

Allston Brighton

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Working Together, Building Community.

May 17, 2024

Christine Brandao
Boston Planning and Development Agency
Harvard Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund
1 City Hall Square #9
Boston, MA 02201

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John Woods
Executive Director

Re: Funding Request for Warren Hall Storefront Window Display

Dear Ms. Brandao,

The Allston Brighton Community Development Corporation (ABCDC) is requesting funding from the Harvard Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund to address a series of temporary repairs and to create a photographic window display for the commercial portion of the Warren Hall Property located in Brighton Center. The temporary repairs and window treatment will help significantly improve the Brighton Center Commercial District while ABCDC and its partners await the required funding to undertake the planned extensive renovations to the historic property.

ABCDC, in partnership with The Schochet Company, received acquisition financing from the City of Boston and other public lenders to make it possible to purchase the building in March of 2023 from a New York City Real Estate Investor who had allowed the residential and commercial property to significantly deteriorate. Work is now underway to help stabilize the property while simultaneously preparing a series of public funding requests that will ultimately produce a stable, affordable housing site, along with a preserved and enhanced storefront configuration.

Unfortunately, the work on the permanent repairs cannot begin for at least 18 to 24 months which prompted the creation of the scope outlined in this proposal.

We greatly appreciate the consideration of this funding request from the Harvard Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund and would welcome the addition of the sponsor of the fund as a valuable partner in this important effort to restore Warren Hall as pivotal location in Brighton Center.

Sincerely,

John Woods
Executive Director

Allston Brighton CDC
18R Shepard Street #100
Brighton, MA 02135
617-787-3874

**Allston
Brighton** 
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.

Harvard-Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund

For Allston-Brighton

Application for Funding, 2024


Total Amount Requested \$_____

Applicant Organization Name:		
Organization Address:	City:	Zip:
Contact Person:		
Title:		
Telephone Number:		
E-Mail Address:		

Application submission(s) must be authorized and signed by an authorized signatory of the Organization.

Name and title of Authorized Signatory:

Signature of Authorized Signatory:



Harvard-Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund

For Allston-Brighton

Application for Funding, 2024

Total Amount Requested: \$26,568.23

REQUIRED APPLICATION CONTENTS

Applicant Information

1. Name of entity(ies) applying for funding and name of project.

Allston Brighton Community Development Corporation

2. Background on applicant(s): type of organization, e.g. 501 (c) 3, public agency, etc.; organization leadership

For over 40 years, ABCDC (EIN: 04-2716278) has led initiatives that create affordable homes, foster community leadership, and offer steps to increase incomes and assets so residents can call Allston Brighton home for the long-term. ABCDC was established in 1980 by a group of residents in response to the urban disinvestment of the 1970's. In the decades since, ABCDC has continuously adapted to the needs of the dynamic population in Allston Brighton and works to address critical changes to create a vibrant neighborhood where people of all incomes, races, and genders can live.

To date, ABCDC has:

- Educated over 9,000 first-time homebuyers through our Homebuying 101 classes
- Built and preserved 553 units of affordable housing for low-to-moderate income families
- Ensured that our 1,000+ residents have access to the services and resources they need to secure their tenancies, avoid homelessness, and build positive future
- Engaged over 3,500 residents in the urban development and planning process

3. Primary contact person name, phone number, e-mail.

Sean Tatar, 617-787-3874, tatar@allstonbrightoncdc.org

4. Key personnel involved in the project.

- John Woods, Executive Director, ABCDC
- Fran Gardino, Local Brighton Artist

- Nilsa Monteiro, The Schochet Companies

5. Any partner organizations/property owners to be involved in the project.

Allston Brighton CDC purchased Warren Hall in partnership with The Schochet Companies in early 2024. ABCDC will collaborate with local artist, Fran Gardino, to design panoramic photos of the neighborhood in the front windows of Warren Hall. ABCDC will also coordinate with The Schochet Companies to install these prints and to improve the look of the store fronts by removing graffiti and awnings at the site in advance of the more extensive renovation project planned at the site that is anticipated to commence within the next two years.

6. If the applicant is a non-profit organization, provide qualifications and prior history of executing similar projects.

