



**ACTION** INC.

**2016 Annual Report**

Dear Friends,

As a Community Action Agency, what makes us special is our fundamental commitment to address our community’s specific needs. It’s who we are. By listening to residents, local leaders, and other stakeholders, we are able to develop programs that change individual lives while strengthening the community as a whole. We work collaboratively with partners to help all people in our service area access the opportunities they need to thrive.

In 2016, we served almost 7,000 Cape Ann residents. Some highlights include:

- Responding to the ongoing need for affordable housing, we purchased and renovated a four-unit building to provide new affordable rental units. Additionally, we received approval to move forward with our Harbor Village project, which will add 30 units of affordable housing to the community and will help revitalize part of Main Street in Gloucester. We hope to break ground in spring 2019.
- Our COMPASS Youth Education Program enhanced its emphasis on the growing needs of out-of-school youth, focusing on providing intensive tutoring, case management support, career services, and high school equivalency (HiSET) preparation to youth ages 16 to 24.
- Our HomeCare team added a range of dementia-specific services in response to the increased need among elderly residents.
- In conjunction with National Grid, our Energy team worked to provide more home energy assessments and conservation activities than ever before, helping to lower the energy burden of low-income people locally and across the state.

As we start our 52nd year, we face fresh challenges as an agency and a community. We do so, however, from a position of strength, inspired by Action’s history and emboldened by the incredible support we receive from our valued partners, donors, and friends.



All our best,  
*P. H. Steck*  
Peggy Hegarty-Steck  
Executive Director



*Roger Lesch*  
Roger Lesch  
Board Chair

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Our Mission

To improve the lives of disadvantaged people on Cape Ann and beyond by minimizing the effects of poverty, promoting economic security, and advocating for social change.



A partnership with Backyard Growers produces garden-fresh veggies for our shelter



Project Uplift brings holiday joy to over 600 local kids



Rockport High School Honor Society raises over \$1,000 for our shelter

COMMITTED TO OUR COMMUNITY

Action Inc. is a Community Action Agency proudly serving the Cape Ann communities of Gloucester, Ipswich, Rockport, Essex, and Manchester.

Established in 1965 under the Economic Opportunity Act, we are part of a network of more than 1,000 such agencies operating across America. Community Action Agencies act as hubs in their local communities, bringing together state, local, and national partners and providing vital services to promote economic security and access to opportunity.

For over **50** years, Action Inc. has been instrumental in improving community life, from originally providing Meals on Wheels; to operating Cape Ann’s public transit system before the formation of CATA; to forming and incubating the Fisherman’s Wives Association, Pathways for Children, SeniorCare, and the Cape Ann Food Bank (later The Open Door). Action Inc. is always at the forefront of addressing local community needs.

Today, Action Inc. continues to provide a range of essential services encompassing emergency shelter, affordable housing programs, job training and career services, in-home care for seniors, fuel assistance, educational programs for at-risk youth, advocacy and case management support, weatherization and energy efficiency programs, adult basic education, and Project Uplift, our holiday toy and clothing drive.



Sen. Tarr & Rep. Ferrante take a break during our 2016 Annual Meeting



Donation of blankets from the Gloucester Elks Lodge



# CLIENT & HOUSING SERVICES

Action Inc. works to help people find and maintain safe, secure housing. As housing costs rise, we see the many ways in which people struggle to maintain stable housing, and as the economy changes on Cape Ann, we help more and more people make ends meet.

## Advocacy

Our Client Services team is a resource for people who are facing challenges and don't know where else to turn. Our advocates meet with people to work on tough housing situations, financial instability, and more. They work with clients to make a plan and take proactive steps toward improving their lives.



*What do advocates & case managers do?*

- Help people apply for public benefits such as disability (SSI/SSDI), MassHealth, food stamps, & housing programs
- Help navigate tenant/landlord issues & housing court
- Connect people to other local resources, including employment & job training
- Provide concrete "next steps" to securing and maintaining stable housing



## Affordable Housing

In 2003, Action Inc. acquired and renovated our first units in Gloucester to help meet the rising demand for affordable housing. Today, we lease **23** units at below market rate to local individuals and families and provide an additional **66** units through housing vouchers.

