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Fundraising for the Homeless

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Fundraising for Homelessness

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report



Submitted to the Faculty of

WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of Bachelor of Science

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Abstract

This project focuses on the effects of Homelessness and possible solutions for homeless. The main solution focused on in this project is fundraising for Abby's House Shelter and Abby's House Empowerment Fund.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 National and Local Homelessness

In America homelessness is a huge problem. Nationally approximately between 500,000 and 600,000 people are considered homeless at any given time. (Richmond) According to the Worcester Homeless Action Committee (WHAC) in one given year there can be approximately 500,000 homeless just in Worcester, Ma alone (Richmond).

The most prominent cause of homelessness in the United States is poverty. Poverty causes families to lose homes and not be able to afford food. Between twenty and thirty percent of homeless families surveyed in 1996 said they had gone without food for part of the previous month (Richmond) Without food the homeless become malnourished and this can lead to serious health risks.

There is a huge difference in the gender of the population of a homeless person. Single men are about 60% of the population of the homeless; families are about 1/3 of all homeless persons and are also the fastest growing group. (Richmond) In Appendix E there is a list of the major causes of homelessness of women in America. Many of these causes are possible for all homeless people. Not all people who are homeless are young either; there are many elders who because of poverty and the poor economy are unable to afford low income housing.

Homelessness in Worcester is very apparent. When driving or walking near Salisbury Park or Salisbury Street, homeless men and women can be seen with signs asking for money. In Massachusetts there are approximately 6,547,629 people as of 2010. In Worcester there are approximately 181,045 people living as of 2010. (Census, 2010) According to WHAC there is an estimated population in Worcester of 2,000 people homeless. (Committee) Also they believe that

approximately 10,000 young children will experience homelessness in Massachusetts alone. (Committee)

According to a census taken in 2007, there were more than 452 people in homeless families with children and 471 homeless individuals in Worcester at a given time. (Levy & Mulford, 2007) Also in the census 116 of these people met the criteria for chronic homelessness. Chronic homelessness is being homeless for more than a year or having been homeless four or more times in the last three years. Between 2005 and 2007 homeless in Worcester and Worcester County increased by 10% and has since then increased even more. (Levy & Mulford, 2007) Homelessness is an epidemic and continues to increase as the economy decreases and the cost of living increases.

Both nationwide and citywide are dealing with homelessness in various degrees. The problem with coming up with one solution to it all is that there are so many reasons for a person to be homeless and different areas have different demographics. There is not a one solution fits all type of solution.

1.2 Project Statement

Homelessness is a huge issue in Worcester, Massachusetts as well as the United States as a whole. Unfortunately, there are approximately 500,000 Homeless in America alone. (Richmond)Hossein Hakim, a professor at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI), has requested ways to potentially fundraise homeless and create ideas for a solution to homeless. His request includes different methods such as researching and fundraising.

In order to create these ideas a basic knowledge on homelessness was needed. This included what it was like to be homeless and how some people became homeless. After gaining

some knowledge of homelessness it was necessary to find ways to both raise awareness for homelessness as well as ways to fund raise for Abby's Fund.

Chapter 2: Background

2.1 Defining Homelessness

The official federal definition of homelessness is found in Title 42, Chapter 119, Subchapter I of the United States Code. According to this definition homelessness is defined as:

(A) In general For purposes of this chapter, the term "homeless" or "homeless individual or homeless person" includes--an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is - a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations ... an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings....

(c) Exclusion For purposes of this chapter, the term "homeless" or "homeless individual" does not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained pursuant to an Act of the Congress or a State law.” (Representatives)

Also the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act has a definition of homeless as well.

They define homeless as:

The term "homeless children and youths"--(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a) (1)); and

(B) includes--(i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement; (ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C)); (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and (iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify

as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii). (The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 1987)

Both these definitions are broad range of the definitions. Many people under these definitions can be considered homeless. It is hard to recognize those who are homeless. They can look like normal people or can be people that we see every day. When homeless comes to mind people think of a person who is dirty and unclean but that is not always the case. Homeless people can have a job but are just unable to support themselves or their dependents with a home. There are many demographics that can be used to describe them. Homelessness does not target one particular gender, race, or age. Some demographics are more prevalent than others but homelessness can be seen all over the world. It is true that there are more males and more African-Americans that are homeless but a homeless person can be any sex or race.

2.2 Living and Characteristics of the Homeless

Characteristics of a homeless person differ very drastically from person to person. It might be as apparent as lack of hygiene or dirtiness or maybe unapparent such as a person who looks wealthy or well kept. Some people make every effort for people not to discover that they are homeless.

Among homeless individuals there are some common factors. A homeless person is more likely to have mental problems, a criminal record, or likely to be a victim of violence. “The homeless also face persistent deprivation and constant threat of harm. They spend more time in the hospital and in jail than their poor counterparts. The majority are victims of violent crimes, and one fourth lack needed medical care.” (Richmond) Without proper medical care major health problems arise. Many health problems can be untreated and become life threatening.

Children can also be considered homeless and can experience worse problems than an adult homeless person faces. “Compared with low-income housed children, homeless children experience more health problems, developmental delays, increased anxiety, depression, behavioral problems, and lower educational achievement.” (Committee) It is also proven that children in homeless families do worse in school and have lower attendance and more long term absences than a child who has a home. (Richmond)

