

WATCH CDC Community Investment Plan (January 1, 2020 – January 1, 2023)

Section I

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

WATCH Community Development Corporation, also known as Waltham Alliance for Teaching, Community organizing, and Housing, is located in Waltham, west of Boston and just inside the Route 95 corridor. The population of Waltham is 62,832. Home ownership rate is 51.5%, which means that nearly half of the population lives in rental units, mostly apartments.

Two characteristics of Waltham are significant for WATCH: rents are rising in Waltham at an alarming rate and a large number of immigrants have chosen Waltham as home. Since 2014, rents in Waltham have increased by 124%. The housing crisis for low- and middle-income residents is compounded by the fact that the number of affordable housing units in Waltham is below the state recommended 10%. The percentage of individuals residing in Waltham who are not US citizens, according to 2017 census data, is 17%. That percentage is higher than all of the surrounding communities. In the Waltham Public Schools last year, the number of students for whom English was not their first language was 47.9%—more than twice the state average. The percentage of English language learners was 22.7%, again more than twice the state average. For at least ten years the Hispanic enrollment in the public schools has been twice the state average. Currently, the Hispanic population at 40.7 % nearly equals the white population (41.9%).

WATCH serves the immigrant and low-income populations of Waltham. Our office is located on the South Side of Waltham, the downtown area, in the midst of numerous apartment buildings and a concentration of immigrant residents. A majority of our clients can walk to the WATCH office. WATCH focuses on responding to the needs of those caught in the housing crisis—steadily rising rents, insufficient affordable housing options, construction of luxury apartments squeezing out low-income residents, and resistance among elected officials to increase the number of affordable and truly affordable units. Families are doubled and tripled up in single apartments.

WATCH also places a priority on welcoming and supporting Waltham’s immigrant community, at a very challenging time for immigrants in the United States. Policies, growing anti-immigration sentiment and new laws “have significantly increased fear and uncertainty among immigrant families and had wide-ranging negative impacts on their health and well-being” (Kasier Family Foundation). Immigrants are increasingly fearful of accessing various services for which they qualify. Both documented and undocumented immigrants face higher risks from the policies and whims of a hostile federal government.

WATCH offers immigrants not just language courses and tutoring, but a place to gather, feel welcomed and safe, and ask questions and get answers. They can access all of WATCH’s programs and resources. The Housing Clinic, the Job Clinic, and the Tenant Action Group are all available to them, with language interpretation if needed.

The demographics of Waltham continue to shift. The immigrant population in Waltham has historically come from Central America. Currently the number of Ugandans moving to Waltham has increased. Our English classes are attracting Latinos, Ugandans, Haitians, Brazilians, and Albanians. On the other end of the economic spectrum, Waltham is attracting an increasing number of young

professionals and higher-income residents who are moving into newly built high-end apartment complexes and taking advantage of Waltham's easy commuting distance to Boston. Gentrification threatens the economically and ethnically diverse nature that Waltham has developed over the last 30 years and low wage workers are increasingly pushed out of the housing market. Waltham is also home to two universities: Brandeis University and Bentley University. WATCH is fortunate to be able to recruit young and energetic interns from these universities for our programs.

Section 2

Involvement of community residents and stakeholders

WATCH is currently immersed in a comprehensive five-year strategic planning process. (Strategic Planning Flowchart attached.) The four initial elements laid out in WATCH's strategic planning process are State of the Organization, Stakeholder Analysis, Environmental Scanning, and Benchmarking. The State of the Organization document is complete, comparing the status of WATCH in 2015 and at the end of 2019 (the span of WATCH's most recent strategic plan), in the areas of Community Organizing, Housing Clinic, Adult Education, Leadership Development/Diversity, Job Clinic, First Time Home Buyer Program, Voter Registration and Engagement, Barnraising, Media/Marketing, Fundraising/Financial Management, Capital Improvements/Assets, Staffing and Benefits, and Our Place in the Community. (Document attached.) This document was completed by the Executive Director and Development Director, with review and input from WATCH's Board of Directors and Advisory Board.

The Environmental Scanning research is complete, identifying trends in politics, demographics, and WATCH constituencies. The document resulted from discussions at two WATCH Advisory Board meetings, in September and November 2019 and research by a WATCH intern and WATCH Executive Director. Initially the Advisory Board developed a list of potential trends that might impact WATCH's work and constituencies during the next five years. At the following meeting the Advisory Board reviewed the data related to the trends. Members talked in small groups about the implications of the data, including brainstorming possible programmatic impacts.

The Benchmarking document is complete. The document identifies our connection with other agencies: overlap between WATCH and other groups, analysis of where WATCH is more successful and effective and where the other organization excels in the areas of overlap, an explanation of how WATCH collaborates with other groups, and any unanswered questions about the other groups. Both the Board of Directors and Advisory Board helped develop the list of partner agencies. Staff members then selected the agencies with which they work most closely and considered the overlaps between WATCH and other agencies: how WATCH overlaps with these groups, what strengths both WATCH and the partner agencies bring to the work, and any questions about how the other agency operates.

