

TITLE X GRANTEE PROFILE:

ACTION FOR BOSTON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, INC.

DECEMBER 2020



OFFICE OF
POPULATION
AFFAIRS

CELEBRATING TITLE X | 1970-2020

Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) has participated in the Title X program for nearly 50 years. ABCD is a community action agency established in 1962 to empower disadvantaged people by providing them with the tools to overcome poverty. Through a comprehensive approach, ABCD systemically addresses the range of barriers faced by households in poverty—from day-to-day crises to long-term need for jobs and education.

Annually, more than 100,000 households in the Boston area receive resources and support that includes food, housing services, fuel assistance, job skills training, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, youth services, Head Start, and more. The agency's Health Services department integrates comprehensive family planning services into local primary care agencies best positioned to serve the health and social needs of Boston's communities.

Boston is made up of 23 distinct neighborhoods, each with its own challenges and needs. To deliver relevant, customized care, ABCD operates with neighborhood community service centers throughout the Greater Boston area, delivering family planning and reproductive health services through a blend of community health centers, school-based health centers, and hospital-based clinics for a total of 20 delivery sites. This neighborhood-based structure enables ABCD to better understand emerging local needs and respond with a high degree of professional capacity and accountability.

Cultural, linguistic, and economic distinctions in communities and neighborhoods create pockets of extreme poverty and elevated healthcare needs, as well as local barriers to service. ABCD has responded to these distinct community needs with careful analysis and responsive service design to ensure that family planning resources are accessible to the populations most in need. For example, three of Boston's neighborhoods, Dorchester, Mattapan, and Roxbury, account for the majority of Title X services in the city. These neighborhoods represent a dense, racially and ethnically diverse concentration of low-income residents, characterized by poor reproductive health outcomes and dramatic racial and ethnic disparities.

FAST FACTS

HHS Region:	1
Year of initial Title X funding:	1973
Grantee tenure:	47 years
# of service sites:	20

Website: [Boston ABCD](#)

COMMUNITY CHALLENGES

- Overall, the individuals ABCD serves are over 85 percent minority and 97 percent low-income.
- More than 35 percent of Boston residents live below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL), and 20 percent live below 100 percent of the FPL.
- The cities and towns served represent a population characterized by poor reproductive health outcomes and disparities among racial and ethnic groups.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

GRANTEE PROFILE: ACTION FOR BOSTON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, INC.

More than 30 percent of Boston residents are born outside of the United States, a rate of foreign births nearly twice as high as in the rest of Massachusetts. ABCD's deputy director of programs and operations notes, "This high percentage underlines the need for continuing efforts to ensure linguistic and cultural access, including the provision of culturally acceptable forms of family planning." To meet the needs of Boston's diverse communities, ABCD has prioritized identifying limited English proficiency areas and developed culturally specific materials in seven languages.

Another way ABCD ensures quality services that meet each community's needs is through its network of Family Planning Counselors (FPCs) and community health workers (CHWs). At ABCD, FPCs work hand in hand with clinic staff to provide family planning services to clients and engage in peer support and peer learning. ABCD's extensive CHW program was highlighted in the Guttmacher Institute's 2010 policy review *I Am Who I Serve*, demonstrating the network's commitment to training and professional development.

ABCD also provides ongoing training for its FPCs and clinical staff, informed by annual training needs assessments. These needs assessments ensure that staff are up to date on emerging and priority topics in family planning.

ABCD's approach to cross-training and knowledge sharing across its network has been particularly impactful in its work to address the HIV epidemic in Boston. In recent years, Boston's HIV/AIDS prevalence rates have been nearly three times higher than statewide and nationwide rates. Through Title X funding, ABCD was able to expand access and integrate rapid HIV testing into family planning sites with disproportionate rates of HIV infection.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought new challenges to service sites across ABCD's service area. Despite these challenges, all agencies quickly adapted to provide services through telehealth, curbside pickup, and bridge methods, ensuring that clients are still able to access family planning care.

ABCD's deputy director of programs and operations shares, "By building trust one client at a time, the program as a whole gains indispensable credibility with the community."

--

Special thanks to Christina Lombardo, ABCD's deputy director of programs and operations, for her contributions to this story.

ABOUT TITLE X

For 50 years, Title X family planning clinics have played a critical role in ensuring access to a broad range of family planning and related preventive health services for millions of low-income or uninsured individuals and others. Title X is the only federal grant program dedicated solely to providing individuals with comprehensive family planning and related preventive health services.

LEARN MORE AT [OPA.HHS.GOV](https://opa.hhs.gov)