



**ANCHORED IN EQUITY**  
*Worker Empowerment Cabinet  
Annual Report*



## LETTER FROM MAYOR WU



Dear Neighbors,

I'm excited to share our Worker Empowerment Cabinet's FY23 Annual Report with you. The data show what we've known to be true for a while now: Boston's workforce remains one of our city's greatest strengths. And, in the past year, the Worker Empowerment Cabinet has worked hard to build on that strength and advance the well-being of every one of our workers.

Our goal as an administration is to make Boston a home for everyone. That means ensuring that our city is a place where people can secure stable, well-paying jobs; provide for their families; and put down roots in our communities. To make that vision a reality here in Boston, we must bridge the wage and wealth gaps that exist across race, age, gender, and ability.

This report details the impact and outcomes of our work in service of that goal. The Neighborhood Jobs Trust distributed \$3.4 million in funding—the largest investment in its history—to dozens of community-based organizations that provide job training, education, and support to Boston residents. We partnered with more than 200 employers and invested an unprecedented \$18.7 million to expand the City's summer youth employment program, connecting more than 9,000 young people to jobs last summer. We passed and implemented the Safe Construction and Demolition Operations Ordinance to ensure that all construction and demolition operations in Boston are conducted in ways that protect the health and safety of workers and the public. And the Boston Tax Help Coalition provided free tax preparation to nearly 11,000 low-to-moderate income residents, securing \$17.2 million in refunds—including \$6.3 million in Earned Income Tax Credits.

We're proud of everything we've accomplished in the last year, but we know our work isn't done until every family has access to safe, healthy workplaces; stable, well-paying jobs; and the resources to advance economically. Under the leadership of Chief Trinh Nguyen, the Cabinet is closing these gaps across a variety of initiatives to support workers, enforce labor standards, and reaffirm the dignity of all work.

Thank you to my colleagues in public service, our partners, and all of the employers who are joining us in making Boston the best home for workers and working families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Wu".

Michelle Wu  
Mayor, City of Boston

## LETTER FROM CHIEF NGUYEN



Dear Partners,

In the Worker Empowerment Cabinet, we are dedicated to creating equitable access to job and skills training, education, worker protections, and financial literacy for all Boston residents. As the FY23 Annual Report, *Anchored in Equity* attests, we challenge ourselves to center equity and inclusion in our endeavors. This past fiscal year, we've continued to make great strides for Boston's workforce across our four departments by providing opportunities for all residents to participate in the city's economic vitality and future.

The Office of Workforce Development created new, innovative, evidence-based career pipelines to train and connect diverse talent to growing markets such as healthcare, childcare, and the life sciences. The Office of Labor Compliance and Worker Protections worked diligently with labor unions, workers' centers, advocates, and community groups to educate workers about their rights on the job and empower them to report workplace issues. The Office of Youth Employment and Opportunity ensured youth were equipped to transition successfully into adulthood through short-term youth employment, skill development, and career readiness opportunities. The Center for Working Families provided financial education and job training opportunities critical for individual, family, and community wealth building.

These accomplishments are the result of the collaborative efforts of our staff, partners, and the residents who rely on us to achieve their goals. We are grateful to Mayor Wu for her leadership and support as we work to advance the lives of all Boston workers in alignment with the administration's broader commitment to creating a safe, healthy, and climate-resilient city for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark red ink that reads "Trinh Nguyen".

Trinh Nguyen  
Chief of Worker Empowerment, City of Boston

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SECTION 1/6

# OFFICE OF LABOR COMPLIANCE AND WORKER PROTECTIONS

Mayor Michelle Wu created the Office of Labor Compliance and Worker Protection (OLCWP), part of the Worker Empowerment Cabinet, to serve as the dedicated voice in local government for Boston workers. OLCWP uses the power and scale of the City's procurement, contracting, licensing, and permitting processes to drive safe, equitable, empowering labor standards for all Boston workers and to ensure a level playing field so that employers that pay their workers fairly, provide good quality jobs, and keep their workers safe and healthy have equal access to City contracts and resources. Since its launch in September 2022, OLCWP has made great strides in furthering this work.



## Labor Compliance and Worker Protections



## ENSURING SAFETY ON CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION SITES IN BOSTON

In Spring 2023, Mayor Michelle Wu signed the Safe Construction and Demolition Operations Ordinance, building on the City's goal of ensuring that all construction and demolition operations in Boston are conducted in a manner that protects the health, welfare, and safety of workers and the public. This work was the culmination of collaborative efforts by the City of Boston, developers, contractors, the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), and health and safety advocates.

Effective December 1, 2023, the ordinance requires that construction and demolition sites in Boston seeking a permit with the Inspectional Services Department (ISD):

- Submit a Site Safety Plan Affidavit,
- Implement a project-specific Site Safety Plan
- Implement a Site Safety Monitoring Plan that includes Site Safety Orientations, Pre-Shift Safety Meetings, and a Site Safety Coordinator on larger projects.

These requirements help to identify potential hazards to protect workers on site and the public. Moreover, the ordinance ensures that workers have equitable access to these protections by requiring they receive the information in a language workers understand. In addition, the ordinance gives ISD the much-needed enforcement capacity it previously lacked. As a result, they can now

issue violations, stop work, revoke permits, and impose fines of up to \$300 on permit holders, developers, general contractors/construction managers, and subcontractors found to be non-compliant with the ordinance.

Going beyond implementation and enforcement, the City worked diligently to inform, educate, and prepare workers and permit holders for the implementation of the Safe Construction and Demolition Operations Ordinance. The Office of Labor Compliance and Worker Protection (OLCWP) and ISD hosted four webinars to educate workers about their rights and permit holders of their responsibilities under the ordinance ahead of its implementation. A total of 972 residents in Boston's construction industry attended these information sessions. The City provided multilingual tools and resources to ensure that those affected by the ordinance were sufficiently prepared for its implementation. Additionally, OLCWP provided free 30-hour OSHA health and safety training for City staff responsible for enforcing the ordinance to build their capacity to identify and remedy unsafe working conditions.

## EMPOWERING BOSTON WORKERS BY EDUCATING THEM ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS

A key priority of the Office of Labor Compliance and Worker Protection (OLCWP) is to educate workers about their rights on the job and the protections to which they are entitled. This work further empowers workers to exercise their rights and report workplace issues. Moreover, OLCWP serves as a clearinghouse for all worker complaints and distributes these cases to the appropriate agencies for action, legal assistance, and resources.

Notably, after a charge of worker abuse in Boston, OLCWP partnered with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Advancement to host a virtual Immigrant Worker Know Your Rights Webinar in May 2023. The webinar was held in partnership with local worker centers: the Brazilian Worker Center, the Chinese Progressive Association, the MassCOSH Immigrant Worker Center, and the Matahari Women's Worker Center. Representatives from Greater Boston Legal Services, the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, OSHA, and the U.S. Department of Labor shared labor rights information and answered constituent questions in five languages. OLCWP makes these and additional labor rights information available [online](#) in multiple languages to ensure equitable access to this critical information.

