CEDC of Southeastern Massachusetts CIP 2021-2023

Incorporated in 1997 as a Community Development Corporation, the CEDC mission is to create a more just local economy by building bridges to resources, networks, and cooperative action for low and moderate-income community members.

Throughout its efforts, it has recognized 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.

Section 1: Community or Constituency (ies) to be served by the organization

The Community Economic Development Center (CEDC) of Southeastern Massachusetts serves the Massachusetts gateway municipality of New Bedford.

New Bedford is a racially diverse, working class city with a population of 95,315 according to the US Census Bureau 2018, and its economic development and local cultural character have been inextricably linked to generations of industrious and enterprising immigrants and migrants from many corners of the globe.

New Bedford has been a gateway to newcomers who have raised families and built new lives in the city. Of its 95,315 people, 37% of New Bedford households speak a language other than English at home, more than double the state average. Further, 8% speak Spanish as their first language, 1.5 times higher than the state average as noted in the 2018 ACS Survey 5-Year Estimates.

New Bedford's Latino population surged from less than 10,000 in 1990 to over 19,000 or 21% of the population in comparison to 12.4% for the entire state of Massachusetts in 2019: ACS 1-Year Estimates Data Profile. Latino students currently comprise 41 % of students in the New Bedford Public school system.

New Bedford residents of Portuguese and Cape Verdean ancestry comprise more than 38% of the city's population. The African American population of New Bedford is 6.6%, and persons reporting two or more races in the Census 2010 comprise 4.6% of the city.

CEDC is located in the city's North End Acushnet Avenue Commercial Corridor. While CEDC serves the community through its programs city-wide, the organization focuses its efforts on the city's North End neighborhood where its many stakeholders reside. Spatial boundaries of the neighborhood are Purchase/Church Street geographically borders the North End of New Bedford to the west, Logan Street to the south, the Acushnet River to the east, and Nash Road to the North.

The North End, where the CEDC is located is where many Mayan-Guatemalan, Honduran, and Salvadoran newcomers live. 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 these workers were undocumented and few mainstream non-profits, legal and community services had staff who spoke Spanish, CEDC built relationships with this community living in the shadows with nowhere else to turn.

As this community grew and some adjusted their status, CEDC also adapted to address new needs. Its reputation grew as a trusted resource center adept at handling the evolving concerns of the immigrant community in New Bedford.

According to the 2018 ACS Survey 5-Year Estimates, the North End residents are 50% white, 43% Hispanic, 3% black, 2% two or more races. 53% of households speak a language other than English at home. Languages spoken at home include 53% English, 26% Spanish, and 21% Portuguese. Additionally, many Guatemalan immigrants speak K'iche and are limited to Spanish speakers. Many Cape Verdean immigrants speak Cape Verdean Kriuolu in addition to Portuguese. These immigrants have fundamental literacy challenges in learning English, and they need additional support and services.

Section 2: Involvement of community residents and stakeholders

For over 23 years, the CEDC has focused on understanding residents' and businesses' needs through active engagement within the community. It has been a priority of the CEDC to achieve resident, stakeholder, and Board community engagement, build planning momentum, and mobilize a broader community participation base to solve problems, build strategies, and plan for the future community.

Below is a sampling of how the CEDC actively engages its stakeholders through a "people-centered" approach to collaboratively develop plans, programs, and services to meet their needs on an ongoing basis.

1. The staff of the CEDC works daily, directly engaging with the residents and small business stakeholders, hearing their concerns and challenges as well as identifying gaps in services. The CEDC then incorporates that feedback into immediate service delivery interventions.

2. The organization is in frequent contact with store owners throughout the Acushnet Avenue Corridor through door-to-door outreach to facilitate their role as critical stakeholders in Commercial Corridor revitalization efforts through addressing common problems and working on joint events and activities.

3. From January to April, the CEDC connects with hundreds of families and seniors who receive free tax preparation at its office as part of the IRS affiliated Volunteers in Tax Assistance (VITA) program. Organization staff and volunteers connect with low-income households and witness the struggles of working low-income families and seniors firsthand. Tax season also presents an opportunity to engage taxpayers about community needs and outreach about new programs and initiatives.

4. For over a decade, CEDC has worked with the immigrant community primarily from Central America. CEDC offers a wide range of advocacy, support, and referral networks to help immigrants navigate health, education, employment, and legal systems. Through this process, the CEDC can identify critical areas impacting the immigrant community that are barriers to successful community integration. CEDC also works to enact policy-level changes affecting this community on both the state and federal level.

5. As part of the CEDC's intentional place-based approach to its work, the CEDC uses the power of creative placemaking to engage the residents directly. Through a variety of activities including public art, development of pocket parks, and family-friendly events such as the Festival Típico de Guatemala, the CEDC can hear directly from neighborhood residents on an informal and ongoing basis the areas of concern to their physical space, i.e., public safety, beautification, etc.

6. In 2014, the CEDC spearheaded the Love the Ave Coalition, which created higher-level partnerships with city-wide agencies and departments, local non-profits, and other stakeholders dedicated to improving Acushnet Avenue's economic development through collaboration. This effort engaged hundreds of neighborhood residents, small businesses, and others to define its strengths and identify challenges. Love the Ave helped to leverage $5 million in new public and private investment to improve the district.

7. The CEDC also participates as part of the Near North End Partnership to assist the most at-risk residents with needed services. Through bi-monthly participation, the CEDC can learn about additional areas of challenge and opportunity impacting those most vulnerable residents.

8. As part of its VITA tax preparation program, CEDC works extensively with seafood processing workers, shore side workers, and fishermen on tax preparation and troubleshooting tax issues. As part of this work, the CEDC learns about issues that involve fishing families and members of New Bedford's working waterfront.

9. The CEDC established Mujeres Victoriosas, a peer support and leadership development group by and for immigrant women that meets twice a month. The group has 7 core organizing leaders and anywhere from 15-25 women participating each month. These women work to bring information and services to underserved communities. Every meeting they host an informational speaker on a wide range of topics and engage in organizing and advocacy on issues impacting the immigrant community.

Below is an outline of how the CEDC actively engaged its stakeholders in developing the 2021-2023 CIP strategic plan.

1. The CEDC created a Futures Survey to collect responses to inform the CIP process. The CEDC geared the survey towards conducting a general scan of the community to identify stakeholder goals and aspirations, obstacles, and additional services and learning opportunities residents would like to see. This survey had an entire section on COVID-19 data collection assessing critical areas such as health, employment, education, childcare, transportation, and other services. In November 2020, CEDC collected a total of 100 responses that directly informed this CIP process indicating a need for ESOL, first-time homebuyer workshops, healthcare services, financial literacy and education, and a variety of classes such as cooking, stitching, and certification courses.

2. Additionally, the survey queried participants on possible uses of the Capitol Theater Resilience Hub that is currently under design and development.

3. The CEDC also queried members of the Mujeres Victoriosas, with two separate survey tools in August and September 2020 about their reactions to COVID-19 and the New Bedford Public School response and their workplace health and supports. The Mujeres Victoriosas also distributed the survey to others when assisting with food distribution. They captured 43 responses providing important data outlining current and needed pandemic supports for immigrant women with children in the school system and 116 responses outlining workplace responses and supports needed.

4. Additionally, the organization obtained feedback through its ongoing individual constituent conversations daily with approximately 160 people per week seeking the Center's services.

5. From April-July 2020, the CEDC called 1,300 member households to conduct need assessments related to the COVID-19 pandemic to determine the impact on individuals and families. The CEDC remained active and open during this public health crisis as the pandemic's hardest hit were disproportionately Latino. The CEDC incorporated the resulting data into the CIP.

6. The CEDC, through the umbrella organization, NeighborWorks conducted a randomized Community Impact Measurements (CIM) survey of approximately 170 neighborhood households during the summer and fall of 2019. Data assessed overall participant community engagement, safety concerns, public services such as ambulance, fire, police, trash collection, and the general feeling of community progress. The data from this survey is informing part of the CIP planning process. In addition, the CIM survey included a neighborhood-housing scan to evaluate the physical condition of properties in the neighborhood.

7. As part of the Capitol Theater rehabilitation, the CEDC has sought feedback from approximately 170 stakeholders. A feasibility and business plan including market research, will be available in early 2021.

8. CEDC held a strategic planning retreat session with the Board of Directors and staff to determine future goals and strategies to align with the community vision. This session focused on determining goals within the CIP framework.

The CEDC will involve stakeholders and residents in the evaluation of the CIP at various levels. Stakeholder evaluations will take place regularly in both one-on-one and group sessions.

1. Stakeholders and residents themselves will be a part of the process of developing questions, determining evaluation methods, assisting in data collection, and analysis at a level that is most appropriate for each subgroup, i.e., decision-makers, participants, partners, etc.

2. Stakeholders and residents will be kept involved in monitoring the CIP progress and lessons learned at least annually, if not quarterly.

