



2024

Social Innovator Guide

CENTERING NONPROFITS, ELEVATING IMPACT

About The Social Innovator Fund



In March of 2023, SIF launched the Social Innovator Fund to help individuals optimally move resources to the organizations in our network. An anonymous donor provided a five-year gift to support SIF's broader work and seed money for the fund. This anchor gift ensures the fund starts with \$200K yearly and gets 100% of all donations. We aim to build the fund and ensure that Social Innovators, typically small, local organizations, get maximized unrestricted funding for building and expanding their work.

100% Payout Annually

Unlike Donor Advised Funds (DAFs), with yearly annual payout variances, the Social Innovator Fund helps donors move money quickly to organizations that need it most. The fund is distributed at year-end among the year's eight cohort organizations and then reset for the next year's cohort. This optimal disbursement advances on-the-ground community work.

How to Make a Gift to the Social Innovator Fund

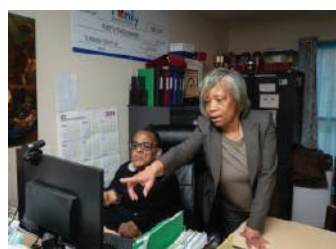
SIF will accept gifts to the 2024 Social Innovator Fund through December 31, 2024. The minimum gift is \$500. Gifts can be made online at socialinnovationforum.org/innovator-fund or by check, electronic transfer, via your donor advised fund (DAF), or stock transfer. Mailing address: 2 Oliver Street, Suite 802, Boston, MA 02109.

Contact Information

For more information about the Social Innovator Fund, please contact Tanya Inwald, Director of Programs, at tinwald@socialinnovationforum.org.

2024 Social Innovators

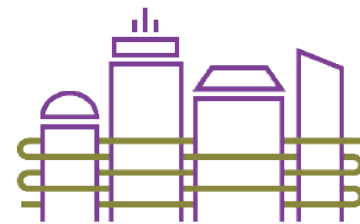
- Beat the Odds (BTO)
- Boston Food Forest Coalition
- Family Independence, Inc.
- Just A Start Financial Empowerment Collaborative
- Kids in Tech, Inc.
- Latinx Community Center for Empowerment (LCCE)
- Massachusetts Women of Color Network (MAWOCN)
- Top Notch Scholars, Inc.



"By giving to SIF's Social Innovator Fund, it allows us to give money to a broad range of community-based impact organizations, all at one time. SIF's process saves both time and money and ensures grant funds get to local organizations, in the most efficient way, by leveraging proximate experts and leaders in a range of social issue areas."

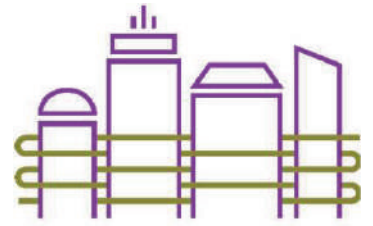
— ANCHOR DONOR

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Letter from the Executive Director



May 16, 2024

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Thank you for gathering with us for our annual Social Innovator Showcase. Every year, this event offers attendees the opportunity to learn about the impactful work that our Innovator organizations are doing in partnership with communities across Eastern Massachusetts. As the Social Innovation Forum's (SIF) new Executive Director, I am pleased to welcome you to this special moment in our Accelerator process. Thanks to your continued support, SIF has been able to uplift and direct \$61.9M in resources to more than 130 social impact organizations in our first twenty years and we look forward to expanding that work in the years ahead.

SIF remains committed to addressing the historical inequities in philanthropy and focusing on communities and organizations that are often excluded in this work. Tonight, we highlight eight dynamic nonprofit organizations and their leaders who we have had the pleasure of working with for the first five months of their two-year engagement in the Accelerator program. These nonprofits are addressing a range of social issues from environmental sustainability to socioeconomic inequality. You will hear from each leader as they share how they are responding to community needs, working to make a positive impact, and developing their visions for their organizations' future.

This year's showcase theme, **"Centering Nonprofits, Elevating Impact,"** acts as a reminder of our ongoing commitment to placing nonprofit leaders at the center of our work, giving them resources and supporting them in driving the change they want to see in their communities. We invite you to support the 2024 Social Innovator cohort and help them realize their vision for impact in their communities by making a philanthropic gift, donating to the Social Innovator Fund (a vehicle for supporting all eight Innovators), providing in-kind resources, or making connections and introductions for these leaders to individuals in your network.

I am truly grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside the SIF team in their planning of this event, as well as the 2024 Social Innovators in their preparation. Each group has worked tirelessly to create our program and our hope is that this evening's presentations will inspire you to connect with our Innovators and support their work.

Thank you again for your partnership!

Executive Director

Investors & Supporters



The Social Innovation Forum thanks our event sponsors!

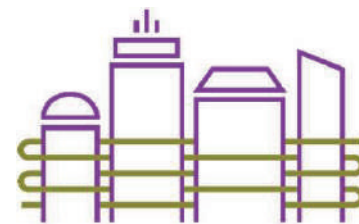
Gold



Silver



Investors & Supporters



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Anonymous
James B. Boskey Memorial Foundation
Jampart Charitable Trust
Liberty Mutual Insurance
MassMutual Foundation
Youth & Education Collaborative
Move the World Foundation
Jim and Lisa Valone
Wellington Management Foundation

SHOWCASE 2024 EVENT SPONSORS

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Fidelity Charitable
Fiduciary Trust
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Nutter
State Street

Silver

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InSource

2023 INNOVATOR FUND DONORS

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BESS Family Foundation
The Collective Change Fund
Larry and Beth Greenberg
Travis Kilpatrick
Havell Rodrigues
Connor Schoen
Steve and Ellen Segal
Lori Tsuruda
Viney Wallach Foundation
Kathleen Wallace

2024 INNOVATOR FUND DONORS

As of May 2, 2024

Anonymous
George and Barbara Beale
Steven and Ellen Segal

SOCIAL INNOVATION FORUM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Emily Fish, ROCA, Inc.
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Weston (Tony) Howland III, Howland Capital Management
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Suzanne Offit
Andrea Perry, Fidelity Foundations
Vikram Punwani
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Colby Swettberg, Silver Lining Mentoring

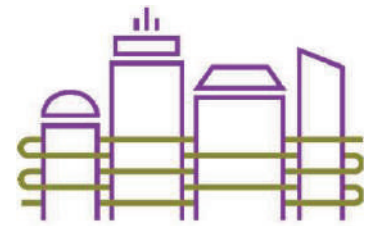
SOCIAL INNOVATION FORUM TEAM

Jessica Bradley, Communications and Events Co-op
Zane Diamond, Alumni and Nonprofit Network Program Coordinator
Sarah Dingee, Senior Program Manager
Melissa Duggan, Chief Operating Officer
Tanya Inwald, Director of Programs
Wyona Lynch-McWhite, Executive Director
Becca Mamlet, Development Operations Coordinator
Katie Murphy, Executive Assistant
Jenna Nackel, Director of Network Engagement
ChiChi Ofoma, Grant Writing Consultant
Malathi Reddy, Program Coordinator
Kassandra Sidney, Communications and Brand Manager
Lori Smith Britton, Development Consultant
Sakura Tomizawa, Finance and Operations Manager
Carina Traub, Funder Learning Manager

SOCIAL INNOVATOR ACCELERATOR CONSULTANTS

Quisquella Addison, School of Law at Northeastern University
Janet Anderson, Janet Anderson Consulting
Luba Falk Feigenberg, Reframe Evaluation
Bernadette Hampton-Jones, New England Community Services, Inc.

Investors & Supporters



Alyson Molloy Hussey, AMH Consulting
Margaret Leipsitz, ML Consulting
Monique Morimoto, SoulWorks Consulting
Wendy Swart Grossman, Creative Re/Frame

ALUMNI COUNCIL (Including the year the group was selected as a Social Innovator)

Renee Boynton-Jarrett, Vital Village Networks (2020)
Stephanie Cogen, Future Chefs (2011)
Alex Danesco, Citizens for Juvenile Justice (2017)
Musau Dibinga, OrigiNation Cultural Arts Center (2020)
Kayla Dorst, LEAP for Education (2019)
Erika Hernandez, ACT Lawrence (2018)
Colin Killick, Disability Policy Consortium (2019)
Michelle Liebetreu, Mystic River Watershed Association (2015)
Shavel'le Olivier, Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition (2022)
Sarah Roxburgh, Veterans Legal Services (2014)
Connor Schoen, Breaktime (2021)

FUNDER LEARNING ADVISORY COUNCIL

Elizabeth Bouchard, Fidelity Charitable
Natanja Craig-Oquendo, Boston Women's Fund
Kevin Fudge, American Student Assistance
Kate Grundy, Devonshire Foundation
Rory Neuner, Barr Foundation
Suzanne Offit
Karen Pfefferle, Wellington Management Foundation
Lawrence (Larry) Wallach, Viney Wallach Foundation

LEAD EXECUTIVE COACHES

Jerry DiMatteo, Atlantic Consultants
Fredia Woolf, Woolf Consulting

EXECUTIVE COACHES

Lina Foster, Lina Foster + Associates
Carol Hoopes, Creative Collaborations
Martha Hopewell, Mandala Leadership Coaching LLC
Gita Iyer, Horizons at Dedham Country Day School

Etta Jacobs, Power in the Middle
Mary Ann O'Loughlin, Cambridge Consulting & Coaching
Maxine Price, JC Max Consulting & Coaching
Joan Ryan, Joan Rosenberg Ryan JD Consulting
Fredi Shonkoff, Fredi Shonkoff Executive and Leadership Coaching
Joan Shulman, Joan Shulman, Coaching, Consulting & Facilitation
Kemarah Sika, Sika Consulting
Steve Stulck, Northern Light Consulting
Kate Taylor, Kate Taylor Coaching & Consulting
Lisa Yarussi, LAY-Up Coaching & Consulting

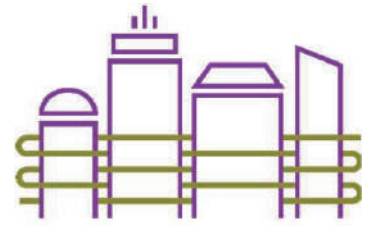
SOCIAL INNOVATOR ACCELERATOR MENTORS

Jane Calvin, Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust
Musau Dibinga, OrigiNation Cultural Arts Center
Toni Elka, Future Chefs
Bior Guigni, Beat The Streets New England (BTSNE)
Matt Pritchard, HomeStart
Linda Saris, LEAP for Education
Patricia Spence, Urban Farming Institute
Lisa Thureau, Strategies for Youth
Marquis Victor, Elevated Thought

SOCIAL INNOVATOR ACCELERATOR EVALUATION CONSULTANTS

Ronda Alexander, Vital Village Networks
Jerren Chang, GenUnity
David Cohen, Doc Wayne Youth Services, Inc.
Adriana Cordero-Raines, YW Boston
Cherie Craft, Smart from the Start
Alex Danesco, Citizens for Juvenile Justice
Kayla Dorst, LEAP for Education
Lisa Goldblatt Grace, My Life, My Choice
Bior Guigni, Beat the Streets New England (BTSNE)
Connor Schoen, Breaktime
Damali Vidot, Independent Consultant (GreenRoots Affiliation)
Isa M. Woldegiorgis, The Boston Area Rape Crisis Center

Investors & Supporters



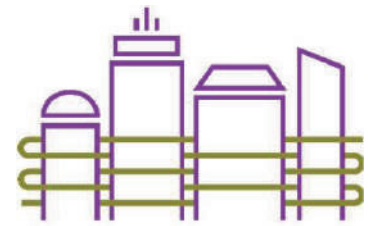
EVALUATION COMMITTEE

Ronda Alexander, Vital Village Networks
Juan Pablo Bonilla Santiago, United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley
Jerren Chang, GenUnity
Clementina Chéry, Louis D. Brown Peace Institute
David Cohen, Doc Wayne Youth Services, Inc.
Julia Satti Cosentino, Nutter
Cherie Craft, Smart from the Start
Alex Danesco, Citizens for Juvenile Justice
Bonnie Denis, James B. Boskey Memorial Foundation
Kayla Dorst, LEAP for Education
Hessann Farooqi, Boston Climate Action Network
Jon Feinman, InnerCity Weightlifting
Annis Gill-Miller, Eastern Bank
Lisa Goldblatt Grace, My Life, My Choice
Bior Guigni, Beat the Streets New England (BTSNE)
Supreme Hassan, Transformational Prison Project
Jon Hecht, Jampart Charitable Trust
Erika Hernandez, ACT Lawrence
Patrick Herron, Mystic River Watershed Association
Robin Kahn, Babson Financial Literacy Project
Matthew Konsa, MassMutual Foundation
Madeline Landrau, MassMutual Foundation
Melissa MacDonnell, Liberty Mutual Insurance
Deanna Moran, Conservation Law Foundation
Ruari O'Mahony, Rist Institute of Sustainability, UMass Lowell
Jill Pappas, Move the World Foundation
Tom Pappas, Move the World Foundation
Karen Pfefferle, Wellington Management Foundation
Danielle Piskadlo, Women's Money Matters
Aliesha Porcena, City of Boston
Adriana Raines, YW Boston
Laceem A. Satcher, Boston College Morrissey College of Arts and Sciences
Connor Schoen, Breaktime
Bryan Spence, Liberty Mutual Insurance
Jalina Suggs, Union Capital Boston
Abigail Szpekman, MassMutual Foundation
Lisa Thureau, Strategies for Youth

Lisa Valone

Jim Valone, Wellington Management Foundation
Damali Vidot, Independent Consultant (GreenRoots Affiliation)
Lawrence (Larry) Wallach, Viney Wallach Foundation
Hadas Webb, Browning the Green Space
Lori Weeden, Climate Change Initiative at UMass Lowell
Rachel Weidenfeld, JRI
Isa M. Woldegiorgis, The Boston Area Rape Crisis Center

In-Kind Partners



In-kind partnerships are an important component of the Social Innovation Forum (SIF) model which strengthens the value of our programs. In-kind partners use their unique professional skills and experiences to provide meaningful, hands-on support to current and past Innovators, helping them to build their capacity to improve our communities. Over the years, our in-kind partners have provided millions of dollars worth of services to SIF Innovators.

