



MDC

Current and Recent Projects

► EDUCATION

Made in Durham: Building an Education-to-Career System

“Made in Durham” is a public-private partnership focused on enabling all Durham youth to earn a postsecondary credential and attain economically rewarding employment by age 25. Core strategies include: mobilizing top public, business, and community leaders; blending work and learning from middle school through postsecondary education; creating a system of multiple pathways for students and those who have dropped out; ensuring all career education and training meet employer standards; and building on Durham’s existing programs through improved data, funding, and organizational capacity. MDC is incubating MID as a stand-alone nonprofit, having provided background research and mobilized an unprecedented cadre of top business, education, and community leaders to guide the organization. Investors include: A.J. Fletcher Foundation, GlaxoSmithKline, Lumina Foundation, Wells Fargo, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of N.C., and Durham city and county government.

Strengthening Alabama’s Community College System

MDC is collaborating with the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education to execute a strategic plan to clarify their role and strengthen the performance of Alabama’s community college system. Since 2013, MDC has provided analytic research and engaged industrial, political, and business leaders to deepen commitment to the system’s three-fold mission of academic education, adult education, and workforce development.

Healthy Places North Carolina

MDC is working with the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust in its Healthy Places North Carolina (HPNC) initiative to find ways to incorporate community colleges as change agents in improving community health outcomes in distressed rural regions of the state. MDC is helping colleges develop and implement ways for the institutions to better provide health-related programming to their faculty, staff, students, and surrounding community and provide civic leadership to promote better health outcomes.

Partners for Postsecondary Success

A three-year demonstration project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to help four cities—Amarillo and Brownsville, Texas, and Charlotte and Raleigh, N.C.—bring leaders from education, business, philanthropy, and community organizations together to significantly increase the number of low-income youth who complete postsecondary credentials and get jobs. Brownsville and Amarillo continue their partnership work in response to improved outcomes, including the number of low-income youth completing high school, moving into postsecondary studies, and participating in work-based learning activities.

Achieving the Dream

MDC helped conceive and was the managing partner of Achieving the Dream—the nation’s largest, non-governmental community college reform effort ever—from its founding as an initiative in 2004 until it was spun-off as a stand-alone nonprofit in 2010. MDC oversaw development of a business plan, incubated creation of the new organization, and provides continuing support as a Founding Partner.

Mission: MDC helps organizations and communities close the gaps that separate people from opportunity.

Background: MDC is a nonprofit organization headquartered in Durham, N.C., that has been publishing research and developing programs focused on expanding opportunity, reducing poverty, and addressing structural inequity for more than 40 years. MDC’s focus is on: defining gaps and mobilizing leaders to create a will for change; demonstrating sustainable solutions and developing them into effective models; and then incubating them so they can be replicated at scale for maximum impact.

Our Organizing

Formula:

Education + Work + Assets = the Pathway to Opportunity

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► WORK

Linking Education to Careers in Northeast Mississippi

At the request of CREATE, a regional foundation, MDC is helping design an industry-funded, tri-county initiative in Northeast Mississippi to build a career readiness system anchored in K-12, connected to postsecondary education, and accessible to all students to spur local workforce development and living wage jobs. Toyota Wellspring Education Fund created a \$50 million endowment and CREATE is providing backbone support to this cross-sector initiative, now in its early stages of development.

The Integrated Services Delivery Collaborative

The Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) Collaborative is a partnership between the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, MDC, and United Way Worldwide to assist low-income working families achieve economic security through the seamless delivery of services and supports. The ISD Collaborative builds upon the tenets of the Working Families Success Network by aligning resources and organizations (i.e. community colleges, community-based organizations, and local United Ways) to leverage knowledge and resources, find efficiencies that will improve the service delivery system in a city, and ultimately the lives of low-income working families.

A Strategic Vision for the N.C. Rural Center

MDC worked with the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center to craft a new strategic vision for an organization that has provided support to and a voice for rural North Carolinians for more than 30 years. MDC helped craft the plan that created the Rural Center in the late 1980s, and the Center is at a critical point in its history and must make important decisions on how best to use its resources to meet the needs of those living in rural North Carolina.

Career Pathways for a Green South

A \$3.8 million green jobs initiative under the U.S. Department of Labor's "Pathways Out of Poverty" program to help low-income and disadvantaged populations attain economic self-sufficiency through good jobs in energy efficiency and renewable energy industries. MDC's leadership and technical assistance helped four community colleges in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia connect with workforce development boards and community-based organizations to build partnerships that cleared the path for individuals in poverty to move from skill-building to training to employment.

Working Families Success Network

A holistic approach to help low-income students reach financial stability and move up the economic ladder. Pioneered by the Annie E. Casey Foundation through their Center for Working Families® (CWF) initiative, the CWF offers an innovative framework to help families increase their income through education and workforce training, reducing their financial transaction costs through financial education programs, and building wealth by encouraging asset growth. As one of the leaders in development of the Working Families Success Network, MDC provides coaching and technical assistance on the tenets of the WFSN strategy to community colleges.

► ASSET BUILDING, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, AND CONSULTING

The Work Supports Initiative

MDC is building and demonstrating integrated systems to connect vulnerable populations with available resources. These systems combine MDC's technology, partnerships, training, and expertise to reach and connect vulnerable populations. One example is MDC's **The Benefit Bank® of North Carolina** initiative, which since 2010 has combined technology and outreach by local organizations, supported by MDC's training and expertise, to help low- and moderate-income families apply for over \$59 million in work supports (tax credits and refunds, public benefits, and student financial aid). MDC's other current demonstrations include the **NC Get Covered** website and **NC Navigators** (connecting uninsured people with health insurance) and **NC Vets Corps** (connecting economically vulnerable veterans and military families with resources and services through AmeriCorps members deployed with local organizations).

Middle Border Forward

MDC assisted the Danville Regional Foundation in developing a new, regional initiative aimed at improving the economic prosperity of citizens in three counties in southern Virginia and northern North Carolina. The effort centered on developing a new generation of community leaders through an initiative called "Middle Border Forward" that is pursuing activities aimed at enhancing growth for all citizens of the region and creating an organizational structure that advances its mission.

Passing Gear Philanthropy

Since 2003, MDC has worked with place-based community and private foundations to help them refocus their philanthropic program services to address the "upstream causes" of social inequities and performance gaps in education, employment, asset levels, and health using a signature methodology called Reflective Practice for Philanthropic Foundations. To date, MDC has helped foundations refocus more than \$1 billion in philanthropic assets in Florida, Virginia, South Carolina, and the Midwest.

► POLICY: BUILDING THE WILL TO CHANGE THROUGH RESEARCH

The State of the South: Building an Infrastructure of Opportunity for the Next Generation

MDC's flagship publication, published since 1997 and now a regularly updated website (www.stateofthesouth.org). The current edition calls on the region to develop and implement purposeful policies and systemic practices—an "infrastructure of opportunity"—to bolster the prospects for its 15- to 24-year-olds to achieve economic resilience as adults and a fulfilling social and civic life. It features analysis of state and regional demographic and mobility data and profiles of nine, varied Southern communities. MDC is currently developing programs to help communities strengthen their infrastructure of opportunity.