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AFFORDABLE HOUSING FINANCE

Building Repurposed for Integrated, Inclusive Community

Bethany Apartments provides needed family housing in Hanover, Mass.

By [Christine Serlin](#)



Developed by the Planning Office for Urban Affairs, Bethany Apartments brings 37 units of much-needed family housing to Hanover, Mass.

A new development for families is helping transform the Cardinal Cushing Centers campus in Hanover, Mass., into an inclusive community.

The Planning Office for Urban Affairs (POUA), a nonprofit developer affiliated with the Archdiocese of Boston, converted a former dormitory on the campus—which has supported children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities through education, employment training, residential care, and other services since the late 1940s—into 37 units of mixed-income housing.

The Bethany Apartments, which was fully occupied this fall, includes 23 low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) units for households at or below 60% of the area median income (AMI) and 10 workforce units for households earning between 80% and 100% of the AMI. Department of Housing and Urban Development project-based vouchers support the remaining four units at 30% of the AMI set aside for individuals with disabilities who receive support from the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health.

“Part of the mission of Cardinal Cushing as well as POUA is to bring in a diverse range of households and look to integrate those households into the larger campus,” says POUA COO Bill Grogan.

He adds that family housing for all income levels is in critical need in many of the Boston suburbs, and Hanover officials recognized that people who work in the town couldn’t necessarily find housing there.



Joel Howe

As part of the adaptive reuse of a former dormitory on the Cardinal Cushing Centers campus, the historic chapel was converted into a community room for residents.

“I think in a lot of the suburbs you typically see more elderly affordable housing, but the town, Cardinal Cushing, and our office were committed to bringing family housing to this campus,” says Grogan.

“We’re all excited that it’s become an asset to address an important need in Hanover.”

Residents also will have close access to a café, stores, and other amenities on the campus. “The idea is to help create a full community where residents of Bethany Apartments can shop and use the retail on the campus,” says POUA project manager David Aiken.

The Architectural Team and NEI General Contracting were behind the adaptive reuse of the historic building. In addition to creating the one-, two-, and three-bedroom units, the building’s chapel was converted into an open community room, with space for children to draw and read and a sitting area for their parents. Other nooks have been carved out in the building, including a fitness center, a quiet reading room, and a community room in the basement with a full kitchen.

A resident services coordinator works with property manager Peabody Properties to coordinate events and to connect residents with area services.

The \$13.6 million development was financed with 4% low-income housing tax credits (LIHTCs), state LIHTCs, and federal and state historic tax credits. Bank of America Merrill Lynch was the construction lender as well as the purchaser of the tax credits. MassHousing provided a loan for the workforce housing units as well as permanent loans and a tax-exempt bridge. Additional financing was provided by the town of Hanover, the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston through member bank Rockland Trust, and Community Economic Development Assistance Corp.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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