3. Stakeholders and resident ideas and suggestions will be integrated into evaluation activities as provided by ongoing feedback as obtained noted above and yearly opportunities for specific engagement through surveys, focus groups, etc.

4. Stakeholders and residents will be involved in the evaluation and interpretation of results.

5. Stakeholders and residents will also be responsible for disseminating evaluation results through a variety of channels.

Section 3: Plan Goals

Below are the goals of the CEDC as developed through community engagement sessions and the CIP planning process for the time frame of 2021-2023.

Community mission: The CEDC aims to bridge new immigrants and long-term residents 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 have access to essential resources and skill-building, connections within the community through collaboration, and work collaboratively towards longer-term community change and resilience.

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 low- and moderate-income households in society by having their individual needs met by providing them with skill-building tools and resources. The community will benefit from having active participants in the local economy.

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. The community will benefit from residents who have a greater sense of pride in the community as a place through community organizing and revitalization.

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. This $5 million project has great potential to improve the streetscape, community resilience, and to spark new investment in the North End of New Bedford, benefiting New Bedford and beyond.

Goal 4: COVID-19 Pandemic Response

- Develop systems to distribute direct aid such as rental assistance, food, and medicine. Assist with access to SNAP, Unemployment, and other benefits that require access to technology. CEDC will also advocate for issues centered on education and remote learning that have overwhelmingly and disproportionately impacted low- and moderate-income immigrant households during the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic.

Section 4: Activities to be undertaken

Goal 1: Community Asset-Building

Activity 1: Increase immigrant integration services

1. Adapt CEDC open office and remote services to follow COVID-19 health and safety guidelines and to align with work schedules in the immigrant community.
2. Use a hybrid model of remote and on-site services to help community members who cannot access services remotely due to language, literacy, or technology barriers.
3. Strengthen partnerships with PACE, the Department of Transitional Assistance, SouthCoast Federal Credit Union and the Greater New Bedford Health Center to bring services not located in the neighborhood to our office to better serve the community.

Activity 2: English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

1. Work with student volunteers from Tabor Academy and America Reads UMass-Dartmouth students to develop an online curriculum.
2. Work with adult ESOL learners to access Zoom on their smartphones.
3. Develop a conversation partners program where ESOL learners and students from Tabor academy and UMass-Dartmouth can practice English.
4. Return to in-person instruction when health guidelines permit.

Activity 3: Serve Safe Certification

1. Recruit new business owners to become ServSafe certified as required by the City of New Bedford.
2. Offer online and in-person training in Spanish that participants can access either on their computer or at CEDC.
3. When the Capitol Theater is available, the commercial kitchen offers hands-on instruction at a certified commercial kitchen.
4. Proctor the ServeSafe examination at the CEDC.

Activity 4: First-time home buyer and landlord classes

1. Participants who can access the information on a computer watch the class on Zoom. Participants who are not able to access this information on Zoom attend a socially distanced class.
2. Classes will move back into in-person at the CEDC as safety permits.

Activity 5: Financial education for newcomers

1. CEDC will continue to recruit for the online classes and work with people to overcome the barriers to using Zoom and in-person when possible in the future.
2. Engage Spanish-speaking presenters from local financial institutions.
3. Provide additional follow-up financial education with participants.
4. Assist unbanked community members open no-cost credit union accounts at SouthCoast Federal Credit Union.

Activity 6: Increase financial well-being and investment in the local economy

1. Develop a drop off tax system to help to continue to provide this critical service of free tax preparation while being COVID-19 safe through drop off virtual tax preparation.
2. Recruit former VITA UMass-Dartmouth volunteers to assist with virtual tax preparation.
3. Raise awareness about tax benefits, especially the Senior Circuit Breaker Credit and the Earned Income Tax Credit that can improve low- and moderate-income families' material condition.
4. Troubleshoot tax issues that immigrant families are not able to address on their own due to language and technology barriers.

Activity 7: Strengthen resident and immigrant-owned businesses

1. Create over 100 new jobs by supporting 75 businesses each year.
2. Provide Business Technical Assistance to 75 prospective, existing, and start-up small businesses, which will amount to 500 counseling hours each year.
3. Complete a feasibility study for an immigrant small business incubator market at the Capitol Theater.
4. Encourage sidewalk dining, support food trucks and vendor cart entrepreneurs to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.
5. Assist businesses to apply for state and federal grants and loans available to help mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis.
6. Educate businesses on health and safety guidelines during COVID-19 and work with them to create systems to keep staff and customers safe.

7. Assist small businesses with language and technology barriers to pay sales taxes on the DOR Mass Tax Connect website.

Activity 8: Health Access Support to underserved populations

1. Work with PACE to offer onsite appointments at the CEDC to meet with individuals face-to-face and file health insurance applications, with a CEDC staff translator's assistance.
2. Collaborate on onsite vaccination and COVID-19 testing clinics to help target hard to reach populations in the North End of the city in partnership with the Greater New Bedford Health Center and SouthCoast Hospitals.
3. Train women from the Mujeres Victoriosas group as peer educators on health topics such as COVID-19 prevention and care and wellness.

Activity 9: Food Security

1. CEDC will promote food distributions at the CEDC office to distribute several thousand pounds of food each week to low-income families.
2. Identify COVID-19 infected families and work with the New Bedford Immigrant Support Network to deliver food and supplies directly to their doors.
3. Assist non-English speaking families in applying for SNAP through the DTA connect portal in partnership with the Department of Transitional Assistance.

Goal 2: Community Ownership and Revitalization

Activity 1: Partnership Evaluation

1 Interview and survey residents of the area to identify community assets and community needs.
2 Design programming and space at the Capitol Theater to expand community assets or fill community needs.
3 Strengthen new partnerships with WHALE and the state of Massachusetts Urban Agenda to bring more physical improvements and economic opportunity to Acushnet Ave.
4 Strengthen partnerships with the Near North End Alliance, PACE, the Greater New Bedford Health Center and United Way of Greater New Bedford to support families with direct assistance.

Activity 2: Continued lead partnership in "Love the Ave."

1. Obtain special designation to name Acushnet Ave as the International Marketplace Cultural District.
2. Strengthen relationships with city departments to encourage more public services and investments in infrastructure on Acushnet Avenue, i.e., street cleaning, trash pickup, etc.
3. Increase and facilitate creative placemaking such as public art and community events and programming to combat blight and attract additional private investment.

Activity 3: Strengthen entrepreneurial and business assistance and development

1. Utilize the network of 270 small businesses on Acushnet Ave. Commercial Corridor, their employees and neighborhood residents to target outreach efforts to participate in community placemaking events.
2. Continue intensive Small Business Technical Assistance with local Small Businesses and act as liaison with the City of New Bedford on permitting and licensing issues.

Activity 4: Increase public safety within the corridor for business and residents

1. Provide technical assistance to make small businesses safer and improve small businesses' exterior design to mitigate vulnerability to crime.

2. Support efforts to increase language access to the police department.
3. Encourage cultural competency in the police department.
4. Educate the police department on the U-T Visa (victim of certain crimes) process. Encourage victims to report incidents to the police.

Activity 5: Activate vacant buildings on the Avenue

1. Activate vacant buildings and engage local artists by creating public art exhibits.
2. Renovate the mostly vacant Capitol Theater to include retail, affordable housing, a credit union, and the new CEDC headquarters.
3. Use vacant storefronts to increase infrastructure with wayfinding maps and signs.
4. Match start-up businesses with vacant property owners to occupy empty spaces with new businesses.

Activity 6: Examine the utilization of vacant properties

1. Partner with the City of New Bedford to better implement their parklet plan for outdoor dining.
2. Work with the City of New Bedford to clarify guidelines for vendor carts and food trucks.

Activity 7: Increase city public services

1. Hold quarterly meetings with a bilingual police officer to speak with Spanish speakers in the community and help resolve crime and police issues.
2. Identify and work with the City on ongoing issues and needs of Small Businesses for trash pick-up, receptacles, lighting, parking, street cleaning and other issues.

Goal 3: Community Resilience

Activity 1: Embark on the next phase in neighborhood revitalization work

1. Complete the pre-development phase of the Capitol Theater plan, including the design and development/construction phase.
2. Aligning the funding for this $5.4 million project, raising funds for construction from sources such as Mass Development, Federal and State Historic Tax Credits, Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), New Bedford Community Preservation Act Funds, Federal HUD HOME funds, and private foundation funding.
3. Begin and complete construction for building occupancy, including possible
   - A Greater New Bedford Health Center satellite office and possible health benefits funding.
   - Conduct renovation and historic restoration of the facade and interior of the building.
   - Construct fixed, affordable housing units.
4. Work with the City of New Bedford's Department of Environmental Stewardship and Resilience to plan for the rear theater space to serve as a Resilience Hub, a community resource center to support neighborhood residents for ongoing economic resilience programs and for episodic response in the event of a climate-related incident.
5. Work with Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE) and studio2sustain to on reuse design that would make a flexible community center training space by tapping into CEDC's community asset-building programs.
6. Develop an operational business plan for the theater section for community programming, education, training, CEDC programs, business incubator, etc.
7. Increase community partnerships to provide expanded services, programs, and other opportunities in the Resilience Hub.

