

SAFEHAVEN

Safehouse for victims of human sex trafficking

In a collaborative effort that includes many City and State agencies, an experienced and respected team was assembled to bring the vision of a “Safe Haven” to life, for the first time in the Commonwealth. The team was comprised of a number of critical stakeholders including, among others, representatives of the Massachusetts Office of Victim Assistance; Mayor Walsh’s Office of Women’s Advancement and Department of Neighborhood Development; the EVA Center (an organization working with trafficking survivors); Casa Myrna (one of the region’s leading nonprofits working to end domestic violence); and the Human Trafficking Unit for the Attorney General. Adding to the significant commitment of these groups, the Planning Office for Urban Affairs (POUA) and the Archdiocese of Boston stepped up to make available a property in which the Safe Haven would be located.

The property is located in a low-crime neighborhood of the City of Boston, which is a critical requirement of the “safe haven” pilot program. This property was previously operated as emergency housing for women in crisis for more than 30 years and has a current lodging house license, making it an ideal space for the safe haven use due to both the physical layout of the building and its status as an existing lodging house. Beyond simply providing housing, the Safe Haven will provide crisis intervention, legal services, immigration assistance, mental and medical health service referrals, support groups, 24-hour on-site staffing, and other critical services for the residents. To provide these services the Planning Office for Urban Affairs has partnered with Casa Myrna, an organization with a long history of success in assisting individuals in crisis in the City of Boston, and the EVA Center, a non-profit housed within the Family Justice Center. The service program will be flexible and unique to each person, responsive and evolving, and intended for the long-term by following residents after they leave the housing program for as long as possible.



Developer & Owner:

Planning Office for Urban Affairs

Service Providers:

Casa Myrna
The Eva Center

Architect: The Architectural Team

Contractor: NEI General Contracting, Inc.

Attorney: Nolan Sheehan Patten

Appraiser: Byrne McKinney

Financing:

City of Boston Dept. of Neighborhood Development
Commonwealth of Mass. MA Office for Victim Assistance
Cambridge Housing Authority - Moving to Work