

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

7.1.22-6.30.23



New Bedford is...  
Back in Business

NEW BEDFORD  
ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
COUNCIL





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“Together, the members of the NB100! project have provided hundreds of hours of 1:1 counseling, trainings, and workshops to a diverse range of New Bedford small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. Notably, the can-do and will-do resilient New Bedford spirit is alive and well and embedded in your major contributions to our historic and equity-advancing Community Navigator Pilot Program.”

MARK MADRID, SBA ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

#### ON THE COVER & INSIDE COVER

One of the earliest NBForward! grant/loan recipients, Justin Sylvia of Mike Andrade Excavation, stands proud on the front cover. Appearing on the inside cover are Jaden Teixeira-Reyes of Brown Suga Stationery, Stefanie Corbin of Footprints Café, and Ian Shields of Coastal Provisions, all technical assistance/grant recipients of NB100! Both programs were supported in part by federal funds awarded to the City of New Bedford by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, and by the U.S Small Business Administration via the Community Navigator Program to support COVID-19 small business recovery.

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*Unless otherwise noted, all images are by photographer, Josh Souza.*

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"Sometimes we beat ourselves up too much or are too willing to accept the knee-jerk judgment of others. But make no mistake, New Bedford is a special place in America. It is worthy of our full devotion. And when you love where you live, you'll commit acts of love on its behalf, and make it an even better place, and maybe through that effort, improve yourself in some small way."

MAYOR JON MITCHELL, STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS, MAY 3, 2023



New Bedford Historical Society was the recipient of a 2022 Art is Everywhere! grant to partially fund the Frederick Douglass Memorial in Abolition Row Park, and president Lee Blake (pictured here) participated in the New Bedford "Creating Connection" initiative with a focus on promoting New Bedford Historical Society's Black History Trail. Photo courtesy of Peter Lonelle Walker

# Mission & Strategy

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To cultivate and promote a transparent, credible, and business-friendly environment, the NBEDC works collaboratively with local, state, and federal partners to support creativity, sustainable job growth, and private sector investment benefiting the citizens of New Bedford.

**To accomplish our mission, we employ a balanced and aggressive strategy to:**



**Recruit targeted industries and sustainable real estate focused development to priority sites and districts poised for job creation and long-term growth**

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**Foster and support entrepreneurs and small businesses of all types by providing financing, educational opportunities, and strong connections to local, regional, and national partners**

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**Engage in city-wide and regional efforts to drive catalytic projects that offer dramatic positive change and growth potential**

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**Provide community reflective leadership to forge thoughtful and inclusionary policies that help to strengthen the city's economic future**

The NBEDC is a nonprofit organization comprised of over 400 successful leaders in business, education, and government led by a nine-member Board of Directors. In conjunction with the Mayor's Office, the Council sets the agenda for the city's key strategic economic development areas. The executive director of the NBEDC, with a talented and dedicated team of six professionals, is responsible for the coordination and implementation of the organization's programs and initiatives.

# FY23: A Quick Review



More than 500 attendees joined together on a glorious day in June for the opening of Abolition Row Park and the unveiling of the Douglass Memorial.  
Photo courtesy of Peter Lonelle Walker

## Assisting Existing & Small Business

- Through the NBForward! program we funded 39 businesses for a total of \$770,000 in grant funds, with supporting loans totaling an additional \$444,700.
- We funded 11 kick-starter grants to entrepreneurs through the NB100! program for a total of \$110,000. There were also 33 additional applicants that completed their technical assistance with grant applications under review with an additional 110 receiving technical assistance from our partners.
- We held six workshops during the year with a total of 207 attendees—once again surpassing our previous record!

## Communications

- This past June we hosted a developer's roundtable where attendees at this packed event heard from Secretary Hao first-hand about the Healey-Driscoll Administration's economic development priorities.
- On Facebook, we regularly reach 10,000 people each week through a vigorous posting and sharing program that supports small business and amplifies useful information.

## Business & Real Estate Development

- Our strong pipeline of 77 business and real estate development projects represents more than \$346 million in development value, as many as 2,579 jobs being created or retained, and as many as 744 new residential units to be constructed.
- Sheep River Capital took the first steps to redevelop the historic buildings at 1061 and 1049 Pleasant Street for 60 market rate housing units as part of a total campus redesign—one of the first large-scale projects in the up-and-coming TOD district.
- Windward Power is expanding a manufacturing division at 2185 Purchase Street to be able to provide further support of our working waterfront. The expansion brings \$1.4 million in investment and 11 new jobs to New Bedford.

### New Bedford Business Park

- A proposal for a 30,215 square foot commercial building on a portion of the existing parcel at 61 John Vertene Boulevard was approved and the site was cleared at the close of the fiscal year in preparation for construction.
- The City completed an environmental baseline assessment for the potential buyer of its parcel on Duchaine Boulevard and began preparing for geotechnical boring work.

### Arts + Culture

- With municipal funding provided through ARPA, we facilitated an expansion of the Wicked Cool Places and Art is Everywhere grant programs and added a new program for individual artists called ARTnet. After receiving 226 applications, we invested \$419,520 in 31 projects city-wide and 40 individual artists.
- We launched the second year of Peer-to-Peer Sessions, a mostly online series of workshops in November, and the first year of Arte Entre Amigos, an in-person series for Spanish speakers.
- This year saw the successful completion of the first-ever place-based pilot of Creating Connection in New Bedford, a national initiative by Arts Midwest that concluded with the creation of Love Letters for New Bedford, a short documentary by filmmaker Ethan de Aguiar and co-produced by Beatriz Oliveira, which has been winning major awards on the film festival circuit.

### New Bedford Ocean Cluster

- This past spring, the NBOC led a delegation of six local companies to Denmark to participate in a U.S. offshore wind trade mission organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and other Danish agencies.
- The NBOC launched a Fisheries Advisory Committee composed of key seafood industry leaders to provide input into the strategic direction of the NBOC's Commercial Fishing & Processing Pillar.

### Economic Development Planning & Policy

- The NBEDC staff, the regeneration committee, and the New Bedford Creative Consortium have participated directly in the citywide comprehensive planning process that will help create a more prosperous, equitable, healthy, and attractive place for present and future generations.
- The NBEDC, City departments, and MassDevelopment have been working together to conduct a comprehensive market analysis, simplify the approach to infrastructure, and streamline a revised approach for the redevelopment of a portion of the golf course.
- As a SouthCoast Rail signature element, the new pedestrian bridge over Route 18 came off the drawing boards to begin construction. The bridge is an example of how functionality and inspiring design can both exist in public infrastructure.

#### FIVE YEAR SNAPSHOT OF KEY INDICATORS

	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
Total Businesses	3,709	3,661	3,672	3,767	3,853*
Employed in Labor Force	45,748	43,450	42,674	44,103	44,052
Unemployment Rate	5.60%	9.72%	11.41%	6.78%	5.6%
Average Weekly Wages	\$949	\$954	\$1,026	\$1,094	\$1,093*

Total calculations are for average of each fiscal year.  
Data sourced from Mass.gov,  
Department of Economic Research  
\*Data available for Q1 and Q2 of FY23

The NBEDC has always valued good data as a basis for the formation of economic policy and community driven planning. In 2016, the NBEDC's regeneration committee published *Measurable Progress: Business and Development Trends in New Bedford 2010-2015*, an in-depth analysis that showed dramatic gains post the great recession. The gains since that period, despite the pandemic, have again been noteworthy.

While *Measurable Progress* outlined many factors that indicate the relative strength of a community's economy, the five factors most commonly referenced when trying to understand these trends are highlighted in the table above. Beginning with this annual report, we will include a five-year running trend by fiscal year so we can be transparent about where there are gains, where there are opportunities for improvement, and what might be the factors driving both.

## From the President

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**Dear fellow Council Members,**

Our “new normal” has us being a bit more vigilant about community health, the impacts of high inflation, and stubborn reminders about the weaknesses of a global supply chain with almost no redundancy. This new post-pandemic mindset has reminded us all just how critical regional economies are, and how big a role our small businesses and entrepreneurs play within that ecosystem.

