

Health Center Stories:

Generations Family Health Center, CT

Generations Family Health Center, CT celebrated the grand opening of a new facility in Willimantic, the health center's main office and original site, on January 19, 2012. The \$16 million facility was funded by a variety of sources, including a United States Department of Agriculture direct loan, state dollars under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, New Market Tax Credits, as well as donations from foundations, corporations and individuals. The financing was creatively structured and precedent setting, the first time a USDA direct loan was included in a New Markets Tax Credit transaction.

Health Center Background

Generations Family Health Center (GFHC) of Willimantic is located in the Willimantic section of the Town of Windham, a semi-rural town with a population of approximately 23,000 located 35 miles from Hartford, CT. The Willimantic site, which houses the main office, is the original Generations Family Health Center site, which opened in 1983 as a free clinic on a part-time basis. It was originally located in a small Victorian house on the grounds of Windham Hospital with a satellite site in the Windham Heights Housing Complex.

In the mid-1990's, GFHC of Willimantic expanded to a full service, family practice-based health center, renting a 9,000 square foot space at 1315 Main Street. Formerly a grocery store, the larger space enabled GFHC to co-locate with the ACCESS Agency, Inc. to provide "one-stop shopping" for health and human services. Several years later a dental suite opened, offering comprehensive preventive and restorative dental care to patients of all ages. In 2002, a mobile dental program called Across the Smiles began providing dental care to primarily pediatric and senior populations.

The Willimantic site currently has the highest patient volume of Generations Family Health Center's four sites, with 27,265 annual visits. It also serves the highest minority population with a 50% Hispanic, 41% White, 6% Black and 3% Other patient mix. In addition, 50 % of children in the region are on Medicaid, double the state average.

The Capital Project

With 16 exam rooms and 5 equipped dental operatories, the Willimantic facility was unable to meet growing demand for services. As a result, GFHC began planning a capital project in 2004. The health center purchased land for a new facility, located at 40 Mansfield Avenue, completing the final design in September 2009. Construction started in May of 2010 and the new facility was completed in December, 2011. A grand opening celebration was held January 19, 2012.



The new facility on Mansfield Avenue.

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The new facility encompasses 32,000 square feet, nearly double the location on Main Street, and includes four more medical examining rooms, five more dental areas and six clinical interview rooms for behavioral health services. It is filled with natural light and has centralized treatment areas. It is heated and cooled by a geothermal system rather than oil, “green” equipment that is expected to pay for itself in three years. The new building can accommodate a 54% increase in the number of annual patient visits, or 41,474 visits.

Project Funding/Financing

The capital project was funded with loans and grants from multiple sources, including a \$7 million 40-year, 4-percent direct loan from the USDA; a \$768,210 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and \$1.4 million from the state Department of Social Services and the Bonding Commission. The USDA loan, which paid for approximately 55% of the project, was part of a New Markets Tax Credit transaction that generated an additional \$3.06 million in net tax credit equity. The health center also contributed equity to the deal and the state Department of Public Health gave GFHC \$250,000 toward the purchase of dental equipment.

Capital Link assisted the health center in assembling the financing. In order to facilitate the most advantageous debt structure for the health center, Community Health Center Capital Fund (CHCCF), a Capital Link affiliate, also participated with GFHC in an LLC that will own the building and lease it to GFHC. At the end of seven years CHCCF will put its interest in the LLC back to GFHC.