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FORWARD EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

PACDC’s 2022 Forward Equitable Development Conference

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In person, in community.
In honor of PACDC’s 30th anniversary, this edition of PACDC Magazine examines the evolution of community development in Philadelphia, the ways the sector has shaped our city and influenced others, and the implications of this work for the future of the field.

1. Those who want a clean definition of “the field” are frustrated by the diversity and multiplicity of approaches and agendas among CDCs. At best, we can identify a broad set of organizations that use private-sector development tools and collaborate with private-sector investors to achieve community/constituency benefits identified by the constituency itself. - Joseph McNeely, PAGE 14

2. When I think of the watershed moments of our industry, I think it was when the first 10 of us got together and said we have to create a shared vision of how we can move this industry forward. We realized that we should come together as an organization. What really started us was the understanding that our field was not recognized, and what helped us was support from city officials like John Kromer, Deborah McColloch, and Melissa Long. - Rose Gray, PAGE 11

3. We must commit to housing as a human right because nothing short of transformative housing and social policy change will solve the affordable housing crisis. Solutions must include funding for affordable housing construction, housing counseling, rental assistance, and other programs. But people also need income supports, including a living wage and public benefits that are not tied to employment. That’s how we end Philadelphia’s housing crisis, fight poverty, and create a city that works for everyone. - Zakya Hall, PAGE 19

4. Now men of all walks of life gather to edify themselves, each other, and the community at large. We enter the Coffee Talk as men, and we leave as brothers. - Kevin Brown, PAGE 55

5. We have to rely on community to build—you’re way better with other people. Your mind is beautiful, but it’s just a part of the painting. The full painting is with your community. - Blew Kind, PAGE 48
Dear Friends,

We are delighted to share with you this edition of PACDC Magazine honoring and uplifting our three decades of work on behalf of community development corporations and their constituencies. Thirty years is a long time! We have accomplished so much together—from advocating for improved systems and increased resources that promote equitable community development to supporting capacity building and peer networks. But as much as we have collectively accomplished, we know there is still so much more that needs to be done to further advance toward a truly equitable city, where all Philadelphians enjoy economic prosperity, justice and safety, affordable homes, clean streets, and cohesive communities.

In this edition you will read about how CDCs large and small, together with a range of other neighborhood leaders, are working toward these goals through innovative and impactful endeavors. You will also learn about the winners of our 2022 awards, which honor organizations and diverse community leaders alike. Their stories will not only humble you for their depth of spirit and commitment but also inspire your confidence that in Philadelphia we have the right tools and know how to get the job done—with dignity, dedication, and lasting results.

Philadelphia does better when we all do better, and with your support we are making progress toward that goal.

―ANDRE’A RHoads, PHILADELPHIA YOUTH POET LAUREATE
PACDC strives to create an equitable city where every Philadelphian lives, works, and thrives in a neighborhood that offers an excellent quality of life.

As a membership association, we foster strong community development corporations and nonprofit community organizations by enhancing their skills and advocating for resources and policies to create a just and inclusive Philadelphia.

PACDC cannot pursue its mission without the support of numerous organizations and individuals. Although this magazine showcases our 30th Anniversary Signature Events Series Sponsors and Advertisers, PACDC gratefully acknowledges the following institutions and individuals for their additional financial investment:

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About PACDC

A STRONG VOICE IN POLICY. PACDC’s advocacy is a unifying and compelling voice in government, business, and funder forums, where decisions affecting neighborhoods are made.

STRONG CDCS. PACDC strengthens CDCs through professional development, funding, and networking opportunities.

A STRONG CITY. PACDC and member organizations build strong neighborhoods—and a strong Philadelphia—by increasing housing and economic opportunities and providing programs and services that sustain families and good jobs.

CENTERFOLD AND COVER ART BY CHENLIN CAI.

Chenlin Cai is a multidisciplinary visual artist who lives in Philadelphia. He received his MFA from two world-renowned universities in fine arts, the Tsinghua University in China and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. Cai’s works innovatively combine traditional Chinese ink painting with contemporary art expressions to create a unique visual image that fuses art and science. The uniqueness of his artistic style has caught the eye of collectors worldwide, such as the FMC Corporation; the Copelouzos Family Art Museum in Athens, Greece; and Mark Epstein, the board chair of Cooper Union.

Cai has held several solo exhibitions in Philadelphia and New York, including at Freeman’s Auction Gallery, Philadelphia, in 2018; Time Arts Gallery, New York, in 2019; and 456 Gallery, New York, in 2021. Cai is also a productive mural artist. He has installed dozens of murals in the United States and China at locations such as Xuchang City Museum, the Korean Cultural Center in Beijing, First Street Green Culture Park in New York, and 10th Street Plaza in Philadelphia’s Chinatown.

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Building stronger communities

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We are proud to participate in these efforts and support PACDC.

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We’re proud to support PACDC.

Congrats to all of the Blue Ribbon Award winners—thanks for all you do for our Philadelphia communities.

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The City of a Thousand Voices

BY ANDRE'A RHOADS

I am of Philadelphia
Bowing to my city
Embracing the brotherly love
And
The sisterly affection
Basking in the glory of
The sun shining better
On the North side
Philly, oh Philly
All of your splendid suns
Rising to the peak of perfection
All of your blessed moons
Keeping my path lit
A perfect picture
Worth a thousand words
Images of a melting pot
Filled with beautiful people
Philly pride and true
Philly I salute you
A place where heart and home intertwine
Producing silhouettes of heroes
Proving that our community is a solid foundation
Which is the purest equation

To a successful life
Philadelphia is a place where dreams come true
The North, South, West,
Even Erie, Germantown, and Olney
Let your voices be heard
Scream out loud in protest
Raise your fist in the air
Celebrate, educate, and collaborate
We are the variety
That God wants us to be
All shapes, sizes, and colors
Blended together to shape the way
Towards loving one another
Let us be the dream
They make speeches about
We are the people to change the world
When you fall
The community will be there to catch you
Dear Philly,
Never change
Continue to welcome us with open arms
Continue to wish us well
Always push us to keep our heads held high
And march on

Andre’a Rhoads is the 2021-2022 Philadelphia Youth Poet Laureate. She credits her gift for self-expression to her parents, the community that has nurtured her, and her faith: “My parents Tracy and Andre Rhoads always taught me to express myself unapologetically, and to never let obstacles stand in my way. I come from a loving community and family. When my back is against the wall, I have a support system who will come to my rescue. My peers and family members give me hope that dreams are real, and that anything is possible. My faith in God also uplifts me.”
The Philadelphia CDC Story: Advancing Equitable Development for 30 Years

Has it really been 30 years? Thirty years is a long time in some respects. If you run a small business, serve your country in the military, or live in one neighborhood for 30 years, you consider that a long time. Then again, 30 years is quite a short time in other respects. It’s the prime of life when you are young. Remember how you could stay up late and then go to work early? It’s also the golden period of a marriage or long-term committed relationship—empty nest, no problem! Did someone say Peloton?

But is it enough time to make impactful change in the life of a community fighting to overcome neglect? Is it possible in the course of 30 years to right hundreds of years of wrong?

In this light, 30 years seems more like 30 seconds: a brief click of a second or two like the year-in-review video highlights that TV news airs in the last week of December each year. A compilation of highlights from 30 years ago might include the following events:

- The Maastricht Treaty is signed, officially forming the European Union (February 1992).
- Police officers indicted in the Rodney King beating are acquitted. Violence breaks out in Los Angeles (April 1992).
- The United Nation’s Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro launches international commitments on sustainable development (June 1992).
- Bill Clinton and Al Gore accept the Democratic Party nomination for president and vice president (August 1992).
- A group of leaders of community development corporations launch the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations, a citywide membership organization focused on advancing advocacy and capacity building for equitable neighborhoods (November 1992).
It seems so long ago, and yet it still feels a little bit like yesterday—or as baseball legend Yogi Berra famously said, “It’s like deja vu all over again.” But despite the seeming sameness of today in comparison to back then (international promises broken, political jockeying, social and racial strife), 30 years has taught us something a little more. Maya Angelou said, “When you know better, you do better.” And the Philadelphia community development industry’s ability to do a little more and be considerably better is largely a result of shared vision and collective action.

What are Philly’s watershed moments of community development over the last 30 years—in a very incomplete list?

“When I think of the watershed moments of our industry, I think it was when the first 10 of us got together and said we have to create a shared vision of how we can move this industry forward,” Rose Gray, Senior Vice President of Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha and one of the founders of PACDC, said recently. “We realized that we should come together as an organization. What really started us was the understanding that our field was not recognized, and what helped us was support from city officials like John Kromer, Deborah McCollough, and Melissa Long.”

So are you telling us that CDCs working collectively can have much more impact than one CDC working individually? Well, yes. And no, but with a caveat!

Yes, the collective impact of PACDC and its members is considerable. Impacts can be seen in the creation and ongoing expansion of the Philadelphia Housing Trust Fund and the establishment and expansion of the Philadelphia CDC Tax Credit Program. Over a 28-year period, CDCs have provided $5.4 billion in economic benefit for the City of Philadelphia and $9 billion for the state of Pennsylvania. And PACDC and its partners have provided training and technical assistance for CDCs and neighborhood groups citywide through the Community Development Leadership Institute.

And no, while some neighborhoods are stronger, inequities of displacement and negative impacts of gentrification have grown, and the economic fallout of the pandemic has amplified the city’s challenges, placing greater burdens on CDCs and their ability to help neighborhoods.
So if CDCs are so effective, why is the city still so far away from equity?

The caveat hinges on the power of the extraordinary people across this city. In the face of challenges, they continue to reach out to one another, to help and uplift regardless of background, color, and faith. These actions fuel the continued march toward dignity and humanity, and perhaps even equity for our city and ultimately the nation.

Nora Lichtash, Executive Director of Women’s Community Revitalization Project and another PACDC founder, says, “What inspires me are the people leading change at the neighborhood level, poor people, women with kids realizing their self-determination. That is what drew me into the sector in the first place in response to the civil rights movement of the ’60s and ’70s. Learning from women in the community who wanted to take back their power to decide what kinds of development they wanted to see in their neighborhoods. It is what keeps me still in this work.”

Walter Toliver, Senior Vice President and General Counsel at Esperanza, concurs, “While I think there is more inequity today than ever, what inspires me and gives me hope is seeing something like the pandemic and civil unrest because of George Floyd protests as watershed moments in our city and the country, where people are stepping up and voicing their opinions and working at the grassroots level for change. It’s important that we don’t lose that momentum.”

“Philly has made some incredible contributions to the community development industry. Initiatives like the Philly Taking Care of Business corridor cleaning program are great examples of how shared vision and partnerships with the city and community groups can have a powerful impact on a neighborhood,” says East Falls Development Corporation Executive Director Michelle Feldman.

In a city of underdogs, the only way the underdog wins is with help from other underdogs. In Philly there is deep poverty, and there are economic drivers of private and public interests—both good and bad—making equitable development a constant fight. But as John Chin, Executive Director of Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation, expressed, “For me personally, I will always play on the side of the underdog. I learned that watching my father who learned from watching his father. There is more power in the voices of the people who stand together.”

Okay, okay, so are you saying that the principles of PACDC’s founding—shared vision, collective action—are still the game-changers for advancing toward equity in Philly?

Philadelphia has grown in population and, yes, problems, but its people have also expanded their capacity for helping each other. Whether through countless community refrigerators in neighborhoods across the city or with eviction and foreclosure diversion programs that keep people safely housed and inspire replication across the nation, Philadelphia’s community residents, small businesses, and community development corporations are more than doing their part to follow Maya Angelou’s teaching: knowing better should prompt us to do better.

In the next 30 years, where will the next wave of leaders and opportunities take us?

Building on the shifting sands of time, the next 30 years of community development will inevitably lead us back to the last 30 years—grassroots organizing, neighborhood leaders stepping up to voice their visions and activate those visions into reality, and CDCs and other neighborhood groups working to protect and defend neighborhood identity, sometimes getting it wrong, but often getting it more right, and along the way educating public and private stakeholders about the dangers of ignoring the voices of the people who will see through sound bites and press conferences held for show. The next wave of community development will already know better, demand better, and be more apt to burn down rooms where decision-making tables are set without neighborhood input. Woe be to the fools who think they can count out Philly neighborhoods and the people who live there. Thirty years is a long time, but in some respects it’s not that much at all.
Join Leon Robinson and De’Wayne Drummond, hosts of the Iron Sharpens Iron podcast, as they sit down with community leaders and organizers tackling the big questions of how the power of the people can build a resilient and equitable Philadelphia, one person, one block, one neighborhood at a time.

