



ABOUT CIP

Communities in Partnership (CIP) is a Black women led, Black women founded, community accountable organization that addresses the social determinants of health through interconnected programs addressing food sovereignty, entrepreneurship and workforce development, affordable housing, and leadership development.

We are a **resident-led** organization focused on **community building**, **collective action**, and **capacity building**.

We describe ourselves as Community Rooted^{TM1} to reflect our commitment to liberative community development practices. Our approach amplifies the lived experience of residents through governance structures, decision-making practices, and strategies that reinforce accountability, enhance community ownership, and emphasize systems-level change. Everything we do is grounded in a vision for Old East Durham that was collectively defined by community members coming together to make CIP a reality.

Vision

We envision East Durham and the surrounding area as a **vibrant place** where **all residents** have an exceptional **quality of life** with the **economic and political power to impact decision making** that affects their community.

Mission

Our mission is to **organize and cultivate long-term residents**, especially **residents of color and low wealth**, to work towards **racial, economic, and social liberation**.

Our current programs reflect immediate community needs and amplify the assets we already have in our community.

| CIP Program | Description |
|--|---|
| Community Food Co-op | Community-owned and run food co-op providing local produce and protein as well as community, educational, and advocacy programming |
| Culinary Femme Collective | Relationship-based Incubator for femme-owned food businesses focused on mutual support to support independent business growth and movement towards a more equitable food system |
| Community Housing | Community-owned and operated properties to ensure tenants' rights, create pathways to home ownership, and stabilize against gentrification |
| Entrepreneurship & Workforce Development | Developing entrepreneurs of color to help each business scale up and prosper while providing equitable employment opportunities . |
| Anti-Racism Training | We identify and equip directly impacted members of our community with knowledge and skills to be effective organizers and leaders. |

¹ metropolitix.org/Community-Rooted-Organizations-Enhanced-Accountability-and-Capacity-Building.html.

CIP'S PANDEMIC RESPONSE

COVID-19 exacerbated existing systemic economic inequity, health disparities, and food access concerns that impacted the Old East Durham Neighborhood significantly relative to Durham County as a whole. For example, our residents are 50-100% more likely to work in retail and food service² and have faced worse economic fallout. Additionally, 61% of our residents had 3 or more COVID-19 risk factors that make it difficult to endure and recover from COVID-19³. However, CIP programs are designed for community resilience. So, it was easy for us to scale-up existing programming to meet the increased community needs during the pandemic.

| CIP Program | COVID-19 Scale-Up |
|---|---|
| Community Food Co-op | We began selling CSA boxes featuring Black & Brown farmers to the larger Durham community to gain additional program revenue . This allowed us to increase community co-op deliveries from one to two times a month. |
| Community Housing | We partnered with local lenders to provide rent-free housing to residents who have lost jobs or had lower income during the pandemic. |
| Entrepreneurship & Workforce Development | We launched the Thriving Communities Fund , a mutual aid network for local small business owners providing micro-grants to sustain operations during COVID-19. Small community contributions totaled over \$100,000 . |
| Anti-Racism Training | We guided philanthropic organizations and large NGOs as they made commitments to improvements to racial equity in 2020 and connected them to grassroots leaders to ensure community-rooted organizations led changes . |
| Culinary Femme Collective | We supported members in development of value added products to create more diverse revenue streams during the pandemic and initiated a planning process for a commercial kitchen space to be operated by the collective. |
| NEW: Community Vaccination Clinic | We distributed masks and information about the vaccine to co-op members and staffed a vaccination clinic for our community members. Over 300 residents were vaccinated through the clinic. |

As a Community-Rooted™ organization, we have been proactive in supporting both immediate community needs while building community capacity on intersectional issues and with a race, class, and gender analysis. From that history of community relationship, we quickly scaled efforts to address the rapid increase in demand as a result of COVID. In 2020, CIP supported **950+ households in Durham** with its food co-op, multi-family housing, vaccination clinic, and community programming. Through our food systems work, we supported **11 Black-owned farms** with over **\$60,000 worth of purchases**.

² <https://compass.durhamnc.gov/en>

³ <https://www.census.gov/data/experimental-data-products/community-resilience-estimates.html>

CIP'S PLAN FOR GROWTH

We know that further investments are required to support the **sustainability of scaled operations**, and are seeking to invest in the following key areas for capacity-building, summarized in the table below:

| Investment Area | Description |
|---------------------|--|
| Human Capital | Salary support for key management staff |
| Physical Rooting | Impact Team Building ownership & renovation |
| Program Expansion | Food co-op expansion and think tank initiation |
| Sustainable Housing | Paying housing loans, renovation, and repair |

Sustainable Operations: CIP's **programming requires support staff** to manage operations, provide services to community members, work with federal, state and local programs, and ensure compliance with sector-specific regulations. We **train and develop community members** first to fill these roles. For 2021, we are seeking to hire or continue the following positions:

- **Executive Director**
- **Chief Operating Officer**
- **Food Systems Lead**
- **Community-Rooted Legal Team**
- **Housing Manager**

Physical Rooting: We have been utilizing the **Impact Team Building**, centrally located in Old East Durham, for co-op distribution and plans to use the building for a range of community programs once COVID-19 restrictions are relaxed. This building acts as a hub, a meeting place for community services, connection, and engagement. While many white-led orgs have a physical space, few BIPOC-founded and BIPOC-led organizations experience the same benefits from physical rooting. We would like to make investments to make this space fully viable and fully community-owned, including:

- **Capital improvements** on the building, primarily through building renovations
- **Ownership transfer** or long-term community-benefit lease so the building is protected from external acquisition

Program Expansion: Our programming addresses the intersectional issues affecting the health, wealth, and well-being of the Durham community. These programs have been particularly important in the face of the pandemic and continued economic and social pressures resulting from gentrification. We are seeking to expand the following:

- **Farmers Market System** including
 - The **Community Food Co-op**, which provides free and subsidized produce grown by local Black and Brown farmers to Durham residents
 - The **East Durham Market**, which is growing capacity to generate revenue for the co-op through selling produce boxes at a mark-up to Durham residents with higher income
- **Community-Building Think Tank**
 - **Food Justice Think Tank**, which organizes local food producers and activists to map the local food system and propose innovative change.

- **Criminal Justice Think Tank**, which organizes legal activists and justice-focused lawyers to advocate for and improve community legal outcomes.

Sustainable Housing: We manage 6 multi-family units to provide affordable housing to community members in the face of gentrification-related displacement. The median income of Old East Durham is less than 50% of the cost of living in Downtown Durham. As high-salary workers continue to move to Durham, and East Durham specifically, this housing and other units will become increasingly necessary to ensure residents are not forced out of the community due to rising property values. To support the current housing, We are seeking

- Funding to **pay off existing loans** with Self Help for housing units
- Funding for **renovation and repair** of existing buildings, to improve livability and potentially expand capacity.