



A Promise in the Heart of Boston

Portraits of the Dudley Village Campus



Boston
Promise
Initiative



June 2014



Boston
Promise
Initiative

Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative would like to thank the families at the 466 households who participated in this survey. Your willingness to share information about yourself and your children will guide us in collaborating with you, schools, program providers, businesses, policymakers, funders, and others to implement strategies that address the priorities that you helped us identify.

We would also like to thank the Boston Promise Initiative Organizers, who embody our vision of true resident leadership. They stayed committed throughout the winter, in the evenings and on weekends, and after many closed doors. They did so because they understood the importance of using data to inform community change. They persevered with smiles in their voices and brought back not only completed surveys, but countless stories that provided rich insights into the neighborhood.

Lastly, a very heartfelt thanks to Goodman Research Group for ensuring a survey process that met research standards, while also staying true to the principles of DSNI. You have helped to build the capacity of our residents as researchers and move forward our goal of becoming a data-informed community.

It is our hope that this report will do all of your efforts and openness justice.

Boston Promise Initiative Organizers

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BPI Survey Coordinator

Leah Lentini Winters

Portraits of the Dudley Village Campus

For the past thirty years, residents of the Dudley area have been rebuilding their neighborhood literally from the ground up. Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative's (DSNI) major accomplishment has been, and continues to be, organizing and empowering residents to create and implement a shared vision. If community stakeholders, under the leadership of residents, are fully engaged and equipped to act collectively, then systems, policies, institutions, and the neighborhood will continue to be transformed.

As we begin to leverage new and ongoing partnerships through the Boston Promise Initiative (BPI), it is important for us to have a deeper understanding of what those changes have meant for all of the residents of the Dudley Village Campus (DVC) and how they are moving us closer to that collective vision of the neighborhood that we established 30 years ago.

Thanks to the dedication and hard work of our BPI Organizers – many of them residents themselves – and researchers from Goodman Research Group, we now all have a chance to witness the emergence of a living portrait of our entire community. The data presented to you in the following pages captures our residents' perspectives in a number of areas, including education, economic realities, community resources, and general quality of life. It reflects the most persistent challenges and powerful strengths of our neighborhood.

Our hope is that residents can use this information to empower their families and neighbors to organize around issues that matter to them. DSNI will provide over \$600,000 to organizations that can address the key needs identified within this report. Now, with the release of our first neighborhood survey results, we can engage around the identified issues with more accountability and foresight.

This neighborhood survey helps all of us – residents, agencies, businesses, schools, partners, funders, supporters – organize our community and plan based on the vision, the direction, the needs, and the stories of the children and families in our Roxbury and North Dorchester neighborhoods.

We welcome each of you and hope you will join us on this journey.

Peace and Progress,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christopher M. Jones'.

Christopher M. Jones
Executive Director
Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sheena Collier'.

Sheena Collier
Boston Promise Initiative Director
Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) is a thirty year-old resident-led, nonprofit planning and organizing group in the Roxbury and North Dorchester area of Boston. DSNI's mission is to empower Dudley residents to organize, plan for, create, and control a vibrant, diverse and high quality neighborhood in collaboration with community partners. In order to realize the neighborhood's vision of a vibrant urban village, DSNI has organized to make significant strides in the areas of land control, affordable housing, local facilities, urban agriculture, youth development, and community building.



Birth to Age 5

- Healthy Births & Young Children
- Parents as First Teachers
- Access to Quality Early Learning Experiences
- Children Enter School Ready to Learn

K - 8th

- 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency
- Caring & Consistent Adults
- Aligning School & Out-of-School Time
- Community Voice & Parent Choice

High School to College & Career

- College & Career Pathways
- Youth Leadership
- Jobs & Community Service
- Engaging Disconnected Youth

