

# IMPACT REPORT 2022

Vital Village  
Networks

at Boston Medical Center



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# A LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDING DIRECTOR

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Every child deserves a future with unlimited opportunities, and robust systems of support to ensure their wellness and success. Yet clearly the tides of systemic injustice and deep-seated structural inequities cast a shadow of fear on what the future holds for our children.

Our Network of caregivers, practitioners, educators, and advocates, myself included, have determined that fear will not be the future for our children. Communities designed with intention, anti-racist policies, aligned organizations, and social cohesion can nurture safety, trust, connection, and healing. Working collectively, in alignment, we have an abundance of community assets and collectives sharing responsibility to ensure we honor the dignity of every child.

At Vital Village, our strategy is to create a community leadership ecosystem that expands opportunities for diverse leaders and communities of color to be welcomed to spearhead early childhood systems transformation. Connecting these local efforts in a meta-network radically expands the stories that can be told of this work and their power to seed liberation.

This year we have deepened our commitment to recognizing the invaluable role of civic service in promoting health and wellness for children and families.

We've launched a new Civic Leadership and Engagement Platform, carefully designed in partnership with community leaders to expand ownership of data and information and to capture the power of civic service for systems transformation. We have expanded our offerings for peer-led leadership development and expanded the ways that service learning can be leveraged to promote child wellbeing. We've furthered our work to support community-led design and sustainable coalition governance models.

A joyful future, full of hope and promise is owed to every child. This requires coordinated change efforts that are deeply local, guided by principles and values that honor human dignity that are global. This is why we often say: Vital Village does local work nationally.

We look forward to our continued work together to make sustainable social transformation that advances racial justice and equity a reality in every community and the birthright of every child.

We thank you for your support, partnership, and collaboration.

*In Community Always,*

Renée Boynton-Jarrett, MD, ScD  
Founding Director, Vital Village Networks

# ABOUT VITAL VILLAGE NETWORKS

Vital Village Networks (VVN) enhances child wellbeing, prevents early life adversities, and advances equity by cultivating community assets and opportunity structures to nurture leaders, connect institutions, and build research evidence and shared data systems.



- We employ collaborative approaches to shape opportunities and co-create solutions, engaging caregivers in the design of strategies that utilize community resources and assets most effectively.
- We prioritize cross-sector collaboration in promoting protective factors, and providing a platform for network building, civic engagement, and cooperative work.
- We leverage data as a driving force for community involvement, shared accountability, and we create dashboards and tools to promote shared responsibility for child wellbeing outcomes.

# OUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

**7,255** volunteer hours

*promoting child and family wellbeing*

**261** civic leaders

**108** PUBLIC EVENTS  
+ COMMUNITY MEETINGS

160+ volunteer hrs to organize & co-facilitate these meetings

**1,856** TOTAL PARTICIPANTS  
(new and returning members)

**3,919**  
volunteer hours

*by Community Peer Lactation Scholars*

to support the community-led  
WARMLINE & Baby Cafes for  
expectant and new parents

NETWORK  
MEMBERS  
NATIONWIDE

**5,710**

**10** unique fellowships,  
certificate programs, and  
intensive learning journeys  
focused on diverse aspects  
of leadership development

**3,857**  
hours

**112**  
community  
scholars

**404 hours**

served by *12 community  
partners*

ENGAGED IN  
PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

# 2022 NETWORK MILESTONES

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Launch of the inaugural cohort of the Community Food Systems Fellowship with 14 fellows across the United States

Network members participated in the Special Commission on Racial Inequities in Maternal Health for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, [report](#) released May 2022

Launch of the Vital Village Civic Engagement and Leadership Platform, co-developed by community partners

CONtexts mobile messages for families with children ages 0 to 5 launched bilingual weekly messages in Spanish and English

The CRADLE Lab led a participatory research project to understand barriers to care coordination for pregnant and postpartum families for the Baltimore Healthy Babies

Networks of Opportunity for Child Wellbeing (NOW) released the Cooperative Reflection Guide following a community co-design process

The Mental Health Committee sponsored the 5th annual May Mental Health Month Campaign

The Community Data Ambassador Program was launched with 3 Ambassadors, the Community Data Workgroup was restored

A cohort of 23 scholars from the Boston Breastfeeding Coalition participated in Lactation training, connected to service as Community Peer lactation counselors.

Led 5 design workshops in partnership with Ariadne Labs to co-develop the groundwork for a cross-sectoral coalition to improve birth equity, released [report](#): "Enhancing Equitable Maternal Health in Greater Boston: Framework of Coalition Principles."

