

WHALE – Waterfront Historic Area League



FOUNDED: 1962

CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: \$325,000

(excluding capital project fund)

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Investment Opportunity

WHALE seeks an investment of \$850,000 over the next two years to grow its capacity to undertake and complete complex restoration projects that will revitalize low-income neighborhoods. To do so, WHALE will hire staff both to manage current projects and to coordinate outreach to the community. In addition, funds will be used to expand the capital resources available to finish two vital projects currently underway – a community theater and a Cape Verdean cultural center– and begin restoration of a multi-use project in an underserved neighborhood.

In the mid-19th century, fortunes from whaling and the textile industries made New Bedford one of the richest cities per capita in the world. Architecture and the arts flourished, creating a legacy of distinctive historic buildings. With the end of whaling and relocation of manufacturing in the 20th century, the city went into a decline, from which it is still recovering.

Today, it is a gateway city of 100,000 with an ethnically diverse population, including 43% of Portuguese or Cape Verdean heritage. The average income of \$37,000 is half the state average.

Low-income neighborhoods have experienced disinvestment due to economic redlining and discrimination, resulting in high unemployment, dilapidated buildings, a lack of affordable housing, and a loss of community pride. Many historic structures that were once anchors of the community are no longer needed for their original purpose and have fallen into disuse.

WHALE (the Waterfront Historic Area League) is working to end the cycle of disinvestment in low-income neighborhoods in New Bedford. WHALE's role is to assemble the resources to acquire and restore foreclosed and abandoned historic properties for re-use that will stimulate jobs, create affordable housing, and restore pride by revitalizing the community.

Two-Year Goals

- Increase capital project fund by \$200,000 per year to accelerate pace of restoration
- Hire a project manager
- Hire a community outreach coordinator
- Double the number of affordable housing units developed, from 25 to 52

Ways to Invest

FINANCIAL

- \$500,000 transforms abandoned theater into Cape Verdean Cultural Center
- \$300,000 completes restoration and transformation of historic church into community theater
- \$45,000 funds a project manager
- \$30,000 funds a part-time community outreach coordinator

IN-KIND

- Light construction work
- Cleanup of sites
- Landscaping
- Event logistics
- Graphic design

Leadership & Governance

Teri Bernert, Executive Director of WHALE since 2013, has over 25 years of experience in community and economic development, concentrating in real estate development. She has a Master's in Urban Planning from George Washington University and is an adjunct professor at Roger Williams University.

The 16-member Board of Directors is reflective of the New Bedford community in its ethnic diversity. With expertise in architecture, real estate sales and development, and historic preservation, the directors guide the organization to fulfill its mission of community revitalization.

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As a single mother with two young girls, I would not have been able to purchase a home like this if it wasn't for WHALE.

DANIELLE

First-time homebuyer

”



WHALE'S MODEL



The Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE) was founded in reaction to “urban renewal,” a controversial 1960s federal program of demolition and clearance of targeted areas. The founders of WHALE saw the embodiment of New Bedford’s rich and diverse heritage in the city’s deteriorated waterfront area: quality structures built during the city’s whaling and textile manufacturing heyday in the 19th century. WHALE acquired buildings, renovated, and even moved them to fill in vacant lots in the district. It also saved properties that now rank among the city’s most popular cultural treasures, including the Zeiterion Theatre.

Six years ago, WHALE evolved to become what is now **the only historic preservation organization in the country that is also a Community Development Corporation (CDC)** – a nonprofit real estate developer that promotes economic revitalization by acquiring and restoring dilapidated historic properties for reuse in order to uplift and transform the surrounding community.

WHALE'S APPROACH

- **Identify vacant historic buildings**, especially in underfunded and low-income neighborhoods.
- **Engage the community** – neighbors, businesses, city planners, local nonprofits – to determine the best and most needed reuse of the buildings.
- **Work with a restoration team**, including architects, engineers, and project partners, to design the reuse of the building and undertake financial feasibility, including a sustainable business plan. In every project, WHALE incorporates green building practices.
- **Enlist investors**. As a nonprofit developer, WHALE has the expertise to assemble a wide variety of resources for historic restoration – including government grants, tax credits, and private philanthropy, in addition to bank loans.
- **Undertake the restoration work** with a team consisting of staff, architects, professional construction crews, and volunteers to return the buildings to their historic integrity, with new purpose.
- **Transform and activate** a building, giving it a whole new life and helping uplift the surrounding neighborhood with an infusion of community pride.

“

The innovative and adaptive reuse of this historically significant property as housing for veterans could not have been done without WHALE's expertise in this complicated project.