Family & Community

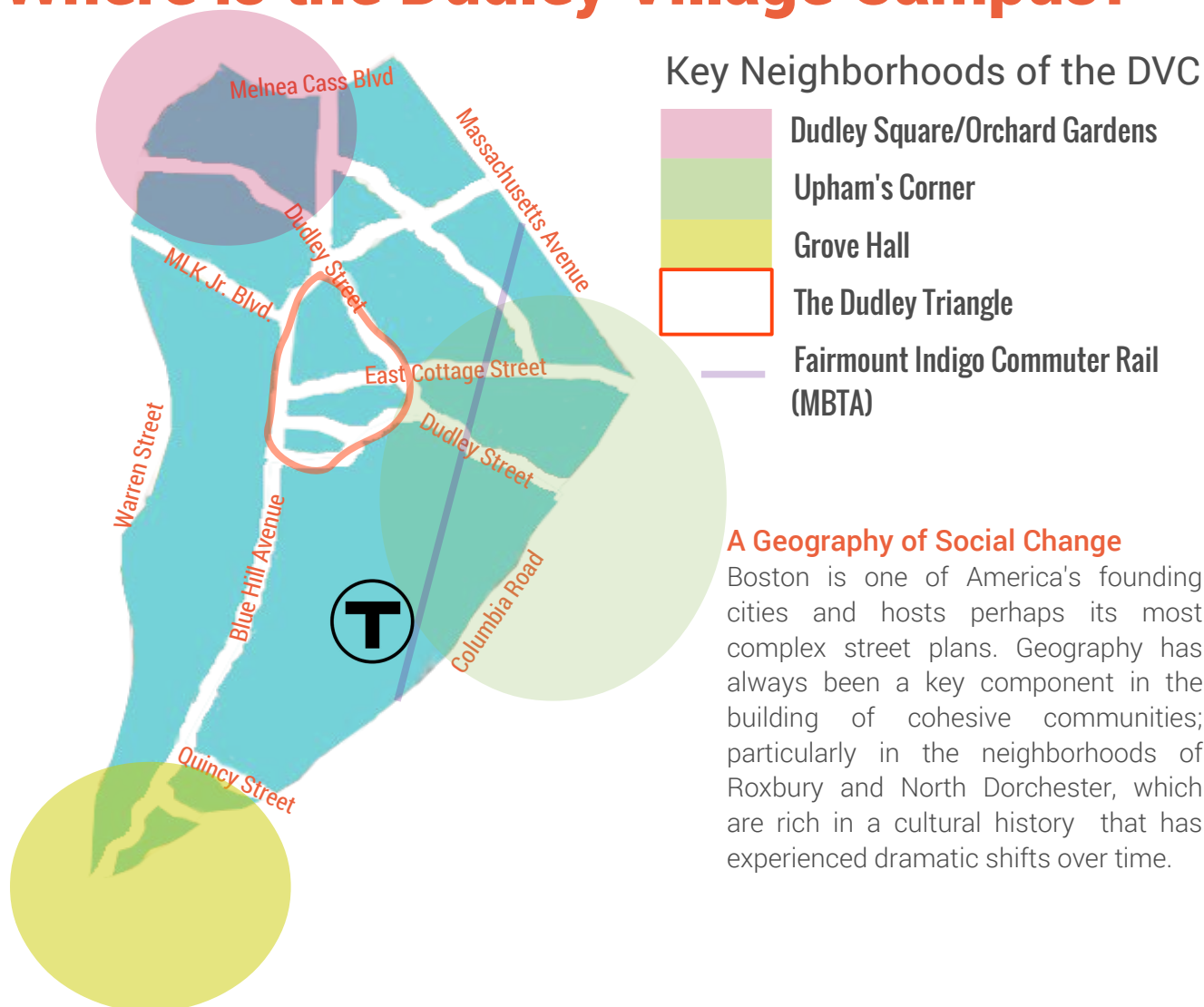
- Housing Stability
- Access to Healthy Foods
- Economic Mobility
- 21st Century Technology

The Boston Promise Initiative

The Boston Promise Initiative (BPI) is a strategy designed to create a community of opportunity - centered around strong schools, families, and resident leadership - that allows every child to learn, grow, and succeed. BPI seeks to transform our Roxbury and North Dorchester neighborhoods into the Dudley Village Campus (DVC), a learning environment where children are wrapped in high-quality and coordinated health, social, educational, and community supports from **cradle-to-college-to-career**.

Through BPI, DSNI and our community partners are connecting families, children, schools, and local institutions in new and meaningful ways. Our goal is to create a lifelong infrastructure, built by parent leaders and local partners, providing access to high-quality early childhood and educational opportunities, positive youth development, and college & career pathways in the DVC.

