

Boston PILOT Program

Lisa Jeanne Graf, written May, 2019, edited Dec 2020

Some Suggestions for PILOT Community Benefits.

Improving the educational outcomes of BPS students:

1. Some BPS partnerships are currently with non-profits. BPS could choose to not renew contracts with partners if their current estimated payments are not paid in full.
2. BPS also should not be paying for facilities rentals, etc.. with non-profits if money is owed. One solution would be for community benefits to include facility use by BPS students.
3. Therapy is sometimes paid for by parents using nonprofit partners. The parent's insurance is billed, and then the co-pay is paid for by families. One idea would be for the nonprofit to pay for family's copays when a family's insurance is used. Then in either situation a family is not paying for therapy and more students have access to therapy.
4. Poverty often impacts educational outcomes. Instead of just dealing with the results of poverty I think it would be a better idea to also try to lower the percentage of families in Boston who are in poverty. Families who are homeless could have a priority for these suggestions. More non-profits could offer more good paying jobs to BPS families. It could be considered part of community benefits. Income affects educational outcomes so movement in this area could help student achievement.
5. Have each fine arts institution partner with BPS to offer free passes for families once a year who go to BPS. The plus of this is that students who don't like crowds can go on quiet days and really enjoy the arts. Free days at Museums are not ideal for all families (especially families that are neurodiverse) since they tend to be very crowded which can be overwhelming.
6. Whenever possible help families improve their housing, and health. All nonprofits should have goals for directly helping the families in the Boston Public schools.
7. Ask BPS staff, families and students what community benefits they would like to see. A list of possible community benefits could be created through meetings that include community members and non-profit staff. One speaker at a city council meeting about the PILOT program suggested creating a database where needs are posted and non-profits could then choose from that list when providing community benefits. This is a great idea.
8. Hospitals could provide space for preschool care to Boston Public Schools. BPS could provide the teachers and classroom materials. This would be a benefit for hospital staff as well as for Boston residents.
9. The BPS initiative Build BPS needs swing space when buildings require repairs or construction. Community benefits could include offering swing space, trading a building with BPS or offering a building for a school.

Housing for College Students:

- For students that get off campus housing through landlords that have a relationship with a college, make sure landlords have fair rents and keep up their properties well. If not have the college stop that relationship. In the Fenway Northeastern has a relationship with a landlord that has a history of violations. This does not help the neighborhood. Colleges have influence to affect housing positively for other city residents.
- Universities could organize students as a group so that they could request certain rents for different sized apartments. This could possibly bring down housing costs if they worked together. If all universities did this as a group it would be even more impactful. Would this be possible or legal?
- Encourage more dorms
- Have a program to connect students and owners so that a student could rent in a room in a resident's home. That would free up some rental units in the city and give residents a little extra income. The zoning has changed to allow this but it would be good for there to be a registry for all colleges of potential rental options.

Employment for Boston Residents:

When possible have all jobs offered be for a minimum of \$15.00 an hour. Have this be rated and noted as a community benefit.

- Have hiring priorities be for BPS families, and families experiencing homelessness
- Have non-profits support unions

Employee Benefits for Boston Residents:

- One perk that I have because my husband works as a security guard at the Museum of Fine Arts is that I get to audit art classes at the Museum of Fine Arts that are not already filled in continuing education classes. I was thinking that if the classes were for credit I could have gotten a specialized certificate or gotten a masters, both things that would have benefited my arts career. Perhaps changing auditing to credit classes would be possible when classes are a work benefit. It wouldn't cost the institutions more money, or time, but it would help build up the careers of Boston residents which has great value.
- Some non-profits have partial tuition reimbursement as a staff benefit. It is given after a class has taken place, not before the class starts. This helps staff that are already financially strong, not those who need the help the most financially. Reimbursement directly from the institution to the school where classes are being taken would be much more useful for low-income staff.

Supporting Artists:

- Non-profits could exclusively purchase art by local artists.

A question - are non-profits doing harm in a neighborhood?

- If so, then their community contributions should be considered less than what they list.

Note: William Brownsberger has put forth bills two times to have non-profits in the state pay 25% in taxes. They were well received, and they are now being studied.