*"Action pretty much saved my life as far as housing goes—not sure where I would be without their help."*

**416** households maintained their housing & became more stable thanks to our housing advocates

**35** families & individuals were housed in affordable housing units owned by Action Inc.

**229** people experiencing homelessness found a safe place to stay at our emergency shelter

**41** shelter guests found homes as a result of case management



## Emergency Shelter

When there's no place else to turn, our Emergency Shelter steps in to care for people experiencing homelessness. Guests work closely with staff on "moving on" plans to tackle mental health and substance abuse issues, regain employment, and secure permanent housing.

As an active member of the Gloucester High Risk Task Force, we work with emergency personnel and key stakeholders in the community to respond to the needs of our most at-risk residents.

## Housing First

Since 2012, our Housing First program has provided housing and hope to individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. Through Housing First, adults with disabilities and long histories of homelessness can receive permanent housing and supportive services. This program recognizes that a person often needs to have a roof over their head, a safe place to sleep, and the support of a case manager before they can improve their health and work toward long-term goals. Our Housing First case managers provide support to **24** tenants, visiting them at home to make sure they are safe and connected to the resources they need to thrive.



Action Inc. apartments in Gloucester

## Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA)



Thanks to Community Preservation Act grants from Gloucester and Rockport, Action Inc. helped **30** families survive financial hardships by providing temporary rental assistance and case management.

Jennifer Beloff, Director of Client & Housing Services  
Cheryl De Primio, Client Services Coordinator  
Michael Barry, Shelter Staff  
Caryn Clifford, QUEST Case Manager  
Molly Derr, Shelter Counselor  
Maureen Dexter, Coordinated Entry Case Manager  
Sophia Douglas, Intake Specialist  
Sean Dunne, Shelter Staff  
Deborah Eason, Advocate  
Erin George, Housing First Case Manager  
Fatima Gomes, Advocate  
Laura Guerriero, QUEST Nutritionist

Susan Howard, Shelter Staff  
Melissa Lezynski, Shelter Manager  
Doug Merlin, Shelter Staff  
Lacey Natti, Housing First Case Manager  
Jim Noble, Housing First Transitions Coordinator  
Kyle Olson, Shelter Staff  
Kevin Peddecord, Shelter Staff  
Sara Schultz, Shelter Staff  
John Thackery, Shelter Staff  
Heidi Weller, Advocate

# TIMOTHY L. RILEY EDUCATION & TRAINING CENTER

Since 1965, Action Inc. has been providing employment and education services to the Cape Ann community. We have focused on expanding access to employment opportunities for people with the greatest barriers. Dedicated in 2015 and named for our former Executive Director, the Riley Education and Training Center is a modern facility in downtown Gloucester that houses all of our Education and Job Training programs.

## COMPASS

Our COMPASS program helps out-of-school youth ages 16-24 to prepare for the High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) and supports them with finding employment or post-secondary education. Students in the COMPASS program receive tutoring, training, career counseling, life skills coaching, social/emotional support, and access to a range of referral services including housing, nutrition, and benefits advocacy.



## Healthcare Career Pathways

In order to improve employment opportunities for local residents, Action Inc. provides healthcare training classes. Classes prepare students to gain the state Nurse Aide Certification and Home Health Aide credentials, allowing them to embark on a meaningful and rewarding career. This program allows Cape Ann residents to enhance their earning potential and meets a growing need among local employers for healthcare professionals.



*“Without the help of Action, I don’t know what I would have done. My teachers never gave up on me. They gave me emotional support and the help I needed to apply for college.”*

**39**  
young adults served through our COMPASS programs

**31**  
young adults gained full-time employment or enrolled in post-secondary education

**41**  
adult students made significant, measurable learning gains

**52**  
people completed healthcare career training and gained critical job skills

## Adult Basic Education

Our Adult Basic Education program, in partnership with North Shore Community College, provides local residents with access to high quality instruction. Our program helps students improve their reading comprehension and writing skills, with the ultimate goal of achieving their HiSET. Classes are provided at three levels to meet students where they are and provide the tailored supports they need to improve their language skills and enhance their employment opportunities. We’re proud that this program has been rated in the top **5%** percent of ABE programs across Massachusetts based on student performance.