Another event hosted by OLCWP in May 2023, the Care Workers and the Racial Wealth Gap in Massachusetts Panel, discussed the racial wealth gap, organizing efforts, and ways to

support care workers across the state. The panelists included union representatives, labor organizers, and care workers. The event was moderated by Commissioner Emily Shea of the City of Boston Age Strong Commission, opened with a presentation from Luc Schuster and Anne Calef of Boston Indicators, and ended with a Q&A.



## ENSURING THAT CITY OF BOSTON CONTRACT EMPLOYEES ARE PAID A LIVING WAGE

Since 1997, the Boston Jobs, Living Wage, and Prevailing Wage Ordinance (LWO) has served to create and maintain livable wages in the City of Boston. This ordinance requires that all employees working on sizable city contracts earn an hourly wage that is enough for a family of four to live at or above the federal poverty level. This wage amount, called the living wage, is recalculated every year. On July 1, 2023, the living wage increased to \$17.55. Therefore, all employers working on contracts with the City of Boston worth at least \$25,000 were required to pay their employees a living wage of at least \$17.55 per hour.

The Office of Labor Compliance and Worker Protection (OLCWP) worked to revitalize the program by increasing awareness and adherence to the LWO. OLCWP conducted outreach to employers, employees, and City of Boston staff to ensure workers receive the current living wage. In June 2023, OLCWP distributed informational materials to current City of Boston vendors which totaled 300. These materials were made available in 11 languages so employees could receive the information in a language they understand. During FY24, OLCWP plans to hold biannual training for City of Boston employees and quarterly training for City of Boston vendors to bolster its outreach efforts.



# OFFICE OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT & OPPORTUNITY

## *Empowering Boston Youth through Summer Employment*

The Office of Youth Employment and Opportunity (YEO) ensures that Boston's youth are equipped to transition successfully into adulthood through short-term youth employment, skill development, and career readiness opportunities. A hallmark of this work is SuccessLink, the City's youth employment program. Led by YEO, the program is designed to recruit and hire youth ages 14-18 for engaging and meaningful employment experiences that advance their professional and personal development. According to research from Northeastern University, the program positively impacts a range of economic, academic, and criminal justice outcomes for youth. To bolster this work, the City invested \$18.7 million in youth summer jobs to expand and improve the program. As a result, over 9,000 young people were successfully employed in summer 2023.

Recognizing the importance of coordination and alignment across Boston's youth employment providers, YEO partnered with over 200 City agencies, non-profits, higher education institutions, and lead entities – Action for Boston Community Development, the Boston Private Industry Council, John Hancock, MLK Scholars, and Youth Options Unlimited (YOU) Boston – to offer high-quality employment opportunities to youth. To ensure that disadvantaged youth have equitable access to jobs, YEO supported organizations that prioritize proven at-risk youth populations in partnership with the Massachusetts Commonwealth Corporation YouthWorks. YEO also partnered with the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement (MOIA) to provide immigrant youth with hands-on leadership and skills training, regardless of immigration status.

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## Youth Employment and Opportunity

**THE NUMBERS:**

**\$18.7m**

Investment

**200+**

Employment  
Providers

**9000+**

Youth  
Employed in  
Summer 2023

YEO conducted strategic engagement and outreach measures to raise awareness about these youth employment opportunities. In 2023, the office revived its Youth Job and Resource Fair, hosting it for the first time since the pandemic. This annual event is crucial to connecting youth to employers, job readiness resources, and job application assistance. The job fair was a great success with over 2000 teens in attendance, a pre-pandemic high. To target youth in communities that are typically underrepresented and underserved, YEO hosted several additional neighborhood job fairs connecting more than 900 young people to summer jobs. The office also hosted office hours, recruitment events, and outreach to Boston Public Schools.

Beyond employment opportunities, YEO provided youth with career development, and skills building to guarantee the teens' success in the workforce. The office equipped young people for employment through job readiness and professional development workshops which covered various topics, including resume-building, interviewing, career exploration, and workers' rights.

These events empowered the participants to make healthy and responsible career decisions.



## SUCCESS STORIES

“The employment program is important for the youth in the area so they learn about independence and gain experience for future jobs and how they work. My favorite part of my job is having fun and creating bonds with the kids that some of them may not have at home. Having a summer job is important to me because I can get money to help myself and my family to get what they need and help take care of the people I love,”

BCYF - Mildred Ave Community Center, Youth Employee, Age 14

“Having a job during the summer is something that I find extremely useful as most of the time I end the vacation feeling unaccomplished and bored. Doing work and elevating my level of experience in the field of work that I want to pursue makes me feel good about myself when I go back to school. Plus, there's pay and I am able to go out with friends more often without having to worry too much about budgeting,”

- Tufts University Youth Employee, Age 15



# OFFICE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

## *Investing in Boston's talent pool through job training and support services*

The Neighborhood Jobs Trust (NJT) is a public charitable trust replenished by linkage fees from developers of large-scale commercial projects in Boston. Since its creation in 1987, NJT has received over \$55 million in linkage funds to support Boston's education and workforce development efforts. In FY23, the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) awarded \$3.4 million in Neighborhood Jobs Trust funding to 26 community-based organizations across Boston's neighborhoods. This marked the largest one-time grantmaking round in the Trust's history and will serve approximately 1,500 Boston residents while allowing grantees to leverage \$10.6 million in additional funding.

The Neighborhood Jobs Trust award recipients were selected through a public Request for Proposals (RFP) process. The organizations selected provided low to moderate-income residents with job training and support services, enabling them to obtain careers in high-growth industries and growing markets including human services, technology, hospitality, healthcare, clean energy, and technology. Collectively, the programs prepared participants for high-quality jobs, including Pharmacy Technicians, Certified Nursing Assistants, Software Engineers, HVAC Technicians, Research Administrators, and Electricians, with employer partners such as Mass General Brigham, CVS Health, Verizon, Audible, Corcoran Construction, and National Grid. In addition, all the programs were designed to serve individuals with barriers to employment and incorporate supportive wrap-around services, such as the case management services BEST Hospitality provided its participants in partnership with Action for Boston Community Development.

A standout among the 2023 grantees was X-Cel Conservation Corps (XCC), a program which prepares young adults for the MA Grade 3 municipal wastewater operator licensure by combining classroom instruction and conservation work projects. NJT awarded X-Cel \$100,478. X-Cel placed eight participants in full-time jobs with benefits at an average wage of \$26.09/hour. Five of the eight participants had no income when they enrolled in the program. The other three participants increased their income by over \$30,000/year each.

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## Workforce Development

## SUCCESS STORY | CLYDE



Clyde came to X-Cel Conservation Corps (XCC) in March 2023, looking for a job. For the past ten years, Clyde had received social security disability payments and was, in his words, “basically sleeping and eating every day.” He felt that his life was going nowhere and he was tired of having no money and living month-to-month, waiting for his next disability check to arrive. He had tried to find jobs in the past but had been unsuccessful. In the spring of 2023 Clyde successfully completed X-Cel Conservation Corps’ ten-week program and obtained his MA Grade 3M Wastewater Operator license. He had a used car that had been sitting for months in his driveway because he didn’t have money for needed repairs. He used money saved up from the stipends he received from X-Cel Conservation Corps to repair his vehicle. At the same time he took classes with XCC for four additional weeks to obtain his MA Grade 5C Wastewater Operator license.

