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Resilient Communities/Resilient Families

Center for Social Policy, University of Massachusetts Boston

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Summary

The Center for Social Policy (CSP) serves as a strategic learning and evaluation partner to The Boston Foundation (TBF). TBF’s investment and people and place-based initiatives seek to make sustainable, positive change through community and economic development in neighborhoods along the Fairmount-Indigo transit line in Boston. As part of the Resilient Communities/Resilient Families (RC/RF), CSP with Mattapan United and Millennium 10 (in Codman Square/Four Corners) to identify community priorities for neighborhood change. From 2013-2015, the Center team is evaluating these neighborhood change efforts, as well as other initiatives aimed at increasing economic well-being for neighborhood residents.

Results/Impacts

The Center for Social Policy:
1. Developed a conceptual, evidence-based alignment framework for use by TBF
2. Assisted two neighborhood organizing groups to generate and analyze information gathered from community residents; this evidence then informed their action priorities
3. Informed evaluation priorities for 2013-2015
4. Generated findings that led to a reexamination of program practices used by the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership’s Family Self-Sufficiency’s program staff

Neighborhoods Impacted:
Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan

Two students engaged 8-16 hours/week per semester

Center for Social Policy Team

Donna Haig Friedman, Director of the Center for Social Policy, Associate Research Professor at the J. W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies

Brandynn Holgate, Research Associate and doctoral candidate, Department of Public Policy

Research team members: Tim Davis, Jeremy Levine, Julia Tripp, Artie Maharaj with Keri-Nicole Dillman

Goals and Objectives

Program-level Evaluation Strategy:
Understand implementation of RC/RF, including:
• procedural accomplishments/challenges
• community building/family outcomes
• role of neighborhood context

Corridor-Level Learning:
• Inform next stages of TBF’s investment and activities along Fairmount Corridor.
• Track TBF’s contribution to transformative strategies and/or approaches that succeed in changing the life trajectories for low income children/families and their neighborhoods.

Approaches and Methods

✓ Participatory evaluation action research
✓ Theory-driven, utilization-focused approach
✓ Using multiple methods

References and Resources

For more information on this and other CSP projects, please visit our website at www.umb.com/csp

Partnerships

The Boston Foundation
TBF’s Boston Indicators Project
Mattapan United
Millennium 10
Boston LISC