



Waltham Alliance for Teaching, Community organizing, and Housing

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Mission

WATCH CDC works towards a more just community in the Waltham area by advancing and promoting affordable housing, providing adult education and leadership development, and empowering underrepresented residents through civic engagement.

We seek to create a community in which all residents of Waltham, including low-income families, immigrants and others who may be left out, have a voice and can influence the way our community grows and functions.

Goals and Programs assisting 1,400 immigrants and low-income residents annually

- Housing stability and prevention of homelessness for low-income residents of Waltham: *management of a free walk-in Housing Clinic and resource location for financial, legal, food, medical, fuel, and housing assistance.*
- Expansion of number of units and access to safe and affordable housing in Waltham: *organizing campaigns related to affordable housing and support of a locally funded rental assistance program.*
- Proficiency in English for the adult immigrant population: *comprehensive English Language Program, including classes and one-on-one tutoring, for adult immigrants.*
- Development of new leaders among immigrant and low-income residents: *engaging tenants in monthly meetings of a Tenant Action Group to set strategy for affordable housing campaigns and be a voice for low-income tenants in municipal policy and funding decision making. Participation of clients and ESL students in WATCH governance and as speakers at community events.*
- Increased financial stability for immigrants and low- to moderate-income residents: *free Job Clinic providing one-on-one support for job search, resume development, and career counseling.*
- Education of first-time home buyers: *monthly CHAPA-certified First Time Home Buyer courses.*
- Voter registration and engagement: *voter registration drives and candidate forums.*

Partnerships

WATCH works in partnership with local universities and agencies. Brandeis University student interns play a major role in operating the Housing Clinic. WATCH and Bentley University will re-open a VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) site in Waltham this year. Boston College Legal Services provides free legal assistance for housing cases requiring legal intervention. The Waltham Housing Authority administers the \$2.1 million Local Voucher Program that WATCH developed and initiated to provide up to three years of rental assistance for 42 residents. WATCH partners with Waltham Public Schools to identify and support families at risk of homelessness.

Volunteers

One of the strengths of WATCH is the reliable and dedicated group of volunteers who work alongside staff members in our programs. Approximately 125 volunteers contribute 3,000 hours of service per year at WATCH to benefit the immigrant and low-income populations of Waltham. English classes are taught primarily by volunteer teachers and aides, and about 40 volunteer tutors meet weekly with English language learners. We draw volunteers from Brandeis and Bentley Universities, from the congregations of surrounding churches, and from the community by means of outreach events throughout the year.

Community Engagement

WATCH thrives on gathering input from the community. WATCH is currently engaging clients, students, donors, community partners, and our staff and boards to get feedback and ideas for growth and improvement during our strategic planning process for the next five years.