Soon after, with support from XCC staff, Clyde landed a full-time wastewater operator position with Woodard & Curran at the Hull Wastewater Treatment plant. Clyde joined two other XCC graduates already working at the treatment plant. Clyde’s starting pay was \$52,000/year with full benefits, and he loves the job. He knows he is contributing to a better earth by ensuring that wastewater is properly treated before it is discharged into the ocean. He also likes that he is not micromanaged on the job. He says “they train you and then expect you to take responsibility for getting the job done each day.” Most importantly, his income has increased by 500% compared to before he enrolled in X-Cel Conservation Corps. And for the first time in his life he is saving money towards his retirement through a company 401K plan. Clyde actively participates in XCC’s alumni events and plans to continue training to advance in his new career.

## CREATING EQUITABLE PATHWAYS TO IN-DEMAND INDUSTRIES

In FY23, the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) was awarded a \$3 million Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to create and expand equitable pre-apprenticeship pathways to Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP). RAPs are a proven model of apprenticeship that have been validated by the U.S. Department of Labor or the Massachusetts State Apprenticeship Agency. They enable and energize more employers to participate and provide them access to larger talent pools that have been trained for entry-level to management positions, thereby meeting industry demands and reducing unemployment rates in the region.

As a result of this award, OWD launched the Greater Boston Equitable Apprenticeship Pathways (GBEAP) program to create and expand eight Massachusetts pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs over the four-year grant period. The project aims to serve 484 residents, especially those from underrepresented and underserved communities. Priority populations include BIPOC residents, women, disabled individuals, returning citizens, court-involved residents, veterans, unemployed and underemployed individuals, and those with limited education or career skills.

In addition, OWD developed Equity Partnerships with several community-based organizations: BEST Hospitality, Boston Emergency Medical Services, and

MassBioEd to ensure that principles such as equity, job quality, support for high-quality programs, evidence-based approaches, intentional outreach to BIPOC residents, and innovation are integrated throughout the initiative. These Equity Partners offer pre-apprenticeship programs in target growth industries including hospitality, health care, and life sciences. The target occupations within these industries have a starting wage of \$18 - \$27 an hour for apprentices and include opportunities for career advancement and salary increases. The pre-apprenticeships lead to quality registered apprenticeships at local employers like UNITED HERE Local 26 Union Hotels, Boston EMS, and MassBioEd. Recently, the GBEAP selected YouthBuild Boston as an Equity Partner, thus expanding its portfolio to include the construction industry.

During the first year the program prioritized developing partnerships, building awareness, and enrolling participants, 20 of whom joined in the first few weeks. One notable success story is the career advancement of JE who participated in a pre-apprenticeship with Equity Partner BEST Hospitality.

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## DIVERSIFYING BOSTON'S HEALTHCARE, CLEAN ENERGY, AND CHILD CARE WORKFORCE

In FY23, the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) was one of 32 organizations selected as a Good Jobs Challenge grantee out of 509 applicants nationally. As a result, the City of Boston was awarded \$23 million by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA), a once-in-a-generation investment to transform the city's communities and local economy. The Good Jobs Challenge enables communities nationwide to invest in innovative approaches to workforce development by developing holistic regional workforce systems with strong sectoral and employer partnerships that lead to good-paying jobs for residents.



Energized by this funding, OWD partnered with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to establish the Good Jobs Metro Boston Coalition (GJMBC). The GJMBC aims to train and place 4,618 Greater Boston residents into quality jobs in three target industries, childcare, healthcare, and clean energy, over a three-year grant period. These jobs will have pathways that lead to family-sustaining wages, employer-sponsored benefits, and educational attainment. Each targeted industry is led by a backbone organization that serves as a leader and convener within its respective sector. Leading the healthcare industry is the MassHire Boston Workforce Board (Boston PIC), for clean energy, Benjamin Franklin Cummings Institute of Technology (BFCIT), and for child care, the Community Advocates for Young Learners (CAYL) Institute.

In addition, OWD brought together partners from key organizations in the targeted industries that serve unemployed, underemployed, incumbent workers, community college students, and BIPOC individuals within the Greater Boston Region. Education and training partners include Boston's community colleges and 10 MassHire career centers selected to provide outreach and recruitment, assessment, career coaching, employer engagement, and job placement throughout all three industries.

OWD has partnered with 81 local employers to create opportunities and connect 130 of the region's workers to training and career pathways within the childcare, healthcare, and clean energy industries. With continual program evaluation and client tracking, the GJMBC will meet the needs of employers and job seekers alike.

## SUCCESS STORY | JE

JE contacted BEST Hospitality about their Introduction to Hospitality, Housekeeping Pre-Apprenticeship program after hearing about it from a graduate. Originally from Haiti, JE arrived in the U.S. through Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in 2021. When he applied for the program, he was unemployed and he and his family of four were living in a long-term shelter in Waltham. After an in-depth intake and assessment, the Job Seeker team at BEST Hospitality deemed him a great fit for the program and he was enrolled in the FY24 Cycle 1 cohort. Despite the long commute from Waltham to the Seaport, JE arrived at class on time and was eager to participate. BEST Hospitality supplied him with transportation passes each month to ensure he would not have any issues getting

to class. His English level was lower than that of his classmates, so his career coach worked closely with him inside and outside of class to provide interpretation for an equitable learning experience. JE also received assistance to apply for public housing and a childcare voucher. After graduating, he secured a job at the Omni Boston at the Seaport Hotel as a Linen Attendant at the full union rate of \$28.21 an hour. After his first week on the job, he emailed the Job Seeker team saying, "I want to say thank you for all your help. I am so happy to work at the Omni Hotel. It is a dream come true. Thank you for your patience and kindness and the time you spent with me and all the students. Now I can help my family and have a better life in this country."

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## SUCCESS STORY | ELIZABETH

If there is one piece of advice Elizabeth Noel would give people interested in or currently in the UMass Global's Medical Assistant program, it would be, "Keep studying, and you are going to see your dreams come true." Elizabeth was an accountant in Haiti for 15 years, but since she was young, she has dreamed of working in the medical field. When she arrived in the United States, she began researching opportunities in the healthcare sector and found the Good Jobs Metro Boston Coalition Medical Assistant (M.A.) program at UMass Global. The program provides instruction on

various departments within the medical field and in-person lab practice. Once Elizabeth completed the coursework, she received resume and job search assistance. She landed a Medical Assistant position at Mass General Brigham in the gastroenterology department, a specialty she was eager to join as it captured her interest to learn more about treatment and how to help patients. As Elizabeth looks to her future in the healthcare sector, she hopes to remain in the medical field and, within five years, begin pursuing a nursing degree.

## DEVELOPING BOSTON'S LIFE SCIENCES WORKFORCE

In 2023, Mayor Michelle Wu announced the Life Sciences Workforce Development Initiative (LSWDI) to train and employ Boston residents in life sciences careers. Led by the Office of Workforce Development (OWD), the initiative aims to leverage Greater Boston's position as the global leader in life sciences to develop more inclusive training and career pathways for Boston residents, particularly workers of color and those without four-year degrees. With recent industry reports from the [Massachusetts Biotechnology Council](#) (MassBio) and [Massachusetts Biotechnology Education Foundation](#) (MassBioEd) highlighting continued job growth, Mayor Wu announced her goal to help 1,000 Boston residents get trained and hired into the industry by the end of 2025.

