volunteers are needed during outreach. Five volunteers allow two volunteers to remain in the vehicle while the remaining three enter the strip club. This arrangement is important to ensure the safety of volunteers and victims during outreach. Initially, due to the nature of outreach, mostly women will join the organization because only the female volunteers physically enter the strip clubs. However, there is a role for men in Covered. Men often drive vehicles during outreach events, help move survivors into safe housing, and supervise children of survivors during "hangouts".

The next step of outreach is donations for the gift bags. StarJewel Showcase, my current employer, has agreed to make Covered the community service organization our company sponsors for the foreseeable future. Our company hosts multiple events throughout the year and each event required a community service donation. On average, one event results in a minimum of one hundred items being donated. These items will be used in for the gift bags during outreach in Columbus.

The final step in orchestrating the basic operation of Covered in Columbus is to locate an office space. Many businesses or churches will donate an office space to nonprofit organizations for free. The office space of Covered's Toledo chapter is a room provided by a local coffee shop downtown. Instead of "reinventing the wheel", I will continue the same process and form partnerships with a location in the Columbus area, perhaps in Grandview or a suburb close to downtown, but not directly downtown. A location in downtown Columbus brings the following



problems: traffic, accessibility to parking, and accessibility to the location for survivors. The office needs to be easy for volunteers, survivors, sponsors, and the executive team to access at all hours of the day.

As the Columbus chapter continues to grow, I will implement and expand the partnerships and services of the Columbus chapter. The goal is to partner with community resources such as rehab and recovery facilities, medical care centers, counseling services, housing authorities, and other basic needs a survivor may require assistance in obtaining. Through the implementation of education and awareness, fundraising, and expansion into Columbus, Covered has the unique opportunity to transform victims into survivors and help improve the human condition.

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