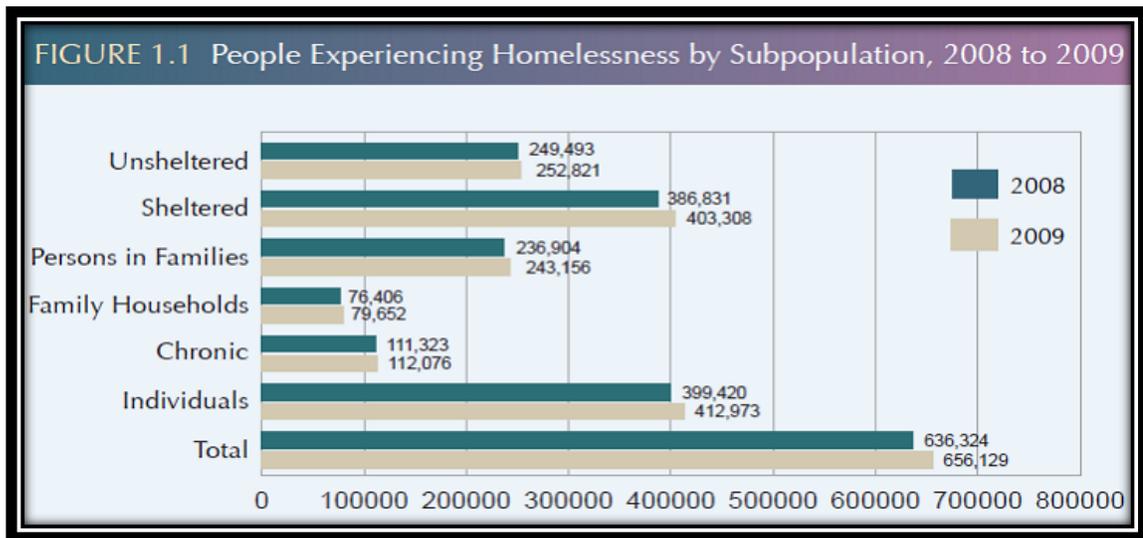


Figure 1.1 above shows where homeless individuals lived in 2008 to 2009. Though many of them stayed in shelters over one half went unsheltered. There were many families who were living homeless.

Although about seventy percent of the homeless live in central cities, rural homelessness is a hidden problem. The rural homeless are more likely to be families that are homeless for shorter periods of time, often as a result of domestic violence” (Richmond)

“One of the hardest groups to reach, however, is the one fourth of homeless who have been homeless for at least five years.” (Richmond) These people are considered the chronic

homeless. These people are very hard to reach because they may be able to find temporary housing but when that runs out there is nowhere else to go but back to the streets.

2.3 Preventing and Solving Homelessness

There are many plans to end homelessness. It is believed that a major way to solve homelessness is to create a more affordable housing system in the United States. Many people are homeless because they cannot afford housing. There is a shortage in affordable housing but also a rise in poverty making the few affordable homes and complexes that homeless may have been able to get in the past, that much more unattainable. There are many new programs both locally and nationwide that helps combat the loss of housing as well as old programs that help assist the homeless.

One of these acts is the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987. This federal law provides funding and assistance programs for homeless. This act comprises of 15 programs that provide services to homeless people. Important Programs include the Continuum of Care Programs: the Supportive Housing Program, the Shelter Plus Care Program, and the Single Room Occupancy Program, as well as the Emergency Shelter Grant Program which can all be found in Title IV. (The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 1987)

In 1990 amendments were made to this act and new programs were created. In this emendation the Shelter Plus Care Program was created. This provides housing assistance to homeless people with disabilities, mental illness, AIDS, or drug and/or alcohol addiction. Also created was the Health Care for the Homeless Program. This Program provides access to medical care for homeless as well as manages and staffs shelter clinics. It provides primary healthcare to at-risk and homeless children. In 1992 safe havens were created which were very low cost

shelters. “A safe have is a form of supportive housing that serves hard-to reach homeless persons with severe mental illness who are on the street and have been unable or unwilling to participate in supportive services.” (The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 1987) These safe havens give 24-hour residence for a person for an unspecified time, can include private and semiprivate accommodation, have a limited overnight occupancy of 25 people, have low-demand services, and have supportive services to people who are not residents on a drop-in basis. (The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 1987)

In 2009 President Obama signed the Homeless Emergence and Rapid Transition to Housing Act. The act reauthorized the McKinney Act as well as added changes which include:

- A consolidation of HUD’s competitive grant programs;
- The creation of a Rural Housing Stability Program;
- A change in HUD’s definition of homelessness and chronic homelessness;
- A simplified match requirement;
- An increase in prevention resources; and,
- An increase in the emphasis on performance.
(Development)

There are also many other ideas that have been suggested to help combat homelessness. One such idea is involving local governments and providing homeless families with temporary shelters. By involving local governments, a homeless person may be able to be pointed into the right direction to obtain and qualify for various kinds of public assistance. Public agencies can coordinate services and refer clients to homeless programs.

Another possible idea is to form a local interagency coordinating body that would bring all of the important services who could be included in prevention together (for example, community development corporations, literacy programs, programs for the mentally ill) (Richmond) Also providing the rural homeless families with temporary shelters and rental assistance funds could possibly help because the rural homeless are often homeless for only short

periods of time compared to urban homeless. Rural shelters, however, must undertake more rigorous outreach to find these families because rural homeless families are harder to reach. (Richmond)

Rural homelessness may seem less numerous than in urban areas but proportionally wise it can be equal if not greater than urban areas. (Post, 2002) Rural communities have few health and social services as well as a higher amount of unemployment. The homeless of rural areas are less well-educated and are more likely to be employed in temporary jobs with no benefits. (Post, 2002)

In Worcester there are many projects and shelters that are set up to end the homelessness in Worcester. Currently there are about 7 shelters in Worcester that cater to the homeless and one that caters to the homeless and addicts. Programs in Worcester that help the homeless include such as WHAC (Worcester Homeless Action Committee), YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) Transitional Housing Program, Central Mass. Dept. of Social Services, Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance (CMHA), Community Healthlink, Legal Services, as well as many others.

WHAC advocates for homeless shelters in Worcester as well as revised plans to address homelessness. The YWCA is multicultural women's organization. They help empower women and advocate against domestic violence. Their transitional Housing Program allows women to have a safe and affordable short time place to live. The Central Mass. Department of Social Services helps with those who are affected with homelessness and helps them find a place to stay. The CMHA helps communities in Greater Worcester and Worcester County respond to the needs of homeless and near homeless. Community Healthlink created a Homeless Outreach and

Advocacy Project in 1985 which helps shelters and other emergency care programs as well as offers basic healthcare services and clinics.