In that regard, we have always had strong feedback from our council members and other trusted voices in the community that we are right to invest so much of our energies and resources to strengthening and building small businesses of all kinds, and in all corners of New Bedford. While we pursue a broad and complex agenda that includes business and development recruitment, arts and culture cultivation, and advocating for thoughtful and inclusive policy, our work with small businesses and entrepreneurs are central to all of these efforts. From the port to the business park and all the neighborhoods in between, they are the bellwether of our economy and deserve our full support.

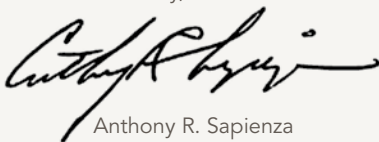
So, through that lens we continue to utilize hard work, a solid strategy, and thoughtful leadership as the foundation for all of our programs. And it is your leadership as members of New Bedford Economic Development Council that is fundamental to these efforts. Your time and energy continue to be indispensable to the board of directors and all of the NBEDC team members, and the pages of this report outline the work of the NBEDC in FY23.

You will find that we continue to see measurable progress in long-term expansion and development efforts, drive nation-leading work in arts and culture, and manage new partnership programs to assist small businesses at every stage to drive home-grown wealth. It is those new programs that deserve special acknowledgement this year. By working with Mayor Mitchell and the City Council, we have leveraged federal pandemic recovery resources to craft new city-wide programs targeted to existing small businesses, entrepreneurs and start-ups, and creative enterprises. While there is much more to do, the positive impacts of the past year offer great optimism for the future.

As I look to that future, I want to thank the board of directors once again for their steadfast governance of this organization. And as a board, we applaud the energy, capability, and creativity of our staff and associated team members. With everyone at the NBEDC working closely with the Mitchell administration, the City Council, and all our many partners we continue to make New Bedford a better city for all.

We thank you again for all that you have done this past year, and as you think about tomorrow, remember to let everyone know... New Bedford is back in business!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony R. Sapienza". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Anthony R. Sapienza  
President, NBEDC

# Board of Directors

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**Anthony R. Sapienza, President**

JA Apparel Corp. (retired)

**Elizabeth Isherwood, Vice President**

President, Moore & Isherwood  
Communications

**David Slutz, Treasurer**

Managing Director, Potentia Business  
Solutions

**Carol Pimentel, Clerk**

Director Internal Audit and  
Administrative Services  
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth  
(retired)

**Helena DaSilva Hughes**

President and CEO, Immigrants’  
Assistance Center

**Dr. Laura Douglas**

President, Bristol Community College

**Dr. Raymond Kruger**

President & CEO, Southcoast Health System

**Roland Giroux**

Executive Vice President and Chief Legal  
Officer, Acushnet Company

**Jeffrey Pagliuca, Loan Committee  
Chairman**

Senior Vice President, Bristol County  
Savings Bank

# NBEDC Team Members

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**Derek Santos**

Executive Director

**Ramon Silva**

Senior Director  
Real Estate Development |  
Financial Incentives |  
Senior Lending Officer

**Jessica Trombly**

Director  
Business Development |  
Communications | Special Projects

**Deborah Trombly**

Controller

**Nancy Durant**

Specialist  
Lending | Compliance |  
Quest Center Management

**Margo Saulnier**

Director  
Creative Strategies | Arts-based Initiatives

**Hendrick Hernandez-Resto**

Creative Specialist  
Communications | Special Projects

**Marianella Perry**

Senior ARPA Fellow

**Zane Cox**

Senior Fellow  
Arts-Based Initiatives | Entrepreneurship

**Devin Melo**

Senior Fellow, Technology | Lending

**Luisa Ribeiro**

Senior Fellow, Lending

**Feliza Vieira**

Senior Fellow, Lending

# Contributors

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**Steven Froias**

Contributing writer

**Mediumstudio**

Graphic design and web services

**Josh Souza**

Contributing photographer

**Colleen MacRamos**

Media Content Coordinator

# Economic Development Partnerships

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In FY23, we shifted from crafting a well-executed recovery from pandemic to executing an agenda designed to take our local economy farther than we have ever been. While our work is multi-faceted, it is centered on the success of family-owned small business owners, new entrepreneurs, and creative enterprises located right here in New Bedford. We have launched several new programs which are highlighted in the pages that follow, but all harness the talent and resources of our trusted partners to expand the reach and effectiveness of these efforts.

## CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

Office of the Mayor

New Bedford City Council

New Bedford Port Authority

New Bedford Redevelopment Authority

City departments of:

- Chief Financial Officer
- City Solicitor
- Department of Inspectional Services
- Department of Public Infrastructure
- Department of Public Facilities
- Department of Public Health
- Environmental Stewardship
- Management Information Systems
- Office of Planning, Housing and Community Development
- Tourism and Marketing

## LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

Community Economic Development Center

Southcoast Community Foundation

Downtown New Bedford Inc.

Greater New Bedford Industrial Foundation  
Groundwork

MassHire Greater New Bedford

New Bedford Ocean Cluster

New Bedford SourceLink resource partners

Immigrants' Assistance Center

Love the Ave

One SouthCoast Chamber

South End Business Association

Waterfront Historic Area League

Co-Creative Center

## STATE PARTNERS

New Bedford Legislative Delegation

- Sen. Mark C.W. Montigny
- Rep. Antonio Cabral
- Rep. Chris Hendricks
- Rep. Chris Markey
- Rep. William Straus
- Rep. Paul Schmid, III

Commonwealth Corporation

International Trade Assistance Center

MassDevelopment

Massachusetts Clean Energy Center

Massachusetts Life Sciences Center

Massachusetts Office of Business Development

Massachusetts Office of International Trade  
and Investment

Massachusetts Small Business Development  
Center Network

Southeastern Economic Development  
Corporation

Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic  
Development District

## ARTS AND CULTURE PARTNERS

3rd EyE Youth Empowerment

Abstrakt Music

AHA! (art, history and architecture)

Barr Foundation

Bristol Community College - Arts and  
Humanities

Buttonwood Park Zoo

Cape Verdean Association in New Bedford

Co-Creative Center

Culture\*Park

Destination New Bedford

EforAll

Gallery X

Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance

Hatch Street Studios & Artist Association

Interwoven

Kilburn Mill at Clarks Cove

MassDevelopment TDI Creative Cities

Mass Cultural Council

Mass Humanities

Massachusetts Design Art & Technology  
Institute (DATMA)

Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism

New Bedford Art Museum

New Bedford Creative Consortium

New Bedford Festival Theatre

New Bedford Historical Society

New Bedford Local Cultural Council

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park

New Bedford Whaling Museum

New England Foundation for the Arts

Rotch-Jones-Duff House and Garden Museum

SouthCoast Community Foundation -  
Arts Advisory Committee

Southeastern Massachusetts  
Convention and Visitors Bureau

UMass Dartmouth College of Visual  
and Performing Arts

Waterfront Historic Area League (WHALE)

Your Theatre & The Steeple Playhouse

Zeiterion Performing Arts Center

### **Giving our Entrepreneurs the Skills to be Successful**

Over the last year, Bristol Community College did amazing work delivering free trainings—designed specifically for entrepreneurs—through the lens of our NB100! program. Bristol has put great energies into collaborations with our six other resource partners to ensure its trainings aligned with the needs of the community and offerings of the other partners. Bristol's trainings provided critical access to core business skills and practices to ensure a baseline of understanding to operate and grow a small business.

Bristol has a core mission to meet learners where they are at in their journey to build a new career, start a business or achieve certified training to enter industries in the region. Through the NB100! program, Bristol is advancing a vibrant, diverse community through education, learner by learner.

#### **KEY EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS**

University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

- Charlton College of Business
- College of Visual and Performing Arts
- School of Law

Bristol Community College

- National Offshore Wind Institute
- Business Solutions and Partnerships

Bridgewater State University

Harvard University

Massachusetts Institute of Technology



Photo courtesy of Bristol Community College

“Bristol Community College embraced the NB100! program as a unique opportunity to deliver our trainings designed for entrepreneurs directly to a built-in pipeline ready for opportunities to develop and grow. We were excited to offer the technical assistance required to open the doors to kick-starter grant opportunities for New Bedford’s entrepreneurs knowing both can help build the foundation for future success.”

