At Bank of America, we are focused on building financial resilience to make our local community stronger and to help our neighborhoods thrive. We have been serving low and moderate-income (LMI) communities since our bank was founded. Today, about one-third of our financial centers are located in LMI areas. Our approach, both in Boston and nationwide, is tailored and community-centered, matching our resources to the unique needs of our clients and neighbors. In our Community financial centers, we work to meet our neighbors’ needs by connecting them to the right products and services, jobs, capital and local partners. Through client interactions, partnerships, volunteerism and philanthropy, we see individual success stories that help strengthen our neighborhoods as a whole. Every day our work begins with a question, to our clients, neighbors, co-workers and partners: what would you like the power to do? Whether that’s own a home, start a business, build savings and credit, secure a job or make a difference in the community, we’re helping connect our communities with what they need to achieve their goals.

**BANKING ON THE FUTURE IN BOSTON**

From the art on the walls, to the staff at the centers, our Community financial centers are reflective of the local communities we serve.

For instance, inside the Dudley Square Community financial center in Roxbury, you’ll find artwork by a local artist, as well as framed drawings from students at the Dudley Street Neighborhood Charter School. Both in Dudley Square and at our Codman Square Community financial center in Dorchester, we have bilingual staff who receive tailored training on products and services to best address the specific needs of our neighbors.

These Community financial centers are also technology hubs for clients. In the lobbies, we offer tablets for tutorials on the latest mobile and digital banking capabilities. And we provide free Wi-Fi to ensure clients are not limited by data downloads on their phone plans and can access our digital banking tools in real time. During the summer months in our Boston financial centers, you may be greeted by a teenage “Digital Ambassador” intern from our partnership with Boston Public Schools & the Private Industry Council – just one way that we’re helping local youth gain work experience and mentoring in order to succeed in 21st century careers.

Knowing that homeownership is a top goal for many of our clients, we focus on connecting clients to affordable loan products and work with partners, like Urban Edge and the Citizens’ Housing and Planning Association, to help spread the word about affordable mortgage seminars that can make the homebuying process less daunting.

We also share free Better Money Habits® financial education resources both in workshops at our centers and out in the community through local nonprofit organizations, including Boston-based partners Sociedad Latina and Inquietudes Boricuas en Acción, which serve primarily Spanish-speaking communities.

Through this approach, our financial centers reflect and support our local communities and connect people to the resources they need to improve their financial lives.

**TACKLING FOOD INSECURITY: A WHOLESALE APPROACH**

Bank of America’s Neighborhood Builders® program has been celebrating local nonprofits throughout the U.S., and in Boston, for over 15 years. In 2018, Daily Table, an organization committed to solving food insecurity by providing affordable wholesome food, was recognized as a Neighborhood Builders award recipient for its impact on the greater Boston area. Daily Table received $200,000 in flexible grant funding and leadership development for an executive director and emerging leader at the organization.

Serving the Dorchester and Roxbury communities, Daily Table is a nonprofit retail store that offers residents a variety of “grab-n-go” meals and a selection of produce, bread, dairy and grocery items at affordable prices. Daily Table works with a network of supermarkets, manufacturers and other suppliers who donate their excess healthy foods or provide special buying opportunities, allowing Daily Table to keep prices affordable while making healthier options more available.

In addition, the organization also offers free healthy cooking classes for everyone in the community at their Teaching Kitchen. Daily Table also provides local job opportunities, employing drivers who coordinate food deliveries, cooks who prepare the meals and retail clerks to staff the stores.

Since the program’s inception in 2004, the Neighborhood Builders program has provided 30 Boston-based organizations with more than $6 million in funding and hours of leadership development training and resources.

We’re proud to support nonprofits like Daily Table with the capital and resources they need to empower economic mobility in local communities.

**CONNECTING PEOPLE TO SUSTAINABLE CAREER PATHWAYS**

We want our financial centers, like the Dudley Square Community financial center and Codman Square Community financial center, to reflect the communities that we serve, and that starts with hiring from the area to build a greater sense of community. In Boston, we partner with workforce development organizations on their programs to connect low-income and unemployed or underemployed individuals to skills training, job placement, retention and advancement services – with a focus on skills development for the financial services sector.

One partner, the Asian American Civic Association (AAC), works with diverse populations, including immigrants with little work experience in the U.S. who have trouble translating their skills and Boston natives in need of a second chance after experiencing long-term family poverty, unstable housing, homelessness or past incarceration. The program offers a pathway to a sustainable career.

Bank of America has partnered with the AACAs workforce development programs since 2012, each year through this program, more than two hundred clients are trained for jobs, and the majority are hired directly upon program completion – including several who now work for Bank of America. We also provide Better Money Habits lessons to AACAs participants to help them increase their financial know-how, and participants in the AACAs’ Careers in Banking and Finance class visit local Bank of America financial centers as part of the learning experience.

Additionally, employees from our Asian Leadership Network employee affinity group conduct mock interviews and resume reviews with members of the AACAs, offering both parties valuable experience in interviewing and hiring.

The partnership is just one example of our investment in workforce development for individuals throughout the Greater Boston area.

**ACHIEVING THE DREAM OF HOMEOWNERSHIP**

On his first night as a new homeowner Mohammed and his wife, Habibah, couldn’t sleep. “It was more than excitement,” he recalls. “It was that sense that finally, we have a place to call our own.”

The family had just moved into the quiet Boston neighborhood of Mattapan. Although they had been living in the city for almost a decade, close to Mohammed’s job at a nearby university, they had their eye on the Mattapan neighborhood for nearly four years. Mohammed and his wife liked Mattapan’s schools and an established Boys & Girls Club nearby.

The work we do with first-time homebuyers like Mohammed and Habibah often starts with a relationship with one of our loan officers. Mohammed worked with his Bank of America loan officer throughout the entire process, and that’s how he learned about free Better Money Habits financial education resources that helped him understand the process of buying a home – including our first-time homebuyer videos, the Spending & Budgeting Tool and savings calculator.

Between conversations with their loan officer and the clear, step-by-step tools they found online, the family grew more confident as they moved through the process. They ran the numbers themselves and managed their money wisely to save for a down payment and strengthen their credit score.

Today they both relish that new sense of permanence in their own home. “We will have our place for a long time,” Mohammed says. “We can plan our life and look forward to a much brighter future.”