

VietAID, Inc. 2020-2022 CITC Community Investment Plan (CIP)

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

Vietnamese American Initiative for Development, Inc (VietAID) is rooted in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston. Our priority continues to be low income, immigrant and people of color in Dorchester as well as the broader Vietnamese immigrant community in Greater Boston.

In a report by University of Massachusetts Boston Institute for Asian American Studies, [“Vietnamese Americans in Fields Corner: The Development of a Community and its Prospects for the Future. A working paper,”](#) approximately 12,000 Vietnamese immigrants and refugees call Dorchester home according to Census 2010 data. While there have been some strides such as increase in homeownership rates (32% in 2010), there also exist challenges including 29% poverty rate particularly among the young and older adults. As an emerging immigrant community, language access continues to be a challenge – working age adults who are English language learners are often in low wage industries such as nail salon, restaurant and subcontracting (construction).

Because VietAID is located in Fields Corner, a racially and economically diverse neighborhood, our programming also targets the low income, working class and communities of color in the neighborhood. Based on data from the [Boston Planning and Development Agency](#), Dorchester had a population of 124,489 in 2015, 19% of Boston’s total population. Seventeen (17%) of residents were school age children in 2015, higher than the citywide share of 11%; also has a higher share of both 5-17 year-olds than the city as a whole. Dorchester is the most racially diverse neighborhood with 44% Black, 16% Latinx, 11% Asian, 7% Other and 22% White. The median household income in 2015 was \$47,200, lower than the Boston median of \$55,777. Sixty-six percent are renters with 62% of occupied households are family.

Over the next three years, we will be exploring expansion of services into Randolph, MA where there is a growing Vietnamese immigrant and refugee community and is considered one of the fastest growing cities for people of color. While we wait for data from 2020 census, initial data shows upwards of 300% increase in Vietnamese population over a 15-year span. Reasons include increase housing costs and displacement from Boston, lower housing costs and public transit access to Quincy Center and Ashmont Station.

SECTION 2: Involvement of community residents and stakeholders

As we complete our 25th anniversary, VietAID continues to be committed to ensuring that residents and community stakeholders are providing feedback and decision making on strategic direction. VietAID has a diverse board that represents Dorchester residents, Vietnamese community leaders, low-income residents and community allies. Over 50% of Board members are women and over 60% are people of color. In addition to the Board of Directors, program

participants are convened to provide feedback to programmatic decisions from youth development to day program for older adults.

Within each of our program, constituents play a key role in defining priorities and are supported by bilingual, bicultural staff and volunteers. Our early education and family-based program works closely with caretakers to understanding families' priorities both in and outside of the classroom informing curriculum and workshops for families. From a scan of our families, VietAID's pre-school is currently developing a partnership with Boston Public Schools becoming a bilingual Vietnamese-English early education for 4-year-old students. In addition, VietAID is a part of a community coalition to develop Vietnamese-English dual language programs so that Vietnamese families can better connect to BPS and students develop deeper connection to cultural and language.

Staff regularly surveys participants in our older adult program to match their needs, interests and understand issues that may affect their population. Our monthly calendar, workshops and partnerships are in direct response to program constituents' feedback.

In the past four months, VietAID has worked to engage young people ages 14-19 to re-launch our youth development program that connects social-emotional support with civic engagement and leadership development curriculum. Youth are empowered to identify issues they care about and develop action-plan from ethnic studies to displacement/gentrification.

VietAID's Board of Directors is currently in a strategic planning process to guide the growth of the organization over the next 5-8 years and define the organization's role as a neighborhood anchor organization. This includes identifying changing neighborhood and community conditions, emerging issues such as climate resiliency, organizational SWOT and opportunities for collaboration to maximize impact.

SECTION 3: Plan goals

VietAID's mission is to build a strong Vietnamese American community and a vibrant Fields Corner through the following measures: promoting civic engagement and community building; developing affordable housing and commercial space; providing small business technical assistance and micro-enterprise development; and offering high-quality childcare services.

Our CIP goals are:

1. Develop truly affordable housing in vulnerable communities where displacement is at the forefront of residents' concerns. Staffed by Director of Real Estate and supported by respected team, VietAID looks to develop mix-use housing that maximizes community benefits. Diversify our real estate portfolio that builds the wealth of the community – whether that's a commitment to local hire, partnering with women and people of color owned businesses or experiments with models that directly invests (or allows residents to invest) in businesses.