Analysis Group

Analysis Group (AG) is one of the largest economics consulting firms in North America. Through its partnership with SIF, teams from Analysis Group work with Social Innovators to assess and contribute to projects that address their data and analytics needs. Some of AG's past projects with Social Innovators include developing database management systems, designing surveys, and conducting a variety of statistical analyses to help evaluate their programs' effectiveness and demonstrate their impact to potential investors and foundations.



Ariel

Ariel is an international training and coaching firm. It is comprised of performing artists and business professionals who believe that the workplace functions better when people interact generously and communicate well. Ariel provides group and individual presentation coaching to our newest cohort of Social Innovators each year, helping them make stronger pitches to investors and build sustainable relationships. When possible, Ariel opens up extra slots in their regular trainings to nonprofit leaders in the SIF community.



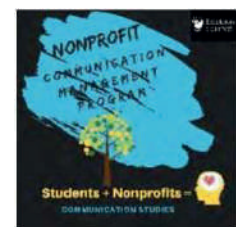
DPA Communications

DPA Communications is a full-service public relations and marketing firm. Clients of DPA Communications are industry leaders who rely on the firm's expertise leveraging communications strategies to meet their unique business goals in a complex and cluttered media landscape. DPA provides public relations guidance and advising to Social Innovators on an as-needed basis, helping organizations to connect with relevant media sources, create innovative event marketing strategies, and build relationships in the public relations space.



Emerson College, Nonprofit Communication Management Program

The Nonprofit Communication Management program at Emerson College provides students with a foundation in nonprofit communication and fundraising combined with service-learning partnerships that join students with local and global nonprofit organizations. Students in this program provide 8-10 organizations each year with Comprehensive social media audits and communication Improvement recommendations.



In-Kind Partners



Goodwin

Goodwin is a national law firm with a growing international presence. Its attorneys are nimble, creative, and pragmatic, working tenaciously to protect and promote its clients' interests in the United States and around the globe. Goodwin offers Social Innovators pro-bono legal services, including assistance with accounting, real estate management, and corporate governance on an as-needed basis.



PROMUS+ Consulting

PROMUS+ Consulting is a Boston-based development consulting firm. Promus+ applies a multi-disciplined approach and nearly two decades of industry experience to assess its clients' fundraising strengths and weaknesses. With such knowledge, Promus+ identifies efficient, effective, and practical solutions for Social Innovators' immediate and long-term fundraising goals.



TypeCoach

TypeCoach delivers practical applications of personality types to drive business results, including onsite corporate training programs, consulting, executive coaching, online tools and products. Every year, TypeCoach provides pro-bono personality assessment tools to SIF volunteer executive coaches in order to enhance and deepen their coaching engagements with Social Innovators.



William James College

The Executive Coaching Graduate Certificate Program at William James College is a two-year, International Coach Federation-approved program that trains experienced professionals to become executive coaches. Students from the program serve as executive coaches to past Social Innovators and Social Innovator Accelerator finalists during their capstone experience at William James. Each year they provide 10-20 individuals with four months of high-level coaching supervised by experienced faculty.



Interested in Becoming an In-Kind Partner?

For more information about how you or your company could become involved with the Social Innovation Forum as an in-kind partner, please email Tanya Inwald, Director of Programs, at tinwald@socialinnovationforum.org.

Accelerator Overview



Program Overview

The Social Innovator Accelerator provides a unique opportunity for innovative nonprofits to gain visibility, expand their networks, and strengthen capacity. Each year, the Social Innovation Forum uses an evaluation and selection process to identify impactful grassroots nonprofits with budget ranges of \$100,000-\$2M that are tackling the most pressing social issues in the Eastern Massachusetts area. Once selected into the Accelerator program as “Social Innovators,” organizations receive access to financial support as well as other in-kind resources and services.

Accelerator Evaluation and Selection Process

Our evaluation and selection process lasts six months and involves targeted outreach to potential applicants, a written application, in-person or virtual site visits, and other forms of due diligence. It brings together a range of stakeholders, including past SIF Innovators, issue area experts, SIF staff, funding partners, and an evaluation committee made up of more than 50 nonprofit, business, government, and philanthropic leaders. By drawing on the expertise of our community throughout the evaluation and selection processes, every year SIF selects a cohort of effective Innovators.

As part of acknowledging and addressing the power dynamics in philanthropic relationships, SIF introduced a new iteration of our traditional Social Issue Track selection process, with a focus on participatory decision-making. In doing so, we acted on the belief that people who are most impacted by the issues at hand should be making decisions about the solutions. With financial support and a commitment to learning from track partners, SIF hires nonprofit consultants – nonprofit leaders working at alumni Innovator organizations – to hold decision-making power throughout the process. This past year, two of our Social Issue Tracks used a participatory decision-making model. We also piloted a multi-funder Collaborative Track, in which three funders worked with SIF staff and nonprofit consultants to select three Innovators working in a single, broad topic area (youth & education).

Social Issue Track Partners are the key funding partners for the Accelerator program. They are involved throughout the program. Track Partners play an integral role during the selection process as they help select impactful local nonprofit organizations – Social Innovators – working on social issues. As a Social Issue Track Partner, you are asked to provide a lead gift to sponsor a Social Issue Track of the Accelerator Program. Funding a Social Issue Track has many benefits, including a range of learning and networking opportunities.

Once selected, Social Innovators receive two years of support from SIF in the following areas:

Consulting – Support with articulation of the organization’s model, along with preparation of a five-minute PowerPoint presentation and a four-page prospectus for potential funders, partners, and supporters

Executive Coaching – Six months of one-on-one engagement with an executive coach focused on individual professional goals

Graphic Design – Creation of a professional-quality PowerPoint presentation and design of an operating model graphic

Public Speaking and Storytelling – Group and individual support with presentation skills and storytelling

Performance Measurement – Support with the performance metrics and goals

Relationship Building – Comprehensive, individualized advice on funding and outreach strategies, as well as promotion at Social Innovation Forum events to raise awareness of the organization’s work

In-kind Partner Support – Access to SIF’s network of in-kind partners who offer pro-bono support in a variety of areas, including legal, data analysis, communications, development, and more

Alumni Program – Ongoing capacity-building, in-kind, and networking support as part of SIF’s network

Unrestricted funding – Access to at least \$30K of unrestricted grants

2024 Social Innovator Prospectuses



Beat the Odds (BTO)

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Advancing Educational/Workforce Pathways and Supports for Adolescents and Young Adults

*Track Partner: Youth & Education Collaborative**

Boston Food Forest Coalition

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Pathways to Climate Resiliency

Track Partner: Liberty Mutual Insurance

Family Independence, Inc.

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Holistic Approaches to Mental Health and Physical Wellbeing in Historically Excluded Communities (BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, Disability)

Track Partner: James B. Boskey Memorial Foundation

Just A Start Financial Empowerment Collaborative

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Building Financial Resilience

Track Partner: MassMutual Foundation

Kids in Tech, Inc.

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Advancing Educational/Workforce Pathways and Supports for Adolescents and Young People

*Track Partner: Youth & Education Collaborative**

Latinx Community Center for Empowerment (LCCE)

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Strengthening Democracy Through Civic Engagement and Community Empowerment

Track Partner: Jampart Charitable Trust

Massachusetts Women of Color Network (MAWOCN)

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Disrupting Cycles of Harm and Building Pathways to Healing

Track Partner: Anonymous

Top Notch Scholars

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Advancing Educational/Workforce Pathways and Supports for Adolescents and Young Adults

*Track Partner: Youth & Education Collaborative**

**The Youth & Education Collaborative track is a partnership between three funders: Jim and Lisa Valone, Move the World Foundation, and Wellington Management Foundation. Three 2024 Innovators were selected on this track.*

Beat The Odds (BTO)

FOUNDED: 2019

CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: \$771,200

CONTACT: Camila Rojas Pagan, *Chief Executive Officer & Co-Founder*

☎ 617.840.7502

✉ camilarp@btoboston.org

🌐 www.btoboston.org



Beat The Odds (BTO) uses the transformative power of music and the creative arts to amplify the voices of Boston's under-resourced BIPOC youth ages 14–24 in a nurturing, safe space that promotes healing. BTO inspires youth to explore their creativity, tap into joy, and build resilience by teaching artist development, music production, dance, content creation, and life skills, paired with authentic mentorship to empower them to lead healthy, fulfilling lives.

BTO works with youth who experience firsthand the effects of intergenerational poverty, racism, violence, and trauma. These young people live in neighborhoods where poverty rates are four times higher than white neighborhoods and homelessness is seven times higher. 40% of BTO youth are faced with housing instability and 100% are impacted by community and/or domestic violence leading to trauma and PTSD. BTO disrupts these cycles that disproportionately affect its youth by offering a paid work experience and the support necessary to overcome these obstacles.

According to nonprofit organization Americans for the Arts, students exposed to the arts have increased feelings of well-being and connectedness and decreased feelings of loneliness, which aids in the healing from trauma. Additionally, students who participate in the arts are 20% more likely to graduate from high school, illustrated by BTO's 100% high school graduation rate.

BTO prepares youth for successful futures with innovative and authentic wrap-around programming that gives youth participants the stage they need and deserve.

Two-Year Goals

- Double the number of youth participants from 70 to 140
- Expand programming from 3 to 5 days a week
- Expand BTO's facility from 1,200 to 5,000 sq. feet
- Increase FTEs from 2.5 to 6 and add 6 additional instructors
- Establish BTO as a Creative Hub and leader in the Boston arts community