2.2.1 Three Year Plan to End Homelessness

In 2007 a report created by the co-chairs of the Task Force on Homelessness, Jordan Levy and William Mulford, was released titled *Three Year Plan to End Homelessness in Worcester*. This report was given to the City Manager in hopes that in three years there would be a decrease in homelessness in Worcester. In this they developed goals and objectives they

Goal 1: Paradigm Shift to Housing First

Housing first is a strategy for re-housing. When a person becomes homeless or when homelessness is in the near future this strategy places them into homes instead of shelters. The task force believes that rapid re-placement is “preferable to shelter placement because it avoids and unnecessary step on the process.” (Levy & Mulford, 2007) By forgoing the shelter, the homeless person will be able to obtain affordable housing throughout the community. The participants in this program would pay about 30% of their income for rent. Housing first is a relatively new model but” pilot implementations have demonstrated that model programs improve the housing stability health and quality of life of participants and that total costs are actually reduced.” (Levy & Mulford, 2007) The Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) is also planning on implementing the Housing First program for homeless families. The task force on homelessness intends to work with the DTA to convert to this strategy as soon as possible.

Objective 1.1: Increase Affordable Housing

In hopes that the task force is about to institute the housing first object they would first need to increase the amount of affordable housing that is available in Worcester. The inability to pay for housing is one of the main reasons for a person to become homeless and thus by creating affordable rental houses will help end homelessness.

Objective 1.2: Eliminate Homelessness within three years

The housing first model would replace the need for shelters and there for by adding affordable homes and implementing this strategy there will no longer be any need for shelters. In this plan the shelters would be phased out over the three year span. Shelters “would be replaced with Assessment and Triage Centers where newly homeless or at risk families and individuals are rapidly assessed given extended assessment and brief respite if necessary and then immediately placed into housing using the Housing First model.”

Objective 1.3: Close PIP Shelter

The PIP shelter is the People in Peril shelter. It consists of many types of homeless from addicts to children and from the chronic homeless to people who are homeless for the first time. Closing the PIP shelter will be very important in order to start the Housing First initiative. The Task Force on Homelessness would like to slowly close the PIP shelter over the three year period and slowly phase out the beds available. They would like to lower the occupancy limits and place shelter guests into supportive housing. Using financial incentives and help from the DTA, the task force hopes to reduce the shelter capacity in its hope to phase out the shelter completely.

Objective 1.4: Develop Assessment and Triage Services for Families

These assessment and triage centers would be for a maximum of a few nights and then participants would be put into housing as soon as possible.

Objective 1.5: Develop an Assessment and Triage Service for Homeless Individuals

Along with Objective 1.4, the Assessment and Triage Service will have 12 available beds for extended assessment. This would allow for the participants to be screened for eligibility of this program as well as other services. It would also include an outreach program that would identify and bring street homeless into this service. It would use existing resources from the HEART program that is funded by the McKinney Plan and operated by Community Healthlink. This Service would also serve as an admittance service for the PIP shelter which would become a referral only program. Also planned are management resources for those who are chronically homeless.

Goal 2: Expand Homeless Prevent Resources

Prevent Imminently at risk families from being homeless are faster and cost less than helping a person who is already homeless, this in order to be more cost-effective the task force believes that a strategy to help the at risk families should be implemented. According to the task forces spending some money to keep families housed is very effective in preventing homelessness.

Objective 2.1: Increase Availability of Flexible Funds and Case Management Services

When flexible funds are increased for the expenses of rent and utilities and case management is utilized for these at-risk families, there will be less of a possibility of homelessness.

Objective 2.2: Increase Educational Efforts and Develop Early Warning System

Developing relationships with those who can see the early warning signs of homelessness can decrease homelessness. These include relationships with schools, healthcare providers, and food pantries. With this relationship they are encouraged to refer them so that homelessness can be prevented.

Goal 3: Improve Service Strategies

With improved strategies the housing and service system can become more effective. This goal describes possible strategies that can improve its housing and services system.

Objective 3.1: Target Chronically Homeless

The Chronically Homeless represents 10% of homeless single adults in Worcester but also uses more than half of all shelter bed days as well as other community resources such as food pantries. By targeting the chronically homeless and giving them top priority it will free up more services for the displaced and near-chronic homeless to be helped better.

Objective 3.2: Improve the Housing and Service System

In order to improve the Housing major changes are need in the current system and services. The task force plan to do a review of the programs and determine which should be kept and expended and which should be changed or cut. They would review the program and determining if they fit into the Housing First Model.

Objective 3.3: Strengthen Skills and Supports for the Homeless

Homeless individuals and families tend to have less skills and inadequate support. In this object the task forces wants to help build skills in basic living areas. These basic living areas

include vocational training, budgeting, parenting, household management, hygiene, and nutrition. They also want to offer support with stable housing, job placement, after-school programs, child-care, and transportation as well as other community services.

Goal 4: Improve Oversight and Accountability of the Housing and Service System

The task force wants the City of Worcester to have oversight on all homeless housing and service programs. Currently federal programs are monitored by grantees and state or city funded programs are monitored by the funding entities. These programs rarely communicate or plan actions together. With the City of Worcester having oversight on all programs that occur in Worcester they will be accountable for the implementation of this plan, the accountability would be exercised through the City Manager.

Objective 4.1: Help Coordinate and Monitor the Performance of Worcester Housing and Service Programs

With this initiative new roles will be created that enhance the new housing and service system. These roles include:

- A Continuum of Care Planning Process which would help the CMHA coordinate housing and service programs
- Monitoring of the Assessment/ Triage Service which will provide the city regarding housing and service performance.
- Monitoring of the funds for the McKinney program act.
- Funding of the Worcester County Homeless Management Information System which provided data about the demographic characteristics of homeless and service statistics.
- Compiling, analyzing, and acting on program reports obtained from funding agencies for all housing and service programs.

Objective 4.2: Develop a City Commission on Homelessness

The task force recommends that the City of Worcester create a Commission on Homelessness that would recommend policies regarding the problem of homelessness. Its responsibilities include:

- Implementing, monitoring, and updating this plan as necessary
- Conduction periodic reviews of the needs of homeless individuals and families
- Recommending City budgetary expenditures to end homelessness
- Advocating meeting the needs of the homeless.
- Staff support for Commission activities.

Goal 5: Ensure that Programs are Sited Responsibly

In order to encourage the appropriate siting of programs several strategies are developed.