Where is the Dudley Village Campus?



Three City Centers, Two Corridors, One Triangle

The Dudley Village Campus (DVC) encompasses the DSNi neighborhoods (see map above) surrounding the Blue Hill Avenue and Fairmount Corridors, The Dudley Triangle, and three other major commercial and residential centers within the Roxbury and North Dorchester neighborhoods of Boston.

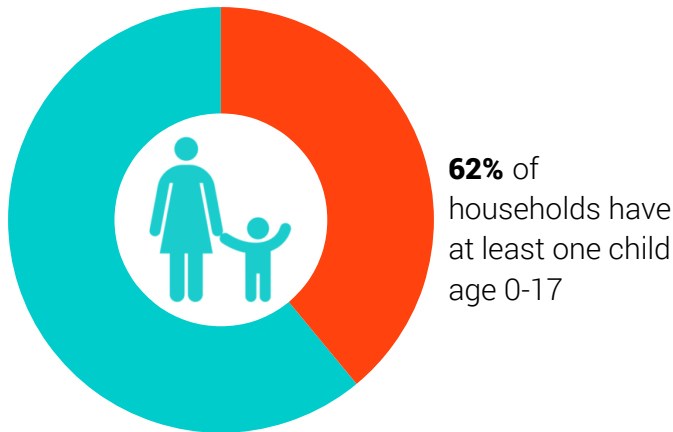
The DVC is bound to the east by Columbia Road from Grove Hall to Edward Everett Square; to the north via Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard, reaching Harrison Avenue in Dudley Square; and to the west by Warren Street, intersecting with Washington Street in Grove Hall.

A Dudley Village Campus Profile*

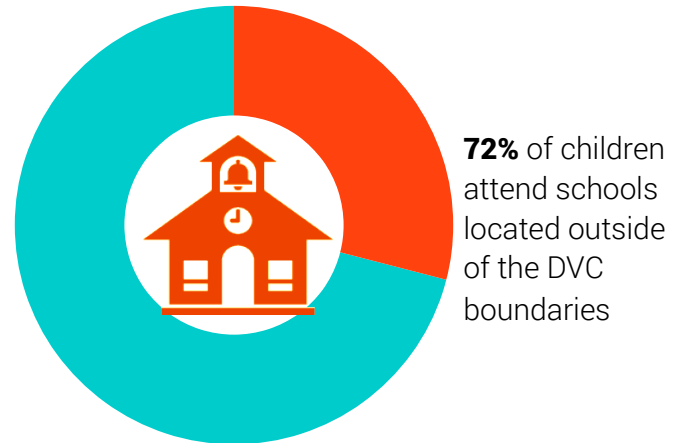
Total Population = 24,359

Total Children (Ages 0-17) = 6,903

Families with Children in the DVC**



Where DVC Children Attend School



Note: Data below refers to adult respondents



Demographics

70% are female

53% are African American

47% speak a language other than English at home

23% are Latino

20% are Cape Verdean (ethnicity)



Jobs & Income

54% earn less than \$25,000 a year

46% are employed full-time

27% are unemployed, temporarily laid off, or permanently sick, disabled, unable to work

8% earn \$75,000 or more a year



High School & College Completion

81% graduated from high school

16% attained a 2 or 4 year college degree

Use of DVC Institutions

66% ate at a restaurant in the last month

57% visited a health center

40% used a fitness center or gym



Technology & Internet Access

77% of children have access to the internet through a 3G/4G mobile device

68% have access to a home computer with fast internet access (DSL, Broadband, cable)

23% have access to a home computer with slow internet access (dial up)



Housing

77% of residents rent their homes

62% spend 30% of their monthly income on rent

42% have lived at their current address for 3 years or less



**All data represented in this report comes courtesy of Goodman Research Group's 'Boston Promise Initiative Neighborhood Survey Report', June 2014*

***DVC and Sub-Neighborhoods of Dudley Square, Dudley Triangle, and Grove Hall: Select Social, Demographic, and Economic Comparisons, July 2013, James Jennings, Ph.D., Tufts University*

Neighborhood Survey Methodology

Who did we survey?

We surveyed DVC residents who consented to participate in the survey and were either parents/guardians of children ages birth to 18 or adults who lived in “adult-only” households. We obtained valid responses from a grand total of 466 households. The results that follow are their aggregated anonymous responses.