The Stakeholder Analysis is WATCH's current focus. WATCH staff, Board of Directors, and Advisory Board brainstormed lists of stakeholders from the community we serve, current clients, supporters, agency partners, and gatekeepers. From the list, individual WATCH staff members identified particular segments of the stakeholders for input. Staff members personalized outreach and surveys for Housing Clinic clients (85), English language students (125), former GED students and applicants (10), Tenant Action Group members (100), major donors (75), past volunteers (30), and agency partners (70). Input sought from the various groups includes: involvement with WATCH programs and activities, satisfaction with WATCH programs, most helpful actions on the part of

WATCH, familiarity with the range of WATCH programs, unmet needs, suggestions for expansion and alteration of existing programs, ways for WATCH to improve its programs and services, the quality and effectiveness of our collaborations, and reasons for supporting WATCH. WATCH will also seek input from Waltham elected officials (including the mayor and city council members), long-time WATCH members, and English Program teachers, aides, and tutors. The Advisory Board and Board of Directors were very involved in the editing of the surveys, giving feedback on both content and format. WATCH's Board of Directors includes clients and students who gave very meaningful input. The Advisory Board includes a few software engineers who developed a format that allows auto reading of the results. This step will save WATCH a significant amount of time reviewing and analyzing the survey data.

The WATCH Board of Directors and the WATCH Advisory Board are both directly and intimately involved in the entire strategic planning process. The composition of WATCH's Board of Directors is 50% low-income. The board meets monthly. The WATCH Advisory Board is composed of local business and church partners, former WATCH board leaders, people of influence in the community, and donors. The Advisory Board ordinarily meets quarterly, but it has chosen to meet every two months during the strategic planning process.

The Board of Directors has 14 – 16 members at any given time; usually 10 – 12 attend monthly meetings. Members of the Board of Directors are elected annually by WATCH members at WATCH's annual anniversary celebration event. Members are defined as anyone who has contributed to WATCH financially or participated in a WATCH program. The Advisory Board has over 30 members and 18 – 20 attend any given meeting.

This strategic planning process began in June of 2019. Updates as to where we are in the planning process are introduced at every Board of Directors, staff, and Advisory Board meeting. The design of the strategic planning structure ensures that we are reaching out to nearly all key community partners as well as representatives of our primary constituencies. WATCH believes in being accountable to the community. This process is an effective way for us to take extra time to deliberately and thoughtfully reach out and get feedback from these different segments of our community.

Section 3

Plan goals

Referring to the strategic planning process above: following analysis of input and results from the surveys and identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats—the staff, Board of Directors, and Advisory Board will move into defining the goals and then objectives of our Community Investment Plan. Because completion of the entire process will take a number of months, in this updated Community Investment Plan we define the goals, outcomes, and programs for which WATCH has committed budget and staffing for FY20. We anticipate adding additional programs or enhancing current programs by June 2020, following the completion of our five-year strategic plan. Our 2020 Statement of Progress on our CIP will include an update of new goals and programs that stem from the finalized strategic plan.

Goals

1. Expansion of number of units and access to safe and affordable housing in Waltham.

Outcomes: Addition of 30 new units of affordable housing in Waltham, and passage of two tenant support or home ownership proposals by the Waltham Community Preservation Committee (CPC).

Strategy: Engage tenants who come to the Housing Clinic in working to address root causes of rising rents and unsafe housing conditions in Waltham. Educate residents about tenant rights, health inspections, city housing policy, and their ability to bring about policy change and support affordable housing initiatives. Develop affordable housing plans and proposals for submission to the Community Preservation Committee.

Program: Community organizing, staffed by a community organizer and a campaign coordinator, to develop affordable housing proposals and campaigns. The Tenant Action Group (TAG) of 250 tenants impacts local policy and funding allocation decisions through advocacy efforts of canvassing door-to-door, outreach at community events, public testimony, and other community organizing actions.

Program: Support for the \$2.1 million Local Voucher Program, developed by WATCH, which provides financial rental assistance for up to 50 families, for a period of up to three years. The program includes quarterly meetings with the recipients, training in financial management and budgeting, and one-on-one credit counseling.

Benefits: Low- to moderate-income residents have a better chance of finding housing in Waltham, fewer people are forced out of Waltham because of the cost of housing, the conditions of rental housing are improved, the City of Waltham maintains its economically and ethnically diverse population.

2. Housing stability and prevention of homelessness for low-income residents of Waltham.

Outcomes: Assist 600 adults and 350 children annually, with successful results in 75% of the cases.

Strategy: Provide comprehensive, free housing assistance during day and evening hours, with language interpretation available. Partner with other local agencies to provide emergency assistance and coordinate referrals for basic needs such as food, childcare, healthcare, and transportation. Supplement current housing clinic services assistance with volunteer help.

Program: A free walk-in Housing Clinic, staffed by a full-time coordinator and Brandeis University interns, offering assistance with housing and basic needs, and referrals for financial assistance and other community services. Assistance ranges from help in avoiding eviction, finding new housing, and resolving issues with landlords, to getting assistance with fuel and utility bills, receiving furniture, obtaining food stamps, benefitting from legal help, and getting assistance from other agencies. All services are combined with an educational component to increase the capacity of clients to independently navigate city and state programs and services and increase independence and self-advocacy.