2. Building the strength and capacity of residents and Vietnamese community members to participate and led on issues that affect their daily lives. Including issues related to housing and displacement, climate resiliency, language access, health care and education. Provide strong baseline services to address the needs of our constituents as a first step to engaging folks in advocacy and organizing efforts.
3. Build strategic collaborations and partnerships to develop resident led visions and platform for the community. Translate these visions into actionable plans.
4. Maximize program through partnership to build the economic stability of community.

SECTION 4: Activities to be undertaken

Actions to address CIP goals:

Goal 1:

- Develop mix use parcel at 195 Bowdoin Street to create 41 units of affordable housing at 60% AMI and under and 6,000 square feet of commercial to be leased to Dorchester Food Cooperative.
- Develop a plan and vision to redevelop land that Vietnamese American Community Center is currently located to mix-use community, housing and commercial space.
- Begin to plan for refinance of existing housing developments within the next 5-10 years.
- Work with City of Boston and neighborhood partners to identify parcels for development within the Dorchester neighborhood, with focus on Bowdoin Geneva and Glovers Corner area.

Goal 2:

- Work with management company to hold open houses and engagement meetings with residents within VietAID's existing portfolio. Build the capacity of the organization to hire a Community Organizer whose mandate will be to connect residents with current programming and support on campaigns/issues that residents may be interested in.
- Expanding the base within our older adult and youth program. Increase the attendance of each program by 150% within the next three years.
- Re-launch and expand the capacity of our youth to envision and implement a program that meets their need and interest. Connect youth to issues that they feel passionate about whether that's within their school or neighborhood.
- Develop a pipeline of youth to organizing efforts within the neighborhood efforts so that youth voices are equal and respected.
- Train and build the capacity of community residents on organizing tools such as 1:1 resident engagement, data analysis and facilitation.

Goal 3:

- Engage over 1,000 residents and community members on issues ranging from climate to neighborhood planning. Build a new base of constituents for the organization through constituent engagement efforts.

- Utilize civic engagement – whether nonpartisan voter education or Census 2020 – to reach and build relationships within the community. Increase voter engagement in our target precincts by 50% over the next 2-3 years.

Goal 4:

- Work with MAHA to hire a bilingual Vietnamese home counselor based and network of bilingual TA providers. Through this partnership, hold monthly classes and expand reach beyond Dorchester.
- With organizations like MassCOSH and St Marks ESOL, provide workforce ESOL while building direct hire relationships with employers.

SECTION 5: How success will be measured and/or evaluated

Success will be measured and evaluated by:

- The number of residents engaged
- How many go on to take action from filling out a survey to participating in a meeting
- How many to take on leadership positions within specific campaigns
- Growth of programs and number of participants in each

Goal 1:

- Number of affordable housing units developed at each income level
- Number of WMBE contractors and workers engaged in development project
- Number of units in pre-development
- Number of residents and community stakeholders engaged in pre-development process

Goal 2:

- Number of residents engaged in each meeting and number of returners for each meeting.
- List of issues identified by residents and how many resolved (with resident input).
- Current number and number increased over 2-3 years within each program. Number of returners for each program.
- Number of residents recruited and skills acquired by each by end of program.
- Number of workshops provided and how many attending each.

Goal 3:

- Number of voters registered, contacted and percent voted. Increase in percentage overtime.
- Number of residents and volunteers engaged to conduct civic engagement efforts.
- Number of residents engaged in climate survey.
- Number of resident in climate workshops

Goal 4:

- Number of home counseling classes and how many successfully purchase.

- Number of residents and students in ESOL classes
- Number of students from classes to job placement

SECTION 6: Collaborative efforts to support implementation

Collaboration is at the heart of our organization’s strategy because we believe that collaboration, particularly bringing together interracial and intergeneration organizations, will allow our work to go to scale and have the biggest impact. Collaboration cuts across every program:

Civic Engagement and Policy:

- VietAID is part of APIs/CAN, a statewide network of Asian American servicing organizations that seeks to build the political power of working class Asian American communities and highlight issues that unite our diverse communities such as language access, education and data equity.
- VietAID is part of an emerging coalition of Asian American organization looking to address compulsive gambling within our respective communities. Compulsive gambling combined with low wage work is a major deterrent to the economic health of many of our families therefore the “wealth health” of our community.
- VietAID works closely with community stakeholder organizations in Fields Corner and Dorchester and helped to convene a cross sector initiative called Crossroads with the goal of developing a resident led resiliency platform.

Early Education and Family Engagement:

- VietAID works closely with Boston Public Schools to provide culturally sensitive and innovate curriculum for our youngest learners.
- VietAID is a core member of a community initiative that seeks to expand dual language opportunities within BPS for Vietnamese language learners.
- VietAID partners with organizations such as Boston Teachers Union, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center and Massachusetts Asian American Educators Alliance to advocate on behalf of Asian American students across Boston.