Possible reuse plans for the rear former Capitol theater space include:

- **expanded and augmented training,** including expanded ESOL classes, ServSafe group training in the proposed demonstration kitchen, computer lab-training, basic computer classes, web design, social media, etc.
- **small business incubator** including offering small stalls to rent for an open weekend market/holiday craft fair etc.
- **other community needs-paid classes,** including vocational type classes in Spanish, i.e., carpentry, home repair, cooking, cake decorating, stitching, upholstery, home childcare certification, etc.
- **additional class offerings for Spanish speakers**, Cooking and nutrition, wellness- Zumba, yoga, etc. arts and culture classes in Maya K'iche language and culture, crafts, music lessons, etc.
- **increased partnerships/new opportunities** with the possibility of leasing space to UMass Worker Education for additional ESOL classes, GNB WIB, and local employers to host job training, in-house Career Center services for on-site assistance, after-school and ongoing wellness programs, etc.
- **increased legal representation and interpretation to serve non-English speaking community programs** through hosting legal clinics from private immigration attorneys and non-profit *pro bono* legal services through UMass-Law, SouthCoast Counties Legal Services, Catholic Social Services, and Catholic Charities.
- **increased medical services** through possible partnerships with Greater New Bedford Health Center, UMass-Dartmouth Community Nursing Program and SouthCoast Hospital.
- **increased community usage** by providing rehearsal space to community groups for dance and music groups and offering a large venue for public meetings or rental for private functions and community programming.

Goal 4: COVID-19 Pandemic Response

Activity #1: COVID-19 Immediate Emergency Response

1. Continue to distribute direct aid from public and private philanthropic relief funds for housing, food, and other basic needs targeting immigrant essential workers.
    - Through a Neighborworks Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) continue to qualify Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) Program applicants for emergency housing rental and mortgage assistance.
2. Address food insecurity community needs as a Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) Connect Partner agency to assist SNAP applicants and to serve as a direct food distribution site in collaboration with community partners such as United Way and the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center.
3. Provide health care access through a partnership with the PACE Health Care Navigator.

Success will be measured/evaluated

The CEDC will measure the success of this CIP in various ways that are both internal and external.

1. Staff will review progress towards goals every quarter. The CEDC will assess activities towards established benchmarks, and quantitative data will be analyzed to determine activity output achievement and progress made toward goals. Determine if plans and activities are still sound and relevant, and what key insights and make adjustments as necessary. Part of this yearly evaluation/monitoring process will also be to incorporate celebrations of successes.

    - During this assessment, the management team will ensure that activities are within the parameters of the agreed CIP goals and objectives.

- Keep making required adjustments to the goals and objectives as needed based on internal and external changes.

2. Staff and Board will revisit the CIP plan yearly to update it before planning and budgeting for the next year. Make revisions to the plan as necessary. Translate plan into yearly objectives, budgets, and priorities.

3. As with all CEDC programs, the organization will employ a continuous process of collecting and analyzing data to compare progress towards goals and effectiveness, factors and trends impacting outcomes, lessons learned, development of new services, etc.

4. The CEDC will include stakeholders (program participants, residents, etc.) to monitor and evaluate the CIP. The CEDC will use already existing structures and groups to obtain input. Feedback received will be through informal conversations and group discussions, surveys, and reviews.

Methods of Measurement

CEDC measures success by having specific quantitative goals such as the number of volunteers recruited, the number of tax returns filed, micro-businesses receiving technical assistance, etc., as outlined in the activity and benchmark section above. The qualitative measures of deepening collaborations, building community relationships, etc. are no less valuable and very important to the community and economic development; however, these process impacts may be more challenging to measure. All outcomes are tracked and managed in the CEDC's Apricot Case Management database.

Collaborative efforts to support implementation

Existing and proposed collaborative relationships with other stakeholders

The CEDC of Southeastern Massachusetts has a long history of building collaborations and partnerships as the community's backbone. Below is a comprehensive listing of the CEDC's collaborative partnerships.

Goal 1: Community Asset-Building

- **Justice Center** – immigration legal assistance
- **UMass Law School** – immigration legal assistance
- **Catholic Social Services** – immigration legal assistance
- **Justice Bridge** (affiliated with UMass Law) – family, employment legal assistance
- **Greater New Bedford Community Health Center** – immigration health care access and education, food insecurity
- **SouthCoast Hospitals** – immigrant health care access and education
- **PACE** – immigrant health care access and application assistance
- **Fishing Partnership** – immigrant health care access via HealthCare Navigators
- **New Bedford Immigrant Support Network** – immigrant accompaniment and transportation, food and medicine support
- **Mujeres Victoriosas** – immigrant peer education and support, community leadership development
- **New Bedford Public Schools** – immigrant integration, parent support
- **Fishing Heritage Center** – documenting oral history of immigrants on the Working Waterfront
- **United Way Hunger Commission** – food insecurity
- **PAACA** – Spanish Alcoholics Anonymous

- **New Bedford Public Schools** – immigrant integration, wrap-around services and welcome services
- **MIRA (MA Immigrants and Refugees Advocacy Coalition)** – immigration legal assistance
- **Community Connections and Family Resource Center** (United Way of Greater New Bedford umbrella organization) – AmeriCorps support immigrant integration
- **Tabor Academy Juntos Club** – ESOL class volunteers
- **Global Learning Charter School** – ESOL program space
- **UMass Dartmouth America Reads** volunteers-ESOL volunteers
- **NeighborWorks Housing Solutions** – RAFT application assistance, first-time homebuyer and landlord classes in Spanish
- **SouthCoast Federal Credit Union** – in-house financial services
- **Office of Refugee and Immigrants** – Financial Literacy for Newcomers workshops in Spanish

Goal 2: Community Ownership and Revitalization

- **City of New Bedford** – Collaboration in small business development and economic revitalization.
- **Acushnet Avenue Business, etc.** – Collaboration in small business development and economic revitalization
- **New Bedford Police Department** – community trust building and advocacy
- **New Bedford Economic Development Council** – Collaboration in small business development
- **Kiva through Boston LISC**, for microloans to small entrepreneurs - Collaboration in small business development
- **Entrepreneurship for All South Coast (E for All)** for small business accelerator training – Collaboration in small business development.
- **Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board** and **Greater New Bedford Career Center** for workforce development.
- **"Love the Ave" Coalition** – community ownership and revitalization
- **MA Growth Capital Corporation** – small business technical assistance
- **MA Tax and Asset Building Coalition (MTAC)** – VITA tax preparation
- **UMass Dartmouth Charlton School of Business** – VITA tax preparation volunteers
- **PACE** – VITA program referrals
- **Immigrants Assistance Center** – VITA program referrals and on-site tax preparation
- **Local area Councils on Aging** – VITA program referrals
- **Coastline Elderly Services** – VITA program referrals
- **Internal Revenue Service (IRS)** – VITA program tax preparation
- **City of New Bedford Parks and Recreation** – Community revitalization, Guatemalan festival
- **Various local artists** – Community revitalization, public art
- **UMass Dartmouth Community-Service Learning** – VITA, ESOL and Community revitalization volunteers.
- **UMass-Law-** Law clinic interns-immigration and family law.
- **City of New Bedford Mayor's Office** – Community revitalization place-making
- **Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations (MACDC)** – Community development technical assistance and advocacy.
- **Near North End Partnership** – community provider information sharing and collaboration
- **New Bedford Public Schools McKinney-Vento Advisory Group-** community provider information sharing and collaboration
- **Rancho Folclorico** – CEDC is fiscal sponsor
- **Reggae on West Beach -** CEDC is fiscal sponsor
- **Hatch Street Studios** – CEDC is fiscal sponsor

- **Movemento Cosecha -** CEDC is fiscal sponsor

Goal 3: Community Resilience: Capitol Theater Resilience Hub

- **studio2sustain and WHALE Waterfront Historic Area League** for the design and rehabilitation and property reuse
- **City of New Bedford's Department of Environmental Stewardship and Resilience** for city resilience hub design, support and implementation.
- **UMass Worker Education** Potential partner for additional ESOL classes
- **Local employers** for employment options
- **Greater New Bedford Career Center and Workforce Investment Board potential** partner for workforce development training and career options
- **SouthCoast Counties Legal Services for** additional legal services
- **Catholic Social Services** for additional social services
- **Greater New Bedford Health Center** for additional healthcare services
- **UMass-Dartmouth Community Nursing Program** for additional healthcare services
- **Southcoast Hospital** for additional healthcare services.

Goal 4: COVID-19 Pandemic Response-

CEDC received $392,000 in direct basic needs funds disbursed to COVID-19 impacted essential workers.