**ANGELA JOHNSTON, DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS SOLUTIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS, BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Statement of Financial Position | JUNE 30, 2023

**ASSETS**

Unrestricted cash . . . . .	\$2,586,601
Restricted cash . . . . .	602,255
Grants and other receivables, prepaid . . . . .	538,856
Loan and interest receivable, net of allowance . . . . .	1,847,874
Equipment, furniture and other assets . . . . .	21,931
<b>Total Assets . . . . .</b>	<b>\$5,597,517</b>

**LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**

**LIABILITIES**

Accounts payable . . . . .	\$83,049
Accrued liabilities, deferred revenue . . . . .	965,333
Term notes payable . . . . .	424,555
<b>Total liabilities . . . . .</b>	<b>\$1,472,937</b>

**NET ASSETS**

Unrestricted . . . . .	2,731,074
Permanently and temporarily restricted . . . . .	1,393,506
<b>Total Net Assets . . . . .</b>	<b>\$4,124,580</b>

<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets . . . . .</b>	<b>\$5,597,517</b>
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*unaudited*

## Statement of Activities | FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

### REVENUE AND SUPPORT

Grants - Federal sources - SBA, EDA, CDBG . . . . .	\$1,082,165
Grant - ARPA - City of New Bedford . . . . .	1,531,342
Grant - Arts and Culture cumulative . . . . .	238,225
Grant - Mass Growth Capital . . . . .	100,000
Grant - Bristol County Savings Bank - program . . . . .	50,000
Grant - Bank Five . . . . .	25,000
Grant - BayCoast Bank . . . . .	25,000
Grant - Realtor Assoc of New England . . . . .	15,000
Grant - St Anne's . . . . .	5,000
Grant - Bristol County Savings Bank - sponsoring . . . . .	25,000
Grant - Santander . . . . .	10,000
Sponsoring southcoast partners . . . . .	18,500
Loan interest and fees . . . . .	132,699
Management fees, other earned income . . . . .	125,519
	<b>\$3,383,450</b>

### EXPENSES

Direct grant expenditures, donations . . . . .	\$650,081
ARPA - City of New Bedford business support . . . . .	1,426,399
Salaries, taxes . . . . .	717,915
Bad debt provision . . . . .	60,000
Employee insurance, retirement . . . . .	118,155
Insurance liability . . . . .	16,818
Consultants . . . . .	32,228
Communications, marketing, supplies . . . . .	47,377
Quest, rent . . . . .	26,042
Meetings, development . . . . .	19,494
Legal, professional, lending . . . . .	66,270
Interest, contributions . . . . .	5,235
Depreciation . . . . .	5,976
Sub Total . . . . .	3,191,990

**Sub Total Change in Net Assets . . . . . \$191,460**

Extraordinary CELF recapture . . . . . 1,107,194

**Net Change in Net Assets . . . . . (\$915,734)**

*unaudited*

A woman with long, wavy red hair and a black turtleneck sweater stands in a well-lit beauty store. Behind her are wooden shelves stocked with various skincare and cosmetic products. In the background, a sign for 'SHIMMER Clean and Ethical Beauty' is visible on a wooden counter. The scene is captured in a professional, slightly blurred style.

## Assisting Existing & Small Business

“Using federal relief funds, we’ve sought to help accelerate the emergence of small businesses from the pandemic and its fallout. In particular, the NBEDC has launched two new programs, NBForward! and NB100!, to help existing businesses get back to normal again, and to provide seed funding to get new ventures off the ground. Both programs are already having an impact.”

MAYOR JON MITCHELL, STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS, MAY 3, 2023

Driving efforts to help strengthen small and family-owned businesses of all sizes and in every stage of their own development is at the core of the NBEDC mission. In FY23 we brought new grant programs into the mix allowing existing businesses, entrepreneurs, and creative enterprises throughout the city to push past the lagging effects of the pandemic with confidence and strength. New Bedford's small business leaders have proven resilient, and with city government and a host of trusted partners by our side, we will continue to champion the small businesses of New Bedford.

**The NB100! and NBForward! Business Support Programs**

With the firm belief that strong entrepreneurial ecosystems strengthen businesses, close access gaps and help build community wealth, the NBEDC launched NBForward! and NB100! – two new programs to help finance the dreams of existing and aspiring small businesses in New Bedford. These programs are made possible through the US Small Business Administration Community Navigator Program and the City of New Bedford's American Rescue Plan Act funding package. In total, \$3.3 million in funding was made available to support local businesses and entrepreneurs.

**NBForward!**

Tailored to existing small businesses in New Bedford, this program offers at least 100 grants of up to \$20,000 in conjunction with matching loan financing from other, non-ARPA sources, and with payments deferred for three months – along with technical assistance including business planning, resource guidance, and best practices.

In FY23 we funded 39 businesses for a total of \$770,000 in grant funds, with supporting loans totaling an additional \$444,700. At the close of the year new applications were still being submitted for grants and loans as the pipeline for this program remained strong.

**NB100!**

This program promotes entrepreneurship by helping 100 new businesses get off the ground while having positive impacts on New Bedford's neighborhoods by harnessing the spirit of innovation and creativity in our city. A critical facet of NB 100! is activating the New Bedford Sourcelink network of partners to help set up new businesses for greater success in long-term. Through this program 100 eligible businesses may receive grants up to \$10,000-but engagement and support will continue to be available long after grant awards are made.

In FY23, we funded 11 kick-starter grants to entrepreneurs for a total of \$110,000. There were also 33 additional applicants that completed their technical assistance with grant applications under review and many more starting technical assistance from our partners.

**Highlighting Diversity**

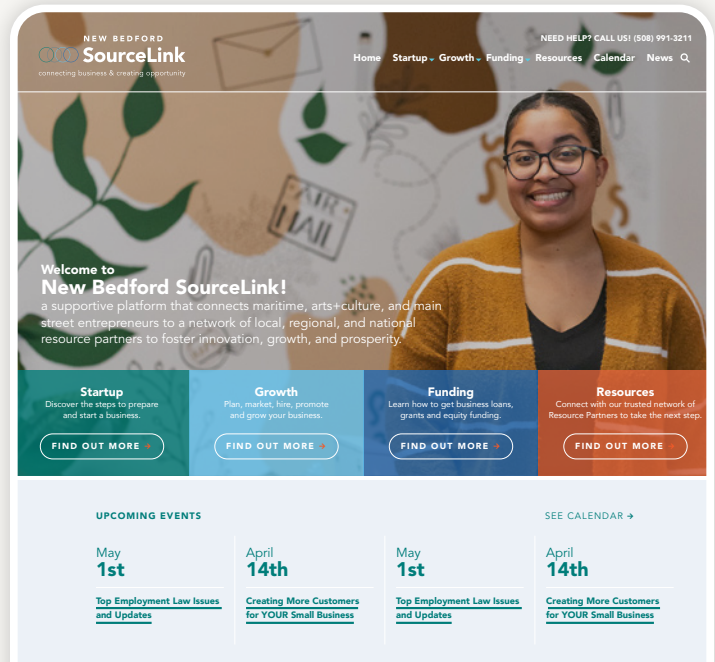
The NB100! program has proven to be a model in our efforts to reach often underserved constituencies looking to start a business for the first time. We share the SBA's goal of making such outreach a priority and this program is currently serving the following demographic groups:

<b>64%</b> female applicants	<b>30%</b> minority applicants	<b>27%</b> LGBTQ+ applicants	<b>18%</b> Hispanic applicants
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New Bedford SourceLink was developed as a supportive platform to connect maritime, arts+culture, and main street entrepreneurs to a network of local, regional, and national resource partners to foster innovation, growth, and prosperity. New Bedford SourceLink partners are all trusted, culturally knowledgeable local individuals, organizations, and businesses.

In FY23, the platform boasted 39 resource partners and was utilized by 3,312 entrepreneurs, while partner organizations meet quarterly to stay connected on progress.

New Bedford businesses can still apply to participate in the NBForward! and NB100! programs. For a full rundown of eligibility, application requirements, and benefits, visit [www.nbedc.org/grant-loan-programs/](http://www.nbedc.org/grant-loan-programs/).



