

HOW ROOT CAUSE HELPS COMPANIES CULTIVATE SOCIAL IMPACT



Root Cause is a nonprofit consulting team that helps drive transformative social change. Our mission is to empower communities to build, improve, and sustain social change initiatives that enable all people to thrive. Since 2004, we've helped over 400 nonprofits, public agencies, philanthropists, and other funders achieve their goals while advancing racial and economic equity and justice.



326

Non-profit
Organizations

81

Foundations

43

Government
Agencies

21

Schools & School
Districts

9

Individual
Businesses

480

TOTAL
ORGANIZATIONS

Root Cause Helps Companies Strengthen Equity-Driven Philanthropy & CSR

We work with companies to support their nonprofit grantees, launch and manage new philanthropic initiatives, and engage local communities in company focus areas.



Designed, launched, and managed STEM equity initiative to increase educational opportunities for over 4,000 students and 600 educators in Massachusetts.




Strengthened nonprofit grantees in Boston and throughout the U.S. through technical assistance, peer-to-peer learning, and 1:1 coaching.



Developed an economic empowerment initiative in partnership with community organizations in Springfield, MA to build community wealth.

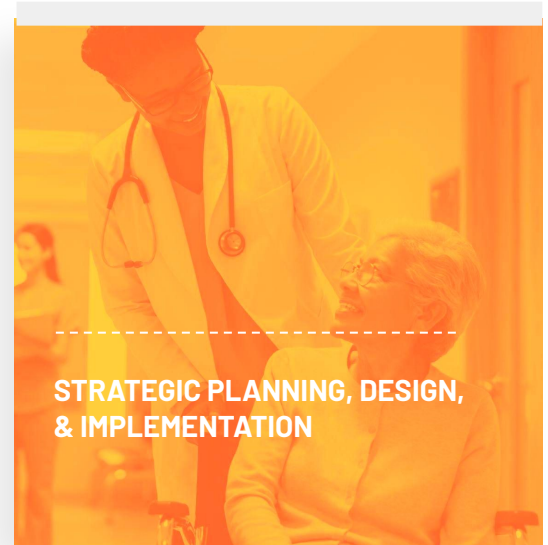
“Our team at Root Cause was a tremendous source of support and thought partnership in a time of greatest need. Our partners have moved from a place of surviving to thriving, thanks in large part to our initiatives with Root Cause. Root Cause is the expert in the nonprofit sector and a trusted voice for all our partners.”

WHITNEY KIMMEL, VICE PRESIDENT, CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP, STATE STREET FOUNDATION



More than ever, companies are expected to play active roles in advancing an equitable and sustainable world.

We support our partners in creating strategies, structures, and processes that level-up their work and drive greater mission achievement. We do so through a “web” of services—each of which can stand alone or be combined with others to create a holistic approach to the challenge at hand:



“Root Cause has been an invaluable partner in building and managing a major philanthropic collective action initiative for our Biogen Foundation. They are excellent at engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, and ensuring everyone’s input is valued and reflected in how we work together to move the needle in STEM education equity.”

BIOGEN FOUNDATION

We help companies navigate the landscape of stakeholders who need to be engaged in any corporate-funded social impact work.