The Data Storytelling Workshop Series was launched in connection with the 2022 National Community Leadership Summit

The Black Breastfeeding Week Committee hosted 13 community events during its 5th annual awareness lifting week

[Publication](#) of findings based on community survey of caregivers from the Boston Universal Pre-K Family Engagement Advisory Committee

The 2022 National Community Leadership Summit featured a daylong Data Equity Symposium

The Social Justice Mediation Program held a refresher training for 25 community mediators (approximately 20% of the alumni group)

Publication of the GROWBABY Research Network's [framework](#) for advancing health equity through community-engaged practice-based research

# ABOUT THE 2022 IMPACT REPORT

*How does Vital Village Networks contribute to strengthening community capacity to promote child wellbeing and advance equity?*

The purpose of this report is to describe the national impact of Vital Village Networks and its success in advancing this work. This impact report showcases several achievements and advancements made in 2022 through collaboration with community members and partner organizations. Furthermore, it assesses crucial areas for future intentional investments, considering the evolving needs of members and of the communities who welcome our partnership across the country.



**This report synthesizes program and evaluation data and partner feedback collected in 2022 to gauge the effectiveness of VVN in achieving its seven objectives:**

1

Enhancing access to resources and tools for children and families' wellbeing

2

Strengthening community capacity to promote child wellbeing

3

Fostering leadership development among individuals

4

Facilitating cross-sector collaborations, coalitions, and collective advocacy actions

5

Expanding social networks for families and organizations

6

Building research evidence and disseminating data on child, family, and community wellbeing

7

Assisting partners in setting collective goals and monitoring outcomes

# LEADERSHIP TRAJECTORIES

## Acknowledging and supporting the development of community leaders

Within Greater Boston and across the nation, Vital Village is supporting an ecosystem for diverse community leadership through mentorship, networks, fellowships and learning journeys.

### *Greater Boston*

The Certificate in Community Advocacy and Leadership, conducted in partnership with Urban College of Boston, builds upon the capabilities of community leaders working to maximize child, family and community wellbeing in Boston. Fellows in the program participate in a year-long, 0-credit college-level certificate program. In 2022, the Certificate program secured a three-year grant to ensure up to 15 scholarships annually for the next three years. In the spring of 2022, 11 graduates with their Certificate and 15 fellows joined the Fall 2022 cohort.



The Boston Breastfeeding Coalition has actively supported service learning and leadership. Robust scholarships for mentored certificate programs, connected to service opportunities through the volunteer-led WARMLINE tele-lactation service and Baby Cafes experience overwhelming interest and strong continuity of community leadership.

We awarded 23 Peer Community Lactation Scholarships in 2022. Approximately 6 scholars completed a 4-month online training process for the Certified Lactation Counselor Certificate and 17 engaged in the ROSE community transformer training and a third day designed and facilitated by a group of leaders from the Boston Breastfeeding Coalition. Scholars were supported by a leadership team which included two community champions who served in lead mentor and facilitator roles. Scholars were paired with mentors and engaged in weekly group meetings and monthly scholar support nights, the majority of which were co-led by community leaders. Scholars go on to volunteer in the volunteer-led Baby Cafes throughout Boston. Through the COVID-19 pandemic, lactation support Baby Cafes were fully operational via zoom. The support location peer counselors, CLCs and IBCLCs provided the breastfeeding mothers of Boston was unwavering. This year several cafes transitioned to hybrid and in-person options, while the majority have remained virtual. Scholars shared resources, advice, and collaborated through a mobile text messaging group, and had expanded resource guides and tools shared on the civic engagement platform.

### *Baby Cafe Collaboration with BFEN*

We collaborated with the Boston Family Engagement Networks (BFEN) to create a Beautiful Baby Cafe Pop, a one time baby cafe where Spanish-speaking families could learn about and receive lactation support from Certified Lactation Counselors (CLC) Scholars. BFEN hosted several Spanish Beautiful Baby Cafe Pop in the winter and spring of 2022.

The Social Justice Mediation Program (SJMP), led by three community champions that serve as Co-Directors, engaged the alumni group of over 150 mediators in ongoing professional development, role plays and began strategic planning for virtual mediation offerings. SJMP also created a self-organizing text messaging group to share mediation related resources and opportunities and strengthen connections across alumni. In December 2022, 25 of the alumni convened for a day-long social justice mediation refresher training led by Leah Wing and Deepika Mayra. This alumni refresher session re-engaged nearly 20% of the alumni over the past eight years.

This past year, Supportive Trauma Interventions for Educators (STRIVE), a collaboration between VVN and Child Witness to Violence Project, provided over 10 online workshops on trauma-informed practices for Boston Universal Pre-K early educators, family engagement coordinators, and parents/caregivers to support increasing their collective capacity to identify, respond to, and optimally support the unique needs of young children who have been impacted by trauma exposure.

