4-2-2014

URBAN.Boston (Urban Research-Based Action Network): Creating meaningful connections between community & academia

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http://scholarworks.umb.edu/ocp_posters/278

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The Urban Research-Based Action Network (URBAN) is a national platform that facilitates community-based research, teaching, and learning for action across disciplinary lines, connecting scholars and community activists within and across cities. It was started in 2011 to honor the memory of activist scholar Marylin Gitell, and has received generous support from SAGE Publications. URBAN currently has 5 local nodes: Boston, Los Angeles, New York City, Northern California, and Philadelphia; as well as 3 discipline nodes: Education, Sociology, and Urban Planning. More nodes will be established in the future. In the meantime, efforts are focused on connecting academics and community partners nationally, locally, and based on discipline.

**Goals and Objectives**

The purpose of URBAN.Boston is to promote + advance research collaborations that create new knowledge and support community action. It does this by:

- Fostering connections and relationships between academics, researchers (outside of academia), community members, and community organizations;
- Facilitating and incubating research-action ideas and projects;
- Developing and encouraging the use of truly collaborative principles of research;
- Encouraging graduate students and supporting academics pursuing community-based research;
- Fostering understanding and support of collaborative research within academic institutions;
- Supporting community organizations in building the capacity to link research to action; and
- Connecting URBAN.Boston members to the national URBAN network.

Since 2012, URBAN.Boston has focused on engaging in public discussions and increasing our network capacity both online and in person. The Boston node has coordinated 7 public meetings over the past 2 years as well as worked to establish an online presence.

With the generous support of the Edward W. Hazen Foundation, URBAN.Boston provided seed funding to help incubate collaborative research projects during the 2013-2014 academic year. These seed grant awards are intended for one of two uses:

1. To develop a new collaborative research proposal or
2. To develop a new phase of an existing collaborative research project.

Each $1000 award must be used for the planning of a collaborative research project.

Seed Grants for Collaborative Partnership Awardees include:

- Pamela Belford (Dever McCormack School) and Amy Cook (UMass Boston)
- Nandini Sengupta (Dimock Community Health Center) and Teri Aronowitz (UMass Boston)
- Midori Monkawa and Efrain Arias (YWCA Boston), Heather Zaykowski, Jacqueline Lageson, and Lauren Cripps (UMass Boston) and Valeria Miranda and Sophia Williams (Peace Circles)

URBAN.Boston is focused on bringing researchers and community members together to work on mutual areas of interest including, though not limited to, health, housing and education as well as neighborhood-level issues, such as transportation; and the ability for community members to use diverse data sources and analytic methods to devise evidence-based interventions. Additionally, URBAN.Boston will continue to enhance its communications capabilities to connect the Boston community around engaged research and action.

**Contact Mark at urban.boston@umb.edu**

**National website:**

https://www.URBAN-Boston.org

**Facebook:**

https://www.facebook.com/UrbanBoston

**Twitter:**

https://twitter.com/URBANcolab

**LinkedIn:**

https://www.linkedin.com/groups?trk=myg_ugrp_ovr&gid=4804225

**Opportunity**

URBAN.Boston Seed Grant

URBAN.Boston network including members of local and statewide community groups, labor unions, think tanks, academic institutions, government agencies, businesses, financial institutions, and nonprofits.

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