



our economic and physical infrastructure (physical capital). Mattapan Family Service Center and the Haitian American Public Health Initiative offer job training, child care, and resource centers to improve outcomes for individuals and families (human capital). Our commitment to building social capital underlies our organizational partnerships.

We believe that social capital can be a catalyst for the neighborhood's physical and human development. Halifan first defined social capital as

“those tangible substances [that] count for most in the daily lives of people: namely good will, fellowship, sympathy and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit...If he comes into contact with his other neighbor, and they with other neighbors, there will be an accumulation of social capital, which may immediately satisfy his social needs and which may bear a social potentiality sufficient to the substantial improvement of living conditions in the whole community....” (Putnam, 19)

The basis of social capital is trust and mutual obligation. Block By Block seeks to develop 4 forms of social capital: mutual obligation, information (knowledge of opportunities), norms, leadership (authority relations). (Walker and Weinheimer, 77) In the Woolcock model of social networks, Block By Block develops integration among the neighborhoods' residents and organizations and linkage to other organizations at the neighborhood level. (Keyes, 137)

Specifically, we support community visioning, neighborhood associations, and the Mattapan Youth Council including their work to research and share the neighborhood's history. We connect to other neighborhoods through initiatives like the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization's campaign to create affordable housing. Given the diversity of our residents, these gatherings are important to building the neighborhood's social capital. Residents connect and share information with each other and with local organizations. As a result, we see local leadership developing through two new neighborhood associations and increased voter turnout in recent elections. Block By Block is committed to building on these social capital networks with The Foundation's support.

Specifically, we would like to target funding to Block by Block's community mobilization and organizing work. We propose to use the neighborhood-level social networks to organize and make connections to "asset-holders outside of the neighborhood". (Walker and Weinheimer, 81) Social capital goes beyond measuring the quality of the relationships between neighborhood actors, it implies their capacity for action -- or power -- outside of the neighborhood. It is more than a question of developing social capital and relationships with public officials and private interests at the city level. As Briggs suggests "social capital is a vital resource for cities, neighborhoods, and individuals because of power and politics not in place of them." (Briggs, 178) We need to organize and use our collective political influence with private and public sector decision-makers at the city level to direct resources to help revitalize Mattapan. We want to build on the support of organizations like the United Way that underwrite Block By Block. This is critical given that the competition for limited resources in the city and our history of public and private disinvestment.

We take lessons from successes of other collective lobbying efforts. Examples include the work to pressure banks to comply with the Community Reinvestment Act, the Chicago Rehab Network's Affordable Housing Campaign and the Fenway Community Development Corporation's effort to block the Fenway Park stadium reconstruction. (Herz; Keyes, 158; Greenberg, 5) In these examples, social capital or relationships between the community and the institutional players alone did not lead to change. These organizations relied on a concerted strategy of consensus building and confrontation to exert power and political pressure and develop relationships. This organizational power and political influence reflect the strength of integration and linkage in the social network at the neighborhood level. (Greenberg, 5) Using

this power in some cases led to stronger linkage between the community and the private/public sector, i.e. the banks in the case of CRA and Chicago Housing Authority.

We see organizing as a key for developing and applying our political power based on our neighborhood social capital. By organizing we mean “systematic base building, leadership development and resident-led campaign work” (Greenberg, 7) Our goal is to bring people and organizations together to articulate their concerns. (Walker and Weinheimer, 74) Ultimately, we want to build residents’ capacity to identify and advocate for their interests using their social capital networks. Once participants agree on goals, they will learn about a range of consensus and confrontational approaches and the advantages and disadvantages. We will identify allies and supporters outside of the neighborhood including the media and at the institutional level. A key challenge is developing a sense of when to use consensus building versus confrontational strategies. We will rely on advice and lessons learned from other initiatives to mitigate this concern. With this knowledge and allies, we can create a strategy to develop and apply political influence to tap into our existing and new relationships at the city level. This combination of our social capital networks and our political power is critical to negotiating for resources for the Mattapan’s revitalization.

With your multi-year support of \$300,000, the Block By Block Initiative will continue its work to revitalize Mattapan through a comprehensive community building plan to improve the economic, physical and social fabric of the neighborhood. In the belief that social capital “entails mutual obligation and responsibility for action” (Putnam, 21) we are looking to translate the strength of our social capital at the neighborhood level into organizing to gain political support and resource allocation from the social networks of power brokers outside of the neighborhood.

### Works Cited and Consulted

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Community organizers "...identify community leadership, establish voluntary forms associations of residents and business, and connect the associations to asset-holders outside of the neighborhood." (WALKER AND WEINHEIMER, 81)

Community organizing holds important promises for low income neighborhoods. Effective organizing may develop indigenous leaders and expand local participation in political and civic affairs (Warren 2001); increase responsiveness to resident concerns on the part of government, business, and community organizations (Osterman 2002); and direct resources and improvements to poor areas (Rubin 1992). (David Greenberg, 1)

Organizing –

"In... 'pure organizing,' power comes from the involvement of neighborhood residents and leaders within the operations and positions of an organization, and from the willingness and capacity of community residents to create change."

"...mass community organization" able to develop "sufficient organizational power to achieve its individual members' interest, its local objectives, and in connection with other groups, its state interests...." (Sixties Movements, 63)

"policy must seek to join the forces of informal social control, local institutions, and extralocal (public) control while at the same time ameliorating the constraints imposed by economic inequality, racial segregation, concentrated poverty and residential instability." (Sampson, 270)

"As political economists point out, neglecting the connections (or lack thereof) that residents have to extracommunal resources and sources of power veils the structural backdrop to community social organization." (Sampson, 270)

Four forms of social capital according to James S. Coleman, mutual obligation, information or knowledge of opportunities, norms, authority relations or leadership.

How well do the residents of the neighborhood work together?

How has the neighborhood made connections with other neighborhoods and stakeholders in the surrounding neighborhoods? What kind of connections are those and how good are they?

Has the neighborhood reached up to make connections with downtown stakeholders? How has it done so? How well do the individual government body, private or nonprofit organization or corporation that affects the life of the neighborhood function?

How well and in what combination do the for-profit, nonprofit and public sector work together?

Do these top-down organizations reach down to make connections with the housing entity? How have they done so?

"...social capital "entail[s] mutual obligation and responsibility for action." (Putnam, 21)

Sampson shares that sentiment reminding us that "[a]s political economists point out, neglecting the connections (or lack thereof) that residents have to extracommunal resources and sources of power veils the structural backdrop to community social organization." (Sampson, 270)