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Harvard and LISC Boston renew $10 million affordable housing investment

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Boston, MA Harvard's flexible, low-cost $10 million investment with Local Initiatives Support Corp. (LISC) 20 years ago contributed to the creation or preservation of 3,108 units of diverse affordable housing in its host communities of Boston and Cambridge. Harvard and LISC have renewed the partnership for another 20 years at a time when investment and leadership by anchor institutions is increasingly critical to our region's response to a mounting housing affordability crisis.

Nearly 20 years ago, Harvard University made a long-term commitment of funds to LISC Boston to be used to seed and support the creation and preservation of affordable housing, predominantly in its host communities of Boston and Cambridge. The low-cost revolving fund investment has proved impactful, with the $10 million invested at low rates in 65 affordable housing developments, creating or preserving more than 3,100 homes that have long-term use restrictions requiring them to be affordable to low-income households.

Harvard recently announced as well, its parallel investments with two other affordable housing lenders. Continuation of this private, low-cost investment is important at a time when rent levels are unsustainable for increasingly more residents, many renters risk displacement, there are few affordable homeownership opportunities, and housing production is far short of demand. Harvard's 20-year investment demonstrates the potential for this type of investment to leverage impact and bring awareness and leadership to our housing affordability crisis.

The LISC investment was part of a $20 million investment made by Harvard through LISC and two other intermediaries. All three investments have been renewed as the Harvard Local Housing Collaborative.

"Harvard is pleased to renew the Harvard Local Housing Collaborative. We are proud to be part of a community where partners from across Greater Boston come together to strengthen the region and address the urgent need for quality, affordable housing," said Harvard president Larry Bacow. "We are grateful to all of our partners for their support and their efforts to increase access to homeownership and promote fair and equitable access to housing."

Karen Kelleher, LISC Boston's executive director, credits Harvard's leadership and believes its investment is a model that could be leveraged at scale by other anchor institutions and business leaders to move the dial meaningfully on our region's affordable housing crisis.

“Harvard has been a supportive housing partner to LISC for two decades, and we are thrilled to renew our partnership. It takes a civic partner who is invested in our communities to make flexible funds available at low cost on a long-term basis to drive housing affordability. Our region’s income disparity and housing affordability challenges have grown to crisis levels since our partnership began twenty years ago. We need the engagement and investment of anchor institutions like Harvard and other business leaders to take our response to this crisis to another level,” said Kelleher.