



The Resident Health Advocate Toolkit

Boston University School of Public Health Partnership in Health & Housing

A Prevention Research Center Tool Showing Evidence of Effectiveness

FAST FACTS:

- Initiated in 1986, PRCs do practical public health research with at-risk communities to promote health and prevent diseases, such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, HIV/AIDs, and obesity.
- The PRC program currently consists of 26 centers nationally, which are housed within a school of public health or a medical school that has a preventive medicine residency program.
- For every \$1 invested by CDC in 2014, PRCs received an average of \$8.60 in additional funds allowing for additional research projects and more innovation in public health.

OVERVIEW

The Resident Health Advocate program works to improve the health of public housing residents, a group who are at risk of a variety of health issues and who frequently cannot afford health insurance and proper medical care.¹ Each year, the Boston Housing Authority chooses public housing residents to serve as health resources within their respective communities. Their 14-week program trains resident health advocates on basic health information about common diseases, tools to discuss these conditions with their neighbors, and how to guide residents to health resources.

The Resident Health Advocate Toolkit, which was developed by the Partnership in Health and Housing as a model for other agencies, includes program advertisements, a resident health advocate application, a baseline survey, training modules, a post-training survey, an evaluation, an internship description and materials, and PowerPoint presentations.

RESEARCH RESULTS

A 2007–2008 study showed a correlation between the use of resident health advocates and a higher rate of participation in medical screening among public housing residents. In addition, follow-up medical visits increased for those with positive screening results, from 15% to 55% in a year.²

TOOL LOCATION

<http://www.bu.edu/sph/research/research-landing-page/partnership-in-health-and-housing/resources/toolkit/>



REFERENCES

1. Digenis-Bury EC, Brooks DR, Chen L, et al. Use of a population-based survey to describe the health of Boston public housing residents. *Am J Public Health*. 2008;98(1):85–91. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2006.094912.
2. Rorie J, Smith A, Evans T, et al. Using resident health advocates to improve public health screening and follow-up among public housing residents, Boston, 2007–2008. *Prev Chron Dis*. 2011;8(1):A15. http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2011/jan/09_0103.htm. Accessed February 7, 2017.