Program: A Volunteer Program, staffed by a part-time coordinator, providing volunteers to meet the needs of clients for navigating next steps after they leave the WATCH office: transportation, interpretation, accompaniment to other agencies for intake or onsite rental application appointments, advocacy and support in court hearings, picking up donated furniture, and using onsite job application computer terminals. Volunteers will be screened and receive training related to the tasks they will be doing with clients.

Benefits: Reduction in homelessness and at-risk tenancies, higher likelihood that services will be accessed and utilized, increased confidence by low-income households of navigating key community resources, increase in positive outcomes for clients.

3. Proficiency in English for the adult immigrant population.

Outcomes: 350 immigrants annually enroll in WATCH's English Language Program and more than 90% show progress on their placement exams.

Strategies: Enroll students into seven morning and evening class sections, taught by volunteer teachers and aides. Each class meets twice a week for a total of five hours a week in 16-week semesters. Place advanced students with individual volunteer tutors. Train and support volunteer teachers, aides and tutors. Provide a supportive, engaging, high quality, stimulating environment for students and teachers.

Program: An English Language Program, staffed by a manager, part-time assistant, and volunteer teachers, aides and tutors. The program includes three levels of instruction in English classes, one-on-one tutoring, a GED preparation course, a US citizenship course, and conversation groups. Additional offerings to supplement more structured learning situations include book club, writing assistance, and computer classes.

Benefits: Immigrants experience a sense of safety and acceptance at WATCH due to the student-centered, interactive, and inclusive approach to teaching. Students increased proficiency in English supports them in achieving new jobs, raises, and promotions; obtaining US citizenship; moving to better housing accommodations; participating in community activities; speaking in English with a child's teacher; getting a learner's permit or driver's license; and opening a bank account. Students are connected to other programs and resources at WATCH and feel a sense of community. The community benefits from the integration of thriving and active immigrants into community life.

4. Development of new leaders among immigrant and low-income residents.

Outcomes: Immigrant and low-income leaders are able to assist and engage friends and associates in navigating the cultural, political, policy, and educational aspects of life in Waltham.

Strategy: Make the objective of developing new leaders a priority in WATCH programs: Community Organizing, Tenant Action Group, English Language Program, and voter registration and engagement. Elect representatives from WATCH programs onto the Board of Directors.

Program: Foster leadership skills through education on housing policy, organizing campaign development, advocacy efforts of canvassing door-to-door, outreach at community events, public testimony, and service on the Board of Directors. Students and clients also prepare presentations and projects for English classes, and make presentations at WATCH events such as annual anniversary celebrations and annual immigrant appreciation events.

Benefits: Immigrants and low-income residents experience a sense of proficiency and accomplishment, and they educate the broader Waltham community with their stories and experiences. They exercise their right to be heard in policy decision-making decisions and to elect officials who represent their needs in city, state, and national elections. Their membership on the Board of Directors ensures that WATCH's Board of Directors is composed of 50% low-income individuals, and that WATCH is lead by its constituents.

5. Increased financial stability for immigrants and low- to moderate-income residents.

Outcomes: 100 clients receive job search assistance annually.

Strategy: Provide free job search and interview preparation assistance at the WATCH office.

Program: A Job Clinic offers free one-on-one assistance in resume preparation, interviewing, and job search one afternoon per week at the WATCH office. The clinic is staffed by a volunteer who has experience in career services. Language interpretation services are available. WATCH has had staffing from MassHire one day a week in the recent past and hopes to re-start this partnership in order to provide additional job support services.

Benefits: WATCH clients from the Housing Clinic, the English Language Program, and tenant assistance programs are able to access job assistance at the WATCH office. Local residents are able to access job assistance locally.

6. Education of first time home buyers.

Outcomes: 200 first time home buyers annually complete a CHAPA-certified course and qualify for financial programs designed for first time home buyers.

Strategy: Obtain bank sponsors to present at the courses, underwrite the costs of offering the course, and support WATCH's community work. Offer a high-quality course and attract participants from Waltham and surrounding areas. Educate first time home buyers to prepare them for a successful home buying experience.

Program: A First Time Home Buyer program, staffed by a part-time coordinator and part-time facilitator, partners with banks to offer pre-purchase courses for first time home buyers. The course is certified by CHAPA (Massachusetts Citizens' Housing and Planning Association). Courses are offered nine to ten times per year.

Benefits: People considering buying a home for the first time receive broad understanding of the process and responsibilities involved in purchasing and owning a home, reducing misunderstandings and foreclosures. They qualify for first time buyer assistance programs.

7. Voter registration and engagement

Outcomes: 80 new voters per year register in Waltham. WATCH clients and members receive information about candidates prior to elections.

Strategy: Offer voter registration door-to-door, at community events, and at the WATCH office. Follow up with new voters prior to subsequent elections to remind them where and when to vote.

Program: Tenant Action Group (TAG) members and WATCH interns and volunteers canvass the local neighborhood and businesses to inform residents about community issues and register voters. TAG members also table at community events and offer voter registration there. WATCH offers candidate forums for local elections and solicits questions from WATCH clients and members.

Benefits: Members of WATCH and the local community are more informed and personally involved in local elections. They are more educated about civic processes. Underrepresented residents are engaged in affecting positive change for the city.

