



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

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Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical Note	3
Scope and Contents	4
Arrangement	5
Administrative Information	5
Related Materials	6
Collection Inventory	6

Summary Information

Repository:	Rockefeller Archive Center
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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[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

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

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Conditions Governing Use note

Completion of a use agreement is required prior to providing scholarly access. See RAC Head of Reference (or applicable designee) for details. Ford Foundation holds title, copyright and literary rights in the collection, in so far as it holds them. The Rockefeller Archive Center has authority to grant permission to cite and publish material from the collection for scholarly purposes. Permission to publish extensive excerpts, or material in its entirety, will be referred to the Ford Foundation.

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.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

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.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances
Amelior Foundation, 1990-1993	box 1
America in the 21st Century, 1989	box 1
American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 1988-1989	box 1
Andrews, Nancy O. -- Memorandum re: Housing, 1989	box 1
Anglin, Roland, 1993-1995	box 1
Applied Research Center, 1993	box 1
Arrick, Ellen, 1994	box 1
Association of Black Foundation Executives, 1987-1993	box 1
Atlanta, Corporation for Olympic Development in, 1994	box 1

Bailey, Charles R. -- Memorandum re: Grant to Proshika Manobik Unnayan Kendra, 1989	box 1
Bermudez, Diana -- Memoranda re: Community Development Corporations, 1988-1993	box 1
Birla, Ritu, 1990-1991	box 1
Board of Trustees -- Meetings, 1991-1995	box 1
Board of Trustees -- Urban Poverty Program Reserve Requests, 1996	box 1
Brown, Ellen, 1988-1992	box 1
Brown, O. Chance, 1991-1992	box 1
Brown, Prue, 1988-1992	box 1
Buhl and Associates, 1993-1995	box 1
Business Executives for National Security, 1992-1993	box 1
Business Loans to Minority-Led Businesses, 1992	box 1
Carter Center, 1992	box 1
Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 1988	box 1
Center for Educational Innovation, 1991	box 1
Center for Urban Policy Research, 1988-1991	box 1
Chavis, David, 1989	box 1
Chen, Ellen E., 1993	box 1
Chile, 1993	box 1
China, 1988-1989	box 1
Churches as Agents of Community Economic Development, 1989	box 1
Citizens Commission on AIDS (5 folders), 1988-1990	box 1
Community Development Corporations and the Arts (2 folders), 1990-1993	box 1
Community Development Corporations and Child Care, 1989-1990	box 1
Community Development Corporation and Civil Rights, 1991-1994	box 1
Community Development Corporations Conference -- Puerto Rico, 1995	box 1
Community Development Corporations -- Human Rights Issues, 1991-1992	box 1
Community Development Corporations -- Miscellaneous, 1991, n.d.	box 1
Community Development Finance Initiative, 1995	box 1
Community Development Partnerships, 1992-1994	

	box 1
Conrad H. Hilton Foundation, 1989-1992	box 1
Conservation Company, 1990	box 1
Corporation for Supportive Housing, 1992	box 1
Coward, E. Walter, 1992	box 1
Dassin, Joan -- Brazil and Latin America Grants, 1989-1991	box 2
DeGiovanni, Frank -- Program Related Investments, 1992-1993	box 2
Designwrights Collaborative, Inc., 1991	box 2
Development Banking, 1992	box 2
Diaz, William A. -- Puerto Rico and Latino Grants, 1987-1990	box 2
Diversity Initiative, 1991	box 2
Domestic Policy Agenda, 1992	box 2
Drug Policy Foundation, 1988-1990	box 2
East St. Louis (4 folders), 1990-1995	box 2
Education and Urban Poverty Staff Retreat, 1994	box 2
Educational Policy, n.d.	box 2
El-Koly, Heba -- Cairo Office, 1991-1993	box 2
Elliott, Mark (2 folders), 1991-1995	box 2
Empowerment Zone (2 folders), 1993-1995	box 2
Empowerment Zone -- Austin Application, 1994	box 2
Empowerment Zone -- Boston, 1995	box 2
Empowerment Zone -- Harlem Urban Development Corporation, 1993-1994	box 2
Empowerment Zone -- Monitoring and Assistance Project -- Columbia University, 1994-1996	box 2
Empowerment Zone -- New York City Application, 199	box 2
Empowerment Zone -- New York City Application Drafts, 1994	box 2
Empowerment Zone -- New York City Letters of Support, 1994	box 2
Empowerment Zone -- Philanthropic Involvement Meeting, 1995	box 2
Empowerment Zone -- Project Summaries, n.d.	box 2
English, John W. -- China Trip, 1990	box 2
Fannie Mae Foundation, 1990-1993	box 2
Flynn, Christine and Mister, Melvin -- Community Development Corporation Intermediaries Consultancy, 1991-1992	box 2