### *In Her Own Words: Fatoumata’s Story*

I was born and raised in West Africa in a family of thirteen children. From the time I was eight years old, I knew I had to cook. I would get fresh ingredients and create dishes from my heart. I loved cooking so much that I left high school to pursue my dream of starting my own business. I opened an outdoor kiosk in Ivory Coast, which became very successful.

Eventually, I decided to go to America to give my son a better life. Once here, I needed a steady income to support my son. I worked as a Home Health Aide, Certified Nursing Assistant, and Dialysis Assistant. However, this was not my dream because I wasn’t cooking, and I became severely depressed, disabled, and had to stop working in 2011.

Through all of this, I realized I wanted to go to college and study Culinary Arts. To do that, I needed my GED. So, I went to Action to take night classes; however, I had to stop studying due to my depression. Subsequently, I attended other programs, tried taking the GED twice, but didn’t pass. Then the GED was replaced with the HiSET. I passed everything but math and struggled with it for two years. I was determined, knew I needed more help, and went back to Action for math tutoring. It was difficult, but I wanted to achieve my goal and refused to give up. After taking the HiSET math test for the seventh time, I finally passed.

Without the help of Action, I don’t know what I would have done. My teachers never gave up on me. They gave me emotional support and the help I needed to apply for college. I didn’t have a family to support me in this country, so Action became my family.

I am presently a student at NSCC, studying Culinary Arts. It isn’t easy, but I am determined to complete the program. On May 1, I received the Barbara Geoffrion Memorial Award, an award given to a NSCC student who represents the dedication to education that Professor Geoffrion had during her long tenure at NSCC. My dream of becoming a professional cook is now within close reach, and I will complete my studies in 2018.

Michele Ameno, Adult Education Coordinator  
Shannon Cormier, Youth Education Coordinator  
Joan Fitzpatrick, Home Health Aide Instructor  
Eleanor Genest, Nursing Assistant Instructor  
Michael Hayes, Adult Basic Ed. Instructor

Stephanie Jackson, Adult Basic Ed. Counselor  
Erin McManus, Adult Basic Ed. Instructor  
Louis Rossi, Tutor  
Karli Washington, Academic & Career Counselor



# ENERGY SERVICES

Action Inc.'s Energy Services team has been helping people stay warm and reduce their heating and electricity bills since the 1970s. Our Energy team delivers direct assistance with fuel bills and provides energy efficiency upgrades for qualifying renters and homeowners. We are also a network leader, overseeing statewide contracts and advocating for low-income residents at the national level.

## Fuel Assistance

Action operates the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), often known as Fuel Assistance. Through this program, we serve residents of Hamilton and Wenham, in addition to our main service area of Gloucester, Ipswich, Rockport, Manchester, and Essex.

LIHEAP is a vital lifeline for people who often have to choose between heating their home and paying for other necessities, such as food or rent. This support allows many low-income people to stay in their homes and is increasingly important as housing costs rise on Cape Ann and beyond. Many working families are eligible for LIHEAP. While there are income limits, support is available to employed people, even those working full time.

*"I'm a divorced, single parent with three children, one of whom is disabled. Action's Fuel Assistance was there to keep us warm when I was unable to work due to caring for my disabled child."*



**1,810**  
local households stayed warm with emergency heating assistance

**81**  
local contractors were utilized through our fuel and weatherization programs

**10,624**  
units in multi-family buildings throughout the state were improved through energy conservation measures overseen by Action Inc.

*National evaluations show that weatherization cuts energy consumption by 25% on average, and creates more affordable, comfortable, and healthier households.*

## Weatherization

Our Weatherization program helps to lower energy bills through increasing energy efficiency. We perform home energy use assessments, replacing everything from inefficient light bulbs to air conditioners and furnaces. We also work with partners to provide additional efficiency measures such as blown in insulation, air sealing, and weatherstripping.

Action Inc. reduces the energy burden felt by low-income families beyond Cape Ann. We are the lead agency overseeing National Grid-funded conservation work across the state. This work helps reduce energy costs for thousands of households each year.