These strategies include:

- Best Practices: Encouraging non-profits that intend to sire programs in Worcester employ best practices that include notification of appropriate officials and neighbors and responding to questions and concerns.
- Incentives and Disincentives: Neighborhoods should be encourages to accept housing and services for the homeless through incentives provided through the City of Worcester.
 - Role of the Business Community and Colleges: The business community can have significant impact through their active support of this plan and their assistance in developing housing. Local colleges can provide housing for the homeless.
(Levy & Mulford, 2007)

In Appendix F is a Summary Table of Objectives along with time frames and funding sources. Though the City of Worcester tried to put into place some of these goals many goals have remained unfinished. The PIP shelter is still around and taking people in as well as many other shelters. There is also not as much affordable housing that the homeless can afford and because of that there is not much of a change in the front of homelessness prevention in Worcester. This plan was developed in 2007 and it has still yet to prevent homelessness in Worcester.

Chapter 3 Abby's House

3.1 Abby's House

Abby Kelley Foster House, Inc. (Abby's House) was opened in 1976 and was one of the first overnight emergency shelters specifically for women (Abby Kelley Foster House, About Us). It is located in Worcester, Ma. The Abby's House shelter offers a variety of services to women. They provide trauma advocacy and supportive services and have staff that helps women with long and short term goals. Abby's House supports women so that they are able to move past homelessness and get back on their feet. "Since 1976, Abby Kelley Foster House, Inc., [Abby's House] has provided more than 11,500 homeless women and children with a safe place to stay, regroup, and rebuild." (Abby Kelley Foster House, Our Mission)

Abby's House is staffed by Shelter Advocates and has over 60 volunteers. It is open year round and is one of two shelters in the Worcester area that does not require guests to be on welfare. Abby's House services consist of the emergency shelter, affordable housing, food services, a thrift shop, and a women's center. Abby's House not only provides women with a shelter but also advocates for these women and empowers them to achieve their goals.

3.1 Emergency Shelter

The emergency shelter was established in 1976 and has helped women move out of the chaos of homelessness and enabled them to regain their independence. It is staffed by shelter advocates and has over 60 regular volunteers. It is open year round and allows a place for women and their children to stay in their time of need. The average stay in the shelter is around 27 nights which has increased from 11 nights. (Abby Kelley Foster House, Emergency Shelter) In order to run the shelter it costs Abby's House \$157,650 a year and unfortunately, they only receive

\$15,500 in grants per year because they do not require its guest to be on welfare and thus are not eligible for state or federal funding. (Abby Kelley Foster House, Emergency Shelter) Women who stay at the shelter have nowhere else to go to sleep, eat, or even shower and may have children with them.

3.2 Affordable Housing

Abby's House owns and operates 7 two bedroom apartments and 71 single room units in four buildings across Worcester, Ma. The average stay of a woman who is living in this housing type is about two years and after the 2 year mark about 98% move into independent housing. (Abby Kelley Foster House, Housing) "The reason we (Abby's House) have such a high success rate is because we provide each woman with the individualized support and services she needs to regain her independence." (Abby Kelley Foster House, Housing) Women who live in the affordable housing receive services which include:

- Advocacy and individualized service planning
- Membership in the Women's Center
- Food Service
- Clothing Assistance through the Thrift Shop
- Support around Domestic Violence and other issues

Abby's House affordable housing department also partners with agencies such as the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), the Tower Hill Botanical Gardens, and the Worcester Art Museum so that the women living there are also able to enjoy some of what Worcester has to offer. (Abby Kelley Foster House, Housing)

3.3 Food Services and Thrift Store

In order to prevent its tenets malnutrition Abby's House prepares meals for the women and children. They serve more than 10,000 meals a year and volunteers donate 2,230 hours

preparing and serving the food. (Abby Kelley Foster House, Food Services) Food Services at Abby's House receive donations from which include both food and food prep volunteering.

They also receive in-kind donation which include:

- 1,248 gallons of milk from Rachel's Table
 - 1,440 meals prepared off site and delivered by volunteer groups
 - Approximately 1,000 supermarket gift cards, ranging from \$25-\$100/each
 - And miscellaneous food donations throughout the year
- (Abby Kelley Foster House, Food Services)

Abby's House also runs a Thrift Store which sells clothing, accessories, home goods, and even cosmetics. All revenue made from the thrift shop fund the emergency shelter. Women who stay at the emergency shelter and are in need for clothes or items sold at the thrift shop receive vouchers that they are able to go and spend at the Thrift Shop. (Abbey Kelley Foster House) Abby's house allows women to buy presents on special occasions such as holidays or birthdays so that they can participate in the holiday spirit.

3.4 Women's Center

Abby's House also offers educational programs, skill-building workshop, social interaction, supportive services, advocacy, and referrals for the women who enter its doors. They offer food delivery programs for women who are unable to afford or access food, as well as transportation for medical appointments. (Abby Kelley Foster House, Women's Center) They offer on-site resources which include:

- health promotion services and activities
 - literacy programs -- including both reading and financial literacy
 - individualized financial counseling and budgeting support and classes
 - computer workstations and computer training
 - English as a Second Language instruction.
- (Abby Kelley Foster House, Women's Center)

Abby's House Women's Center is a key in helping woman strive to gain their independence back after stays at either the shelter or in the affordable housing. The staff and volunteers help guests learn new skills as well as socialize, and give them a place to heal. Each woman who enters Abby's House is given an advocate who is there to help them accomplish their goals and support them in every way possible.

3.5 Abby's Empowerment Fund

Abby's Empowerment Fund was established in 2009 by Professor Hossein Hakim, a professor at WPI. It was established at the Greater Worcester Community Foundation and the mission of this Fund is to raise and distribute small, high impact grants which empower the women of Abby's House to overcome specific barriers to success. This grant supports women with educational expenses, childcare expenses, job training expense, as well as required job related clothing and uniforms that are not available through Abby's Thrift Shop.

3.6 Women of Abby's House

Abby's House houses many extraordinary women who have had a rough time and just need help to get back on their feet. In order to get a better feel for the life and daily routines of a woman of Abby's House the reporter interviewed two women who spoke about what they do on a daily basis and how they got to Abby's House.

