

Women's Lunch Place

The Women's Lunch Place was founded in 1982 in response to the need for a safe place for women during the day, when overnight shelters closed. Since its opening, the day shelter has been housed in the basement of the Church of the Covenant on Newbury Street. Initially WLP was open three days a week for lunch, serving eight women with a healthy meal, with china plates, silverware and fresh flowers to create a homelike atmosphere.

The program has continued to grow; breakfast and lunch are now served six days a week to over 2200 women annually. Renovations in 1991 and 2011 allowed the shelter to provide a wide range of services. In addition to meals, direct care is provided in the form of essential supplies such as clothing and self-care items. Showers and laundry are available and guests can use the WLP address for their mail.

WLP advocates now provide wraparound services including housing search, eviction prevention, employment assistance, benefit enrollment, and resolution of legal issues. Medical professionals from Boston Health Care for the homeless offer guests daily free health services at the Women's Lunch Place. Counseling is offered by a psychiatrist, a therapist and a psychiatric nurse practitioner. Advocates also assist in obtaining health insurance, and will schedule appointments with specialists and arrange for transportation to appointments.

Most recently, the WLP is spearheading a new housing program, which offers single rooms to women for six months. Support services will also be available, with the goal of enabling the women to move into permanent housing.

The NABB Homelessness Task Force works closely with the WLP and has been holding a joint annual fund raiser since 2021.