## Lending Program

The NBEDC Lending Program remains central to the execution of our mission and is often the most tangible way for us to have a quantifiable effect in the continued growth of small business and new development in all neighborhoods of New Bedford. During the past year our lending team spent countless hours to ensure applying to all programs was more accessible and easier for applicants by utilizing new software and online portals.

In FY23, the Lending Program status and activity was as follows:

- The portfolio consisted of 69 loans totaling \$2,419,520.
- Staff closed 16 new loans to New Bedford businesses totaling \$444,700.
- The program helped small businesses create and retain 13 jobs.
- To further professional development and keep current with ever changing regulations, NBEDC lending team members participated in multiple SBA webinars and the MassGrowth Capital Corp. Annual Meeting. All were attended remotely.



The NBEDC Lending Program is administered by the lending staff and is overseen by a nine-member Loan Committee and the NBEDC Board of Directors. Each application is subject to a review and a clearly defined approval process by the Loan Committee, which is structured to allow for the timely processing of complete and qualified applications.



“I’m very grateful to be part of the TDI family and be physically in New Bedford. I completely love the district where I am, and I feel very connected with it.”

ADELSA MENDES, TDI FELLOW FOR ACUSHNET AVENUE DISTRICT, MASSDEVELOPMENT

### Business Assistance and District Development Programs

In FY23, we continued to partner and support the city’s business associations by connecting them with the resources needed to assist businesses at a neighborhood level. Grassroots communications remained highly effective tools and collaborative events proved to be a successful marketing strategy to engage the community. Robust social media campaigns in the districts also continued to provide greater awareness to businesses that pivoted and refined their service offerings, products, and hours in the evolution of a post-pandemic world.

### CITYWIDE EFFORTS TO ASSIST SMALL BUSINESS

- Through all of our programs we assisted 87 existing businesses and/or start-ups with site selection, permitting, lending, or business planning.
- We held six workshops through a virtual format. We had 207 attendees among all of the sessions—once again surpassing our previous record! The workshop series could not be offered without the continued collaboration with the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center and the Mass Growth Capital Corporation.
- We supported the efforts of the Immigrants Assistance Center as they provided technical assistance and translation services to small business owners.



### LOVE THE AVE INITIATIVE

- The Love the Ave project charged forward in its first year as a MassDevelopment Transformative Development District. Love the Ave team members dove in working within the TDI cohort framework to develop both long-term and short-term strategies to move the district forward in growth.
- The NBEDC rallied around numerous arts+culture and business development projects across all corners of the city. In this effort, we were a strong partner to the CEDC's efforts to serve as the lead business development support agency for the north end, specifically their efforts to work with business owners whose first language is not English.

### THE DOWNTOWN

- Downtown New Bedford Inc continued to be a lean, all-volunteer organization that led the robust marketing and branding of the downtown with direct support from the NBEDC.
- The Downtown Squad continued quarterly meetings facilitated by the NBEDC. Partners also coordinated efforts regularly to advance projects and programming with new place-based projects, such as the hugely popular Fall Fest and Holiday Stroll events.

### Tax Increment Financing Program

Since the inception of the Tax Increment Financing Program in New Bedford in 1996, a total of 120 projects have been certified. These projects ensure a certain level of investment and job creation by the private sector while the Commonwealth and the City have provided a measure of incentive on new short-term taxes.

- In FY23, 14 such agreements remained active and compliant with the program's reporting requirements. These projects have added nearly \$88 million in new private sector investment, have created more than 485 new jobs, and have ensured that more than 722 jobs have been retained in New Bedford.
- While several companies seeking expansion had inquired about the program, one new project for Island Creek Oysters was approved this year, which represents nearly \$1 million in new investment and would create as many as 10 new jobs.
- Windward Power System applied to the program for their \$1.4 million expansion project that would create 11 new jobs. At the close of FY23 this project was approved by the TIF board and was awaiting approval from the City Council.



### Quest Center Collaborative Workspace

The New Bedford Quest Center for Innovation is an initiative by the City of New Bedford to provide a focus for entrepreneurial training and a supportive environment for start-up activity.

- The incubator spaces at Quest Center continued to brim with activity with 104 entrepreneurs associated with Groundwork and 17 public sector employees from various agencies.
- There are three entrepreneurial/workforce/economic development agencies with a presence at the Quest Center that hosted dozens of workshops, training sessions, and partnership meetings both online and in person throughout the year.
- FY23 activity generated \$20,100 in income to the City through the incubator program managed by the NBEDC.
- The NBEDC, NBOC and City continued to explore opportunities for the re-use of the vacant areas of the third floor, as the building's close location to the waterfront, downtown, and South Coast Rail proved to be attractive assets sought by private sector interests. In FY23 a proposal was submitted to Vineyard Wind with the goal to establish a base of operations for ocean cluster companies, programing, and support services. An announcement on the Quest Center Blue project with Vineyard Wind is expected in the fall of 2023.



## Business & Real Estate Development

“Windward Power has been in operation for 17 years supporting our working waterfront. We are excited to expand our services in New Bedford to include hydraulic-based manufacturing and become a leading service provider for the offshore wind industry and others in the growing blue economy.”

NATHAN TYNAN, PRESIDENT OF WINDWARD POWER SYSTEMS

Private sector interest in New Bedford—from real estate development, to expanding businesses, and entrepreneurs—continued to trend at higher levels again in FY23. For the year, our pipeline of 77 business and real estate development projects is stronger than ever. In total, this pipeline represents more than \$346 million in development value, as many as 2,579 jobs being created or retained, and as many as 744 new residential units to be constructed. Many of these projects have financing in place, are fully permitted, or are under construction—a sign of healthy growth for the years ahead.

### Industry and Developer Recruitment

In FY23, we had 40 active pipeline projects in the recruitment and pre-development phase, with a total investment value of \$287 million, an estimated 1,875 new jobs, and 527 new housing units. This recruitment pipeline represents a wide variety of project type, investment value, and location.

Notable examples of our efforts to bring in future development include:

- The team at Sheep River Capital took the first steps to redevelop the historic buildings at 1061 and 1049 Pleasant Street for 60 market rate housing units as part of a total campus redesign. This new investment would be one of the first large-scale projects in the up-and-coming innovation district, just steps away from the South Coast Rail pedestrian walkway.
- Boston Harbor Distillery, a successful female founded distillery brand, began efforts to create a second outpost, eyeing several options in our downtown. The tasting room and retail shop would showcase their small batch whole-grain whiskey and other inventive spirits. Staff has supported with providing connections to property owners and brokers as they toured sites at the close of FY23.
- Ceviches by Divino is a Peruvian tapas and gastropub with an industrial vibe, based in Miami. The Providence owner is interested in exploring another location in downtown New Bedford and our staff has supported their exploration of potential sites.

### Existing Business Expansion Support

In FY23 we continued to see that much of our potential new growth is attributed to the expansion of existing businesses that already call New Bedford home. In the past year, we were actively working with 28 such businesses or developers on projects with a total value of just over \$59 million. These projects would create more than 670 new jobs and add as many as 217 new housing units. The NBForward! program funded 39 existing businesses specifically.

A few illustrative examples include:

- Windward Power is a Fairhaven-based marine diesel engine and generator sales/service/parts company expanding a manufacturing division at 2185 Purchase Street to be able to provide further support of our working waterfront. Staff assisted this business with site selection, tax incentives, as well as coordination with city permitting departments. The expansion brings \$1.4 million in investment and 11 new jobs to New Bedford.
- Anthi's Drawing Room is a carefully curated art & design shop featuring original work by New England artisans with a keen focus on quality craftsmanship. Anthi's downtown shop recently moved to 22 William Street and has been a participant of NBForward!

### Start-up Cultivation and Assistance

Beyond the work that was done to help fund eleven entrepreneurs through the NB100! program, we have been working with an additional nine new business ventures ready to bring ideas to reality in New Bedford. With a combined investment value of \$270,000, these start-ups will also bring more than 34 new jobs into the city. We expect the NB100! program active pipeline at the close of FY23 to drive this growth to all-time highs.

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a maroon shirt and a tan apron, is painting a mural on a large blue canvas. He is holding a paintbrush and a palette. In the background, there is a white tent with rainbow flags hanging from it, and a large brick building with a flagpole. The scene is outdoors with trees and a clear sky.