Fordham University, 1992	box 2
42nd Street Light Rail Transit, 1994	box 2
Foundation Executives Education Reform Group, 1992-1994	box 2
Foundation for American Communications, 1991	box 3
Fulbright, Karen -- Youth Programs, 1989-1993	box 3
Gaberman, Barry D., 1987	box 3
Georgia Pacific Corporation, 1988	box 3
Gerdes, Gina, 1988	box 3
Ginzberg, Eli, 1993-1994	box 3
Greater Cleveland Roundtable, 1987-1988	box 3
Halpern, Robert, 1986-1993	box 3
Historically Black Colleges and Community Development, 1989	box 3
Homosexual Equal Rights, 1993	box 3
Housing Leadership Development for Minorities and Women, 1989	box 3
Hughes, Mark Alan, 1993	box 3
Hurricane Andrew, 1991	box 3
International Center for Research on Women, 1988-1989	box 3
Jackson, Peter, 1989-1990	box 3
Jhally, Sut, 1993	box 3
Johnson Foundation, 1989	box 3
Kahn, Carol, 1991-1994	box 3
Katz, Michael -- Transcript of Interview of Robert Curvin and Prue Brown, 1990	box 3
Kellogg Foundation, 1993-1995	box 3
Koprowski, John, 1993	box 3
Kubisch, Anne C., 1991-1994	box 3
Lanigan, John, 1989-1992	box 3
Latin America Regional Meeting, 1992	box 3
Lilly Endowment, Inc., 1989-1991	box 3
Lipsky, Michael, 1991-1995	box 3
Literacy, 1992-1995	box 3
Livelihood, Employment and Income Generation, 1989-1994	box 3

Los Angeles Collaboration for Community Development, 1990-1995	box 3
Los Angeles Task Force (4 folders), 1992-1994	box 3
Lynch, Barbara -- Caribbean Programs, 1992-1994	box 3
Martin and Glantz -- Urban Poverty Program Communications Strategy, 1993-1995	box 3
Mary Brown Productions, 1991-1994	box 3
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), 1988	box 3
Mature Community Development Corporation Initiative -- Budget and RGA's, 1992-1993	box 3
Mature Community Development Corporation Initiative -- Grantees, 1992-1993	box 3
Mature Community Development Corporation Initiative -- Meetings (2 folders), 1990-1994	box 3
Miami Community Development Corporation (2 folders), 1988	box 4
Miami Staff Conference on Urban Initiatives, 1988-1989	box 4
Miami Staff Conference on Urban Initiatives -- Transcripts, 1989	box 4
Miami Survey, 1990	box 4
Miller, Tom, 1990-1994	box 4
Mincy, Ronald B., 1994-1995	box 4
Minority Economic Development, 1988	box 4
Mohamed, Inca A. -- Youth Development Program, 1995	box 4
Molnar, Janice, 1992-1994	box 4
Nadelman, Ethan A. -- Drug Policy, 1988-1995	box 4
Nairobi Office, 1988-1993	box 4
National Affairs -- Civil Rights Program, 1981	box 4
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), 1988-1993	box 4
National Civic League, 1992	box 4
National Community Development Initiative (3 folders), 1988-1995	box 4
National Puerto Rican Coalition, 1988	box 4
National Service, 1989-1995	box 4
National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1988-1995	box 4
National Urban League, 1995	box 4
Nelson A Rockefeller Institute of Government, 1993	

	box 4
New York City Partnership, Inc., 1988-1994	box 4
New York Foundation Executives Group (2 folders), 1991-1993	box 4
New York Urban Coalition, Inc., 1989	box 4
NHP Foundation, 1991-1992	box 4
O'Connor, Alice -- Public Service Program Strategies, 1988-1989	box 4
Offenheiser, Raymond, 1994	box 4
Page, Chris, 1993-1995	box 4
Pew Charitable Trusts, 1989-1994	box 4
Philadelphia Community Development, 1988	box 4
Philadelphia Neighborhood Development Corporation, 1988	box 4
Philanthropy and Public Policy, 1989	box 4
Philippines (2 folders), 1993-1994	box 4
Philippines, 1995	box 5
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, 1989	box 5
Poston, Richard W -- Southern Illinois University, 1989-1990	box 5
Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development, 1990-1992	box 5
Program Related Investments (PRI), 1990-1995	box 5
Program Review (3 folders), 1989-1993	box 5
Project Redirection, 1992	box 5
Race Relations, 1988-1989	box 5
Rand Visit, 1991	box 5
Reichman, Rebecca -- Urban Poverty Program Strategy, 1989-1991	box 5
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 1994-1995	box 5
Roman, Ruth, 1994	box 5
Rural Poverty and Resources, 1991-1993	box 5
Russell Sage Foundation, 1991	box 5
Sanborn, Cynthia -- Latin America Programs, 1990-1992	box 5
Schwarz, Marian L. (2 folders), 1991-1994	box 5
Sexuality, 1992	box 5
Smith, Peter, 1992	box 5
Social Capital, 1993	box 5

Solarz, Stephen J., 1988	box 5
South Africa, 1988-1994	box 5
South Bronx Site Visits, 1989-1994	box 5
Southwest Initiative, 1992-1994	box 5
Special Needs Housing, 1991	box 5
Spencer, Edson W., 1989-1992	box 5
Substance Abuse Initiative, 1990	box 5
Taylor, Andrea -- Media Grants, 1988-1995	box 5
United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1993-1995	box 5
Urban Assembly, 1990-1992	box 5
Urban Institute, 1990	box 5
Urban Opportunity Program, 1990	box 5
Urban Poverty Program Staff Retreats, 1990-1991	box 5
Urban Poverty Program -- Worldwide, 1988-1994	box 5
Urban Summit, 1990-1991	box 5
Violence in the Urban Environment, 1993	box 5
Vincent, Christine -- Arts and Culture Grants, 1992-1994	box 5
Violence Prevention, 1992-1994	box 5
Visiting Scholars, 1991	box 5
Winnick, Lou -- Immigration Proposal, 1989	box 5
Women and Development, 1989	box 5
Women in Community Development, 1995	box 5
World Vision, 1988-1989	box 5
Worldwide Development Organizations, 1994	box 5
Yogi Bear Sunday School, 1989	box 5
Young Minority Males at Risk, 1989	box 5