Allston Brighton CDC has worked closely with local arts-focused organizations to create art installations to improve the beauty of the neighborhood. Most recently, ABCDC partnered with Artists for Humanity (AFH) to design and install three (3) artistic bike racks across Commonwealth Avenue in Allston. The goal of this project is not only to allow more neighbors to safely lock their bikes, but also to create art that all community members can enjoy. ABCDC is an anchor organization in Allston Brighton and has long-term experience executing projects related to community building and art.

Project Information

1. Briefly describe the proposed project. Include a description of the site with a map and identify all property owners. If the applicant is not the sole property owner, please include letters of support from the property owner(s).

In early 2024, ABCDC purchased the Warren Hall building in partnership with The Schochet Companies. Warren Hall is a historic building located at 329–337 Washington Street in Brighton. According to the Brighton Allston Historical Society, the space was used for multiple different functions including political rallies, weddings, and even briefly as a rock club in 1967. The building was converted into housing in the 1970's.

As ABCDC and project partners work to finalize a rehab plan for the 33-units of housing at the site, four out of the five commercial spaces on the first floor of the building are vacant and in dilapidated conditions. These vacant units tarnish the property's historic legacy in the community and are an eye sore on this main road in Brighton Center creating a negative impact on the commercial district.

To improve the beauty of this historic site, ABCDC will partner with local artist, Fran Gardino, to install panoramic photo prints of Allston Brighton in the front windows of the commercial space at the site. The goal of these art pieces will be to highlight the history of the building, while also improving the look of the site and encouraging neighbors to learn about the upcoming development project.



2. Describe public benefits of the project with reference to review criteria.

Warren Hall is a landmark in Brighton Center that has historic importance to the community. Currently, four out of five of the storefronts on the first floor of the building are vacant and have left behind old awnings, security gates, and there have been instances of vandals impacting the building and leaving graffiti. The strategy of benign neglect adopted by the previous out of state investor owner of the property will require significant and extensive repairs to help restore the site to its historic stature. This has left this building looking blighted, and leaving residents confused about the plans for this building.

By installing a series of panoramic photos of sites across the neighborhood, this will temporarily improve the look of the building while also highlighting the beauty of the Allston Brighton community. ABCDC and Fran Gardino will also include a QR code at the site for residents to scan for more information about the art installation and the site plans for the property. Not only will this improve the appearance of this historic building, but it will also help inform residents of the Allston Brighton Community about plans for the site and encourage neighbors to support the development process.

3. Explain why HAPRFF funding is required.

Currently, ABCDC does not have funding in place to temporarily improve the look of the storefronts on the first floor of the building while plans and funding for the long-term project are finalized. The rehab of this property is not planned to begin until at least 2026, and funding from the HAPFR will help bridge the gap between now and when construction funding is secured.

4. Explain if this project/funding would be part of a larger phased project, and if HAPRFF funding would be sought for future phases.

Currently, ABCDC and The Schochet Companies are planning to rehab the Warren Hall building to stabilize and improve the long-term quality and affordability of the 33-units of rental housing now at the site. Final decisions on the re-use of the commercial space are still being evaluated but the historic restoration of this important site will be undertaken with the participation of the Allston Brighton Community. ABCDC will utilize the art pieces beyond the grant period, and will work with Brighton Main Streets, Allston Village Main Streets, and local artists to incorporate the input of local businesses and artists into the future building plans.

5. Timeline (start date, end date, milestones).

Summer 2024

- Complete the design process for the panoramic murals at the five storefronts. Photos will be designed by artist Fran Gardino in collaboration with ABCDC.
- Meet with The Schocket Company to finalize the temporary building improvement list impacting the commercial spaces. Building updates will include;
 - Removing security gate at 319 Washington Street
 - Removing graffiti at 343 and 339 Washington Street
 - Removing old AC units at 331, 339, 341, and 343 Washington Street
 - Removing old signage and awnings at 331, 333, 339, and 341 Washington Street
 - Replacing broken glass at all units
 - Adding an appropriate temporary covering for the front section of building at 329, 331, 333, and 343 Washington Street
- Collaborate with Fran Gardino and The Schocket Company to finalize art installation process which will include installation of the panoramic displays all five sites.

Fall 2024

- Complete minor building improvements.
- Print and install panoramic photos at all five storefronts; Install QR code at the property which will include information about the development plans at the site and information about the art installation.
- Complete the installation of the art pieces and hold unveiling event to the public.

6. Project maintenance requirements, protocols, and sources of funding.

ABCDC will collaborate with Schocket to make temporary minor improvements to the look of the building beyond the art installation. This will include removing graffiti, store awnings, and old security gates (*detailed building improvement scope above*).