- **Sen Mark Montigny Children's Fund** - children's education and basic needs
- **Fish Family Foundation** - COVID-19 relief funds distributed by CEDC
- **Mass Office of Housing and Economic Development** - COVID-19 relief funds distributed by CEDC
- **SouthCoast Community Foundation** - COVID-19 relief funds distributed by CEDC
- **Neighborworks** – RAFT emergency housing rental and mortgage assistance
- **Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)** - assist SNAP applicants and food distribution
- **United Way of Greater New Bedford** – food distribution boxes
- **Greater New Bedford Community Health Center** – food distribution and health care access
- **PACE Health Care Navigator** – health care access

Other collaborations and partnerships

CEDC is a member of several local coalitions and partnerships including the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance Advisory Board, Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board, the Massachusetts Tax and Asset Building Consortium, Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations (MACD) Member, Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition Member, UMass Dartmouth Labor Education Advisory Board, City of New Bedford Brownfields Advisory Board, and Legal Center for Nonprofits Board.

Integration of activities/consistency with community strategy and vision

Community vision: To provide a three-prong "people-centered asset-based" pathway to change. The CEDC aims to do this through providing resources and skill-building, fostering connections within the community through collaboration, and working towards longer-term community change and resilience through organizing and engaging multi-layered community responses, including developing a central community "resilience" hub.

It all begins by developing pathways to community "asset-building" and resilience that must start first with the needs of individuals being met and stabilized while moving to broader scale community ownership and revitalization to resilience. By taking an approach to build on skills and capacities as community members develop, the CEDC can provide support and services that ultimately lead to better jobs, homeownership, education, and small business development.

CEDC strives to promote and facilitate active participation, empowerment, and larger-scale community change. But we also recognize and acknowledge the struggles and basic needs hardships faced by the communities we serve, particularly in light of the current ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The proposed CIP goals, objectives, and activities mirror this multi-pronged strategy to help people meet immediate needs, and also intermediate and longer-term goals and aspirations.

Additionally, this CIP plan addresses the unique set of circumstances and system disruptions that have been caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. While vaccines are near, the CEDC anticipates that the impact of COVID-19 may be long-lasting in the communities most impacted by the virus and served by the CEDC.

This CIP is in direct alignment with other important community initiatives such as the "Love the Ave" partnership, the City of New Bedford's Resilience Hub development, and other neighborhood and business groups initiatives and city-related planning processes.

Financing Strategy

Description of how the CDC will finance implementation of the Plan's activities

To meet the CIP's mission, vision, and strategic goals and objectives, the organization must implement a financing strategy that can help it meet its goals while reducing its reliance on traditional revenue streams. Additionally, it must build on the successful financing strategies utilized during the past CIP effort and use them as a basis for future planning.

Steps towards plan financing will include:

Case for Support

In 2017, the Social Innovation Forum selected the CEDC as a participant in the Social Innovator Accelerator program. In this 24-month program the Social Innovation Forum invested pro-bono executive coaching, consulting, and presentation advising. This program enabled the CEDC to create a professional funding "Case for Support" prospectus, including graphical elements and collaterals formulated into a marketing and fundraising packet.

Elements of this packet highlighted the Community Investment Tax Credit (CITC) Program. This information included how donors can have a more significant impact through their giving and the effect on the CEDC to build capacity and serve and engage the community according to its mission and CIP plan.

In the next CIP, the CEDC plans to leverage this "Case for Support" by developing an informational communications campaign creating publicity for the cause and the CITC program.

Board development

The CEDC has a Board of Directors representing the community that it serves and maintains a commitment to doing so. Last year alone, it recruited Board members to help from within the Guatemalan community, financial services representatives including mortgage brokers serving the Spanish community, an ESOL teacher, and a representative of the New Bedford Immigrant Support network.

The CEDC will continue to seek representative Board candidates who can move the organization forward both programmatically and financially.

Grants management

The CEDC has increased its capacity to write for and obtain grants, now writing over approximately twenty grants per year. It has diversified its grants strategy through attracting new funding sources, both public and private. It has recently secured new funding through COVID-19 relief efforts that have added new streams of revenue to support the organization during the ongoing pandemic and possibly open up the organization to new funding relationships post-pandemic.

Over the past few years, new relationships have developed. Such associations include the United Way of Greater New Bedford for tax preparation services, the Carney Foundation for immigration services, and the Social Innovation Forum that has opened up doors to even greater collaborations with other private funders both near and far.

Additionally, the organization has diversified its state funding and contracts revenues working with state agencies to obtain funds from such departments as the Office of Immigrants and Refugees, the Department of Transitional Assistance, Mass Growth Capital Corporation and the Office of Housing and Community Development Urban Agenda program. The CEDC has also expanded its state funds for Census outreach through the Massachusetts Secretary of State.

The CEDC's Capitol Theater Re-Use Project has opened the organization to more funding partnerships that include the Community Preservation Act (CPA). The organization received $550,000 from the CPA towards building acquisition and roof repairs, with another $200,000 pending request for windows and commercial façade repair. Mass Development has awarded the CEDC funds for feasibility study planning, and a $200,000 is Massachusetts State Historic Tax Credits for building re-use. Additionally, the CEDC will apply for City of New Bedford HUD HOME funds to DHCD and for affordable housing development in 2021.

In this new CIP, the organization is committed to continuing its efforts to expand on these relationships while developing new ones that support programmatic efforts as outlined in the CIP while also enhancing its profile to obtain even greater public funds and contracts.

Individual giving

Since the last CIP process, the organization has seen significant growth in its giving program. In the past, the organization relied solely on foundation grants and state contracts for its operating revenues. Today, it now conducts a variety of fundraising strategies aimed at building a healthy individual donor base.

In 2019, the CEDC hosted a donor cultivation event to provide interested parties with more information about the organization with no direct ask but planned follow-up engagement. CEDC held two house parties in which hosts invited their friends' network to an event with a short CEDC presentation and request for donations. The ancillary benefits of these house parties are that many of the attendees have become repeat donors to the organization.

Both the cultivation events and house parties will continue post-pandemic to build awareness of the organization and raise funding from interested attendees with the prospect of donor conversions.

The organization also maintains a "Black Box" donation receptacle in its office for free-will offerings from community members who receive direct services such as a document translation or a notary seal. The

community that it serves responds generously through anonymous donations totaling anywhere from $6,000 to $10,000 per year. In tandem, the organization, through its website, received several unsolicited online donations.

Donation numbers have dropped by 41% from 2019 to 2020 due to the nature of the COVID-19 crisis. Once the pandemic has passed, CEDC will continue the above activities. They will also add more house parties, cultivation events, and appeals both offline and online to increase its donor base and solicit prospects for continued support, leading to a more diversified and stable contributed income stream.

Special events

The CEDC has hosted many small, community-based events that purposely build greater community and raise awareness of the CEDC's advocacy and services in the community. While we have postponed these due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the situation improves, we will reintroduce some of these community events in the future.

Direct mail campaign

Since the last CIP, the CEDC has made great strides with building a base of consistent supporters and launched a direct mail program to create a fundraising "pipeline" developing a mailing list.

With this growing donor list, the CEDC has begun to specifically campaign at Calendar-Year End time, sending out a personalized fundraising appeal letter both offline and online to its prospects and donors. These efforts will be continued and expanded on to include multiple multi-channeled appeals per year. CEDC encourages donors to consider the benefits of CITC as part of the annual appeal.

Database and gift acknowledgment

The CEDC has invested in obtaining Apricot, a customized case management database. While not a fundraising specific database, the organization maintains its donor files to capture and maintain prospective donor names, record contribution amounts, etc. in this system. Investment in Apricot allows the CEDC to become more efficient in donor administration and acknowledgment.

Social benefit methods

Today, the CEDC generates revenue through subletting part of its current office and classroom space to the Mass Migrant Education Program and receives fees for First-Time Homebuyer and Landlord classes that create a small stream of consistent additional revenues. We also receive rent from the 2-retail spaces currently occupying the Capitol Theater building. These rental fees currently generate over $40,000 annually.

In the CEDC's planning stage plans for its Capitol Theater project, it is considering revenue-generating social enterprise units, including securing:

- Rental income from commercial storefronts and businesses, both for-profit and not-for-profit.
- Rehearsal space rental for artists and musicians.
- Stall rentals during festivals and seasonal markets.
- Training and materials fees for classes and programs.
- Housing unit (6) rentals.
- Kitchen incubator rentals for small businesses.
- Expanded health and legal access for satellite office rentals.
- Other possible commercial social enterprise ventures.

History, Track Record, and Sustainable Development

Track Record of Past Practices

The CEDC was incorporated as a Community Development Corporation in 1997 and was one of the first in the state to receive the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development's certification for CDCs in 2013. Unlike most CDCs that work on "bricks and mortar" community development, its focus has been people-centered development.

The CEDC has an extensive history of past practices and approaches that demonstrate its track record towards implementing the proposed activities found in the CIP.

As evidenced by the successful advancement of previous CIP's since 2014, the CEDC has worked with stakeholders to enact many significant changes that improve community members' lives.

Here is a listing of examples of CEDC's track record in the community.