## Arts and Culture

"I always love to visit New Bedford. The city is alive with diverse arts, creative expression, and cultural experiences that bring the community together and celebrate local talent and stories. The Barr Foundation is thrilled to help amplify investments the City and New Bedford Creative have made to position arts and artists as key to community and economic development that serves all of New Bedford's diverse communities."

SUEELLEN KROLL ON THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BARR FOUNDATION'S THREE-YEAR \$1,000,000 GRANT SUPPORTING THE NBEDC'S NEW BEDFORD CREATIVE PLATFORM

In this age of connectivity, the people who make up the creative economy are playing a central role in the growth of entirely new industries, while also helping to transform and regenerate traditional ones. Now more than ever, creativity is needed to think differently about how to solve New Bedford's most pressing challenges. Investing in the infrastructure of the creative economy is not just an economic imperative, but also an existential one. Examples of these investments from FY23 are highlighted here.

## The Arts + Culture Plan

This year marked the fifth year of implementing the City's first-ever arts and culture strategic plan, *New Bedford Creative: Our Art, Our Culture, Our Future*, and included an expansion of grant and training programs along with dozens of projects. The 24-member volunteer leaders of the New Bedford Creative Consortium oversaw the execution of several initiatives, with three that we would like to highlight here:

- The completion of a Feasibility Study for a "Business of Art Center," with actionable steps to strengthen the infrastructure of the creative economy to ensure a wide range of participants – individuals, firms, and non-profits – have access to resources and critical knowledge to be agile in the face of rapid economic, social, and environmental change.
- The commission of a New Bedford Creative Economy Report by Zapalac Advisors, to review the period from approximately 2018 to 2022, to demonstrate how creatives and creative industries impact the overall New Bedford economy, including how the creative economy is evolving and the increased reliance of other industries on creative skills and services.
- Implementing the largest round of grants to date with the investment of the City of New Bedford's resources provided by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

## Grant programs: ARTnet, Wicked Cool Places, and Art is Everywhere!

With municipal funding provided through ARPA, the New Bedford Creative team at the NBEDC facilitated an expansion of the Wicked Cool Places and Art is Everywhere grant programs and added a new program for individual artists called ARTnet, an artist training and recovery network. After receiving 226 applications, we invested \$419,520 in 31 projects city-wide and 40 individual artists. The complete list of recipients can be found on [newbedfordcreative.org](http://newbedfordcreative.org).

In addition to these grant programs, we launched the second year of Peer-to-Peer Sessions, a mostly online series of workshops in November, and the first year of Arte Entre Amigos, an in-person series for Spanish speakers in May. New Bedford is the home of artists, creatives, change makers, designers, entrepreneurs and community enthusiasts and the Peer-to-Peer Sessions and Arte Entre Amigos embraces the pulse that makes New Bedford so unique while expanding our knowledge and connections. Most sessions are archived on New Bedford Creative's YouTube channel.



The Community Economic Development Center has received several Wicked Cool Places grants for their summer series of "El Patio de Comidas" and the annual "Festival Tipico de Guatemala" (pictured here); they also facilitate the "Love the Ave" brand, and are a key stakeholder in the MassDevelopment TDI's north end district.

## Love Letters for New Bedford

This year saw the successful completion of the first-ever place-based pilot of Creating Connection in New Bedford, a national initiative by Arts Midwest to make creative expression a recognized, valued, and expected part of everyday life. The year-long pilot concluded with the creation of Love Letters for New Bedford, a short documentary by filmmaker Ethan de Aguiar and co-produced by Beatriz Oliveira, which has been on the film festival circuit this year.

Love Letters has won “Best Short Documentary” by the Block Island Film Festival, Portugal International Film Festival, and Texas Arthouse Festival, and was an official selection for Brooklyn International Short Awards, Chicago Filmmaker Awards, Flickers’ Rhode Island International Film Festival, New Jersey International Short Festival, Newport (CA) Beach Shorts, Vancouver Independent MovieMaker Awards, Santa Fe KIDS’ FIRST Film Festival, and the Washington Film Awards.



## Activities of the Seaport Cultural District



Since 2014 the downtown Seaport Cultural District (SCD), an official designation by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, has served as a center of cultural, artistic and economic activity.

In FY23, the activities of the SCD included:

- The opening of the “Explore New Bedford” gallery at the Seastreak Ferry lobby at State Pier, featuring local art, music, and books for the public to purchase directly from artists, as well as brochures and event flyers of cultural venues and activities in New Bedford.
- The tenth anniversary of Seaport Art Walk, the district’s annual temporary public art installation, partnered with DATMA’s SHELTER 2023, to present 12 new artworks along the waterfront, and an indoor exhibit at Groundwork Gallery with over 30 artworks.
- The partnerships of 160+ organizations, companies and individuals, with four successful partner meetings in collaboration with the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, Destination New Bedford, and AHA!
- The support of Downtown New Bedford’s Fall Fest (formerly All Treats, No Tricks), Holiday Stroll, Spring Shop Small Crawl, and events activating Wings Court.
- Press for the partnership organizations included features in Archaeology Magazine, Art New England, Artscope Magazine, The Arts Fuse, The Boston Globe, Boston Magazine, Boston Public Radio, Commonwealth Magazine, Forbes, National Review, New Bedford Light, The New York Times, The Public’s Radio, Sculpture Review Magazine of the National Sculpture Society, SouthCoast Today, The South Coast Insider, The South Coast Almanac, The Wall Street Journal, WBSM & FUN107 Radio, WGBH Radio and TV, and many more.





### Outreach and Communication

Throughout the year, the New Bedford Creative platform utilized both traditional and innovative strategies to target communications to our arts-based constituencies. This part of our work is critical to ensuring that news on available resources, trainings, and events gets out to the greatest amount of people possible. By the end of FY23, we had:

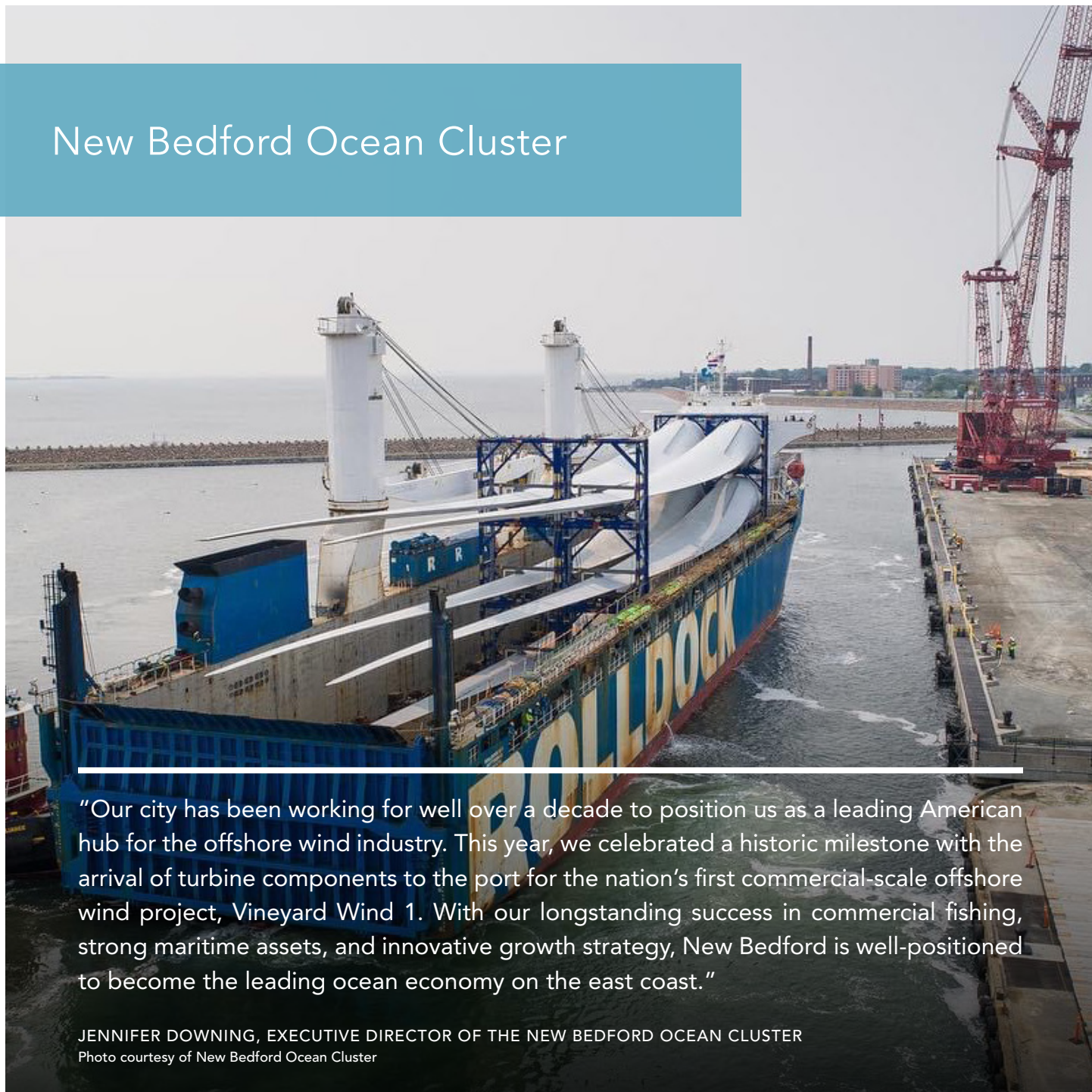
- 2,332 followers on Facebook and 1,583 followers on Instagram.
- 1,350 views on YouTube, with 63 subscribers.
- 1,525 email subscribers, with a 44% open rate.
- Produced 92 Eventbrite events, with 230 followers, and 1,089 RSVPs.
- Hosted a total of 8 television shows in partnership with New Bedford Cable Network, distributed to 30,000 Comcast subscribers.
- Sent out 10 press releases to 270+ media contacts, and was featured in Americans for the Arts, Arts Midwest, Barr Foundation, The Boston Globe, The Fall River Herald, The New Bedford Standard-Times, New Bedford Light, The New York Times, Mass Cultural Council, MassDevelopment, New England Foundation for the Arts, SouthCoast Almanac, SouthCoast Insider, The Public's Radio, and WBSM Radio.



