



Economic Mobility in Greater Boston

Greater Boston is often lauded as a prosperous region with a strong economy. However, the region consistently ranks near the top of lists for income inequality, and legacies of disinvestment and discrimination have created pockets of chronic disadvantage in Greater Boston’s neighborhoods. New data from the U.S. Census Bureau, with research from Harvard and Brown Universities, highlight that the invisible lines separating neighborhoods have long-ranging impacts on the children who grow up within them.

The Opportunity Atlas, an extensive, publicly-available data project, tracks the economic trajectories of children born between 1978 and 1983. It shows that children born to parents with low incomes in suburban areas in the MAPC region were more likely to climb the economic ladder than those born in the inner core. Yet within the inner

core, pockets of advantage and disadvantage are sometimes next door. Comparing these neighboring communities offers potential insights for positive change. Policies should bolster opportunity in neighborhoods where economic mobility is stymied and dismantle barriers that prevent low-income households from accessing housing throughout the region. This requires correcting historical and present wrongs that have maintained racial and class segregation and disadvantage.

The color gradient in this map represents the probability that a child born into a low-income household between 1978 and 1983 in a given census tract now lives in a high-income household—one with an income in the top 20% of the nation.