



New Bedford Community Economic Development Center (CEDC) Community Investment Plan 2021-2023

Community mission:

Incorporated in 1997 as a Community Development Corporation, our mission is to create a more just local economy by building bridges to resources, networks, and cooperative action for new immigrants and working families to find their way to economic opportunity.

Community vision: To provide a three-prong “people-centered asset-based” pathway where all those in the immigrant community and working families have access to essential resources and skill-building connections within the community to work collaboratively towards longer-term community change and resilience.

Throughout our efforts, we recognize the importance of approaching economic development strategies by utilizing the strengths and skills of women, minority, and immigrant-owned entrepreneurs and community members to create jobs and build on community networks and collaborations to help our local economy to thrive.

History and Neighborhood Make-up

New Bedford has historically been a gateway to newcomers who have raised families and built new lives in the city. According to the 2018 ACS, 37% of households speak a language other than English at home, and Spanish as a first language is 1.5 times higher than the state average with 21% of residents identifying as Latino and 41% of public-school students identifying as Latino. New Bedford residents of Portuguese and Cape Verdean ancestry comprise more than 38% of the city's population.

CEDC is located on Acushnet Ave. in the heart of the International Marketplace in the City's North End. The district was recently designated as a MassDevelopment Transformational Development Initiative (TDI) District. Our proximity to many of the diverse small businesses in the district enables the CEDC Small Business Technical Assistance Team to build close ongoing contact with these Mom-and-Pop businesses to address their ongoing technical assistance needs. Although we focus on support to businesses in the North End, we also provide support to small businesses city-wide.

The Central American community came to New Bedford in the late 1990s primarily to work in the seafood processing industry on New Bedford's waterfront. Since many of the fishing industry workers were undocumented and few mainstream non-profits, legal and community services had staff who spoke Spanish, we have built relationships with this community living in the shadows with nowhere else to turn. Our reputation grew as a trusted resource center adept at handling the evolving concerns of the immigrant community in New Bedford.

Community Investment Plan Goals

The CEDC's ultimate goal is an active, vibrant community that gets its fair share of public and private services and provides opportunities for all.

Goal 1: Community Asset-Building

- Stabilize working families by having their individual needs met by providing them with skill-building tools and resources.

How we'll do it: We provide free tax preparation as part of the IRS's Volunteers in Tax Assistance (VITA) program. VITA returns \$3 million dollars directly back into the pockets of local residents each year. We also offer training on skills like ServSafe food handling, computer training in Spanish and English, and Second Language (ESOL) classes. We have a history strengthening resident and immigrant-owned businesses, by providing business

technical assistance to small start-ups with 500 counseling hours a year. For over a decade we have helped immigrants navigate health, education, employment, and legal systems through one-on-one counseling and support in the languages they are the most comfortable with.

Goal 2: Community Ownership and Revitalization

- Build a sense of personal fulfillment within low- and moderate-income households through fostering individual connections that lead to greater group collaboration.

How we'll do it: We established the Mujeres Victoriosas, a peer support and leadership development group *by and for* immigrant women. These women work to bring information and services to underserved communities through having guest speakers and these women engage in organizing and advocacy on issues impacting its general membership. This group serves as a sounding board for issues affecting the immigrant community.

CEDC spearheads the Love the Ave campaign that has leveraged \$7 M dollars in public-private investment on the Acushnet Avenue Commercial Corridor. This project has built deep local connections with the City of New Bedford, residents, local artists, and other partners to work on creative placemaking projects to increase utilization of vacant spaces and properties, sponsoring public art, beautification, and façade improvement projects. CEDC hosts the Patio de Comida, a summer mobile food vendor court at Riverside Park. CEDC works with mobile food and merchandise vendors to create a vibrant and welcoming community space for neighborhood families.

Goal 3: Community Resilience

- Create longer-term community change and economic resilience for low- and moderate-income households by engaging a multi-layered community response centered on developing the Capitol Theater Resilience Hub.

How we'll do it: In the development of the Capitol Theater Resilience Hub, we incorporated the articulated needs by neighborhood residents in the design of the \$6 million project. Working with Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE) and studio2sustain, we are developing the mixed-use building to include flexible community training space, a shared-use kitchen and small business incubator/market space. The building will also have six 1 and 2 bedroom affordable apartments, a credit union, mini-market, and retail space. The site will offer ESOL classes, financial literacy workshops, workforce development programs, legal clinics and consultations from private low bono immigration attorneys and non-profit pro bono legal services. The Capitol Theater Resilience Hub will also offer support to community members in the event of a climate-related incident, like hurricane, flood, or heat emergency. This project has great potential to improve the streetscape, improve community resilience, and to spark new investment in the North End of New Bedford benefiting the neighborhood and the city. CEDC intends to enter into Site Review and Permitting by the end of 2022. Our plan is to complete construction in 2023 for occupancy in 2024.

Goal 4: Health Equity Response to Public Health

- Develop systems to distribute direct aid such as rental assistance, food, medicine, cash, and access to these services. We are building on local partnerships with health and human service providers, small business assistance programs and financial institutions to bring more services directly into the Acushnet Ave. Commercial Corridor as we emerge from the pandemic.

How we'll do it: We partner the Greater New Bedford Health Center, New Bedford Health Department, Seven Hills Behavioral Health, and Southcoast Hospitals to provide onsite vaccination and a pilot mini clinic to help target hard to reach populations. We also facilitate partnerships to train women from the Mujeres Victoriosas group as peer educators and in health assessment data collection on health prevention and care and wellness.