On the Ground Against Gentrification
with Illana Dominguez-Franco

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A Brief History of Time: The CDC Movement

BY JOSEPH McNEELY, MA PSYCH, JD

As we celebrate recent history and accomplishments and face new challenges, it’s helpful to recognize that community development corporations (CDCs), or community-based development organizations, have a long history, stretching back over a hundred years of organized efforts for racial justice, economic development, equity, and empowerment of those most marginalized and exploited. We have deep roots in the 19th-century civil rights movement and labor organizing. In the early 20th century these roots branched into rural community development in the face of mass population exodus, in the settlement houses of large cities that organized self-help among immigrants and fostered social reform, and to the first housing codes in the country.

The contemporary expression of CDCs started around 50 years ago in both the federal and local efforts to combat poverty. Activists realized it was not enough to mount social service and employment programs, community organizing and civil rights campaigns, and integration of previously all-white housing areas. Something needed to be done to “address the hard economic realities” of neighborhoods left out of the mainstream economy and whose housing and business were disinvested and redlined.

The CDC Movement: Across Three Waves of Activism

The first wave of CDCs was supported and defined by a “special impact” federal program—Title VII of the Economic Opportunity Act—and by the Ford Foundation’s CDC program. These two programs supported a small number of highly capitalized, community-based organizations with multiyear operating support; “no strings attached,” high-risk investment capital; and major support from a high level of expertise in consulting organizations and the private sector. Among them was Rev. Leon Sullivan’s Zion Trust in Philadelphia. The goal of these programs was to use private-sector techniques to draw sustaining reinvestment in low-income communities through partnership between private-sector investors and a strong community-based organization accountable to the constituency but well supported enough to attract highly competent professional development staff reflective of the constituency of the community.

While those programs never expanded, a second wave of CDCs emerged from the “neighborhood movement” of the 1970s, spawned by opposition to failed urban renewal, misguided highway projects, mobilization to fight redlining, and a vigorous “back to the city” campaign. They didn’t have the kind of financial supports and framework of the first wave of the CDCs, but they multiplied rapidly and found resources in Community Development Block Grant local decision-making and local foundations. Their success in creating the Community Reinvestment Act and bank-based community development investment created new mechanisms for private partnerships. Thousands of organizations like Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation, Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha, and Impact Services Corporation flourished, and private partners multiplied.

Out of the housing and homelessness crisis of the late 1980s came the third wave of organizations, like Project HOME and Women’s Community Revitalization Project, largely focused on affordable housing and that sought to use the same techniques as the first and second waves to create sustainable shelter for all. The 1980s and 1990s also saw the rise of intermediary organizations bringing new kinds of capital for the riskiest part of development financing and capacity building: these organizations included at the national level the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LiSC), the Enterprise Foundation (now Enterprise Communities), the Development Training Institute (DTI), and Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation (now NeighborWorks America), and at the local level a host of support groups like the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations. The Clinton administration recognized and launched the first federal investment in community development financial institutions (CDFIs) like the Reinvestment Fund.

There were never more than three or four dozen CDCs in the first wave. But 40 years later, there are well over 10,000 of these organizations across the country, along with a plethora of support groups. Of course, community-based development organizations and CDCs have a more numerous and diverse array of partners in community-based social services; health; employment; arts; youth development; women, immigrant, and senior serving organizations; and civil rights groups—all striving to collaborate in producing comprehensive community development. The lines of definition are blurred. Thousands of organizations march in a parade behind the banner of CDCs/community development, but each band has its unique song, uniform, and contribution. At the heart of all these organizations are community organizing, the struggle for equity and fairness, and the highest values of American democracy.
Defining Something Not Quite Definable

Those who want a clean definition of “the field” are frustrated by the diversity and multiplicity of approaches and agendas among CDCs. At best, we can identify a broad set of organizations that use private-sector development tools and collaborate with private-sector investors to achieve community/constituency benefits identified by the constituency itself.

They are driven by values of racial equality, empowerment, building community capital and systemic change through concrete benefits to the community. They are seeking not just access to the mainstream economy but to reverse disinvestment and achieve market stability and high quality of life in their communities through sustainable economic reinvestment mechanisms, as do other “normal” communities—whatever those are. While intertwined with and somewhat limited by the private-sector techniques and business partners they bring, they are driven by a community vision established by the constituency, and they are accountable to them.

The history of the programs and policies that support CDCs reveals a virtuous cycle of community initiatives and social justice movements leading to policy advocacy for systemic change, followed by government programs providing resources to implement those policy changes, later provoking efforts to reform and obtain community participation in those programs as they sometimes go awry. These all lead to another set of community initiatives and social justice movements to take us to the next level. Each type of activity and each phase has its own contribution, and the stages are often contemporaneous rather than linear. What always have been and must continue to be a part of this virtuous cycle are the voices of authentic leaders within the constituency of the community or group of beneficiaries. Professionals play an important role in this drama, but they are not the main act.

Some Permanent, Inherent Dilemmas

As the practice of CDCs matured and became more professional and successful, some inevitable tensions arose. These appear to be permanent features of a social change movement with private-sector partners and techniques, highly professionally staff accountable to “lay community leaders,” and ongoing financial support from private and public establishments.

The stress between professionalism and community empowerment is inherent in the very notion of CDCs and will never disappear. National organizations like the now defunct Development Training Institute and local organizations like PACDC contributed simultaneously to a higher level of professional skills within the workforce and more complex understanding of community empowerment at the grassroots.

Similarly inevitable is the regular strain within CDCs between the desire for radical, systemic social change and the need to make concrete progress on business and real estate projects with private-sector partners who are inherently interested in conserving the present system. How explicit should we be in our intention to disrupt the elements of a capitalist system that lead to inequities? How explicit can we be about racial equity as we work with mainstream organizations in which the very vocabulary of race, equity, and immigration makes decision-makers uncomfortable?

The contemporary expression of CDCs started around 50 years ago in both the federal and local efforts to combat poverty.
These dialectics define the current debate within CDCs as they have for the last 50 years. We constantly challenge ourselves, calibrate and rebalance our strategies and language, and push always, whether directly or indirectly, for empowerment, inclusion, and equity.

Not new, and equally inevitable and currently present, are the other well-known dialectics within CDCs:

- How do we make the transition in prototype organizations from the founders to the next generation without provoking the instability of leadership turmoil? How do we involve the young people and the young voices that are so disruptive to organizations that have an established pattern and track record?

Some Reflections of the Past on the Future

As we face these dilemmas today and in the future, as our predecessors did over the last 50 years, we are proud of the accomplishments of this community-based development field. No, it has not ended poverty and inequity. No, it has not reversed the inexorable disinvestment in poor communities that the larger society of government and business sustains. No, it has not ended hyper-segregated, concentrated poverty nor the devastating effects of crime, addiction, unemployment, and discrimination on poor communities. By the way, neither has anyone else.

But we have stemmed the tide of disinvestment in many communities. Every neighborhood and section of the city with a functioning CDC is better off, even in market terms, than those without those institutions.

With minuscule resources, CDCs have leveraged an enormous output of reinvestment, physical change, affordable and market rate housing, business development, commercial corridor revitalization, and jobs. CDCs are more stable and successful than private-sector business in similar industries at a similar economic scale. As builders of housing, for example, CDCs have a failure rate, but it is far less than the failure rate nationally among private-sector homebuilders. Standing on the shoulders of a century of predecessors, this diaspora’s parade of thousands of organizations has every right to be proud and confident in its record of empowering communities, producing physical change and reinvestment in the most forgotten communities, growing in sophistication and mechanisms of institutional support, and, most of all, continuously raising up a new, more capable cadre of community leaders to fight for systemic change.

Joseph McNeely, MA(Psych), JD, is a community economic development consultant working in Baltimore, MD. He is a member of PACDC’s national advisory board and was the founding Executive Director of the Greater Baltimore Partnership and the Development Training Institute.
Why is Philadelphia a national leader in community-based development?

Cities and states that have risen to the forefront of the movement of genuine community-based development share certain characteristics which are preeminent in Philadelphia:

1. A rich population of community-based organizations in many fields, such as CDCs, civics, faith-based, and arts organizations, and a cooperative spirit among them to cross boundaries of program, geography, and ethnicity to collaborate, cross-fertilize, and innovate; migrate personnel; and join in collective action for policy and structural change.

2. A dynamic set of consistently productive CDCs/community-based development organizations such as Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha, Community Ventures, Esperanza, HACE, New Kensington CDC, Project HOME, and Women’s Community Revitalization Project, with authentic community leadership, professionalism, and the reputation for reliability (“what they promise, they deliver”).

3. As a necessary condition or result of the previous two characteristics, a stable cadre of professional staff in these organizations who know, respect, communicate, and collaborate with each other and who have stayed “in the field” locally for decades, often job swapping across public and private philanthropic and nonprofit institutions. In Philadelphia, there are numerous professional community developers in nonprofits, banks, foundations, government agencies, and support organizations that have been in this field for over 30 years.

4. Capacity-building mechanisms and institutions such as LISC Philadelphia, PACDC, the Citizens Planning Institute, the LaSalle Nonprofit Center, and universities that increase professionalism among staff, develop new skills for new challenges, encourage sophisticated organization development, and raise up new leaders for the field.

5. A collection of public, private, and philanthropic funders who see community-based development organizations as a long-term investment, who “stay the course” over decades rather than funding only short-term innovation, and who are willing to fund core operating support either as such or by underwriting adequate overhead or enough programs annually to sustain a business model.

6. Intermediaries at the secondary level, such as Regional Housing Legal Services, LISC Philadelphia, PACDC, and the Community Affairs Department at the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, who understand the field broadly and the organizations particularly to provide a variety of supports for organizational stability, conflict resolution, funding, capacity building, research, and evaluation and who communicate with and become brokers of credibility for the field to private, public, and philanthropic funders and civic leadership more broadly.

7. Enough private investment institutions such as banks and community development financial institutions like the Reinvestment Fund, and private companies to engage, support, and partner with CDCs.

8. Consistent, evolving collective efforts to create or modify public and private policies that affect funding, program innovation, and public support and that work toward racial justice, equitable economic development, and community empowerment. For example, there have been several recent successful efforts by advocates that have led to expanded funding for affordable housing and neighborhood economic development, as well as strengthened protections for tenants.

In Philadelphia, first individual foundations and then a collaborative of private foundations and banks through the Philadelphia Neighborhood Development Collaborative/Neighborhoods Now provided substantial multiyear support to CDCs for two decades. The launch of the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation in 1999 (now Regional Foundation housed at the Philadelphia Foundation) also provides critical funding to implement resident-driven neighborhood revitalization efforts. That has been followed by a period in which some individual foundations and banks have provided program- or project-specific funding on an annual basis to CDCs and others. The gap left by the demise of the Collaborative in the early 2000s has been partially filled by the expansion of the city’s CDC tax credit program that supports neighborhood economic development. Nonetheless, the absence of significant, consistent philanthropic funding reduces the diversity of the funding base for CDCs, making it less sustainable than a more diverse base.

BY JOSEPH M. NEELY, MA PSYCH, JD
Creating vibrant communities

When we come together to build stronger communities, we give our time, energy, and ideas to help influence positive change. And as we watch progress take root, we grow as well.

PACDC and 30th Annual Gala Awardees, it’s an honor to recognize your commitment and service to the community.

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At least half a million Philadelphians cannot afford their rent or mortgage each month. Too often, these residents struggle to prioritize their health, keep a job, access public benefits, and keep their families together. Moreover, Black and Brown residents are disproportionately harmed by eviction, foreclosure, mortgage delinquencies, and tangled property titles. In the face of great need and greater inequity, Philadelphia offers a wide range of programs and services that help people and families stabilize their housing. These investments have received national attention for being extraordinarily effective at preventing homelessness and saving public dollars, but they haven’t yet moved the needle on Philadelphia’s affordable housing crisis, partly because more funding is required to reach every resident with housing needs.

