

GrandFamilies House

214 Harvard Street
Boston, Massachusetts • 02124

Census Tract: 0924.00
PMSA: 1120

Project Basics

The \$4.1 million GrandFamilies House provides 26 units of affordable housing with supportive services for grandparents raising their grandchildren. The project involved the extensive renovation of a former nursing home built in 1968 but vacant since 1981. An additional wing was built and a third story was added to the original structure, creating a mix of two-, three-, and four-bedroom apartments. A one-bedroom unit is provided for a resident manager. The building features an elevator, and all units are handicapped accessible. The Boston YWCA provides on-site resident services in a 4,000 square-foot basement space. Services include exercise classes, medical screening, preschool, after-school programs, and youth services. A van service is available for shopping or medical visits.

Neighborhood

The predominantly African-American community of Dorchester is the largest neighborhood in the Boston metropolitan area. Although Dorchester has seen its share of crime and violence, many residents have lived there for years, lending considerable stability

to a community that might otherwise be in flux. The building is near a small shopping area and is a half-block from a bus line.

Project Impact

This development makes it possible for grandparents to continue caring for their grandchildren in safe, clean, affordable apartments that are designed for the comfort of both very old and very young people. This sort of “grandparent housing” promotes stability in the neighborhood by ensuring that grandparent-headed families will not have to leave the area to find appropriate accommodations.

Sponsor

Boston Aging Concerns-Young and Old United (BAC-YOU) was incorporated in 1973 to protect elderly people in Back Bay from displacement and to ensure they remained an important part of the community. The organization initially provided a range of supportive services for seniors. In 1991, the group decided to concentrate exclusively on

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Sponsor (continued)

addressing seniors' housing needs. Since 1979, BAC-YOU has developed five intergenerational housing models (in addition to GrandFamilies) that provide 148 units of housing for very low-income people.

The Women's Institute for Housing and Economic Development served as codeveloper with BAC-YOU. The group brought to the project its considerable expertise in development, financing, construction management, and tax credit syndication.

Community Development Objectives

- *Qualified investment amount:* \$3,468,196*
- *Innovativeness or complexity of investment:* Grandfamilies House was the first project of its kind in the US, and was realized through complex partnerships with state and local government, community residents, and private groups such as the YWCA and the Women's Institute for Housing and Economic Development. The state and city set aside a portion of their federal Section 8 certificates specifically for low-income grandparent-headed families; this represented the first such Section 8 allocation in the country.
- *Responsiveness of qualified investment to community development needs:* This project provides affordable rental options and social services for grandparents raising their grandchildren. It is estimated that there are between 10,000 and 12,000 grandparent-headed families in Boston. Dorchester, with the highest number of "grandfamilies" in the city, has a particular need for affordable housing of this sort
- *Degree to which qualified investment is not routinely provided by private investors:* While the number of grandparent-headed households in America's cities has been growing quietly but steadily in recent years, the phenomenon has received comparatively little attention. This is the first project in the area—and, indeed, in the country—that addresses the special housing needs of such families.

* Gross equity includes syndicator fees and bridge interest.

Financing

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| Total Development Costs | \$4,126,905 |
| Sources | |
| Massachusetts Housing Partnership | \$431,409 @ 8.12% interest, 20 year amortization |
| Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development HOME loan | \$700,000 @ 7.11% interest, 30 year amortization |
| City of Boston Public Facilities Department HOME loan | \$350,000 @ 1% interest, 30 year amortization |
| Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development Housing Initiatives Fund Loan | \$250,000 @ 5% interest, 30 year amortization |
| General Partner Equity | \$234,075 |
| NEF95 Net Equity | \$2,161,420 |
| Total Sources | \$4,126,904 |
| Construction Financing | |
| Boston Private Bank and Trust | \$700,000 @ Bank's floating rate plus 100 basis points, 18-month term |
| Rental Subsidy | |
| The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development and the Boston Housing Authority have provided the sponsor with 100 Section 8 certificates allocated specifically for low-income grandparents raising their grandchildren. | |