



Theory of Change

Springboard To Opportunities connects families living in affordable housing with resources and programs that help them advance themselves in school, work and life. We are practitioners, working on the ground and deeply embedded in community and guided by our radically resident driven model, ensuring all we do is informed by the voices and wisdom of our residents and implemented in partnership with them.

STO'S RADICALLY RESIDENT DRIVEN MODEL

STO HAS...

COMMUNITY TRUST AND RELATIONSHIPS

CONTENT EXPERTISE

NATIONAL PARTNERS

DIVERSE AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

DOES...

Springboard to Learning

Ensures children and their families can achieve their educational goals and develop big, bold visions for their future.

Springboard to Success

Supports adult residents in reaching their goals in school, work, and life.

Springboard to Community

Provides immediate stability and promotes social connections among resident families.

ACCOMPLISHES...

Individually

Residents have the tools needed to meet their goals in life, school, and work.

Community

Created connections foster a sense of belonging and encourage residents to take ownership of their communities.

Systems

Support person-centered policy that values the lived experiences and voices of residents and is informed by their stories.

VISION

Residents of affordable housing recognize their power to create change in their lives, community, and the larger social structures around them and feel equipped with the tools, resources, and support systems necessary to enact that change.

Definition of Terms

PROBLEM STATEMENT:

While affordable housing is an important starting point for many families, it is not enough to actually support families in breaking cycles of poverty. Social safety-net benefits and anti-poverty programs are often built upon assumptions and stereotypes that surround families living in poverty, particularly Black families living in poverty, rather than the actual expressed needs and stories of families. As such, these programs and policies fail to provide the necessary supports and tools that families need.

Minimum wage jobs simply do not provide the income needed to support a family, and the system for obtaining supplementary benefits is stressful, dehumanizing, and time-consuming. Issues like the benefits cliff effect, where families lose supplementary benefits almost immediately after an increase in income, often de-incentivize higher-paying employment and scare families away from building assets or entering into the financial system, ultimately preventing them from building wealth and savings for the future. On top of all this, the stress and trauma families experience from poverty can take a toll on mental health and make it challenging for families to prioritize their own or their children's well-being.

THEORY OF CHANGE:

Springboard offers a new model of resident services and poverty alleviation by developing programs and solutions that center residents and their stories. **Everything we do is centered in our radically resident driven model and ensures that residents are involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of all programming and services.**

Springboard recognizes that there is never just one thing that keeps families in poverty or prevents them from reaching their goals. Instead, the organization takes a holistic approach, working to deeply know and understand the different factors affecting a whole person. We provide support for families as they work to create change and reach their goals on an individual, community, and systems level, while simultaneously elevating their stories and voices to counter the harmful narratives that surround low-income families.

Our ultimate goal is for residents to recognize the power that they already have to disrupt these systems and make change within their own lives, communities, and the various systems that affect their day-to-day lives by providing the tools and supports necessary to enact that change.



Springboard To Opportunities Has...

The assets and tools we have as an organization that make us unique and help us accomplish our mission and vision

COMMUNITY TRUST AND RELATIONSHIPS:

Relationships are at the heart of everything Springboard does. In order for families to feel they are part of Springboard, share with us what it is they need, and participate in the services Springboard offers, we must first have trusting relationships with them. Low-income communities have been taken advantage of in so many ways that establishing trust takes time and commitment. Springboard has worked to establish a consistent presence and has on-the-ground staff at every community it serves who work hard to build those relationships and know what the communities need.

CONTENT EXPERTISE:

Springboard has been at the forefront of innovative ideas and initiatives to support low-income families since its very beginning. We developed an early model for community-centered and informed resident services, established one of the first and longest-running guaranteed income programs in the country, and continue to innovate and refine all we do based on feedback and insight from our residents. We have valuable models for implementation that we continue to use and others can learn from.



NATIONAL PARTNERS:

Springboard, at its heart, is a practitioner organization working on the ground in local communities. However, we know the voices and stories of our families need to be part of the national conversation concerning poverty alleviation and economic security. We have national policy, advocacy, and communications partners who help uplift the stories of our families and utilize their wisdom to inform policy agendas, national campaigns, and advocacy work.

DIVERSE AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS:

Springboard works to build a diverse network of local, regional, and national partners who can help in our mission to provide holistic support to residents. We partner with local banks to help residents reach their financial goals, like building credit and growing savings. We partner with local food banks, healthcare organizations, and rental assistance groups to make sure families can meet their basic needs and have stable housing. We partner with education nonprofits who provide tools and programs to support children and families in learning and development.



Springboard To Opportunities Does...