Building on this commitment, OWD released an initial grant application round funded through the Neighborhood Jobs Trust (NJT) and the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). As a result, the City awarded \$4.7 million in funding to nine grant recipients. Each awardee applied for funds to secure internship and hiring commitments from life sciences companies, train for specific in-demand industry positions, and support residents without four-year degrees who are underrepresented in the industry today.

Grant recipient Year Up in collaboration with MassBio, was selected to create an intermediary organization, the Life Sciences Career Alliance, which will connect trained,

diverse talent to life science industry roles. The Alliance recently concluded the discovery phase of the initiative, resulting in a [Discovery Report](#) and [Labor Market Insights Report](#). Both provide insights into the newest labor market trends and existing challenges experienced by stakeholders in the life sciences sector and identify areas of opportunity and strategies to build buy-in with key ecosystem stakeholders.

The other eight grant recipients: Bioversity and Mass College of Pharmaceutical Health Sciences (MCPHS), Bunker Hill Community College and Mass General Brigham, Just-A-Start, Quincy College, Franklin Cummings Institute of Technology, and Roxbury Community College, MassBioEd, and The American City Coalition (TACC) and Lab Central Ignite, were selected to provide Boston residents with training, retraining, career readiness, and job placement services within the life sciences. These partners have

created nine job training opportunities and career navigation services. Residents can train for various family-sustaining roles at no cost, including Biomedical Lab Technician, Manufacturing Technician, Quality Control Technician, Phlebotomy Technician, and Medical Laboratory Technician. Upon successful completion, participants will receive industry-recognized credentials such as an associate degree or certification in their chosen field.

To date, the LSWDI has served 2,547 residents through job training programs and career awareness services and more than 20 industry employers, including Venture Forward Partners, Thermo Fisher Scientific, Foundation Medicine, Flagship Lab Services, Abcam, Bioversity, Addgene, Gingko Bioworks, Moderna Inc, Millipore/Sigma, Sanofi, Catalent Pharma, Takeda, AmericanB10, and Mass General Brigham.



## TRAINING BOSTON'S YOUNG ADULTS FOR JOBS IN THE GREEN INDUSTRY

PowerCorpsBOS, the City of Boston's green jobs program, graduated its third cohort during this fiscal year. Following a "learn and earn" model, the program pays young adults ages 18-30 to participate in hands-on training for green industry careers that address pressing environmental challenges in the city. The 29 graduates spent six months learning about various green industries and skill sets, including urban forestry and energy-efficient building maintenance. Participants also received career readiness support, connections to employers in the green industry, job placement support and free financial coaching with the Center for Working Families. Priority populations for the program include residents from environmental justice communities, returning citizens, court-involved residents, youth who have experienced homelessness or housing instability, young people who have been in foster care, and other marginalized communities.

PowerCorpsBOS offers two training pathways: Urban Forestry (UF) and Building Operation Systems (BOS). Twenty-three of the graduates completed the UF track which covers the planting, maintenance, care, and protection of trees. These participants assisted 101 acres of public land, removed 197 bags of invasive material, worked with 18 service project partners, planted 52 trees, pruned 21 trees, underwent eight hours of tree climbing training and eight hours of chainsaw training, earned three college credits from UMass Mount Ida in Arboriculture, and connected

with 78 employees in the private and public industry.

Six graduates completed the BOS track which provided training for jobs that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in large buildings by learning skills to maintain building operations at peak efficiency. The curriculum included topics ranging from conducting energy audits to maintaining electrical, HVAC, and plumbing systems. The participants earned several industry-recognized certifications including a Building Operator Certification (BOC), Fundamentals in Energy Efficient Building Operations (FEEBO), a Building Performance Institution (BPI) certificate, and a Green Building Professional - Operations and Maintenance (GPRO) certificate.

Since its launch in Fall 2021, the program has graduated 80 participants across three cohorts. Building on this success, PowerCorpsBOS has increased its training period from six months to ten months to offer participants a more comprehensive and immersive experience and enhance the depth of its curriculum. The new schedule strategically aligns with the traditional college academic calendar and seeks to capitalize on peak hiring seasons in the green industry.

## CITY ACADEMY

Launched in 2018, City Academy provides free job readiness training to Boston residents preparing for jobs as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) and for jobs requiring a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and/or Hoisting License (1C/2A classifications) within the City of Boston. These City jobs pay above Boston's living wage, \$17.55 an hour in FY23, and offer benefits and opportunities for career advancement. The initiative was created to address labor shortages in targeted fields while connecting Boston's talent pool to family-sustaining jobs. In addition, City Academy prioritizes populations that face barriers to employment including low-to-moderate-income residents and returning citizens.

City Academy's EMT training pathway consists of six months with Boston Emergency Medical Services (Boston EMS). The track provides both job readiness and an EMT basics course, and support in completing the EMT certification process. Once an individual obtains their EMT certification, they are eligible to apply to the Boston EMS Recruit Academy, and, finally, employment earning at least \$69K per year.

This year, becoming a Boston EMT is even more accessible with in-person courses offered twice a year and part-time online courses offered three times a year.

The CDL training pathway prepares residents for jobs that require a CDL license for potential placement in various City departments. Participants receive training and test preparation leading to CDL and Hoisting licenses. This track is approximately four months long and includes a Job Readiness Bridge Course, a two-week component that takes place four hours a day, five days a week, totaling approximately 20 hours per week. Participants go on site visits with potential employers and take a Civil Service registration workshop to register to be on the list for applicable Labor Service titles. Job placements range from various City departments such as Boston Water and Sewer Commission, Department of Public Works, Parks Department, and Boston Housing Authority, as well as private companies and self-employment through students buying their own trucks.



## TUITION-FREE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PLAN: HELPING MORE BOSTON RESIDENTS AFFORD COLLEGE

Last year, Mayor Michelle Wu announced a \$4 million investment to expand the Tuition-Free Community College (TFCC) Plan, a City initiative that pays for up to three years of community college for Boston residents. Funding for this investment comprised \$3 million from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and \$1 million from the Community Project Funding secured by U.S. Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley. Through the expansion, all Boston residents were eligible to receive TFCC funding, regardless of their age, income, or immigration status. The funding covered tuition for students enrolled in an associate's degree or eligible short-term certificate program at one of six partner schools: Franklin Cummings Tech, Bunker Hill Community College, Massasoit Community College, MassBay Community

College, Roxbury Community College, and Urban College of Boston.

To spread the word about the expansion, TFCC held monthly online office hours, facilitated over 100 information sessions, including at every Boston Public School high school, and collaborated with local community-based organizations and groups like SuccessBoston and New Skills Boston. As a result of these efforts, the expanded program served 959 students in the 2023-2024 school year alone, a significant comparison to the total 1,004 students served in the program's first seven years (2016-2022). Fifty-one percent of students were Pell-eligible, 49% were Pell-ineligible, 92% pursued an associate's degree and 8% pursued short-term certificates.