Interview with Tammy

Tammy has been at Abby's House since August of last year. She was born and raised in the Worcester area. She has two daughters and in May she plans on visiting one of them in Florida. She hopes of becoming a Home Health Aid.

Living in Abby's House to her has been "Awesome". Abby's House gives her everything she needs. She receives an advocate who is supportive and giving. They provide her with meals and gifts during the holidays. They are very encouraging. When Tammy started taking classes to become a health aid and flunked, they encouraged her to take remedial classes.

Her average day recently has been waking up at 5am heading to classes at the Red Cross which last till 3pm, then coming home and doing some house chores. After that is done she then goes to the Women's Center where there is a lot of camaraderie between the women. They are all very helpful and she has made lots of friends.

She is now waiting to take the state test to become a Home Health Aid.

Interview with Joni

Joni has been at Abby's House on and off since 1977. She has lived in Worcester her whole life. Joni's life in Abby's House began after she became involved with a man in 1965. He was abusive towards her. She moved to New York with him and met a woman who was just as battered as she was. This woman told her about Abby's House and she kept the card in her wallet.

When she wanted to leave him for the first time she left New York in the middle of the night and went to her mother and her aunt for help. She asked for a place to stay but they both said no. Back then there were very few agency's to turn towards or ask for help. She was taken to Abby's House and she remembers how kind and reassuring they were. The next day she left to find a job. She did not want to give up and because the usual stay at the shelter was 3 days because she found the job she was able to stay two weeks.

In 1977-1978 she stayed in the shelter more than anywhere else. She needed the support of the women and felt that she wasn't alone. She became very independent. She continued to go back and forth with the man she was involved with for 20 years.

Abby's House is her whole life. She did not want to stay ay Abby's House forever but she enjoys coming back. After the man she was involved in died she began to drink heavily. With the help of Abby's House she got her own apartment and entered AA. She now owns an apartment in Worcester and continues to visit Abby's House regularly.

Chapter 4 Methodology

To help fundraise for Abby's House and Abby's Empowerment fund many different types of methods were used these methods include Researching, Visiting Abby's House, Penny Wars, Clothing Drives, Auctions, Dances, and Business Solicitation.

Researching about Homelessness helps gain the necessary information to learn about homelessness and potentially ways to brainstorm how to solve homelessness. There are numerous books, studies, and movies that are solely about Homelessness and the effects of homelessness. By utilizing these research methods it allowed the researcher to become better educated about homelessness. For much of the research I used the library as well as talked to Women at Abby's House, a local shelter.

In order to better examine the effects of homelessness in Worcester and our local area, the reportee went to Abby's House. Abby's house is an emergency and long-term housing shelter that advocated women and support services to the homeless. (Abby's house website)

Penny Wars is a fundraising idea that is aimed at school age children to get them interested in raising money. A Penny War is when each class has a jar that class members can place money into. Penny's added into the jar affect positively to the class's total. Other monetary items such as nickels, quarters, dollars, etc., affect negatively to the classes total. The total is calculated by adding all the pennies together and subtracting everything else. The winner is the person with the highest total. Other classes put in higher monetary so that other classes will gather a negative amount.

A clothing drive is a way to get people involved in raising awareness. The point of this drive was to raise homelessness awareness. The clothes collected from the schools could then be donated to Abby's House thrift shop. Different seasons require different clothes and most people

are willing to give away clothes of a different season during this drive. This allows Abby's House to have a head start on the next season. The clothes collected would be able to support not only the women at Abby's House but the children of these women.

An auction is also another great way to fundraise. Both silent and live auctions work well. Items auctioned off to people can create revenue that will be donated to Abby's Fund. These types of fundraisers generally are targeted to a more mature audience than fundraisers such as Penny Wars, partly because some auction items may be high in monetary denomination.

Auction donations can come from many places. Families and friends are able to give smaller donations while companies or groups of people may be able to donate bigger items. By hosting an auction

Dances are the type of fundraiser that is great for all ages. People can enjoy dancing and since it is only a recommended donation people can feel free to donate as little or as much as they would like and still have fun while dancing.

Business Solicitation includes going to businesses and asking for donations. The best way to gain donations from businesses is a letter stating what it is that they are donating to and why they should donate.

Fundraising is not the only way to raise awareness but can turn over a quick profit for the Fund. A few other ideas that are easy and can be quickly implemented are a website, table sitting, a giving tree, and a basket raffle.

A website can quickly create awareness. An idea for a website could be a list of shelters in the Worcester community where a person can not only check out information about it but sign up to volunteer. Also on the website could be what the shelter has to offer such as whether it allows children, addicts, and other homeless demographics

Table sitting can both create awareness and raise funds. During table sitting it is easy to solicit for money by asking for donation or raise awareness by passing out information about homelessness. During table sitting you can also do other fundraising ideas such as a giving tree or a basket raffle where you create different types of basket and sell tickets for each of the baskets.

Research, fundraising, and raising awareness are great ways to get the community involved with the problem of homelessness. These ideas are very easy start and raise money. They can easily be implemented and can create a huge success. With methods of fundraising as well as creating awareness through events and activities possible solutions to homeless may develop. These solutions will both help prevent as well as diminish homelessness.

Chapter 5 Results

Research started with a basic definition of homeless. This enabled the reportee to categorize who was actually homeless and who was just a displaced person. With this basic definition of homelessness the reportee was able to tighten the scope on who was affected by homelessness. After the background research about Abby's House was necessary so that fundraising for this fund would run much smoother.

Abby's Fund was created by a professor at WPI. This created a quick and efficient research tool for the reportee. They were able to go directly to him to learn about the Fund. Professor Hakim supplied them with a booklet of information about the Fund and how the fund was use. In this booklet was information about how the women of Abby's House used the fund as well as others that have received scholarships from the fun.

While at Abby's house they met with Katrina, one of the women in charge of Abby's House, and some of the women staying at the shelter. They toured the thrift store and the conference rooms. At Abby's house they ate lunch with some of the women staying there and heard about their lives and what caused them to become homeless.