**10+**

**online workshops on trauma-informed practices for Boston Universal Pre-K early educators, family engagement coordinators, and parents/caregivers**

**90+**

**educators and family engagement coordinators attended workshops, who reach 500+ UPK families**

The STRIVE Team has also supported the infusion of trauma-informed practices, and integration of an understanding of racism and trauma, and cultural assets that promote resilience and healing into two preschool curricula.

## *National*

This year we launched our inaugural Community Food Systems Fellowship Program, a year-long fellowship for local community food systems leaders who are committed to food justice, equity, and centering community leadership in their work to develop resilient and equitable local food systems. The program pairs peer learning and capacity building with participatory co-design principles and was co-designed through strategic partnership with a group of 19 local and national food systems advocates, experts and practitioners on a National Advisory Board. The 2022 cohort consisted of 14 local leaders across 13 states who engaged in regular peer learning sessions and virtual design labs to develop a Roadmap for community powered food systems, lifting up collective recommendations, guiding principles, and practices to share with the field. Fellows also showcased their work at the 2022 National Community Leadership Summit.



### *Community Food Systems Fellows Feature*

2022 Community Food Systems Fellows were featured in a multi-media storytelling project and the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's 2022 State of Childhood Obesity Report](#).

As part of an accompanying landscape scan, Vital Village conducted 50 stakeholder interviews from participants across the nation to better understand community-level and grassroots food systems efforts that exist at the intersection of community power building, resident leadership development, and healing and resilience within local food systems.

### 2022 National Community Leadership Summit (NCLS)

In October 2022 Vital Village Networks hosted its 9th Annual National Community Leadership Summit, themed *Crafting Our Legacy: Collaborative Action for Love, Liberation and Joy*. The summit included four plenary sessions, 13 breakout sessions, two fireside chats, and many more opportunities for community champions of health equity and child wellbeing to connect with and learn from one another. Our featured keynote speakers included social justice leader and movement strategist Tamika D. Mallory, as well as Omari Maynard and Bruce McIntyre of the Hulu documentary "Aftershock". Key topic areas for the 2022 Summit included birth equity, health, food systems – featuring Vital Village Networks 2022 Food Systems Fellows, and justice. We welcomed over 400 registrants representing the United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil and more.

### Data Equity Symposium:

The 2022 Summit also featured our first Data Equity Symposium as a pre-conference. Attendance was capped at 60 participants, with a waiting list of over 50. We welcomed 57 participants to a half day session seeking to build equity and strengths-focused, and socially and culturally diverse research, data-sharing, and evaluation capacity and expand collaborative partnerships in this realm.

### Accessibility with Tech Goes Home

To advance accessibility to the summit, technology justice scholarships were offered to provide equipment and training. Ultimately, 11 scholars graduated from the Tech Goes Home 10-week training. Scholars created social media tools and personal finance trackers during the course to support their social enterprises. The scholars felt that the experience was of value, experiencing an increase in their confidence in using technology:

Before:



with 4 or 5/5 confidence rate

After:



with 4 or 5/5 confidence rate



## 2022 NCLS BY THE NUMBERS:

509

*Registered Attendees of the 2022 NCLS and Data Equity Symposium*

322

*Live Attendees at the 2022 NCLS and Data Equity Symposium*

9.8

*Overall Score out of 10*

11

*Countries Represented*

90-Day Challenge Tool and the Now Playbook: Transformative Community Capacity to Advance Equity

- *Cooperative Funding Strategies:*

Exploring justice and dignity-centered approaches to funding community transformation using Vital Village Networks' *Dignity-Centered Guide to Reflecting on Cooperative Funding Structures*.

Participants in these unique learning experiences were able to connect with like-minded community leaders from across the country to deepen their ability to practice dignity-centered principles in how they partner with peers, community members, families, and children.

During the 9th National Community Leadership Summit in October 2022, we launched a third cohort of the Beloved Community in Action Learning Journey series with Collaborative Leadership for Social Justice 2.0. This cohort consists of more than a dozen participants who've been eager to define collaborative leadership and focus on building their individual and team capacity to lead and serve with dignity.

### Beloved Community Learning Journey

In early 2022 we completed our first Beloved Community in Action Learning Journey Series, which consisted of two small cohorts focusing on Collaborative Leadership for Social Justice and Cooperative Funding Structures. Each cohort spent six months exploring what their respective aspects of *beloved community* look like in daily practices and operation, utilizing processes centered in human design and dignity, along with tools developed by Vital Village Networks in partnership with community leaders.

- *Collaborative Leadership for Social Change:*

Exploring and building capacity to apply principles of dignity, equity, and justice to drive change in partnership with the community you seek to serve using Vital Village Networks'





# COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING & SOCIAL CONNECTIVITY

Cultivate community opportunity structures and curate resources and tools that promote systems transformation and advocacy

## *Civic Engagement and Leadership Platform*

This year we designed and launched our civic engagement and leadership platform. The intent of the platform is to capture civic engagement and volunteerism across the network, to improve support of engagement with community members and expand ownership of civic leadership data by community members, and consolidate data systems.