### Leveraging City Resources

During FY23, the \$113,963 from the City's Arts, Culture, and Tourism fund leveraged an additional total amount of \$1,909,984 from Arts Midwest, Barr Foundation, Bristol County Savings Bank, MassDevelopment/TDI, Mass Cultural Council, New Bedford Local Cultural Council, New England Foundation for the Arts, SouthCoast Community Foundation, grantees of ARTnet, Wicked Cool Places and Art is Everywhere, and federal award number SLFRP1067 awarded to The City of New Bedford by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

## New Bedford Ocean Cluster



"Our city has been working for well over a decade to position us as a leading American hub for the offshore wind industry. This year, we celebrated a historic milestone with the arrival of turbine components to the port for the nation's first commercial-scale offshore wind project, Vineyard Wind 1. With our longstanding success in commercial fishing, strong maritime assets, and innovative growth strategy, New Bedford is well-positioned to become the leading ocean economy on the east coast."

JENNIFER DOWNING, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NEW BEDFORD OCEAN CLUSTER  
Photo courtesy of New Bedford Ocean Cluster

The New Bedford Ocean Cluster's mission is to leverage New Bedford's coastal position, marine knowledge base, and landside capacity to drive employment and wealth creation for New Bedford residents. The NBOC seeks to leverage and enhance the City and Port of New Bedford's existing maritime strengths, while advancing innovative programs, start-ups, and technology partnerships. This past year the NBOC represented New Bedford on a world stage, maximized early supply chain opportunities for local business, and ensured that commercial fishing's continued growth is fully supported.

### New Bedford on a World Stage

The NBOC's efforts to attract businesses and foreign direct investment to New Bedford continue with great momentum. Serving as a one-stop-shop and first point of contact, the NBOC provides information and support to both domestic and international companies interested in expanding their business to New Bedford. In FY23, the organization forged valuable partnerships with international ocean clusters and industry trade associations, and received numerous invitations to conferences, forums, and trade missions that are raising the visibility and profile of New Bedford's growing ocean economy.

- Last fall, NBOC Executive Director, Jennifer Downing and City of New Bedford Mayor, Jon Mitchell traveled to the North of England to showcase New Bedford's competitive advantages for European wind companies looking to enter the U.S. market.
- In January, the NBOC hosted a delegation of 40 Canadian marine technology companies to explore opportunities for partnership and investment in the region's growing offshore wind market.
- Last spring, the NBOC led a delegation of local companies to Denmark to participate in a U.S. offshore wind trade mission organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. The New Bedford delegation included: the New Bedford Foss Terminal, Imtra, Coast Line Transfers, Shoreline Offshore, Brownell Marine Manufacturing, and Windward Power Systems.

### Act Local Program Connects Local Businesses with Offshore Wind Opportunities

The NBOC's Act Local program aims to support the development of a diverse and equitable offshore wind supply chain in greater New Bedford. Designed to maximize the positive economic impacts of the growing offshore wind industry, the NBOC connects Original

Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) and Tier 1 companies with local businesses interested and able to participate in the offshore wind industry supply chain. "Meet the Buyer" events and Community Outreach Forums help to further disseminate information and educate the local business community about opportunities in the OSW industry. In FY23, the NBOC completed a supply chain analysis to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities for supply chain development in greater New Bedford. By assessing the current state of the local offshore wind supply chain, the NBOC will be able to better promote the region's strengths while seeking to fill gaps in capabilities through targeted business recruitment.

### Fisheries Advisory Committee Launched to Drive Growth for Seafood & Processing Industry

The NBOC aims to support the continued growth of New Bedford's commercial fishing industry by facilitating connections, business opportunities, and knowledge sharing between fishermen, processors, regulators, academics, businesses, and entrepreneurs. The goal is to support local fisheries to derive more value from the seafood they land and process, discover new ways to optimize their business, and explore new markets.

In FY23, the NBOC launched a Fisheries Advisory Committee composed of key seafood industry leaders to provide input into the strategic direction of the NBOC's Commercial Fishing & Processing Pillar. As it relates to offshore wind, this group will be an essential voice in establishing a mutually beneficial relationship and forum for regular discussion and coordination between the fishing and offshore renewable energy industries.

## New Bedford Business Park



"The New Bedford Business Park demonstrates the strengths of having a diverse local economy with national and international connections. The park is home to all manner of companies with workforces that have skilled manufacturers working alongside researchers, logistics specialists, sales managers, as well as artists and designers. In a post-pandemic world, that diversity and connection to large markets give our city and region tremendous competitive advantage. "

ELIZABETH ISHERWOOD, CHAIR OF THE GREATER NEW BEDFORD INDUSTRIAL FOUNDATION  
Photo courtesy of Ahead

In 1954 a group of area service clubs and businessmen organized the Greater New Bedford Industrial Foundation, determined to reverse the downward economic trends that began to face cities such as New Bedford and return the city to a position of strength in the regional economy. After successfully canvassing the area for funds, they set up a fifteen-person committee to select an appropriate site for a new industrial park. They found their site in the far North-end of the City and the 550-acre park was officially opened in September 1961 with four plants completed and a fifth under construction.

Today, the New Bedford Business Park covers 1,300 acres and has 37 companies employing more than 3,100 people. All manner of goods are manufactured in the park, from the world's #1 golf ball, to medical devices and textile products. The park continues to be one of New Bedford's greatest economic development assets with companies that are industry leaders in craftsmanship, design, and innovation.