Energy Services Office, 47 Washington St., Gloucester



Elliott Jacobson, Vice President of Energy Services  
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Marie Sanviti, Assistant Director of Energy Services  
Brian Beote, Lead Conservation Manager  
Jonathan Daley, Energy Services Manager  
Brendan Delaney, Technical Manager

Maria Arias, Seasonal Intake  
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Barry Moir, Energy Resources Program Coordinator  
Matthew Murrin, Administrative Assistant  
Kevin Neylon, Building Performance Specialist  
Jean Pomeroy, Utility Program Data Coordinator  
Cindy Schimanski, Office Manager  
Cristine Sears, Conservation Information Coordinator  
Louis Silveira, Information Technology Coordinator



# HomeCare

Action Inc. has a long and proud tradition of serving seniors on Cape Ann, operating Meals on Wheels services in the 1960s and employing our first Home Health Aides in 1973. Today, HomeCare provides a range of services to support senior citizens and disabled adults, allowing them to continue to live safely and comfortably in their own homes.

Action’s team of over **60** professional caregivers provide comprehensive support services for seniors, including personal care, home-cooked meals, medication reminders, light housework, grocery shopping and errands, companionship, and transportation.

Our Home Health Aides provide specific medical supports for seniors with more complex needs. This year, staff received special training and certification in caring for people with dementia. We also provide dedicated support for George W. McPherson Park, Gloucester Housing Authority’s senior housing development with 96 elderly residents.

Throughout all of our work, we remain committed to providing the highest quality service and protecting the dignity of our seniors here on Cape Ann.



*“My father has home health aides employed by Action who do light housework, cooking, etc. With these wonderful people available, I am able to spend more quality time with him without worrying, which is important as I work two jobs.”*

**283**  
seniors and disabled adults maintained an independent living situation

**88,000**  
hours of service were dedicated to our homecare clients

### What do HomeCare workers do?

- Medication reminders
- Grocery shopping
- Rides to doctor’s appointments
- Provide companionship
- Prepare & cook meals
- Help with bathing
- House cleaning
- Provide peace-of-mind to family members



*Our Board Chair and Executive Director, advocating for our community’s elders*

Action’s HomeCare and Riley Education and Training Center continue their collaboration by providing Home Health Aide training. In our Home Health Aide training program, students gain the skills they need to receive Home Health Aide certification and embark on a meaningful career path helping seniors in our community. Graduates from this program even have opportunities to join our own HomeCare team.

This year, HomeCare welcomed Lisa Murrin as its new director. Lisa has been part of the HomeCare team since 1996. As the former Operations Manager, she brings a vast knowledge of our clients, their families, and our community to her new role.



*Lisa Murrin, Director of HomeCare*

In 2016, Action Inc. continued our commitment to our clients, hosting our “Building a Caring Community” workshop. This event was designed to raise awareness of bullying, respect, and behavioral issues in the senior community.

Attendees, including nearly **50** residents of McPherson Park, discussed opportunities to build empathy, foster a culture of respect, and increase trusting relationships. Action Inc. continues to be committed to meeting the needs of our seniors through close communication and openness.

Lisa Murrin, Director of HomeCare Amy Clancy, Payroll and Billing Clerk Shelley Frontiero, Office Manager		Gia Scola, RN Supervisor Elizabeth O’Donoghue, RN Supervisor Candace Natti, LPN Supervisor	
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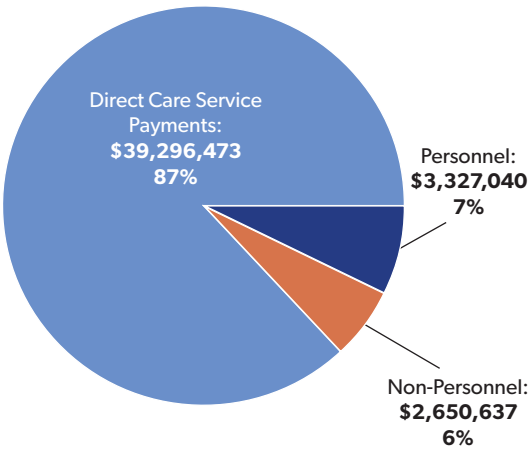
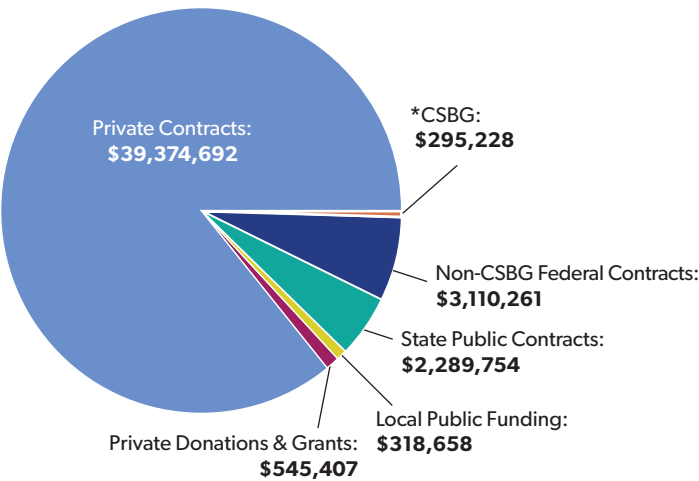
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Keith Zellman