Section 4

Activities to be undertaken

1. Expansion of number of units and access to safe and affordable housing in Waltham.

Activities:

- Work with Metro West Collaborative Development to complete feasibility study of converting the abandoned Waltham Armory building into affordable housing. If feasible, secure funding for conversion.
- Pursue feasibility studies for conversion of other abandoned city buildings into affordable housing, using funding from the Community Preservation Fund.
- Hold Tenant Action Group meetings monthly to plan strategy for community organizing campaigns.
- Provide opportunities to our members for engagement in local decision making around housing policies.
- Provide one-on-one and group support and training for local voucher program participants to enable them to successfully transition off the voucher at the end of three years.
- Consider applying for additional funding to extend the local voucher program.
- Research and develop proposal for a path to homeownership funded by the Community Preservation Committee.
- Research ways to reinstate Waltham's down payment assistance program for first time homebuyers.
- Research landlord incentive programs to support landlords to charge affordable rents such as tax incentives or place-based vouchers.

2. Housing stability and prevention of homelessness for low-income residents of Waltham.

Activities:

- Run a free walk-in Housing Clinic for Waltham and nearby residents that provides support for preserving tenancies, finding housing, and accessing resources to meet basic needs.
- Provide 10 – 15 hours weekly of additional daytime one-on-one support for clients.
- Utilize the revised intake form for client visits and enter all information into Salesforce. Make follow-up calls monthly and record outcomes. Run quarterly reports on clients, needs, services provided, and outcomes.
- Organize meetings every six weeks with 20 local and regional agency partners with a focus on meeting the needs of low-income households in Waltham. Maintain list serve for this inter-agency group.
- Coordinate with the Waltham Public Schools on 10 – 15 cases a year where students are identified as homeless or at risk of homelessness. Help stabilize tenancies or find housing or shelter.
- Coordinate with Metro Housing Boston to refer cases qualifying for assistance through RAFT (Residential Assistance for Families in Transition).
- Maintain a tenant assistance fund to help with small, emergency needs for clients or for short-term housing in cases where there is a one to two week gap, with an expected housing outcome.
- Coordinate with Boston College Legal Services LAB on cases involving tenant law that require legal representation.
- Collaborate with the Waltham Housing Authority to ensure fair treatment and equal access to public housing for our clients.
- Design a Volunteer Program, create a budget, and hire a coordinator for the program. Recruit and train a group of volunteers to assist clients with various activities and needs: transportation, advocacy, accompaniment, interpretation.

3. Proficiency in English for the adult immigrant population.

Activities:

- Provide eight to ten ESL classes five hours a week, for two 16-week semesters and one 12-week summer session. Charge low fees and provide waivers for as many as half of the students. Provide classes in a supportive, student-centered environment with volunteer teachers and aides supported by a full-time program manager and part-time assistant.
- Connect tutors with English learners in one-on-one tutoring pairs. Train and support tutor pairs. Pairs meet at least once a week to increase English language development and integration into the broader community.
- Administer entrance exams for placement and exit exams for indications of progress. Guide students in setting personal goals and assessing progress at the end of sessions.
- Provide GED class to those who are interested and eligible, twice a week.
- Provide training, curriculum development, and support for volunteer teachers and aides.
- Provide one to two 8 – 12 week sessions of citizenship classes run by volunteers.
- Collaborate with other ESL programs in Waltham and nearby towns to share recruitment strategies, curriculum approaches, and other best practices.
- Provide other English learning programs and classes based on student and volunteer interests such as conversation groups, book clubs, chess club, etc.

Development of new leaders among immigrant and low-income residents.

Activities:

- Recruit new members for the Board of Directors from WATCH programs to ensure at least half of the board is composed of low-income residents who have received services from WATCH.
- Provide leadership development opportunities to members to speak at public events and represent WATCH in the community.
- Work with members to share their stories by participating in public testimony, letter writing campaigns, and in our newsletter and bi-annual fundraising letter.
- Encourage and support members of the Tenant Action Group to participate in setting the strategy for increasing access to affordable housing. Give structure and opportunity for tenant leaders to give their input and see their ideas implemented within the community.
- Have staff-supported opportunities throughout the year to be the public face of WATCH: tabling events at summer festivals, going door to door registering new voters, and tabling at health fairs and events at the local library.
- Work with members on increasing their comfort with public speaking by helping them develop talking points and practice in a supportive environment, and by giving lots of positive feedback.

4. Increased financial stability for immigrants and low- to moderate-income residents.

Activities:

- Provide free one-on-one assistance for job search related needs, three to five hours a week at WATCH.
- Persist in reaching out to Mass Hire to re-fill the co-location job skills position here at WATCH.
- Track client outcomes with follow up calls in the weeks and months after their visit to the job clinic.

5. Education of first time home buyers.

Activities:

- Solicit bank sponsors for monthly three-session first time home buyer courses.
- Coordinate with FTHB Facilitator the scheduling of professional presenters, marketing the courses, registration of participants, and implementation of the courses.
- Re-apply for CHAPA certification for WATCH First Time Home Buyer courses.

6. Voter registration and engagement

Activities:

- Develop an annual plan for how, when and where to register voters.
- Engage volunteers, interns, and tenants in carrying out the plan that will include tabling and canvassing in low income neighborhoods to register voters.
- Host candidate forums in key local election years.

