

Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC) Project Description

Since the beginning of this spring semester, I have been interning at PCDC as a part of my school's Urban Studies program. PCDC is a 501©(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1969 in Philadelphia's Chinatown, and is best known for defending Chinatown from development projects that have threatened its survival. However, PCDC also provides a variety of services including housing counseling, free tutoring for students, small business workshops, and notably affordable housing developments. At PCDC, I perform a variety of tasks such as creating grant proposals, digitizing documents, and managing data. I also advocate for Chinatown's residents by organizing committees and petitions.

Chinatown is the last predominantly minority and impoverished neighborhood left in Philadelphia's Center City. The majority of the residents here are low-income Chinese immigrants with low English proficiency. As such, this neighborhood is especially vulnerable to gentrification. While we have successfully defended against numerous projects that threatened to displace residents including a baseball stadium and a federal prison, Philadelphia's Chinatown has lost over a quarter of its land since its inception. Across the nation, Chinatowns are at the risk of disappearing, particularly in the East Coast – Philadelphia's Chinatown is not unique in its struggles.

Several years ago, PCDC was able to secure the funding for our most ambitious and largest project yet – a 20 story building known as the Eastern Tower Community Center. This affordable housing development will be able to house more than 120 apartments as well as a recreational center, and it is estimated to be completed by Fall 2019.



This summer I plan on continuing my current roles in PCDC, as I will be interning full-time from early June to mid-August for a total of 10 weeks. I will assist in preparing for the opening of the long anticipated Eastern Tower Community Center. In addition, I will help put on our annual summer events and lead college tours at my university. Recently, we have been planning a Business Improvement District in Chinatown, and I will be continuing to educate residents on the BID and garner their support. With the nearby Callowhill neighborhood aiming to create a BID as well, we have been working with the neighborhood and consultants to ensure equitable development in Chinatown.