# FINANCIAL REPORT

The Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) designates Action Inc. as the Community Action Agency serving Cape Ann. **For every one dollar received in CSBG funding, Action Inc. leverages \$144 from non-federal sources.** Our revenue from Private Contracts consists primarily of funding for statewide energy conservation programs, overseen by our Energy Services Department.

Fiscal Year 2016 Revenue: **\$45,934,000**

Fiscal Year 2016 Expenses: **\$45,274,150**



*Action Inc. is the 4th largest employer in Gloucester, providing job opportunities that support the local economy and our residents.*



## ADMINISTRATION

- Peggy Hegarty-Steck, President & Executive Director  
Maggie Howard, Deputy Director  
Ken Kudym, Chief Financial Officer  
Judy Manchester, Director of Human Resources  
Joe McEvoy, Director of Marketing & Planning
- David Brooks, Facilities Manager  
Gerrie Coughlin, Office Manager  
Richard Gurry, Assistant to Facilities Manager  
Carol Hayes, Accountant & Payroll Administrator  
Taylor Jesso, Office Assistant  
Allison Lex, Planning Coordinator  
Megan Merlin, Project Coordinator



PARTNERS & PUBLIC FUNDERS, 2016

Accord Food Pantry	Grace Center
Action for Boston Community Development	Harborlight Community Partners
Addison Gilbert Hospital	Healing Abuse Working for Change
Adult Foster Care	Healthy Gloucester Collaborative
Annisquam Village Church	Holy Family Parish
Association for Energy Affordability	Housing Assistance Corporation
Backyard Growers	Independent Living Center of the North Shore
Beauport Hotel Gloucester	Invest in People
Berkshire Community Action Council	Ipswich Caring
Better Off Babies	Ipswich High School
Beverly Bootstraps	Ipswich Housing Authority
Beverly Housing Authority	Low Income Energy Affordability Network
Birth to Three Family Center	Lynn Economic Opportunity
Cape Ann Art Haven	Lynn Housing Authority
Cape Ann Interfaith Commission	Lynn Shelter Association
Catholic Charities	MA Clean Energy Center
Center for Community Recovery Innovations	MA Commission for the Blind
Children’s Friend & Family Services	MA Community Action Partnership
City of Gloucester	MA Department of Children & Families
Coalition for the Homeless	MA Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Community Action Inc.	MA Department of Housing and Community Development
Community Action of the Franklin, Hampshire, and North Quabbin Regions	MA Department of Mental Health
Community Action Programs Inter-City, Inc.	MA Department of Transitional Assistance
Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation	MA Department of Youth Services
Community Teamwork Inc, Lowell	MA Energy Directors Association
Consumer Credit Counseling	Manchester-Essex Regional High School
Elder Service Plan of the North Shore	Manchester Housing Authority
Element Care	Maritime Heritage Center
Eliot Community Human Services	MassHousing
Emmaus	Massachusetts Housing & Shelter Alliance
Essex County Bar Association	Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
Essex Housing Authority	MassHealth
Federal Emergency Management Agency	Menotomy Weatherization
First Ipswich Bank	Mission of Deeds
Food and Fuel Fund	Montachusett Opportunity Council
Franklin Square House Foundation	Moore’s Way
Gloucester Department of Public Health	National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners
Gloucester District Court	National Association of State Consumer Advocates
Gloucester Family Health Center	National Community Action Foundation
Gloucester Fire Department	National Energy Assistance Director’s Association
Gloucester High Risk Task Force	National Grid
Gloucester High School	Neighborhood Legal Services
Gloucester Housing Authority	Network for Energy, Water, and Health in Affordable Buildings
Gloucester Police Department	New England Community Action Association
Good Friday Walk	New England ISO