Section 5

How success will be measured and/or evaluated

WATCH's evaluation process takes place on many levels and engages a variety of stakeholders. WATCH is currently immersed in a comprehensive five-year strategic planning process. We anticipate completion of the process in the spring of 2020. At that time, we will have identified goals, objectives, strategies, and an implementation plan—including measurements of success. In this Community Investment Plan, we have indicated specific goals and the corresponding outcomes. Those outcomes are indicators of success.

An annual detailed analysis of the Community Investment Plan takes place at the levels of the Board of Directors, the Advisory Board, and the staff. All three bodies assess progress on goals and indicated outcomes, shortfalls in achieving desired results, internal and external circumstances that have affected progress, and movement on activities. Discussion and problem-solving at that time lead to needed adjustments in strategies and objectives.

At the level of Board of Directors, monthly meetings include updates on activities and progress from each program within WATCH. Every two months staff members prepare written reports of current highlights, concerns, and progress within their program areas. Ideas and suggestions in response from the Board of Directors are brought back to the staff from the Executive Director.

In quarterly meetings the Advisory Board receives updates on program activities from the Executive Director. The Advisory Board is on occasion asked to assess progress on particular WATCH goals from the perspective of a community member. Their broader viewpoint can be useful in adjusting strategies and objectives.

Staff members meet together every two to three weeks. Each staff member presents program updates, highlights, progress, and challenges at that time. Again, successes are celebrated and setbacks are addressed.

The Executive Director meets monthly with individual staff members to assess in more detail the specific goals, timelines, and activities of the various WATCH programs. Within each program, the means of evaluation is tailored to the goals and needs of the program. For example, the Housing Clinic enters data about services needed and received by clients into a database. Monthly, follow-up phone calls are made to clients and results are recorded. In this way the Coordinator can clearly assess outcomes and success, in a timely manner.

The English Language Program engages in the most nuanced evaluation systems. On the first day of class, students take extended reading, writing, and grammar tests. At the end of each semester, students take final tests in their classes. Progress toward proficiency in English is part of what the Program Manager observes and tracks. Students also set personal and educational goals at the beginning of the semester and evaluate their progress at the end. In addition, students evaluate the course and teachers.

Section 6

Collaborative efforts to support implementation

Boston College Legal Services LAB (BCLAB)

WATCH partners with Boston College Legal Services LAB for housing cases requiring legal intervention. BCLAB schedules consultations at the WATCH office.

Brandeis University

Thirteen years ago WATCH formed a partnership with Brandeis University to create the Housing Clinic at WATCH. Brandeis University students still staff the clinic. They are trained and supervised by the Housing Clinic Coordinator. WATCH also attracts a large number of Brandeis student interns and volunteers, who commit many hours to WATCH programs and activities. They provide a level of professionalism that is not often found among college-aged volunteers.

Business Partners

WATCH has strong connections with two corporate partners who each donate \$5,000 annually. WATCH has connections in the business community through our membership in the local Chamber of Commerce. Approximately 20 businesses donate regularly to WATCH. WATCH's Executive Director also serves as the Chair of the Chamber of Commerce's Non-Profit Committee, which is developing opportunities to highlight corporate social responsibility and increase access by local non-profits to corporate charitable giving.

Fernald Working Group (FWG)

WATCH was an original member of the Fernald Group, prior to the purchase of the Fernald property by the City of Waltham. The FWG persistently seeks sustainable development of the Fernald property to ensure that the land is reused in ways that most benefit the City of Waltham and its residents. FWG calls for the initiation of a comprehensive, professional community planning process to determine the future of the property.

Local Banks

WATCH currently partners with seven local banks that sponsor First Time Home Buyer Courses. Some of the banks also make additional donations to WATCH through the CITC program.

Local Churches

A number of churches in Waltham and the surrounding area are very supportive of WATCH in various ways. Churches sign letters of support for organizing campaign initiatives and individual church members speak individually to committee and council members to promote affordable housing policies and proposals. Church members serve as teachers, aides, and tutors in WATCH's English Language Program. Members volunteer in our office and at events. Churches also make donations to support WATCH programs.

Massachusetts State Legislators

WATCH maintains some contact with state legislators around constituent and local issues. Our State Senator and two state Representatives all are familiar with and supportive of our work. All three were involved in amending the state budget to include funds for WATCH's Housing Clinic.

MassHire Career Center

WATCH has held conversations with MassHire in Framingham, in an effort to partner with the agency. MassHire has held multiple workshops at WATCH and had a co-location staff person work once a week at WATCH for one year until that staff person left for another job. We are working with MassHire to see if they can re-instate their colocation services to provide job training and placement support on site at WATCH.

Metro Housing Boston (MHB)

WATCH has a long, successful partnership with MHB. For the past five years, a MHB representative has seen clients at WATCH's office two days a month. The representative has direct access to RAFT (Residential Assistance for Families in Transition) funding for those eligible. MHB staff also provide training on tenant's rights and other housing related issues to WATCH clients.