FY23 was another dynamic year in the New Bedford Business Park. Park sites for expansion moved through permitting and early site work as day-to-day activity throughout the park continued along its bustling pace. Highlights for the past year included:

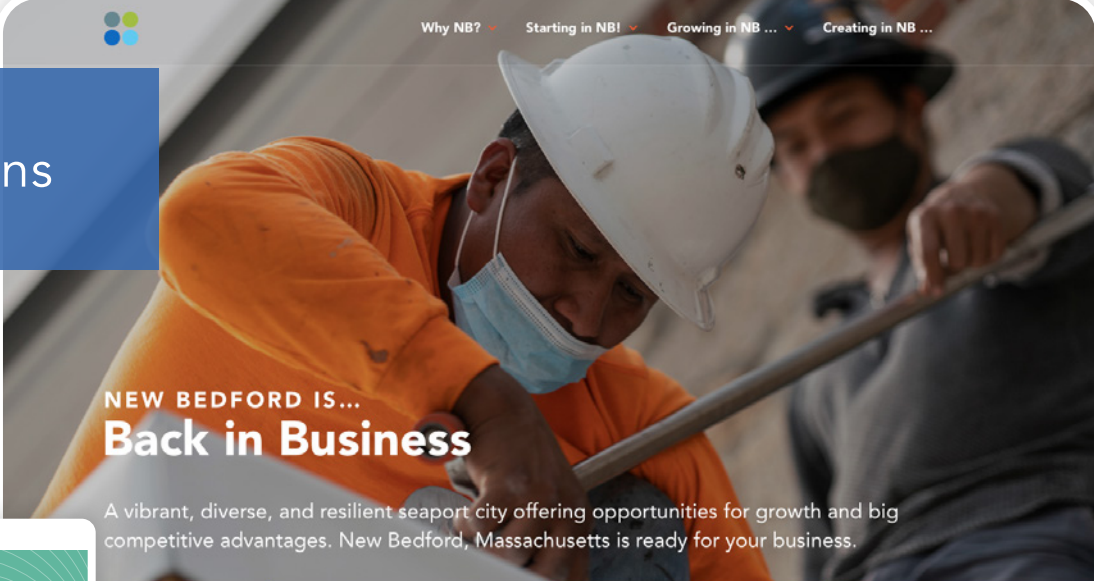
- A proposal for a 30,215 sqft. commercial building on a portion of the 61 John Vertene Boulevard site was approved by the City's Planning Board. The building will be accessed from the existing site off Samuel Barnett Boulevard, and parking will be under a proposed solar canopy. The site was cleared at the close of the year and we are working in partnership with the owners and their brokers on recruiting a new company to the site.
- The 14-acre site known as Lot 11 is now owned by D.F. Pray and site clearing, and other preliminary development work, was undertaken. This parcel abuts the freight rail line and can support 100,000 sqft. of new development. Marketing the site for new users was underway with D.F. Pray as several leads expressed interest.
- The City completed environmental baseline assessment for the potential buyer of its small parcel on Duchaine Boulevard. At the close of the year, they were in the process of preparing a letter report for the buyer to review with their environmental/legal team as well as preparing for geotechnical boring work.

- The GNBIF executive committee began meetings and scoping exercises with the City's Department of Public Infrastructure to undertake a comprehensive study that assesses the future infrastructure and operational needs at the New Bedford Business Park, and how best to meet those needs by working together. This study is intended to explore maximum build-out scenarios for existing parcels, emergency access needs, pedestrian usage, improved safety and security, and expanding sustainable beatification possibilities. Work is expected to begin in late 2023.
- The GNBIF agreed to donate approximately \$145,000 to Northstar Learning, a minority-led nonprofit organization accredited by the Council on Accreditation, to construct a modern 14,000-square-foot state-of-the-art early childhood education center for the most vulnerable children and families of New Bedford. This was made possible by the payoff of their mortgage for the 267 Samuel Barnett Boulevard site and represents the value of the interest on the mortgage. The GNBIF sees this as a worthy investment in the youngest citizens of our future workforce.

**The Greater New Bedford Industrial Foundation was established as a trust in 1955. The trust has 114 members and an executive committee of 15 members that administers the strategic leadership and management of the Foundation. The NBEDC and the Foundation have a management agreement for the Foundation and the business park's strategic planning, development, marketing, and general management services.**

Communications

Why NB? Starting in NB! Growing in NB... Creating in NB...



# NEW BEDFORD IS... Back in Business

A vibrant, diverse, and resilient seaport city offering opportunities for growth and big competitive advantages. New Bedford, Massachusetts is ready for your business.

Why NB?  
What sets us apart.

Growing in NB...  
Build a strategy for what's next.

Create in NB...  
Connect with local arts & culture.

Starting in NB!  
Create your blueprint for success.

FIND OUT MORE →

FIND OUT MORE →





## arte entre amigos

### Serie de formación de artistas




PHOTOS BY JONAS



## ARTnet

ARPA Grant Program

an artist training recovery network  
una red de formación y recuperación de artistas  
uma rede de treino e recuperação de artistas



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY THE ARTISTS: NALINETO, TRACY SUE BARRELL, JUSTIN BUCHANAN, L...

### DEVELOPERS ROUNDTABLE

JUNE 20, 2023  
NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM  
HARBOR VIEW GALLERY  
18 JOHNNY CAKE HILL, NEW BEDFORD, MA  
9AM-11:30AM

Please join Mayor Mitchell and Secretary Hao for a pre-se discussion about how the City and Commonwealth can lead partners in new development opportunities for New Bedford.

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CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST STARTS AT 9AM

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS  
Tony Sapienza, President, NBEDC

A VISION FOR NEW BEDFORD AS A PARTNER IN GROWTH  
Mayor Jon Mitchell

REMARKS ON THE COMMONWEALTH'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES  
Yvonne Hao, Secretary of Economic Development, Commonwealth of Massachusetts

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION  
Led by Mayor Jon Mitchell

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PLEASE RSVP TO THE NBEDC  
jtrambly@nbedc.org



## wicked cool places

ARPA GRANT

This week's grant recipient highlight is **Wicked Cool Places** ARPA grant awardee, Community Economic Development Center (CEDC) for their **Patio de Comidas** (Food Patio) where you can enjoy a delicious experience filled with tradition and flavor!

Immerse yourself in Central American food, art, and culture on Saturdays, August 12, 19, and 26th, between 11am and 5pm, where you can refresh yourself with delicious natural fruit slushies, savor authentic tacos, and enjoy other traditional sweets.

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### Free Networking and Training Sessions

[Register Here For All Sessions \(unless indicated\)](#)

**Every Monday in August and September: 5:30pm**  
"The Play Lab" presented by Culture\*Park, for those interested in writing plays or scripts for theater. August 28 features playwright Candace Perry. Co-Creative Center, 137 Union Street, New Bedford

**Tuesdays, August 15 & 22 and September 19 & 26, 6:00pm**  
"Craft Your Own Calling: Making your Life Work for You" presented by Rhonda M. Fazio of Dyer Maker Studio, La Rhonda Catering, and Intervoven. Intervoven, 634 Pleasant Street, New Bedford

**Wednesday, August 23, 6:00pm**  
"Entrepreneurship for Artists" with Samia Walker, executive director of South Coast's Entrepreneurship for All (EforAll), presented by Co-Creative Sessions. Hosted by Co-Creative Center online via Zoom: [Registration Link](#)

In an ever more intense and competitive market to recruit new investment to cities, we must continue to find new and compelling ways of sharing stories that highlight New Bedford as a great place to invest, develop real estate, and expand a growing enterprise. We also must reach those who have had businesses here for generations and citizens thinking of becoming entrepreneurs for the first time. It's a tall order, but we have a game plan to do just that and provide consistent, reliable, and quality content to all of our audiences.

## Representing New Bedford

Nothing is better than being there in person, and in FY23 we got back on the road as often as possible to advocate for and positively represent the city in local, state, and national settings. Example of this work by team members include:

- On the main panel for the UMA/Lincoln Institute Webinar-Community Resilience Through Small-Scale Manufacturing.
- Attended the 2023 Gateway Cities Leadership Summit in Boston to advocate for New Bedford positive policies and established relationships with new administration officials.
- Attended the ICSC northeast regional events in Boston, as well as New York, to network one-on-one with the development community, setting up follow-up opportunities for sites of interest.

## Developer's Roundtable with Secretary Hao

This past June we hosted a developer's roundtable at the New Bedford Whaling Museum. In her first address to the Greater New Bedford development community, attendees at this packed event heard from Secretary Hao first-hand about the Healey-Driscoll Administration's economic development priorities. It was a lively exchange moderated by Mayor Mitchell, sparking real interest in new opportunities in TOD districts and other key sites. Direct follow-up by the NBEDC with business development contacts remains ongoing.