Community Peer Lactation Scholars are now able to track leadership pathways (certifications, training, and hours toward certifications). Breastfeeding Scholars each have their own profile and dashboard to track their progress

towards IBCLC and CLC certifications and manage documentation such as academic courses and clinical hours. 49 Scholars have hours logged in the system

The platform enables real time evaluation of civic engagement and volunteer experiences as well as workshops and training. Reports informed and facilitated real time programmatic changes including informing workshop topics, modifying training materials, and empowering civic leaders with their own volunteer statistics and certifications. Visualizing network-wide civic engagement and programmatic metrics helps guide alignment and synergy to promote optimal engagement and opportunities for civic leaders

## *Greater Boston*

### **Network Connection**

The Greater Boston VVN has made headway in advancing racial justice and equity through dignity-centered tools, resources, and shared spaces. Network Connection Meetings were co-designed with community leaders and partner organizations and focused on areas of interest outlined by network members. One meeting featured a youth leadership panel exploring intergenerational mental health and harvested action steps that enable families and communities to support and foster spaces that promote mental health and wellness.



## Youth Leaders Panel

During the March Network Connection Meeting, we collaborated with Community Partners Fields Corner Community Collaborative and Vital CxNS to feature a panel of 5 Youth Leaders ranging from ages 13–18.

Village Strategists of Boston, a community champion leadership team, utilized a co-design process to support peer-led community discussions, and developed a leadership team infrastructure that proactively supported the wellness, self-care, and diverse personal and professional responsibilities of leaders. In collaboration with the Male Engagement Network (MEN), partners supported advocacy efforts and collectively contributed ideas to the City of Boston Black Men and Boys Commission and two members of MEN joined the Commission.

CONtexts, our free text messaging service geared towards expecting and postpartum individuals, and parents of newborns and young children, shared over 117 resources through weekly messages with its group of 160 users. In 2022, we launched Spanish language messages in addition to English. Weekly messages promote social connections, share health and wellness information, and disseminate family-friendly community events.

Weekly messages include:



### Monday Resources

At-Home Dad Network to connect stay-at-home dads with social support and education

### Wednesday Wellness Tips and Information

CDC guidelines for keeping young children safe from RSV/Flu/Covid

### Friday Family Fun Events

Boston Children’s Museum free infant admittance

The Boston Breastfeeding Coalition’s Black Breastfeeding Week Committee hosted thirteen supportive and affirming community-led events to raise awareness, advance equity and highlight the leadership of Boston’s Black breastfeeding families. The launch event integrated three languages. The committee leveraged social media to launch a campaign to raise awareness.

Vital Village collaborated with MEN@Home, a policy and advocacy initiative for men of color, and committee members of the new City of Boston Commission of Black Men and Boys at events and meetings, to work towards policies and resources that affect men and boys in Boston. Several members of the MEN Network were inducted as members of the Commission.



Vital Village Community Partnership (VVCP), a leadership team composed of 10 community champions, has a growing online presence and purposefully disseminates information and shares advocacy resources, community events, and opportunities to its 963 members via an established Facebook group. The VVCP Leadership Team supports social connections, resource networking, self-care and mental wellbeing by designing and hosting Game Nights and Wellness events. VVCP Leaders are active participants in community events, roundtables and campaigns and work in collaboration with community centers, churches and other local community-based organizations, aligning with existing efforts to inform more community members and families about the available resources as part of their engagement role.

### Mental Health Committee

Our Mental Health Committee has 62 active members, holding bi-weekly committee meetings and three active subcommittees focused on: Children’s Mental Health Storytimes, the Youth Mental Health Forum, and the May Mental Health Campaign. The committee has created several resource guides focused on mental health services and resources and social-emotional learning tools and curated booklists and articles for children and families to share during the holidays, storytimes, campaigns, and when community needs for collective healing spaces are heightened. The Committee is developing a charter to guide decision-making and efforts to support mental health across our network in the years to come.

In May 2022, we hosted our 5th annual May Mental Health Awareness Campaign. This included a panel discussion including community members, clinicians, parents, and social workers on lived experiences with mental wellbeing and action steps to gain support.

### *The Youth Mental Health Forum was hosted for the third year.*



The Children’s Mental Health Storytimes brings families together for book readings and activities focused on Social-Emotional Learning.

There were 4 community volunteer storytellers and 9 volunteer librarian storytellers from 8 Boston Public Library Branches, and community-based organizations, such as Read Boston.