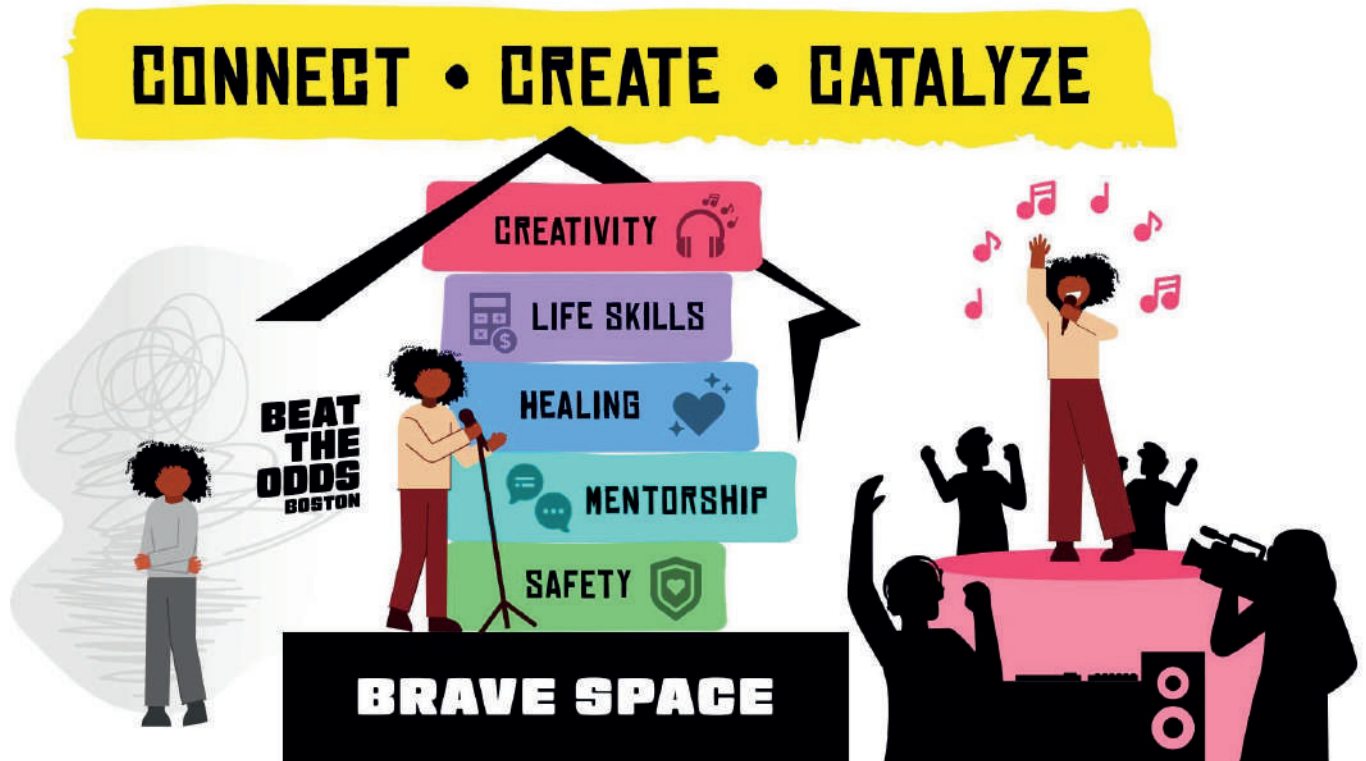
Investment Opportunity

Beat The Odds (BTO) seeks an investment of \$2 million over the next two years to expand programming and amplify its impact. This will enable BTO to double the number of participants served, increase programming from 3 to 5 days a week, add staff and instructors, and expand technology to keep up with industry standards. Additionally, this investment will allow BTO to support the building of critical infrastructure needed as the organization scales its impact, including development, finance, and operations systems.

Ways to Invest

- Join Board of Directors or Advisory Board
- Organizational strategic planning
- Commercial real estate and HR consulting services
- State of the art recording equipment, laptops, and music production software
- Gift cards for necessities for youth
- Cooked meals twice a week

Beat The Odds Model



BTO'S Unique Value Proposition

BTO's theory of change is based on organic experiences, extensive prototyping, and continual feedback from youth participants, partners, staff members, and instructors.

Safe, Supportive, and Stable Spaces BTO cultivates a sense of belonging and community by providing inclusive spaces where youth feel empowered to express themselves freely and give voice to their feelings.

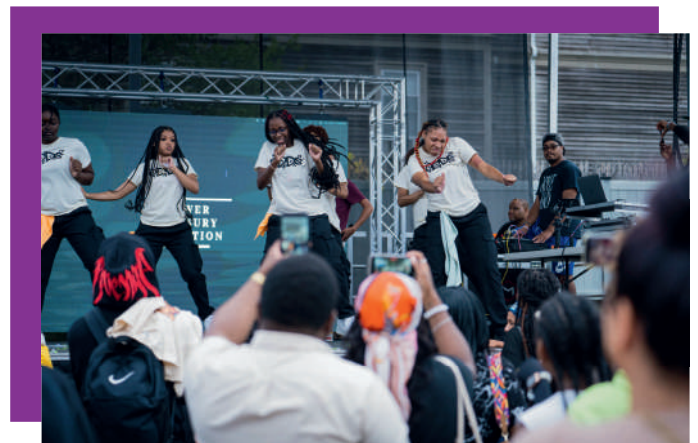
Authentic Mentorship BTO's trauma-informed staff inspire youth by building trusting relationships and providing compassionate support and guidance in navigating life, relationships, academics, and the artistic journey.

Holistic Healing Marathon Monday empowerment groups led by a licensed clinician foster open discussion to help youth heal from trauma by recognizing their own resilience to improve mental health.

Crucial Life Skills BTO prepares young people for their futures by providing workshops with outside experts that

cover topics such as creative entrepreneurship, conflict resolution, job readiness, college preparation, healthy relationships, and financial literacy.

Courageous Creativity Choosing dance, music production, artist development, or content creation, youth learn the technical skills necessary to build a career in the creative world while strengthening their confidence and self-identity, ensuring their voices are amplified and heard. BTO has emerged as a leader in the community hosting an annual showcase where youth participants share their artistic work with over 300 community members.



Opportunity Builds Equity For All

CONNECT: Coming together in BTO's Dorchester studio at least three afternoons a week after school, with a 100% participation rate, youth connect with their mentors, peers, and creative partners, forging meaningful long-lasting relationships grounded in mutual respect and support. This has led to 100% of BTO youth self-reporting a significant improvement in self-esteem, mood, and ability to cope with conflict at home and in school.

CREATE: Using various forms of artistic expression including dance, music production, rapping, singing, songwriting, beat making, and videography, youth create pieces to share with their BTO counterparts and the broader community. They develop their voices and sense of belonging, with 100% of BTO youth self-reporting increased self-confidence.

CATALYZE: BTO puts the power of storytelling into the hands of its young participants. Through its art, youth explore what it means to be whole, connected, and heard. BTO helps its youth navigate through systems of oppression with a commitment to social justice by using arts as a vehicle to change narratives and uplift each other.

"BTO creates safe spaces for young people to explore their passions, develop their craft, and find their voices so they can flourish and grow as vital community members in our city."

— Pedro Cruz, Executive Director, Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement, City of Boston

Leadership & Governance

Camila Rojas Pagan, CEO & Co-Founder is a lifelong artist born and raised in the Mission Hill neighborhood of Roxbury. Having completed her Nonprofit Management and Leadership Certificate at Boston University, she was recognized by the Boston Celtics as a Hero Among Us and is an inaugural member of The Boston Foundation's Women of Color Leadership Circle. With 18 years of experience leading teams and dance workshops in NYC and Boston, Camila and her co-founders launched BTO to create the artistic spaces for youth they wished they had. BTO is governed by a seven-person all-BIPOC Board of Directors with expertise in finance, impact investing, artist development, teen mental health, and youth engagement.

Financial Sustainability

Beat The Odds has grown from a volunteer organization to 2 FTEs, 1 PTE, and 4 instructors in the past year. BTO has demonstrated the ability to manage limited funds efficiently and effectively since its inception. With the primary source of funding coming from foundations and government, BTO's executive leadership and Board of Directors are well-poised to develop and deepen their individual and corporate fundraising.

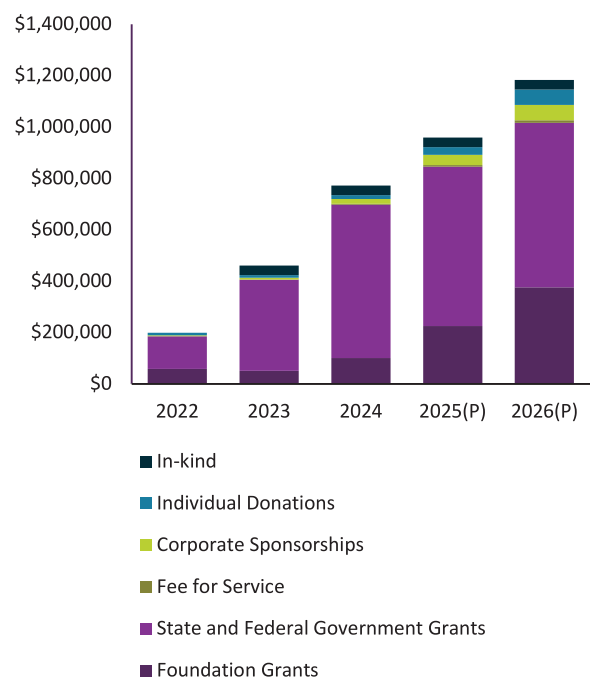
KEY INVESTORS

- Boston After School & Beyond
- Boston Cultural Council
- The Boston Foundation
- City of Boston
 - Office of Youth Employment and Opportunity
 - Office of Black Male Advancement
- Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture
- New Commonwealth Fund
- Red Sox Foundation

KEY PARTNERS

- Casa Myrna Inc.
- City of Boston, Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement
- The Hustlers Guild
- The Record Co.
- Moms Demand Action - MA

Revenue by Source





Success Story

JAH'EELIN "SANYE" BERES GONZALEZ

Growing up in Hyde Park, Sanye faced significant societal pressures that took a toll on his mental health. Surrounded by individuals selling drugs, Sanye battled this influence all alone, often feeling overwhelmed and discouraged. Grappling with feelings of isolation and displacement, he had no plans for college and doubts about graduating from high school. In BTO, he found a safe space where he could unleash his creativity without inhibition or judgment. He completed high school successfully and earned an Associate's Degree in Recording Arts and Show Production. He is now a BTO youth leader and an audio engineer for local artists. In 2023, he won the Master of the Chamber title in a prestigious Boston music competition. BTO also secured placements for his singles on Spotify playlists with over 1 million followers, elevating his monthly listeners to 30,000 and accumulating 1 million streams. In his own words, "BTO provided me with a sense of home along with the support and confidence to break free from societal pressures so I could become a force in the music industry, and a courageous adult."

Program Performance and Organizational Health

Below are some of the key measures BTO tracks to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, capture lessons learned, and adjust strategy as necessary to maximize success.

	FY 2024	FY 2025(P)	FY 2026(P)
Program Performance			
Youth Participants	70	105	140
Community Programs/# of attendees	5/300	10/500	15/700
% of BTO high school seniors who return as youth mentors	65%	70%	75%
% of youth who can recognize and ask for help around mental health challenges	93%	95%	97%
% of youth who have increased confidence sharing their creative expressions publicly at end of program	100%	100%	100%
Organizational Health/Capacity-Building			
Number of full-time staff members	2.5	4	6
Number of community and coalition partners	5	10	15
Total Revenue	\$771,200	\$958,200	\$1,182,200

Social Impact

Beat The Odds employs 70 youth annually—mainly from Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, and Hyde Park—in their school year and summer youth programming. In the past three years, BTO has provided over \$300,000 in youth salaries, adding to Boston's economy and ensuring financial stability for youth.

Below are the indicators BTO will track to ensure progress and continued impact.

Indicator	Current Numbers	2026(P)
% of high school seniors who apply to post secondary education	100%	100%
% of youth who can identify at least one adult mentor in their life and have an increased sense of belonging	96%	99%
% of youth who self-report increase in confidence	100%	100%
% of youth who feel better prepared to navigate adulthood	78%	90%
% of youth who experience a decrease in feelings of loneliness	84%	91%
% of youth who can identify the signs of unhealthy relationships	85%	95%

Boston Food Forest Coalition

FOUNDED: 2015

CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: \$2,395,000 (FY24)

CONTACT: Orion Kriegman, *Executive Director*

☎ 857.928.4066

✉ orion@bostonfoodforest.org

🌐 www.bostonfoodforest.org



Boston is facing a climate emergency. Each year, the city experiences record heat and temperatures, as well as an increase in extreme weather events. Boston's history of discriminatory neighborhood development practices, such as redlining, has led to an inequitable distribution of green space across the city, placing the burden of climate-induced impacts on the city's Black and Brown residents.

Recently, the City of Boston reported that communities of color have 20% less parkland and 40% less tree cover than predominantly White neighborhoods. This leads to hotter daytime temperatures, a disparity of 7.5 degrees, making these residents more vulnerable to increasing urban heat waves. Research shows that less access to green space negatively impacts residents' physical and mental health.

Founded in 2015, the Boston Food Forest Coalition (BFFC) acts at this intersection of racial equity and climate resilience. As a nonprofit community land trust, BFFC transforms vacant lots into public "edible parks," known as food forests, placed into permanent community control and ownership. Working together with grassroots leadership, BFFC is building a new model of green infrastructure in Boston neighborhoods, providing more equitable access to healthy green space and greater connection to each other and the natural world.

