



Boston Nonprofit Receives Grant to Promote “Trauma Resiliency” at its Wareham Affordable Housing Community

Preservation of Affordable Housing will implement Resilient Communities model the 132-unit Brandy Hill Apartments

Boston-based nonprofit housing developer Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH), which owns 3,426 affordable apartments in Massachusetts, is one of six winners of a [Housing Affordability Breakthrough Challenge](#) grant from [Enterprise Community Partners](#) (Enterprise) and [Wells Fargo](#) to find the most innovative and scalable solutions to increase housing affordability across the U.S..

POAH will implement its breakthrough Trauma-Resilient Communities project - a collaborative, human-centered process whose goal is to deliver trauma-informed resident care within affordable rental housing - at Brandy Hill Apartments in Wareham. The property was originally developed in the early 1970s under the HUD Section 236 program which provides interest rate subsidies in exchange for affordability. The acquisition of Brandy Hill Apartments six years before affordability restrictions expired ensured the property’s affordability. In 2016, POAH refinanced and recapitalized the property substantial renovations.

POAH will receive \$2 million in grant funding and two years of technical assistance valued at \$500,000, facilitated by Enterprise, to realize its innovative concepts.

POAH will partner with five talented organizations from around the country including MASS Design Group (Boston, MA). The project will look at property management practices and physical design to create a more equitable model for affordable housing that reduces evictions, improves resident and staff retention; promotes healthy, physical design; and contributes to individual and community resiliency.

Why this work is needed:

Individual and community trauma has been shown to have a lasting impact on the body and the brain, exacerbating pre-existing health conditions disproportionately impacting communities of color, and targeting the most vulnerable members of our society – including POAH’s residents. As affordable housing providers have been working to address the growing housing crisis, organizations like POAH have been challenged by decades-old compliance regulations and restrictions that deter them from helping residents address underlying trauma issues that can result in resident evictions, health problems and financial and family instability to name a few.

“We believe that applying trauma-informed care principles and practices to affordable housing is an idea whose time has come,” said Aaron Gornstein, President and CEO of POAH. “The COVID-19 pandemic and the growing need to address racial injustices make this even more urgent today.”

“Housing affordability is directly tied to racial equity and both are urgent issues fundamentally impacting every community in our country. That is what makes the Breakthrough Challenge so important right now,” said Priscilla Almodovar, chief executive officer at Enterprise Community Partners.

“We are delighted to have joined Enterprise Community Partners to engage creative innovators with know-how, technical skill, and imagination, who are now awarded catalytic funding to transform their housing affordability ideas into real solutions on the ground,” said Eileen Fitzgerald, head of housing affordability philanthropy with the Wells Fargo Foundation.

The Housing Affordability Breakthrough Challenge is part of Wells Fargo’s \$1 billion commitment to support housing affordability solutions nationwide by 2025. Entrants were asked to specifically demonstrate how their breakthrough ideas addressed racial equity and environmental considerations. The applications varied widely, demonstrating a commitment to reframing approaches to single-family and multifamily housing challenges and addressing the wide-ranging needs of homeowners, renters, children, youth, families and seniors in communities across the United States.

For more information on the competition, as well as the finalists and their winning proposals, visit [the Housing Affordability Breakthrough Challenge](#) website.

POAH is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve, create and sustain affordable, healthy homes that support economic security, racial equity and access to opportunity for all. POAH owns and operates nearly 12,000 affordable rental homes in 11 states and the District of Columbia.
www.poah.org

Brandy Hill Apartments in Wareham, MA

