



# Abby's House

SHELTER • HOUSING • ADVOCACY



52 High Street • Worcester, MA 01609 • 508-756-5486 • [abbyshouse.org](http://abbyshouse.org)




## MISSION

The mission of Abby's House is to provide shelter and affordable housing, as well as advocacy and support services, to homeless, battered and low-income women, with or without children.

## VISION

Abby's House empowers the women we serve to lead self-directed lives filled with dignity and hope.



“I can't say enough good things about Abby's House! They take care of the women and children who live here, not only with the big things, like providing services or pointing you in the right direction to help you reach your goals, but they even remember the little things like leaving birthday cards, Christmas gifts, meals – they do so much! Abby's is always giving and I'm so grateful that my granddaughter, who is now a teenager, has grown up in such a compassionate environment!” *- Kim, current resident*

## VALUES

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### HOSPITALITY

We are a safe and welcoming place that values people of diverse backgrounds and experiences. We provide a home, not just a place to live. We intentionally seek to create an inclusive community that celebrates all cultures.

### DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Abby's House community commits to affirm women of all races, ethnicities, ages, national origins, sexual orientations, disabilities, educational backgrounds and gender identities. We embrace diversity and foster healing and well-being for all.

### COMPASSION AND RESPECT

We believe that each person is unique and deserves to be treated with dignity and compassion. We develop caring, supportive, non-judgmental, and enduring relationships. We listen to and give each other support.

### WOMEN'S SELF-DETERMINATION

We believe that women can name and change the injustice that exists in the lives of women. We encourage women to be leaders and decision-makers. We help women recognize their own inner strengths, opportunities and abilities to lead self-directed lives.

### COLLECTIVE EFFORT

We are a multi-cultural, multi-racial community of volunteers, donors, partners, housing residents, shelter guests, and staff working collectively to achieve our mission. The contribution of each person is valued and respected and makes Abby's House a special place that nurtures self-determination, independence and strength.

## HISTORY OF ABBY'S HOUSE

The concept of Abby's House (Abby Kelley Foster House, Inc.) began with an invitation to Annette Rafferty from the Worcester Urban Ministry Commission to start up a task force. It was early 1973 and pastors, rabbis, and ministers were overwhelmed with requests to house the "new homeless" women and children. At the time, there were only three shelter beds for women in Worcester. As chair of the Task Force, Annette was charged with exploring the need and finding a solution. She collected stories and statistics from homeless women in Worcester and as a result of her research, Annette and the Task Force recommended opening a shelter. When their recommendation was voted down by the Commission, Annette resigned. She knew that if no one was going to take action then to help these women, no one ever would. After a few years of grassroots organizing, Annette and a group of courageous women opened the Abby's House shelter on June 7, 1976. After several years however, the founders realized that shelter alone was not enough, and expanded our services to include permanent, supportive housing for women and children as well as advocacy services. Abby's House now consists of 4 properties: a 9-bed overnight shelter for women and children and 3 properties consisting of safe, supportive housing: 7, two-bedroom apartments for women with children and 71 single occupancy rooms for women.



Unfortunately, the need for safe, supportive housing and advocacy services is even greater today, but we're here to answer the call, one knock at a time. Through our shelter, housing, and advocacy programs, we're able to work one-on-one with each woman who comes through our doors to create an Individualized Empowerment Plan that is designed to help foster and activate women's inner strength and power so that they are able to reclaim and rebuild their lives.

# OVERVIEW OF SHELTER AND HOUSING

*Four Buildings, One House*

## SHELTER

Abby's House has two properties on Crown Street. The first is our 9-bed overnight shelter for women, with or without children, open each day from 5:30 p.m. – 8 a.m. Women accessing the shelter are allowed to stay for a maximum of 90 days. While staying at the shelter, women meet with an Advocate at least once per week to develop an Individualized Empowerment Plan and receive help to secure long-term housing.



## CROWN / CHATHAM STREET HOUSING

The second property on Crown Street is one of our 3 properties of affordable, supportive housing for women. Abby's House purchased and rehabilitated this home in 1993. This property has 16 single occupancy rooms for women as well as a shared kitchen, living room, bathrooms, and laundry.



Our property at Chatham Street, which was rehabilitated and opened in 1996, provides safe, affordable housing for single

women and their children. This location has seven 2-bedroom apartments that are equipped with a kitchen, living room and bathroom and have access to a shared laundry room and green space outside.

## HIGH STREET

For over 90 years, 52 High Street was left largely unaltered. Before becoming part of Abby's House, 52 High Street was known as St. Joseph's Home for Working Girls, a place specifically for women with no safe place to live. The Sisters of Mercy built this home in the 1920's and operated St. Joseph's Home for Working Girls as their ministry. When the Sisters of Mercy gave the keys to 52 High Street to Abby's House in 2001, our missions blended - keeping the focus on providing safe, affordable and supportive housing for women who needed it. With homelessness on the rise and the need for safe, affordable housing greater than ever, a \$16.2 million renovation was completed in 2019 to ensure that women who are facing homelessness have access to safe and supportive housing that's specifically designed to meet their needs for years to come. The renovated 56 single room occupancy (SRO) unit building is now in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and includes an elevator, accessible entrance, three accessible bedrooms and accessible bathrooms on each residential floor. Electrical, plumbing, heating, and windows have all been updated and residential kitchens were added to each floor. Shared laundry rooms were also added on the second and third floors.



