



Ford Foundation records, Urban Poverty Program, Office Files of Robert Curvin

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Summary Information

Repository:	Rockefeller Archive Center
Creator - aut:	Curvin, Robert
Creator:	Ford Foundation
Title:	Ford Foundation records, Urban Poverty Program, Office Files of Robert Curvin
ID:	FA626
Date [inclusive]:	1981-1996
Physical Description:	5 Cubic Feet
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The Office Files of Robert Curvin document planning, implementation and management of grants by the Ford Foundation's Urban Poverty Program during the period 1981-1996. There are substantial files relating to Foundation support for community development corporations, response to the Los Angeles riots of 1991 and the work of other foundations on such urban issues as housing, education, substance abuse and employment. The files contain correspondence, memoranda, reports, grant proposals and meeting materials. They are arranged in a single alphabetical series. The collection measures 5 linear feet and is contained in 5 record cartons.

Preferred Citation note

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Biographical Note

Robert Curvin joined the Ford Foundation in 1988 as Director of the Urban Poverty Program (UPP), which under his leadership granted over \$50 million annually to revitalize neighborhoods and expand economic opportunities for city residents. In 1996, Curvin was appointed VicePresident for Communications. Curvin retired from the Ford Foundation in January 2000, and later served as President

of the Greentree Foundation. Prior to joining the Ford Foundation, he served for five years as Dean of the Graduate School of Urban and Public Policy at the New School for Social Research in New York City. He also spent six years as a member of the Editorial Board of The New York Times, where he wrote on a wide range of social policy issues. From 1960-1970 he was a social worker in New York City and New Jersey, and from 1974-1978 taught politics at Brooklyn college. He holds a B.A. (1960) and M.A. (1964) in social work from Rutgers University, and a Ph.D. (1975) in political science from Princeton University.

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Organizational History

Ford Foundation support for an array of programs to alleviate urban poverty in the United States dates from the 1960s, when funding was provided to the Gray Areas program – a model for later federal programs associated with the War on Poverty – and to the first wave of community development corporations. In 1981, as part of a major institutional reorganization, the Foundation established its Urban Poverty Program (UPP). UPP encompassed existing grant portfolios for urban affairs, community development, employment and job training, welfare, teen pregnancy, crime, pre-college education and population. Bernard McDonald served as UPP Director from 1981-1987. The principal institutions that UPP assisted during the 1980s were community development corporations, human service organizations and public secondary schools. Under Robert Curvin's leadership from 1988-1996, UPP expanded its commitment to grantmaking aimed at issues relating to housing, substance abuse and urban poverty outside of the United States.

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Scope and Contents

The Office Files of Robert Curvin document strategic planning and grantmaking by the Ford Foundation's Urban Poverty Program during the period 1981-1996. There are substantial files relating to the work of Ford-funded community development corporations, Foundation response to the Los Angeles riots of 1991, the federal government's Empowerment Zone initiative, and the work of other foundations on various urban issues. Files on "Miami Staff Conference on Urban Initiatives," "Program Review," and "Reichmann, Rebecca" are especially rich in material concerning UPP strategy and program development. The transcript of a 1990 interview of Curvin and Program Officer Prudence Brown provides useful context and background on UPP work during the 1980s (Box 3, Folder 19). Files concerning the work of Foundation Program Officers (Roland Anglin, Prudence Brown, et al) contain a variety of documents related to grants and initiatives coordinated by these individuals. The files contain correspondence, memoranda, reports, grant proposals and meeting materials, and are arranged in a single alphabetical series. The collection measures 5 linear feet and is contained in 5 record cartons.

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Arrangement

The Urban Poverty Program Files of Robert Curvin are arranged alphabetically.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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archive@rockarch.org

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Immediate Source of Acquisition note

Ford Foundation archive was deposited at RAC in 2011. Ford Foundation records, correspondence, reports, program files and officers papers were transferred to, and accessioned by, RAC beginning in 2011. Accessions continue as necessary.

Processing Information

Level 1 Minimal Processing has been conducted to establish basic intellectual and physical control of the material and assess immediate preservation and conservation needs. Material remains as received, in original folders and storage boxes.

Conditions Governing Access

Records more than 10 years old are open for research with select materials restricted as noted. Brittle or damaged items are available at the discretion of RAC. Researchers interested in accessing digital media (floppy disks, CDs, DVDs, etc.) or audiovisual material (audio cassettes, VHS, etc.) in this collection must use an access surrogate. The original items may not be accessed because of preservation concerns. To request an access surrogate be made, or if you are unsure if there is an access surrogate, please contact an archivist.

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Related Materials

Separated Materials

Unpublished reports written by Ford Foundation staff and consultants were removed from the papers and transferred to the Archives' collection of staff and consultant reports. A list of the titles of these reports is appended to this register.

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