Stories for these women's homelessness ranged from women who had divorced their husbands and were left with nothing to women who were abused and chose to leave before it got worse. After listening to the women's stories this added knowledge of homelessness to the reportee. These stories gave insight to what Abby's House actually does for these women and how the women feel about Abby's House

Katrina showed me movie that was filmed to introduce the public to Abby's House and the work they do. This film also shared more women's stories and what their life was like living

in the shelter. It also introduced the founder of Abby's House and what made her decide to create Abby's House.

During the School year Professor Hakim sets up dances at the WPI's Alden Hall. These dances allowed guest to dance as well as an option of dance lessons. These dances have recommended donations but donations are not required. Many people from the Worcester community come to dance and donate. These donations go directly to the Abby's Empowerment Fund.

During these dances many people donate and in one dance alone over \$1,000 was donated to the Empowerment fund.

. In Appendix A is a letter that was sent to businesses around the WPI community. In this letter is what Abby's Empowerment fund is and what it does as well as why the company should donate.

For this project the reportee focused on soliciting businesses that could directly impact Abby's House immediately instead of having an auction for items and having the money go to Abby's House. This included places such as grocery stores, pharmacies and health needs. Grocery gift certificates could help Abby's House with food while places such as Home Depot could help with minor repairs or any easy fixes that Abby's House needs. The 11 businesses that the reportee went to are in Appendix G.

With the business solicitation out of the 11 businesses 3 were able to donate. 4 wanted official letter head with tax ID's and 5 were unable to donate. The responses received from these businesses are also in Appendix G.

By focusing on the immediate needs of Abby's House, this cut down on many places to solicit. These included food places such as the Boynton or the Sole Proprietor. In the future these should be asked to donate for things such as auctions or baskets.

Many companies were very willing to donate after an official letter was given. Each company had its own policy on what they were able to donate and what they needed in order to donate. Companies such as Target were only able to give one gift card a month away and Shaw's was only able to give a gift certificate after they had a meeting to deem them worthy.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

Many people can be considered as homeless, it does not matter what you look like, your age or whether you have family or not. It may even be difficult to figure out who is actually homeless. Not only is homelessness an issue in America it is also an issue locally. With at least 2,000 people homeless in Worcester there are plenty of people that need homeless help.

There are many possible actions that suggest solutions to homelessness. These include affordable housing systems such as the Housing First Model that was part of the Worcester three year program. The McKinney Homeless Act of 1987 helps provide funds and assistance for the homeless. There are multiple healthcare programs that are also implemented for the solution of homelessness such Community Healthlink and CMHA.

Abby's House and Abby's Empowerment Fund are a great way to help the homeless in the Worcester Community. Abby's House provides shelter and advocacy for those who have nowhere else to go. They empower women to enrich their lives through the services they provide. The women who stay at Abby's House have a safe place to stay while they are transitioning. Abby's Empowerment Fund helps these women enrich their lives. It provides funds for things such as schooling and skill development that women are able to find jobs that fit with the skills they gain.

Fundraising is a good way to not only support a good cause but also raise awareness. Fundraising is a way to inform businesses of what Abby's House is doing and why they are doing this. Businesses are then more likely to remember the cause and donate again. This project introduces many ways to fundraise and raise awareness for Abby's Empowerment Fund and Abby's House.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Solicitation Letter to Businesses

To whom it may concern:

My name is Alexzandria Haney and I am doing an Interactive Qualifying Project (IQP) at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). For my IQP I am working on raising funds for Abby's Empowerment Fund. In order to do this I would like to start a clothing drive or a Penny War drive at your school.

Abby's Empowerment Fund was established in 2009 by Professor Hossein Hakim, a professor at WPI. It was established at the Greater Worcester Community Foundation and the mission of this Fund is to raise and distribute small, high impact grants which empower the women of Abby's House to overcome specific barriers to success. This grant supports women with educational expenses, childcare expenses, job training expense, as well as required job related clothing and uniforms that are not available through Abby's Thrift Shop.

We are asking local businesses and restaurants to donate gift certificates that will be auctioned off to students and faculty. We are hoping to receive numerous gift certificates throughout the Worcester area, so that we have a diversity of items for people to bid on. We recommend a donation of \$100, but even \$25 can make a great difference.

Thank you for your time,

Alexzandria Haney

WPI Fundraising for Homelessness IQP

Appendix B: Letter to School

To whom it may concern:

My name is Alexzandria Haney and I am doing an Interactive Qualifying Project (IQP) at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). For my IQP I am working on raising funds for Abby's Empowerment Fund. In order to do this I would like to start a clothing drive or a Penny War drive at your school.

Abby's Empowerment Fund was established in 2009 by Professor Hossein Hakim, a professor at WPI. It was established at the Greater Worcester Community Foundation and the mission of this Fund is to raise and distribute small, high impact grants which empower the women of Abby's House to overcome specific barriers to success. This grant supports women with educational expenses, childcare expenses, job training expense, as well as required job related clothing and uniforms that are not available through Abby's Thrift Shop.

By holding a clothing drive, the clothes that are donated will go to Abby's Thrift Shop. This shop allows the women of Abby's house to obtain clothing for either work or just for everyday wear. These items are also available to the public at low costs. The money that is raised from these sales goes to continuing the work of Abby's House. The Penny War drive profits would go directly into the Abby's Empowerment Fund to help reach the goal of \$100,000.

Because the last day for the Worcester Public Schools is June 14th, and I need to collect the information of the data before the beginning of June, I would like to start the clothing drive and the Penny War drive by May 9th. That way it can end by May 20th and I will have plenty of time to collect my data.

Thank you for your time,

Alexzandria Haney

WPI Fundraising for Homelessness IQP

Appendix C: Schools That Received Letters

All Schools that received letters are schools In Worcester, MA.

