



Revitalize
Community Development Corporation

Colonial Block Building
1145 Main Street, Suite 107
Springfield, MA 01103
Tel: 413-788-0014
www.RevitalizeCDC.com

**Testimony of Colleen Loveless
President & CEO
Revitalize Community Development Corporation
in support of**

**An Act to Promote High-Impact Community Investment (H.2617 & S.1511)
May 9, 2017**

Good Afternoon, Chairman Brady, Chairman Kaufman and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. On behalf of Revitalize Community Development Corporation, I am here today to offer our enthusiastic support for An Act to Promote High-Impact Community Investment (H.2617 & S.1511) filed by Senator Sal DiDomenico and Rep. Steve Kulik.

Revitalize CDC has been in existence in the city of Springfield, Massachusetts since 1992. Our organization performs critical repairs, modifications and rehabilitation on the homes of low-income families with children, the elderly, military veterans and people with disabilities. In addition to homes; neighborhood parks and playgrounds are improved and community gardens are created.

Our mission is: "Revitalizing homes, neighborhoods & lives through preservation, education and community involvement."

Our goal is to prevent the risk of homelessness, and the condemnation and foreclosure of homes resulting in blighted properties. The results help low-income families remain in their home and improve the quality of their lives and the entire neighborhood.

We leverage the investments of donors, grantors and volunteers as high as 4 to 1, to make significant home repairs that strengthen the tax base, allow elderly homeowners to "age in place", and reduce crime, that result in stabilizing and

Preserving affordable homeownership and revitalizing our community



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revitalizing neighborhoods.

In the past 18 months, Revitalize CDC has successfully implemented our Plan investing Half A Million \$ \$500,000 in the local community thanks to the Community Investment Tax Credits (CITC). That has been a game changer for us.

Prior to CITC, Revitalize CDC completed an average of 50 home rehab projects and one park per year impacting an average of 140 individuals.

In 2016 with just half of the Half of the \$ \$500,000 investment from CITC, our organization completed 76 homes, one park, one playground and created a community garden, directly impacting 320 individuals. The increased donations from the CITC program came from increased donations by our current supporters and 31 new investments, some from outside the state investing in our own community. **If not for CITC, almost 30 family households would not have been served.**

I would like you to meet Mr. Curtis Vaughn. Mr. Vaughn is in his early 80s. His wife passed away several years ago after a long illness. Mr. Vaughn cares for his adult son who suffers from developmental challenges. His parents purchased the home in the 1940s where he remembers them having horses in the back yard. Mr. Vaughn had gone the entire winter without any heat, only using space heaters. After the city discovered this, they were about to remove him and his son from the home.

Thanks to our donors we were able to install a new furnace preventing the home from condemnation and improving the quality of life for them both. "I do not have the words...I love you all!"

Meet Ms. Juliet sBurnett. She is an elderly grandmother who cares for her 4 grandchildren and babysits two of her neighbor's children when their single Mom works. Revitalize CDC replaced the back steps, installed hand railings and made masonry repairs to the foundation to stop water and moisture from seeping into

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the basement. These improvements made the home safe and healthy for both her and the children. **READ** Card from granddaughter Ireland.

In the last quarter of 2016 Baystate Health partnered with Revitalize CDC to invest \$250,000 into our community. Our two organizations have been working closely with the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative from Baltimore, MD to implement a Pilot Program and Pay-For-Success Model that will reduce and ultimately eliminate asthma triggers for families suffering from the chronic disease.

With this program, chronic sufferers from asthma that enter the Emergency Department at Baystate Health will be referred by the Medical Center's Pulmonary Rehab Department to a Healthy Homes Assessor at Revitalize CDC. Our Healthy Homes Assessor will contract and complete interventions in the homes such as, mold remediation, pest control and removal of old and dusty carpeting.

The interventions will significantly reduce or eliminate asthma triggers all together. The studied results have demonstrated that children will no longer miss school and parents miss work due to the chronic illness, therefore increasing educational and economic outcomes for both. The results include a significant cost-savings for Baystate Medical Center and healthier families improving their quality of life.

Over the next 3 years thanks to the Baystate Health \$250,000 community investment, Revitalize CDC will complete over 300 home and rental unit interventions, positively impacting almost 1,000 individuals at the very low cost of just under \$300 per individual. The ripple effect is profound...improving the health, wealth and quality of life for low-income families in need in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.