Most recently, Philadelphia’s Eviction Prevention Project, Eviction Diversion Program, and Right to Counsel programs have formed a comprehensive system of support for tenants who are facing eviction in different ways. Additionally, the Renters’ Access Act prevents landlords from discriminating against potential tenants based on eviction records and credit scores alone. Given that Black renters are overrepresented in evictions regardless of neighborhood and income and 70 percent of eviction filings happen to women of color, these interrelated programs are important racial equity tools and solutions for decreasing those racial impacts.

With the city’s deteriorating housing stock, homeowners and renters alike face repair and utility costs to remedy conditions that, if left unchecked, could threaten their health. Low-income homeowners can access the Basic Systems Repair Program, and tenants may file a complaint with the Fair Housing Commission, but neither option has the capacity to truly meet the need for habitable housing across the city. At the same time, energy affordability is a critical part of the housing picture that is often overlooked. Programs such as LIHEAP, LIHWAP, TAP, and CAP help Philadelphians live with dignity in their own homes and maintain financial resources for other expenses like medication, child care, and transportation. Importantly, most homeowners with a tangled title are locked out of these programs until they obtain legal ownership, which can cost tens of thousands of dollars.

Philadelphia has already laid the groundwork for meeting the city’s diverse housing needs, so we know what works. At Community Legal Services, our clients share the urgency of accessibility time and again, and we work alongside them to build power and drive policy change at all levels of government. When we commit to community engagement at the beginning of program design, eliminate unnecessary barriers to enrollment, and adequately fund outreach to meet people where they are, Philadelphians can access the support they need to stay in their homes.

Ultimately, we must commit to housing as a human right because nothing short of transformative housing and social policy change will solve this crisis. These solutions must include funding for affordable housing construction, housing counseling, rental assistance, and other programs. But people also need income supports, including a living wage and public benefits that are not tied to employment. That’s how we end Philadelphia’s housing crisis, fight poverty, and create a city that works for everyone.

Zakya Hall is the Communications and Content Manager at Community Legal Services.
The Philadelphia CDC Tax Credit Program: Investing in Neighborhood Economies

Since 2002, Philadelphia’s Community Development Corporation Tax Credit Program (CDC Tax Credit) has been making a lasting difference in neighborhood economic development, often along neighborhood commercial corridors, across the city. The CDC Tax Credit is a program that pairs businesses with CDCs that work at the ground level on various aspects of neighborhood economic development. Through the program, a business commits to contributing $100,000 per year, over a 10-year period, to a qualified CDC or nonprofit intermediary that is doing tangible neighborhood economic development work. In turn, the business receives a credit against its city Business Income and Receipts Taxes (BIRT) liability.

The funds are flexible, but the CDC must show real work and outcomes that “move the needle” in neighborhood economic development. With the initial leadership of then Councilman Wilson Goode Jr., the program has grown from 10 slots in 2002 to 40 nonprofit and business partnerships today.

Advantages of a Tax Credit Program

Some may ask what the advantage of a tax credit program is versus a Request for Proposal (RFP) process used in the implementation of many city programs. There are a number of answers that really get to the heart of why the CDC Tax Credit is considered by many as the best program Philadelphia has put in place to support communities and especially neighborhood economic development.

First, a 10-year commitment signals stability and allows nonprofits to plan for the longer term versus the limitations of a typical one-year grant. We have seen other funding come and go and staff change with it. For example, the most important basic factor in a successful commercial corridor program is the building of relationships and trust with the business community: this takes time and continuity, which is exactly what is unique to the CDC Tax Credit. It often takes years to achieve buy-in from local businesses as corridor managers take incremental steps to demonstrate change is possible through partnerships. Grant programs, unlike the 10-year CDC Tax Credit, are often limited to a year and are at most renewable for only a few years.

Second, the flexibility of the funding allows CDCs to target those things that may be unforeseen when funding was applied for. One example was how CDC staff pivoted to help businesses during the pandemic apply for relief funding and to market more take-out options for restaurants when seating was barred. And did we know there would be way more interest in security cameras and lighting today than five years ago? Most neighborhood corridor funding comes from federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds with numerous requirements. Most, if not all, RFPs also require much more effort in predicting what will happen and then spending inordinate amounts of time (and money) documenting how every penny is spent.

Third, this stable funding source allows CDCs to better find other partners who have an understanding that their support is being leveraged and is more likely to be successful with tax credit funds in hand.

Fourth, perhaps a less obvious but very important result is that many of the CDC Tax Credit business partners have found other ways to support their CDC partners. For example, many business partner employees now serve on the boards of their CDC partner, provide other forms of in-kind assistance, and participate in cleanups and neighborhood events. This would not be possible but for the CDC Tax Credit helping to create deeper relationships and partnerships.

It is for these reasons and more that the CDC Tax Credit Program has been one of the most widely appreciated programs contributing to the continued improvement of neighborhood economies, even during the most challenging times.
THE POWER TO

strengthen our community

At the 30th Anniversary, we congratulate PACDC for community outreach that’s making a lasting difference in people’s lives.

In Philadelphia, PACDC is known for their work to create an equitable city where every Philadelphian lives, works, and thrives in a neighborhood that offers an excellent quality of life...

We’re proud to share our goal of improving lives with you.

What would you like the power to do?®

BANK OF AMERICA
A Unique Medicaid Waiver and Its Potential to Support Affordable Housing

Housing—safe, stable, affordable housing—is a key social determinant of health. Social determinants of health are the systemic, environmental, economic, and institutional factors influencing the health outcomes of all of us. Traditional health care systems in the United States focus on clinical presentations of disease, but social determinants of health—housing, racism and discrimination, poverty, access to food and quality education, exposure to trauma, and myriad other indicators—are often ignored, even though they profoundly influence individual and community health.

As the United States has grappled with how to ensure that every American has access to affordable, accessible, culturally responsive health care and the insurance needed to pay for it, the country has also been faced with ever-increasing health care costs and poor health outcomes.

In 1965 Medicaid was signed into law as part of the Social Security Act. Significant in its reach, the program aimed to ensure that children and individuals living without wages sufficient to offset health care costs could have their health expenses covered. This critical program has served millions of Americans since its inception, and with the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2014, states now have the authority to expand Medicaid eligibility, thus helping to insure more Americans.

Medicaid’s effectiveness in addressing social determinants of health and supporting the well-being and economic stability of its beneficiaries continues to expand. States across the country are using Medicaid funds to help connect families with programs designed to tackle issues related to hunger and housing. Although it may seem counterintuitive to use medical resources like Medicaid for housing needs, it makes a lot of sense if you consider the interconnectedness of housing and health outcomes. If your home is unsafe or has a mold infestation, you will be more likely to suffer an injury or chronic respiratory issues. If your house is unaffordable, you may not have the money to buy healthy foods or needed medications. If you are experiencing homelessness, you are more likely to suffer injury, illness, and trauma and more likely to use expensive emergency care. All of these upstream causes have significant downstream health implications that can require expensive and ongoing treatment often paid through Medicaid. Viewed in this way, investing in housing isn’t much different than investing in other forms of preventive medicine: the goals are to keep folks healthy and keep subsequent costs down.

To move toward these goals, some states have used the Medicaid 1115 Demonstration Waiver Program. These waivers permit states to test new ways of providing care to beneficiaries, including addressing the need for affordable, safe, stable housing. While Medicaid cannot fill every gap in funding for every social service, the 1115 Demonstration Waiver provides a clear opportunity to improve the health of Medicaid beneficiaries by connecting them to resources to support basic needs.

An alternate and more lasting approach is for states to negotiate for incorporation of interventions that have already been tested and proved effective in addressing social determinants of health into their Medicaid agreements with the federal government. While the waiver program allows for novel pilot experimentation, changes to the overall agreement would have more impact because of their relative permanence and reliability.

Either path forward—the waiver program or permanent changes to the Medicaid agreement—offers an exciting opportunity to improve health outcomes by coming to grips with unmet housing needs and provides another instrument in the toolkit to ensure everyone has access to a safe, affordable home. Other states have piloted waivers or updated their Medicaid agreements to cover moving costs, home repairs and modifications, short-term rental assistance, and more. Philadelphia and the whole of Pennsylvania would benefit from pilot programs like these—programs designed to limit the effect of unstable, unsafe, and unaffordable housing on health outcomes. As Pennsylvania and the country continue to address the gross health inequities plaguing the nation, as they seek to curb the rise of health care costs, and as they seek to help all people live their best lives, using Medicaid to fund this kind of preventive “medicine” may be one piece of the puzzle to move us toward those aims.
While complex bureaucratic and budgetary considerations would need to be addressed, using Medicaid resources to support housing among the Commonwealth’s most vulnerable would represent an important shift in how we think about health care costs, preventive medicine, and the need to link social determinants of health more tangibly to health outcomes. It’s exciting to know that in Pennsylvania there are advocates and public officials working on this right now who recognize that if our housing isn’t stable, our health care costs won’t be sustainable. But the Commonwealth as a whole needs to consider these questions: Should Pennsylvania make investments upstream to help ensure that citizens of the Commonwealth have the best chance to lead healthy and productive lives? Or should it spend even more money further down the line in health care costs, as housing continues to impact the well-being of those living across the state? Whether one’s focus is on the moral urgency of shared humanity or on the public purse, the answer should be clear.
At M&T Bank, we know how important it is to support those organizations that make life better in our communities. That’s why we offer our time and resources, and encourage others to do the same. Learn more at mtb.com/community.

M&T Bank is a proud supporter of PACDC and its member organizations.
Powering partnerships.

At PECO, we recognize the immense value that community development corporations provide to the City of Philadelphia. Great leaders grow where diversity is celebrated and people are empowered. That’s why we contribute more than $6 million each year to diverse programs that promote education, the environment, arts and culture, community enrichment, and economic development to help create communities where every individual is valued and respected.

PECO is proud to partner with the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations in its commitment to rebuilding communities and revitalizing neighborhoods.
The unprecedented impact of the last two years has left many of us asking how we can better support small businesses, Black and Brown businesses, and neighborhood-based businesses. At PACDC, we have been working with our partners to address gaps in the small-business support ecosystem, building capacity across Philadelphia’s network of community development corporations and facilitating network building and connections across the many entities that work closely with neighborhood-based businesses. We know that long before the pandemic took root the dedicated staff at CDCs had been working with neighborhood-based businesses and that they possess the trust-based relationships essential to effective programs designed to actually improve people’s lives.

Two initiatives we are particularly excited to share with you as we celebrate our 30th anniversary are our Corridor Manager On-Boarding Program and the Save Your Biz Philly! pilot program. Both have grown out of years of collaborative work with the Commerce Department and LISC Philadelphia toward a comprehensive approach to strengthening Philadelphia’s commercial corridors.

**Corridor Manager On-Boarding Program—Investing in New CDC Talent**

Last spring, a group of eight new corridor managers met with a crew of subject area experts and trainers over Zoom throughout the month of March. They received an introduction to corridor management topics ranging from storefront design, to small-business coaching, to dealing with trash and cleaning, to community organizing. This series was part of PACDC’s Corridor Manager On-Boarding Program, designed to better equip newer corridor managers for their work, connect them
with a network of their peers, help them align their roles within the broader equitable development mission of their organization, and begin to build a clear career pathway within Philadelphia’s neighborhood economic development field. The program also included one-on-one coaching with an experienced economic development professional and resources to facilitate professional development goal-setting between participant and supervisor.

A year later, after a successful pilot, PACDC is working closely with our partners to continue adapting the program and linking it to the range of training and professional development opportunities for corridor managers across the city. Our 2022 cohort will meet in person for three full days of training and then reconvene periodically as a group to share progress, help each other troubleshoot challenges, and continue to work toward their professional growth goals. They will also be paired with coaches who will work with them for a full 10 months, providing one-on-one support. We anticipate offering this program on an annual basis and continue to explore opportunities for additional capacity-building and peer network cultivation across our member organizations.

It has been extremely exciting to have the opportunity to nurture incoming talented young professionals who are working on the ground to lead Philadelphia into economic recovery, creating a more equitable small-business ecosystem across the city. The future is looking bright!

“Im meeting and discussing projects with architects all the time; this process has given me things to bring to the conversation. I feel like I know what I’m talking about.”
—Corridor Manager On-Boarding Program 2021 Pilot Cohort Participant

Small businesses are the backbone of Philadelphia’s economy, culture, and communities, accounting for a third of the city’s total employment. Despite their importance to our local economy, however, small-business owners of color face institutional and systemic barriers that stifle their sustainability and growth and undercut the resilience of Philadelphia communities during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Small businesses in Philadelphia during this time saw revenues decrease by 33%, and the city lost roughly 31% of its “mom and pop shops.” Businesses owned by people of color reported nearly twice the closure rates and revenue losses of white-owned firms during the first two months of the pandemic.