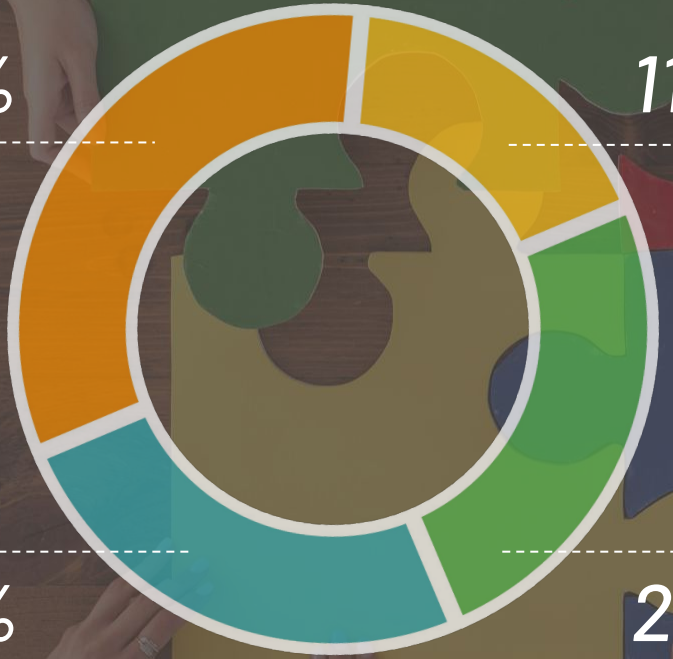
Sectors of Root Cause client work *from 2023*

39%

11%

28%

22%



39% *Improving Health & Well-Being*

22% *Education & Youth Development*

11% *Economic Mobility*

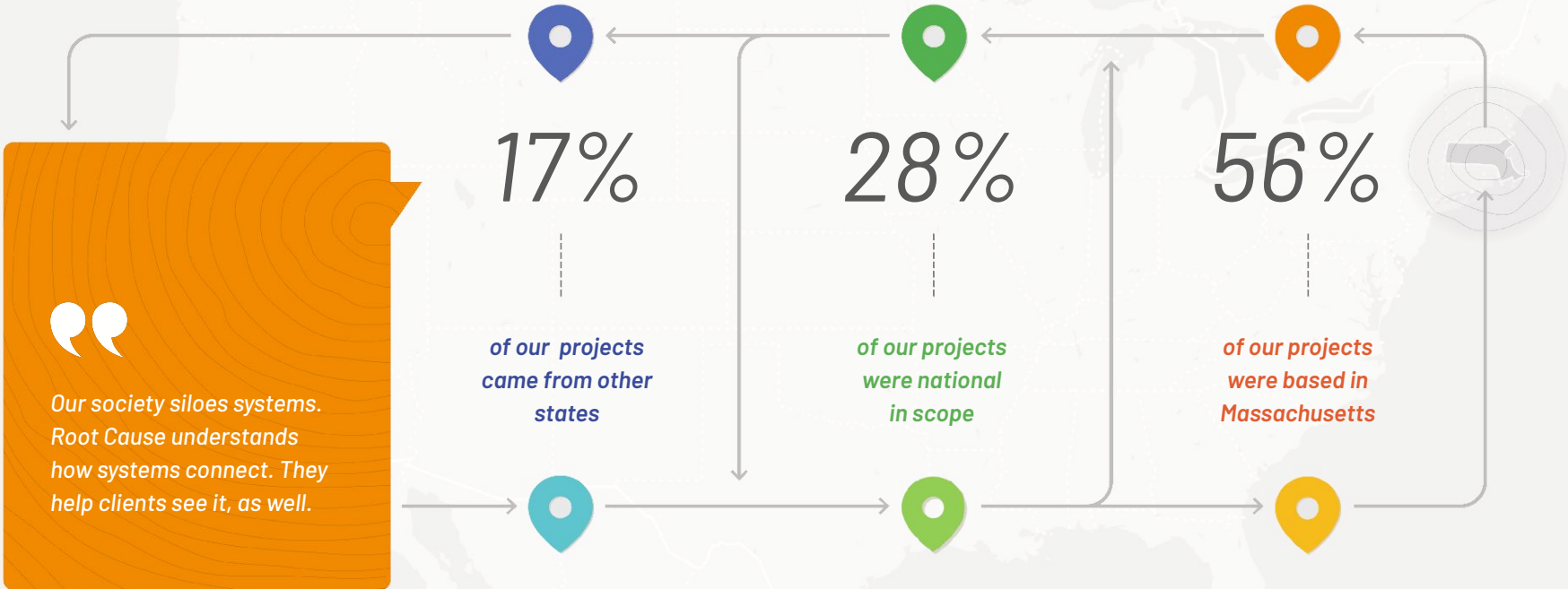
28% *Multiple Social Issues*

Impactful investment

in social issues requires nuanced understanding of local contexts across multiple sectors

Our reach *from 2023*

Root Cause was founded in Greater Boston in 2004. We are committed to, and have a deep understanding of, the communities, institutions, and social issues affecting Massachusetts and its various regions.



