



University Archives and Special Collections Department

**Documentation Plan
for
United South End Settlements**



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INTRODUCTION

This plan is intended to help *United South End Settlements (USES)* effectively manage and transfer selected organizational records to the *Northeastern University Archives*. It identifies groups of documents to be preserved based on activities deemed significant as evidence of USES functions.

The plan consists of three sections:

- ANALYSIS OF THE ORGANIZATION
- LIST OF DOCUMENTATION GOALS AND SELECTED RECORDS
- METHODS FOR RECORDS TRANSFER

Although this documentation plan identifies specific records and outlines methods for their management and transfer, it should not be considered static or unchangeable. When needed, the plan should be updated to reflect changes in USES's functions, programs, and mission and the records they generate.

SECTION ONE: ANALYSIS of United South End Settlements

To provide context for records selection, this analysis consists of brief descriptions of USES's:

- History and culture
- Mission and functions
- Current organizational units
- Control of the institution
- Interaction with other institutions
- Comparison with other institutions of the same type

History and Culture

On January 1, 1892, Robert Woods opened Andover House (later South End House), the first settlement house in Boston. The mission of Andover House was to provide for the housing, health, and educational needs of the poor, working-class, and immigrant communities of Boston's South End. Andover House was followed by other settlement houses with the same emphasis on social service. In the middle of the 20th century, facing financial difficulties, some of the individual houses in the South End began to look for ways to better cooperate and support each other. In 1950, five settlement houses—South End House, Lincoln House, Hale House, Harriet Tubman House, Ellis Memorial & Eldredge House—and the Children's Art Centre federated, and a joint board was created. In 1960, the federation was formally incorporated (with the exception of Ellis Memorial & Eldredge House) to form United South End Settlements. Charles W. Liddell, executive director of the federation, was named the first executive director of USES.

USES's overall mission remained largely unchanged from that of the early settlement houses. Each house brought with it a long tradition of public service. Overseen by a single governing Board of Directors that included all the members of the former boards, this new organization was stronger, richer, more flexible, and more effective. USES faced its first major challenge with the proposed razing of the Castle Square area as part of an urban renewal project by the city of Boston. Castle Square residents had reacted with panic and outrage to the 1959 announcement of the clearance. USES, newly incorporated, accepted responsibility from the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) to relocate the 644 resident families and individuals out of the area. USES organized meetings with community members and, between 1962 and 1963, successfully relocated 90% of Castle Square residents to safe, standard housing, even assisting some in purchasing their first homes.

From the beginning, one of the major goals of USES was to encourage community participation and active, grass-roots leadership, to work from within the community and plan *with* residents rather than

for them. That goal was realized in 1964 when the South End community effectively challenged the Boston Redevelopment Authority's plan for re-use of the Castle Square area. The BRA's initial proposal allotted only one-third of the area for residential use. With the help of USES, residents pressured the BRA to double that amount. The second redevelopment plan created 540 units of low-cost housing, including 90 units for the elderly. This defeat of the BRA urban renewal plan was only one example of the increased community activism of South End residents during that time. Between 1959 and 1962, USES helped to organize 14 neighborhood associations and the South End Businessmen Association.

Since its inception, USES has been an active and versatile participant in the redevelopment and rehabilitation of the South End, taking part in all phases of the process from planning to execution. In the early 1960s, USES crafted a long-range plan for the development of the area called "Physical and Social Planning Objectives for the South End." This document articulated short- and long-range goals for the area and led to the formation of a new organization, Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD), to address the social aspects of urban renewal. In 1964, USES was awarded a \$205,300 federal grant to look into new and more effective ways to provide low-income housing. That same year, USES helped launch South End Community Development, Inc., a new non-profit corporation to acquire and develop low-cost housing. By 1966, USES was handling all relocation for South End urban renewal.

The development of affordable housing was only one of USES's early interests. Other concerns included health and sanitation, day care, education, and employment training. Each of the member houses provided both direct service and referrals, all from locations within the community. For example, the Community Services Center, employing a home economist, offered a wide range of services to families, such as home management and budget counseling. Project Outreach staff made door-to-door visits. For at-risk youth, USES has offered testing services, career counseling, vocational workshops, computer skills training, camping programs, and opportunities for artistic expression at the Children's Art Centre. USES was also instrumental in the development of O'Day Playground (named for prominent community leader Thomas O'Day) and the establishment of a social work and urban renewal library at 20 Union Park.