## Social Media and E-Communications: Tools to Inform, Engage and Educate

During the past year, we continued to invest more in our continuously growing communications program. Daily updates across Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter provided an opportunity to engage with followers, supporters, partners and potential clients. We retain the value of being a trusted resource for local news and updates as

they relate to business development and growth in the city—including groundbreakings, public art openings, new businesses, or funding opportunities.

Our social media continued to inform and engage followers across all platforms throughout the past year. Since taking steps to raise and enhance our online profile in 2021, each platform has consistently performed above expectations. Here are several of note:

- On Facebook, the NBEDC regularly reaches 10,000 people each week through a vigorous posting and sharing program designed to support small business and amplify useful information regarding living and working in the City of New Bedford.
- On LinkedIn, our more than 7% engagement rate—perhaps the most important metric in social media communication—is more than double the industry standard of 3.16%.
- In addition to our expanded work in social media, our targeted e-blasts and quarterly newsletters highlighted opportunities and events throughout the year. Open rates of our targeted communications soared to 48% as we shared important updates and press releases—far exceeding the industry average.

## The Importance of Council Engagement

Our Council membership grows as we recruit new leaders emerging in the community, and new businesses locate and expand in the city. At the close of FY23, we exceeded 400 engaged and well-informed members crossing all sectors and who were willing to participate in leadership committees, such as the activities of the Regeneration Committee, the New Bedford Creative Consortium, and Love the Ave. The full list of Council Members is located at [nbedc.org/about](https://nbedc.org/about). Please contact us if you are interested in becoming a Council Member.

# Economic Development Planning & Policy



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"This is my city. I want to see it be beautiful."

CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT LINDA MORAD AT THE FIRST  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OPEN HOUSE AT ALFRED J. GOMES  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Rendering courtesy of Fennick McCredie Architecture

The combination of hard work and forward-looking, data-driven, and community-based planning and policy work is critical for sustainable economic success. This pairing of work and good planning and policy remains the foundation of our economic development agenda. In FY23 we centered this part of our work around the City's efforts to undertake a new comprehensive plan while continuing to push the efforts on a new advanced manufacturing campus to the city, commuter rail, and advancing the pandemic recovery and growth policies advocated by the Regeneration Project Committee.

### Supporting the City's Comprehensive Plan

New Bedford is the metropolitan center of the region, and it is imperative that future development and progress be based on sound community-based planning. The City's current master plan, *New Bedford 2020*, was adopted in 2010 by the City Council and Planning Board to chart the City's course for a decade. Indeed, many of the goals and objectives in *New Bedford 2020*, have been achieved and the NBEDC used it as a tool to guide our work. However, outstanding goals required reexamination, particularly in a world that has been irrevocably altered by the COVID-19 pandemic and related economic and social distress.



Throughout FY23 the NBEDC staff, the regeneration committee, and the New Bedford creative consortium have participated directly in the citywide comprehensive planning process. Our roles as support staff, focus group participants, and steering committee members has given us a front row seat to a

process that has engaged all members of the community to create a more prosperous, equitable, healthy, and attractive place for present and future generations. This work has been expertly led by the City Planning Office and the Agency Landscape + Planning team.

When completed the plan will offer a community-driven set of goals for the next decade. It will provide an actionable implementation framework, which includes policies and practices for creating a healthier community, maintaining a clean, sustainable environment, housing for a range of incomes, increasing opportunities for use of open space, improving transportation access, and offering quality public facilities. All of this leads to greater economic opportunities for all and will be a guiding document for the NBEDC's future work.

### Proposed New Development at the Golf Course

In the early months of FY23 the City's Request for Proposals (RFP) for a new 100-acre advanced manufacturing campus on a portion of the municipal golf course created great interest from more than 60 requests but no formal proposals. Wanting to understand why such interest did not materialize in formal development proposals, the NBEDC engaged with RND Consultants, Inc, to conduct an analysis of the process and provide feedback on how best to proceed with a second issuance of an RFP for the site.

RND concluded that the City rightfully set a high bar for redevelopment. Noting that the site itself offers tremendous development potential, coupled with a newly enhanced golf course, improvements to the Hathaway Road corridor, and the new airport terminal which itself is in the planning stages. All of this can be catalysts for the redevelopment of this and other adjacent and underperforming sites. Their findings state that since the time of the publication of the RFP, several events occurred changing the real estate demand and economic factors such as the war in Ukraine, increased inflation, political uncertainty, rising interest rates, and the continued normalcy of hybrid workplace

models. Specifically, with rising interest rates the debt markets have tightened their lending terms causing real estate developers to become more selective with projects. The economic conditions have changed unexpectedly and drastically in less than two years.

The NBEDC and City have since been working together with MassDevelopment to follow-up on recommendations from RND to position the City as a partner with a master developer, conduct a comprehensive market analysis, simplify the approach to infrastructure, and streamline the second RFP process. This work began in late FY23 with site readiness grant funding from MassDevelopment and should be completed by the close of 2023.

### SouthCoast Rail Transit Oriented Development

Gateway cities such as New Bedford, Fall River, and Taunton offer excellent and cost-effective investment opportunities for new growth and entrepreneurship from which the whole Commonwealth can benefit. We know that rail service is critical to enhancing two-way commerce and tourism, addressing a portion of the state's housing shortage and improving the quality of life for residents from the SouthCoast to Boston.

For those reasons, the NBEDC has continued to have a seat at the table, with the City's Department of Public Infrastructure and City Planning Office leading the way, with MassDOT and many others as FY23 witnessed construction of the Church Street and Hicks Logan platform areas in full swing. Also, the long-term planning for new development of those areas (known as TOD districts) around the platform locations neared completion.

Of great interest was that the new pedestrian bridge over Route 18 - as a signature element serving as a gateway to the downtown - came off the drawing boards to begin construction near the end of FY23. The bridge is an example of how functionality and inspiring design can both exist in public infrastructure. We look forward to taking our first steps across that bridge to the new platform when commuter rail service to Boston begins at the close of 2023.



## NBEDC THE REGENERATION PROJECT

RESEARCH | ENGAGEMENT | POLICY

The Regeneration Project Committee is an independent policy formation and advocacy committee of the NBEDC. Throughout FY23, the committee took measurable strides to implement the concepts developed in its 2018 report, *Realizing the Potential*. Throughout the pages of this report the committee makes the case that New Bedford can be:

- A global leader in ocean cluster development, research, and entrepreneurship
- A metropolitan anchor for the region with a vibrant and diverse downtown and waterfront experience
- A place where emerging community leadership is recruited and harnessed
- A city that uses art, design, and architecture to inspire citizens and visitors

The 2018 report identified 38 specific actions. At the close of the year, 27 are listed as completed or have made substantial progress, and six actions have seen limited progress. Only five actions have yet to see measurable progress.

During FY23, the full committee met 10 times, published two advocacy pieces, and directly served as a focus group for the economic development section of the City's comprehensive plan, with many members also serving on the steering committee. The committee also began working in partnership with MassINC to develop a comprehensive housing study to better understand how current conditions in housing impact economic growth. MassINC is scheduled to complete the study later this fall.

**The Regeneration Project is a collaborative platform that allows for a broad cross-section of private sector community leaders to shape, advocate, and tangibly advance a strategy of sustainable and shared growth for New Bedford.**

## Sponsoring Corporate Partners

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The New Bedford Economic Development Council would like to recognize and thank the following corporate partners for supporting our work to promote a transparent and business-friendly environment for sustainable economic development in the City of New Bedford.

### LEADING PARTNER



### CORPORATE PARTNERS



### SUPPORTING PARTNERS



The Seaport Art Walk and Friends of Seagull Cinderella have made donations to the Southcoast Centers for Cancer Care: Patient and Caregiver's Assistance Fund. A donation in any amount to the fund can make a big difference to those undergoing cancer care. Proceeds of Seagull Cinderella stickers, which are available at TL6 The Gallery, will go towards this effort. You can also learn about making a donation by calling 508.973.5353.

"Seagull Cinderella' is as common as the birds we see at the beach. Yet she is uncommon, like Marilla in Anne of Green Gables, corseted and bound by the sweet virtues of her character. Her full-length gown is alive with neon daisies and flower power! This piece is celebrating a common sea bird as the American mythic princess, Cinderella." - DONNA DODSON, ARTIST OF "SEAGULL CINDERELLA"



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