Root Cause helps companies develop and implement actionable philanthropic & CSR strategies



We help companies identify and bring together multi-sector stakeholders who need to be engaged for impactful corporate-funded social impact work



We guide companies in developing trusting relationships with community partners



We lend credibility to companies' social impact work by facilitating collaboration as an independent neutral party



We facilitate complex conversations and decision making amongst diverse stakeholders



We provide technical assistance and coaching to help foundation grantees strengthen their work and impact and build capacity



We produce CSR and impact reports that translate companies' social impact work into compelling narratives



We help companies advance their social impact goals using a racial equity lens



We help companies collect and report on data to help them assess progress and impact on philanthropic investments



We create strategies to maximize employee volunteer impact

Grantee capacity building, program quality coaching, and technical assistance

Grantee technical assistance and coaching

Grantee capacity building

Employee volunteer impact

State Street Foundation and Root Cause partnered to develop a customized technical assistance program for State Street's grantees. We developed workshops, facilitated peer-to-peer learning opportunities, and offered 1:1 coaching, all with a focus on rapid adaptation and strengthening program quality.

State Street employees were active participants in the program through meaningful volunteer opportunities. Volunteers connected with grantees as workshop facilitators and as coaches and learned how to tailor their corporate expertise for a nonprofit setting.

PROJECT STATS: 2020 – 2022

3

cohorts

24

grantee nonprofits
organizations

17

workshops
and webinars
delivered

630+

1:1 coaching hours

100%

of grantees served said
they found the coaching
and workshops valuable



Building community wealth in Springfield, MA through Collective Action

Facilitate complex conversations
and decision making

Racial equity lens

In 2021, Root Cause partnered with [MassMutual Foundation](#), and community organizations and members in Springfield, MA to design and launch North End Community Connects (NECC). NECC is an economic empowerment initiative designed using a [groundwater analysis](#)* to understand barriers and racial inequities. It strives to (1) build community wealth and (2) strengthen the ecosystem of local resources to achieve “a vibrant North End, designed by and for community, where everyone can thrive.”

Root Cause continues to support the NECC backbone team in building its capacity and infrastructure and facilitating the initiative’s work across partners, residents, and funders in the North End.

PROJECT STATS: 2021 – Present

60+

members of the
initiative,

36

partner
organizations,

20+

of participants who
attended recent
storytelling event



 **MassMutual**
Foundation

* Groundwater Approach, [Racial Equity Institute](#)

Advancing STEM education and equity with the Biogen STAR Initiative

Collect and report on data

Assess progress and impact

**Identify and bring together
 multi-sector stakeholders**

Produce impact reports

In 2017, Root Cause worked with the Biogen Foundation to design and launch a new philanthropic initiative in its headquarters community of Cambridge and Somerville, MA. Root Cause served as the backbone organization for STAR (Science, Teacher support, Access & Readiness), a **5 year, \$12M STEM** ecosystem building initiative. STAR serves students in grades 6-14 who have been historically underrepresented in STEM, including students of color, economically disadvantaged students, and English language learners.

Root Cause produced [annual reports for STAR](#) to tell the story of this inter-district collective action initiative and highlight its impact at the individual student, organizational and system levels.