In 2007, USES's broad spectrum of programs reaches as many as 3,000 lower-income residents of all ages. Adults can receive free GED preparation or take classes in a variety of subjects, from business to sewing. Technology education and free computer access are available at the Timothy Smith Computer Learning Center. The Arts Incentives Program (AIP), just one of USES's many arts and culture programs, gives at-risk youth the opportunity to work with mentors and professional artists, exhibit their artwork, participate in interactive field trips, and produce the AIP newsletter, *In Our Times*. USES also operates a summer camp for urban youth, a variety of after-school activities, and an accredited pre-school with a strong literacy curriculum. Services for seniors include home repair, free tax preparation, health screenings, benefits advocacy, computer classes, exercise classes, social and recreational activities, and a daily lunch program.

This information was taken from the following sources:

The Development of USES: A Chronology of the United South End Settlements, 1891-1966, Albert Boer, 1966. United South End Settlements Records (M126), University Libraries, Archives and Special Collections Department, Northeastern University, Boston, Mass. Box 24, folder 7.

"Greater Boston Settlement Week: United Neighborhood Centers of America." United South End Settlements Records (M126), University Libraries, Archives and Special Collections Department, Northeastern University, Boston, Mass. Box 24, folder 7.

"Neighbors All: Settlement Houses and the South End: A Conversation with Frieda Garcia," *The South End Historical Society Newsletter*, vol. 30, no. 1, May 2002. United South End Settlements Records (M126), University Libraries, Archives and Special Collections Department, Northeastern University, Boston, Mass. Box 35, folder 36.

"United South End Settlements: The Story and the Scope," [1975]. United South End Settlements Records (M126), University Libraries, Archives and Special Collections Department, Northeastern University, Boston, Mass. Box 24, folder 7.

United South End Settlements, timeline, 1991. United South End Settlements Records (M126), University Libraries, Archives and Special Collections Department, Northeastern University, Boston, Mass. Box 24, folder 7.

United South End Settlements, website, <http://www.uses.org>. Accessed February 2007.

Mission and Functions

"USES's mission is to act as a catalyst, bringing together resources of participants, the community, and the agency to promote the stabilization and well-being of individuals and groups at risk within the community, nurture personal growth and development, build a sense of community, and foster an environment where all can thrive."

USES performs four basic functions:

1. **Administration and Development**
This includes governance, policy development and implementation, employee and volunteer training, fiscal operations, facilities maintenance and security, contracting, grant management, fund-raising, and budget coordination.
2. **Direct Service Provision**
USES provides direct assistance to seniors, adults, youth, and families in areas including housing and legal referrals, home repair, health screenings and advocacy, transportation assistance, telephone outreach, job and literacy training, child care, and counseling.
3. **Community Programs**
USES offers a wide range of educational and recreational programs, including pre-school and after-school programs, GED preparation, adult education, technology training, senior programs, field trips, and a summer camps for boys and girls.
4. **Arts and Culture Programs**
Located in the Children's Art Centre, the pre-school and after-school arts programs, classes for children and families, Teen Portfolio, John Hancock Arts in the Parks for Kids, and the Arts Incentive Program offer arts instruction and exploration, arts-based youth development, mentoring programs, and classes for adults.

Current Organizational Units

The **President/Chief Executive Officer** of USES oversees the operating budget which supports four facilities and funds the full spectrum of programs. S/he makes general programming decisions and determines the mission and strategic goals of the institution.

The **Development, Marketing, and Public Relations Office** is responsible for fund-raising, grants management, program promotion, special events, and publicity.

The **Business and Employment Office** maintains staff records and oversees employees. Internship and volunteer placement is handled by the **Volunteer Services Department**.

The **Board of Directors** consists of four officers—a chairperson, an immediate past chairperson, a vice chairperson, and a treasurer—and a number of directors and honorary directors. The Board maintains legal documents related to the institution as a whole and directs organizational development.

USES programs are administered by the **Youth Development Department**, the **Senior Services Department**, the **Adult Education Department**, and the **Technology Education Department**.

Control of Institution

United South End Settlements is a private, non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization with an annual operating budget of over \$3.2 million. It is overseen by a Board of Directors and funded through various government and private contracts and grants (including the United Way of Massachusetts Bay), contributions, and facility rentals. Through organizational partnerships, contributions, grants, and contracts, USES provides programs and services to low-income residents of Boston's South End, Lower Roxbury, and Dorchester area.

Interaction with Other Institutions

Since the early 1960s, United South End Settlements has developed cooperative relationships with many government, corporate, and private organizations. Many of USES's programs began as joint initiatives with organizations such as the Boston Housing Authority, the University of Massachusetts, Boston City Hospital, and Action for Boston Community Development. USES's current financial and programming partners include: the Adult Literacy Resource Institute, the Center for Teen Empowerment, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción, the Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services, Child Care Choices of Boston, the Boston Public Library, the Young Men's Christian Association, and many others. The United Way of Massachusetts Bay provides a significant portion of USES's funding.

