

We know....



## COMMUNITY ACTION WORKS IN BOSTON

Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD) is Boston's anti-poverty Community Action agency. The **Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)**, which funds Community Action, is the federal government's only comprehensive approach to building economic security for struggling Americans. CSBG is the heart and soul of ABCD.

**COMMUNITY ACTION: Demonstrating Impact.** Building on the base of CSBG, ABCD reaches over 94,000 individuals each year<sup>1</sup>. That's a much larger percentage of Boston's low-income residents than any other human services organization touches<sup>2</sup>. All of ABCD's CSBG-supported services rigorously measure their impacts on the lives of participants. To provide just a few examples,

- **With CSBG, ABCD puts people to work.** In 2010, 927 unemployed persons got career-track jobs through ABCD's CSBG-supported programs. 360 persons got a college degree or certificate to help them move into better jobs<sup>3</sup>.
- **With CSBG, ABCD prepares youth for success.** In 2010, 195 youth got a high school degree or GED through ABCD's CSBG-supported programs. 4,210 youth explored careers through summer jobs and after-school internships.
- **With CSBG, ABCD delivers quality early education.** In 2010, 2,340 children got a Head Start. 9,804 children benefitted from vouchers for early education.
- **With CSBG, ABCD keeps families safely housed.** In 2010, 825 families were saved from eviction through CSBG-supported programs. 471 homeless families found homes. 1,444 houses were weatherized.
- **With CSBG, ABCD helps families make the most of their dollars.** In 2010, 16,594 families got heating help. 676 families learned to manage their money better.

**COMMUNITY ACTION: Reaching Households in Greatest Need.** Using CSBG, ABCD reaches the people in greatest need of help. 56% live at incomes under the federal poverty line. All live under 200% of poverty. 75% of those served are women. 37% are Black; 23% white; 29% Hispanic. More than 33% of adults served don't have a high school diploma.

**COMMUNITY ACTION: Providing Comprehensive Solutions.** Thanks to CSBG, ABCD is able to provide both emergency support and a *comprehensive approach to helping households work their way out of poverty*. Through ABCD's CSBG-supported *integrated service delivery system*, families in distress get "one-stop" access to services. CSBG helps meet immediate needs—and allows ABCD to work with families to create long-term gains through education, employment, and resolution of barriers to work.

<sup>1</sup> ABCD FY10 Information Survey submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.

<sup>2</sup> According to Boston Business Journal.

<sup>3</sup> This and following data from ABCD FY10-11 Progress Report submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development.

**COMMUNITY ACTION: Leveraging Resources.** CSBG leverages a tremendous array of other resources. At ABCD, every dollar in CSBG funds leverages \$24.56 in other resources, including over \$3.67 in non-Federal funds<sup>4</sup>.

**COMMUNITY ACTION: Engaging Communities.** Because of CSBG, ABCD is uniquely community-driven. Following CSBG regulations, low-income community representatives have a dominant voice on its Board of Directors. Each of ABCD's CSBG-supported Neighborhood Network sites is guided by a locally elected community Board. Each site provides a "front door" to comprehensive services that is close by, familiar, and trusted. This neighborhood-based approach gives ABCD a unique level of access to groups that may not be well-served by other organizations. Like all Community Action agencies, ABCD belongs to the people it serves.

**COMMUNITY ACTION: Leading with Innovation.** Thanks to the flexibility provided by CSBG, ABCD is recognized as a source of new ideas and important innovations in service delivery.

- ***A Birth-to-College Continuum for Urban Education.*** ABCD works with the youngest children and their parents through Early Head Start and Head Start; runs a successful alternative high school for youth at risk of failure in more traditional public school settings; and sponsors a private two-year college designed especially to meet the needs of disadvantaged workers. Now ABCD is working with the Boston Public Schools and other partners to establish a seamless learning continuum. CSBG makes it possible.
- ***An Early-Warning Homelessness Prevention Model.*** Using CSBG funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), ABCD launched a ground-breaking "early intervention" model to forestall homelessness before families were facing eviction. Combining mediation, legal help, and wrap-around services to stabilize families and raise their incomes, HEART is continuing with private funds.
- ***A Recovery School for Students Struggling with Substance Abuse.*** ABCD's Ostiguy High School is one of the first "recovery schools" in Massachusetts—offering a rigorous academic program in combination with comprehensive supports for sobriety. CSBG supports the infrastructure that makes it possible.
- ***A System of Financial Capacity-Building Services to Support Savings and Investment.*** ABCD's Financial Futures Initiative, selected as a Social Innovation Award finalist by RootCause, seeks to offer low-income families a toolkit of resources for managing money, improving credit, saving and investing in durable assets. CSBG makes it possible.
- ***The Elder Economic Initiative—Providing Dollars and Dignity.*** ABCD is extending its integrated approach to reducing poverty to one of Boston's most vulnerable groups—frail, homebound elders. In collaboration with Boston's elder services agencies, ABCD provides one-stop access to benefits through home visits and computerized systems for benefits screening. CSBG makes it possible.
- ***A Transitional Jobs Program for the Hard-to-Employ.*** Building on decades of experience, ABCD is using a new model of "transitional employment" to help those among the long-term unemployed get and keep jobs with career potential. CSBG makes New Careers possible.

## **ACTION FOR BOSTON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, INC.**

### **BOSTON'S COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY**

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<sup>4</sup> ABCD Financial Report for year ended August 31, 2009.