How did we conduct the survey?

DSNI hired Boston Promise Organizers, most of them DVC residents, to conduct the survey between February 10, 2014 and April 11, 2014. Goodman Research Group trained the organizers, particularly on how to collect quality data and ensure every respondent’s confidentiality. The BPI Organizers were given nearly 1,000 randomly selected addresses, with no resident names attached. Organizers visited households in pairs or groups. The survey featured 67 questions and took approximately 20 minutes to complete. Residents who participated received a \$25 gift card. The hiring of residents as surveyors, as well as the gift cards given to households, invested nearly \$60,000 back into the families of the Dudley Village Campus.

Why did we conduct this survey?

The Boston Promise Initiative is being designed to leverage the strengths and assets already existing in the community, namely our residents. We want a “village” where children are surrounded by caring adults in a “campus” environment of continuous learning. The foundation of this vision will be built on five goals for whole community change:

1. **Strong and healthy families**
2. **Children entering school ready to succeed**
3. **Successful students and schools**
4. **Post-secondary completion and career readiness**
5. **Vibrant and thriving communities of connected residents**

DSNI and GRG designed and conducted the BPI neighborhood survey to better understand our progress towards our community vision. We need to know where residents are thriving and where there are barriers to positive outcomes.

What did the survey measure?

The survey measured various indicators related to our five goals for whole community change. We asked questions about developmental and educational outcomes for children (birth to age 18) and about adult’s experiences in the community (involvement, use of resources, social experience, economic stability, and family functioning). Some of these indicators are being measured across all federally-funded Promise Neighborhoods.



Our dedicated and effective team of BPI Organizers who helped to develop and conduct our first-ever BPI Neighborhood Survey.

On the Validity of Self-Reported Survey Data

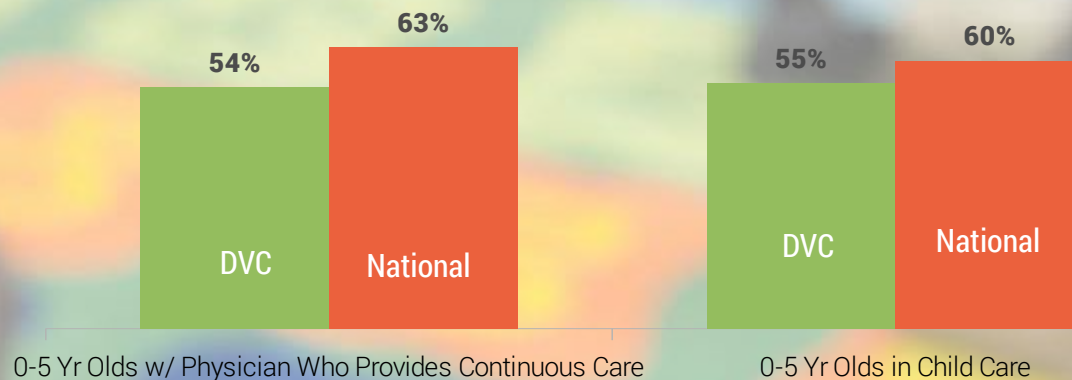
The BPI Neighborhood Survey is a tool that uses self-reported answers to a questionnaire in order to measure neighborhood outcomes. Answers to the questionnaire were obtained through in-person interviews with Dudley Village Campus residents at their home addresses. It is important to note that self-reported answers do have some validity limitations.

Answers to questions that ask respondents to indicate their opinion on a scale may be exaggerated. Respondents may be too embarrassed to reveal private details. Various biases may affect the results, like social desirability. For example, many of the respondents to this survey were parents, and, as parents, were asked to respond to questions about their child's medical care, education, and home care. Even while attempting to answer honestly, and even with the knowledge that the survey was conducted anonymously, it is fair to say that many parents would not want to “underperform” compared to other parents. This subconscious desire to provide socially acceptable answers could skew some data.

Self-report studies are also inherently biased by the person's feelings at the time they filled out the questionnaire. If a person feels bad at the time they fill out the questionnaire, for example, their answers will be more negative. If the person feels good at the time, then the answers will be more positive.

