The mission of Sojourner House is to promote healthy relationships by providing culturally sensitive support, advocacy, housing, and education for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking; and to effect systems change.
LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.”

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

This past year, we at Sojourner House witnessed an increase in the demand for our services, and we were able to expand our existing programs in new ways. We now provide over 150 apartment units to families through our permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, and transitional housing programs.

Two years ago, we officially launched a housing development program, and during 2022 we purchased four buildings, and we closed on a fifth property at the beginning of 2023. During our 2022 fiscal year, we provided housing to over 282 survivors of abuse, which was an increase of 35% over the past year. We also provided direct services to close to 1,900 unique individuals across all of our direct services programs.

While we celebrate Sojourner House’s growth in the community, it is important to remember why Sojourner House exists – to provide support, advocacy, and life-saving resources to victims of abuse – and to affirm that we envision a world where domestic abuse, sexual assault, and human trafficking cease to exist. As much as we are proud that our programs have grown and we are serving more people than ever before in our history, we acknowledge at the same time that there is still so much work yet ahead of us to ensure that everyone is able to live free from abuse.

Therefore, it is imperative that we refuse to remain silent about the prevalence of abuse in our society. One silver lining of the COVID-19 pandemic was that it raised the visibility of the severity of abuse and the staggering number of people who are affected by it. We must continue to work to remind elected officials, public health administrators, and the general public that we will not --and cannot-- tolerate a world where anyone experiences abuse.

In the midst of current and ongoing threats to the rights of the vulnerable, our community makes our work possible. Thank you for standing by us, and for joining our voices as we continue to raise awareness and provide support to those who need it most.

Warmly,

Vanessa Volz
Executive Director
Over the past few years, our staff and our programs have grown exponentially. As a result, we needed more physical space, which led us to the acquisition of our Westminster property.

In June of 2022, Sojourner House purchased a historic property in the West End of Providence for multi-purpose use. This building now houses our immigration, clinical, housing, and advocacy teams, and serves as the central Drop-In Center for clients.

In March 2023, we launched a two-year $1.5M Capital Campaign to pay off the mortgage on 1570 Westminster Street, cover needed repairs, and create an operating reserve fund for future building expenses.

We have already secured an initial $250,000 seed grant from the Champlin Foundation to put towards this Campaign. Additionally, we received a “challenge” grant from the Champlin Foundation, for a maximum additional award of up to $225,000. We have until Oct. 31, 2023 to raise matching funds.

The Capital Campaign is led by a committee of volunteers who are engaging members of the community to support the work of Sojourner House. Donations will also support preservation and maintenance of this iconic, historic Mansard building that has been a cornerstone of the West End since 1876.

Since the start of the pandemic, Sojourner House has more than doubled the size of its workforce. Where we had 23 full-time staff in 2019, we have 55 now. This expansion in headcount has allowed us to grow our programs and services considerably, and provide more holistic care to our clients.

In September of 2022, our ever-growing staff gathered for a retreat to set goals, have fun, reflect, and reconnect with Sojourner House’s mission and values.
FY2022 FINANCIALS

REVENUE: $6,037,506

- Government Funds: 55%
- Corporate & Foundation Grants: 24%
- Contributions: 16%
- Special Events: 4%
- Rent & Other Income: 1%

EXPENSES: $4,810,984

- Housing: 52%
- Emergency Shelter: 6%
- Management and General: 5%
- Development: 4%
- Development & Fundraising: 4%
- Housing Development: 2%
- Education: 5%
- Drop In & Community: 20%
- Trafficking: 6%

IN FY2022, YOU HELPED US PROVIDE...

- 50,271 bed nights in rapid rehousing for 247 clients
- 23,094 nights in permanent supportive housing for 73 clients
- 16,555 bed nights in transitional housing for 77 clients
- 1,473 responses to hotline calls
- 4,242 referrals to other social service agencies
- 286 clients with immigration assistance, for 1,599 sessions
- 23,304 sessions across all of our programs for a total of 12,595 drop in hours
- 6,845 individuals with education services
- 1,391 hours of clinical service for 175 clients
- 2,074 support group hours
GROWTH IN HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

In August of 2022, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse held a press conference announcing Sojourner House as the recipient of a highly competitive $850,000 congressional appropriation. With this award, we were able to expand our housing development program and purchase two additional residential properties; one in Providence and one in Northern Rhode Island.

Due to our work, we are too familiar with the fact that access to safe, secure housing is often a barrier for a victim to flee from an abusive situation. The more stable, permanent housing options we can provide for families to rebuild their lives, the more successful we can become in breaking the cycle of abuse that often forces victims to return to an abusive situation.