**22 storytimes were shared**

**45 families registered for 1+ live storytime session**

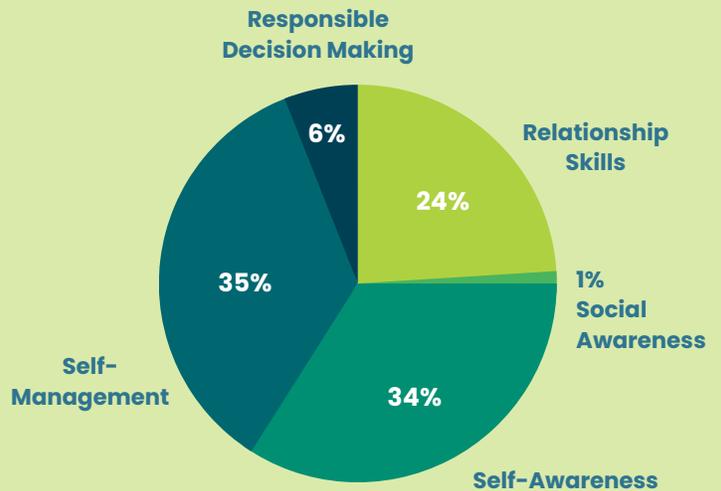
**>100 children served, estimate**

**1 bilingual storytime**

**1 Spanish language storytime**

The Children’s Mental Health Storytime Map was a tool created to capture various data points and disseminate the Storytime Facilitation Toolkit that serves as a resource for families and community organizations to create their own storytime sessions.

Percentage of overall themes during storytime sessions:



## National

### NOW Innovation Forum

The [NOW Innovation Forum](#) (Forum) serves as a central online hub to promote shared learning and networking across the field by bringing together resources, stories, discussions, innovations, and other interactive tools that help build the capacity of local communities working to ensure all children and their families achieve optimal health and wellbeing. This online resource has continued to grow in reach and impact, disseminating resources, stories, and tools that lift up community leadership and solutions across its growing online network of thoughts of users and hundreds of members, which span across the United States and beginning to expand globally.

- **There are over 400 members in the NOW Network who receive the monthly newsletter**
- **345 registered as NOW Forum Members to access additional resources and tools**
- **600 curated Community Leadership Resource Library Items**

### 2022 NOW Webinar Series

The 2022 NOW Webinar Series, *Levers of Change in Action: Unpacking the NOW Playbook*, in partnership with experts across the country, aimed to help groups move from idea to action by offering guidance on how to apply the NOW levers of change. These levers are critical to ensure the equitable transformation and alignment of community systems, and include: strategies to center racial equity and healing; implement shared governance and equitable decision making; engage communities authentically and with dignity; develop and disseminate data stories, and plan for sustainability.

To further support application of the NOW Playbook levers of support application of the NOW Playbook levers of change, the *2022 Webinar Series Reflective Action Guide*, was developed and distributed to registrants and attendees.

### In 2022:

- **We hosted 3 webinars, with 373 registered and 159 live attendees**
- **Since its publication, the NOW Playbook has been downloaded 566 times, 162 times in 2022**

### Storytelling through NOW Blog and Podcast Series

*In the Arena with NOW*, a serial podcast, seeks to elevate diverse voices, perspectives, and stories across the NOW Network, featuring engaging interviews with community residents, local leaders, practitioners, as well as national experts on critical issues impacting child health and education across diverse sectors. The 15 episodes continue to grow in listeners with over 1,600 listeners to date.



The NOW Blog series spotlights stories from the ground – commentary, reflections, and perspectives from practitioners, advocates, and community leaders engaged in work to advance health equity and child and family wellbeing. These stories seek to improve and increase the reach of innovative solutions, and contribute thought leadership to advance an equity agenda for children. In fall 2022, we launched a Leadership Blog Series to continue learning journeys sparked during the 2022 National Community Leadership Summit.

**NOW Signature Tools**

*Cooperative Reflection Guide:  
A Dignity-Centered Guide to Reflecting on  
Cooperative Funding Structures:*

Published in March 2022, the Cooperative Reflection Guide seeks to provide a framework for funders and their potential partners to think intentionally about the goals and outcomes of their relationship. Developed by 15 community champions who engaged in our Cooperative Design Lab over the year prior, the tool and the design team process were featured on the August 2022 NOW webinar, *Cooperatives as a Practice of Community Leadership*.

**The guide was downloaded 156 times in 2022**

**Supporting Community-Led Design of Equitable Systems**

Vital Village Networks led several collaborative action labs that centered community leaders as designers of systems change.

In collaboration with Ariadne Labs, Vital Village Networks designed and co-led five design workshops to co-develop the groundwork for a cross-sectoral coalition to improve health for people navigating pregnancy, childbirth and the transition to parenthood with a focus on communities of color in Greater Boston and released the report: “Enhancing Equitable Maternal Health in Greater Boston: Framework of Coalition Principles.”