School Contacted	Address	Person Contacted
Worcester Public Schools	20 Irving Street	Dr. Melinda Boone
Worcester Academy	81 Providence Street	Dexter Morse
St. Mary's High School	50 Richland Street	Michael Dedek
Notre Dame Academy	425 Salisbury Street	Ann Morrison

Appendix D: Interviews

Tammy

- How long have coming to Abby's House
 - Living there since last august
 - Born and raised in Worcester
- Living in Abby's house
 - Awesome give you everything you need
 - Abdicate (Katrina)
 - Supportive
 - Giving
 - Holiday meals
 - Christmas gifts
 - Encouragement
 - Went back to school to home health aid
 - Flunked
 - With encouragement too remedial classes
 - Not moving from Abby's House
- Average day
 - Got up at 5am
 - Went to school
 - Red cross
 - Till 3
 - Laundry or read eat shower
 - Women's center
 - Commodore(friendship)
 - Very helpful
 - Lots of friends
 - Hangout w. a lot of women's from Abby's house
 - Now waiting to take state test
 - Hoping to be a home health aid
 - Month of May
 - Two daughters
 - Visit in Florida
 - 3 children under 5

- Back in June return to start working as home aid

Joni

- How long have you been at Abby's House
 - March 1977 on and off
 - Lived in Worcester whole life
 - Married to join service
 - army
- How did you find out about Abby's House
 - Met another battered women
 - Women suggested it
 - If one day she got homeless to look it up
 - Kept it in the wallet
 - Battered women(basically considered)
 - Left before damage
 - Left NY
 - Terrytown, NY
 - With just a bag
 - Helped get a bag left in the middle of the night
 - Came on the bus
 - Always comes back here (this is home)
 - After losing dad august 7th 1959
 - State hospital in the 60s because got sick
 - No agency's to turn to or help
 - 1965 involved w. a man
 - Stayed with him till 77
 - Met the beaten women
 - Wanted to help each other
 - Women to Abby's House helps women
 - Went up to see step mother (Worcester)
 - Mother said no
 - Aunt said no too
 - got taken to Abby's House
 - Very kind
 - Reassuring
 - Gave her her own room
 - Never wanted to give up
 - got a job

- was able to stay two weeks
 - taberts
- could only stay at the shelter for 3 days
 - wanted to see who had the will to go on and get a job
- things would just appear at the door
- November 76 – January 77
 - Stayed in the shelter more than anything else
 - Needed the support
 - Decorated Christmas tree
 - Lots of food from agencies
 - Wasn't alone anymore
 - Became very independent
 - Started fighting back or leaving
 - On and off with Joe for 20 years
 - Joe died In august 9th 85
- Abby's House
 - Her whole life
 - Didn't want stay at Abby's but likes coming back
 - Stayed a couple of nights
 - Wanted to get a room and get into AA
 - Doors always open when in need of help
 - Elaine helped her get into the meeting AA
 - After Joes death went into VA hospital in California
 - Hospital notified Abby's House
 - Took the bus cross country and came back to Worcester in 87
- Own apartment Webster towers 97
- Lived there 18 years
- Met Martha
 - Like a sister that she never had

Appendix E: Health Problems Faced by Homeless women

Health Issue	Key Findings
Chronic Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The most common chronic physical conditions (excluding substance abuse) are hypertension, gastrointestinal problems, neurological disorders, arthritis and other musculoskeletal disorders, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and peripheral vascular disease.
Infectious Disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The most common infectious diseases reported were chest infection, cold, cough, and bronchitis; reporting was the same for those formerly homeless, currently homeless, and other service users. •Homeless patients with tuberculosis were more likely to present with a more progressed form than non-homeless. •Widespread screening for TB in shelters may miss most homeless persons because many do not live in the shelter, and instead present in emergency departments.
STDs/HIV/AIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •A mobile women’s health unit in Chicago reported that of 104 female homeless clients, 30 percent had abnormal Pap smears—14 percent with atypical and 10 percent with inflammation; the incidence of chlamydia was 3 percent, gonorrhea 6 percent, and trichomoniasis 26 percent. •HIV infection was found to be 2.35 times more prevalent in homeless, drug-abusing women than homeless, drug-abusing men.
Stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Homeless mothers reported higher levels of stress, depression, and avoidance and anti-cognitive coping strategies than low-income, housed mothers. Nutrition •Currently and formerly homeless clients are more likely to report not getting enough to eat (28 and 25 percent respectively) than among all U.S. households (4 percent) and among poor households (12 percent). •Contrary to their opinions, homeless women and their dependents were consuming less than 50 percent of the 1989 recommended daily allowance for iron, magnesium, zinc, folic acid, and calcium. •Subjects of all ages consumed higher than desirable quantities of fats. •The health risk factors of iron deficiency anemia, obesity, and hypercholesterolemia were prevalent
Smoking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •More than half of both homeless mothers and low-income housed mothers were current smokers, compared with 22.6 percent of female adults 18 years and over.
Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor women are at higher risk for violence than women overall; poverty increases stress and lowers the ability to cope with the environment and live safely. • In a study of 436 sheltered homeless and poor housed women: 84 percent of these women had been severely assaulted at some point in their lives; • 63 percent had been severely assaulted by parental caretakers while growing up; 40 percent had been sexually molested at least once before reaching adulthood; 60 percent had experienced severe physical attacks by a male intimate partner, and 33 percent had been assaulted by their current or most recent partner. • A study of 53 women homeless for at least three months in the past year demonstrated that this group is at a very high risk of battery and rape, with 91 percent exposed to battery and 56 percent exposed to rape

- Substance Abuse
- Homeless women comprise a subpopulation at high risk for substance abuse; rates of substance use disorder range from 16 percent to 67 percent.
 - There exists an imbalance between treatment need and treatment access.
 - Some homeless people with mental disorders may use drugs or alcohol to self-medicate.
- Mental Health/
Depression
- A case-control study of 100 homeless women with schizophrenia and 100 non-homeless women with schizophrenia found that homeless women had higher rates of a concurrent diagnosis of alcohol abuse, drug abuse, antisocial personality disorder, and also had less adequate family support.
 - Many homeless women with serious mental illness are not receiving care; this is due to lack of perception of a mental health problem and lack of services designed to meet the needs of homeless women.