The network of resources and services designed to assist and support small-business owners in our city can be confusing and disjointed; many businesses had difficulty accessing emergency funds and
programs during the pandemic. In response, PACDC has launched Save Your Biz Philly! This initiative grew out of ongoing collaborative work with the Commerce Department and LISC Philadelphia, who offer parallel programming to build capacity among Philadelphia’s technical assistance providers. In the program’s pilot phase, we are partnering with Temple University Small Business Development Center and Black Squirrel to offer a wide range of wraparound supports and resources, along with access to pro bono legal support and professional services, all in the business owner’s language of choice. The program is designed to help stabilize businesses that are struggling with debts, landlord-tenant issues, and lack of basic systems. The “secret sauce” is blended from the direct outreach and ongoing follow-up for businesses from a trusted entity—their local commercial corridor manager—along with navigation and guidance throughout the process from a consultant at Temple SBDC. Businesses receive a clear understanding of their goals and progress through baseline, midpoint, and exit assessments from Black Squirrel, which has developed a comprehensive assessment geared toward strengthening Black and Brown businesses in Philadelphia.

PACDC is grateful to have been awarded a TD Ready Challenge grant, which has allowed us to launch and grow this program over the next several years, and we are appreciative of our pilot-phase partner CDCs: Frankford CDC, Germantown United CDC, HACE, and SEAMAAC.

“Having a space to talk with people who have similar backgrounds and challenges and finding some more resources was definitely helpful and will help me go back and bring that energy to my work.”

—Corridor Manager On-Boarding Program 2021 Pilot Cohort Participant

“This helped me find my excitement for my work again.”

—Corridor Manager On-Boarding Program 2021 Pilot Cohort Participant
Committed to a better world

Truist is proud to be a sponsor of PACDC’s 30th Anniversary Signature Events Series. Our purpose is to inspire and build better lives and communities. And every day, the pursuit of better drives us. That’s why we’re committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion—and boldly believe in the power of what we can achieve together.

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The Power of Art to Create Solidarity:
Two Stories from Philly’s Northside

Art creates change by making us feel, relate, and connect to one another. That is its power. From the AIDS Memorial Quilt in Washington, DC, to the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Alabama, art has helped shape local and national conversations around what it means to seek justice, stand with one another, and fight against inequity. Art, of course, doesn’t cultivate solidarity alone; it also fosters beauty, love, and joy.

Philadelphia’s long history of using art to advance social justice, engage community, and build a better city continues unabated. The North 5th Street corridor and Norris Square neighborhood exemplify what it means to create art that builds community and thereby moves us toward a more just and equitable city that values the lives and livelihoods of every person within its boundaries.

Visit the North 5th Street corridor in Olney, and you’ll find yourself in a unique part of Philadelphia, boasting the most ethnically and linguistically diverse communities in the city. Olney’s strength is rooted in its diversity, with residents who count places like Korea, Colombia, Haiti, the Caribbean, Cambodia, South America, Mexico, sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East as those of their birth. North 5th Street is an area in which neighbor cares for neighbor and where solidarity is a given, not an unfulfilled wish.

“Never Forgotten,” the recently installed, larger-than-life mural located on the side of Tang Pharmacy, features an image of George Floyd and has become a touchstone in Olney for young and old. North 5th Street Revitalization Project Executive Director Stephanie Michel explains that the mural signifies how Olney has “withstood the blows and honors a tragic moment in time.” This extraordinary public artwork, created by Randall Whitfield, was completed in late 2021 in collaboration with Mural Arts, Councilmember Cherelle Parker’s office, Tang Pharmacy, and community members. It was installed after white nationalists defaced a previous iteration of the painting located on a newstand at 5th and Olney. The mobilization to re-create the mural at its newer, grand scale was swift—a testament to a community that has “withstood the blows and honors a tragic moment in time.” This extraordinary public artwork, created by Randall Whitfield, was completed in late 2021 in collaboration with Mural Arts, Councilmember Cherelle Parker’s office, Tang Pharmacy, and community members. It was installed after white nationalists defaced a previous iteration of the painting located on a newstand at 5th and Olney. The mobilization to re-create the mural at its newer, grand scale was swift—a testament to a community that has “withstood the blows and honors a tragic moment in time.” This extraordinary public artwork, created by Randall Whitfield, was completed in late 2021 in collaboration with Mural Arts, Councilmember Cherelle Parker’s office, Tang Pharmacy, and community members. 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“Never Forgotten,” however, is not the first example of art bringing people in Olney together to celebrate and to testify to the strength of a diverse but unified community. Artwork along the North 5th corridor is a proud declaration by residents, affirming that we love the place we call home, we have joy and pride in our neighborhood, and we will rise together until we are all free.

Whitfield, a longtime muralist and sculptor has, in the words of Michel, “poured his heart and soul” into creating art along the corridor, beginning with the intricate floral and landscape mural found on two facades of Peony Garden Restaurant at 5th and Duncannon. Often operating on a shoestring budget and working off-hours to complete painting projects, he also designed and painted branded murals on security gates for businesses up and down the corridor—each gate celebrating the unique culture of the business owner, while using shared images to evoke a sense of unity. Despite the heartache, pain, confusion, and suffering the community has faced over the past several years, “Never Forgotten” and the corridor’s other public artworks are intended to remind those in the community of their mutual support of one another and resilience in the face of great odds. The art of North 5th makes those in the community feel seen and loved, and reminds them that the bonds that knit this neighborhood together cannot be broken.

Just a few miles southeast of Olney, Villa Africana Colobó, one of several gardens stewarded by Norris Square Neighborhood Project (NSNP), sits tucked away on a small side street, its colorful buildings and many raised beds beckoning passersby for a closer look. “It’s all
“Art,” NSNP Executive Director Teresa Elliott says, when she reflects on the layers of culture NSNP’s gardens bring to the Kensington community. There’s food, of course, and activation of their spaces for community. There are also replicas of traditional Puerto Rican homes and kitchens, youth working side by side with their elders, and music, along with a shared love for the past, present, and future.

Over the past two years, with the vision and wisdom of community leader and gardens cofounder Iris Brown leading the way, NSNP’s Villa Africana Colobó garden has transformed from a space in deep need of repairs and reawakening to a monument to the people of the neighborhood, young and old, and their heritage. Colobó, situated at the intersection of Dauphin and North Palethorp Streets, with raised garden beds, artwork, traditional Puerto Rican huts, fashioned in the way of their West African heritage, and an outdoor kitchen, is designed to triangulate three parts of the world into one space for reflection, education, celebration, and community building: Puerto Rico, Philadelphia, and West Africa. Garden beds planted with foods native to each location tell the stories of the transatlantic slave trade’s history with Puerto Rico, the culture of the Puerto Rican Taíno people, and the subsequent diasporic community in Kensington. With care, funding, and an intergenerational team of elders, NSNP staff, and young people from the community, Colobó’s presence is a statement: we are here, we have survived, and we believe in the power of community.

“The gardens have power.” Iris Brown led the re-visioning of Colobó alongside local youth just as the pandemic hit a fever pitch in spring 2020. To her mind, after she and the community had weathered so many challenges, surely the gardens could be made beautiful, safe, and inviting even during a devastating time of illness, death, civil unrest, and deep economic uncertainty. What has unfolded at Villa Africana Colobó over the past few years has advanced social justice in many ways simply by existing. In a neighborhood fighting rapid gentrification, NSNP and its partners and community members have continued to use their garden spaces to preserve the strong Puerto Rican heritage of the community, to invite others in to learn, and to empower young people to have a voice, feel safe, and be themselves. High school junior and gardener Jocelyn Wyatt noted that gardening with NSNP has allowed her to grow her community and a home away from home.

As in Olney, those in the Norris Square neighborhood show up for one another time and again. Most recently, NSNP and its partners—Norris Square Community Alliance; Philadelphia Legal Assistance; Langer, Grogan & Diver P.C.; and the Pennsylvania Horticulture Society, among others—have collaborated to address damages to a garden space owned by NSNP that occurred during demolition by a developer of an adjoining property. The questions of who has access to land and who does not—and even when you do own the land, how you can effectively protect it—reverberate among urban farmers and organizations with gardens designed to advance food sovereignty, nourish community, and knit neighbors together. The deep commitment and enduring sense of community keep NSNP, Brown, and others moving their work forward—because they believe in one another and the power of those rooted in community to create a Philadelphia where everyone thrives and feels safe, connected, and valued.

“Never Forgotten,” by artist Randall Whitfield, in partnership with Mural Arts, North 5th Street Revitalization Project, Councilmember Cherelle Parker, and Tang Pharmacy.
The Community Development Sector and the Fight for Housing Justice

As the world grapples with growing racial, economic, and political injustices, Philadelphia’s community development sector—CDCs, other nonprofits, residents, and local government—has led the charge for housing justice. In another article in this publication, author Joseph McNeely talks about how the CDC movement is a collective response of civil rights activism focused on targeted economic programs. In Philadelphia, programs to expand BIPOC homeownership, repair long-held family homes, and assist those facing the threat of losing their home constitute a localized collective response in the fight for housing justice. This response is making a difference for people of color and low-income Philadelphians, while also having a positive impact on communities.

The Challenges: Past Inequities Showing Up in the Present
Economic insecurity and entrenched discriminatory housing practices like redlining are factors that have played a critical part in the creation of housing inequity for people of color in Philadelphia, which has the highest poverty rate among the country’s largest cities. These practices have resulted in undervalued and deeply segregated neighborhoods throughout the city.

While Philadelphia has historically had one of the largest populations of homeownership by people of color in the country, the city saw homeownership rates for Black households fall from 53% to 48% between 2006 and 2019, and from 52% to 45% for Latinx/Hispanic households over the same period. Rising home values and apartment rents in the city have exacerbated the shortage of affordable homes. More than 40% of Philadelphia’s households are considered “cost burdened,” meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing. Among renters earning below $30,000 per year, 88% are cost burdened, with 68% of these paying more than half of their income for rent.

Overall, it is estimated that over 70,000 affordable homes are needed across the city to meet demand. Add other factors to that—that major repairs needed in the old housing stock, loss of units from the affordable housing inventory, lack of a living wage for many workers, and inflation—and we are left with a city in which affordable, safe housing feels out of reach for too many people.

Rising to These Challenges: CDCs and the Community Development Sector
For years, CDCs have been central to fighting discriminatory barriers to equity and economic mobility. These organizations work hand in hand with the communities they serve, partnering to respond to immediate needs and to build opportunities and resources for visioning the future of neighborhoods. CDCs have advocated and partnered with legal service organizations, city agencies, the courts, banks, and others to create innovative programs and new affordable housing resources.

Rising home values and apartment rents in the city have exacerbated the shortage of affordable homes. More than 40% of Philadelphia’s households are considered “cost burdened,” meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing.

For example, PACDC, the Coalition for Affordable Communities, CDCs, and others led the initial effort in 2005 to create a local, dedicated source of funding for affordable homes: the Philadelphia Housing Trust Fund. More recently, a ballot question was approved by voters resulting in additional funding of more than $28 million per year for the Housing Trust Fund.

Philadelphia’s nationally recognized foreclosure and eviction prevention programs have supported thousands of residents during two years of deep financial uncertainty. Legal service organizations, housing counselors, the courts, and others provide critical support to keep homeowners and tenants in crisis in their homes.

The fight for housing equity is not new. CDCs and their partners have led the effort to expand homeownership, advance home repair programs, and develop and preserve rental housing. These efforts are part of a complex and rich mosaic of resources that are making a difference in the lives of thousands of individuals and families.
Building toward Justice and Dignity

Homeownership and Home Repair

CDCs have built new affordable homes and prepared first-time homebuyers for the American dream of homeownership.

“It’s critical that we work to sustain the community by ensuring that homeownership is available for the diverse people of the community. For us that means supporting both existing homeowners and developing first-time homeownership opportunities for those interested and able to do so,” says Maria Gonzalez, President of HACE.

Critical to wealth-building through homeownership is home maintenance and repair. Indeed, the most affordable home is often the home one already lives in.

