

The Bronx Healthy Buildings Program

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Initiative





Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition

Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition (NWBCCC) is a member-led, grassroots organization fighting for racial and economic justice in the Bronx.

Because of a history of disinvestment and toxic, extractive development, the Bronx is the poorest urban county in the nation, with children twice as likely to be hospitalized because of asthma compared to other U.S. children. In response, NWBCCC is building a healthier, more sustainable Bronx through our energy democracy and health justice work, and with projects like Healthy Buildings.



Bronx Healthy Buildings Program Overview

The Bronx Healthy Buildings Program (Healthy Buildings) is a **cross-sector initiative to promote holistic community health by addressing upstream causes of asthma-related emergency department visits and hospitalizations** in the Northwest Bronx by providing green and healthy retrofits.

In June 2015, the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition won a 2-year, \$250K implementation grant from the inaugural BUILD Health Challenge.

In October 2017, NWBCCC won the Bronx Partners for Healthy Communities Innovation Award for \$250k to support phase two.



Guiding Principles

- Asset-based approach
- Building of mutually beneficial relationships
- Collective decision-making
- Community organization as lead
- Community members at the center of decision-making



Program Goals



- Reduce exposure to asthma triggers in apartment buildings through environmental assessment, education, and remediation



- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants that result from burning fossil fuels



- Lower residents' monthly energy bills by performing energy and water conservation upgrades alongside the health-related remediation efforts



- Help residents build community power and leadership through tenant organizing and training about the social determinants of health



- Create jobs and wealth in the community by contracting with Bronx-based construction firms and holding contractors to high-road community workforce standards and ecologically sustainable practices



Program Design

1
Identify target
buildings

2
Educate and
i n f o r m

3
Conduct building
assessments and
identify upgrades

4
Secure
financing

5
Construction
and necessary
trainings

6
Monitor and
evaluate



Program Partners

- NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene
- Bronx Cooperative Development Initiative
- Emerald Cities Collaborative
- MIT Community Innovators Lab
- Council Member Ritchie Torres
- State Senator Gustavo Rivera
- Enterprise Community Partners
- New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
- a.i.r. bronx
- NYC Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development
- Montefiore Medical Center
- Bronx Partners for Healthy Communities



Leadership Development

- Organizing and Health Justice Campaign Development
- Social Determinants of Health Trainings
- Community Health Planning
- Community Research



Financial Sustainability

- Partner with NYS Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)
- Leverage NYC funding through Dept. of Housing Preservation & Development
- Developing a fund for pre-development financing and overall program sustainability



Program Learnings

- Successful cross-sector collaboration aimed at addressing root causes of poor health outcomes
- Leverage community health and energy resources to support holistic approach
- Impact on health and sustainability outcomes when community serves as lead convener of unlikely partners
- Balance between diverse and often competing interests across individual partners
- Activation of community members in taking action in addressing social determinants of health



Key Challenges & Takeaways

- Aligning shared interests
- Overcoming power differentials
- Investing in relationship building
- Financing and getting to scale



THANK YOU