Through a new grant from the William Penn Foundation of Philadelphia Vital Village Networks has convened a group of learning program leaders and community based organizations to develop a strategic plan for how they might collaborate to better serve Philadelphia children and families. During 2022, the National Partnerships team at Vital Village Networks conducted an environmental scan of how early learning programs and community based organizations currently serve children and families and launched a strategic planning process using human-centered, participatory methods with a local, Philadelphia-based design team.



# DATA STORYTELLING

## Expanding strength-based communications, resource mapping, and shared data across our network

The use of data, its integration with technology-driven strategies, and all relevant tools and resources are increasingly weaved into our work.

### Data Storytelling Workshop

Data storytelling workshops used peer learning methodologies where participants shared case studies for group learning, practiced tutorials for new data tools, and engaged in breakout room discussions elevating ways that data can be democratized for community-led systems change.

*In 2022 we:*

FACILITATED **3** WORKSHOPS, **2** INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS, & **14** BI-WEEKLY 1:1 OFFICE HOURS

**43** *total registrants*

**17** *unique participants*

**65%** *attended more than one session*

**56** *total volunteer hours*

Reflecting on the workshop, participants expressed excitement for learning a breadth of data tools, and a strong interest in carving out space for deeper connections and dive into specific projects. Five workshop participants conducted oral presentations at the 2023 National Community Leadership Summit on topics including Black birthing journeys, parent leadership dashboards, community efforts to support high school graduations, and mapping community food pantries. In total workshop participants, 8 gave presentations at conferences symposia, and forums.

*“The content had practical applications”*

-Participant reflection



### Child Wellbeing Tracker 2.0

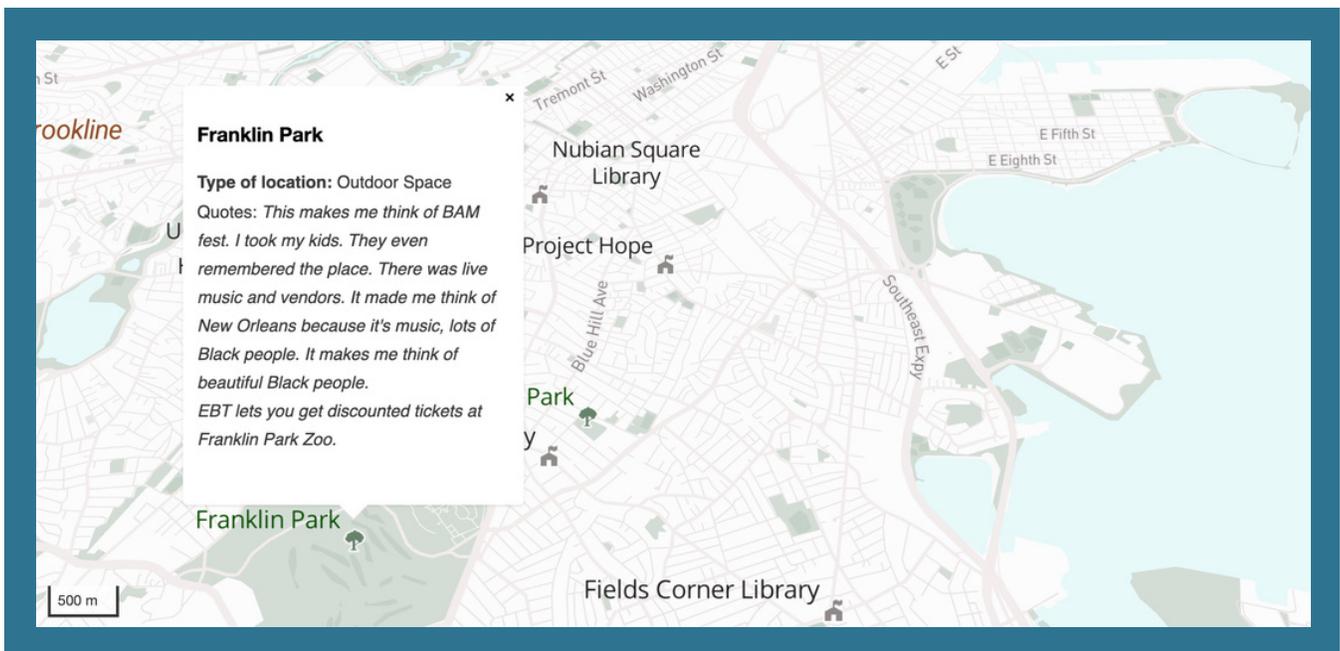
The adapted Child Wellbeing Tracker 2.0 data tool was completed in Fall 2022 and launched at the National Community Leadership Summit. The tool helps coalitions collect, store, and visualize their own data on personalized dashboards. This is part of an expanded effort to democratize data collection and ownership across network organizations and partners. The new data dashboard allows coalitions to track and visualize their shared impact by aggregating information from the Child Wellbeing Tracker.

