

Chinatown HOPE



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Final Report

November 2024

Grant period: January 1, 2023 - September 30, 2024

BIDMC Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative



About Chinatown HOPE

Chinatown HOPE (Health, Opportunities, Possibilities, and Empowerment) comprised 9 organizations in Boston's Chinatown neighborhood:

- ❖ Asian Community Development Corporation
- ❖ Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center
- ❖ Chinatown Community Land Trust
- ❖ Chinatown Main Street
- ❖ Chinatown Resident Association
- ❖ Chinese Progressive Association
- ❖ Josiah Quincy Elementary School
- ❖ Pao Arts Center
- ❖ Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy

Chinatown HOPE operated through regular meetings of the **full Collective** and **three working groups** (Gardening Brigade, Wellness Events, and Advocacy). The full Collective met every other month, while working groups met monthly. Most meetings took place in-person.

Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC) served as fiscal agent for Chinatown HOPE, and the Collective is facilitated by Heang Rubin and Mia Colby of CHIC Community Engagement Consulting.



Chinatown HOPE Collective Members during Fall Fun

Photo Credit: The Chinatown Project

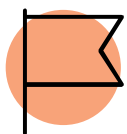
About the funded project

The funded project addressed community needs identified during the Planning Phase. The overall goals were to **decrease social isolation** and **increase community cohesion** by activating open space in Chinatown through gardening, arts, cultural programming, and resident leadership development. Specific objectives are displayed to the right and arose from the original SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound) goals articulated in the grant proposal. See [appendix](#) for details.

Establish Gardening Brigades	Provide Wellness Events	Advocate for Open Space
<p>Goals & Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Establish a gardening brigade that creates opportunities for residents and other stakeholders to feel less socially isolated and more connected to the community❖ Increase gardening brigade members’ sense that collective voice matters <p>Chinatown HOPE established three gardening brigades, each facilitated by organizations in the Collective, with the following structures and goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Youth Brigade (<i>Chinatown Main Streets</i>): 21 youth activated and maintained Phillips Square.❖ Chinatown Backyard (<i>Asian Community Development Corporation</i>): 8 resident gardeners cultivated garden plots at Tufts Community Common.❖ Coffee Hour (<i>Chinatown Community Land Trust, Chinese Progressive Association, and Chinatown Residents Association</i>): ~50 residents participated in workshops and tours and advocated for more green spaces and gardening.	<p>Goals & Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Provide public events in open spaces in Chinatown that are designed to increase the emotional well-being of the community <p>Chinatown HOPE coordinated and/or hosted six public wellness events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Summer Picnic (2023, 2024): Focused on wellness, community resources, and heat mitigation.❖ Block Party (2023): Focused on resident leadership, environmental justice, and community resources.❖ Fall Fun (2023): Focused on activating and advocating for Phillips Square.❖ Autumn Moon (2023): Focused on arts and cultural programming, particularly for families.❖ Experience Chinatown (2023): Focused on arts and cultural programming.	<p>Goals & Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Activate open space as strategy to call for more state and city investment❖ Demonstrate how integration of arts and culture is central to neighborhood planning❖ Strengthen relationships with other institutions around Chinatown <p>Chinatown HOPE’s Advocacy Working Group and its members pursued numerous coordinated efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Consistently engaged in direct conversations with city staff.❖ Published an op-ed in Sampan (May 2023) advocating for more green space in Chinatown.❖ Collected 85 signatures for a petition advocating for funding to re-design Phillips Square.❖ Hosted Maria Belen Power, the MA Undersecretary of Environmental Justice and Equity, during her EJ Listening Tour.❖ Invited City of Boston officials to attend or speak at Wellness Events: City Councilors Julia Mejia and Ed Flynn, neighborhood liaison Chulan Huang, and Climate Ready Boston’s Zoe Davis.

Summary of Evaluation Findings (Jan '23 - Sep '24)

Project Outcomes



Chinatown HOPE successfully established **three gardening brigades** and collaborated on **six public wellness events**. Collectively, these activities increased **emotional wellness** and confidence, **social connection** among residents, **sense of belonging** in Chinatown, and **care for Chinatown**. Advocacy and activation efforts brought **attention and investment** to Chinatown open spaces and **strengthened conditions** for stronger advocacy in the future. **And participants had fun!**

Community Voice



Collective members overall felt they could share their opinions and influence decisions. Members were **mostly satisfied with project implementation and outcomes**. Many wished that Chinatown HOPE could have accomplished more but appreciated some of the constraints or challenges for doing so.

Collective Practices



Collective members felt they were **aligned** on project vision and able to **coordinate and communicate effectively**. Members **strengthened relationships** with each other and built new skills around project planning and collaborating to complete a community project. New Collective members felt Chinatown HOPE was a useful way to orient themselves to neighborhood strategy. Barriers to participation included competing priorities and the challenge of attending so many meetings.