Nicetown CDC was one of the first CDCs to participate in the city’s Targeted Home Repair Program, which provided much-needed repairs and upgrades to longtime homeowners to maintain the equity and value of their homes. “Our work is making a difference for Nicetown so that people can stay connected to their neighbors, while also maintaining the value they have built over time in their homes,” said Majeedah Rashid, Chief Operating Officer of Nicetown CDC.

Rebuilding Together Philadelphia has provided 1,800 homeowners with home repair resources. “Working to support people like Ms. Green, a longtime leader in the community, to be able to stay in her home in comfort and dignity is what keeps us at this work and makes it so personal,” says Rebuilding Together’s Executive Director Stefanie Seldin.

Rental Housing Development and Preservation

Many CDCs work in communities where there is substantial disinvestment and poverty and a huge need for access to quality affordable rental housing. Increasingly, CDCs are also working in neighborhoods experiencing rapid change and the loss of affordable homes, where access to affordable rental housing will make a difference.
in residents’ ability to remain in their community of choice or for future residents to live in a higher-amenity neighborhood.

“One out of every two families who rent in Philly are housing cost-burdened, meaning once they pay their rent they can’t afford to pay for other basics like heat or sneakers for their kids. And it’s clear that rents are skyrocketing. This hurts so many, but especially Black and Brown women and children. The city needs to expand its investment in creating and preserving rental homes that are affordable to families with the lowest incomes and greatest housing needs,” said Nora Lichtash, Executive Director of Women’s Community Revitalization Project.

**Housing Counseling Services**
The role of housing counselors, critical components of CDC housing programs, has grown from assisting first-time homebuyers to helping homeowners and tenants facing foreclosure and eviction stay in their home. Indeed, housing counselors are the first point of contact for individuals facing housing need, and as such they are the City of Philadelphia’s housing first responders. They must engage with the courts, legal aid, banks, utility companies, real estate agents, and landlords, serving as advocates, guides, and mentors to individuals at their lowest and highest points in life.

“Since the City Foreclosure Diversion program was created in 2008, thousands of homeowners and their families have been able to stay in their home. We are currently facing the same issue with thousands more Philadelphia homeowners seeking help now given the moratoriums that held mortgage lenders back for the first year of the pandemic are over,” said Donna Henry, Executive Director of Southwest CDC.

**Looking Forward**
The future of just and equitable communities will rely not only on the work achieved to date, but also on finding new ways to build affordable housing, sustain existing housing, and expand creative pathways for families to enter into homeownership. Philadelphia’s CDCs and the community development sector are playing a major part in creating a more equitable city, including supporting equitable housing strategies so everyone has a stable place to call home.
Join a growing list of the city’s leading established and emerging community-based innovators and entrepreneurs. Learn from experienced colleagues, be reenergized by new voices and fresh approaches, and take advantage of free and discounted industry services. Together, share resources and insight, and most importantly, gain a seat at the table in community development decision-making.

Join a PACDC committee to have your voice heard! Member committees support PACDC decision-making, shape our programming, and set our policy priorities. We believe in the power of the lived experience of community leaders to set our agenda.

The COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR WORKING GROUP meets monthly to share ideas and discuss common challenges and opportunities. The Working Group engages with city officials about economic development and corridor management.

The HOUSING COMMITTEE informs and guides PACDC’s policy and advocacy on housing issues, including our efforts to expand funding for affordable housing and advance policies to create more affordable housing opportunities. The Housing Committee needs your input and participation if you or your staff work on housing development, preservation/home repair, housing counseling, or similar projects.

The CDLI ADVISORY BOARD leads the planning of our Community Development Leadership Institute’s range of programs. CDLI serves as PACDC’s training, technical assistance, and networking umbrella for PACDC member services programs.

The COMMUNICATIONS PEER GROUP meets intermittently to share ideas and discuss approaches and best practices to communications and social media, as well as to support each other’s communications efforts.

The EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE helps plan PACDC’s annual Equitable Development Conference, a multiday event attended by more than 300 members of the community development sector. The Planning Committee offers insight and support on planning the agenda, speakers, and other substantive content of the conference.

To sign up and explore membership visit pacdc.org/members/join-pacdc/
“City of a Thousand Voices.” Painting inspired by Andre’a Rhodes’ poem of the same name. ARTIST: CHENLIN CAI.
Thank you, PACDC, for all you do to move our community forward, day in and day out.

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Drs. Rickie Brawer and James Plumb have spent decades improving the health of people and communities across Philadelphia. They recognized early on that while much good work was being done inside the practices at Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals, the social determinants of health occurring outside the walls of the hospital and in the neighborhoods were the most important factors to consider. They saw CDCs and other community service providers as essential conduits to determine neighborhood needs and support and to supplement ongoing health system efforts. As Dr. Brawer says, “CDCs know what they’re doing and they are good at it. The people on the ground doing the work of community development are key, and our work was to support them.”

They worked with CDCs across the city, such as Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation, New Kensington CDC, Project HOME, the Enterprise Center, SEAMAAC, Esperanza, and Impact Services. They’ve helped develop and support programs focused on nutrition, physicals and checkups, community gardens, after-school programming, and refugee resettlement and have provided direct funding through the Philadelphia Collaborative for Health Equity.

“Our job through the years was to make the case for why we need to address social determinants of health and get out of the clinic. That’s what gave birth to the Jefferson Center for Urban Health,” says Dr. Plumb. The center works to coordinate the resources, research, and focus of the university and hospitals toward improving health for Philadelphians of all backgrounds. It also represented the commitment of Jefferson leadership to the mission of Drs. Plumb and Brawer, for which they are grateful. Moreover, it seeks to reshape the medical education of nurses, public health students, and physicians by exposing them to communities and the needs of people from all backgrounds.

This desire to increase exposure of medical professionals through service led to some of the accomplishments of which Drs. Brawer and Plumb are proudest. In the early 1990s, at the suggestion of a student, Dr. Plumb helped create JeffHOPE—a collection of regular clinics at homeless shelters and a needle exchange facility designed to introduce medical students to community care and provide health care access to a vulnerable population. This led to a collaboration with Sister Mary Scullion and Project HOME to establish a permanent clinic within the St. Elizabeth’s recovery residence in North Philadelphia. This was followed years later by Jefferson and Project HOME partnering on the creation of the Stephen Klein Wellness Center, a 28,000-square-foot health clinic providing a full range of outpatient services to the community.

Dr. Brawer’s work over the years with communities in South Philadelphia shined a light on the unmet needs and barriers to access for immigrants and refugees. However, as she notes, meeting these needs “is all about bringing the resources together.” That’s exactly what happened when the Hansjörg Wyss Wellness Center opened its doors. Located in the Bok Building, this clinic provides a range of culturally inclusive, full-spectrum primary care, social services, and community programs. Both doctors agree, “Looking back, these health centers are the parts of our legacy of which we are most proud.”

No doubt the retirement of Drs. Brawer and Plumb will leave a noticeable void far beyond the immediate Jefferson community, including in the community development and public health sectors more broadly. However, they are optimistic that the future of hospital investment in addressing social determinants of health remains bright. As Dr. Plumb notes, “There’s still a lot more that can be done with hospital resources to sustain and support the mission of CDCs.” Through their example, we have certainly seen what dedicated hospital staff can do to advance the health of communities.

PACDC is pleased to recognize Dr. Rickie Brawer and Dr. James Plumb with our Lifetime Achievement Award.
“CDCs know what they’re doing and they are good at it. The people on the ground doing the work of community development are key, and our work was to support them.”

—Rickie Brawer

“Our job through the years was to make the case for why we need to address social determinants of health and get out of the clinic.”

—James Plumb
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CHAMPIONS
Recognizing outstanding leadership and dedication in advancing the field

Philadelphia’s Housing Counseling Agencies

Housing Counselors: The City’s First Responders to Housing Needs

The Great Recession of 2007 to 2009 threatened the well-being of thousands of Philadelphia homeowners as they faced foreclosure. But a small, highly focused band of agencies stood up to help frightened homeowners navigate the court system to defend their rights to keep their homes.

When new opportunities become available through the Philly First Home program to help first-time homebuyers achieve the American Dream for their families and strengthen communities, this dedicated group is there providing encouragement, a little tough love, and expertise when the finish line seems too far away.

Throughout the COVID pandemic, with renters facing eviction, struggling to pay utility bills, and fearing the loss of a safe place to call home, this group provided the same diligent, deliberate, and careful work to get young families, seniors, and others access to the information and financial resources needed to navigate a labyrinth of procedures to access their rights to stay stably housed.

These agencies, funded in part by the City of Philadelphia’s Division of Housing and Community Development, are our city’s first responders to housing crises. As front-line workers, they don’t do this work alone. The City of Philadelphia has invested significantly to support families facing eviction and foreclosure through legal services and thoughtful mitigation involving the courts. This collective effort, which helps families to remain in their homes, is innovative and is being hailed as a model to replicate in cities across the country.

However, this work could not be done without a citywide network of dedicated housing counselors in agencies large and small who provide direct services connecting individuals to resources as they navigate the complex pathway toward safe, stable, affordable housing. They interface with the courts, legal aid, banks, utility companies, real estate agents, and landlords, serving as advocates, guides, and mentors to individuals at their lowest and highest points in life.

“Our counseling agencies are truly unsung heroes of the city, helping people access and stay in housing. More people should know about their work and support it so that these agencies can serve clients even better, while also recognizing the challenges these professionals face every day helping others face difficult points in their lives,” says Housing Counseling Action Committee Chair Kenneth Bigos.

We cannot overemphasize just how important housing counseling is to the ecosystem of affordable, equitable housing in the city. These housing counselors make a key difference in the lives of Philadelphians who have few other supports. They make the difference in keeping folks housed, safe, and thriving.

PACDC is pleased to acknowledge Philadelphia housing counselors’ dedication and commitment and honors their individual and collective achievements to support an equitable and vibrant city as our 2022 Community Development Champions.

“Housing counselors are the first point of contact for individuals facing housing need, and as such they are the City of Philadelphia’s housing first responders.”
List reflects counseling agencies under contract with City of Philadelphia's Division of Housing and Community Development as of March 10, 2022.

Affordable Housing Centers of Pennsylvania
Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha
Center in the Park
Clarifi
Congreso de Latinos Unidos
Esperanza
Greater Philadelphia Asian Social Service Center (GPASS)
Greater Philadelphia Community Alliance
HACE
Intercommunity Action (Senior Center)
Intercultural Family Services
Liberty Resources
Mt. Airy CDC
New Kensington CDC
Norris Square Community Alliance
Northwest Counseling Service
Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation
Philadelphia Senior Center
Southwest CDC
Tenant Union Representative Network
Unemployment Information Center
Urban League of Philadelphia
West Oak Lane CDC
**Nourishing Bodies and Minds**
Chef Kurt is more than a chef. His passion for food came from his “farm-to-table” family of hunters and fishers. But seven years ago, after cooking for Christina Martinez’s Right to Work Dinner Series, he was inspired to use his talents for activism. He began the End Mass Incarceration Dinner Series to raise awareness of systemic racism by bringing the community to the table. He cofounded Everybody Eats Philadelphia, which hosts food give-backs providing healthy and culturally relevant food to neighborhoods. When giving back to a community, Evans says you must be “intentional,” building relationships with residents to know what they really need.

He also cofounded Down North Pizza, a business employing the formerly incarcerated at livable wages. A self-described community architect, Evans enjoys setting the foundation for certain projects before passing them on to other leaders who will sustain them. He says, “It’s about knowing when to step up and step back.”

Evans has a deep love for Philadelphia, its resilience, and its businesses. He describes this city as being full of “love and grit. ... I couldn’t imagine doing this work anywhere else.”

PACDC congratulates Kurt Evans on being recognized as a PACDC 2022 Community Leader!

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**Being Productive in His Environment**
Derrick Pratt was born into community organizing. His mother and grandmother had always been involved in service to the community. Growing up, he watched his mother throw block parties focused on feeding the neighborhood. Now he nourishes the community in his own way.

Leaning on his background in music, Pratt created PCRadioLive.com, of which he is the Owner and Program Director. He has built this platform to reach the people directly. “With an internet radio station, you can reach the world,” says Pratt. “With this platform, I wanted to introduce Philly music to the world.”

In a former role leading the Community Connectors program at People’s Emergency Center, Pratt recognized a correlation between a lack of strong male mentorship and an increase in violence in Mantua. He connected with Jeff Sugg to cofound We Embrace Fatherhood, an organization designed to build, uplift, and strengthen men. Pratt has been instrumental in the creation of a bimonthly event called “Circle Up,” a space for facilitating understanding between fathers (from teenage fathers to post-incarceration fathers) and their children.