Two-Year Goals

CLIMATE RESILIENCE/ RACIAL EQUITY

- Build 3 new food forests a year in collaboration with local leaders in neighborhoods with limited green space
- Support & train new teams of stewards to care for the parks

BUILD A SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION

- Grow staff capacity from 8 to 13 FTEs
- Hire first Development Director
- Expand Board of Directors

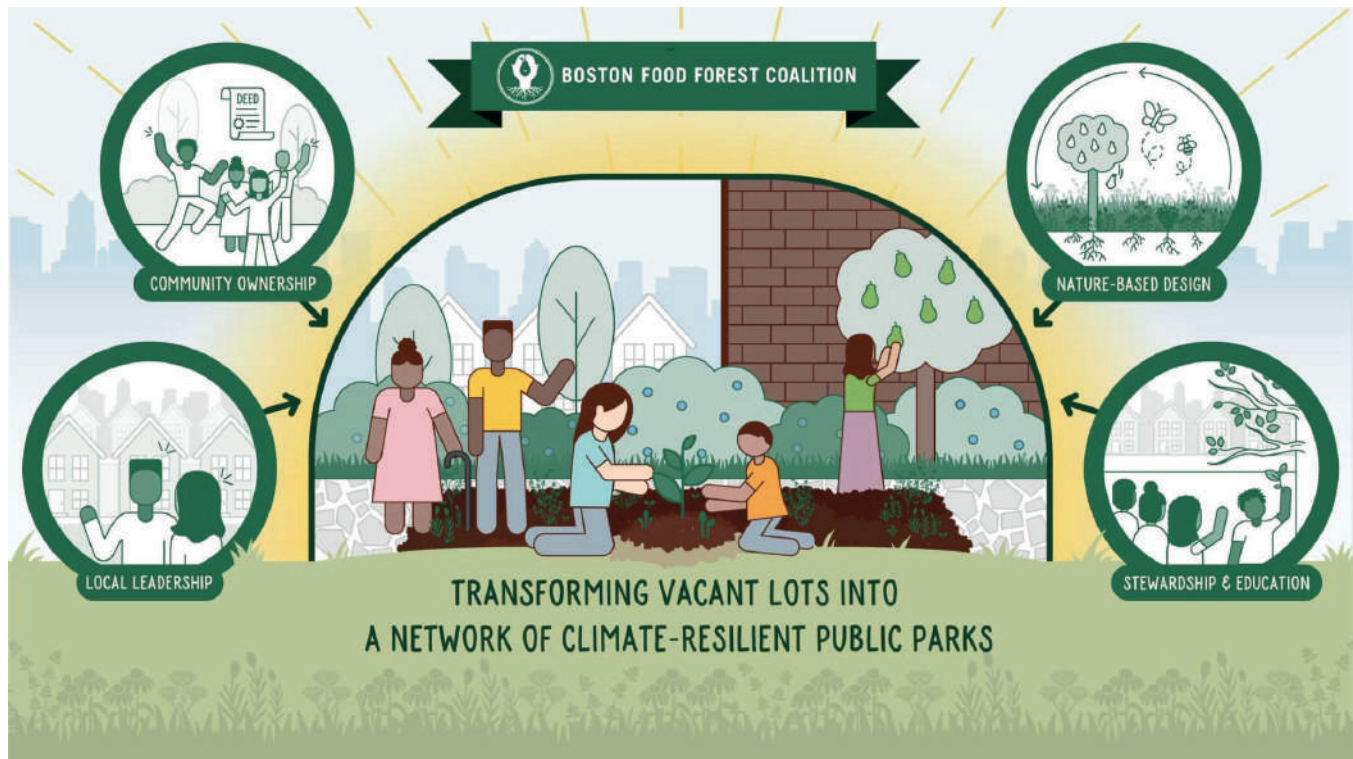
Investment Opportunity

Boston Food Forest Coalition's goals for growth and impact will require an annual budget of \$2.6M by 2026. BFFC is seeking funds to maintain existing food forest parks and build three new parks a year through 2030. Each new park requires an upfront investment for design and construction, followed by support and training for the community stewards who will maintain and care for the parks. BFFC looks to add its first Development Director to lead this fundraising effort and additional program staff to support the growth in the number of food forests.

Ways to Invest

- \$450-800k to design & build a new food forest park
- \$12,000 annually to maintain an existing park
- Contribute to the Equity Fund to support the stewards
- Volunteer to work in a park
- Suggest a possible location for a new food forest park

Boston Food Forest Coalition Model



What Is a Food Forest Park?

A food forest park is a diverse planting of edible plants that attempts to mimic the ecosystems found in nature. Food forests are three-dimensional designs, with life extending in all directions—up, down, and out—open to the community from sunup to sundown.

BFFC's Key Strategies

The Boston Food Forest Coalition (BFFC) envisions a future where every Boston resident can access a food forest park in their neighborhood. By transforming vacant lots into locally-run, public, edible food forests, BFFC's mission contributes to strengthening climate resiliency, increasing access to healthy locally grown food, and reducing racially driven disparities in greenspace access and its associated benefits. The food forest parks also create important community gathering spaces, connecting neighbors across class, race, language, and culture. The BFFC model combines four **key strategies** to create a vibrant network of climate-resilient food forest parks across Boston.

1. Local Leadership: Working with local leaders and neighborhood groups, BFFC develops neglected vacant lots into public parks for community gathering and urban forest gardening, prioritizing communities of color with less access to green space and its critical benefits.

2. Community Ownership: In partnership with the City of Boston, BFFC acquires city-owned vacant land parcels for food forest development. These parcels, purchased for \$100, are placed into community control and remain protected in the BFFC community land trust in perpetuity.



3. Nature-Based Design: In conversation with the community, a unique three-dimensional design is developed for each food forest site, including tree canopy for needed shade, fruit and nut shrubs for food, plants to attract beneficial insects and pollinators, inviting structures (pathways, benches, gazebos), and welcoming signage and artwork.

4. Stewardship & Education: BFFC works with the same neighbors who design the park to train and support them to steward the food forest park once it opens to the public. BFFC’s network of educators provides technical assistance and team support to the stewards and gardening and environmental workshops for stewards and the public.

The current sites in BFFC conserve over 130,000 square feet of land. BFFC is poised for major growth and impact. Its goal is to build 30 food forest parks by 2030, held in trust for generations to come. The time to join BFFC in this critical work is now.

“The City of Boston needs community land trusts like BFFC working on green space creation in order to mitigate some of the challenges of a changing climate that we are already seeing in our city.”

— Sheila A. Dillon, *Chief of Housing and Director of the Mayor’s Office of Housing, City of Boston*

Leadership & Governance

The Boston Food Forest Coalition is a 501(c)(3) organization, incorporated as a community land trust. Authentic representation and power-sharing is critical to its mission. The Board of Directors is at least two-thirds local neighborhood residents and stewards, actively caring for the food forest parks. The other Board members are nonprofit leaders and key partners.

BFFC Executive Director and Founder, Orion Kriegman, is a certified permaculture designer, with decades of community organizing and environmental and economic justice experience.

Financial Sustainability

BFFC exceeded its revenue goals the last few years through a combination of government funding, foundation grants, and individual giving. An anonymous 3-year capacity grant, ending in 2024, allowed BFFC to grow its staff and build the organization’s infrastructure. BFFC is looking to secure a base of annual fundraising and multiyear gifts that will ensure it can reach its ambitious goal of 30 food forest parks by 2030.

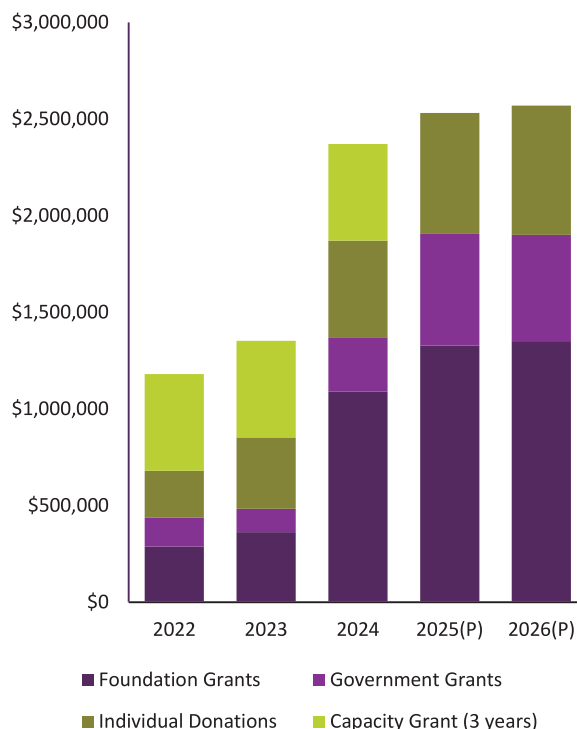
KEY INVESTORS

- City of Boston, GrowBoston
- City of Boston, Community Preservation Committee
- Cummings Foundation
- Liberty Mutual Foundation
- Mabel Louise Riley Foundation

KEY SUPPORTERS

- Local neighborhood organizations (e.g., Edgewater Neighborhood Association, Old West Church, Egleston Square Branch Public Library)
- Mayor’s Office of Housing
- Mass Audubon’s Boston Nature Center

Revenue by Source





Success Story

EDGEWATER FOOD FOREST

The Edgewater Food Forest in Mattapan began as a vacant lot littered with abandoned shopping carts and other refuse. In 2021, neighbors decided to change that. These residents—many of whom are members of the Edgewater Neighborhood Association—came together to transform the lot into a public green space and resource for the community. In partnership with BFFC, they created a vision for a food forest that would feature edible plants, benches, chess tables, a compost bay, a rain catchment system, and a bandstand. Through clean-up days, neighborhood meetings, planting workshops, and lots of collaboration, their vision came to life. In May 2023, the Edgewater Food Forest opened to the public, an oasis in the neighborhood. Permanently protected in the community land trust, this food forest will be, as Mayor Michelle Wu stated at its grand opening, “transformational for generations to come.”

Program Performance and Organizational Health

Below is a summary of the key measures that the Boston Food Forest Coalition will track to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, capture lessons learned, and adjust strategy as necessary.

	FY 2024	FY 2025(P)	FY 2026(P)
Program Performance			
Total food forest parks	11	14	17
# of community stewards	60	80	100
Stewards actively caring for their food forest parks weekly (i.e., gardening, weeding) <i>Note: Goal is to hold percent steady as number of stewards increase.</i>	75%	75%	75%
Organizational Health/Capacity-Building			
Number of staff members	8	11	13
Number of Board members	5	8	10
Total Revenue	\$2.4M	\$2.5M	\$2.6M

Social Impact

Boston Food Forest Coalition envisions a network of food forest parks that will create a tapestry of green spaces across the city. This green infrastructure will provide each neighborhood with much-needed access to natural spaces. Besides cooling urban hotspots, the research suggests that access to green space has a positive impact on mental and physical health. BFFC advocates for city-wide policy changes and exists as a model for the role that local communities can play in climate resilience.

BFFC has identified key indicators to track progress and impact over time. Below is a summary of the social impact that BFFC aspires to have in the next two years.

Indicator	Current Numbers	2026(P)
CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND RACIAL EQUITY		
Cool urban hotspots – total trees and shrubs planted*	525	800
Total land conserved (square feet)	130,000	180,000
COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS		
Stewards who agree or strongly agree that they are more connected to their neighbors because of the food forest park	Add to steward survey in 2024	Report on change
Stewards highly likely to invite a neighbor to get involved in the coalition. <i>Net promoter score out of 100 with a score of 50-70 considered very good.</i>	55	65

*NOTE: Scientists have found that when done thoughtfully, planting urban trees and enhancing urban forests and urban green canopy can lower air temperatures in city neighborhoods by around 10 degrees. Source: OneTreePlanted.org

Family Independence, Inc.

FOUNDED: 2017

CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: \$3,112,564

CONTACT: France Neff, *President and CEO*

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✉️ Fneff@fsgb.org

🌐 www.familyindependence.org



Family Independence, Inc. (FI) is a residential program for families experiencing homelessness that provides life and parenting skills development, access to education, job training, child care and child-centered services, housing search assistance, and specialized clinical services. FI's two programs, Young Parent Living Program and Family Emergency Shelter Program serve young families and adults respectively.

According to the Massachusetts Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Commission's Youth Count survey, between 2019 and 2022 the percent of unsheltered youth increased 38% and there was nearly a 36% increase in unhoused youth (UHY) who were not in school and did not have a diploma. Based on the study, respondents who left home as minors were less likely to be sheltered, have a high school degree, or to receive the help they needed, and more likely to have no income sources at all.

FI serves young families in Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, Jamaica Plain, and the South End. Many of the residents are low-income families struggling with the emotional, psychological, physical, and economic effects of poverty, abuse, discrimination, violence, and parental neglect. FI provides a broad range of behavioral health services using a holistic, supervised, structured housing model for young families.