The expanded TFCC program proved its feasibility and impact and provided a model for the Commonwealth's investments in tuition-free higher education. In a historic move, the Commonwealth passed critical financial aid programs to provide more students with access to pursue and persist in their postsecondary education, including Tuition Equity, MassReconnect, and the expanded MassGrant. On March 1, 2023, Governor Maura Healey included \$20 million in her proposed FY24 budget for MassReconnect. The budget, inclusive of the \$20 million and other investments in public education, was signed by the Governor on August 9, 2023. The Tuition Equity Bill signed into law as part of the FY24 budget provides in-state tuition fees for undocumented students.

Given the Commonwealth's focus on prioritizing residents ages 25 and older in its tuition-free programs, the Tuition-Free Community College Plan revised its eligibility requirements to include Boston residents ages 18-24. Moving forward, TFCC plans to work in tandem with state financial aid programs to continue supporting Boston residents in their postsecondary journeys.



## SUCCESS STORY | KARL

"I am the first in my family to attend college," said Karl Freidrick Alvarez, a student at Bunker Hill Community College. "As a black immigrant from Haiti, this [funding] has provided me with an invaluable opportunity to further my education, pursue my dreams, and set a powerful example about the value of education for my daughter. [TFCC] represents hope and the promise of a better life - not just for me, but for other immigrants who strive for success through education. Your generosity will have a ripple effect for generations to come."

### THE NUMBERS:

**\$4m**

Investment

**6**

Partner  
Colleges

**959**

Students  
During 2023-  
2024 School  
Year

## ADULT LITERACY INITIATIVE: INVESTING IN BOSTON'S ADULT LEARNERS

In the City of Boston, education plays a crucial role in shaping residents' lives and opportunities, particularly for adults in need of basic education services. The Adult Literacy Initiative (ALI), led by the Worker Empowerment Cabinet in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) unit, is dedicated to empowering adult learners. ALI, comprising 29 adult education providers, serves over 3,500 diverse students annually. Programs include literacy, job skills training, high school equivalency, and ESOL classes for adult learners. Working closely with ACLS, the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) and the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC) ensure funding for these programs. These efforts led to a FY23 allocation of nearly \$11 million, reflecting the Commonwealth and City's commitment to investing in inclusive education.

In FY23, ALI members also participated in the Digital Literacy Initiative (DigLit), a comprehensive intervention aimed at empowering adult education providers to seamlessly integrate technology into their instructional practices. Facilitated in partnership with World Education, DigLit is designed to

enhance the digital skills and resilience of Boston residents.

A pivotal outcome of this initiative is the EdTech Strategy Routine Library, a toolkit that addresses the specific needs of adult learners navigating today's digital landscape. DigLit was made possible through funding secured from the City of Boston's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. In 2023, the project received an additional \$1 million allocation through Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley's Community Project Funding, further underscoring the recognition and support garnered for this impactful endeavor.

Beyond education, ALI collaborated with the City of Boston's Equity and Inclusion Cabinet on the Literacy Task Force, a 15-member group launched in June 2023. This group, including ALI members and adult learners, will study the literacy rates of Boston residents, craft action plans, and advocate for enhanced access to education and services.

Boston's Adult Literacy Initiative is emblematic of the City's commitment to providing every resident with access to education and a chance to unlock their full potential.



## SUMMER LEARN AND EARN

The Summer Learn and Earn (SLE) program offers Boston's rising high school juniors and seniors a unique opportunity to earn money while taking college-level courses. The program, in partnership with Benjamin Franklin Cummings Institute of Technology and Roxbury Community College, also gives students access to team meetings, academic coaching, and college readiness activities such as campus tours and financial aid information sessions.

In 2023, SLE enrolled 117 rising juniors and seniors. The teens earned 3-6 college credits and up to \$2,000 in stipends during six to eight weeks of online instruction in one of the following subjects: Introduction to Marketing, Introduction to Business, Entrepreneurship, Google IT, Web Design, and Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC). The program provided academic mentoring to each student throughout the summer as well as free lunches during the in-person enrichment sessions.

The 2023 SLE cohort celebrated the end of the program with a tour of the State House followed by lunch and a certificate of completion presentation attended by staff, students, family members, speakers from the participating academic institutions, and other supporters.

### THE NUMBERS:

40

Distinct ABE and  
ESOL Programs

3.5k

Adult Learners  
Served Annually

\$11m

FY23  
Investment

## A SECOND CHANCE FOR AT-PROMISE YOUTH

In FY23, Youth Options Unlimited (YOU) Boston continued its mission to empower at-promise youth aged 14-24 through comprehensive programs aimed at education, employment, and community engagement. Despite challenges posed by the pandemic, YOU Boston exceeded its goals, serving 400 youth, surpassing the initial target by 114%. Of these participants, 210 were new program entrants, exceeding the goal by 105%, demonstrating YOU Boston's ability to reach and engage new individuals.

The impact of YOU Boston's programs is

evident in the outcomes achieved. While 245 youth were placed into subsidized jobs, representing 89% of the goal, the organization also focused on job upskilling training experiences. Thirty-three youth earned industry-recognized credentials, and 28 were placed into unsubsidized jobs. These achievements underline YOU Boston's commitment not only to providing job opportunities but also to achieving sustainable employment with equitable wages.

YOU Boston always celebrates individual

success stories among its participants. One such story is that of TK, who joined the program seeking direction after facing challenges in her education and personal life. Through YOU Boston's career cohorts and case management services, TK gained valuable job skills and confidence. Today, TK is thriving in community college, earning a living wage while pursuing further education, and raising a healthy toddler.

As YOU Boston continues to support youth in achieving their educational and career goals, the organization remains dedicated to

its core principles of racial equity, trauma-informed service provision, and positive youth development. With 10 youth enrolled in post-secondary education and efforts ongoing to support those working towards high school credentials, YOU Boston remains steadfast in its commitment to empowering youth and building stronger, more resilient communities.





## PROVIDING EMPLOYERS WITH DIVERSE TALENT: BOSTON'S MASSHIRES JOB CENTERS

Together, the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) and the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC), lead two of the largest MassHires Job Centers in the State, providing the much-needed talent pool for employers' growing demand for a skilled workforce. Emerging from the pandemic, the workforce system, including the PIC, OWD, career centers, training partners, and employers, continued to demonstrate responsiveness, commitment, and collaboration while working to meet the changing needs of the Boston workforce.

During this fiscal year, with the support of community partners, employers, and training providers, Boston's MassHires Job Centers served 11,000+ job seekers, of whom 9,749 were unemployed—and 68% of these job seekers entered employment. Six hundred eighty-six (686) employers received services. Some of the most popular training programs sought by job seekers were medical assistance, AI/networking, project management, property management, CDL training, and substance abuse/addiction treatment.

*"Mass General relies on the Career Centers and the amazing teams behind them, who we consider highly valued partners and friends, to identify, train, and connect us with employees from a highly skilled workforce with the skills needed to get the job done. Once hired, these opportunities lead to pathways in patient care and hospital administration."*

- MJ Ryan, Vice President, Workforce Development & Economic Opportunity, Human Resources, Mass General Brigham



# CENTER FOR WORKING FAMILIES

The Center for Working Families (CWF) continues to work with Boston and area residents to help them take control of their finances, obtain job training, and build assets. Programs and initiatives include the Boston Tax Help Coalition, Bank On Boston, Bridge workforce training programs, Boston Saves, and ReadBoston, featured elsewhere in this report.