Knowing this, and recognizing the shortage of affordable housing in our community, Sojourner House made the decision in 2020 to begin housing development work of our own. Since then, we’ve made five real estate transactions and currently own or lease over 150 units statewide. This allows us to provide permanent supportive housing to victims, as we know this is the most effective way to help victims and their families transition out of very dangerous situations into safety. We’re extremely grateful for this expanded federal funding and for the support of Senator Whitehouse.

SUPPORTING TRANSITIONAL AGE YOUTH (TAY)

In October 2022, Sojourner House launched a new program called TAY, which provides transitional housing and rapid rehousing to transitional age youth (ages 18-24).

This new program was developed as a means of responding to the rising levels of youth homelessness across the state. TAY now has three dedicated staff members, all of whom understand the long term effects of childhood trauma and the unique challenges faced by youth survivors of abuse.

TAY advocates work with clients to create action plans that outline goals related to education, employment, childcare and maintaining housing.

Clients are eligible for up to two years of rental assistance and supportive services through the program.

At this stage, the TAY team are beginning to develop additional programming specific to this age demographic. They are discussing offering financial literacy programs, sexual health workshops, resume coaching sessions, and life-skills training.
Historically, the primary source of funding for Sojourner House’s Immigration Advocacy program has come from VOCA (Victims of Crime Act), a federal grant program. However, in recent years, while requests for immigration services have only increased, VOCA funding has been cut significantly. In the last two years it dropped approximately 65%.

In 2022, when funding for our Immigration Advocacy program was looking unstable and we were fearing for the worst, the Papitto Opportunity Connection stepped up and awarded us a two year, $500,000 grant.

The funding from the Papitto Opportunity Connection came at a critical time. Their support allowed us to fill critical funding gaps in the program and ensure that we could continue to provide the same level of care and, indeed, meet the increased demand for additional immigration services.

With this grant funding, we were able to expand our service offerings and even hire additional staff. We now support two-full time and two part-time staff members in the only immigration advocacy program in a domestic violence agency in Rhode Island. Two of our staff members are Department of Justice accredited representatives who can assist survivors of abuse in preparing and filing U.S. non-immigrant visa petitions and applications for naturalization, permanent residence, and adjustments of status.

With this grant, we were able to stabilize our Immigration Advocacy program and expand access to vital resources.

**Immigration staff member with a client after winning her asylum case at the Boston Immigration Court.**

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**2022**
SPECIAL EVENTS

In 2022, with the support of our friends and community partners, we hosted two widely successful special events: the 7th Annual Sojo Mojoe Breakfast and the 12th Annual Masquerade Ball.

SOJO MOJOE BREAKFAST

On May 26, 2022, our community came together at the Providence Marriott Downtown for a celebration of service at the Sojo Mojoe Breakfast. Nearly 300 supporters of Sojourner House gathered to hear stories about our work and our clients, and to help us recognize those whose contributions have been critical to our growth. Together we raised over $175,000 from our breakfast and spring fundraising campaign to serve victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking.

MASQUERADE BALL

Later in the year, on November 18, 2022, the Graduate Providence was transformed into a Royal Garden Party for Sojourner House’s Masquerade Ball fundraiser. Over 400 guests came dressed in their best gala attire for the event, which featured live music, delicious treats, and a variety of fun performances. The event raised more funds for our programs (over $190K) than ever before!
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GET INVOLVED

Sojourner House relies on the support and generosity of our community to provide safe housing, counseling, and holistic care to victims of interpersonal violence across the Ocean State. There are many ways to get involved and support our work and our clients, including:

MAKE A DONATION

As Rhode Island’s largest and most comprehensive victim service agency, Sojourner House receives requests for help from new survivors every day. The services we provide are life saving, and with your help we can grow our impact and expand our reach. Every donation, no matter the amount, helps us respond to the rising number of requests for safe shelter and supportive care.

Monetary donations can be made online, via mail, or on the phone. If you would like to make an in-kind donation instead, our staff regularly updates the Amazon, Walmart, and Target wish lists linked on our website with the items most needed by their programs.

BECOME A VOLUNTEER

Our website (www.sojournerri.org) describes numerous ways you and/or your company can lend a hand across our programs. Opportunities for volunteers are vast, but some examples are: tabling at events, fundraising, answering our helpline, coordinating donation drives, assisting with childcare, helping with support groups, planning programming and activity nights for survivors and their children.