## OVERVIEW OF ADVOCACY AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

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Abby's House has been a safe-haven for women, with and without children, since we opened our doors in 1976. Once safely housed, each woman is assigned an Advocate, who helps her identify realistic goals and provides her with the tools she needs to achieve them. Our Advocates help women thrive. We partner with more than 75 social services and government agencies and departments to provide linkages to critical services including housing support, behavioral health, physical wellness, nutrition, education, employment, and legal services. Abby's House is where women's inner strength and power are fostered and activated.



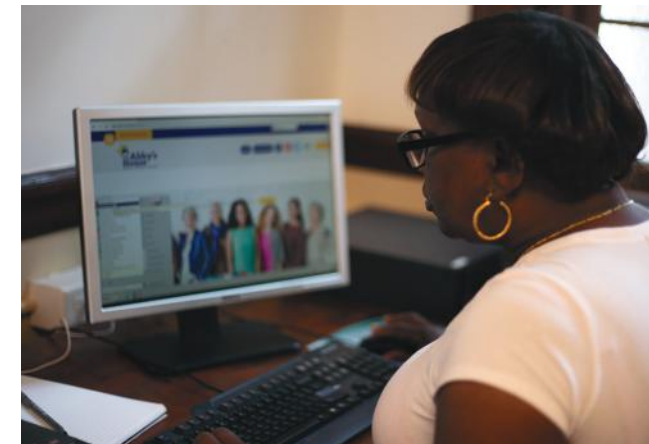
## OVERVIEW OF ADVOCACY AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

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A major resource for both current and former shelter guests and housing residents is the Annette Rafferty Women's Empowerment Center. Located at 52 High Street, the Annette Rafferty Women's Empowerment Center is where women, with and without children, can come together as a community and are able to access exceptional programs designed to help foster healing and hope. These programs and services include:

- Computer access and training as well as career preparation
- Food distribution and weekly meals including a food pantry and holiday celebrations
- Wellness programs including yoga, Zumba, walking club and nutrition classes
- Economic empowerment programs including financial literacy

The comradery that is built through the Annette Rafferty Women's Empowerment Center provides community and stability as the women move through their journeys of healing and recovery.



## THRIFT SHOP

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The Abby's House Thrift Shop serves as a community resource and as a source of income to support the mission of Abby's House. Working together with community partners, the Thrift Shop is able to provide clothes, shoes, small household items and other much-needed items at no cost to homeless or low-income women who are referred to us, as well as to housing residents and shelter guests of Abby's House. When visiting the Thrift Shop you'll find quality women's clothing, accessories, home goods, and health and beauty products. The Abby's House Thrift Shop relies solely on the donations we receive from the community. Donations can be made directly to the Abby's House Thrift Shop, located at 52 High Street, during regular shop hours. For more information including hours of operation, visit [abbyshouse.org/thrift-shop](https://abbyshouse.org/thrift-shop)



## WAYS TO HELP

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Abby's House relies on the collective contributions of time, talent and treasure from our supporters. Together, we have built a safe, supportive community for women and with your help, Abby's House will continue to play a critical role in helping vulnerable women in the greater Worcester region to reclaim and rebuild their lives. There are many ways that your impact can be felt in the lives of the women and children we serve.

### MAKE A GIFT

Your gifts significantly impact the lives of the women and children who call Abby's House home. For questions or to learn more about making a gift, contact the Director of Development at **(508) 756-5486 ext. 214** or [info@abbyshouse.org](mailto:info@abbyshouse.org). You can also visit our website at [abbyshouse.org/get-involved/ways-to-give](https://abbyshouse.org/get-involved/ways-to-give)

Multiply your impact through recurring gifts. To set up recurring gifts, visit [abbyshouse.org/donate](https://abbyshouse.org/donate)

### VOLUNTEER

Volunteers have been at the heart of Abby's House since the beginning. By becoming a volunteer you'll play an essential role in the lives of women who are at risk of being homeless. To learn more, visit [abbyshouse.org/get-involved/volunteer](https://abbyshouse.org/get-involved/volunteer) or contact our Volunteer Coordinator at **(508) 756-5486 ext. 227**

### MORE WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

- Host an event
- Workplace giving & corporate gifts
- Gifts of stock and appreciated securities
- Give from your retirement account(s)
- Abby's House Legacy Circle – to include Abby's House in your Will or trust
- Donate needed items
- Attend our events
- Take a tour

Find out more by visiting [abbyshouse.org/get-involved](https://abbyshouse.org/get-involved)

Make your gift online at [abbyshouse.org/donate](https://abbyshouse.org/donate) or send a check payable to Abby's House to:

**Abby's House**  
**Attn: Accountant**  
**52 High Street**  
**Worcester, MA 01609**



Every day women reclaim and rebuild their lives through the dedication and support of the Abby's House community – our staff, volunteers, donors, partners, and the women and children we serve. Thank you for your support!

## **STAY IN TOUCH!**

Stay up-to-date with what's happening at Abby's House! Follow our social media pages and sign up to receive our e-newsletter on our website for all the latest information!

