



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

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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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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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Sleepy Hollow 10591

archive@rockarch.org

URL: <http://www.rockarch.org>

Conditions Governing Access note

Material is open for scholarly research, with prior archival review.

Material more than ten years old is open for scholarly research.

Select individual files are restricted, as noted. Permission to access these files must be obtained from the Ford Foundation before scholarly access is permitted.

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.

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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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Controlled Access Headings

- Ford Foundation

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements note

Materials requiring specialized equipment for access (film, audio, video, slides) may be restricted from scholarly research dependent on availability of the applicable equipment. Brittle or damaged items, or materials otherwise in need of preservation care, may be restricted from scholarly research at the discretion of the RAC Head of Archival Services/RAC Head of Reference.

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