- CEDC became a recognized organization of the US Dept. of Justice Board of Immigration Appeals in 2016. This recognition establishes the CEDC as an agency authorized to assist with immigration forms preparation and services.

- In 2017, the Social Innovation Forum selected the CEDC as a 2017 Social Innovator.

- It is the only resource in Southeastern Mass to provide micro-business technical assistance services in both English and Spanish.

- The Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts and the Barr Foundation launched a new Arts and Culture initiative. CEDC was part of the planning efforts to help engage underrepresented communities. CEDC later was awarded funds for producing the Festival Tipico de Guatemala in 2018 and 2019.

- It received a Gateway Innovation Award in November of 2019 for spearheading key community stakeholder coalitions to advance progress in the Acushnet Avenue commercial corridor through its "Love the Ave" partnership.

- It has been a part of significant area partnerships such as the Love the Ave, Brownfields Area-wide Planning Group, and consulted for many other public policy projects. In 2019, CEDC was recognized by the Mass Planning Association and by the Southeastern Mass Regional Planning District for its community engagement efforts.

- As a partner in the Greening the Gateway Cities/Mass Dept. of Conservation and Recreation program, CEDC educated local residents about shade trees' value to increase shade cover to mitigate climate change effects.

- The City of New Bedford designated the CEDC to house a Resilience Hub in the North End of New Bedford to prepare community members with education and tools to adapt to episodic and ongoing climate disruption.

- CEDC has engaged community members in community placemaking by working with others to organize events such as the Festival Tipico de Guatemala, creating murals and community displays to highlight arts and culture, and building community leadership, and stimulating new economic development with immigrant-owned small businesses.

- CEDC has built partnerships with the City of New Bedford towards improving community policing strategies, building trust in new immigrant communities, increasing utilization of vacant spaces and properties, increasing public services such as trash pick-up, street cleaning, and more, instituting public art projects, beautification and façade improvement, and expanding the awareness and support for the fishing community.

- It has increased transportation options by getting increased bus service on the inter-city #9 route, advocating for a Sunday bus service, and helped gain service to the South Terminal for bus access to seafood processing plants.

- It has created awareness of transportation options by providing informal travel orientation and support on the bus system, particularly for Limited English Speakers.

- It leveraged $5 million in public-private investment in the Acushnet Avenue Commercial Corridor through the "Love the Ave" partnership.

- It leverages yearly over 2 million dollars in tax credits that are reinvested back into the community through the CEDC's VITA tax program.

- The CEDC has collaborated with the UMass-Dartmouth Public Policy Center on studies about the lack of access to financial services in the low-income community and a study about the Acushnet Ave Commercial Corridor and on bus transportation issues.

- It also provides homebuyer classes in Spanish and financial coaching in English and Spanish.

- It has a long track record of providing English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

<u>There are several ways that the organization lives out the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles:</u>

Concentrate development and mix-use and protect land and ecosystems.
The organization approaches community development in a holistic and integrated way to promote economic and sustainable development.

The organization supports community revitalization of Greater New Bedford and, in particular, the Acushnet Avenue Commercial Corridor through promoting development that conserves land, revitalizes and reuses old buildings and sites, preserves historic resources, and integrates uses. The neighborhood focus of its work in the Acushnet Avenue Corridor is to create a compact, walkable community where neighborhood residents sustain locally owned businesses. It is most recently embarking on the Capitol Theater Project, which has the potential of bringing back a blighted commercial property in reuse as retail and affordable housing space while catalyzing community economic development.

Advance equity
The CEDC as an organization provides technical assistance for inclusive community planning and decision

making to ensure social, economic, and environmental justice. CEDC seeks to be a change agent to engage environmental justice communities to become influential stakeholders in community visioning and planning. The CEDC plays a critical role in reaching out and engaging non-English speaking community residents in community revitalization and economic development.

Make efficient decisions and uses natural resources wisely.
The CEDC supports the efforts of the Mass Smart Growth Alliance that advocates for local zoning changes to promote smart growth policies. It has also worked in strong partnership with the City of New Bedford Brownfields Group to invest in, restore, and utilize abandoned and environmentally "tainted" properties to meet the community vision of increasing open, safe space and youth and other recreational opportunities. CEDC is also a partner with the City of New Bedford in the development of the Capitol Theater space to be utilized as a Resilience Hub, a community resource center to support neighborhood residents in a climate-related event incident.

Provide transportation choices and plan regionally
CEDC has been in the forefront to advocate for significant regional public transportation changes, including an expanded bus service and the South Coast Rail. These efforts are critically important to promoting economic development and addressing climate change. Throughout its history, it has been the leading proponent and the voice of expanding and increasing access to public transportation options that maximize community resident mobility, especially for those most in need, reduce traffic congestion, and conserve natural resources.

Increase job and business opportunities
CEDC has recently celebrated 20-years as a Community Development Corporation. They are a unique CDC in that their work focuses on building community capacity through small business development and workforce development programs. They have a successful and consistent track record of accomplishing their goals and creating positive outcomes for hundreds of community residents every year through providing technical assistance and support, creating increased business opportunities.

Additionally, the CEDC's most recent project, the Capitol Theater reuse, will catalyze community economic development through expanding programming in job training and incubating small business ventures through increased one-on-one technical assistance and support.

Promote clean energy
CEDC is a partner of New Bedford Energy Now!, which provides awareness of weatherization and energy audit programs for low to moderate-income households. CEDC plays a vital role in reaching out to and engaging non-English speaking families about energy efficiency, renewable energy opportunities and the City-led energy aggregation program. The Resilience Hub development also plans to incorporate green design and energy efficiency into the project.

Expand housing opportunities
The CEDC provides direct service on the RAFT program in collaboration with Neighborworks Housing Solutions. We are also disbursing emergency COVID-19 rental relief funds direct rental relief. We offer monthly first-time homebuyer and landlord classes in Spanish as well as education and advocacy for tenants facing eviction and Fair Housing violations.

Additionally, through the Capitol Theater Project, the CEDC will be bringing back a blighted commercial property into reuse as retail and affordable housing space, a first in its long history.

Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development 2021
Community Investment Tax Credit Program
Community Partnership and Tax Credit Allocation Application

Attachments

1) Map of Service Area
2) CIP Futures Survey Tool Data Findings
3) Various News Articles

Overall New Bedford - CEDC provides Immigrant Support Network, VITA, 1st Time Homebuyer, Small Business, and COVID-19 Emergency Aid.

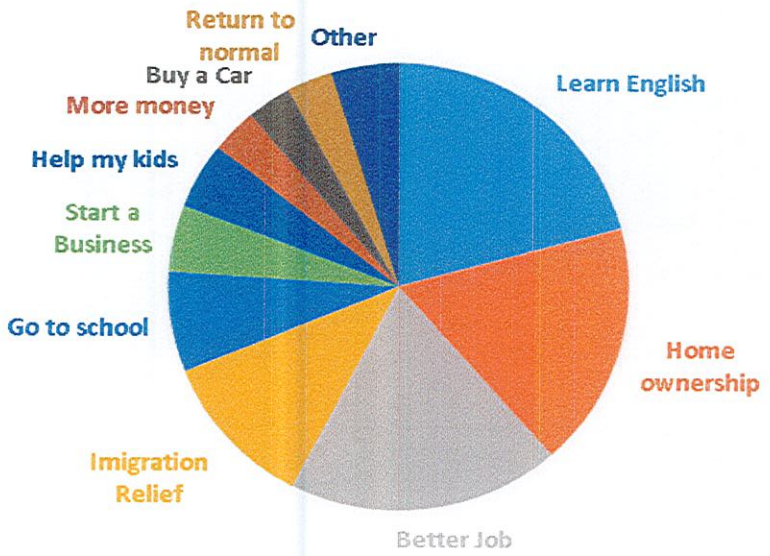
CEDC ACUSHNET AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD FOCUS

Small Business Technical Assistance, Urban Placemaking, and Capitol Theater Restoration.