USES is also a member of the Timothy Smith Network, a partnership of non-profit organizations in greater Roxbury receiving grant money through the City of Boston's Timothy Smith Fund. The mission of the Timothy Smith Fund is to bring technology education and computer access to residents of Roxbury by creating state-of-the-art technology centers throughout the community. USES's computer facility is called the Timothy Smith Computer Learning Center.

Comparison with Institutions of the Same Type

United South End Settlements is one of many social service organizations in Boston with roots in the settlement house tradition and a focus on a specific population or locality. The Roxbury Multi-Service Center (RMSC), founded in 1964, is a social service agency based on the settlement house model that serves residents of Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan. La Alianza Hispania was founded in 1970 as a multi-service advocacy organization for Latino residents of the Roxbury/Dorchester area. Ellis Memorial & Eldredge House continues its long tradition of educational, social, and health services to individuals and families. One organization very similar to USES is Federated Dorchester Neighborhood Houses, which was formed in 1965 when three settlement houses consolidated their operations.

The federation and later incorporation of USES marked the first time such an organization was formed, and USES has served as an example for other institutions of its kind. USES's programs are wide-ranging and comprehensive, with a strong focus on education, leadership, civic participation, and community building. USES boasts a stronger arts and culture program than many of its neighboring organizations, a flexibility that traditional social service agencies lack, and a proactive approach to social service that can uncover and respond quickly to specific needs. Over the years, USES has evolved to fill niches in the community and has developed many groundbreaking programs. USES's Community Services Center, established in the early 1960s, was one of the first to combine case work, group work, community organization, and inter-agency coordination. USES has been involved in technology education since 1985, and Camp Hale remains one of the premier residential camping programs in New England.

SECTION TWO: DOCUMENTATION GOALS AND SELECTED RECORDS

USES functions will be documented as they relate to its continued role as a social justice organization serving the needs of Boston's under-represented communities. Records selection is based on their historical significance, research value, and the administrative and legal needs of the organization. Emphasis has been placed on records documenting USES administration, program planning and operations, and fiscal development. Access to certain materials is restricted; researchers may apply to the Northeastern University Archivist for access to this material.

Documentation Goals

The selected USES records will document:

1. A community response to an unmet need.
2. The development and administration of a community service and advocacy organization.
3. The impact of a community-based social service agency on area residents.
4. The evolving focus of the organization through changing programs and services, and the decision-making involved in these processes.
5. The interconnections of a non-profit organization with affiliated agencies and contractual partners.

Selected Records Series

The following USES records have been selected for permanent retention. Records are listed under the office presumed to have control of them. The list is suggestive rather than prescriptive, and may be altered as needed. Electronic records will be preserved where no paper copy exists.

Board of Directors

Annual reports

Bylaws and amendments

Agendas, minutes, and attachments of annual meetings and of special and standing committees

Correspondence to and from Board of Directors, USES president, consultants and funders

Reports from board and USES presidents

Planning retreat meeting minutes and reports

Audits and annual budgets

President/CEO

Correspondence to and from Board of Directors, program directors, coordinators, and other USES staff, outside organizations, donors, and government officials

Program descriptions, reports, planning reports, and statistics

Personnel policies, procedures, and manuals

Organizational charts

Funding proposals and reports

Grants and contracts

Notes from meetings with program directors

Meeting notes regarding collaborative projects/programs with other organizations

Consultant reports

USES newsletters

Staff meeting minutes

Staff lists

Articles and newspaper clippings about USES

Development Office

Funding proposals, awards and reports

Correspondence to and from funding sources and staff

Strategic plans

Posters, photographs, invitations, and announcements regarding USES events

Program Directors

Program descriptions

Budget reports

Curriculum and syllabi

Student enrollment statistics

Brochures, flyers, posters, photographs, slides, negatives, film, video tape, and announcements regarding USES programs, including exhibits, Camp Hale, and the Children's Art Center

Correspondence to and from artists and exhibit coordinators

Artist biographies

Memoranda to and from president, program directors, program coordinators and staff

Business Office and Public Grants and Contracts

Proposals to government and private agencies

Award letters

Reports (interim and final) to funding agencies

Contracts

Correspondence to and from funding sources, president, and members of Board of Directors

Minutes / notes of meetings with program directors, president, and funders

Other

Blueprints, maps, and architectural drawings of USES-owned facilities

SECTION THREE: RECORDS TRANSFER

This documentation plan is devoted to the identification, retention, and transfer of **permanent historical records**. It applies to records in both paper and electronic format. It is a **general retention schedule** and does not prescribe specific time to transfer records. Rather, during a periodic review USES determines which files are inactive and thus ready for donation.