Two-Year Goals

- Develop in-house mental health services by hiring three clinical staff
- Develop affordable housing with supportive social services for 10 additional families post-discharge
- Develop new partnerships to provide housing search and rental assistance to program participants
- Hire two additional staff to expand parenting and life skills learning groups

Investment Opportunity

Family Independence, Inc. seeks an investment of \$420,000 over the next two years to build fully in-house mental health services. This investment will allow the organization to hire three mental health counselors and to lease and/or purchase office equipment and technology, including three laptops, to support the work of a growing staff.

Ways to Invest

- Provide real estate services to expand office and living space for families
- Join a committee on the Board
- Lead financial literacy workshops
- Develop website content
- Donate technology, including computers and office equipment
- Provide advocacy campaign support to access and purchase city- and state-owned properties

Family Independence Model



Young Parent Living Program (YPLP)

FI offers a safe, comprehensive, supervised, structured residential young parent living experience for fifteen (15) homeless, pregnant/parenting teens, ages 12-21, and their children. Young families can stay in the program until the parents are 21 and 11 months. Each family has a small efficiency apartment with communal space. These young families are first referred by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) after they have been assessed as homeless by the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA). They are placed in a network of Young Parent Living programs. FI, as part of the network, assesses each young parent's needs by performing a clinical assessment. Through placement with FI, young families receive access to housing, clinical services from community partners, and child care assistance. FI collaborates with Boston public schools to ensure that teens have access to high schools, alternative high schools, and HiSET programs. Young families receive life skills training through learning groups on parenting skills, financial literacy and budgeting, maintaining a household, and healthy living.

FI provides 24-hour staff supervision and support to all residents. During the day, FI staff ensure that youth attend schools and other programs, facilitate effective communication between teachers and youth, and check if youth receive the support they need. After school, FI staff travel through the apartment units to ensure young parents have support for homework, chores, and meal preparation, and ensure that the families have enough food. During bedtime, staff support young parents with establishing bedtime routines for children. FI staff ensure young families feel safe and are safe 24/7.



Emergency Family Shelter Program

After unhoused adults are assessed by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), they are referred to Family Independence which operates 20 adult units to help homeless families with minimal resources attain housing stability. Through the Emergency Family Shelter Program, FI develops and monitors Rehousing Plans that identify and address each parent’s strengths, needs, and goals, including education, training, employment, and independent housing. FI supports each family’s pursuit of its Rehousing Plan so they can achieve their housing permanency goals. FI partners with families through all the steps of housing search to ensure that families access housing as soon as possible. FI offers on-site and community-based services such as case management, advocacy, and mentoring. Additionally, FI provides referrals to access health and stabilization services for rehoused families—to equip families and promote independence and success. FI provides stabilization support for a minimum of 2 years after families are rehoused.

“They provided a community of support and encouragement that allowed me to complete high school and pursue college. I built friendships that have endured well beyond my experience.”

— Anonymous, Former Program Participant

Leadership & Governance

France A. Neff, PhD, LMHC, President & CEO, has dedicated her career to empowering young parents and helping them build stable environments for their children to thrive. With over 20 years working with families, France's passion and commitment shine through in every endeavor. The FI team includes 11 staff members working within the program facilities. The dedicated FI Board consists of five community leaders, including mental health professionals, educators, and experts in operations, law, and development.

Financial Sustainability

Family Independence, Inc. has a sustainable financial model based on longstanding contracts with the Department of Families and Children and the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities. FI has an endowment created from revenue received in 2022 from funds remaining in the Family Services of Greater Boston (FSGB) budget upon closing. FI maintains former FSGB service contracts and receives individual contributions. FI hopes to diversify funding by increasing support from foundations and individual donors.

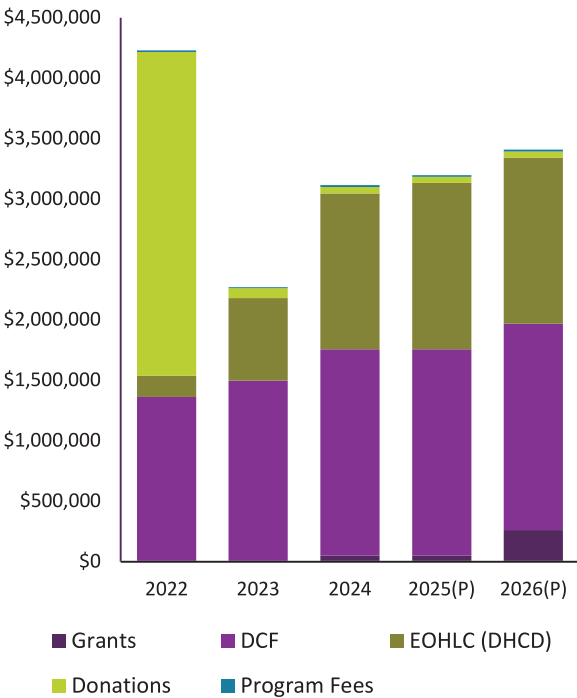
KEY INVESTORS

- Department of Children and Families
- Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities

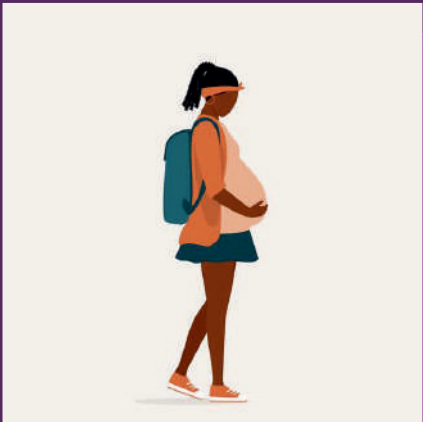
KEY PARTNERS

- Boston Emergency Services Team (BEST)
- Dimock Community Health Center
- Whittier Street Health Center

Revenue by Source



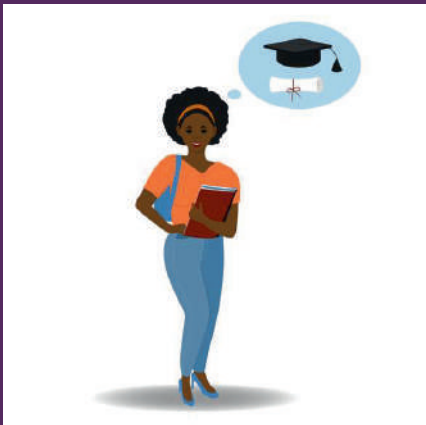
* The budget in 2022 reflects a one-time transfer of funds from Family Services of Greater Boston, which was the parent organization of FI. This amount is held in an endowment and not considered as part of FI’s budget for subsequent years.



Success Story

Anonymous

“I entered the YPLP at seventeen, with two children under the age of three. My window for opportunity looked grim, and my chances of academic success were slim. Through the support of the YPLP, I was able to complete high school and obtain a college degree. I developed long-lasting friendships, learned life skills that have contributed to my success today, but most importantly, I learned to love Me. I became a nurturer, giver, believer, and learner! Having that safe space with trusted adults allowed me to flourish beyond expectations and step proudly into my version of Black Excellence!”



Program Performance and Organizational Health

FI serves 15 teens through the YPLP program and 20 adults through the Emergency Family Shelter Program. FI provides residents with specialized services through their dedicated staff and community partners.

	FY 2024	FY 2025(P)	FY 2026(P)
Program Performance			
Families served (both programs)	59	65	70
High school enrollment (YPLP)	70%	75%	80%
Babies and children screened (YPLP)	100%	100%	100%
Organizational Health/Capacity-Building			
Full-time staff	11	14	14
Learning groups	4	7	10
Community collaborators	6	8	10
Total Revenue	\$3,112,564	\$3,197,002	\$3,407,002

Social Impact

While utilizing a supervised, structured apartment model, FI ensures its clients receive holistic individualized support in developing the skills and knowledge needed to be competent parents and lead independent, productive lives once they leave FI. FI helps to build stronger communities starting with youth and families.

Below is a summary of the social impact that FI aspires to have on young families in the next two years.

Indicator	Current Numbers	2026(P)
Young parents demonstrate an ability to set and stay within weekly/monthly budgets	65%	70%
Mothers demonstrate an ability to properly care for home, purchase food, prepare nutritious meals for themselves and their children	75%	80%
Mothers show patience/sensitivity in addressing children’s behavioral issues	75%	80%
Families remain housed after placement	65%	75%

Just A Start Financial Empowerment Collaborative

FOUNDED: 1968

CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: \$311,692

CONTACT: Ian Davis, *Program Manager*

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Cambridge is known as the center of innovation and home to prestigious universities. But not all Cambridge residents are thriving in Cambridge. In fact, 13.8 % of Cambridge residents have incomes below the poverty line. That is 24.7 % higher than Massachusetts' poverty rate of 10.4%. The cost of living in Cambridge is 73% higher than the national average and housing costs are 212% of the national average.

Just A Start (JAS), founded in 1968, is a Cambridge-based community development corporation dedicated to promoting equity by creating access to stable housing and building pathways to economic opportunity. JAS creates and preserves affordable housing, provides housing resources and services, offers financial education and workforce training for youth and adults, and builds community engagement. Now in our 55th year, Just A Start serves approximately 2,600 low- to moderate-income residents of Cambridge and surrounding communities annually.

Two-Year Goals

- Expand access to financial and career coaching by hiring program staff and building case management support services at the new Financial Empowerment Collaborative at 55 Norfolk Street in Central Square.
- Secure Families Moving Forward (FMF) funding to provide multiyear wraparound services for Cambridge families beyond the pilot program.

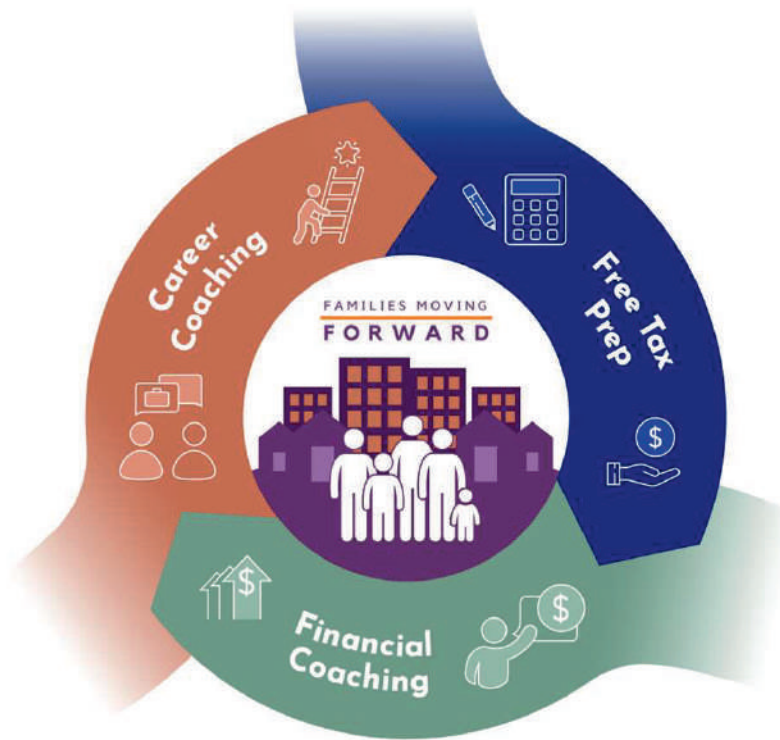
Investment Opportunity

Just A Start's Financial Empowerment Collaborative seeks a \$708,000 investment over the next two years to support the next cohort of the Families Moving Forward program. Just A Start's vision is an equitable community where Cambridge residents can secure a solid economic foundation. For 55 years, JAS has supported economic resiliency and mobility in Cambridge, but demand for its services is increasing. Its goal is to make the programs financially self-sufficient, to further its reach, and increase the number of people served.

Ways to Invest

- \$200,000 to fund 20 additional families in Families Moving Forward program
- \$20,000 to provide financial incentives
- \$10,000 for community meetings and flexible spending
- \$10,000 to provide FMF matched savings per year

Financial Empowerment Collaborative Model



Families Moving Forward

Families Moving Forward was created in 2019, in partnership with five Cambridge agencies, in order to offer families with incomes at or below 50% of AMI (area median income) multiyear, individualized, wrap-around services. The Families Moving Forward program provides a comprehensive and focused approach to link parents of minor children to knowledge, resources, and tools with which they can overcome their challenges.

In addition to the services offered by the Financial Empowerment Collaborative, the twenty families enrolled in the Families Moving Forward program receive case management from a Mobility Mentor who meets monthly with participants to evaluate their specific needs and set goals to improve their situation. Upon accomplishing their goals, participants receive a financial incentive. Just A Start maintains a matched savings account for each family. Additionally, Families Moving Forward participants gather for small group and bimonthly community meetings where they learn together and share experiences through guided discussion.