However, BPI Organizers were trained to alert residents to such biases in advance of answering the questionnaire. Each did their utmost to explain the importance of collecting honest answers from a large and random sample of DVC residents, assuring each resident of their motivation to collect valid data while remaining neutral toward any individual answers.

The DVC: Through a Child's Eyes



“55% of the children in the DVC – from birth to their first day of kindergarten – have consistent child care access, compared to 60% of 1-5 year olds nationally.”

- Boston Promise Initiative Survey Report, Goodman Research Group, June 2014

Children Entering School Ready to Succeed

High-quality early childhood care programs have consistently demonstrated positive societal outcomes over the course of decades, from reduced need for remedial and special education, to reduced incarceration rates, and lower rates of teen pregnancy.

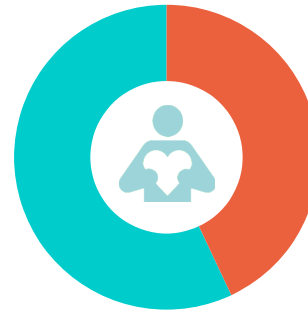
About half (55%) of children in the DVC, from birth to their first day of kindergarten, were in some form of child care for at least 10 hours per week. Of those children, 69% attended center-based care, while 26% are in a formal, home-based program (with two or more children), and 12% attend both throughout the week.

Differences in race/ethnicity are some of the leading factors in a number of early childhood and family literacy indicators.

Cape Verdean children birth to kindergarten entry were more likely to have a regular physician or healthcare provider (74%), while Black (44%) and Latino (52%) children were less likely.

95% of parents with higher income report reading to their birth – Kindergarten age child three or more times a week, compared to 69% of parents with the lowest income.

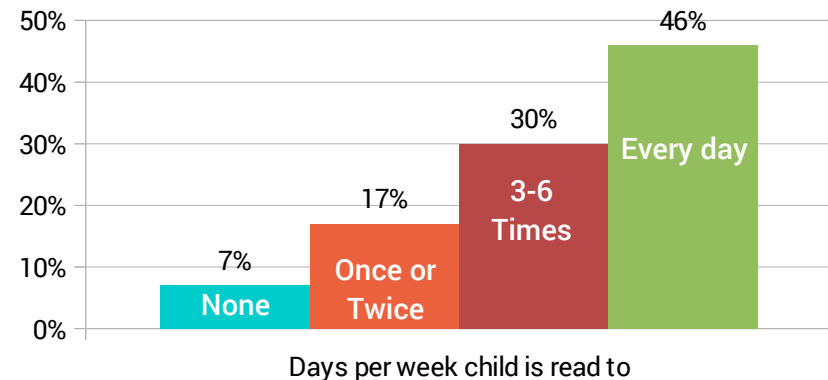
A Community of Caregivers



57% of children birth to age 5 who are in child care for at least 10 hours week, are receiving that care in informal settings - from a relative or nonrelative other than their parent/guardian.



Family Literacy

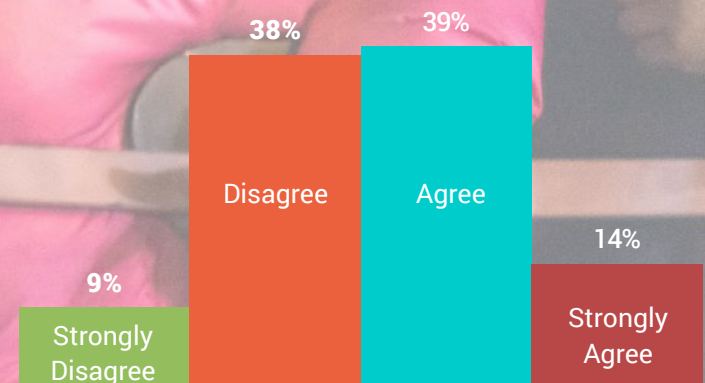


46% of parents/guardians, or another person in the home, are reading to children birth to age 5, every day

What Makes a Community Livable?

“Residents felt more positive than not about the neighborhood, with a majority who “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that it was close-knit and that people were willing to help their neighbors. In contrast, a slight majority disagreed that people in the neighborhood could be trusted.”

- Boston Promise Initiative Survey Report, Goodman Research Group, June 2014



This neighborhood is a safe place to raise a child.