PARTNERS & PUBLIC FUNDERS, 2016 CONTINUED

New England ISO	Santander Bank
North Shore Career Center	Seacoast Nursing and Rehabilitation Center
North Shore Community Action Programs	Self Help, Inc.
North Shore Community College	Senior Care
North Shore Continuum of Care Homeless Services Consortium	Shaw Fund for Mariner’s Children
North Shore Health Project	South Middlesex Opportunity Council
North Shore Housing Action Group	South Shore Community Action Council
North Shore Workforce Investment Board	Springfield Partners for Community Action
Northeast Behavioral Health	St. John’s Episcopal Church
Oak Ridge National Labs	St. Paul Lutheran Church
The Open Door	St. Vincent DePaul
Partners, North Shore	Strongest Link - Cornerstone
Pathways for Children	TLC @ Home, LLC
Project SAFE	US Department of Energy
Quincy Community Action Programs	US Department of Health and Human Services
Riverdale Methodist Church	US Department of Housing and Urban Development
Rockport Community Preservation Committee	US Department of Labor
Rockport Council on Aging	Veteran’s Office
Rockport High School	VNA Care Network & Hospice
Rockport Housing Authority	Wellspring House
Sailors' Snug Harbor	Women, Infants and Children
Salem State University/School of Nursing	YMCA



Taylor’s Story

Taylor struggled in school, dropping out when she was 16. “It was really tough for me. I felt so trapped,” Taylor said. “I never felt like I was good enough or smart enough.”

When she came to Action Inc. to join the COMPASS program, she was surprised. “Everyone was so open-minded, friendly, and kind; they care about people. They really want you to succeed and it was a great feeling.” As time went on, and with the support of the COMPASS team, she gained more self-confidence.

When a career assessment told her she would be well suited for office work, she applied for an internship at Action’s Main Office in Gloucester. Her internship gave her a sense of purpose and helped her to set goals for her future. “Working at Action really helped me see the world from a better perspective and really helped me see what I want to do in life as a career; I want to help people.”



## IN REMEMBRANCE

*Mike McNair*

*May 13, 1951 – March 2, 2017*



Mike was a kind, funny guy who brightened the days of clients & staff alike. Often he could be heard whistling or singing a tune around the office. As a Housing First Case Manager, Mike helped clients find direction in difficult times.

*Ralph Johnson*

*Aug. 6, 1954 – April 17, 2017*



Ralph formerly worked at Action for 13 years as the Housing Director. He was an advocate for those in need and helped many people over the years. Ralph was a fun-loving person with a quick wit who always had a story to share.

## PROJECT UPLIFT

Action Inc. participates in and leads critical community initiatives, such as our Project Uplift holiday toy and clothing drive for Cape Ann kids. For the last 25 years, Action has provided gifts to children ages 0-14 as a way to help lighten the financial burden around the holidays. Thanks to the generosity of local residents, businesses, and volunteers, Project Uplift is one of our most successful and popular initiatives.



**605**

children received toys and clothing over the holidays

**326**

families utilized Project Uplift

**50**

local businesses and organizations served as donation collection sites



Action Inc. relies on the support of the community to offer the range of services we provide. By making a gift to Action Inc., you will be directly supporting the people of Cape Ann, helping them access vital resources and better opportunities.

[www.actioninc.org](http://www.actioninc.org)

## OUR LOCATIONS

Main Office  
180 Main Street  
Gloucester, MA 01930  
978-282-1000

•  
Energy Services  
47 Washington Street  
Gloucester, MA 01930  
978-283-2131

•  
Emergency Shelter  
370 Main Street  
Gloucester, MA 01930  
978-283-4125

•  
Satellite Offices  
37J Whistlestop Mall  
Rockport, MA 01966  
Ipswich Housing Authority  
00 Southern Avenue  
Ipswich, MA 01938





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Cover Photo by Brendan Pike