## Greater Boston

In 2022 we launched a Community Data Ambassador program and three data ambassadors were selected to engage in this first cohort. The leadership team facilitated the Vital Village Community Data Workgroup sessions over a 4-month period. The ambassadors conducted outreach, agenda drafting, and meeting facilitation over six months, collaborating to identify a topic and implement a data project. The work culminated in a presentation at the National Community Leadership Summit, highlighting a tool used to collect and share community experiences on MBTA services.



A participatory mapping exercise was conducted at the 2022 STEPS Young Parents Celebration with young parents where. Participants shared bright spots in communities to then digitize and share the map as a resource using a new participatory mapping toolkit.



In 2022, the Vital Village data program expanded the accessibility and usability of our data tools and services, including the Community Housing Data Tool and Abundance Boston. In the past year we developed a new web-based version of the Boston Abundance App that highlights community food resources alongside city environments such as community gardens, bike paths, and parks. Vital Village's 2022 practicum student conducted a systematic review and redesign of our Abundance outreach strategy. The Youth Ambassadors helped us expand the Abundance App outreach through local food pantries, supermarkets, community events, and social media. By strategically partnering with new community partners and organizations, the Abundance App was shared with more families and youth in Boston.

### *Language Justice*

Practicum student and Youth Ambassadors expanded the Abundance App's outreach resources for Mandarin and Vietnamese speaking families.

We engaged four Boston Public School students through the Boston Successlink program, in summer employment. In their role they helped to engage the community in a feedback survey at over 15 community events and a virtual food justice conference, culminating in a data dashboard highlighting community-defined successes and areas for improvement in the current Abundance strategy. We hosted several community meetings to engage families in developing solutions to improve the Boston Abundance App.

- **400+ locations are available in the Abundance App**
- **Closed food programs have updated long-term partnerships, including 7 new partnerships**

### *Community Food Systems Fellows*

We also collaborated with Community Food Systems Fellows to co-develop an Abundance for Partners template to allow community members to visualize food resources in their communities by maintaining data in a Google Sheet.

[Vallejo Food Systems Map](#) is an example created by a partner in Vallejo, California.



The data program offered two comprehensive practicum opportunities as a part of our emerging leaders program to students pursuing their Masters in Public Health, focused on expanding and evaluating the Abundance food justice app and expanding our spatial data visualization capacities. In an effort to elevate community leadership and resources in data stories around health disparities, our practicum student rebuilt maps that highlighted community gardens, bike/walking paths, and cooling centers on maps around cardiovascular health and exposures to extreme heat, in a new user-friendly template. As emerging public health leaders, these graduate student interns learned critical community engagement strategies, including co-designing data tools with network members and staff and how to sustain collective efforts.

# PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

**Building the evidence to improve child health and educational equity**

## **B'more for Healthy Babies**

In 2022, the CRADLE Lab led a participatory research project for the B'more for Healthy Babies (BHB) initiative to gather the experiences and opinions of clients and staff of BHB's resource referral program, Healthcare Access Maryland (HCAM), and provide this input in order to strengthen outreach and inform care coordination strategies. This intensive participatory research process engaged BHB and HCAM care coordination administrative staff and clients in the design of the study, qualitative interview guide, surveys, and analysis of data.

*In 2022 we:*

- **Conducted 26 participatory research meetings with the BHB and HCAM teams to plan, implement, and adjust the project**
- **Interviewed 15 HCAM staff and 26 clients to collect their input and reactions to resources, systems, and programs that make up the healthcare infrastructure in which BHB exists**
- **Held 2 share out sessions to present emerging themes and gather initial reactions and feedback to the preliminary findings of the project**

## **CRADLE Lab Research Dissemination**

The CRADLE has been intentional about disseminating our work through academic and community facing platforms. Several members of the CRADLE Lab team had abstracts accepted for presentations at national meetings in 2022, including the Pediatric Academic Society and American Public Health Association. These presentations, based on early findings from the CK-Ready Study Supplemental Questionnaire, highlighted the impact of social, economic, and health-related stressors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Increased childcare responsibilities and challenges paying for basic needs were positively correlated with caregiver loneliness, even when adjusting for time and phase of the pandemic. Another analysis focused on inequities in multilingual assessments of child expressive language development.



