

## Providence Residents Building Careers in Construction

Mayor Cicilline and Building Futures mark an Operation Opportunity goal that's putting Providence residents to work in good-paying jobs



Mayor David N. Cicilline, [Building Futures](#) Director Andrew Cortés and President of the Rhode Island Building Trades Council Michael Sabitoni celebrated an Operation Opportunity goal that's putting low-income Providence residents to work as carpenters, laborers, ironworkers, plumbers and bricklayers.

"It's important that residents have access to good-paying jobs with good benefits in the construction industry," said Mayor Cicilline. "We're committed to working with Building Futures to create a pathway to solid careers in construction and to ensuring that these men and women have the skills they need to succeed."

"I want to commend Mayor Cicilline for leading by example and for being a catalyst for change by establishing a process on school construction projects that provides Providence residents access to paid apprenticeships," said Cortés. "With the power of the union apprenticeship model, and the support of Mayor Cicilline, Building Futures helps our residents in need get connected to excellent careers in construction."

The Mayor set a goal of placing 30 Providence residents in construction apprenticeships in partnership with Building Futures as part of Operation Opportunity, an economic action plan with strategically aligned, measurable goals to expand opportunity for Providence residents. Seven of those residents are now at work on the construction site of the new Warren Alpert Medical School on Richmond Street.

Building Futures prepares low-income individuals for union apprenticeship programs by conducting a thorough evaluation of the individual's skills to determine their readiness, provide a 200 hour basic construction training and extensive course work in safety, job rights and labor history. Building Futures also offers individual tutoring in preparation for the apprenticeship exam. The candidates also gain valuable life skills, including information on financial literacy, assistance establishing bank accounts and information on the dangers of predatory lending practices.



The apprentices are also on the City's First Source List, a provision that ensures Providence residents receive first preference for employment from developers who receive tax

stabilizations from the City of Providence.

Building Futures is a joint initiative of the Providence Plan and Build RI. The program is funded through proceeds from Governor's Workforce Board RI, United Way of Rhode Island, Rhode Island Department of Education, Rhode Island Foundation, Nellie Mae Education Foundation, Making Connections Providence, Rhode Island Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Labor. For more information on Building Futures, contact Andrew Cortés at (401) 919-5919 or visit <http://www.bfri.org>.

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## Mayor Cicilline Joins Housing and Community Development Leaders to Break Ground in Smith Hill



The [Smith Hill Community Development Corporation](#) (SHCDC), [Dimeo Properties](#) and [Rhode Island Housing](#) along with Mayor David Cicilline and community partners officiated a groundbreaking today on the latest community revitalization effort located in the Smith Hill neighborhood.

This effort, called Visions II, a \$12.45 million joint venture between SHCDC and Dimeo Properties, will help to stabilize the neighborhood by utilizing

19 foreclosed and abandoned properties and one new building to create 52 affordable rental homes. When completed, it will include 28 two-bedroom homes, 18 three-bedroom homes, five four-bedroom homes and one single-bedroom home.

"The Smith Hill area was hit particularly hard by the foreclosure crisis," said SHCDC's Executive Director Francis Smith. "Through efforts like this, we have learned that not only will the targeted properties benefit, but it will have a ripple effect, increasing the value of neighboring properties, and improving the overall pride and sense of place for Smith Hill residents."

For nearly two years, SHCDC has been working to transform vacant lots and foreclosed properties into safe, healthy homes for families in the community. These new homes will be conveniently located near childcare facilities, social services, recreation areas, transportation and jobs. (All of the apartments will be affordable to families with household incomes at or below 51 percent area median income.)

"Each time we transform a vacant lot or a foreclosed property into affordable homes, we're helping to strengthen families and revitalize our neighborhoods," said Mayor Cicilline. "The City of Providence is proud to support Visions II. This is an example of what can happen when we have strong community partners and dedicated leaders in Washington advocating for families."

Visions II marks the next phase of SHCDC's implementation of the greater Smith Hill revitalization efforts. Initial work began in 1995 along Goddard Street, which then prompted the master planning efforts for the Visions developments. Visions I created 26 rental homes and several ownership opportunities.

"By bringing together partners of varied interests from the private and non-profit sectors, we have combined our strengths and goals to change the way we think about, build and approach communities," said Rhode Island Housing's Executive Director Richard Godfrey. "As more Rhode Islanders struggle with reduced income or job loss, it's critical that we work together to ensure safe, healthy homes, which all Rhode Islanders can afford."

For 17 years, SHCDC has been dedicated to creating affordable homes and enhancing Providence's Smith Hill community. SHCDC's passion for the neighborhood, combined with Dimeo's long history of building high-quality homes and its commitment to securing the necessary funding guarantees, as well as serving as the Managing Partner of the initiative, is an ideal example of how the right partnerships are critical to community revitalization.



"As a national organization, we are proud to invest in SHCDC's current projects as well as other efforts across Rhode Island to build strong neighborhoods," said Barbara Fields, Executive Director of [Local Initiatives Support Corporation \(LISC\)](#). "Our commitment is to help rebuild and reconnect low income neighborhoods to the economic mainstream - LISC invests in building better schools for our children, safer streets and more beautiful homes for families. Congratulations to all those involved in making today's project a reality."

Visions II is funded by a combination of sources including:

- Rhode Island Housing Mortgage: \$250,000
- City of Providence HOME Funds: \$500,000
- Rhode Island Housing Deferred Payment Loan: \$75,000
- Rhode Island Housing Tax Credit – National Equity Fund (NEF): \$7,420,000
- State Bond Funds (BHRI): \$2,500,000
- Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) Funds: \$1,220,000
- City of Providence Lead Funds: \$480,000

Rhode Island Housing is a self-sustaining public agency, which generates its own operating income, without state funding. Everything the agency earns is reinvested to meet the needs of the state. Together with its partners, the agency works to ensure that all people who live and work in Rhode Island can afford a safe, healthy home that meets their needs. Rhode Island Housing provides low-interest loans, grants, education, advocacy and consumer counseling to help its customers rent, buy and retain their homes. It also offers special programs to ensure that these homes are safe and healthy.