



WHITTIER STREET HEALTH CENTER - BOSTON, MASS.

Developer/Sponsor

Whittier Street Health Center Committee, Inc

Project Type

New construction of a Federally Qualified Health Center



Description

The Whittier Street Health Center project involved the new construction of a six-story, 78,900-square-foot community health facility for the Whittier Street Health Center Committee, Inc. Whittier is a 75-year-old, nonprofit community health clinic in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston. The new facility replaces 33,000 square-feet of leased space in the same neighborhood and allows Whittier to serve a larger number of patients and expands the types of services offered. The project nearly doubles the size of Whittier's clinical operations and includes complementary health services in partnership with the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, the Whittier Pharmacy and a physical therapy office.

The city of Boston provided the site through the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA). Whittier will lease the site from the BRA on a long-term basis at a below-market rent. The project was made possible, in part, by a \$12 million Facilities Investment Program (FIP) grant from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration. Whittier was one of 85 community health centers to receive FIP grant funds, as part of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act.

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The Whittier Street Health Center facility was constructed to U.S. Green Building Council LEED Silver standards. It incorporates advanced health information and barcode design technology to improve patient flow and provider productivity.

Investment Type

The Whittier Street Health Center was financed using a combination of debt, tax credit equity and grants. Enterprise provided \$15 million in New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) allocation. Citi Community Capital provided an allocation of \$10 million in NMTC and was the equity investor for the entire \$25 million of NMTC. Boston Private Bank and Trust provided a \$9 million term loan and Boston Community Capital provided a \$5.8 million construction-period bridge loan. The balance of project costs were paid for by fundraising and grants, including a \$12 million grant from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration.

Market

The Whittier project is located in a distressed census tract, with an unemployment rate 2.4 times the national average, median household income substantially below the Boston Area Median Income and roughly 38 percent of residents living in poverty. The project is located in a medically underserved area and an economic development hot zone. Area residents suffer higher mortality, asthma and infant mortality rates compared with the city of Boston overall.

Community Impact

The new Whittier Street Health Center will have the capacity to handle more than 100,000 patient visits by 2015 and have the physical capacity to eventually serve 220,00 patients. In addition to family health care, dental care, mental health and low-cost pharmacy services, Whittier will provide community outreach, benefits counseling, health education and transportation. The new facility will include an expanded urgent care capacity, helping to divert patients with less serious injuries and conditions from area hospital emergency rooms.

During construction, the project created 177 construction jobs. Since completion, the center has provided approximately 50 permanent full-time jobs, 35 for people with low incomes. Whittier worked to engage

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women-owned and minority-owned businesses and a diverse workforce during the construction of the new center.

Sponsor

The Whittier Street Health Center Committee, Inc. provides primary health care and support services for diverse low-income populations in the Roxbury area of Boston. This was the first capital project undertaken by Whittier, which was originally founded as a well-baby clinic in 1932. A 501(c) 3 nonprofit corporation, Whittier provides high-quality primary health care to community residents, many of whom lack access to private health care providers. The center currently employs 165 physicians, nurse practitioners, dentists, mental health providers and other staff, many of who are multilingual.

Investor

Citi Community Capital (formerly Citibank Community Development), an affiliate of Citibank, provides innovative, comprehensive and cost-effective financing packages for affordable housing and community revitalization projects in locations around the country. Citibank's products meet both the short- and long-term needs of for-profit and nonprofit organizations that build and operate affordable housing, commercial developments and community facilities that benefit low- and moderate-income neighborhoods and populations.