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Annie E. Casey Foundation, Atlanta Civic Site
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This summer, with the support of the The Sillerman Center, I worked as a graduate intern for the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Atlanta Civic Site (ACS). I am currently an MPP student concentrating in Children, Youth and Family Policy. Working for an organization which is "[devoted to developing a brighter future for millions of children at risk of poor educational, economic, social and health outcomes](#)" is an opportunity which I was thankful to have. The Atlanta Civic Site is a place based funder, which means it is located in the community which it serves. Doing this work in Atlanta was a personal pleasure for me because I learned so much about the history of policy decisions which shaped the lives of my family in our hometown.

From the first week of my internship I hit the ground running as a member of the Neighborhood Transformation team. On day two I went with my supervisor to a meeting at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta about Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs). On day three we went to "Investing for Impact in the Southeast", sponsored by the Council on Foundations. It was a gathering of philanthropic organizations, all who were place based funders and interested in positive financial and social returns on their investments. My first week was filled with so many opportunities to learn about how organizations are using their money to create social impact. It set the tone for an amazing summer!

My main project for the summer was the Community Investment Fund grant. CIF grants award up to \$5000 to community based organizations to pursue opportunities which further educational achievement, neighborhood transformation, family economic success or a combination of these goals. The Casey Foundation provides the funds, but a board of residents from the area reviews applications and chooses grantees. It was my job to communicate with applicants, create score sheets and feedback forms and facilitate the collection of applications. My internship allowed me to work with the board and experience what goes into the awarding process. I was amazed that staff members at ACS were truly removed from the decision making process. I think there are many organizations which say they give the communities they serve the agency to be involved in the decisions which affect them, but Casey really puts its money where its mouth is. I was so pleased to see Casey providing the resources and allowing community members to choose which projects they thought would best serve to better their neighborhoods.

In addition to my work with CIF grantees, my supervisor also gave me two small research projects to complete. Both of these projects dealt with 352 University Avenue, a 32-acre site owned by the Casey Foundation in Atlanta's Pittsburgh neighborhood. My first small project allowed me to learn about how foundations across the country have taken a role in economic development of underserved communities. For the second project, I researched local

hiring agreements to inform the one which will hopefully govern the work done at 352 University Avenue. This project gave me the opportunity to become familiar with First Source, Atlanta's newest local hiring rules passed by the City Council in 2013. I was able to use many of the skills I learned in the first year of my MPP program to read the legislation, find possible weak points, compare it to the flagship agreements in San Francisco and determine what could inform the creation of a stronger agreement for University Avenue.

One of neighborhood transformation's biggest events of the summer was the community safety workshop. This event happened because Casey had previously held listening sessions with community residents. These residents made it clear that they wanted to hear how other communities in the country were dealing with trauma and violence. The workshop brought in experts from across the country to discuss treating violence as a public health issue, trauma informed practice with regard to service providers, and more. This workshop gave me the opportunity to work with residents to discuss how these solutions could be applied in an Atlanta context. I also contributed to a blog post about the event for the Casey website.

This summer I worked with amazing people who took the time to invest in my learning. I did informational interviews with people inside and outside of our office. During one of these interviews, one of my colleagues told me, "Wherever you go, assess the culture of the organization within the first 90 days. Decide if it is a culture you want to blend in to, or if it's one you want to build." I was so lucky to spend a summer with Casey in a culture that empowers community residents, looks for feasible solutions to create better outcomes and makes newcomers feel like part of the team from day one.