FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Boston – The Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration (MOPC) at UMass Boston’s John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies announced today it has received a second-year grant from the Boston Foundation’s Open Door Grants program. The $20,000 grant extension, building on last year’s $47,000 grant, will allow continuation of a pilot program known as ReMAp that provides mediation services to soon-to-be released inmates of state and county correctional facilities allowing pre-release planning with family, friends, and community members to reduce the risk of recidivism.

“This grant will allow us to grow the momentum that has taken the pilot from serving one facility in 2018 to now six facilities across the state,” McCormack Graduate School Dean David Cash said.

The ReMAp pilot services for returning citizens outside the Greater Boston area are being funded through a third-year grant of $15,000 awarded by the Gardiner Howland Shaw Foundation. According to Rosalind Cresswell, MOPC’s program manager for ReMAp, “The pilot has been used to build programming and establish a consistent presence at the correctional facilities and we can now continue to serve this vulnerable population by helping support relationship building, which has been shown to be crucial in building stability after release.”

The ReMAp program is based on a similar one started over 10 years ago in Maryland and is underpinned by the same evaluation protocol. Data is gathered around program effectiveness with the goal of establishing a link to recidivism reduction. Maryland’s research has shown that
regardless of whom the inmates choose to mediate with, what the conversation is about or whether an agreement is reached, the ability to have a confidential conversation supported by mediators to plan for release on their terms results in reduced re-incarceration rates of 10 percent for the first mediation session and 7 percent for each subsequent session.

ReMAp outreach, education, intake, mediation, and community follow-up services are delivered by five of the 12 Massachusetts Community Mediation Centers that are funded through MOPC by a state-sponsored grant program. The centers include the Community Dispute Settlement Center in Cambridge, Metropolitan Mediation Services in Brookline, North Shore Community Mediation Center in Beverly, Middlesex Community College Mediation Center in Lowell, and the Mediation and Training Collaborative in Greenfield.

The centers collectively provide free or low cost mediation services to 8,000 individuals statewide annually, including consumer, family, divorce, housing, workplace, and community cases as well as offering restorative justice, school peer mediation, conflict coaching and community education.

The Boston Foundation, Greater Boston’s community foundation, brings people and resources together to solve Boston’s big problems. Established in 1915, it is one of the largest community foundations in the nation—with net assets of $1.3 billion. In 2018, the foundation and its donors paid $129 million in grants to nonprofit organizations. The foundation works in close partnership with its donors, with more than 1,100 separate charitable funds established for the general benefit of the community or for special purposes. It also serves as a think tank and advocacy organization, commissioning research into the most critical issues of our time, promoting civic engagement and helping shape public policy that advances opportunity for everyone in Greater Boston. The Philanthropic Initiative (TPI), a distinct operating unit of the foundation, designs and implements customized philanthropic strategies for families, foundations and corporations around the globe.

Open Door Grants are competitive, one-year grants designed for organizations whose proposal is focused on Greater Boston and whose values align with those of the Boston Foundation. Grants are awarded quarterly, and are selected by staff through an inclusive evaluation process. Funds for this grant come from the Boston Foundation’s Permanent Fund for Boston, Greater Boston’s only endowed fund focusing on the pressing needs of Greater Boston. The Permanent Fund has been made possible by more than a century of gifts from those who seek to support innovative solutions to the region’s most pressing problems since 1915. For more information about the Boston Foundation, visit www.tbf.org.