Pratt continues to give of himself to the Mantua community, and he fully lives out his motto: “Why should you be content being a product of your environment when it’s so much more fulfilling to be productive in your environment?”

PACDC congratulates Derrick Pratt, Sr., on being recognized as a PACDC 2022 Community Leader!

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**Kurt Evans**
“He stands out for his ability to bring community organizations and private partners to the table.”
—Rachael Viscidy, Program Officer, LISC Philadelphia
Helping Neighborhoods Realize a Vision

Maria Sourbeer’s Philadelphia roots run deep. After growing up in South Jersey, fate led Sourbeer to purchase her great grandfather’s house in South Philly, becoming the fourth generation of her family to live there. She officially became a resident in 2019 and started working at Norris Square Community Alliance.

The Norris Square area has truly become another home to her. She got to know everyone from the Block Captains to the families who have lived for generations in Norris Square. After leaving the Community Alliance as an employee, she stayed involved as a board member and ultimately board chair. What is her greatest hope for the Norris Square community? She wants to see opportunity passed between generations to fortify the strength of the neighborhood.

An architect by trade, Sourbeer had always been interested in the community side of her work and how it impacted others. While pursuing ways to create a bridge between architecture and community impact, she discovered that her passion was helping neighborhoods realize a vision. Today, she works at Mosaic Development Partners, a firm that focuses on neighborhood projects.

PACDC congratulates Maria Sourbeer on being recognized as a PACDC 2022 Community Leader!
2022 PACDC AWARD WINNERS

RISING STAR
Recognizing staff 40 years of age or under at PACDC member organizations

Tempest Carter
ACHIEVEability

“I see success when I’m walking down the street and hear people say it feels safer, or it feels more beautiful, or I see things have changed—the smiles that I get and hugs that I get from my business owners.”

Making an Impact through Intent
When Tempest Carter was an undergrad, she asked “Why does poverty exist?” The Peace Corps first offered her a global perspective to this question, but the village she worked in made her think locally. Then she came back to Philadelphia to apply her knowledge.

Before 2014, Carter didn’t see community development as a viable career, but once she started her job with Esperanza, she realized she loved “working with businesses to help them transform in conjunction with the community.” She went on to work at the Enterprise Center and in 2019 became the Director of Community and Economic Development at ACHIEVEability.

Carter has been fundamental to every project she has launched. She partnered with the Kresge Foundation to raise $725,000 for the Bushfire Theater, a legacy Black-owned business. She helped West Philadelphia’s 60th Street businesses recover twice from damages done during the civil unrest of 2020. Currently, she’s launching an antiviolence collaborative that will employ youth to work for 60th Street businesses and pay the businesses to train them.

As this Rising Star looking toward the next generation of community development, Carter says she “can’t wait to see the new comets!”

Activating the Community against Violence
Rikeyah Lindsay is a lifelong resident of Mantua with familial roots in the community. As both a community resident and a Block Captain, she has seen the community experience beautiful highs and painful lows since 2012. When a Programs Assistant position opened in 2019 at Mount Vernon Manor CDC, she applied and joined the team. Within a year, her responsibilities changed when the CDC received funding to hire a Safety and Justice Coordinator. After beginning the job search, they realized they already had the perfect candidate on their team.

In this role Lindsay drew on her background in early childhood learning. She saw the need to develop a network of parents that would enable children to get home safely and swiftly when an instance of violence occurred. As the Safety and Justice Coordinator, she is always striving to connect community members and build relationships among them. Her approach to community safety is centered on prevention first, making sure families and children know each other because familiarity reduces the chances of violence.

Understanding that there is no one solution to a systemic issue, Lindsay defines success through an engaged community. She says, “I believe that through efforts to build community pride, we will begin to see a change in the hearts and minds of the people that will lead to both peace and prosperity throughout our neighborhoods.”

PACDC congratulates Tempest Carter on being recognized as a PACDC 2022 Rising Star!

PACDC congratulates Rikeyah Lindsay on being recognized as a PACDC 2022 Rising Star!
Recognizing a Sense of Responsibility

Uplifting communities is the biggest motivator for Misha Rodriguez, Communications Manager at Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha (APM). After graduating with a degree in anthropology, she wanted to shift from an academic focus to getting involved in communities, and so joined APM as a PHENND Fellow. After her service year ended, she knew she still had so much more to learn from APM and its surrounding North Philadelphia communities. Rodriguez was lucky enough to join the Community and Economic Development team full time as a Special Projects Coordinator.

Rodriguez believes the Walkability Campaign is her most meaningful accomplishment. After the neighborhood suffered a loss when a child was killed in a hit-and-run near a local park, she saw the community truly collaborate and mobilize to improve safety and fight disinvestment. Rodriguez listens to and collaborates with the community first, which then informs her communications strategies for APM. As she reflects on the future of community development, she hopes that the field’s related industries will be owned by and open to community members, ensuring that spaces are shared because “there has to be a sense of responsibility.”

PACDC congratulates Misha Rodriguez on being recognized as a PACDC 2022 Rising Star!
EQUITABLE ENTREPRENEUR

Recognizing outstanding achievement by an individual entrepreneur that advances equity and economic opportunity for low-income residents in their business model

Blew Kind, Franny Lou’s Porch

Leading in Partnership with Community

Franny Lou’s Porch, located at the corner of Coral and York Streets in the East Kensington neighborhood, is an inviting, warm, and tranquil space created with intention to serve marginalized communities, feeding both body and spirit. This is not just a one-time brag you might find on the Franny Lou’s website, but a central tenet that Blew Kind, founder and one of three co-owners of the coffeehouse, has taken very seriously from day one.

After studying performance and theater in college, Kind left to start her first coffeehouse, Leotah’s Place. As her concept evolved, she moved the business across the street in 2014 and renamed it Franny Lou’s Porch, a coffeehouse and community space named after abolitionist and writer Frances E. W. Harper and civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer, both African American women, artists, and mothers.

At Franny Lou’s, community activism, relational business practices, awareness, wellness, and advocacy are baked into every detail, from the naming of specialty sandwiches, to the carefully sourced ingredients, to the antiracist/anticapitalist books that line shelves and coloring books featuring Black women in restful poses.

Franny Lou’s has undergone some big changes over the past year, which have served to reaffirm the business’s values related to building community in the neighborhood. In 2021, Kind brought on two additional co-owners, Chantelle Todman and Ashley Huston, and together, they adopted a profit-sharing model for the business that includes financial transparency through monthly report-outs and dividing among the entire staff any money remaining after expenses. Kind explains that staff at Franny Lou’s are referred to as the “Tribe” and that there is a big focus on self and mutual care and wellness. “We share values—we love ourselves first, we love each other, and we love the neighbors. And we really focus on emotional intelligence and taking care of yourself.”

Shortly after the change in ownership structure, the building in which Franny Lou’s sits went on the market. Deciding they wanted to own the space outright, Kind and her colleagues launched a GoFundme page and reached out to partners. In short order they secured the funds needed to purchase the building via the crowdsourcing campaign, grants from LISC and the Merchants Fund, and a low-interest loan from PIDC. Kind attributes this success to the skills and energy her co-owners brought to the process and the group’s ability to work together to engage neighbors and partners and keep each other motivated.

Kind encourages other small-business owners to “take the time for quiet, turn off your cell phones, turn off your medias, take your retreat, really get grounded ... because you really need that grounding to get through the difficult times.”

“We have to rely on community to build—you’re way better with other people. Your mind is beautiful, but it’s just a part of the painting. The full painting is with your community.”

PACDC congratulates Blew Kind and Franny Lou’s Porch on being recognized as a PACDC 2022 Equitable Entrepreneur!
**EQUITABLE ENTREPRENEUR**

Recognizing outstanding achievement by an individual entrepreneur that advances equity and economic opportunity for low-income residents in their business model

Dan Tang, Tang Pharmacy

Providing Care, Building Connections

Dan Tang fondly recalls spending a lot of time with aunts and uncles in Philly’s Koreatown of the 1980s—Olney. After finishing high school in Bucks County, Tang was drawn to Temple University’s pharmacy school. Temple appealed to him because of its highly diverse student body; pharmacy appealed to him in part because of his aptitude in math and the sciences but also because his parents had impressed upon him the importance of choosing a career path that would inherently involve giving back.

Now in his seventeenth year as an owner of Tang Pharmacy, alongside his brothers and parents, Dan Tang’s big city business has a decidedly small-town feel. One critical component is Tang Pharmacy’s ability to support customers who speak many different languages, including Korean, Vietnamese, and Cambodian. It isn’t just about the Asian community, though: it’s about the Jamaican, Guatemalan, and white customers, too. At a time when trust in one another matters more than ever, this independent pharmacy deeply rooted in the neighborhood comes through for all of its customers.

It is trust that helped Tang and his team successfully set up COVID testing and vaccination clinics in the neighborhood, and it is trust that has customers calling Tang for a recommendation for a reputable roofer or help jumping their car.

Pharmacists like Tang and his brothers know that pharmacy is a personal business: they know their customers’ birthdays, the names of the children and grandchildren of longtime customers, their fears and concerns about what’s going on in the city and the world, just as they also know the importance of translating prescription labels and delivering meds to local homebound seniors. Humble about the many ways in which Tang Pharmacy continuously gives back to the community through food and toy drives, college scholarship programs, and helping customers apply for health insurance, to name a few, Tang reflects that this is just how you do the work. He believes in treating his customers and employees well and providing equal access to information to everyone in Olney.

How Tang Pharmacy shows up for the neighborhood boils down to this for Tang and his team: “Just being here for the community ... that’s gone a long way. We provide comfort; it doesn’t matter who you are.” Making a difference, Tang says, is seeing the next generation of smiles come through the door, making the customer experience as responsive and first-rate as possible, and using the resources they have as a business to help support a community where many small changes over time add up to something much bigger and much better.

PACDC congratulates Dan Tang and Tang Pharmacy on being recognized as a PACDC 2022 Equitable Entrepreneur!
EQUITABLE ENTREPRENEUR

Recognizing outstanding achievement by an individual entrepreneur that advances equity and economic opportunity for low-income residents in their business model

Jerome Shabazz

PACDC’s 2022 Equitable Entrepreneur awardee Jerome Shabazz is a bad brother. Darn straight! Hush your mouth! We only talkin’ about Jerome. Yeah, and we can dig it!

All comparison to the iconic Shaft movie character aside, Jerome Shabazz, father, teacher, social venture capitalist, and civic engineer, has spent nearly 30 years working with young people, neighborhood residents, and activists to help communities better understand the built and natural environments and how critical that knowledge is for a truly sustainable and equitable city.

He did this in Philadelphia long before environmental sustainability was embraced as a key best practice in development. He did this without much fanfare. But along the way he acquired a broad and growing reputation of achievement that others both locally and nationally can see and learn from. His accomplishments include developing urban farms with extensive underground water-retaining systems and launching a robust STEM training program that has spawned the Overbrook Environmental Education Center (OEEC) in West Philadelphia, a community-based hub dedicated to environmental education, workforce development, literacy, nutrition, and wellness programs for thousands of West Philly youth and their families.

Shabazz comments, “I was at a conference out of town, and we were standing in line for one of the sessions, and I could hear two men talking about Jerome Shabazz. That was so surreal because they were talking about me.”

There are indeed many people watching and learning from his work. Shabazz, in his roles first at the Philadelphia Water Department and then the Philadelphia Gas Works, started his journey modestly in the classroom. “My work in community-based environmental sustainability started formally at Overbrook High School in 1997 in a program targeted to help young people and address the structural inequities that prevented low-income young people from pursuing science, technology, engineering and math education and jobs,” Shabazz shared.

“We started teaching young people about the built and natural environments documenting existing conditions, animal, plant, and tree life. After running the program for three years and seeing test scores and grades improve substantially, we grew from that.” The program at Overbrook High—Juveniles Active in Science and Technology—formed the basis for the OEEC, taking the insights from those early days in the high school classroom and producing acclaimed programs that range from certifications in lead safety and remediation and dust sampling to fee-for-service stormwater infrastructure training offered to PECO and Philadelphia Water Department employees.

Shabazz is a bad brother!