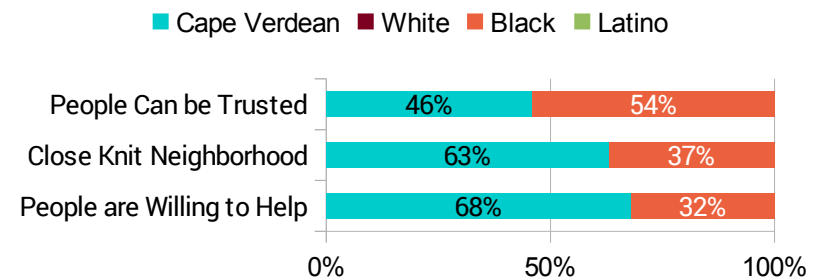
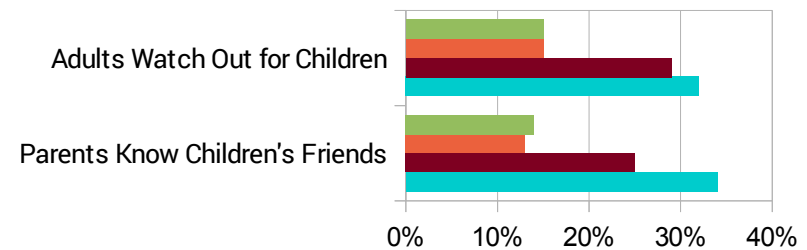
Vibrant and Thriving Communities of Connected Residents

Feeling safe, trusting your neighbors, and having access to essential resources are all important factors that help to create **livable communities**.

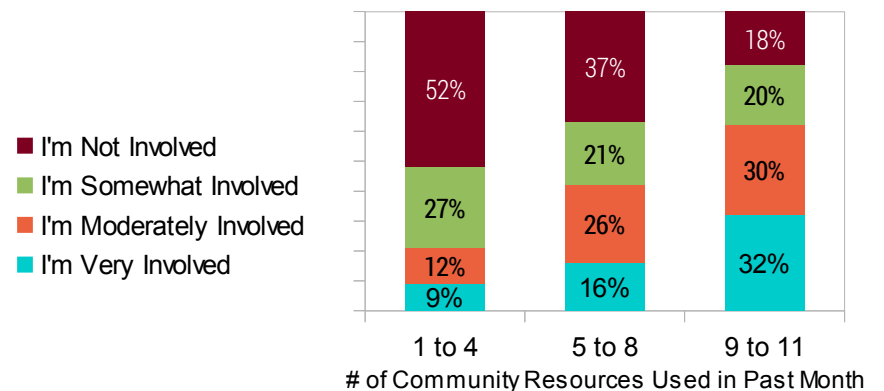
In the DVC, residents form relationships with their neighbors around shared accountability for children, but have concerns about safety. Cape Verdean and White residents are more likely than Black and Latino residents to experience the neighborhood as family-friendly; for example, agreeing that adults watch out for neighborhood children.

The majority of residents feel positive about the neighborhood, responding that they “agree” or “strongly agree” that they live in a close-knit neighborhood where people are willing to help their neighbors. However, there was also a slight majority that disagreed that people in the neighborhood can be trusted.

When residents are using more resources within the community (like a gym, health center, grocery store, or religious institution), they are more likely to identify themselves as “community-involved.”



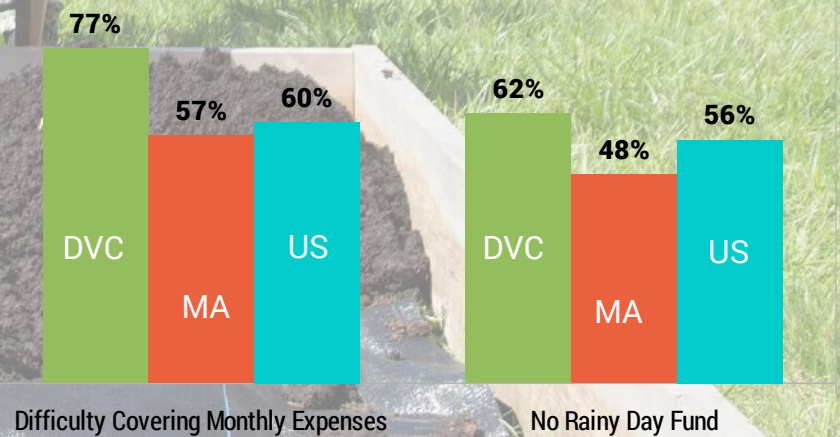
■ Agree ■ Disagree



The Need for an Opportunity Economy

“A majority of DVC residents have a hard time making ends meet and have no buffer against financial shocks.”

