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Recommended Citation

Center for Social Policy, University of Massachusetts Boston, "The Boston Foundation Retrospective Case Study" (2014). *Office of Community Partnerships Posters*. 179.
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The Boston Foundation Retrospective Case Study

Center for Social Policy

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Summary/Abstract

The Boston Foundation (TBF) seeks to improve the life trajectories for children and families living in Fairmount Corridor neighborhoods. The emerging Fairmount Strategy can be strengthened and achieve greater impact with rigorous information about how foundation activities and investments contribute to community change. To further this internal strategic learning, the **Center for Social Policy (CSP)** is conducting retrospective and prospective case studies of the Fairmount Strategy (2009-2015) focusing on one of the foundation's central tenets: alignment.

Goals and Objectives

Using an Alignment Framework—Geographic, Brokerage, Coordination, Leverage—**CSP** is investigating how TBF has invested resources of time, money, and influence in the Fairmount neighborhoods and what these contributions to community change have yielded during the study period. The case studies will provide a record of **TBF's** investments and activities along the Fairmount Corridor and track TBF's contribution to transformative change through the lens of alignment.

Approaches and Methods

CSP has identified three research and learning objectives for the case study:

- A working statement of **TBF's** Fairmount Strategy that enables collective understanding, discussion, and decision-making for TBF's strategy and policy agenda going forward;
- A succinct statement of TBF's role in the Corridor since 2009 in terms of both grant-making and change-making activities and their contribution to neighborhood change processes and intermediate outcomes, focusing specifically on the concept of alignment in TBF's activities and contributions;
- A deeper understanding of the political and economic context in the Corridor and how this context relates to opportunities and challenges for TBF.

As part of the **CSP's** data collection and analysis, we conducted:

- 30 interviews completed with TBF internal senior leaders, Fairmount grantees and community leaders, and other Fairmount and city-level stakeholders;
- Analysis of TBF Documents (internal and website) and grant materials;
- Secondary data analysis of contextual neighborhood factors.

Conclusion/Next Steps

The **CSP's** Retrospective Case Study results are a source of evidence being used by **TBF** to inform its future strategic actions and investments in Boston's Fairmount Corridor.

- The Retrospective Case Study executive summary was completed on November 15, 2013.
- A formal presentation of findings was conducted for **TBF** senior staff on November 22, 2013.
- The final Retrospective Case Study was delivered November 27, 2013.

References and Resources

For more information on this and other **Center for Social Policy** projects, please visit our website at

www.umb.edu/csp

Partnership Information

The Boston Foundation

[https://www.tbf.org/](http://www.tbf.org/)