

Leader of the Pack



City of Boston is the First to Select the DAP, Exclusively Available in SurveyTrax

At A Glance

Challenge

City of Boston sought a solution that would further improve the collection and use of data to support its results-oriented approach to youth development.

Solution

Boston is the first to select the Developmental Assets Profile (DAP), exclusively available in SurveyTrax. This solution is the result of a newly formed alliance between Search Institute and nFocus Solutions.

Results

The DAP, available in SurveyTrax, will give Boston Centers for Youth and Families and Boston After School and Beyond the ability to:

- Access an automated, electronic evaluation of how the City's young people are faring
- Quickly and cost-effectively administer, score and analyze DAP results
- Easily re-administer the DAP every three months to measure longitudinal data
- Make targeted improvements that will drive high-impact results
- Integrate multiple, external data points with DAP results to gain even greater insight into what kids need to succeed
- Provide funders with the proof they need to provide resources for successful programs and services



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City of Boston is the First to Select Search Institute's Developmental Assets Profile (DAP), Exclusively Available in SurveyTrax from nFocus Solutions



Mayor Thomas M. Menino's commitment to helping children and their families is undeniable and unwavering.

Mayor Menino and the City of Boston are at the forefront of bringing positive, meaningful change to the City's most vulnerable and underserved populations. Through the creation of innovative programs like

the Mayor's Youth Council and Youthline, a peer-to-peer listening and resource hotline for young people, Boston understands what works – and what doesn't – when it comes to giving children, teens and families the resources they need to succeed in school and life.

A New Approach

This results-oriented approach to helping youth and improving the collection and use of data is the reason behind the City of Boston's decision to take advantage of the newly formed partnership between Search Institute, a widely recognized research orga-

nization dedicated to discovering what makes kids thrive, and nFocus Solutions®, a leading provider of innovative solutions and technologies that drive improved performance management and outcome measurement. The partnership is based on combining Search Institute's renowned Developmental Assets Profile (DAP), the most widely used approach to youth development in the United States, with nFocus Solutions' advanced SurveyTrax application.

Two divisions within the City of Boston that will benefit from the joint solution offering include: Boston Centers for Youth and Families, which operates 35



facilities focused on providing a range of early childhood programs, school-aged and adult education, family literacy, violence prevention and intervention, senior activities and recreation programs; and Boston After School and Beyond, the City's out-of-school intermediary that currently leverages nFocus Solutions as the backbone for BOSTONavigator – a database that houses extensive out-of-school-time information and opportunities for Boston families, schools and program staff.

What is the DAP?

The DAP is grounded in extensive research in youth development, resiliency and prevention and considers the relationships, opportunities and personal qualities that young people require to avoid risks and thrive in today's world. Studies of more than 2.2 million youth in the United States consistently show that the more assets they have, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviors. Consequently, they are more likely to succeed in school and beyond. Research indicates that Asset measurement is a better predictor of high-risk involvement than factors such as poverty and belonging to single-parent families.

The DAP's 58-item survey measures the following eight categories of Developmental Assets using reliable and valid tests:

- **Support:** Measures whether children have caring adults in their lives, which may include parents, neighbors and/or teachers.
- **Empowerment:** Asks questions about how safe children feel at school and at home, as well as their perception of being valued and appreciated.
- **Boundaries and Expectations:** Hones in on whether a child feels he or she must abide by boundaries and expectations set at home, in school and in their neighborhood.
- **Constructive Use of Time:** Evaluates whether children are involved in outside activities, like sports, clubs, music or art programs or religious groups.
- **Commitment to Learning:** Asks questions related to whether children care about school

and completing their homework, as well as appreciate learning new things.

- **Positive Values:** Seeks to understand if children value taking responsibility for their actions and helping others, are honest and have respect for others and their community.
- **Social Competencies:** Measures a child's willingness to express his or her feelings, establish relationships with others, say no to activities or suggestions that are dangerous and can find positive ways to deal with hardships.
- **Positive Identity:** Measures a child's self-worth.

"The DAP is key to understanding a child's social and emotional wellbeing, as well as ensuring that organizations and communities continue to provide effective and impactful programs for the youth they serve," said Kent Pekel, Chief Executive Officer of Search Institute. "Our alliance with nFocus is a step in the right direction to ensure that organizations like the City of Boston have the tools they need to understand what is working, what is not and to ultimately get to outcomes faster."

Advanced Survey Functionality

Integrating Search Institute's DAP assessment tool into nFocus Solutions' powerful SurveyTrax application allows for an automated, electronic evaluation of how the youth in the City of Boston are faring. SurveyTrax is a web-based survey tool that allows users to create custom surveys from scratch or from existing templates like the DAP. With sophisticated branching of questions and skip-logic, SurveyTrax provides deeper analysis of critical information with the flexibility to customize the application. Users can be confident the information they collect is secure with options to password protect surveys or mask identifying information.

"We are honored to partner with leaders like Search Institute and the City of Boston to bring innovative tools to market," said Ananda Roberts, President of nFocus Solutions. "For more than 17 years, nFocus Solutions has provided community-based organizations, government organizations and public schools with data management and business intelligence software that help them achieve clear, well-defined results that change the world. Launching this joint solution with Search



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Institute is a watershed moment for our Company. I am confident that it will 'change the game' in terms of improving youth outcomes."

Seamless Integration

In the City of Boston's case, information obtained by using the DAP will be integrated into its BOSTrax data management system. An important tool developed by Boston Centers for Youth and Families, BOSTrax integrates GIS tracking information into nFocus Solutions' advanced data management system to effectively geographically track the en-

rollment, participation and attendance of the City's youth in all programs – from the arts, to community and civic engagement, education, sports, recreation and wellness.

Next Steps

The City of Boston expects to deploy the joint Search Institute and nFocus solution in early 2013. As a result, Mayor Menino is confident Boston will gain a new level of visibility into what is helping or hindering the development of its young people.



"We're in the business of helping all of Boston's children thrive and grow into productive members of society. Data is crucial because it helps us make sure we are putting the time and resources into the most effective programs that deliver the best results for our young people," Mayor Menino explained. "Investing in technology like the joint Search and nFocus solution not only allows us to better understand what factors help children succeed, but also provides data that can be shared and utilized across a number of other organizations within the city."

Daphne Griffin, City of Boston's Chief of Human Services and the Executive Director of Boston Centers for Youth and Families, added, "With the long-time support of nFocus Solutions, we have laid the foundation with BOSTONavigator and BOSTrax to collect and analyze information that shapes how we approach a variety of social issues. Adding the joint DAP/SurveyTrax application to our impressive resume of technology and solutions is the next step for us to continue on the path to improving the lives of children and their families in Boston." ■



About nFocus Solutions®

nFocus Solutions is dedicated to the development of innovative technologies and intelligent business solutions for the public sector. We are a leading provider of applications, services and technologies that community-based organizations, government agencies and public schools rely on to make their organizations more effective. Our high-quality data management and analysis software enable nFocus Solutions clients to achieve clear, well-defined results that change the world. Visit nfocus.com or connect with us on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to learn more.