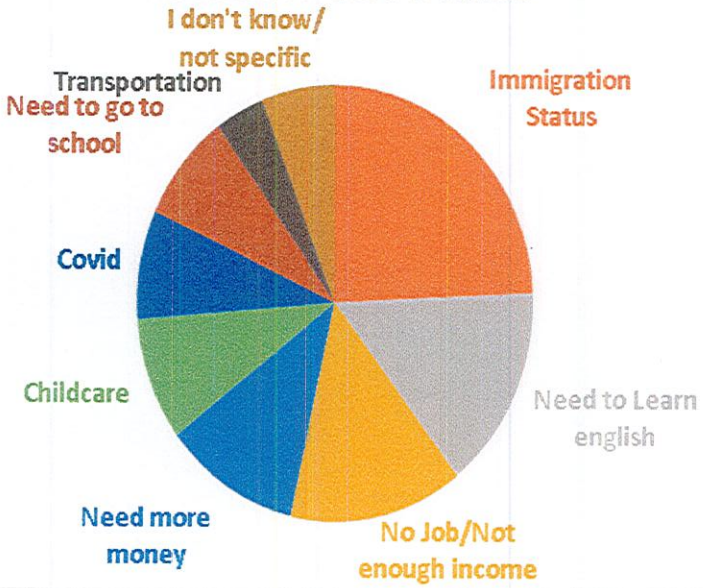
development consulting solutions

CEDC FUTURES SURVEY RESULTS

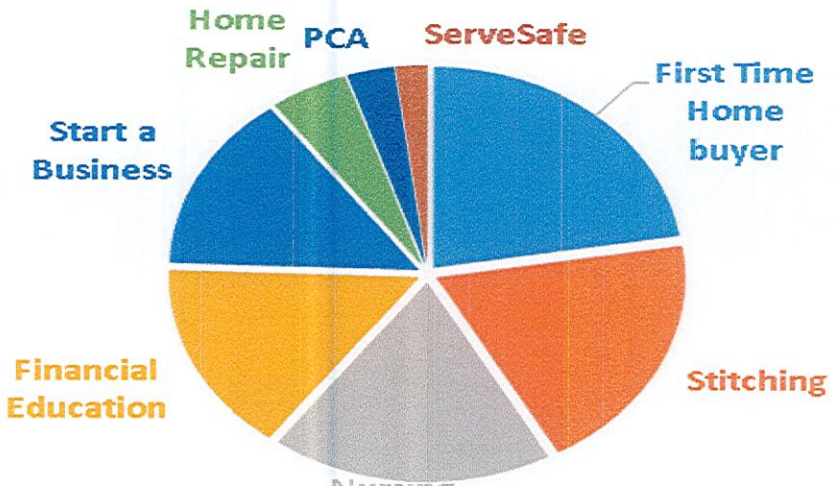
WHAT ARE YOU LIFE GOALS IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS?