Recently, Shabazz’s work at the OEEC has expanded to include partnerships with the Nature Conservancy, Jefferson Health, and the US Department of Agriculture and has become a nationally recognized example of best practice in conserving the built and natural environments through its stormwater management system. Additional plans are coming to fruition for Overbrook Farmacy, a wellness center that will include a bakery and café, greenspace for public access, and an aquaponics system. Shabazz says, “I view what we do here as community development, sustaining the environment so that everyone regardless of income can be free to enjoy clean air and water. That is true sustainability—the ability to live free to enjoy nature and enjoy your surroundings.”

We couldn’t agree more with Jerome or with the fact that he truly is a bad brother.

PACDC congratulates Jerome Shabazz and JASTECH on being recognized as a 2022 Equitable Entrepreneur.
How PACDC Blue Ribbon Award Winners Are Selected

PACDC’s Blue Ribbon Awards recognize outstanding achievement by community development corporations that advance our vision:

“An equitable city where every Philadelphian lives, works, and thrives in a neighborhood that offers an excellent quality of life.”

Winners exemplify community development best practices and demonstrate excellence in at least one of the following categories:

- **INNOVATION**: The organization has created a new or pioneering project or program, or has approached a project or program in a new and inventive way.

- **IMPACT**: The organization has shown a demonstrated capacity to positively influence or enhance the community or population served.

- **LEADERSHIP**: The organization has displayed a proven ability to guide, lead, or influence the direction, course, action, or opinions of stakeholders that results in advancement for the community or population served.

- **ADVANCES EQUITY**: The project or program has demonstrated the use of an equitable development strategy that works toward equality in housing, health, education, or economic opportunity for low- and moderate-income households.

A committee of community development professionals reviews nominations, selects the finalists, and decides the winners by consensus.
Past Blue Ribbon Winners and Finalists

2021

WINNERS
Community Ventures
Susquehanna Square
Mission First Housing Group
New Market West

FINALISTS
African Cultural Alliance of North America
Woodland Revitalization
Frankford CDC
Frankford Pause Pilot Park

2020

WINNERS
Esperanza
Esperanza Arts Center
Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation
Crane Community Center

FINALISTS
Impact Services Corporation and New Kensington CDC
CoLab
New Kensington CDC
Kensington Health Connectors

2019

WINNERS
Community Ventures
Centennial Village
Project HOME
Gloria Casarez Residence

2018

WINNERS
Esperanza
Roberto Clemente Homes
Germantown United CDC
Open Doors in Germantown

FINALISTS
HELP USA
Lural L. Blevins Veterans Center at HELP Philadelphia V
Office of Community Development–Catholic Human Services
St. John Neumann Place II
People’s Emergency Center CDC
4050 Apartments

2017

WINNERS
Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha
Food Buying Club
Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation and Project HOME
Francis House of Peace Ping An (平安) House

FINALIST
New Kensington Community Development Corporation
Orinoka Civic House

2016

WINNERS
People’s Emergency Center CDC
Neighborhood Time Exchange
The Village of Arts and Humanities
People’s Paper Co-op

FINALISTS
Esperanza
Esperanza Academy Public Charter High School
Women’s Community Revitalization Project
Grace Townhomes

2015

WINNERS
Impact Services Corporation
Veterans Housing Center
Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation
Leveraging Night Markets

FINALISTS
Community Ventures
Ingersoll Commons
People’s Emergency Center CDC
Bigham Leatherberry Wise

2014

WINNERS
Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha
Paseo Verde
Logan CDC
Logan Park(let)
F I N A L I S T S

A C H I E V E a b i l i t y
Community-Academic Partnerships

T h e E n t e r p r i s e C e n t e r C D C
Center for Culinary Arts

Uptown Entertainment and Development Corporation
Uptown Youth Got Talent Program

2013

W I N N E R S
Mission First Housing Group
Walnut Hill West and Temple I & II

N ic e t o w n C D C
Nicetown Courts I & II

F I N A L I S T S
The Enterprise Center CDC
Community Leaders Program

P e o p l e ’ s E m e r g e n c y C e n t e r C D C
Lancaster Revitalization Plan

2012

W I N N E R S
Community Ventures
Francisville East

H a b i t a t f o r H u m a n i t y P h i l a d e l p h i a
ReStore

F I N A L I S T S
Friends Rehabilitation Program
Strawberry Mansion Townhomes

P e o p l e ’ s E m e r g e n c y C e n t e r C D C
Jannie’s Place

W o m e n ’ s C o m m u n i t y R e v i t a l i z a t i o n P r o j e c t
Evelyn Sanders II

2011

W I N N E R S
East Falls Development Corporation
Trolley Car Café and Gateway Center

N e w K e n s i n g t o n C D C
Sustainable 19125: Big Green Block

F I N A L I S T S
H A C E
Lawrence Court

I m p a c t S e r v i c e s C o r p o r a t i o n
Aramingo Crossing

P h i l a d e l p h i a C h i n a t o w n
Development Corporation
Tenth Street Plaza

2010

W I N N E R S
H A C E
Mercy LIFE Center

R o x b o r o u g h D e v e l o p m e n t
Corporation
Targeted Block Façade Improvement

F I N A L I S T S
E s p e r a n z a
Latin Quarter Project

I m p a c t S e r v i c e s C o r p o r a t i o n
Hancock Manor

P e o p l e ’ s E m e r g e n c y C e n t e r C D C
West Powelton/Saunders Park Neighborhood Plan

U n i v e r s a l C o m p a n i e s
Universal Plan

2009

W I N N E R
Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha
Pradera II and TruMark Credit Union

F I N A L I S T S
Archdiocese of Philadelphia/Office of Community Development
St. John Neumann Place

N e w K e n s i n g t o n C D C
Sustainable 19125

O g o n t z A v e n u e R e v i t a l i z a t i o n
Corporation
West Oak Lane Jazz Festival

W o m e n ’ s C o m m u n i t y R e v i t a l i z a t i o n
Project
Neighborhood Planning

2008

W I N N E R
Project HOME
St. Elizabeth Phase V
Homeownership Development

F I N A L I S T S
Asociación Puertorriqueños en Marcha
Sheridan Street Affordable Housing Project

T h e E n t e r p r i s e C e n t e r C D C
Walnut Hill Street Team

I m p a c t S e r v i c e s C o r p o r a t i o n
Dual Diagnosis Program
New Kensington CDC

N e w K e n s i n g t o n C D C
Frankford Avenue Arts Corridor

O g o n t z A v e n u e R e v i t a l i z a t i o n
Corporation
Northwest Greening Initiative
It started in 2018 with the rising zeitgeist of awareness of the critical link between housing and health. Inglis—the largest provider of accessible housing in Greater Philadelphia—decided to convene key stakeholders to discuss building cross-sector partnerships to address the issue, and, with that, the seeds of Inglis Methodist Gardens began to sprout in the Wynnefield Heights neighborhood of West Philadelphia.

Not long after, the charitable arm of Aetna, which had attended the meeting and was interested in pursuing the idea further, approached Inglis. Aetna then committed $4 million toward an innovative health and housing development. The choice of a partner came naturally enough. Methodist Services, a venerable provider of housing and social services, assists individuals and families with the transition from homelessness. Moreover, both Inglis and Methodist Services have been serving Wynnefield Heights and the surrounding community since shortly after the Civil War. Methodist also had available land on which a new development could be built and a shared mission of service to the vulnerable.

Costing $16.8 million, Inglis Methodist Gardens boasts 47 units of affordable housing split between Inglis and Methodist Services. All of Inglis’s units are “accessible plus,” which means they go far beyond ADA requirements to create a more supportive living space for those with a range of challenges. They have wider doorways to accommodate modern power-wheelchairs and a variety of smart home tech features, such as voice-activated blinds, smart locks, and more. These features can also be “sip and puff”—activated for those unable to use the voice-activated features. Carved out of the Methodist Services Campus, the site has plenty of open space and a park nearby.

Beyond the generosity of Aetna, support for the development came from Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh, and TD Bank, which was the lender. Having support from Senator Vincent Hughes and Councilmember Curtis Jones was also very helpful, especially during these challenging times. As Ben Laudermilch, Executive Director of Inglis Housing Corporation, noted, “We closed in July of 2020—so we had to deal with the curveball of the pandemic and all of the supply chain issues that followed. Yet we were still able to open in a little over a year.”

Being able to move into these beautiful modern units during particularly dark times must have been a relief to the 47 vulnerable individuals and families that found new places to call home. Gary Bramnick, Inglis Director of Marketing Communications, says, “The goal is that people who are in need of an accessible apartment should have the opportunity to live in a wonderful community—full stop.”

With Inglis Methodist Gardens and their partner Methodist Housing, they have certainly achieved that vision.

PACDC congratulates Inglis Housing Corporation and partner Methodist Services on being recognized as a 2022 Blue Ribbon Award Winner!
When Kevin Brown, the Neighborhood Advisory Committee Coordinator at People’s Emergency Center CDC (PEC), started Men’s Coffee Talk in November 2015, he didn’t imagine it would still be around seven years later. What started as a small coffee and donuts meet-up to share concerns and resources has grown into an impressive program that has helped men in the West Philly community (and beyond) with everything from how to make a sincere apology to how to create wealth by proper investing.

Through conversations with residents of the West Philly neighborhood where he was working for PEC, Brown realized there was a need for supportive programming geared specifically to men. “I wanted to find out what their needs were and not make any assumptions.” He invited all to come by the small community center where he offered them coffee. The first meeting was on a Tuesday in 2015, and all these years later this “grassroots think tank,” as Brown calls it, is still meeting at the same time, the second Tuesday of every month.

The group members discuss their challenges, which include struggles finding jobs, problems getting housing, issues about health, and difficulties surrounding addictions. They feel comfortable speaking to other men with similar experiences. Brown says the group’s mission grew organically from those conversations, and they had modest goals at the outset. They brainstormed concrete things they could do to make a difference that didn’t require waiting for, say, legislation to be passed. What could they do immediately? A lot, apparently.

Many members had issues finding affordable housing (particularly senior housing) and getting jobs because of, often unfair, criminal convictions that stayed on their records. Brown partnered with the Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity who brought in student lawyers to teach the group how to expunge their old criminal records online and even trained them so they could mentor others. This clinic has become an annual event and has helped hundreds of men clear their records to date.

When a friend of Brown’s from the AIDS Health Foundation wanted to contribute to the group, Brown told her the guys would love a hot breakfast. A full Panera breakfast soon became the norm at monthly meetings. The HIV epidemic in the Black community was a prevalent group topic, so the foundation sent Dr. Bursted, a longtime AIDS advocate, to share resources with them, including free condoms, information about local HIV testing sites, and free prep medication that effectively keeps HIV at bay. Prep medication has been around for 20 years, says Brown, “but nobody was telling the Black community that.”

Other Coffee Talk accomplishments include voting registration days, domestic violence awareness events, health access partnerships, Wharton school entrepreneurship workshops, and the well-attended annual Men’s Wellness Festival, which showcases health screenings, COVID vaccinations, AIDS prevention resources, clothing closets, an expungement clinic, resource sharing, and four hours of delicious BBQing (thanks to the local 16th Precinct).

Men’s Coffee Talk has served 2,500 attendees to date from a diverse cross-section of men from all over the city and all walks of life. It boasts a wide array of partnerships with hospitals, law schools, and business entrepreneurs, and even scored a recurring guest spot on local DJ Nick Taliaferro’s radio show on WURD where, yes, they dedicated a whole session to an “Apology Lab” to learn how to say you’re sorry.

PACDC congratulates People’s Emergency Center CDC for being recognized as a PACDC 2022 Blue Ribbon Award winner!
Safety, justice, community cohesion, trauma-informed policing. These aren’t just buzzwords. These are the concrete goals of young people in Kensington and Fairhill, who are lifting their collective voices and using their lived experiences to make informed recommendations for their communities. “My Voice Matters,” a youth-centered initiative, was part of a larger collaborative called WeCAN (Change & Action Now) spearheaded by three local partners: HACE, Impact Services Corporation, and New Kensington CDC (NKCDC).

Decades of neighborhood disinvestment have left the Fairhill and Kensington neighborhoods of Philadelphia with physical blight, a large opioid epidemic, and a disproportionate share of violent crime, including high rates of gun violence. Despite these problems, NKCDC Project Manager Cass Green believes in the great tenacity of the residents of these neighborhoods; she believes that the long-standing perseverance of the community leaders who have been taking care of Fairhill and Kensington block by block for many years are why projects like My Voice Matters can have success. But partnerships, she says, are another component of the success.