The Right to Immigration Institute (TRII)

WATCH rents office space to TRII, a new organization providing free legal immigration support. We provide access for TRII to our conference room and other meeting space, copying and printing, wifi and phone services for a nominal fee. As a result of the proximity, WATCH students and clients get quick referrals for immigration assistance. We have cross referrals from TRII to WATCH's adult education and housing clinic services and we work together on the citizenship class held at WATCH.

Metro West Collaborative Development (MWCD)

Metro West Collaborative Development is WATCH's housing development partner. WATCH works locally to raise awareness, funding, and political will for affordable housing developments in Waltham. Most recently MWCD and WATCH identified the Waltham Armory as a potential affordable housing development site. WATCH obtained \$30,000 from the Community Preservation Committee to fund a feasibility study. MWCD will carry out the study.

Walker Center

WATCH partners with the Walker Center, a nearby retreat center and bed and breakfast, in order to provide short-term housing, in a supportive environment, for clients who are in between permanent and/or temporary housing. The households identified are in acute need, without any other options for short-term housing, yet having the possibility of more stable housing in the foreseeable future.

Waltham City Council and Mayor

WATCH has several allies on the City Council and a respectful relationship with several other Councilors and with the Mayor. Recently WATCH advocated for the passage of an increase in the Waltham Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance from 10% to 15%. The 5% increase is reserved for lower income households at 50% Area Median Income.

Waltham Community Preservation Committee (CPC)

WATCH has established a good working relationship with the Waltham CPC. Mostly recently WATCH obtained funding from the CPC for an affordable housing feasibility study at the vacant Waltham Armory. WATCH also introduced a landlord incentive proposal which was sent to a WATCH-CPC working group to hammer out the details. WATCH will continue to seek funding for affordable housing proposals through the CPC.

Waltham Housing Authority (WHA)

The Waltham Housing Authority administers the \$2.1 million Local Voucher Program, which WATCH researched, developed and secured funding for. The program provides financial assistance for up to 50 tenants for a period of up to three years. WATCH is subcontracted by WHA to provide quarterly meetings with recipients, training in financial management and budgeting, and one-on-one credit counseling. In three months, the first recipients will complete three years of support. Good record keeping, financial analysis, and persistent interactions with the Waltham Housing Authority (on the part of WATCH) are responsible for bringing the number of residents enrolled in the program up to 41.

Waltham Interagency Group

WATCH initiated the Waltham Interagency Group 4 years ago, which allows for better coordination of the services of local agencies for housing and basic needs. Other social service agencies that assist the working poor in Waltham are active in the group, for example: Salvation Army, Jewish Family and Children's Services, Community Day Center, Charles River Community Health Center, More than Words, Waltham Partnership for Youth, and REACH to end domestic violence. WATCH works regularly with these organizations to assist clients at the Housing Clinic.

Waltham Public Schools

WATCH partners with the Waltham Public Schools through a school liaison for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Fund. WATCH is contracted to provide case management services to families that are homeless or facing homelessness. WATCH provides housing assistance and connects families with various resources and subsidies and maintains communication with the MKV liaison on the status of these families.

Section 7

Integration of activities/consistency with community strategy and vision

WATCH's vision for Waltham is: a community in which every family has what it needs to be economically stable. We envision a community in which everyone can participate. We envision a community in which meeting the interests of the whole population is a core value in decision making. WATCH seeks to create a community in which residents of Waltham, including low- and moderate-income families, immigrants and others who may be left out, have a voice and can influence the way our community grows and functions.

WATCH provides services that fill gaps. Those services provide an opportunity for low-income residents to come into our door and discover WATCH. Here, they discover that – in addition to getting that service (learning English or help with housing), they can join with neighbors to affect positive change in their community. All of WATCH's programs provide an opportunity for low-income Waltham residents to become part of a larger effort for affordable housing in Waltham. The activities we will undertake with our learners, members and allies are all steps that are required to develop confident and effective leaders who can help to advance community development in Waltham.

WATCH's goals also help meet the needs identified in the City's 5 year Consolidated Plan (2015-2020). According to the Consolidated Plan, 2,350 Waltham rental households are paying more than 50% of their income towards rent & utilities. An additional 805 Waltham rental households are paying more than 30% of their income towards rent & utilities. 320 households live in overcrowded or substandard rental units. 185 households lack complete plumbing or have substandard kitchen facilities and 135 eligible households are living in overcrowded conditions. WATCH's support of tenants in the rental voucher program and our goal to develop more affordable housing as well as expansion of our Housing Clinic will help improve housing conditions for those most in need.

Section 8

Financing strategy

WATCH will finance implementation of our CIP through an aggressive fundraising strategy. Our fundraising methods include researching and submitting foundation grant proposals to private foundations, making presentations at local churches and soliciting their support, carrying out spring and fall fund drives, soliciting local businesses for sponsorship of events, procuring local banks as sponsors for our First Time Home Buyer courses, and organizing fundraising house parties in local communities. We collect program fees for our ESL courses and our First Time Home Buyer courses. WATCH receives funds from the State of Massachusetts as a budget line item for our Housing Clinic, from the Waltham Public Schools McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Fund for housing and basic needs assistance for homeless or near homeless families, and from the Waltham Housing Authority for supporting local voucher program recipients.

WATCH’s projected income for Fiscal Year 2020 is \$485,000.