Climate Resiliency:

- A new program for VietAID and launching in 2020, our climate resiliency work will connect VietAID with public partners such as Department of Public Health and City of Boston with neighborhood community partners. The goal of our climate work will be to engage low income residents into the climate conversations; a population that is often missing from policy conversations despite being the most vulnerable to climate fluctuations such as extreme temperature.

Small Business and Community & Economic Development:

- VietAID works closely with organizations such as Main Streets to support small businesses, particularly when language is a barrier.

- We recognize that many community members enter the nail salon or subcontract industries because language is a barrier to access higher wage work. VietAID works with organizations providing ESOL classes and the City of Boston to develop workforce focused ESOL classes and employer partnerships.
- Partner with Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance (MAHA) to develop a home counseling program that maximizes our respective organization's strengths – MAHA's expertise in home counseling and VietAID's network and language capacity.

SECTION 7: Integration of activities/consistency with community strategy and vision

As noted above, VietAID is in the process of updating our strategic plan for the next 5-8 years.

Our programming and activities are in direct response to the needs of our constituents and identified priority population. To date, there has not been a City lead or plan in Fields Corner as other Boston neighborhoods such as Chinatown, Dudley or Uphams Corner has development. VietAID's integration of activities is instead based on data, community stakeholder feedback and internal capacity to provide culturally competent services.

In 2019, VietAID helped to convene a collaborative of neighborhood-based organizations to develop a resident led resiliency plan for Fields Corner. This collaborative received support of Boston Children's Hospital through their Children's Health Equity Initiative. We anticipate the completion of this plan by fall of 2020 and move into implement at the beginning of 2021. This plan will take into account: needs assessment of a diverse range of residents, available data, feedback from a "steering committee" of residents and analysis of conditions and issues present in the neighborhood. Those in the collaborative include Dot House Health, Boys and Girls Club Dorchester, Louis D Brown Peace Institute, All Dorchester Sports and Leadership, Asian American Resource Workshop, New England United for Justice, MassCOSH and Dorchester Youth Collaborative.

SECTION 8: Financing strategy

VietAID's financial strategy utilized the following: government and private foundation support, individual and corporate sponsorships and real estate development. VietAID has been working to rebuilding our financial strength particularly to recruit more individual and corporate supporters.

We anticipate that while our real estate development will continue to be a central goal for the organization, we recognize that a combination of limited resources, increase competition and time that each project takes, our financial strategy needs to diversify and prioritize other avenues. Over the next three years, VietAID's financial strategy will be to fully fund our programs through government contracts, private foundation and/or corporate support. We plan to do this by completing our strategic planning, develop and strengthen partnerships with partner organizations and focus resources to fundraising. In addition, we seek to build a

general operating funding, maximize rental income from the Vietnamese American Community Center and utilize future developer fees to build reserves for the organization.

Usage of CITC funds will be used to attract individual, corporate and institutional supporters and build general operating resources for the organization. VietAID has engaged in conversations with institutional partners to be CITC supporters as a way to support the organization outside of transitional programmatic grant support. VietAID is an affiliate of United Way Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley to support our early education and youth development work. Our Board of Directors continues to be committed to building new relationships and funding partners; the board has 100% giving.

Currently funders include City of Boston, State of Massachusetts, Boston Public Schools, Mass Census Equity Fund and Franklin Square House Foundation. Corporate partners include Santander Bank, Boston Private and Trinity Management.

SECTION 9: History, Track Record and Sustainable Development

VietAID was founded in 1994 by community leaders and residents who believed that community development was a means to stabilize and strengthen an emerging immigrant community. Since then, VietAID has proven to be an innovative leader: leading a capital campaign to develop the nation's first Vietnamese American community center; opening a bilingual-bicultural pre-school (the only in Massachusetts); developing a workers cooperative cleaning services; and being a leading voice speaking on behalf of Vietnamese immigrants and refugees.

VietAID's program and the community center services over 2,000 constituents on a yearly basis ranging from cultural programming, adult ESOL classes to community workshops on issues such as small business support and civic engagement.

Our real estate development seeks to meet three goals: 1) providing stable housing for vulnerable populations, 2) provide supportive services for residents, 3) be built in ways that are sustainable and forward thinking. Past and future developments seek meet sustainable principles by being mix-use commercial and residential with emphasis on supporting women and people of color own businesses, LEED certified and meeting other healthy development standards and located within .25 to .5 miles of public transit.