*Note: For a concise, practical overview of records management, please see:

An Introduction to Records Management for Non-profit Organizations by the Minnesota Historical Society, adapted by Northeastern University Libraries, Archives and Special Collections Department;

Northeastern University Archives and Special Collection, "Guide to Records Management," Available at <http://www.lib.neu.edu/archives/records/index.htm>.

Step One: Distinguish Current from Non-Current Records

- Current (or "active") records are used in day-to-day operations. Nonessential documents, such as routine memos or listserv e-mail, may be destroyed immediately after use. All others are filed. However, once these files are no longer relevant to basic office functions, records become non-current (or "inactive"). Non-current records of permanent historical value should be donated to the Northeastern University Archives.
- One of the most basic records management practices is "breaking a file." To break a file, start a new folder regularly, preferably every year, and apply consistent, meaningful labels. Breaking files helps in locating information while the records are active, and in discarding or storing records after they are no longer needed. It applies to both paper and electronic documents.

Step Two: Identify At-Risk Records

- At-risk records are materials threatened by identifiable vulnerabilities. They may require different handling from records which are not at risk.
- Electronic records are always at-risk. The first step in dealing with electronic records is to encourage personnel to care for them responsibly.
- E-mail, now a dominant form of correspondence, is especially vulnerable. Listserv, routine inter-office and personal correspondence is not of long-term value and should be deleted. Official correspondence, however, should be sorted routinely (i.e. monthly) into appropriately labeled (including dates) electronic folders.
- The best course of action is to transfer a copy to the Northeastern University Archives immediately after creation. It is strongly recommended that electronic records be sent before the hardware or software on which they were created and stored becomes obsolete or degraded. This may occur as quickly as three years after the document creation date.
- To ensure permanent preservation, the Northeastern University Archives prefers open, well-documented formats such as Text (.TXT, .ASC, .RTF), Portable Document Format (.PDF), Graphics Interchange Format (.GIF), TIFF (.TIF), Joint Photographic Experts Group (.JPG), Hypertext Markup Language (.HTML, .HTM), Standard Generalized Markup Language (.SGML), and Extensible Markup Language (.XML).
- The Northeastern University Archives will also give priority to updating certain popular proprietary file formats. These include standard Microsoft applications, such as Microsoft Word (.DOC), Microsoft

Excel (.XLS), Microsoft Powerpoint (.PPT); Text and LaTeX (.TEX), Visio (.VSD), and RealMedia (.RA, .RM, RAM).

- If the same record exists in both electronic and paper form, save the paper copy rather than the electronic copy.
- Photographs and audio-visual materials are of great historical value. It is best to label them in pencil soon after their creation, so identifying information is not lost.

Step Three: Identify Records for Transfer

- This step is made possible by an efficient file labeling system. File names, particularly electronic files, should be unambiguous and reflect document content or function. As with paper records, electronic file directories should be organized logically. It is easier to separate current from not current records if files are broken into regular intervals, such as year or month.
- Choose an annual date to review and transfer records.
- Review the documentation plan and the selected records series. Do personnel or program changes require altering the plan?
- At the specified time, each responsible party should sort through appropriate documents as indicated by the Selected Records Series in Section II. Segregate inactive files from current records. Once this is routine, the process will simply involve locating the oldest files still under RMSC control and determining which records, if any, should be exceptions to the yearly transfer.

Step Four: Create a List of Box or Disk Contents

Box and disk inventories are brief lists of the files found in a storage box or an electronic storage disk. It is easiest to create these inventories when the box or disk is filled.

Box inventories should include:

- Unique number*
- Name of the person, office, or group whose files are in the box
- Date the files were put in the box
- General description of the files, such as "Correspondence" or "Committee Minutes"
- Year-dates covered by the files
- List of folder titles (or item titles for audio-visual materials)

Disk inventories should include:

- Unique number*
- Name of the person, office, or group whose files are stored on the disk
- Dates the files were copied onto the disk
- General description of the files, such as "E-mail Correspondence" or "2004 Budget Spreadsheet"
- List of file folder or directory titles
- Name or type of computer system on which the disk was created. To aid the preservation of electronic records, it is extremely important to know what hardware and software were used to create files.
- Application software names and version numbers used to create the files

*Note: Unique numbers are needed to connect boxes and disks with their contents lists. These simple codes, such as BD-C-2004 for Board of Directors-Correspondence-2004, should be written directly on box and disk labels.

Step Five: Notify the Northeastern Archives that records are available for transfer

Once materials are ready for transfer or if you have questions, please contact the Northeastern University Archives at 617-373-2351, or email University Archivist, Joan Krizack, at j.krizack@neu.edu to schedule a pick-up time.