PROJECT STATS: 2018 – 2023

4,000+

students were served in 2 school districts, with 600 participating educators in Cambridge and Somerville; Secured funding for a new data specialist position in each school district

92%

of STAR students are from social identity backgrounds under-represented in STEM

87%

low-income STAR students pass 9th grade STEM courses vs. 78% non-STAR peers

8%+

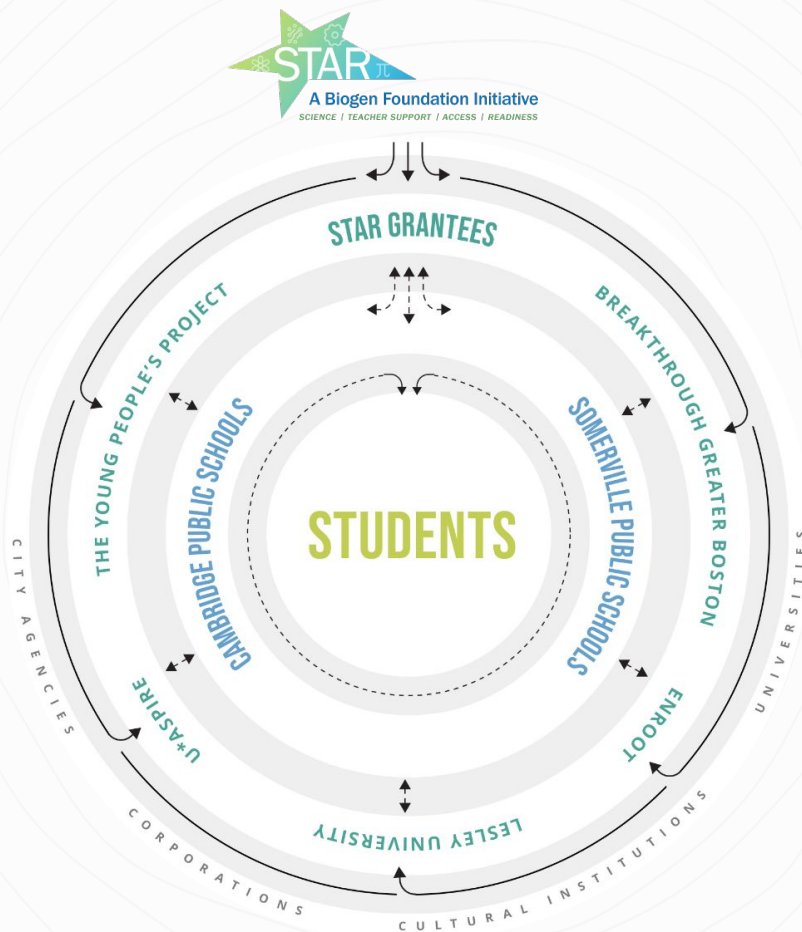
STAR students enroll in high level STEM courses vs. their peers



How Root Cause helped Biogen launch and manage the STAR Initiative

"Root Cause has been an invaluable partner in building and managing a major philanthropic collective action initiative for our Biogen Foundation. They are excellent at engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, and ensuring everyone's input is valued and reflected in how we work together to move the needle in STEM education equity."

- Biogen Foundation



Boston Public Schools WINs (Workforce Investment Network) Initiative

Identify and bring together multi-sector stakeholders

Developing trusting relationships with community partners

Lend credibility as an independent neutral party

From 2015–2021, Root Cause partnered with the State Street Foundation to lead the Boston **WINs** (**W**orkforce **I**nvestment **N**etwork) Initiative, a 6-year, \$26 million collective action initiative focused on better preparing and supporting Boston Public School (BPS) students for postsecondary education and/or employment opportunities.

WINs was an innovative collaborative effort that brought traditionally siloed stakeholders together– five core grantees/service providers, school district and school leaders and teams of educators from across 26 BPS high schools – to coordinate efforts and resources and collectively set and track performance measures for BPS students.

As a neutral 3rd party, Root Cause facilitated effective cross-sector participation that resulted in a years-long commitment to a common purpose.

PROJECT STATS: 2015 – 2021

6-year
\$26 million
initiative across

26

BPS high schools

70%+

more youth and
supported and served

85%

of BPS seniors in
committing to a
postsecondary plan



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