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The Boston Foundation Retrospective Case Study

Center for Social Policy, University of Massachusetts Boston

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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.

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.

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.