



Since 1997, the Community Economic Development Center (CEDC) of Southeastern Massachusetts has fostered economic justice in the local economy through people-centered development. CEDC connects youth and adults, mainly in the Acushnet Avenue corridor of New Bedford, to skill-building opportunities, and resources and we build community networks and collaborations to promote cooperative action for social change. Some of CEDC's key programs include Bus Riders United, Immigrant Support Network, Volunteers in Tax Assistance (VITA), Small Business Technical Assistance and the Great Neighborhoods partnership.

The first goal of the CEDC's CIP is to build community by providing a place where residents and businesses in the Acushnet Avenue corridor can work together to create a healthy, safe and vibrant place to live, work and discover. Tied to the first goal, is the second goal: to improve the Acushnet Avenue Corridor as a physical place where all residents may thrive and succeed in the local economy providing stability, safety and access to opportunities that these residents need to improve their lives. The third goal of the CIP is to transform the lives of those living in the Acushnet Avenue corridor through improving the quality of life for individuals and families and fostering new opportunities.

Several activities have occurred to support these goals in 2014:

- 1) Bus Riders United has been an active stakeholder in the SRTA's Comprehensive Service Assessments to align bus service with workplace and community needs.
- 2) In collaboration with the Great Neighborhoods initiative, we organized the painting of a new mural on Acushnet Avenue in an area that was previously blighted. (See photo below)



- 3) CEDC acquired donated brooms, planters and flowers and distributed them to businesses along Acushnet Avenue, improving the physical appearance of the neighborhood.
- 4) This fall, CEDC will open a temporary art gallery in several vacant buildings on Acushnet Avenue.
- 5) CEDC has assisted numerous businesses with technical assistance in 2014. One example is the Broadband Grants and One-on-One Technical Assistance that helped 38 local small businesses to expand to new markets and increase their internal operations.
- 6) CEDC is an IRS- VITA site which engaged 39 Community-Service Learning Volunteers from University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth to prepare over 1,500 tax returns for working families and seniors which returned \$1.9 million in refunds and credits that were reinvested in the local economy.