



BACKGROUND

Originally constructed in 1935, the Chicora Graded School served the Chicora-Cherokee neighborhood of North Charleston, a community closely connected to employment at the Charleston Navy Yard. The campus was expanded multiple times between 1938 and 1955, adding classrooms, an auditorium, a cafeteria, and administrative space.

For decades, the building functioned as a public elementary school, first as a segregated school for white students and later as a more integrated neighborhood school. Following the closure of the Navy Yard in 1996, the surrounding area experienced economic decline and shifting demographics. By 2011, the school suffered from deferred maintenance and declining enrollment, leading to its closure. Vacant for more than a decade, the building remains significant for its role in local educational history.

PROJECT DETAILS

Upon completion, the former Chicora Graded School will be rehabilitated into a college-preparatory high school serving exclusively low-income students from the greater Charleston region. The facility will include modern classrooms, administrative offices, science and technology labs, a cafeteria and commercial kitchen, assembly and gathering spaces, and outdoor areas designed to support both academic instruction and workforce development programming.

The school will operate as part of the Cristo Rey network, which combines rigorous college-preparatory coursework with a corporate work-study model that allows students to gain real-world professional experience while offsetting the cost of tuition. Students will work part-time with local employers across industries such as healthcare, finance, professional services, technology, and nonprofit organizations. Tuition at Cristo Rey operates on a sliding scale based on need, with most families not paying any tuition at all.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Nearly 40% of residents in the surrounding community live in poverty, and local schools serving this area have historically been underfunded, with graduation and college-completion rates for students of color lagging significantly behind state and regional averages. In response, the project will serve up to 400 high school students, all from low-income households, 99% of whom identify as students of color.

The \$37.7 million project was funded through a variety of sources, including an equity investment by NTCIC in the \$5.5 million federal and \$2.75 million state Historic Tax Credits generated by the project and a \$4 million New Markets Tax Credit allocation.



PROJECT COST: \$37.7 MILLION

PROJECT PARTNER: Metanoia

NTCIC FINANCING:

\$5.5 Million Federal HTCs
\$2.75 Million State HTCs
\$4 Million NMTC Allocation

COMMUNITY BENEFITS:

Education Access



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