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JIM REID, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Veterans Transition House



Key Investors

- 1772 FOUNDATION
- BRISTOL COUNTY SAVINGS BANK
- ISLAND FOUNDATION
- LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT CORPORATION (LISC)
- MASS. CULTURAL COUNCIL
- MASS. DEPT. OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
- NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Partners

- CAPE VERDEAN ASSOCIATION IN NEW BEDFORD
- CITY OF NEW BEDFORD
- COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER
- NEW BEDFORD PORT SOCIETY

REVITALIZING COMMUNITY

Mary Anthony, Executive Director of The 1772 Foundation, encapsulates the relevance of historic preservation in today's world:

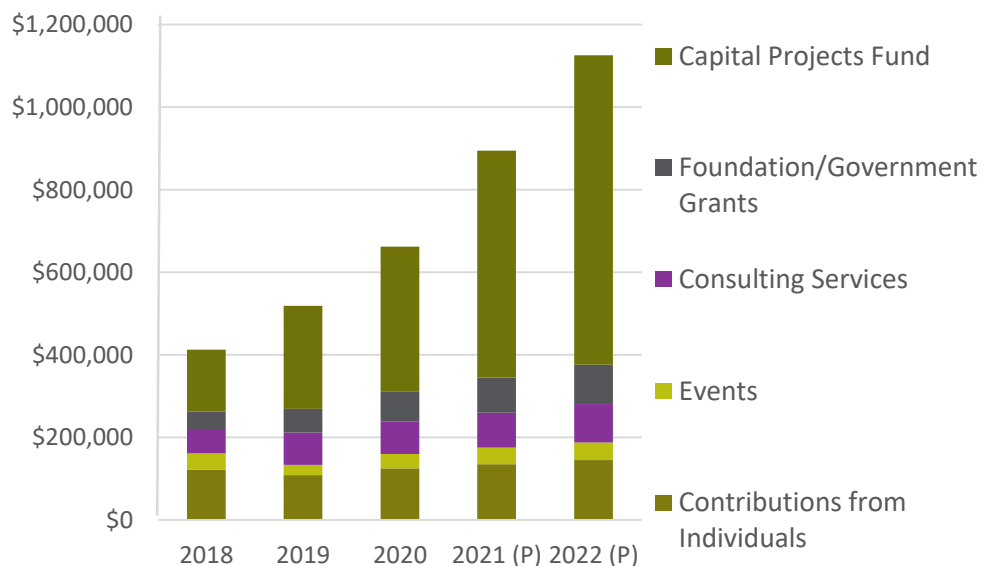
"At 1772, we support the efforts of change-making programs nationwide. Within the field of historic properties redevelopment programs, we are looking specifically for efforts that are locally driven, proactive, inclusive, collaborative, people-centered, and future-oriented. WHALE is at the forefront of such efforts, bringing a holistic approach to ensure that historic buildings play a meaningful role for the entire community of New Bedford. We are very pleased to play a supporting role in their efforts, which have been used nationally as an example of just what is possible in the historic revitalization of cities."

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

WHALE'S **operating budget** is poised to accommodate additional staff, in part through increased earned income from consulting fees paid by developers for WHALE's expertise. In addition, as a Community Development Corporation, WHALE is able to participate in the state's Community Investment Tax Credit Program (CITC), which doubles the impact of all gifts and grants over \$1,000 – giving a special incentive to a growing number of upper-level donors.

Separate from the operating budget, but essential to WHALE's mission-driven work, is the **capital project fund**, which is the pass-through account for all financial resources used for the purchase and renovation of each building. Growing the core of available monies in this fund – similar to an ongoing capital campaign – is key to long-term project sustainability.

Revenue by Source



Success Story: Co-Creative Center

WHALE undertook the \$3 million restoration of two historic buildings in the heart of downtown New Bedford in 2016. The once-abandoned block is now transformed into a collaborative retail, living, and arts venue that has brought new vibrancy to the neighborhood.

Named the Co-Creative Center, the mixed-use development features an art gallery, education space, co-working space, affordable apartments, business and nonprofit offices, and two women-owned business startups.

The goals achieved by the project include:

- The restoration of two vacant buildings with a creative multi-use approach for space that includes more affordable housing
- Access for artists and creatives through a community gallery, co-work space, and makerspace
- Enlivening of the streetscape to draw people downtown
- Access to hands-on art education for low-income residents
- Job creation, both construction and permanent



PROGRAM PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Below is a summary of the key measures that WHALE will track to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, incorporate lessons learned, and adjust strategy as necessary.

| | FY 2020 | FY 2021 (P) | FY 2022 (P) |
|--|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| PROGRAM PERFORMANCE | | | |
| Cumulative affordable housing units developed (since 2015) | 25 | 37 | 52 |
| Number of restoration projects underway | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Revitalization funding leveraged | \$2.5 M | \$3.7 M | \$5.5 M |
| ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH/CAPACITY-BUILDING | | | |
| Full-time equivalent employees | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Growth of capital project fund | \$350,000 | \$550,000 | \$750,000 |
| Earned income from consulting services | \$20,000 | \$30,000 | \$40,000 |
| WHALE membership base | 350 | 400 | 450 |
| Total operating budget (excluding capital) | \$312,000 | \$345,000 | \$376,000 |

SOCIAL IMPACT

Over the past 5 years, WHALE has leveraged \$15 million in funds to complete 11 restoration projects, creating affordable and transitional housing, cultural venues, and women- and minority-owned small businesses. The economic benefit includes job creation – both construction and new permanent jobs.

WHALE anticipates taking on and completing additional complex projects to further revitalize this historic city – allowing more people to both live and work in New Bedford and grow a thriving local economy.

| INDICATOR | 2020 |
|---|--------------|
| Investment leveraged in New Bedford since 2015 | \$15,000,000 |
| Jobs created in New Bedford since 2015 | 532 |
| Number of restoration projects completed since founding | 70 |

