

# **BAYSIDE OPPORTUNITY CENTER**

## **DRAFT**

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### **Executive Summary**

The Bayside neighborhood occupies the north central portion of Portland's peninsula, running north from Congress to Marginal Way and west from Franklin Street to Forest Avenue. It is currently Portland's most diverse neighborhood, both economically and demographically, but that diversity is under threat. The neighborhood is undergoing rapid change that reduces housing affordability for current low-income residents (the poverty rate from Franklin to Elm is 75%; from Elm to Forest, where new development has emerged, it's 46%). Much of Bayside's diversity comes from the immigrants, refugees, and asylees who live in the neighborhood; federal policy and funding cuts by the Trump administration are threatening the survival of some immigrant-serving programs, and even the organizations that provide those programs.

The Bayside Opportunity Center (BOC) is being formed as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community development corporation; it will be a "sister" organization to the Bayside Neighborhood Association (BNA), which is working on issues arising from rapid but uneven development in Bayside. The BOC will work on barriers to socio-economic inclusion of immigrants, refugees, and asylees.

### **Mission**

The Bayside Opportunity Center builds social, economic, and political empowerment among the diverse populations of the Bayside neighborhood and beyond. We accomplish our goals through (1) programs for English language acquisition, socioeconomic integration, and civic engagement, and (2) collaboration with other development organizations in Greater Portland.

### **Vision**

Bayside is a vibrant community in which immigrants are self-reliant, low-income residents feel physically and financially secure, and businesses, property owners, and renters work together to solve neighborhood problems and shape neighborhood priorities.

### **Initial Goals of the Opportunity Center**

**Goal 1:** Establish a nonprofit organization at the state and federal levels (interim fiscal sponsor is the Bayside Neighborhood Association).

This work can easily be done by current project personnel.

**Goal 2:** Assist Maine's immigrant, refugee, and asylee populations with integration into their new communities, with a focus on developing skills to transfer to the US labor market. Programs that do this focus on five approaches, although most immigrant-serving organizations focus on 2-3 at most:

1. foundational skills, especially English language acquisition and financial literacy; some organizations meet basic needs or help immigrants access basic resources – food, clothing, shelter
2. basic workforce skills development for entry level jobs in growing fields
3. assessment of previous experience, mentoring to qualify for professional careers
4. assessment of previous experience, mentoring for entry to apprentice positions in the skilled trades
5. entrepreneurship/microenterprise development

To accomplish Goal 2, the BOC needs to develop a roster of initial programs; the BOC will hold discussions with the Greater Portland Immigrant Welcome Center, which is currently – barring serious miracles – planning to close down its year-round programming by July 1 of this year, and its summer programming by August 31. The GPIWC has several programs that will be ready to restart with little effort.

**Goal 3:** Acquire by ownership or lease a facility capable of hosting initial and long range programming, community events and meetings, and administrative offices.

- One possibility is 72 Parris Street, which is currently in a planning process to determine how best to turn it over to community ownership. If that process is consistent with the goals of the owner, Justin Alfond, and the 72 Parris Street Steering Committee, the BOC would begin fundraising to take over the facility.

If the BOC secured 72 Parris Street, the current concept is to convert the existing building to an open concept area on the first floor, and transform the second floor into community rooms and organizational offices.

- A second possibility exists at 24 Preble Street, the current location of the GPIWC. One BOC principal has already met with the IWC to discuss how to reconfigure the first floor to accommodate reduced programming, and to establish a commissary kitchen to accommodate new programming.

There are drawbacks to both these possibilities; community sentiment indicates 72 Parris Street is headed towards becoming a community center. Using the space now leased by the GPIWC would involve complications of their current lease.

**Goal 4:** To support the entrepreneurship/microenterprise development, the BOC will offer a marketplace for immigrants to sell their products – made by themselves, imported crafts, food items. (The BOC, through the Bayside Neighborhood Association, sponsored a successful World Market and Fair for four years.) and or acquire familiar and new items. With a commissary kitchen that meet state and municipal regulations, the BOC can support the development of food businesses and set up a weekly or monthly ethnic café to accompany the market. Each iteration of the café could focus on a particular country's food. When the space is not in use for events, it will offer work benches and storage lockers for participants and artists who need space to work on their projects, products and businesses. Another possible activity are the underserved Teen dances/fashion shows

**Goal 5:** Acquire the currently vacant real estate at 33 Brattle Street and remove. One opportunity is to use this land to establish a food pantry. And construct a steel metal frame (exoskeleton) over the buildings of 72 Parris Street and 33 Brattle Street (perhaps including the parking lot). Install on the top steel decking and 2 " of poured concrete .Construct, a green space for the community garden and a Greenhouse within the footprint but much smaller to allow for year round cultivation. The balance of the deck will be the community garden with raised beds Access to the roof top will be from 2 locations one on Parris street side and the other from the Brattle Street side.