— Boston Promise Initiative Survey Report, Goodman Research Group, June 2014



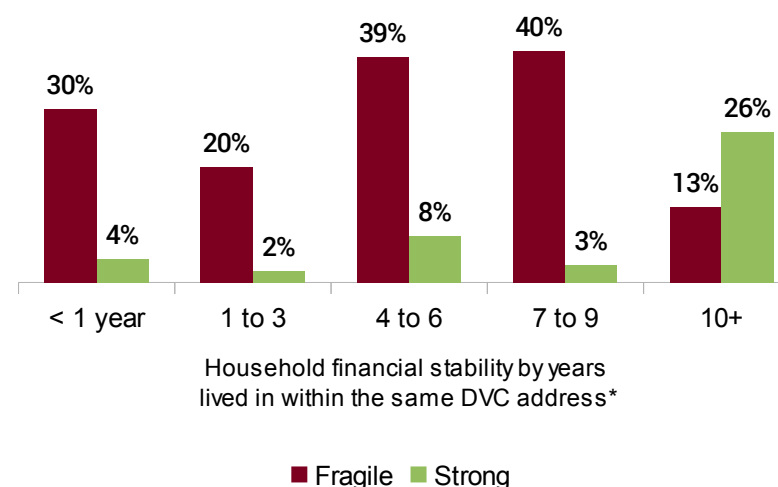
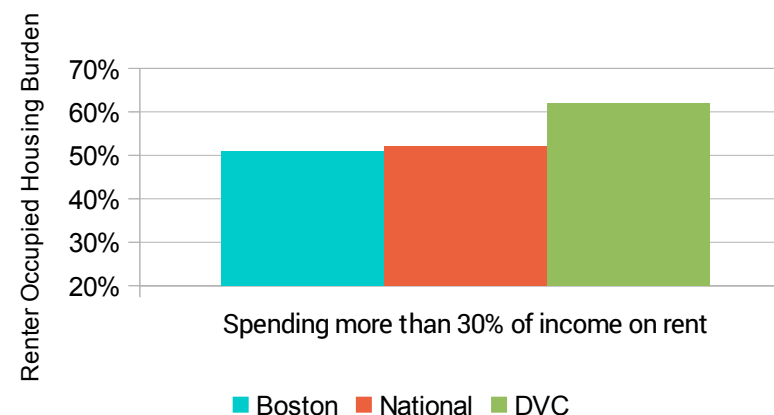
Family Finances & Neighborhood Stability

62% of residents do not have a rainy day fund; money set aside that would cover expenses for 3 months, in case of sickness, job loss, economic downturn, or other emergencies.

Along with that, DVC homeownership is low and the housing cost burden is high. More than half of households are burdened by housing costs, compared to 37% nationally. Of those families, close to two-thirds are renters (62%), nearly twice the percentage of homeowners (34%).

63% of DVC household can be described as “Financially Fragile” or “Financially Vulnerable.” Financially fragile and vulnerable households are defined as households which 1) find it somewhat to very difficult covering monthly expenses, 2) have no rainy day funds, 3) are renters.

Households with longer-term residents are less financially fragile, while households with children are more fragile (31%).



**GRG performed a cluster analysis to identify any natural groupings that emerged from standard of living data. They identified five “standard of living” segments. In ascending order of financial stability, these were: Financially Fragile (27%), Financially Vulnerable (36%), Coping Financially (18%), Managing Well Financially (10%), and Financially Strong (9%)*

Family Health & Well-Being

92% of DVC parents agree (and 84% strongly agree) with the statement, “I have confidence in my ability to parent and take care of my children.”

– Boston Promise Initiative Survey Report,
Goodman Research Group, June 2014

I know who to contact in my community when I need help.

41%

25%

I have confidence in my ability to parent and take care of my children.