Building on the WeCAN model, My Voice Matters gave a critical voice to young adults aged 14 to 24 as they sought to build sustainable, practical solutions to deeply entrenched problems in their neighborhoods. In the spring and summer of 2021, twenty-six young adults participated in art-based dialogue sessions and two strategy sessions in which they analyzed systems of oppression, creatively explored issues, and affirmed the assets present in their communities. Facilitated by Creative Praxis, these sessions culminated in the publication of a set of recommendations by My Voice Matters relating to investments in community, training, and accountability for policing in the community in partnership with the 24th Police District. They also listed other holistic preventive measures that could be taken to support the well-being of residents.

The WeCAN collaborative has been hard at work creating sustainable plans for the future. Green stresses that this three-year project was not one that would simply end after the grant period. Instead, she and her partners, alongside community members, are working for long-term change. The partners have joined to identify funding for community-rooted organizations like Faith, Health, and Healing and Somerset Neighbors for Better Living. Further, the partnership created between the collaborative and the 24th Police District features My Voice Matters youth-led training for police and bidirectional training, while the newly formed Youth Advisory Commission of the Philadelphia Police Department will be guided by My Voice Matters’ recommendations on community policing. The agencies and many partners engaged in this work over the past several years are deeply committed to seeing it continue—with the community’s voice always centered, always serving as the North Star, lighting the way toward brighter days for every person on every block.

PACDC congratulates My Voice Matters, WeCAN Collaborative (HACE, Impact Services Corporation, New Kensington CDC) as a 2022 Blue Ribbon finalist for its exemplary work!
“Rambling farmland” is how the Sharswood neighborhood was characterized in the nineteenth century. Three hundred years later, this part of North Philadelphia has undergone multiple transformations, beginning with the opening of Girard College in the mid-1800s. The Great Migration transformed Sharswood into a hub for Black American arts, culture, food, and history, its major commercial corridors bustling with activity and known for their unparalleled jazz scene. Fast-forward through years of disinvestment, “white flight,” and economic recessions, a period that created high rates of unemployment and poverty and persistently low rates of homeownership in the neighborhood.

Over the past decade, however, Sharswood has seen some of the sharpest rises in real estate values. From 2010 to 2020, median home sale prices in the zip code covering Sharswood and its adjacent communities grew by more than 415%, the steepest growth in any zip code in Philadelphia.

Enter Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia, committed to ensuring that all Philadelphians have a “safe, warm, dry,” stable place to rest their heads at night. Habitat acquired land from the Philadelphia Housing Authority and broke ground on 20 new single-family homes in the 2300 block of Oxford Street in early 2020. With support from the Brewerytown-Sharswood Community Civic Association and others, 20 families are now building equity for themselves and for generations to come. Through their homeownership program, families participate in educational workshops and partner with Habitat to build their own homes through sweat equity, which in turn serves as their down payment.

“Oxford Green,” as the housing development completed in June 2021 is known, features energy-efficient green roofs and a more flexible first-floor living space, designed using feedback from other Habitat homeowners. While small design tweaks may seem inconsequential, Habitat notes that the changes support aging-in-place goals that many individuals and families hold.

In the short time Oxford Green has been occupied, families have created babysitting and bicycling groups, and children attend school together—proof that blight needn’t persist, that affordable homeownership is possible, and that community can be created even during a global pandemic. Oxford Green exemplifies how equitable access to homeownership can begin and end in partnership with and for the community.

PACDC congratulates Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia on being recognized as a finalist for the 2022 Blue Ribbon for Community Development Excellence.
Imagine a thriving hub of education, recreation, and community celebration that brings together seniors, teens, young adults, parents, and children housed in two brand-new community centers built under one roof. Imagine how in bringing together different languages, ethnicities, and perspectives the shared vision for that hub strengthens the wider community, emboldens its imagination for the future, and safeguards neighborhood identity and cohesion. That kind of imagination takes courage, foresight, and collective strength.

In the Fairhill section of Eastern North Philadelphia, residents are working with a local CDC and a social justice arts organization to design such a facility as part of the revitalization of the Mann Adult Center and Rivera Recreation Center. HACE and Just Act are joining with residents to help prioritize, plan, and implement a full range of programs and services to be featured in the center after its remodel is completed. This planning process, entitled “ReStore*ReImagine*ReBuild,” is the community’s hyper-local approach to participating in the city’s Rebuild program involving Philly’s parks, libraries, and recreation centers. HACE is serving as the project lead, with Just Act coordinating resident-led engagement, organizing, and planning support.

“It’s important that neighborhood residents know and feel that the newly redeveloped centers belong to them and their vision for the community. Partnering with Just Act to help in this process is an important part of our work to not just get neighborhood buy-in but also ownership of what goes on there,” says Harry Tapia, HACE Chief Financial Officer.

The goal of incorporating arts- and community-based engagement in this project “is about helping community members build a shared vision for not just the center itself, but also how the programming process of the center can nourish and uplift the already existing assets of the neighborhood and activating it day in and day out. This process is more than building the center, but also about building community in its broadest sense,” says Lisa Jo Epstein, PhD, and founder of Just Act.

From its inception, this partnership and project focused on creating spaces for residents to lead, including through the recruitment of a Community Advisory Team and the hiring of resident leaders who are bilingual and multigenerational to be part of a Story Engagement Team. Trained and directed by Just Act, the team serves as facilitator of the Story Circle Process, which invites attendees to share personal stories about meaningful experiences they have had at the centers or in the neighborhood. The Story Engagement Team then “gifts back” participants’ stories to those assembled at each event through theatrical improvisations, thereby challenging the often-extractive nature of data collection. Participants reimagine systems and possibilities for a more connected neighborhood that is inclusive and supports community growth and well-being.

For additional data collection, residents were invited to “play with a purpose” by using a game board created by Just Act to indicate which activities should take priority to uphold their collective values, share the benefits each activity has, and identify additional specific audiences who may engage with that activity. This rich process of deep engagement involving personal stories, shared visioning, and collective action is essential to rebuilding a new plan for the future of the Rivera and Mann Centers, enabling its activation to support the growing strength and vitality of the Fairhill neighborhood.
In November 2021, St. Rita Place and Cascia Center finally welcomed home dozens of seniors, as the long-awaited South Philly senior affordable housing and community space was dedicated to much celebration. As is common with many complex development efforts, Catholic Housing and Community Services (CHCS), the lead partner on the project, found the path to opening its doors far from linear. Originally planned as a one-story community space at the corner of Broad and Federal Streets, adjacent to the National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia, the initial project was not fully embraced by the community, and calls for a larger vision arose.

Heather Huot, CHCS’s Director, realized “luxury condos were going up everywhere” in the neighborhood while seniors struggled to age in place. The project was re-envisioned with partners as a multi-use complex aimed at supporting low-income seniors and helping to stem the tide of gentrification sweeping this part of the city.

After a complicated set of real estate transactions, CHCS and the Shrine of St. Rita successfully brokered a land donation that helped support both the 106-year-old shrine and the path to construction of 46 affordable apartments for seniors and an adjacent community space. These partners shared a vision to create peacemaking space for seniors at the busy intersection of Broad and Ellsworth, with vibrant outdoor space and a design that unified the neighborhood’s aesthetic.

With architecture group Cecil Baker & Partners, St. Rita and Cascia Center was creatively designed with additional support from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, Philadelphia Housing Authority, Diamond and Associates, Domus, and Councilmembers Kenyatta Johnson and Mark Squilla, and robust support from the local community. St. Rita and Cascia Center illustrates how even in neighborhoods with relatively high average household incomes and ever-increasing rental rates and housing prices, thoughtful partnerships can win the day for residents most in need and deserving of an affordable, peaceful, friendly place to call home.

PACDC congratulates Catholic Housing and Community Services on being recognized as a finalist for the 2022 Blue Ribbon for Community Development Excellence.
Nevertheless: An Ecstatic Ode

BY AIREA DEE MATTHEWS, PHILADELPHIA POET LAUREATE

Praise to the father holding his sleeping daughter on the 52nd Street trolley
To the daughter sleeping through the pothole thrum

Praise to the diabetic with shorn feet & sugarcane blood
To the shooting nerve through her left hip & lower spine
To those flying gods on their routes

Praise to boot houses
children running over frayed laces

Praise to the old kitchen, half-gutted,
its springtime gnats & winter flies
its mice hugging sweet corners

Praise to that which endures
To old doors, layers of paint
years of storm beating solid oak
To the gable roof that is a ceiling,
the coffered ceiling that is also a floor

Praise to what shoulders weight
To brackets & load-bearing walls
beams & spindly skeletons
sacred geometry & tangents
To levees & pregnant summers
the bullet-ridden body
coil spring & wheel

Praise to open wombs & caskets
any mother who must decide either
To the crown & seed lowering
into the thorny or fertile soil

Praise to the ground unfastening
To every earthworm’s bristle
& every seraph’s six wings
entwined in song waltz of welcome
To the body relenting only to dust
the spirit ascending straightway to stars

Praise to all who rejoice in becoming
To all who transform in return

“Airea D. Matthews’ first collection of poems is the critically acclaimed Simulacra, which received the prestigious 2016 Yale Series of Younger Poets Award. The collection explores the topics of longing and desire with power, insight, and intense emotion. Matthews received a 2020 Pew Fellowship, a 2016 Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers’ Award, and was awarded the Louis Untermeyer Scholarship in Poetry from the 2016 Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference. Matthews earned her MFA from the Helen Zell Writers’ Program at the University of Michigan. In 2022, she was named Philadelphia’s Poet Laureate. She is an assistant professor at Bryn Mawr College where she directs the poetry program.
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Our mission is to spur investment, support business growth, and foster developments that create jobs, revitalize neighborhoods, and drive growth to every corner of Philadelphia. Armed with flexible financing products, a targeted portfolio of industrial and commercial real estate, and decades of Philadelphia-based knowledge, PIDC provides the resources and expertise to help you invest, develop, and grow.
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For 30 years of leadership in community development and neighborhood revitalization in Philadelphia. Thanks for all you do to make this a city where all our citizens can flourish.

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Reinvestment Fund celebrates PACDC’s 30th anniversary!

We are proud to support PACDC’s work to create an equitable Philadelphia.

Reinvestment Fund is a mission-driven financial institution committed to making communities work for all people. We bring financial and analytical tools to partnerships that work to ensure that everyone has access to essential opportunities: affordable places to live, access to nutritious food and health care, schools where their children can flourish, and strong, local businesses that support jobs.

For more information, contact:
Elizabeth Franz, Philadelphia Market Leader
215-574-5911 | elizabeth.frantz@reinvestment.com

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Arab American Community Development Corporation ● ●
215-915-2306

All in the Family Community Development Corporation ●
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www.brewerytownsharswood.org
267-858-4246

Catholic Housing and Community Services ● ●
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Chesnut Hill Community Development Corporation
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Community Ventures ● ●
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East Falls Development Corporation ● ●
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The Enterprise Center Community Development Corporation ● ● ●
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Esperanza ● ● ● ●
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Oxford Circle Christian Community Development Association ● ● ●
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South Street Headhouse District ●
www.southstreet.com
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Southwest Community Development Corporation ● ● ●
www.southwestcdc.org
215-729-0800

Tacony Community Development Corporation ●
www.visittacony.com
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Wynnewood Overbrook Revitalization Corporation ●
www.wynnewbrook.org
610-660-1241

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www.yorktowncdc.org
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- Housing/Housing Counseling
- Social Services/Referral
- Organizing/Advocacy
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ASSOCIATE MEMBERS
Membership Directory

AARP Pennsylvania ● ●
www.states.aarp.org/pennsylvania
866-389-5654

Affordable Housing Centers of Pennsylvania ● ●
www.ahcopa.org
215-765-1221

The Asian Bank ●
www.theasianbank.com
215-592-1188

Bank of America ●
www.bankofamerica.com
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Benchmark Construction Group ●
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Energy Coordinating Agency ●
www.ecasavesenergy.org
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www.myphillypark.org
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Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh ●
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Fulton Bank ●
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When people pull together, every day is a giant leap forward.

We’re proud to honor PACDC for the work you do every day to make our community a better place.

Contact Monica Burch
SVP and Market Manager
215-585-4606
monica.burch@pnc.com
pnc.com/communitydevelopmentbanking