### **Administration of the Bayside Opportunity Center**

The BOC will form a **board of directors** experienced in meeting the needs of the BOC's constituents and the Bayside neighborhood. Bayside has a diverse population that includes immigrants, low-income families (ALICE – Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed), middle- to upper-income home owners, renters; it is home to a wide range of businesses. Members of the board of directors will be invited so that all these communities are represented, with an emphasis on immigrants, refugees, and asylees.

The officers of the Board of Directors will include the organization's treasurer, who will work with an external accounting firm experienced with nonprofit finance.

**Initial management** of the BOC will be by staff experienced with nonprofit and neighborhood development, as well as nonprofit finance; depending on the administrative outcome of the Greater Portland Immigrant Welcome Center, staff of that organization may be available to steer the development of initial immigrant services. Initial staff will be small, including a director, a development/grants manager who includes program evaluation in funding proposals, a communications specialist, and a programming director. This small staff will manage and maintain the facility until it generates sufficient revenue to hire more staff. A **community organizer** will be hired

to engage with and maintain relationships with constituents, collect information on needed programming, and assist in developing that programming.

**Ultimate management** of the BOC will comprise at least 50% immigrant staff members.

**Initial financial possibilities** will involve seeking financial support through small grants and donations that include the Bayside Neighborhood Association – the BNA's roster of community focused committees has greatly increased its potential for grant-seeking.

Once the BOC is operational revenue sources will include

1. Revenue through the ethnic café/market days,
2. a commissary kitchen to possibly serve a limited number of food related vendors,
3. Use of the kitchen to prepare and sell ethnic foods for a café
4. Fees from the rental of workspaces
5. fees from the rental of the conference room to other NP or others seeking a meeting venue.
6. Revenue from the existing programming from the GPIWC , English classes, mentoring immigrants to develop skills needed for employment,
7. fees for rentals of the venue (weddings, birthdays, holidays, art/craft shows).
8. initial BOC staff will concentrate on developing other revenue streams to support the BOC – grant funding and donations will support the immigrant-serving programs.

**Legal:** BOC will engage a law firm familiar with nonprofit law, starting with submission of the 1023 IRS form seeking the 501(C)(3) exemption status.

**Collaborating organizations:** The BOC is the sister organization to the Bayside Neighborhood Association. BOC founders have relationships with

- CEI
- City of Portland
- **The State of Maine**
- Maine State Building and Construction Trade Council (MSBCTC)
- Southern Maine Labor Council
- State of Maine Apprentice programs

The BOC will also be active in seeking partnerships beyond the BNA

Existing immigrant organizations will be contacted for partnership discussions.

- Maine Office of New Americans, part of the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, Augusta, ME; ONA has a list of 58 organizations supporting New Mainers
- Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services (MEIRS), 256 Barlett Street, Lewiston, ME
- Maine Access Immigrant Network (MAIN), 237 Oxford Street, Portland, ME
- Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition (MIRC), 1 Marginal Way, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Portland, ME
- Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ILAP), 489 Congress Street, Portland, ME

- Immigrant Resource Center of Maine (IRCM), Lewiston (4 offices), Brunswick (3 offices), and Augusta (2 offices)

**Market Analysis:** This section needs to document the statements about failure. It should be tied to the five approaches listed above. **Needs work.**

**Programs:** What's covered above is sufficient for this document.

**Development budget:** Needs work.

### **Organizational setup**

- Nonprofit consultant or staff
- Legal
- Accounting
- Fundraising
- Community organizer
- Social media development

### **Facility preparation**

- Project management
- Building renovation, including design and construction planning
- Construction and completion, including a commissary kitchen

### **Initial operations budget**

- Director
- Development director/grants manager, evaluation specialist
- Communications specialist
- Programming director
- Community Organizer
- Social media individual to manage the website, and scheduling for the many diverse uses
- Operational expenses,