The strategies we use to advance our mission and vision

SPRINGBOARD TO LEARNING:

Springboard To Learning is about education for children and their parents, ensuring families have the tools and resources they need to support learning at school and in the home. We not only stress the importance of a good education but the value of life skills and helping youth recognize their power to become leaders in their communities. When kids don't have a safe place to go after school, we make one. When youth are struggling through insecurities, we help them find community and confidence. When parents don't know how to help their children succeed in school, we give them the resources to do it. In addition to providing individual services, we are committed to elevating parent voice through parent councils, fellowships, and connections with community organizations within school systems and neighborhoods to help transform them into places where all children have the tools and supports they need to thrive. Families feel heard; their experiences are valued; and they are equipped to make the best choices for their kids.

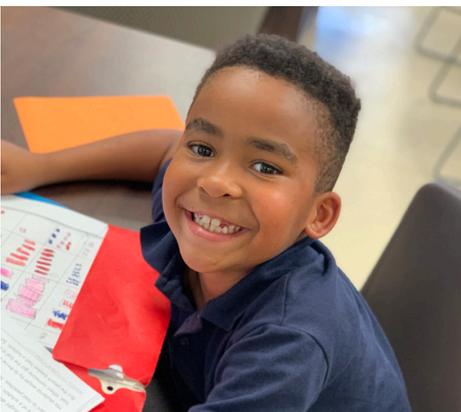
SPRINGBOARD TO SUCCESS:

Springboard To Success empowers residents to take steps to achieve their short- and long-term goals, such as furthering education, career development, and finding economic security. Low-income residents face a host of extra barriers as they begin to work toward their goals. Together, we identify those barriers and develop programming and services that help residents overcome them and build sustainable plans for success. If residents

feel overwhelmed with all they need to do, we help them plan. When there are setbacks, we help residents keep going. When there are successes of any size, we celebrate together! In conjunction with these programs, we partner with advocacy and policy organizations to share the stories of our families and advocate for better economic security and social safety-net policies that value family voice and experience and are based in trust, rather than derogatory narratives that surround low-income families.

SPRINGBOARD TO COMMUNITY:

For most of us, a flat tire is a bad day. What if a flat tire made you lose your job? How would that affect paying for food or rent? These kinds of financial emergencies add an additional burden and stress to families who are already just trying to get by. That's why Springboard To Community creates a safety net for residents of affordable housing with immediate assistance. By building a system of support within the community and with property management, we ensure that residents have stable housing, feel safe and connected within their community, and their needs are always being met. We also help build in a network of support and help residents gain a sense of ownership over the community where they live. This creates social connections and commissions of residents who support Springboard in planning, deciding how to spend programming funds, and building community amongst residents. These connections foster a sense of belonging and help everyone feel safe.



Springboard To Opportunities Accomplishes...

What we expect to achieve based on our strategies and the work that takes place

Recognizing the interconnectedness of individual lives and larger systems, Springboard knows that to achieve its mission of helping residents achieve their goals, there also must be transformation happening at a community and systems level. As Springboard implements programming, services, and supports across its three strategies, the goal is to create change across all three levels.

INDIVIDUAL:

On an individual level, Springboard To Opportunities connects families living in affordable housing with resources and programs that help them advance themselves in school, work, and life. We do this by working directly with families, as well as by establishing strategic partnerships with other organizations and community partners that align with Springboard's values and help residents achieve their goals.

COMMUNITY:

Many residents feel powerless within their own communities and struggle to see a way to create change. We create programs and events that help foster connections and relationships between residents helping to create a sense of belonging and understanding amongst neighbors. These connections help residents feel that they have a network of support that can be essential for anything from needing emergency child care, landing a new job, or having someone to lean on in difficult times. As residents start to recognize the commonalities between

their goals and hopes for their community and those of their neighbors, they start to see the power that comes in working together and advocating for change, growing in their confidence to be leaders in their own communities.

SYSTEMS:

The policies created at a local, state, and federal level are often some of the biggest barriers residents face in reaching their goals. Policymakers and those in power are often disconnected from the people they are supposed to be serving, and policies are based on assumptions and stereotypes placed upon low-income families rather than the experiences of families themselves. We partner with policy organizations and advocacy groups who are able to share and uplift the stories of our families with those in power and create recommendations for better, more inclusive policy. But beyond this, we also work directly with residents to help them see their own power in bringing about change. Through fellowships and leadership opportunities at Springboard and partner organizations, residents are equipped with the resources, supports, and connections necessary to start advocating for their needs and begin to transform systems.

Vision

The dream we are always striving for in our work

Through all our work, our ultimate goal is ensuring residents of affordable housing recognize their power to create change in their lives, community, and the larger social structures around them and feel equipped with the tools, resources, and support systems necessary to enact that change. Residents are at the center of all Springboard does, and ultimately, we want them to recognize their agency to transform the world around them and live a life where they are able to flourish. When we say we believe residents are the experts on their own lives, we mean it. We know the power and wisdom each of our residents has and hope with Springboard's support, they - and the rest of the world - will recognize it, too.