The panoramic murals will be printed to cover the windows and doors and will be installed via metal rods or hooks placed at the top of each windowpane. The installation will vary for each of the five storefronts depending on window design. These will require little to no maintenance once installed.

7. Anticipated project sustainability/life span

The current timeline will have the panoramic photos installed by the Fall of 2024. These photos will remain in the windows until construction at the site begins (anticipated late 2026). The panoramic murals will be printed to cover the windows and will be installed via metal rods placed at the top of each windowpane. This will allow ABCDC to move the murals easily depending on the needs at the site. The murals will also be installed inside the buildings to ensure graffiti will not ruin the pieces. ABCDC expects to utilize these photos at the building beyond the completion of construction at the site.

8. Anticipated regulatory review and necessary permits

Warren Hall is owned by ABCDC and The Schochet Companies so no permits or regulatory review processes will be needed for this project although we anticipate connecting and working with City of Boston Main Streets Programs

Materials

- 1. Budget, including anticipated total cost and percentage to be funded by the HAPRFF.**
- 2. Other funding sources, if applicable, and amount and status (e.g. funds granted, requested, date when status will be known).**
- 3. Images, renderings, and other relevant information.**
- 4. Letters of support.**

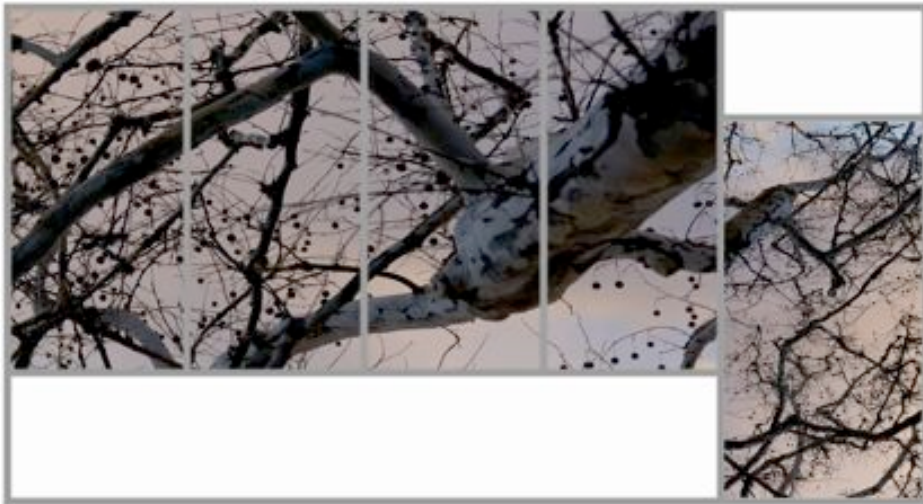
Images, renderings, and other relevant information.

Current Site Photos, May 2024



Warren Building Image Proposal Layouts:







Christine Brandao
Boston Planning and Development Agency
Harvard-Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund
1 City Hall Square #9
Boston, MA 02201

May 16, 2024

Dear Ms. Brando,

As the Executive Director of Brighton Main Streets, I am writing to express my strong support for Allston Brighton Community Development Corporation's (ABCDC) proposal to the Harvard-Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund. Through this project ABCDC, local artist Fran Gardino, and The Schockett Companies will collaborate to improve the appearance of the vacant storefronts at the Warren Hall building in Brighton Center in advance of a larger-scale renovation project that won't commence for a number of years.

For over four decades, ABCDC has established a longstanding and robust track record of leading successful open space and community building campaigns as well as effective management of large-scale community development and improvement projects in the public realm. In March of this year, our organization was excited to hear that ABCDC and The Schockett Companies purchased this important historic property from an out-of-State investor and have exciting plans to renovate and revitalize this important site. Given the anticipated time frame for starting the large-scale renovation project this concentrated effort to immediately improve the local streetscape will have a positive impact on the Brighton Center District.

Brighton Main Streets has strong partnerships with businesses across our community, and our organization, as well as local neighbors, are excited to see this project come to fruition. We look forward to collaborating with ABCDC and other stakeholders to implement this project. I fully support the efforts of Allston Brighton CDC in their proposal to the Harvard-Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund and strongly urge you to positively consider their application.

Best,

Kelly McGrath

Kelly McGrath
Brighton Main Streets