

IBA looks to expand housing in South End, Lower Roxbury

[Yawu Miller](#) | 1/21/2015, 10:57 a.m.



Inquilinos Boricuas en Accion Executive Director Vanessa Calderon Rosado presents the community development corporation's new logo and branding during a press conference at the Jorge Hernandez Cultural Center. Banner Photo

Inquilinos Boricuas en Accion, the Community Development Corporation that built and manages the Villa Victoria housing development, is looking to expand affordable housing opportunities in the South End and Lower Roxbury along with programming for area youth.

The organization unveiled new branding and a new website last week, as Executive Director Vanessa Calderon-Rosado announced plans to expand IBA's work.

In his state of the city address last week, Mayor Martin Walsh pledged to make available 250 parcels of city-owned land for affordable housing. Calderon-Rosado said IBA will bid to develop new affordable housing on city-owned land in the South End and Lower Roxbury.

"There are some parcels in our area that are undeveloped," Calderon-Rosado said.

Calderon-Rosado also said the CDC will bid on South End and Lower Roxbury properties Boston Housing Authority is seeking to divest from its portfolio, owing to ongoing reductions in federal funding.

"We feel we're very well positioned to take these properties on and preserve them as affordable housing," she said.

While market-rate rents and housing costs in the South End are among the highest in the city, 41 percent of the housing units in the neighborhood are subsidized. The BHA owns several major developments in the South End. The agency has not yet made public details on which housing developments it will put out to bid.

In addition to its plans for expanding its affordable housing stock, Calderon-Rosado said IBA will also expand programming to meet a growing need for services, a need evidenced by long waitlists for educational and arts programming the CDC provides.

"As we go into our strategic planning process, we're looking at where we can expand," she said.

Calderon-Rosado expects the planning process will take six to nine months. Thousands of families in the South End are on waitlists for IBA's pre-school and after-school programming. The rebranding effort the CDC has undertaken was designed to help people inside and outside the organization better understand its work.

"For the past five years, we've been working to align IBA's program areas," Calderon-Rosado said. "People know one side of our work, but not the other. We now have new branding, a new logo and a new website. We want people to connect the dots and put all the pieces together – all the great work IBA does."

IBA was founded in 1967 in response to a Boston Redevelopment Authority Urban Renewal plan that targeted a section of the South End where many Puerto Ricans were living. After the city demolished tenement buildings in the area, IBA took control of the land and developed affordable housing, a senior housing building, several commercial properties, a cultural center and a public square for cultural events.

In addition to its pre-school and teen programming, IBA runs a satellite campus of Bunker Hill Community College that provides educational and job-training programs, a community technology center and other programming.