

Pennsylvania



The Africa Center (Dolakeh Square)

Philadelphia, PA (2024)

Southwest Philadelphia's Africatown is a thriving commercial and cultural corridor for the city's booming immigrant populations from Liberia, Senegal, and other African and Caribbean countries. ACANA, the African Cultural Alliance of North America, is at the forefront of development in the community. The nonprofit recently started construction of the Africa Center, a social services and retail hub, and the location of ACANA's new headquarters at 55th Street and Chester Avenue.

FINANCING

NMTC Financing: PIDC Community Capital, Community First Fund: \$16 million
Equity Investor: Capital One
Total Project Cost: \$27 million

IMPACT

- 50 accessible, quality construction jobs
- 73 permanent jobs
- 6,000 patients served at the health clinic
- 100 students served at the Wooldyn Academy

COMMUNITY

- Poverty Rate: 34.29%
- Median Income: 47.94% of the AMI

PIDC plays key role in the development of ACANA's Africa Center

PIDC Community Capital (PIDC) was proud to play an instrumental role in helping to structure an array of financing to make the project a reality. ACANA Founder and CEO Voffee Jabateh has been envisioning a neighborhood revitalization in Africatown for over a decade, and the development of the Africa Center is a transformational project designed to attract jobs and spur investment in the community. The 37,000 sq. ft. space will act as a cultural, economic, and social epicenter, housing a community center, daycare, healthcare clinic, and a second location of Senegalese restaurant Kilimandjaro, with additional retail and office space.

PIDC helped ACANA secure funding from public and private institutions totaling \$22 million to bring the Africa Center to life. Funding includes NMTC financing from PIDC and Community First Fund with an equity investment from Capital One. It also includes \$3 million in grants from the Philadelphia Commerce Department, a \$1.5 million loan from United Bank of Philadelphia, \$9 million in PA Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program grants, \$2.4 million from Global City Regional Center, temporary construction funding from Reinvestment fund, and \$2 million in federal Community Project Funding dollars, secured with the help of Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon (PA-05).

Africa Center is at the center of Jabateh's larger redevelopment goal. Dolakeh Square translates to "people rising together" in the indigenous Mano language spoken in parts of Liberia, where he was born. The neighborhood is positioned to be an official center of African culture in the city, with hopes that it could become a must-see tourist destination like Chinatown, bringing additional investment, businesses, and jobs to the community.

"We deeply appreciate PIDC's indispensable role in this exciting development, which will establish Philadelphia's Africatown as a thriving cultural and geographic epicenter for the community."

-Voffee Jabateh, founder and executive director of ACANA