An important part of CWF is the financial coaching program. CWF has four full-time financial coaches who served 480 clients in FY23; 354 were new clients. These individuals had an average hourly income of \$27 and approximately 70% completed at least three coaching sessions. Coaches work with clients in English, Spanish, or Haitian Creole and are trained to work with the disabled.

While every individual's situation is different, coaches begin by asking about the client's short and long-term financial goals and work together on a budget and savings plan. If the client is unbanked or underbanked, a connection is made to our Bank On Boston program to assess banking options that would save money. The client's employment situation is discussed and recommendations are made regarding training to help individuals work towards living wage jobs.

This economic stability program connects families living on a low- to moderate-income with the financial and labor market mainstream. These employment and career services, financial coaching and education, and low-cost financial products build credit, savings, and assets. Workshops on employment, financial, and consumer awareness topics are conducted online and are available to the public, regardless if they are coaching clients. This includes a Credit Building for Teens workshop made available to community partners seeking workforce readiness programs for their summer employees. In FY23, we served about 400 individuals through workshops.

Research indicates that financial empowerment and workforce development are most effective when integrated and result in improved job retention and improved net income ([What It's Worth](#)). We know that healthy, sustainable communities are made up of people who have living wage jobs and feel confident about their economic futures. To get there, residents need the skills to advance along the path of employment and manage their money well.

*(continued on next page)*



Center for  
Working Families

## SUCCESS STORY | BILLY

Billy is a coaching client trying hard to adjust after 28 years of incarceration. He has been working with CWF coach Jessica for several months on personal finance and job seeking. His positive attitude has been an inspiration to staff and all rejoiced when he obtained a full-time job at \$17.92/hour with benefits. Jessica has referred him to other support services as well. His probation officer, Justin Albergaria, says he is thrilled with Billy's progress and appreciates CWF's work to support his reentry

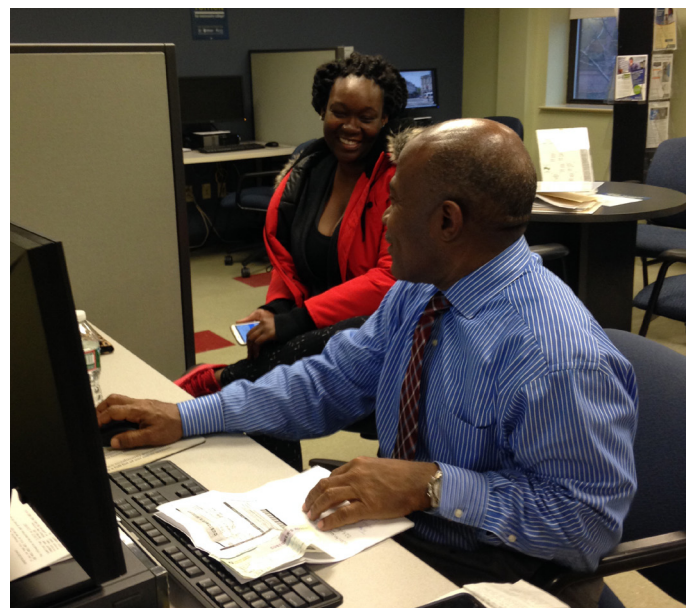


## BOSTON TAX HELP COALITION: 2023 TAX SEASON BY THE NUMBERS

The Boston Tax Help Coalition (BTHC) continued to provide free, successful tax preparation and financial education services to thousands of Boston area taxpayers in 2023. BTHC partners saw a significant increase in taxpayers served this season as tax sites were able to resume in-person services following several tax seasons under COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. During the 2023 tax season, BTHC prepared tax returns for 10,859 low-to-moderate income (LMI) Boston area taxpayers. This effort generated \$17.2 million in tax refunds, including \$6.3 million in Earned Income Tax Credits, returned directly to LMI taxpayers in Greater Boston. The average household served by BTHC received a \$2,000 tax refund, providing LMI families with critical income to address a wide variety of financial needs.

This tremendous effort was carried out across 31 community-based tax sites by

a network of highly trained volunteer tax preparers and financial educators. In the 2023 tax season, 322 volunteers were recruited and managed by BTHC to power free tax work. The tireless work of hundreds of volunteers saved LMI Boston area families approximately \$2.7 million in predatory, for-profit, tax preparation fees.



In addition to assisting thousands of Bostonians in receiving their maximum tax refunds, BTHC staff and volunteers provided credit advising and financial education to 1,303 tax clients in the form of the Financial Check-Up (FCU), up from 486 in 2022. The FCU is a light-touch credit advising session where a trained Financial Guide assists an individual taxpayer in understanding their current financial situation, including a review of an individual's credit report and FICO score, a personalized one-year plan to help improve their credit, and relevant service referrals.

BTHC primarily serves LMI Boston area residents, with a priority focus on reaching taxpayers with limited English proficiency (LEP) and taxpayers with a disability. In 2023, 18% of tax clients served had limited English proficiency, and 12% of taxpayers self-identified as individuals with a disability. As racially, ethnically, and otherwise marginalized groups in Boston bear the burden of economic disparity, BTHC is proud to provide financial empowerment services to Boston's Communities of Color; 85% of BTHC 2023 taxpayers are People of Color.

THE NUMBERS:

10,859  
Taxpayers  
Served

\$17.2m  
in Tax  
Refunds  
Returned

\$6.3m  
in Earned  
Income  
Tax Credits  
Returned

## PROMOTING EARLY LITERACY TO BOSTON FAMILIES THROUGH STORYTELLING

ReadBoston is the City of Boston's only comprehensive early literacy program. The program aims to set Boston's children on the path to reading success by providing resources to schools, childcare programs, community-based organizations, and families in low-income and new-immigrant communities.

In FY23, ReadBoston's beloved Storymobile visited 51 sites per week covering every Boston neighborhood. Storymobile is a one-of-a-kind summer program that brings a diverse group of professional storytellers and new books to children, ages 3-8. Storytellers entertained families with interactive stories and each child was able to choose a new book to take home and keep. The Storymobile stops included neighborhood branches of the Boston Public Library, BCYF Community Centers, schools, and childcare programs. The four-week program served over 9,000 kids and families, a 66% increase from 2022.

Some of the Storymobile locations received an extra special treat when they were visited by the Boston Police Department Bureau of Community Engagement's Ice Cream Truck. It was a nice way for the kids to cool off while enjoying a book.

In addition, ReadBoston received a special grant from Colin's Joy Project that helped to provide storytellers and books for almost 900 kids at 15 Storymobile locations throughout South Boston and Dorchester. Thank you, as

always, to our friends at Colin's Joy Project.

In Summer 2023, the American Association of Law Libraries held its annual meeting in Boston, and their "Social Responsibilities Special Interest Section" named ReadBoston as the beneficiary of their book drive. Thanks to the generosity of the AALL, the program received over 300 new books.