WATCH CDC Projected Income for FY 2020		
	Churches	15,000
	Individual Donations	225,000
	Organizations & Businesses	22,000
	United Way (CITC)	72,000
	Foundations	40,000
	Government	69,500
	Tenant Assistance Fund	3,500
	Interest & Dividend Income	1,500
	FTHB Course Sponsors	24,000
	FTHB Course Fees	7,500
	ESL Program Fees	5,000
Projected Income		\$485,000
Projected Expenses		\$510,000

WATCH also has anticipated net real estate income of \$6,276. WATCH has a strategic reserve fund of \$345,000 held in certificates of deposit (cds) and a money market account. This reserve was created from funds resulting from sale of our duplex, and donations from a very generous major donor.

By Fiscal Year 2023, with the help of Community Investment Tax Credits, WATCH aims to raise our operating income to \$584,000 through the following sources:

WATCH CDC Projected Income for FY 2023		
	Churches	30,000
	Individual Donations	250,000
	Organizations & Businesses	30,000
	United Way (CITC)	111,600
	Foundations	50,000
	Government	69,500
	Tenant Assistance Fund	5,000

	Interest & Dividend Income	2,000
	FTHB Course Sponsors	24,000
	FTHB Course Fees	7,500
	ESL Program Fees	5,000
Projected Income		\$584,000
Projected Expenses		\$600,000*

*WATCH anticipates spending down some of its reserve fund for program expansion in the next three years.

WATCH will continue to increase the number of individual donors, and the size of their donations, by participation in the CITC Program. More new donors continue to hear about the program—from us, from media, and from their friends, associates, and tax accountants. More importantly, participants have learned to trust the program.

We also expect to increase individual donations as a result of implementation of our CIP itself. Our work with immigrants in the areas of English skills, leadership skills, integration into the community, and resource assistance are appealing to residents of Waltham and the surrounding communities. Our work with the Tenant Action Group in the area of affordable housing has also attracted the attention and support of individuals and churches.

Support from organizations and businesses is strengthened by our institution of a WATCH Advisory Board, which includes business leaders and other people of influence in the local community. Members are supportive through their own financial contributions, and their connections with others in the business community. WATCH will continue to reach out to businesses as sponsors of our Annual Meeting and annual fall community dinner.

WATCH’s First Time Home Buyer (FTHB) Program is strong and popular as a sponsorship opportunity for local banks. We project holding ten courses per year. Bank sponsorships are \$3,000 per course.

Local churches are particularly involved in and supportive of WATCH’s mission and programs. A number of volunteer teachers in the ESL program are church members. They encourage strong financial support from their congregations. One Weston based was so impressed by our work that they recently decided to consolidate all of their community giving and volunteer work to one organization-WATCH. As part of that decision, the church presented WATCH with a check of \$18,000 this fall!

Private and government foundations are an important source of funding for WATCH’s work. We will continue to research foundations whose objectives are consistent with WATCH’s work.

The funding sources on which WATCH relies are the ones with whom we have built relationships over the years. We take donor stewardship seriously and our donors are loyal to us. WATCH has also worked hard to develop strong programs and relationships with the people who come to us for assistance. We have built trust among our supporters. Our work is highly valued among many in Waltham and the surrounding communities. By engaging many segments of the community including our donors and advisory board members throughout the year, and by our transparent and inclusive decision making, we build accountability with our community which rewards us with funding for our programs.

Section 9

History, track record, and sustainable development

History and Track Record of Implementation

WATCH has a long history of successfully carrying out activities similar or identical to those proposed in this Community Investment Plan. At many key points in the last 32 years, WATCH has overcome steep political barriers to make significant and positive changes such as the creation of the Housing Department in Waltham City Hall, the passage of Inclusionary Zoning and the Community Preservation Act, and an agreement with a national real estate investment trust to cap rents for over 100 low-income elderly tenants.

WATCH follows a community-building model. No matter what the program, WATCH seeks to connect people to each other and to new ideas, to develop leaders, and bring neighbors together to work collectively on a common goal. The primary approaches in this plan include: relationship building, community organizing, leadership development, political advocacy and organizing, policy analysis and development of policy solutions. Secondary approaches – those related to WATCH’s other programs that help bring more people into our organization, and so into the primary housing development work—are: adult education, volunteerism, and workforce training. From day one, WATCH has been a deeply welcoming organization that seeks to be effective, not just exist. Many people have come to WATCH over the years with a wide range of problems that we do not directly address, because we are known in the community as the place to go if you need help of any kind. We continue that culture today, enabling us to engage more and more people each year.

Sustainable Development

In addition to possessing the experience to achieve our goals, the goals themselves of WATCH’s Community Investment Plan are well aligned with the Commonwealth’s Sustainable Development Principles. Just as the Commonwealth promotes “sustainable development through integrated energy and environment, housing and economic development, transportation and other policies, programs, investments and regulations,” WATCH’s interconnected programs— adult education, leadership development and affordable housing—work together to advance a subset of those goals. Specifically, WATCH’s plan supports the Commonwealth’s goals to:

1. Concentrate Development and Mix Uses

WATCH focuses efforts on Waltham’s dense South Side. This is the priority location for the development of more affordable housing for Waltham’s thousands of low-income families. The South Side features a walkable commercial center, bus and commuter rail stations, City Hall, the public library, and it has a high density of rental housing. Adding more affordable housing to the South Side would support the local small independent businesses on Moody Street and connect low wage workers that are employed by those businesses with adequate housing. Furthermore, locating housing in the South Side would enable infill development and/or the renovation of existing degraded structures, including many from the Industrial Revolution era. WATCH’s affordable housing goals are focused on renovating existing multi-unit rentals or retrofitting abandoned buildings into affordable housing in order to revitalize blighted areas of the town. By focusing on conversion of existing units, we can maintain the historical integrity of Waltham while creating new opportunities for housing low income households.