The Families Moving Forward pilot program was originally funded by the Cambridge Community Benefits Advisory Committee (CBAC) and was designed to address the top needs identified in a Cambridge community needs assessment: housing stability, financial stability, and mental and behavioral health support. A class of 20 families graduated in March of 2024 at the end of the pilot program (photo below).

Just A Start structured the Financial Empowerment Collaborative to incorporate Families Moving Forward with its other services in a more integrated holistic model. Just A Start is looking to secure funding so that it can offer Families Moving Forward to another 20 families in 2025 and 2026.



Coaching and Tax Preparation

While Families Moving Forward is a comprehensive model with wraparound services, some participants are not yet in a place for such intensive work. The Financial Empowerment Collaborative offers pieces of the model as individual services. While FMF may be the whole buffet of services, the Collaborative has an à la carte menu as well:

- **Financial Coaching:** The certified financial coaches assist participants in establishing a budget, creating a net worth statement, credit building, among other topics as needed.
- **Career Coaching:** The career coach works with participants to write a resume, search for jobs, and develop interviewing skills.
- **Free Tax Prep:** The IRS-certified preparers offer free tax preparation to maximize taxpayer refunds as well as expert advice and education.

“With the guidance of my mentor, I was able to achieve important goals, including a safe, stable home, schooling, and a job that I wanted.”

— Families Moving Forward participant

Leadership & Governance

Following his service with the Peace Corps, Ian Davis, Program Manager, moved to Boston and worked at East End House, a local community center. From there, he had the opportunity to join the Just A Start team and build its new Financial Opportunity program. Just A Start is led by Executive Director Carl Nagy-Koechlin and the Board of Directors, which includes current and former participants of Just A Start’s programs, including tenants of our properties, workforce development alumni, and housing improvement program participants.

Financial Sustainability

The Financial Empowerment Collaborative and FMF are funded by private foundations and corporations and a few local government contracts. The organization’s goal is to make the programs financially self-sufficient as it increases the number of people served. Philanthropic support provides JAS with the flexibility to innovate and to meet immediate needs of participants as well as providing the opportunity to expand its reach.

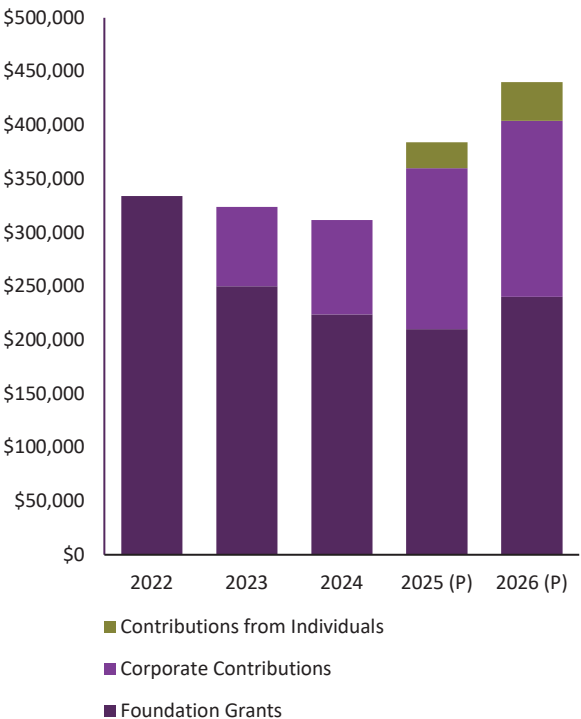
KEY INVESTORS

- Ameriprise Financial
- Berkshire Bank
- Capital One
- The Charlotte Foundation
- Santander Bank

KEY PARTNERS

- Bridges Homeward
- Cambridge Housing Authority
- Cambridge Health Alliance
- Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS)
- Institute for Health and Recovery
- Cambridge Redevelopment Authority

Revenue by Source





Success Story

Rae and John*

When Rae arrived for a JAS monthly Families Moving Forward (FMF) meeting, she was worried that she would have to quit her job, because she hadn’t been able to find childcare for her son, John, who has special needs. Ellen and Joan, other FMF participants, voiced their desire to help. They had obtained certifications as childcare providers while working with their Mobility Mentor. Ellen was underemployed, and Joan was unemployed; both were looking for work. Bridges Homeward identified a Federal program that would pay Ellen and Joan to care for John, and JAS staff facilitated the application process. Thanks to Families Moving Forward, two Cambridge community members are now gainfully employed, one young boy is being cared for by them, and another community member is moving forward with her own financial empowerment goals.

*all names have been changed with respect to the participants

Program Performance and Organizational Health

Below is a summary of the key measures that Just A Start will track to assess progress for both the Families Moving Forward and the Financial Empowerment Collaborative programs.

	FY 2024	FY 2025(P)	FY 2026(P)
Program Performance			
Families Moving Forward : number of families engaged in individualized support as they work through family goals	20	25	30
Financial Coaching: individuals receiving one-on-one financial coaching	73	100	150
Tax Preparation: Households receiving free tax preparation from an IRS-certified tax preparation professional	300	400	500
Organizational Health/Capacity-Building			
Number of staff members	2	4	6
Total Revenue	\$311,692	\$384,000	\$440,000

Social Impact

Just A Start is committed to building pathways to economic opportunity for Cambridge residents in order to lessen the wealth disparity. The inaugural Families Moving Forward cohort boosted their collective savings by \$110,000 and increased their aggregate salary by 126%. JAS acknowledges that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions. Every family is unique and deserves individualized support from trusted mentors, coaches, and community members. Often, the most helpful advice comes through a community member who has been through a similar challenge. Building community is an integral component of the work of JAS. Although JAS acknowledges that some residents may only need assistance through a specific crisis, JAS is committed to offering the more intensive support that FMF provides to as many families as possible in the coming years.

Indicator	Current Numbers	2026(P)
Families Moving Forward: Goal Completion Rate	57%	75%
FMF Incentives Earned (per participant per year)	\$525	\$750
FMF Matched Savings Contributions (per participant per year)	\$500	\$1,000
Financial Coaching Budgets Completed	75	125
Tax Returns Completed	300	350
Total Tax Refunds Received	\$580,000	\$640,000
Resumes Reviewed	0	40
Career Prospectuses Written	0	40

Kids in Tech, Inc.

FOUNDED: 2016

CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: \$895,400

CONTACT: Olu Ibrahim, M.Ed., *Founder and CEO*

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Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) is the fastest-growing sector in the US. In Massachusetts, STEM occupations employ ~600,000 people, 21% of the labor force. The number of STEM jobs in Massachusetts is expected to increase by 7.2% by 2028, accounting for 40% of total expected employment growth.*

Achievement in STEM depends on early immersion: 92% of boys and 97% of girls lack future interest if not exposed to STEM by the 5th grade. Many school systems, especially those in under-resourced neighborhoods, lack the capacity to provide students an adequate immersion in STEM. In 2022, 75% of 3rd - 8th graders in Lowell and Boston were partially or not meeting expectations on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS).**

Kids in Tech, Inc. (KiT) partners with school districts and youth development organizations in Lowell and Boston to provide high quality STEM education for low-income and BIPOC students (8-14 years old) in an afterschool setting.

*Commonwealth Corporation STEM Report 2022

**2022 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Report Card

Two-Year Goals

- Add 2 Tech Club sites in Lowell, 2 in Boston; expand to Worcester
- Serve 100 more students per year
- Add 1:1 tutoring and family STEM programming
- Add 5 new corporate partners and 4 new Board members
- Build capacity by adding a Development Director, Communications Manager, Program Director, and Data & Evaluation Manager
- Increase revenue by 10% and 20% in the next 2 years

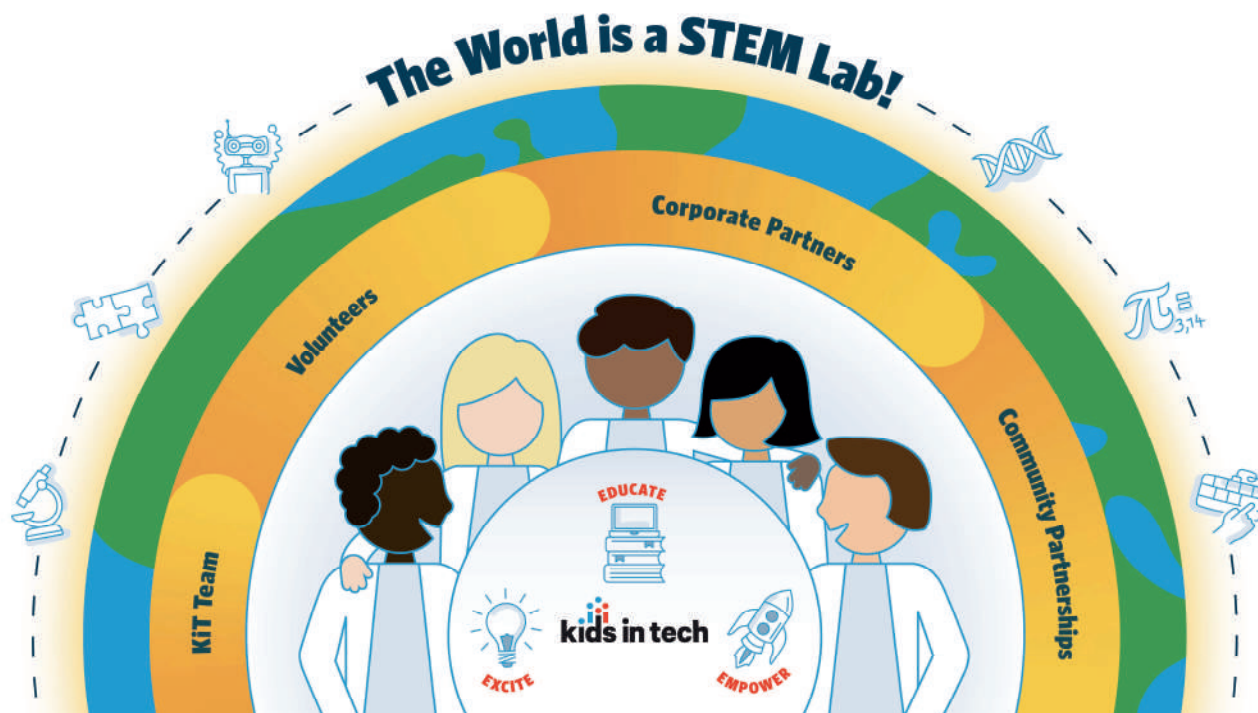
Investment Opportunity

Kids in Tech, Inc. seeks an investment of \$987,500 over two years to provide competitive salaries and benefits to 4 new FTEs: a Development Director and Communications Manager to build fundraising capacity; a Program Director to add 2 schools in Lowell, 2 in Boston, expand into Worcester, and further develop and standardize instructor training program; a Data Evaluation Manager to develop a data collection system to enable KiT to track and monitor student outcomes.

Ways to Invest

- Be a Career Day speaker
- Host a field trip or job shadow day
- Volunteer at an Afterschool Tech Club
- Volunteer at a KiT's Stem Week Event
- Apply to join the KiT Board of Directors
- Sponsor a Tech Club with gifts of cash, crypto, stock/securities, bequests.

Kids in Tech Model



Excite Kids about Learning

By 6th grade, kids in low-income households have spent 6,000 fewer hours in afterschool and summer learning than their peers in middle-income households. KiT's After School Tech Clubs help bridge this gap.

Tech Clubs (TC's) are exam- and grade-free. Students learn for the fun of learning; not to test. Classes range from 9 to 20 students and take place in students' elementary and middle schools or local community centers.

The twice-weekly, hour-long sessions in each 10-week TC focus on fun, relatable, project-based, hands-on learning activities that develop students' critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and creativity. TC's student to instructor ratio of 15 to 2, plus an additional 1 to 2 volunteers, to support students' learning.

Students learn best when instructors are excited and relatable. KiT follows a near peer model, recruiting and paying high school and college students from the community, who are close in age and demographics to the students.

KiT trains instructors on the curriculum, classroom management, and presentation skills, and provides ongoing coaching. Instructors gain STEM teaching experience, while developing self-confidence, leadership skills, and potential career paths. KiT plans to further develop and standardize its instructor training program in the next two years to optimize the students' learning and instructors' effectiveness.



Educate and Empower for the Future

The world is a STEM lab! Students discover how STEM is part of everyday life. They determine what interests them, which helps shape their future choices. What makes KiT's Tech Clubs unique is the wide range of topics KiT's curriculum covers. Students study a variety of STEM topics such as coding, how to use Google Forms to design a survey, AI and machine learning, biomedical engineering, filmmaking, robotics, digital citizenship, wearable tech, and graphic design. The kids are asked for input into what their interests are so they get a say in what they want to learn.

