



# Revitalizing New England Cities

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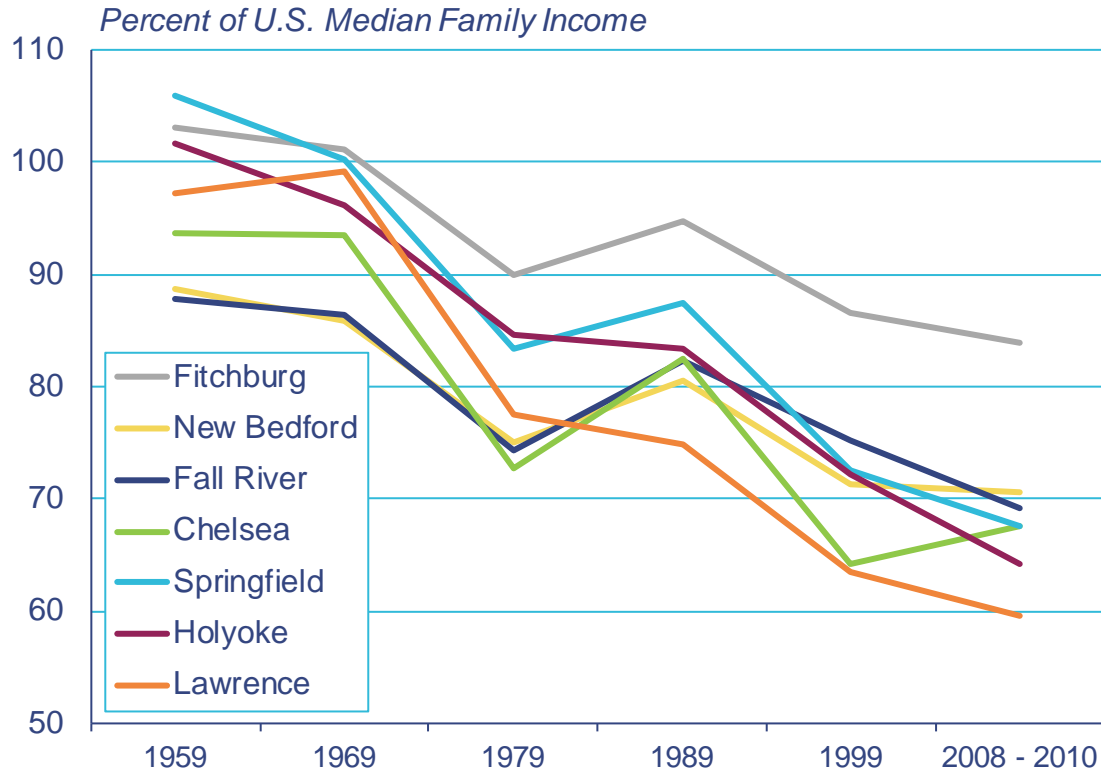
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[bostonfed.org](http://bostonfed.org)



# Figure 1: Median Family Income Relative to U.S. Median Family Income for Massachusetts Smaller Cities with the Lowest Median Family Income



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Decennial Census 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, American Community Survey (2008 - 2010, Three-Year Estimates)

# What is the Working Cities Challenge?



## Key Features

- ▶ Based on Fed research showing economic resurgence for smaller post-industrial cities possible; key elements: collaboration and leadership on shared economic vision
- ▶ Eligible to compete: struggling smaller post-industrial cities
- ▶ Proposals must be ambitious and
  - ▶ unite public, private, non-profit sectors and community members,
  - ▶ focus on improving lives of low-income people and diverse residents, and
  - ▶ create systems change
- ▶ **One proposal per city**: must create shared vision and team to carry out effort
- ▶ **Merit based**: Winners chosen by **independent, expert Jury** based on public criteria (Fed not on Jury)
- ▶ Three-year efforts supported by extensive **technical assistance** and independent evaluation

# Working Cities in New England

- ▶ Competition for three-year grant funds. Grants are modest in size (\$400 - \$475k) and contributed by private, public and philanthropic partners (no funds from Federal Reserve)
- ▶ Over \$10 million in award funds contributed by 63 funders to date
- ▶ State by state model. Current states: Massachusetts (2 rounds), Rhode Island, and Connecticut
- ▶ Expansion to Northern New England states (VT, NH, ME) currently in planning with adaptations for rural areas

## **Massachusetts**

### **Round 1**

Lawrence  
Fitchburg  
Chelsea  
Holyoke

### **Round 2**

Haverhill  
Lowell  
Springfield  
Pittsfield

## **Rhode Island**

Providence  
Newport  
Cranston

## **Connecticut**

Danbury  
East Hartford  
Hartford  
Middletown  
Waterbury

# Lawrence Working Families Initiative: Round 1

**Lawrence:** a largely immigrant and Latino city with great strengths and challenges

- ▶ **Historic Opportunity:** Turnaround in Lawrence Public Schools (LPS) following receivership
- ▶ **Key Challenges:** High levels of poverty and unemployment among families of LPS students, coupled with low levels of student graduation and achievement
- ▶ Mayor, school district, businesses, community college, and workforce service providers unite to support school system turnaround effort (responding to receivership), with focus on parent economic stability, jobs and parent engagement
- ▶ **10-Year Goal:** 15% increase in real income for LPS families, with related student gains due to increased economic stability



Lawrence



Lawrence Partnership

# Lawrence Working Families Initiative: Round 1 (Continued)

Progress highlights and focus on systems change

- ▶ WCC process catalyzes **new CEO economic development group**: Lawrence Partnership. Lawrence WCC effort and Partnership together tackle **city-wide local hiring campaign**
- ▶ Major **new family support system** created for schools has counseled, referred and trained nearly 1,000 parents to date. Job placements >200, another 200 in training and education
- ▶ Launched the state's first **Pay-for-Success** immigrant jobs effort outside of Boston
- ▶ New parent engagement model piloted with 600 parents, now being adopted across school system (9,500 families)
- ▶ School turnaround successful so far – significantly moving the needle on graduation rate
- ▶ WCC implementation grant **leverages more than \$1.6 million** in direct philanthropic and public-sector funds

# Impact Highlights

- ▶ First round of Winning Cities has leveraged \$1.6 million in award funds into \$8.5 million in follow-on funds. Cities adjusting spending to support winning initiatives
- ▶ Needles moving on 10-year goals. For example: jobs and school outcomes improved in Lawrence, crime down in Chelsea
- ▶ Substantial systems change in Round 1 Winning Cities, including permanent changes to school systems, city hall
- ▶ Major new CEO and anchor institution engagement in most cities
- ▶ Application process creates important new work and capacity in cities that win and cities that do not win
- ▶ Better targeting of statewide policy toward smaller cities
- ▶ Increased national and local philanthropic interest/investment in smaller cities

# Sustainability of Cross-Sector Collaboratives

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Empirical research has shown that the following factors are key to sustainability of cross-sector collaborative efforts:

Strong lead organization and dedicated staff support

Active participation from local partners

Community buy-in and involvement

Flexible funding from multiple sources

Action-oriented sustainability plan in place early on in the process (year 2)