## GROWBABY Research Network (Group Wellness Visits for Babies & Families)

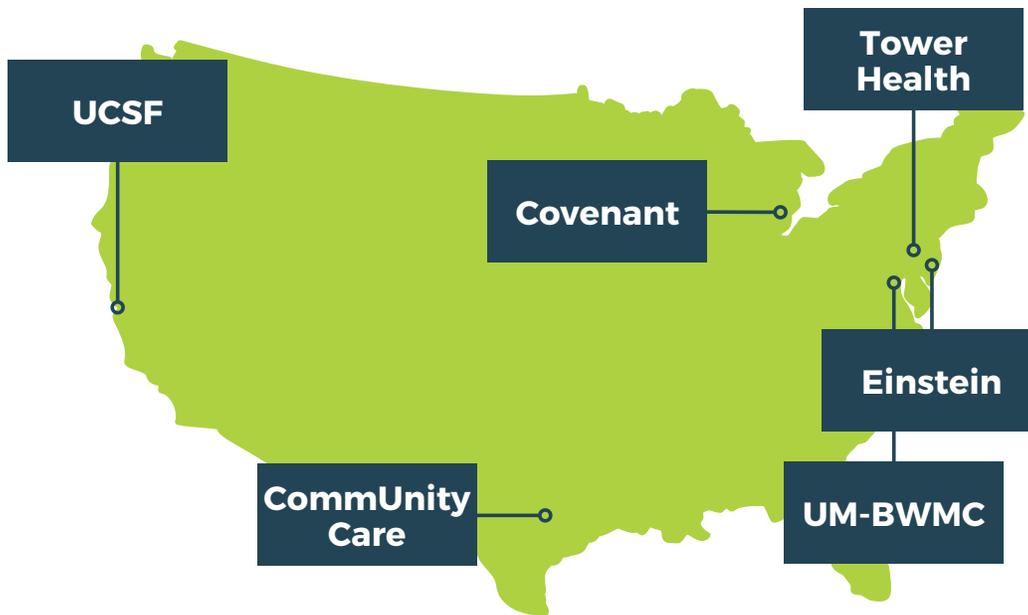
The GROWBABY Research Network successfully launched two pilot studies:

1. A research network case study of adaptations during the COVID-19 pandemic
2. A multi-site, electronic medical record (EMR-based) project exploring health care utilization, immunizations, and developmental health of children enrolled in group well-child care.

A new manuscript describing the development and unique value of the GROWBABY Research Network was published in the *Maternal Child Health Journal*.

Four members of the GROWBABY Research Network presented at the Integrative Medicine for the Underserved Conference, *Decolonizing Medicine*, in October 2022.

### *The GROWBABY Network:*



- University of California San Francisco (UCSF)
- CommUnity Care - East Austin
- Covenant Community Care - Detroit
- University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center (UM-BWMC) Women's Health Practice
- Tower Health: Reading Hospital, Children's Health Center
- Einstein Medical Center Philadelphia - Pediatric and Adolescent Ambulatory Center

# ON THE HORIZON: 2023 & BEYOND

In 2023 we will host our 10th annual National Community Leadership Summit. This milestone summit marks a decade of sustained commitment to co-designing spaces where communities and individuals of color lead the way. A central impact of the summit is transforming our understanding of the landscape of strategies communities leverage to optimize child wellbeing. To ensure our work continues with purpose and impact, we will engage our members to create a new 5-year strategic plan.

In the year to come we aim to enhance our social impact through intentional investments in the following areas:



## *Dignified Data*

A national cohort of community partners piloting the updated Child Wellbeing Tracker to collectively develop and share metrics for child wellbeing across geographies.

## *Community-Led Participatory Research*

Advancing parent and family leadership in developing evidence that can advance equity in early childhood systems by expanding capacity in community-based participatory research approaches led by caregivers.

## *Birth Justice*

Cultivating community-led solutions for improving social supports and services for birthing families by facilitating cross-sector collaborations focused on improving birth equity and justice in Greater Boston.

## *Coalition Governance*

Expanding our role in guiding and developing coalitions through co-design processes by working with community and state-level coalitions focused on expanding equity during the prenatal period through the first three years of life with coalitions in several states across to the US.

## *Accessibility*

Increasing opportunities for social connections and expanding accessibility through hybrid engagement models, enhancing language offerings and further integration of language justice models.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*We thank you  
for your  
continued support.*

## Grants:

1434 Foundation  
AmeriCorps  
Burke Foundation  
Doris Duke Charitable Foundation  
Gisela B. Hogan Foundation  
J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation  
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
Tara Health Foundation  
The Boston Foundation  
William Penn Foundation

## Sponsorships:

Massachusetts Breastfeeding Coalition  
Massachusetts PPD Fund  
Massachusetts General Hospital  
New England Blacks in Philanthropy  
Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere  
Stronger Generations  
The Spears Family Foundation Fund  
The Social Innovation Forum  
United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley  
Zahirah Nur Truth Arts

## Individual Donors:

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