KiT participates in Massachusetts' STEM Week, where students, educators, and corporate sponsors from across the state engage in hands-on activities to design innovative solutions for common challenges. Field trips to STEM companies and Career Day speakers expose kids to what a future in technology could be.

KiT celebrates students' accomplishments at their annual showcase event in May where students proudly present their projects to their peers, parents, and school staff.

"I did Kids in Tech at my school and it was good. My teachers were nice and friendly....we made a tool to take out the fat from arteries -- that was cool!"

— Toni, 10, KiT Tech Club Student

Leadership & Governance

Founder, President & CEO, Olu Ibrahim, has an M.Ed., and experience in K-12 and postsecondary education, technology and innovation, workforce development, public policy, and business management. Inspired by the impact her tutoring of students in Lowell had on their learning and grades, Olu approached schools and organizations to offer a formal program, and KiT was born. KiT's four Board members live in the communities KiT serves and bring a wealth of financial and communications skills to the organization.

Financial Sustainability

KiT has intentionally developed a diverse funding stream to support its sustainability. KiT's funding sources include individuals, government, private foundations, and corporate partnerships. KiT is grateful to its funders and partners and seeks to expand its funding sources to continue to grow KiT's impact in the state of Massachusetts and, eventually, beyond.

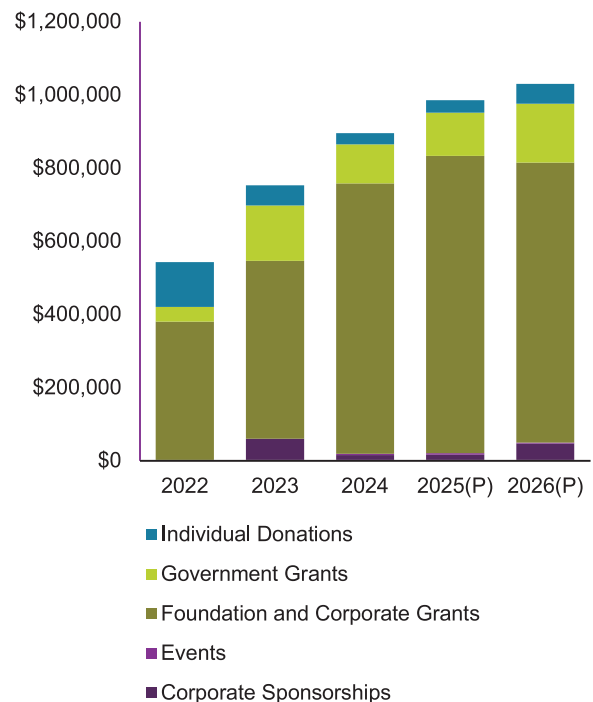
KEY INVESTORS

- Collegium Pharmaceuticals Inc.
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- Life Science Cares Boston
- Patrick J. McGovern Foundation
- Wellington Management Foundation

KEY SUPPORTERS

- Boston Public Schools
- Coalition for a Better Acre
- Epiphany School
- Individual Donors
- Lowell Public Schools

Revenue by Source





Success Story

Naomi’s story as told by Olu Ibrahim

KiT’s After School Tech Clubs encourage kids who may not have seen technology as a path for them to investigate and learn about the amazing opportunities technology offers while also having fun.

I first met Naomi at a KiT After School Tech Club when she was 10 years old. “I didn’t think I was going to like Tech Club at first,” she shared, “but it is really fun and interesting. I like that we get to build things, tear them apart, and build again. We also get to go on field trips and see real tech people at their jobs. I get to learn things that I do not learn in school.”

I recently saw Naomi at Coalition for a Better Acre when she was picking up her little sister, who is now participating in a KiT Tech Club. Naomi is now attending Middlesex Community College and interning in local organizations to build skills as she pursues her goal of being a STEM educator focused on kids ages 1-5. She expressed her gratitude to KiT for inspiring her to pursue this career!

Program Performance and Organizational Health

Below is a summary of the key measures KiT tracks to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, capture volume of services delivered, and lessons learned to adjust strategy as needed.

	FY 2024	FY 2025(P)	FY 2026(P)
Program Performance			
# of Tech Club sites/students served: Increase the # of Tech Clubs in Boston and Lowell	8/170	10/270	12/370
# of volunteers/hours served: Engage additional volunteers to serve existing and new Tech Clubs	75/400	85/450	90/475
Expand Tech Clubs to Worcester	Outreach	Planning	1-2
Add online STEM programs, (contingent on funding)		Research	Planning
Organizational Health/Capacity-Building			
Build Capacity: Hire a Development Director, Communications Manager, Data Evaluation Manager, and Program Director	4 FTEs	7	8
Number of corporate partnerships	27	29	32
Total Revenue	\$895,400	\$984,940	\$1,030,113

Social Impact

KiT envisions a future where every child is equipped with the skills necessary to pursue 21st century opportunities, where children courageously and joyfully explore STEM fields to become creators and builders of technological innovations and of their own futures. To measure the impact of its programs on students, KiT currently administers 3 widely used student self-reporting survey tools that measure program quality and student outcomes: Two PEAR’s STEM Tools: Common Instrument Suite and Dimensions of Success, and the SAYO-Y: Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes-Youth Survey. Below is the summary of the social impact that KiT aspires to have on Tech Club students in the next two years.

Indicator	Current Numbers	2026(P)
Increased understanding of the role of STEM in everyday life	91%	91%
Increased knowledge, interest, and skills in STEM fields following participation with focus on ESOL students	71%	80%
Improved technology skills	79%	85%
Improved classroom teamwork skill	71%	75%
Positive engagement with instructors	N/A	80%
Families engaged in STEM learning activities, pending funding for new programming	N/A	15

Latinx Community Center for Empowerment (LCCE)

FOUNDED: 2019

CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: \$257,000

CONTACT: Diego Leonardo, *Founder and Executive Director*

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🌐 www.latinxcenter.org



People of Hispanic descent are the fastest-growing group in the United States. (Note: For maximum inclusivity, the terms Latinx, Latino, Latine, and Hispanic will be used interchangeably.) Research from the Pew Research Center projects that the Latino population in the United States will rise to 128 million by 2060, more than doubling in size from today. In Lowell, nearly 20% of the adult population and almost half of the school-aged children identify as Latinx.

Despite this, there are very few Latinos in positions of influence across academic, economic, and civic institutions. This lack of representation in civic life is the result of multiple barriers that Latine individuals face—such as limited language skills and knowledge of the system and little connection to others in the various communities—when trying to access resources and opportunities.

The Latinx Community Center for Empowerment (LCCE) works to break down these barriers by helping people build on their strengths and get connected to a network. LCCE's programs focus on promoting civic engagement, workforce development, financial education, and community events that connect and celebrate the variety of Hispanic cultures. The result is a more civically-engaged community where the Latinx perspective is represented across all aspects of civic life.

Two-Year Goals

- **Double** the number of English language classes by offering evening options
- **Hire** 8 full-time staff from the LCCE community to build organizational capacity
- **Expand** the participants in workforce development programming by 250%
- **Deepen and expand** partnerships with Latinx-serving institutions

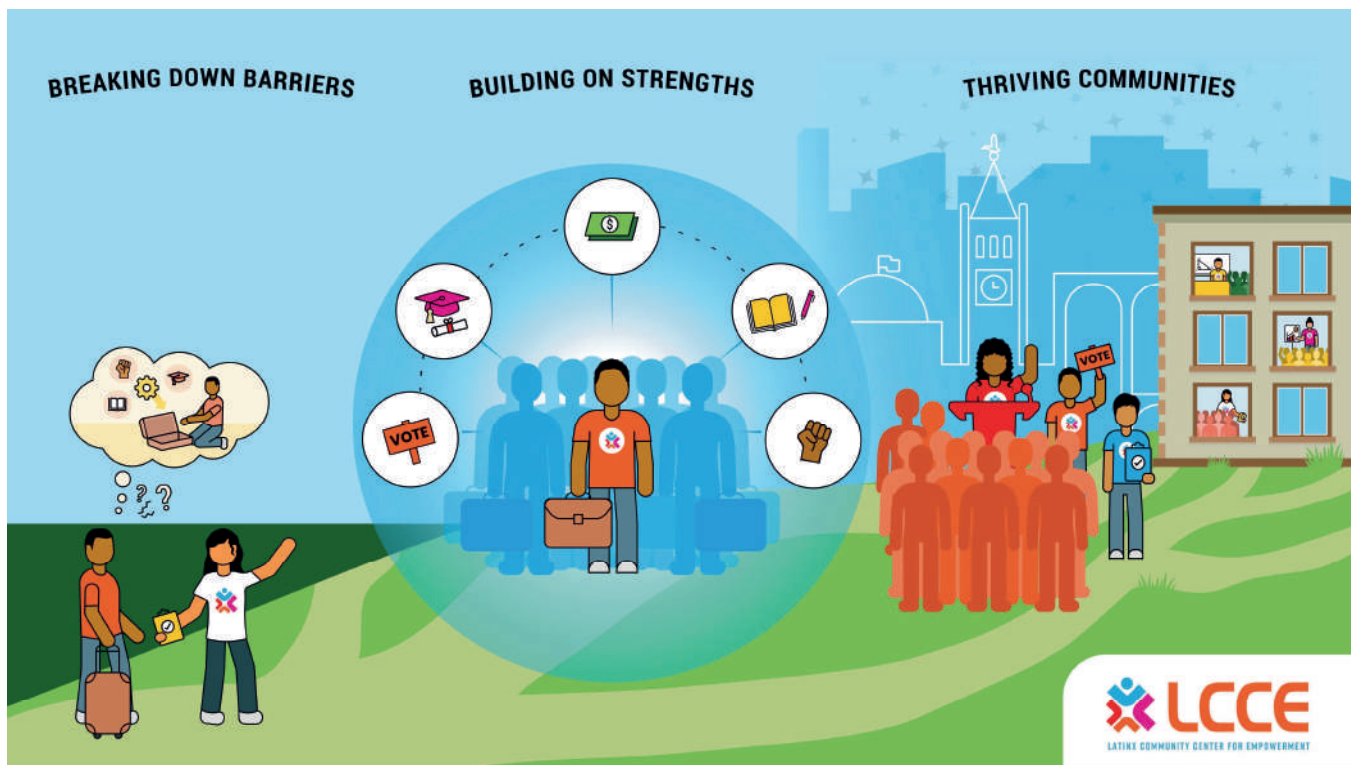
Investment Opportunity

Latinx Community Center for Empowerment (LCCE) is seeking \$1M over the next two years. These funds will allow LCCE to invest in building its organizational capacity and infrastructure through hiring program staff who are already in the LCCE network and represent the Latine community in Lowell. Funding will also support program development to meet the growing need through expanded workforce development programs in collaboration with local and state entities and increased classroom space to accommodate additional English classes.

Ways to Invest

- Sponsor the Lowell Hispanic and Latinx Festival
- Provide scholarships for students to participate in language classes
- Help LCCE secure a space of its own
- Donate technology for classes and professional attire
- Connect LCCE to potential partners and collaborators

LCCE MODEL



Approach

Many Latinos come to the US with a set of tools, knowledge, and expertise, but they don't always know how to put them to use because of a language barrier, limited access to information, or lack of a network.

LCCE helps people find the path that will lead them to success by building on their strengths and making connections to resources. LCCE also works to change the social conditions by providing community organizations with training and guidance on culturally competent practices for serving the Latinx community.

By working to empower and uplift individuals and advocating for their voices, LCCE promotes a thriving city where there is Latinx representation across the civic, social, and economic life of the community.

Program Areas

LCCE has four main program areas: civic education and engagement, workforce development, financial education, and community building. All LCCE's programs are designed to meet the specific and diverse needs of the Hispanic community.

Civic Education and Engagement

These activities aim to increase Latinx participation and representation in the democratic process, including voter registration, citizenship preparation, and canvassing activities. Programs are targeted specifically for first- and second-generation immigrants from the Latin American region who bring a wide range of beliefs about democracy.

LCCE also partners with other community organizations, which provide participants with workshops about immigrant rights as well as legal clinics for individualized assistance.



Workforce Development

LCCE provides tailored support to help participants access the workforce, including English language classes, resume advice, interview prep, professional clothing, and job placement. LCCE recently completed a successful pilot of a GED class for adult learners that will continue to grow.

Financial Education

LCCE provides financial literacy classes that address the specific needs of the Latine community who tend to live in multigenerational households, which creates specific financial challenges and stressors. In addition, LCCE hosts a financial symposium where the local banks and credit unions share information about how to navigate the process of applying for accounts, loans, and mortgages through their institutions.

