

A photograph of a woman with dark curly hair, wearing a light blue t-shirt, sitting on a bed and kissing a young child on the cheek. The child is wearing a yellow ruffled shirt and has a small pink bow in their hair. They are sitting on a bed with a striped blanket and blue pillows. The image is framed by a yellow circular border.

Partnering to End Homelessness

**Board of Representatives Fiscal Committee
Wednesday, April 9, 2025**

**Rosalba Messina
CEO**



From Homeless to Home

Agency Summary

MISSION

Inspirica strives to end homelessness and housing insecurity by helping individuals and families achieve independence through support services and affordable housing.

Agency Summary

OUR IMPACT

3,500+	individuals served across all programs
2,900+	community members served through Holiday Wishes and Harvest for Hope
150+	Job placements made
114+	Families & individuals moved into permanent supportive housing
510+	Number of people sheltered per night

Inspirica's Housing Programs

Serving approximately 510 individuals each night, providing emergency and permanent housing solutions for our community's most vulnerable population

FAMILY HOUSING
Emergency Housing - 42 Beds
MCKINNEY HOUSE
2 Suites/15 Beds



WOMEN'S HOUSING
25 Beds



ATLANTIC PARK
27 Units/27 Beds



COLONY APTS.
29 Units/29 Beds



FRANKLIN APTS.
53 Units/125 Beds



GILEAD HOUSE
16 Units/16 Beds



INSPIRE HOUSE
13 Units/13 Beds



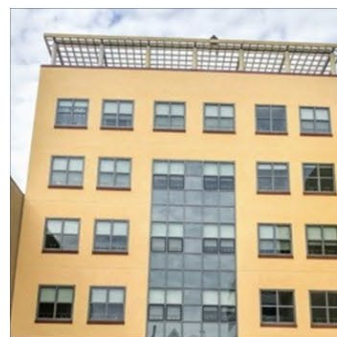
METCALF HOUSE
10 Units/10 Beds



ROSE PARK APTS.
3 Units/8 Beds



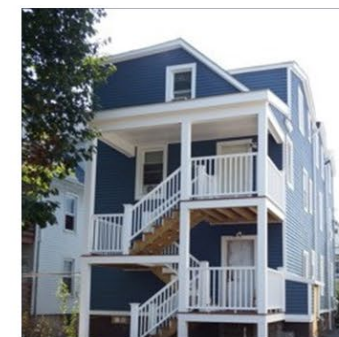
SUMMER PLACE
48 Units/64 Beds



24 WOODLAND
6 Units/12 Beds



26 WOODLAND
3 Units/6 Beds



Agency Summary

Residential Programs

- **Women's Housing Program (Emergency Shelter)** – Provides emergency shelter for up to 25 single women each night
- **Family Housing Program (Emergency Shelter)** - 67 beds of housing for families with minor children
- **Cold Weather Shelter, Warming Center, & Triage Center** -Emergency shelter beds for individuals and families to come inside during the frigid winter months
- **Specialized Housing –**
 - **Gilead House:** 13 permanent beds and 3 transitional beds for adults with chronic mental illness
 - **McKinney House:** 15 permanent beds for adults living with HIV/AIDS
- **Permanent Supportive Housing –**
 - Three 2-bedroom apartments for families
 - 56 studio apartments for individuals
 - 13 SRO units in shared apartments for individuals in our new Inspire House program
- **Affordable & Deeply Affordable Housing** -Income restricted permanent housing units for individuals, families, and seniors (in collaboration with Charter Oak Communities)



Agency Summary

Non-Residential/Support Services

- **Early Childhood & Parenting Program –**
 - Pre-literacy and developmental support for children
 - parenting support and skill building for adults
- **Children's Services –**
 - Meeting the needs of school-aged children and youth
 - health, wellness, and basic needs
 - homework help and tutoring
 - mental health and behavioral health



Agency Summary

Non-Residential/Support Services

- **Education, Employment & Financial Empowerment Program –**
 - Helping adults acquire the basic skills they need to get a job, keep a job, and advance in the workforce
 - workforce and vocational training
 - a full-serve employment agency
 - Includes pathways to a high school diploma or equivalent
 - English as a Second Language
 - basic financial literacy education
 - includes a Wage Growth Initiative to help people increase their earning potential
- **Support Services -**
 - Counseling and in-house case management
 - Direct access to medical, including telehealth and dental care
 - Inpatient substance abuse treatment & psychiatric care provided through a network of strategic partnerships



ANTICIPATED CHANGES FY26

Key Staffing Changes

Inspirica recently promoted Sydney DeLago to Director of Development having been with the organization for 6 years. We just hired a new Sr VP of Human Resources due to start in Mid April.

In FY24, Inspirica began to utilize an outsourced fiscal department after the departure of our long-serving CFO. While this arrangement has assisted Inspirica in this transitional period, we believe having an in-house fiscal department better serves the needs of the agency. Inspirica anticipates hiring a new permanent VP of Finance/Controller and Assistant Controller over the next few months.