84%

5%

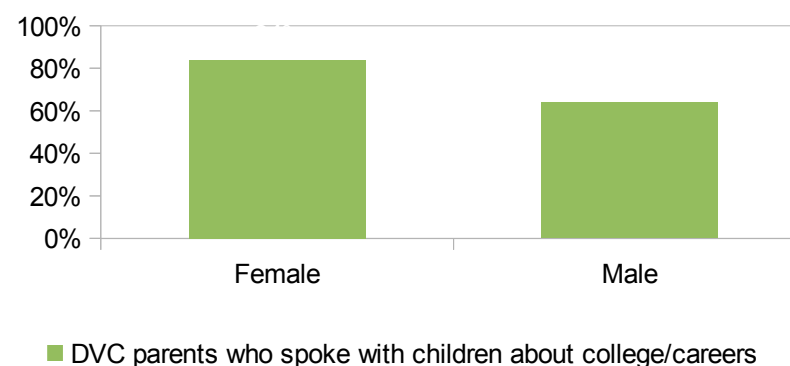
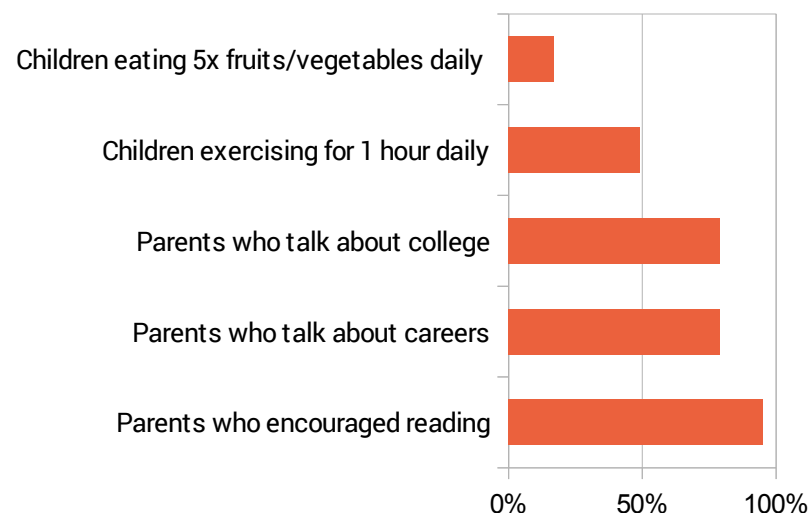
Strongly Agree Disagree

Strong & Healthy Families

95% of parents and caregivers in the DVC are encouraging reading outside of the school day. They reported they had read to their child (in kindergarten through 8th grade) at least three times in the previous week or their child had read to themselves or others in at least three times in the previous week.

Most DVC parents are talking with their high-school aged children about the importance of college and career. 79% reported talking with their child about the importance of college, 79% reported talking with their child about the importance of careers, and 70% reported talking about the importance of both. Female heads of household are 20% more likely than male heads of household to have these conversations.

17% of children are consuming at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day. About half of DVC children are eating fruit (54%) and vegetables (48%) at least once a day.



The Way Forward

Next Steps for DVC Residents

- Identify the survey results that you find most exciting and share with your family and neighbors.
- Identify the survey results that you are most concerned about and decide how you will take action to address it - as an individual, with other residents, or by partnering with a local organization.
- Send an email to boston_promise@dsni.org with your ideas on places where these results should be shared and ideas on action steps to be taken.

Next Steps for Schools, Community Organizations, Policymakers, and Local Businesses


- Share this report with your staff, board, and constituents to inform discussions about where you should allocate your time and resources (full survey report can be requested from DSNI).
- Identify the survey data that are most connected to the work that you do and set targets for how you will help to make improvements.
- Find out more about the Boston Promise Initiative and how you can become a partner in creating a community of opportunity.


Next Steps for DSNI


- Along with partner organizations, determine what we want to change over the next 3 - 5 years and what it will take to get there.
- Use the data to inform our *Investments in Neighborhood Change* priorities and \$300,000 grants that we award to organizations to serve DVC families and schools.
- Conduct this survey again in 2016 to determine if the strategies implemented through the Boston Promise Initiative have had a positive impact.


Learn more about the BPI & DSNI, today!

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