## BOSTON SAVES: INVESTING IN BOSTON'S FUTURE

Boston Saves, the City of Boston's children's savings account (CSA) program, provides every Boston Public Schools (BPS) K2 kindergartner with a CSA seeded with \$50. This money can be used to pay for the child's future college or career training, after high school graduation. Since its launch in 2001, the program has allocated more than \$1,070,000 to more than 18,866 students. Each year, another cohort of kindergartners is added to the program.

Boston Saves motivates families to earn more money for their child(ren) through regular incentives and provides financial education and resources that make saving easier and help families get ahead. In FY23, the program ran a January promotion: BPS K2 - 3rd grade families who logged in to the program's online savings platform for the first time by month's end earned an extra \$25 for their child's account. Boston Saves created this incentive to encourage families to take a crucial first step toward unlocking the program's many benefits. This money, plus the \$50 provided in every Boston Saves account and any additional incentives families earn, provides a

financial boost to their child's future. Almost 600 BPS families earned a total of \$14,550 for their children's futures through the January promotional offer from Boston Saves. To date, the program has provided \$126,275 in family-earned incentives alone.

A multi-year evaluation of Boston Saves in partnership with Dr. Willie Elliott, a national expert on CSAs at the University of Michigan and Summitlab Consulting Group, links the program to positive youth outcomes. Among economically disadvantaged families involved in the Boston program, the evaluation found a 16% increase in parent-reported children's social-emotional development compared to students not in Boston Saves. Additionally, economically disadvantaged families involved in Boston Saves displayed stronger indicators of financial capability than similar families not involved in Boston Saves. For example, 58% of economically disadvantaged families in the program reported they had a personal budget, spending plan, or financial plan, compared to 33% of families not in the program.