Headcount Changes

Inspirica recognizes the unprecedented nature of the current federal fiscal environment. In spite of these challenges, we are committed to maintaining the essential services upon which our most vulnerable neighbors have come to rely. Inspirica does not anticipate headcount reductions in the coming year.

Capital Expense Requests

Inspirica has requested or secured funding for completing renovations to the lobby at 141 Franklin St., as well as the resident bathrooms at 141 Franklin St. to ensure ADA compliance.

Inspirica is actively exploring housing development opportunities in collaboration with housing developers and with current housing partners. By working closely with trusted partners, we aim to create innovative solutions that not only provide housing but also integrate our vital wraparound services, including job readiness, childcare and afterschool support.

NEW OR EXPANDED PROGRAMS FY26

Enhanced Programming for Seniors

In recognition of the complex needs of homeless and formerly homeless seniors, Inspirica will be focused on engaging senior participants to provide wraparound services, educational and wellness events, social engagement, and other needed supports.



Talkspace Mental Health Services

Inspirica is partnering with Talkspace to provide convenient online access to licensed therapists for our residents. This pilot project has shown success, and Inspirica aims to expand access to this service in FY26.

Strategic Use of Space

Inspirica continues to explore ways to optimize the use of space in our main facility at 141 Franklin St.

This winter we were able to open a triage center to help community members out of the cold and provide some food and a warm bed to sleep over night. We continue to explore ways to utilize any additional space to provide services which will further our mission to end homelessness.



ABANDONED OR CURTAILED PROGRAMS FY26

While Inspirica recognizes the tenuous nature of the current federal funding environment, we do not anticipate closing any of our programs at this time.

KEY AGENCY CHALLENGES EXPECTED FY26

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is greatly lacking. Available rentals are fewer, more expensive, and in very high demand. Fair Market Rent for a 2-bedroom apartment in Stamford is now \$2,610 per month . Individuals and families are staying in shelter longer because they simply cannot afford to leave.

Inflation

Wages are not keeping pace with inflation. The minimum wage in Connecticut is \$16.35 per hour. According to the 2024 National Low Income Housing Coalition's Out of Reach report, a worker would need to earn \$50.54 per hour to afford a 2-bedroom apartment in Stamford without paying more than 30% of their income.

Individual Barriers

Many of Inspirica's residents live with severe mental and physical health diagnoses. These individuals need complex, supportive care – not just a temporary place to live. Many residents lack the education and workplace skills they need to get living-wage jobs. In fact, it's not uncommon for our clients to come to Inspirica with limited employment history. Yet, we know, the fastest way out of homelessness and towards stable housing is through gainful, stable employment.

Competition for units is high. Landlords are able to tighten the criteria applicants must meet to secure an apartment. Our clients often have limited or adverse credit history, justice involvement, or eviction histories and are not being approved for many of the housing options they typically would qualify for.

Competitive Wage

One of the ongoing challenges our organization faces is retaining and supporting our dedicated staff, who often work tirelessly despite wages that do not fully reflect the complexity and emotional demands of their roles. Alarming, some of these same staff members face housing insecurity themselves due to noncompetitive wages, placing them at risk of experiencing the very challenges they work to address. Competitive compensation is critical to sustaining a motivated and skilled workforce, which directly impacts the quality and consistency of services we provide to those experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity. Additional funding would enable us to better support our team, reduce turnover, and enhance program outcomes

HIGHLIGHTS, EFFICIENCIES, & SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS FY25

Additional Permanent Supportive Housing

In FY25, Inspirica opened 13 new PSH units in Stamford's South End. Inspire House is an SRO program for chronically homeless individuals. The building is arranged in three apartments with 3-5 individuals in each. Each apartment has individual locking bedrooms and shared common spaces, kitchens, and bathrooms.



Enhanced Programming for Youth

Each summer, children who reside in Inspirica's family shelter are given the opportunity to attend summer camp. Throughout the summer of 2024, children who were unable or chose not to attend summer camp were provided with additional enrichment opportunities within Inspirica or in collaboration with our community partners. Children were able to visit nature centers, museums, parks, and more.

Our Youth Center has also enhanced services by adding weekly Art Therapy sessions with a certified Art Therapist, as well as a weekly rotation of Bartlett Arboretum workshops and African Drumming sessions.



RESIDENT TESTIMONY

A photograph of a woman with dark curly hair tied back with a pink scrunchie, wearing a grey t-shirt, sitting on a couch and kissing a baby on the cheek. The baby is wearing a yellow ruffled onesie and has a small pink bow in her hair. The baby is holding a small pink toy. The background shows a window with white curtains and a blue cushion. The entire image is framed by a yellow circular border.

Thank You!

 Inspirica

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