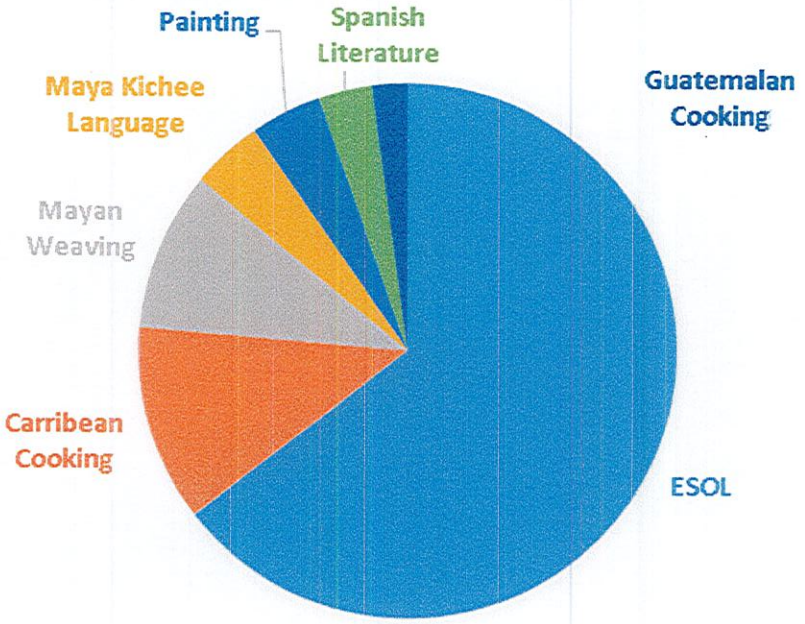
CURRENT OBSTACLES

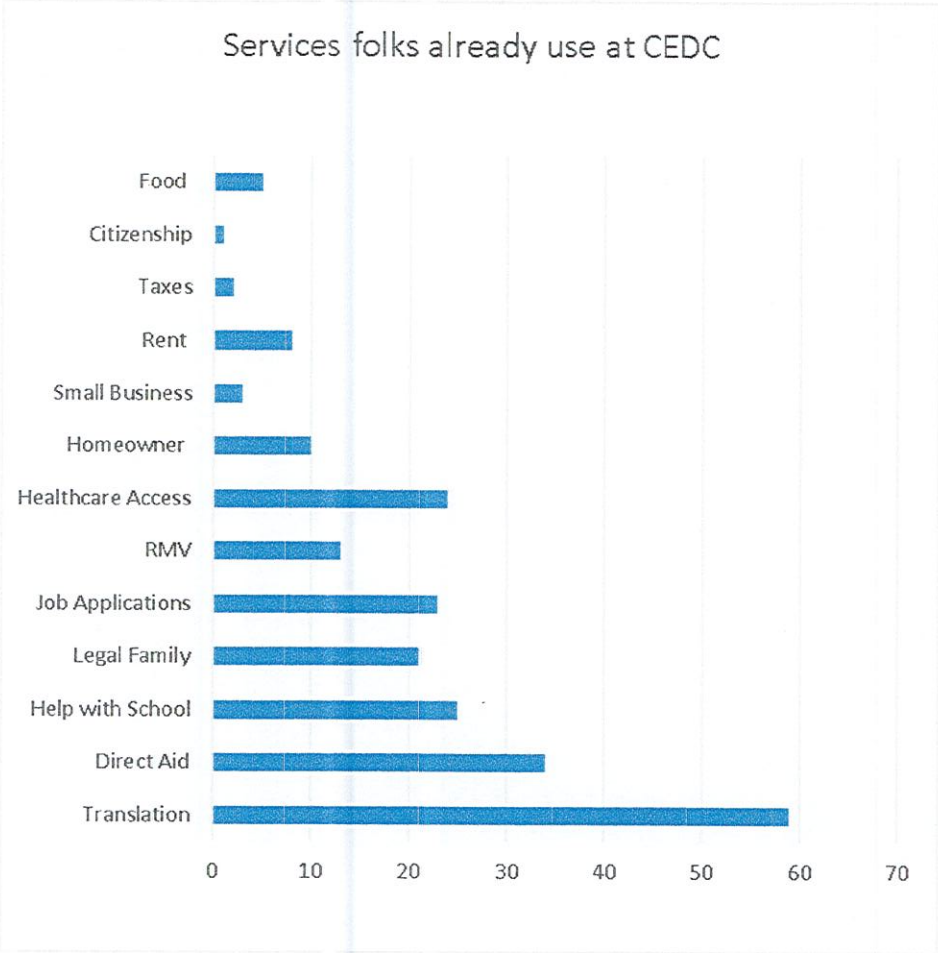


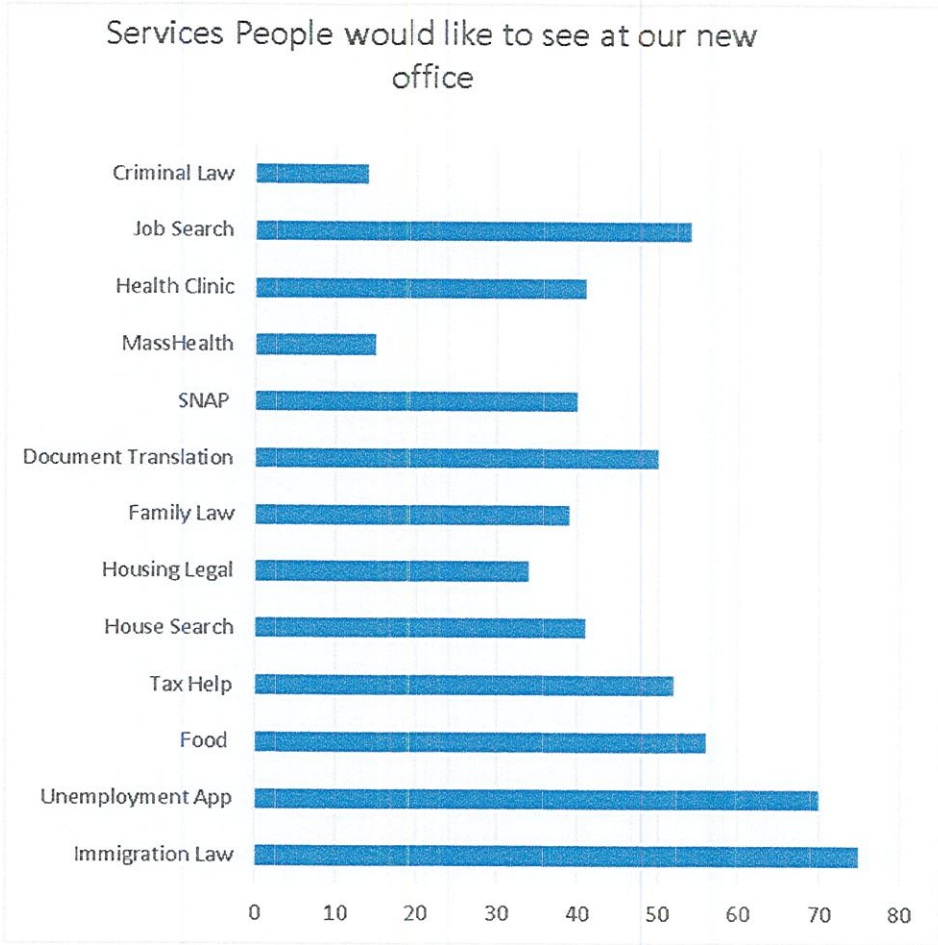
OCCUPATIONAL AND ASSETTS BUILDING CLASS INTEREST

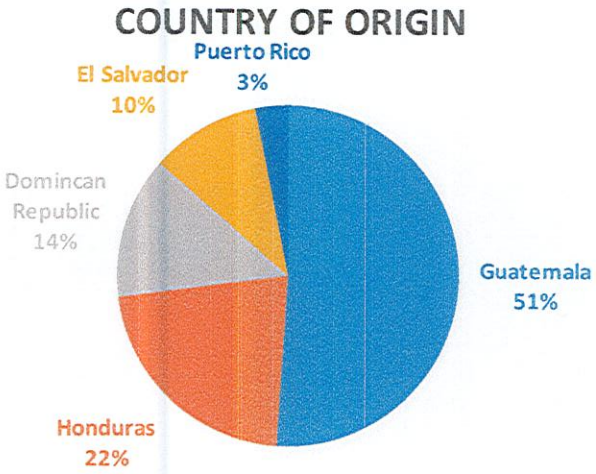


ART AND CULTURE CLASS INTEREST









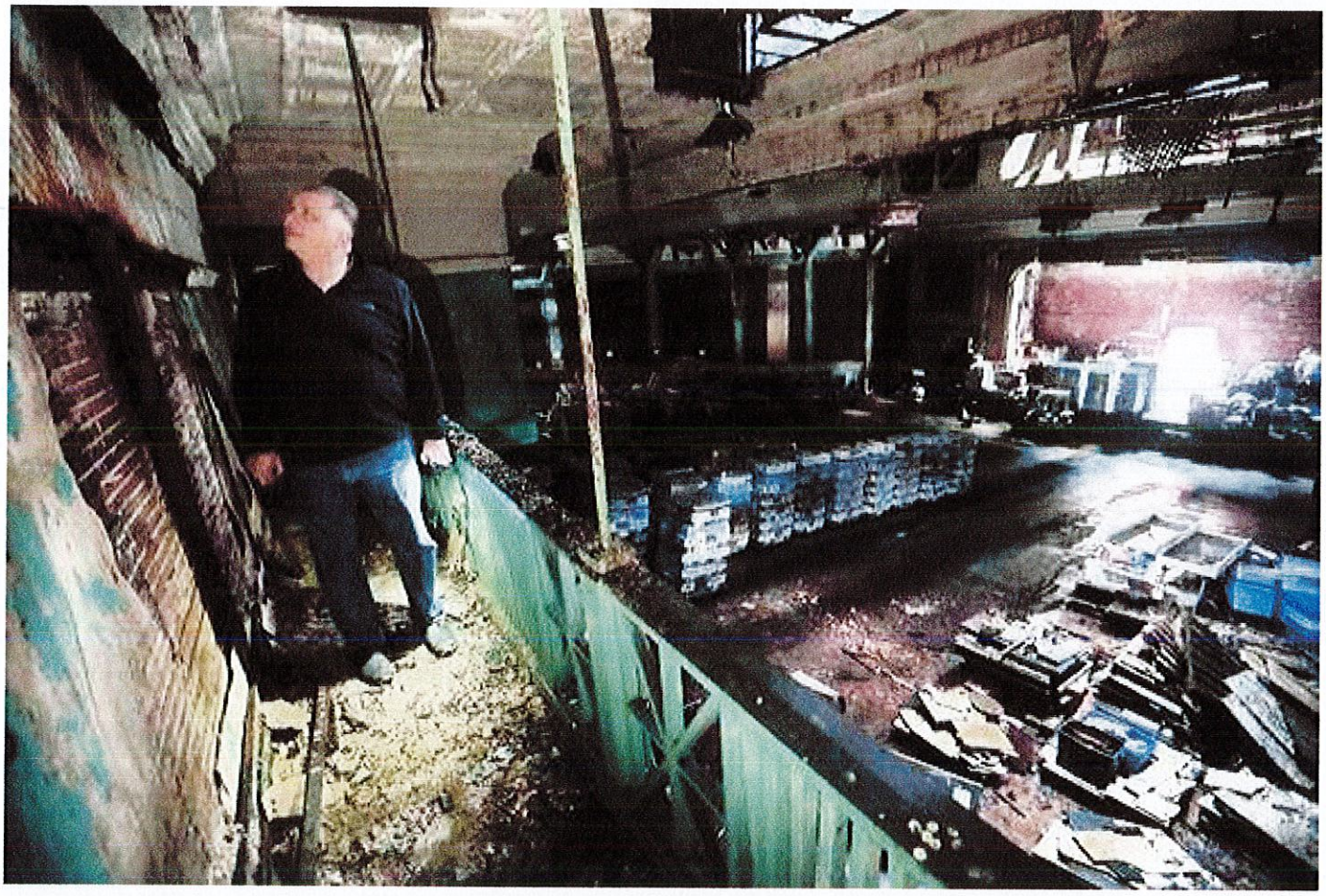
Demographic Info

100 Participants

- Avg. Household Size 4.7
- Avg. # of Adults 2.3
- Avg # of Children 2.4
- Avg. Rent $893/ Month
- 100% New Bedford Residents
- Languages Spoken: Spanish, Kichee, English, Portuguese,

Covid-19 Related Information

- 30% Positive
- 68% have been tested
- 90 % lost hours/wages due to virus or shutdowns
- 48% lost their job completely
- 33% have lost household income to stay home with children for remote learning



A Capitol success: Immigrant businesses to take center stage at historic North End New Bedford theater

By Linda Roy Posted Dec 14, 2019 at 5:23 PM Updated Dec 15, 2019 at 8:23 AM

NEW BEDFORD — If you walk past 1418 Acushnet Avenue and remember Butch the ticket taker dressed in the traditional red theater uniform and hat, then you have just taken a step back in time to the days when the Capitol Theatre was a shining light in the city.

It was a beautiful smile on "The Ave" back in 1920 when it first opened.

But today that beautiful smile reveals some badly chipped teeth.

The Allen-Charette/Capitol building is recognizable to the general public today by the retail store fronts that are mostly barred and locked with heavy chains as the building is nearly 90% vacant.

Ahh, but did you know that tucked behind those closed stores there was once a movie theater?

Depending on your generation, maybe you went to see actor Danny Kaye starring as Red Nichols in "The Five Pennies" or perhaps Sophia Loren in "The Black Orchid."

Locals who reminisce about the old theater on the database website CinemaTreasures.org talk about when the block-long brick building opened as a theater in November 1920. Getting in to see a movie only cost 12 cents on Saturdays. It was more expensive to get in on Sundays, though — a whole quarter. Candy bars were a nickel and a bag of hot buttery popcorn would set you back a dime. Moviegoers were treated to two movies and five Looney Tunes cartoons.

And they also remembered Butch who was the ticket man.

Thomas J. Charette partnered with George W. Allen Jr. in building the Capitol Theatre and became the largest owners and managers of theaters in the city. The1580-seat Capitol Theatre proved to be their largest theater when it was built, according to historical records.

The two stone signs in the parapet above the second story with "Allen-Charette" and "Capitol" carved into them are still there today.

In the 1970s, the movie screen was replaced by rock concerts.

In the 1980s, the final curtain closed on the theater and it was lights out for decades. The rear part of the building was left to slowly show signs of neglect like a watercolor painting left out in the rain. Time was bringing it closer and closer to a date with a wrecking ball. However, the 25,000 square-foot structure is poised to smile once again as the Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE) and Community Economic Development Center (CEDC) have joined together to launch a $6 million renovation project to rehabilitate and transform the building into something primarily focused on serving the needs of the immigrant culture in North End of the city.

"We looked at this building a long time ago, back when the 2010 census was going on," said Corinn Williams, executive director of CEDC. Located further south on Acushnet Avenue, the CEDC has outgrown its space. Williams said its new headquarters will be situated in the Capitol building.

"We also noted a real lack of space for nonprofits in this area," she said.

That will all change when the curtain rises once again at the Capitol building.

The Standard-Times recently walked through the building with Williams and Teri Bernert, executive director of WHALE.

You can see where parts of the ticket booth are still intact at the entrance. Carefully tiptoeing through the theater area using the flashlight app on our smartphones to light the way, Ken Rapoza of CEDC pointed out old relics like empty projection reels rusting on the floor, large, dinosaur-like boilers in the basement, and an empty stage where the archway tries desperately to hold on to the last pieces of peeling paint.

With holes in the roof that let the elements literally pour in, badly decaying walls, and lots of debris to step over on the floor, it feels as if the building is crumbling in on itself. And the place looks like a money pit.

But Williams and Bernert see something completely different.