### THE NUMBERS:

**\$1.07m**

Funds Allocated  
to Date

**\$18,866**

Students Funded  
to Date

**600**

Families Earned  
\$14,550 in  
Incentives in 2023



5

SECTION 5/6

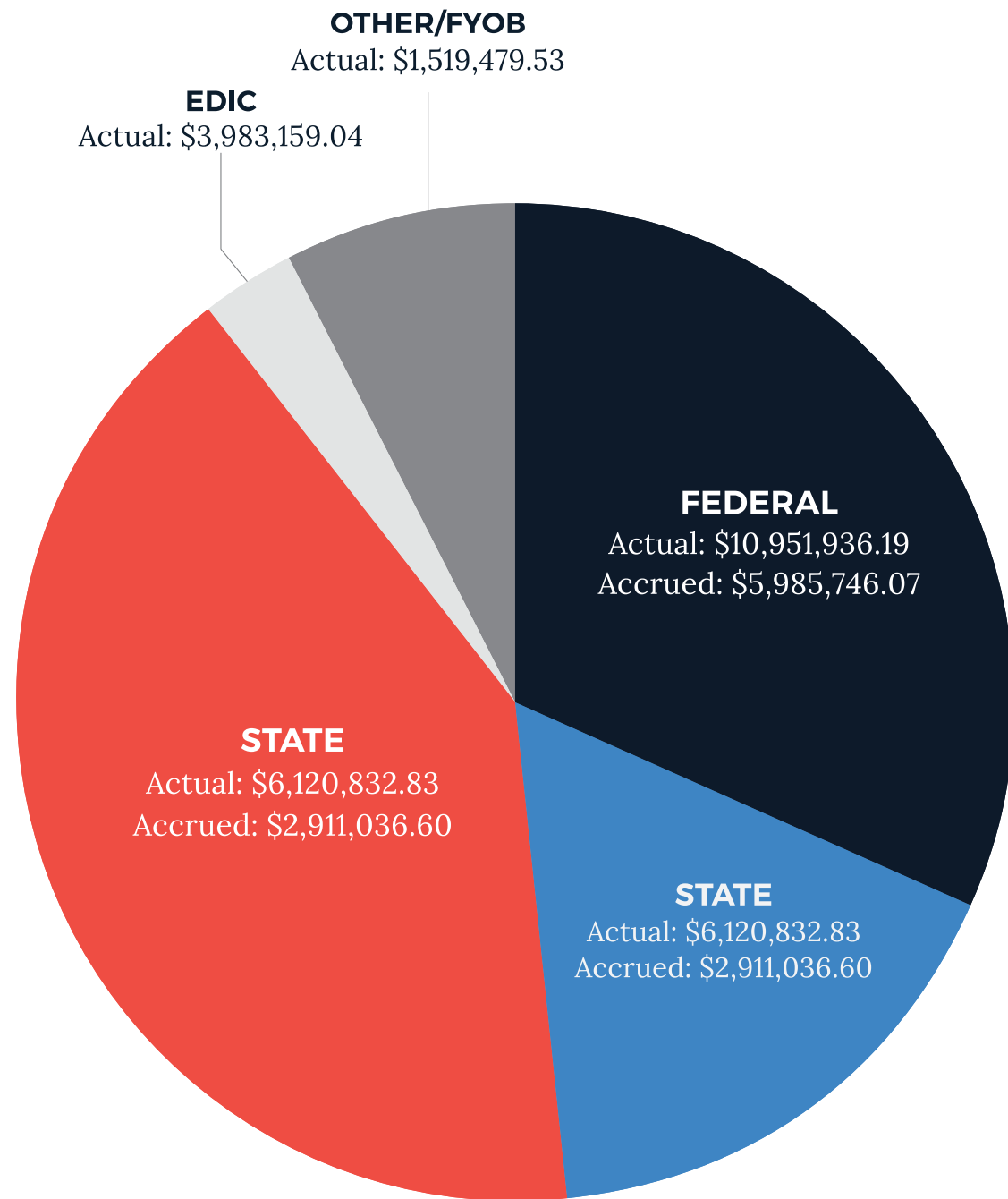
# FINANCIALS

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# FINANCIALS

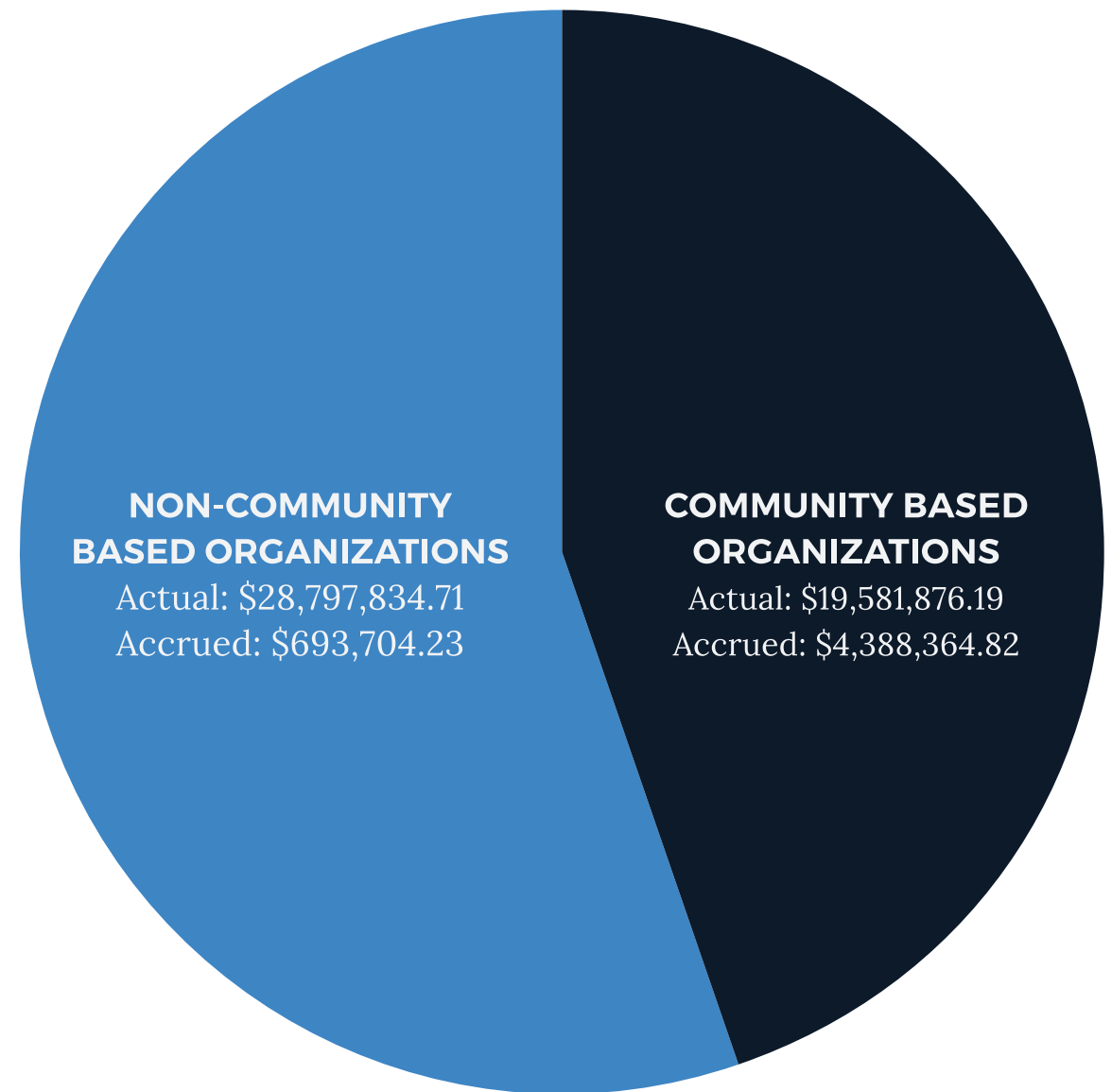
## FY23 REVENUE

Total Revenue: \$53,461,779.95



## FY23 EXPENSES

Total Revenue: \$53,461,779.95





SECTION 6/6

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## STAFF ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Elaine Lian	Keyla Kelley	Rashad Cope	
Elicia Flemming		Richard Sheriff	
Elizabeth Hughes		Ronice Kimbrel	

## PARTNER ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A Sporting Chance - Boston Baseball Camp	Boston Housing Authority
African Community Economic Development of New England	Boston Music Project
Action for Boston Community Development Inc.	Boston Opportunity Agenda
Afrimerican Culture Initiative Inc.	Boston Outdoor Preschool Network
All Dorchester Sports & Leadership	Boston Police Department
American Chinese Christian Educational & Social Services Inc.	Boston Private Industry Council
Apprentice Learning	Boston Project Ministries
Artists For Humanity Inc.	Boston Public Health Commission
Asian American Resource Workshop	Boston Public Library
Associated General Contractors of Massachusetts	Boston Public Schools
Associated Subcontractors of Massachusetts	Boston Regional Intelligence Center
Baupost Foundation	Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston
Beat the Odds	Brazilian Worker Center
Beat the Streets New England	Bridge of Boston Community Works
Bikes Not Bombs	Builders of Color Coalition
Boch Center - Wang Theatre	Building Pathways Boston
Boston Architectural College	Building Trades Employers Association
Boston Centers for Youth & Families	Bunker Hill Community College
Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center	Castle Square Tenants Organization Inc.
Boston City Council	Cathleen Stone Outward Bound School
Boston Common Frog Pond	Catholic Charitable Bureau of the Archdiocese of Boston Inc.
Boston Communities	Children's Services of Roxbury
Boston Emergency Medical Services	Chinese Progressive Association
Boston Fire Department	Commonwealth Corporation
	Courageous Sailing for Youth Inc.
	Digital Ready



DREAM Collaborative  
East Boston Social Centers  
English for New Bostonians  
Fair Employment Project  
Franklin Cummings Institute of Technology  
Freedom House Inc.  
Friends of St. Stephen's Youth Programs  
Future Chefs  
Future Leaders Of Roxbury  
Get Girls Going Inc.  
Greater Boston Building Trades  
Greater Boston Labor Council  
Greater Boston Legal Services  
Greatest MINDS Boston  
Harlem Lacrosse and Leadership  
Hideo Sasaki Foundation  
Hyde Square Task Force  
Immigrant Family Services Institute Inc.  
Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción  
Justice 4 Housing  
Justice at Work  
Kwong Kow Chinese School  
Level Ground Mixed Martial Arts  
LISC Boston  
Madison Park Development Corporation  
Massachusetts Attorney General's Office -  
Fair Labor Division  
Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational  
Safety & Health (MassCOSH)  
Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor &  
Workforce Development

Massasoit Community College  
MassBay Community College  
Masshire Career Centers  
Matahari Women's Worker Center  
Mattapan/Greater Boston Technology  
Learning Center Inc.  
Maverick Landing Community Services  
METCO: Metropolitan Council for  
Educational Opportunity  
Massachusetts Housing Investment  
Corporation  
MissionSAFE  
Mothers for Justice and Equality  
National Electrical Contractors Association  
New England Aquarium  
Next Leadership Development Corporation  
Norfolk Design and Construction  
North End Music & Performing Arts Center  
Northeastern University  
Paris Street Community Council  
Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons  
Phillips Brooks House Association  
Piers Park Sailing Center  
Related Beal  
Roxbury Community College  
Roxbury Tenants of Harvard Association Inc.  
Santander Bank  
Sisters Unchained Inc.  
SkillWorks  
Skanska  
Soccer Unity Project

Sociedad Latina  
South Boston Neighborhood House  
Speak for the Trees  
Spoke Art Inc.  
State Street Foundation  
STEAM Ahead  
St Martin de Porres Parish  
Success Boston  
Suffolk Construction  
Tenacity  
The Calculus Project  
The Center for Teen Empowerment  
The City School  
The Food Project  
The Pathway Initiative Inc.  
Timothy Smith Network Inc.  
Transformative Culture Project  
Trinity Boston Connects  
Tufts University  
U.S. Department of Labor  
United Somali Youth Inc.  
United Way of Massachusetts Bay  
Urban College of Boston  
Urban PowerHouse  
VietAID  
WriteBoston  
X-Cel Education Inc.  
YMCA of Greater Boston  
Zoo New England  
ZUMIX Inc.

**CITY** *of* **BOSTON**



Worker Empowerment