2. Advance Equity

WATCH's work is driven by a mission to give voice to immigrants and low-income residents in Waltham, both in their own lives and in the municipal decision making that impacts them. Every program we offer is designed to create a community that is equitable for all, and provides opportunities for everyone—including those who are poor, immigrants or otherwise left out—to have a voice in local decision making. The development of a base of trained leaders who advocate for affordable housing results in a greater voice for families traditionally left out, as well as housing for people who cannot afford the homes in Waltham. WATCH's new five-year strategic plan will be influenced by discussions we have had at every level about the concern of how gentrification is impacting our community. Those discussions and will inform strategies we develop to maintain opportunities for low income households.

3. Make Efficient Decisions

In our own work, WATCH will continue to develop better data tracking and analysis tools to track outcomes on levels of our work. This includes tracking outcomes for the Housing Clinic, tracking progress of our English students, evaluating our partnerships in a systematic and comprehensive way, and developing and implementing a five-year strategic plan that guides our work and aligns with our mission. On the municipal level, WATCH will continue to look for opportunities to promote more comprehensive planning on key topics such as transportation, zoning and housing. In any opportunity to impact Waltham's planning on these issues, we will support the goals of smart growth, environmental stewardship, and healthy communities.

4. Protect Land and Ecosystems

WATCH's biggest impact in the area of protecting land and ecosystems is to support re-use of existing housing and abandoned structures as conversions to affordable housing. Re-use is preferable to building large, new affordable housing projects, for re-use has the least impact on the environment. It maintains open space and makes maximum use of all existing buildings. Waltham currently has several large, empty buildings that could be turned into affordable housing. In any conversion proposal with which WATCH is involved, we will promote landscaping around the structure. Plantings promote ecosystem protection and integration with existing open space and natural areas.

Buildings such as the Waltham Armory, which have been abandoned for many years, will need some aspect of environmental clean-up. WATCH will coordinate with our development partner to ensure maximum compliance with all environmental regulation. Having these spaces cleaned and used will result in less risk of environmental damage to nearby land and water by eliminating the pollutants on the property.

5. Use Natural Resources Wisely

With conversion of existing empty buildings into affordable housing, such as the Waltham Armory, WATCH will work with our development partner to include efficient design that conserves natural resources.

6. Expand Housing Opportunities

Our plan will result in expanding housing opportunities for low-income families in Waltham and the surrounding area by rehabilitation of existing structures. This will include conversion of abandoned buildings and conversion of existing market rate multi-family housing into rehabilitated, affordable units. Because we will focus on advancing housing developments in Waltham's South Side, the

housing will be located near jobs, transportation, schools, and public amenities such as City Hall, the public library, and parks.

7. Provide Transportation Choice

WATCH's programs currently do not include a primary focus on the issue of transportation access. However, by providing multiple services here in one location, where there is a high density of low-income households and need, we are reducing the trips that people need to take. Many of our clients and students walk to WATCH because we are located close to their homes. Whenever possible, we encourage regional partners to co-locate here at WATCH and see clients here to avoid client trips to Framingham or Boston. Metro Housing Boston, Boston College Legal Services LAB, American Consumer Credit Counseling, and The Right To Immigration Institute currently see clients at the WATCH office. We hope to also have MassHire soon provide services again at WATCH. We also always list our resources in our online Community Resource Guide, starting with those that are close by. By eliminating the barrier of transportation to receiving services, we can increase access to key supports for low income households.

8. Increase Job and Business Opportunities

WATCH will continue to provide access to free one-on-one job search support. WATCH's Adult Education program is a launching point for increasing access to jobs and job promotions. By increasing English and conversation skills, our students can be more confident in the workplace and move up to positions that involve interacting with supervisors and clients directly. This can increase their wages, which has a big impact on their quality of life.

9. Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change

The biggest impact WATCH will have in the area of mitigating and adapting to climate change is described in #7, related to consolidation of services into a local hub right here where low income people live and work. In addition, WATCH will continue to help build community and increase integration of immigrants into the community, so that we are stronger and more united. In this way, we will be in a better position to respond to any large-scale issues as a community.

10. Plan Regionally

WATCH is a big proponent of planning. In our own work we are in the middle of an ambitious process of developing our next five-year plan. For this plan we are soliciting input from many aspects of the community, including non-profit and municipal partners. WATCH will continue to promote a comprehensive planning process for the development and use of the Fernald property, in order to include consideration of the social costs and benefits and impacts to the local residents. WATCH supports any effort by Waltham to engage in municipal, long-range planning, especially in the areas of housing, transportation, and development.