They see six apartments on the second floor. They see a Vietnamese restaurant and other businesses on the street-facing front of the building. They see a shared commercial kitchen in a portion of the former theater section.

And that's not all.

"There will be training space to encourage immigrant-owned businesses," Williams said. The shared commercial kitchen, for instance, will be open to those who want to start their own food business, but who don't have the kitchen space to make it work.

Williams said there will also be workshop space for vocational training to help boost local economic development along Acushnet Avenue.

WHALE is involved in the project as development consultant, as is Kathryn Duff, founder and director of local sustainable architectural practicestudio2sustain.

WHALE is no stranger to rehabbing properties in New Bedford and has worked with many organizations to help breathe new life more than 65 historic structures, including the Rotch-Jones Duff House & Garden Museum, Zeiterion Performing Arts Center, Union Street Lofts, Howland House and Seamen's Bethel.
Bernert is looking at a very aggressive time frame in getting the project completed. She said work should begin sometime in late 2020 and aiming for completion in one year.
Funding will come from various grants and private donations, Bernert said.
And there's a lot of support behind this rehab including endorsements from Love The Ave, Massachusetts Migrant Education Program of EDCO Collaborative, Groundwork Southcoast, State Rep. Antonio Cabral, and the New Bedford Economic Development Council, to name a few.

"Little by little we're beginning to bring The Ave back to life," Williams said.

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You are here: Home » Schools » Tabor Expands Partnership with New Bedford's CEDC

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Tabor Expands Partnership with New Bedford's CEDC

on January 16, 2017

Recently, Tabor Academy has expanded its collaboration with the Community Economic Development Center (CEDC) based in New Bedford. Each week throughout the school year, a group of Tabor students travel to New Bedford to provide English tutoring to members of the community who have immigrated to the United States.

The CEDC is a nonprofit organization that, according to their website, "fosters economic justice in the local economy through people-centered development." Among many things, the CEDC provides opportunities, resources, and networks to those needing help becoming a part of the local economy. Specifically, the organization focuses on economic development, community building, neighborhood improvement and public policy.

The CEDC works largely in part with immigrants from Central America, many of whom have limited knowledge of the English language. Because of this, everyday activities such as finding jobs or housing, using public transportation, or filling out government paperwork can become a significant challenge. This group is the focus of the English tutoring provided by Tabor students.

The program began under the leadership of Jonathan Sirois, a Spanish teacher at Tabor, who was looking for a way "to foster better and more meaningful relationships with the local community." The program began with weekly visits to New Bedford on Thursdays after extra-curricular commitments in the afternoon, but due to recent success, they have added a trip on Tuesdays as well.

During the hour-long tutoring sessions, students will work with the community members individually. Starting with a baseline discussion from a worksheet, the conversation expands based upon specific ability levels or needs. Whether the community members are teenagers new to the language or people applying for United States citizenship after decades living in the country, everyone is there to develop a basic understanding of English.

"They are all extremely friendly and they tell you their story before and after moving to this country," said Tabor sophomore Christopher Mills.

The ability to develop knowledge of language goes both ways in this partnership. For students like Mills, this tutoring program not only provides the opportunity to meet people from the local area that they would never have the chance to meet otherwise, but also gives them a chance to improve their Spanish. The ability to have actual conversations with native speakers, says Mills, allows him to improve substantially in a short amount of time.

Though this program provides great opportunities for Spanish-speaking students, the partnership with the CEDC is open to all students at Tabor. While the growing success of the program has allowed it to expand to a second day of the week, the core members of the tutoring group hope it will continue to grow and gain popularity among Tabor students. Since students can go and tutor as many or as few times as they wish, it provides a flexible way to expand upon the boundaries of Tabor's campus and community.

This tutoring program with the CEDC is one of several reoccurring community service efforts pursued by Tabor students on a weekly basis. Each week, Tabor students volunteer with things such as Sunday school, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Sunday Supper, and more. Additionally, there is an ever-changing list of opportunities for students to give back to the Tri-Town and South Coast communities.

The school regularly hosts events for the Special Olympics, including the Special Olympics Polar Plunge event on January 22.

Twice a year, the entire Tabor community comes together to complete dozens of volunteer service projects across the region in the "Day of Service."

By Jack Gordon

Categories: Schools

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4 MINUTE READ

The "Ave" is alive!

from **The South Coast Insider - December 2020**
by **Coastal Communications Corp.**

A new mural by artist Eden Soares adorns the Cape Verdean Community Center on Acushnet Avenue.

By Steven Froias

This isn't supposed to be happening.

During a pandemic and an economic downturn, new businesses are opening up and down Acushnet Avenue, the north end of New Bedford's unique urban commercial corridor.

In the last few months, a Puerto Rican-themed gift and specialty store, Muralla, Maquinas & Mas, has opened at 1690 Acushnet Avenue. A few blocks south, a new mattress store has appeared. The former Tilia Cafe has a sign announcing that a new restaurant is coming soon.

And just where The Ave (as it is affectionately known) meets Brooklawn Park, something totally different has just opened: Pita Food Mart, featuring Lebanese, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean groceries and produce.

The owner, Hassan, says he decided to realize a dream and open Pita Food Mart when the space next to his smoke shop next door became available. The spacious storefront was perfect for the wide and plentiful variety of stock he wanted to carry.

Pita Food Mart is an amazing culinary adventure, with rows upon rows of bottled grape leaves, boxed baklava, havlah, and even fresh foods like spinach and cheese pies.

Since opening at 1890 Acushnet Avenue, the store has attracted a following and its reputation has already spread throughout New Bedford. It's now a destination, and a perfect fit for an area that's officially dubbed the city's "International Marketplace."

Next Story →
from 'The South Cc
December 2020'

Incredible Gifts!

Where old meets new

The birth of these new businesses is matched by the resilience of the long-time enterprises which give The Ave so much flavor.

The beloved Taqueria La Raza Mexican restaurant just opened up at their new, much larger location on The Ave at number 1218. The huge new space has been totally remodeled to reflect the sense of fun their formersmaller space brought to dining out.

Supporting many of these businesses is the Community Economic Development Center (CEDC) at 1285 Acushnet Avenue, led by Corinn Williams.

Working at a breakneck pace during the pandemic to ensure area residents were able to navigate everything from unemployment claims to healthcare, the CEDC and Williams in particular still pursued an expansive view of broad economic equality on The Ave.

In fact, its Urban Agenda Initiative got fully underway this past summer and into the autumn.

The Urban Agenda program was funded by the legislature to promote economic vitality and cultivate stronger urban neighborhoods across Massachusetts. The CEDC received one of 23 total awards distributed by Governor Baker in late 2019.

The $100,000 grant is designed to stimulate economic development along Acushnet Avenue by working with small businesses, community members, and other stakeholders to fill vacant storefronts with arts and culture displays, make physical improvements on existing storefront facades, and create family-friendly events to attract new customers.

That last one is largely put on hold right now, but the CEDC did partner with the arts organization 3rd EyE Unlimited to bring a popup event to the north end that saw a "free wall" graffiti mural created for street artists, while other virtual events took place during the evening.

Combined with the storefront facade portion of the Urban Agenda project, it has already brought a new visual element and more public art to The Ave, which will continue through the end of the year.

Related to the streetscape but not part of the Urban Agenda project – yet nonetheless a significant milestone – the soaring Eden Soares mural was also erected on the side of the former Strand Theater and future Cape Verdean Community Center in early November.

The Cape Verdean Association of New Bedford (CVANB) has partnered with Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE), a non-profit organization committed to preserving New Bedford's history and architectural heritage, to reimagine this patch of The Ave.

The organizations teamed up with the City of New Bedford, SouthCoast Community Foundation, CEDC, local artist Tracy Barbosa, studio2sustain Architects, and members of the neighborhood group Love the Ave, to create Island Park alongside the former Strand Theatre at 1157 Acushnet Avenue.

It is overlooking the new Island Park that the multi-panel mural painted by artist Eden Soares now hangs. It is designed to function as a welcome to Island Park.

"Our Board and many community volunteers have been working for many years to open the Cape Verdean Cultural Community Center," says Raquel Dias, CVANB Board President.

"The addition of Island Park will connect the CVA community center to the neighborhood and help to expand our future programming,"

Indeed, it will function as a welcome and gateway to the entire north end and its commercial corridor, historic Acushnet Avenue. Where, despite all odds, an economic and cultural renaissance is gaining speed and energy heading into 2021.

You can follow events and find out more about everything happening on The Ave by logging onto lovetheave.com. It's clear that something amazing is happening on The Ave, and that it's beating the odds and delivering on its promise as an urban destination like no other on the South Coast.

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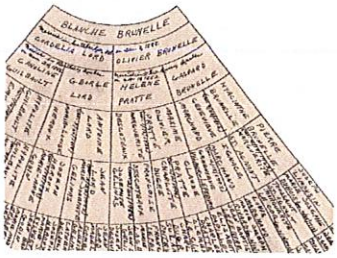

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