SOURCE: Gillian Silver and Rea Panares, "Table 2. Summary of Study Findings Related to Health Problems Faced by Homeless Women," in *The Health of Homeless Women: Information for State Mental and Child Health Programs*, Women's and Children's Health Policy Center, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School for Public Health, 2000,

http://www.jhsph.edu/WCHPC_/Publications/homeless.PDF

Appendix F: Summary Table of Objectives

Objective	Time Frame	Responsible Party	Targeted Funding Sources
Objective 1.1.1 Develop 60 units of permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless using the Housing First model.	60 units (20 units/ year for 3 years)	G. Carmark/ CMHA	HUD McKinney \$13,500/unit/year total
Objective 1.1.2 Develop 90 units of permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless using the Home and Healthy for Good	90 units (30 units/ year for 3 years)	Sen. E.Augustus	Commonwealth of Massachusetts \$13,500/unit/year total
Objective 1.1.3 Develop 90 units of permanent supportive housing for chronically and near-chronically homeless individuals using a more intensive service model through CHAIN initiative	90 units (30 units/ year for 3 years)	D. Ekstrom/ CHL	Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts \$16,000/unit/year
Objective 1.1.4 Develop 30 units of permanent supportive housing for families with a disabled parent using the Housing First model.	30 units (10 units/ yr. for 3 years)	G. Carmark/ CMHA	HUD McKinney Convert existing transitional
Objective 1.1.5 Develop 30 units of units of permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals using the Housing	30 units (10 units/ yr. for 3 years)	G. Carmark/ CMHA	HUD McKinney Convert existing permanent
Objective 1.1.6 Develop 300 units of single-person housing with services to be used as an alternative to shelter for homeless individuals.	300 units (100 units/year for 3 years)	S. Hayman/ City of Worcester	Mass. DHCD/ Mass. Housing/ CEDAC/ City of Worcester HOME Funds/ Worcester Housing Authority/ RCAP Solutions
Objective 1.1.7 Increase state MR VP rental subsidies for Worcester homeless families by 150	60 new units public funding 60 project based housing choice vouchers 150 vouchers (50/yr. for 3 years)		Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Objective 1.2 Eliminate homeless shelters within 3 years and convert to Housing First	Reduce shelter beds from current census by 33.3% per year for 3 years		Commonwealth of Massachusetts DTA Conversion to Housing First

model

Objective 1.3 Close the PIP Shelter within 3 years	Reduce shelter beds from current census by 33.3% per year for 3 years	J Cuddy/ SMOC	Commonwealth of Massachusetts DTA Conversion to Housing First
Objective 1.4 Develop assessment and triage services for families	Convert existing family shelter(s)		Commonwealth of Massachusetts DTA Conversion to Housing First
Objective 1.5 Develop an Assessment and Triage Service for Homeless Individuals that includes Aggressive Outreach and Case Management Components	Lease existing institutional or commercial space		Commonwealth of Mass/ City of Worcester \$800,00/ yr.
Objective 2.1.1 Increase availability of flexible funds to prevent homelessness through expansion of RAFT Program and Emergency Shelter Grants	Add funds to serve additional 1 00 families annually	G. Carmark/ CMHA	Commonwealth of Massachusetts DTA Conversion to Housing First
Objective 2.1.2 Expand case management resources for prevention of homelessness among families by two FIE staff	Add staff Year I	G. Carmark/ CMHA	Private foundations/ Commonwealth of Mass/ City of Worcester \$80,000/yr.
Objective 2.2 Increase Educational Efforts to Develop an Early Warning System to Target those At-risk of Homelessness.	Develop during Year I	G. Carmark/ CMHA	No cost
Objective 3.1 Target the chronically homeless	Begin immediately		Not Cost
Objective 3.2.1 Improve admissions/discharge practices in existing housing programs to increase movement in and out of system	Initiate changes Year I		No cost
Objective 3.2.2 Convert existing housing programs to Housing First where feasible	Initiate changes		Not Cost
Objective 3.3.1 Develop 300 job opportunities for homeless individuals and families	300 jobs (100 jobs/year for 3 years)	Hon. J. Levy	Worcester businesses No cost
Objective 3.3.2 Provide child care and after-	Provide 200 child care/after- school slots		Commonwealth of Massachusetts DIA

school programming for all homeless families	for homeless families		Conversion to Housing First
Objective 3.3.3	100 families/year		City of Worcester/ WRIA \$3,000/yr.
Provide 50% subsidized bus passes for homeless families			
Objective 4.1	Year I		City of Worcester \$35,000/yr.
Help coordinate and monitor the performance of Worcester housing and service programs for the homeless	0.5 FIE staff or equivalent		
Objective 4.2	Year I		City of Worcester \$35,000/yr.
Develop a City Commission on Homelessness	0.5 FIE staff or equivalent		
Objective 5.1	Year 1		Commonwealth of Mass.
Support legislation by the Commonwealth that reimburses Cities for the loss of taxable income from property converted to use by nonprofits; and, penalizes communities that do not accept their fair share of nonprofit programs			No cost
Objective 5.2	Year I	Hon. J Levy	Worcester businesses and colleges
Involve local businesses and colleges in siting programs and developing new housing for the homeless			No public

Total Annual Cost: \$4,418,000

Total One-Time Cost: \$4,500,000

*Total annual costs are at full implementation after 3 years. Costs during implementation years are roughly proportional. Total one-time costs can be spread over 3 years. Costs do not reflect savings achieved in other expenditures for the homeless population through reduction in public services used by individuals and families receiving supportive housing. Costs associated with conversion of the shelter system to Housing First should be offset by reductions in spending for homeless shelters by the Massachusetts DTA. (Levy & Mulford, 2007)

Appendix G: List of Businesses

Business	Address	Outcome
Lowes	533 Lincoln Street	Waiting to hear back
Home Depot	130 Goldstar Blvd.	Will Donate
Shaw's	14 West Boylston Street	Can only donate after vote
Price Chopper	221 Park Ave	Donated
Wal-Mart	25 Tobias Way	Unable to Donate
Price Rite	117 Goldstar Blvd	Unable to Donate
Rob Roy	50 Southwest Cutoff	Will Donate
CVS	400 Park Ave	Unable to Donate
Walgreens	320 Park Ave	Unable to Donate
Target	529 Lincoln Street	Only one donation per month
Stop & Shop	545 Lincoln Street	Waiting to hear back