Community Building

LCCE hosts the annual Hispanic and Latinx Festival to celebrate and showcase the multiple cultures in the Latin American region. To amplify important leaders in the Latine community, LCCE created and maintains the Lowell Latinx Archive, housed at Lowell History and UMass Lowell.

“Our ability to incorporate racial equity in our strategic planning process is directly related to our partnership with LCCE and their willingness to guide our approach for the needs of the Latinx community.”

— Devin Gilmore, Lowell Public Health Department

Leadership & Governance

Diego Leonardo is the Founder and Executive Director of LCCE. Trained as a scientist, Diego has extensive leadership experience in the biotech sector. His work is inspired by his own lived experience in an immigrant family navigating resources for the Latinx community in Lowell.

The LCCE Board of Directors and Advisory Committees include 7 community members who represent the diversity of perspectives, needs, and aspirations of the Latinx community in Lowell. Their collective experience and expertise includes the areas of public health, research and evaluation, finance, social services, and state resources.

Financial Sustainability

With a largely volunteer team, LCCE has been successful in securing support from foundations, public contracts, corporate sponsors, and individual donors. Over the next two years, LCCE will increase staff to grow organizational capacity across programs, development, and communications. LCCE is also looking to build a revenue stream from providing culturally relevant training and guidance to Latinx-serving institutions, such as universities, companies, and municipal agencies.

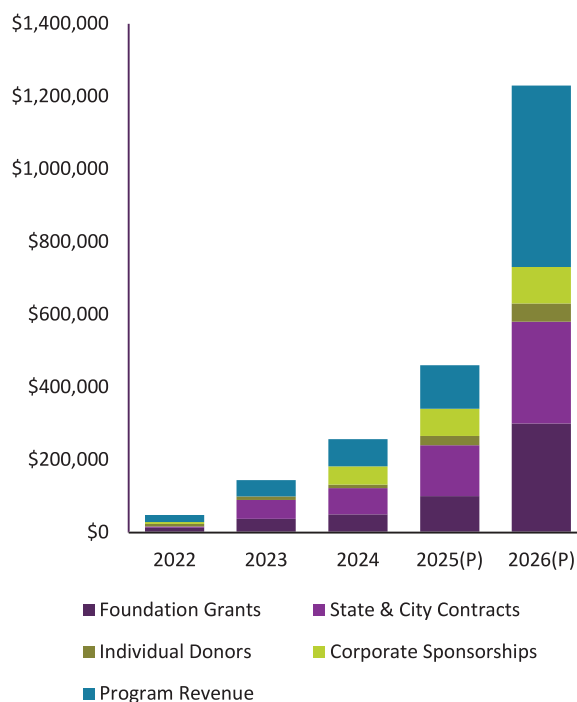
KEY INVESTORS

- Berkshire Bank
- The Boston Foundation
- City of Lowell
- Democracy Hub
- Greater Lowell Community Foundation
- Massachusetts Cultural Council
- Mass Humanities
- Massachusetts Voter Table

KEY PARTNERS

- Coalition for a Better Acre
- Community Teamwork
- Lowell Alliance
- Lowell Community Health Center
- Lowell Public Schools
- Middlesex Community College
- The Center for Hope and Healing

Revenue by Source





Success Story

JONATHAN

Jonathan came to the Latinx Community Center for Empowerment looking for help accessing the workforce. As a refugee from Nicaragua who also has a disability, he didn't know where or how to start looking for a job. Jonathan said, "It was hard to come to this country and be in a place where I'm not accepted for who I really am."

Jonathan enrolled in LCCE's Saturday morning English language classes, got assistance with his resume, and accessed job placement resources. Additionally, he was motivated to return to school and is currently working on his pre-med requirements at Nashua Community College.

LCCE hired Jonathan as a part-time staff member and he's now one of the most positively-received teachers. Of his experience with LCCE, Jonathan says, "They always treated me like a person and helped me see a world of opportunity for myself."

Program Performance and Organizational Health

Below is a summary of the key measures that LCCE tracks to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, incorporate lessons learned, and adjust strategy as necessary.

	FY 2024	FY 2025(P)	FY 2026(P)
Program Performance			
Number of students in HiSET (GED track)	10	25	30
Number of students in English language classes	153	250	300
Number of educators trained	300	350	450
Hispanic & Latinx Festival attendees	1,600	2,000	5,000
Organizational Health/Capacity-Building			
Number of full-time staff	1	4	8
Number of Board members	7	11	15
% of Latinx Board members	90	90	90
Available classroom space (sq. ft.)	2,100	2,800	4,200
Total Revenue	\$257,000	\$460,000	\$1,230,000

Social Impact

As the Latinx population continues to grow, there is an increasing need for services to help people navigate the path towards economic and social development and civic engagement. LCCE works to reduce the barriers, build on individual strengths, and strengthen a feeling of connectedness across the Latino community. When people have access to opportunities and can connect to a network, the civic, social, and economic life of the city will thrive. LCCE envisions a community where there is Latinx representation across the board from education to government and business to civic engagement.

Below is the summary of the social impact that LCCE aspires to have in the next two years.

Indicator	Current Numbers	2026(P)
% students who complete English classes	83	90
% workforce development participants placed with a job	100	100
% participants who feel welcome at LCCE	100	95
% participants who feel LCCE helped them connect to resources they didn't previously know about	94	95

Massachusetts Women of Color Network (MAWOCN)

FOUNDED: 2010

CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: \$425,856

CONTACT: Kishana Smith, *Executive Director*

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The Massachusetts Women of Color Network (MAWOCN) supports the leadership and sustainment of women of color (WoC) professionals working in the sexual assault and domestic violence (SDV) field. MAWOCN has witnessed the profound impact of racism and other systems of oppression on its service population. Founded in 2010 by seven women of color, MAWOCN shares knowledge and resources, provides peer-to-peer support and mentorship, and raises awareness about institutional racism, while challenging systems that uphold and perpetuate oppression.

Historically, WoC have predominantly occupied frontline direct service positions. Yet, they have limited access to leadership roles, support, and general services. In 2015, MAWOCN conducted market research and found that of the 69 participating SDV organizations, there were 81 individuals in executive leadership, of which only 3 were WoC. Today, 9 individuals hold leadership roles; MAWOCN has contributed to this profound and ongoing shift in the SDV movement. MAWOCN provides a culturally-specific space for skill-building and empowerment among its members, acknowledging the importance of supporting individuals who face multiple layers of discrimination in the SDV field.

Two-Year Goals

- Increase the number of members by 75%
- Increase staff by 6 FTE
- Expand resources: leadership development, training, holistic support
- Disseminate the Keeping Black Survivors Alive (KBSA) toolkit and facilitate statewide training to inform enhanced services for BIPOC survivors of violence
- Co-create an accountability process to better care for Women of Color in collaboration with Jane Doe Inc. and Caucasian executive directors in SDV organizations

Investment Opportunity

Over the next two years, MAWOCN is seeking \$1.6M to support the addition of 6 staff to meet the needs of its members, and to increase membership from 489 to 1,250 throughout Massachusetts. This investment will help MAWOCN expand member resources by increasing training and technical assistance for WoC in both frontline direct service and executive positions. Providing expanded training and holistic support, MAWOCN will help improve the quality of service for survivors of the sexual and domestic violence community.

Ways to Invest

- \$30K: For financial hardship and health and fitness training
- \$200K: Support KBSA statewide training
- \$10K: Laptops for staff
- \$5K: Gift cards for self-care supplies
- Space for community training

MAWOCN Model



Keeping Black Survivors Alive Project (KBSA)

Many WoC in the SDV field serving survivors of violence also identify as survivors themselves. Their invaluable experiences, cultural competency, education, and humility guide their essential services. If this core group of workers is not adequately supported and recognized, the individuals needing these critical SDV services may not receive adequate care.

MAWOCN has established programs and initiatives that are making a significant impact in addressing the issue of support and sustainment for WoC working in the SDV field. These transformative programs include training and technical assistance in the form of quarterly meetings and conferences, confidential one-on-one counseling, and the groundbreaking signature project, **Keeping Black Survivors Alive (KBSA)**.

Since 2021, MAWOCN has partnered with 5 Black women-led community-based organizations in Massachusetts to develop a cohort of organizations currently serving Black survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV). The group comprises 16 Women of Color ranging from frontline staff to managers and executive directors. The cohort created a multimedia toolkit led by the voices and input of Black survivors of abuse who have received support services in Massachusetts.

The KBSA toolkit provides a curriculum, best practices, resources, and education on serving Black survivors of abuse, creating culturally-specific services, repairing harm in BIPOC communities, and decreasing the overreliance on law enforcement. The primary objective is the statewide distribution of this toolkit, which will include training for diverse stakeholders, such as SDV organizations, healthcare providers, law enforcement, places of worship, salons, and community businesses.

MAWOCN members gathered for a self-care activity at the MAWOCN "Beyond Self-Care to Leading Change" conference



Leadership Development: Breaking the Glass Ceiling

WoC service providers in the SDV field often hold entry-level positions as frontline workers. They are more likely to provide the most direct services to survivors while having less access to structural support than their White counterparts. Therefore, WoC are witnessing abuse and experiencing vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue at higher rates than their White counterparts; this leads to an increase in burnout. MAWOCN is committed to decreasing burnout rates by offering its network members access to various tools, skills, and support. These resources contribute to increased retention of the workers, benefitting the survivors they serve.

MAWOCN members also receive mentoring from senior and executive leaders in the SDV field. The mentors provide guidance and strengthen the skills of those seeking high-level leadership roles in their organizations. The quarterly trainings held by MAWOCN provide information and education on analyzing and preparing an organization budget, program development, creating work plans, and the importance of self-care. Confidential one-on-one counseling offers an opportunity for women experiencing institutional racism to address their feelings of isolation and invisibility and increase their feelings of hope and validation.

"MAWOCN provides inspiring, relevant, and compelling leadership for racial equity, igniting allies to action and creating transformative experiences for women of color in the field."

— Debra Robbin, Jane Doe Inc. (JDI)

Leadership & Governance

Executive Director Kishana Smith brings 13 years of domestic and sexual violence work experience, a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, and a hunger for influencing positive change. Kishana has experience in advocacy, direct service, human resources, and nonprofit management. Kishana openly identifies as a survivor of domestic violence and sexual assault, and she believes that ending violence is in the hands of all of us. MAWOCN has a board of seven members who bring deep professional and lived experience to the organization.

Financial Sustainability

MAWOCN transitioned from operating as a community group in 2010 to becoming a registered 501(c)(3) organization. As a young organization with a small team, MAWOCN successfully cultivated funding from government contracts, foundation grants, and individual contributors. The annual awards gala has also become an additional funding source since its inception in 2022. MAWOCN will achieve overall organizational growth and sustainability with continued and increased funding.

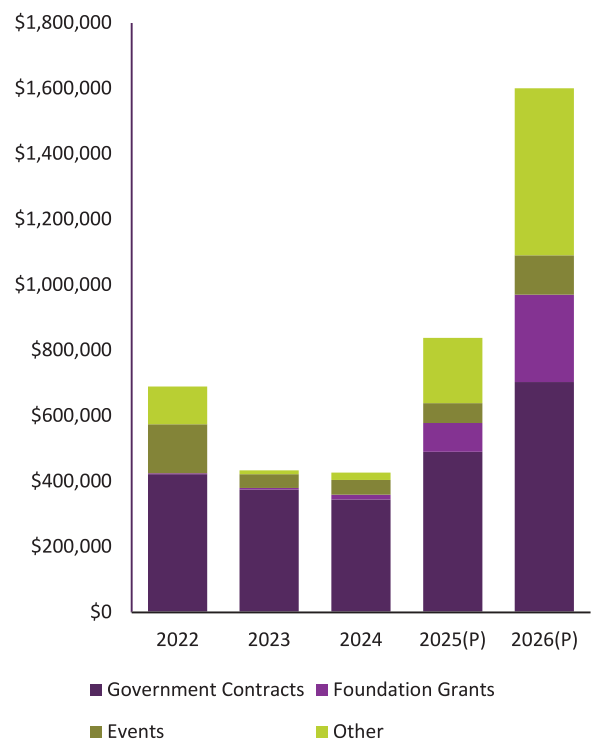
KEY INVESTORS

- Center for Hope and Healing, Inc.
- Jane Doe Inc.
- MA Department of Public Health

KEY SUPPORTERS

- Brookview House
- Love Life Now Foundation
- Transgender Emergency Fund of Massachusetts
- YMCA of Central Massachusetts

Revenue by Source





Success Story

ASIA THOMPSON

“MAWOCN holds a special place in my heart. This organization is truly a beacon of light.” — Asia Thompson, MAWOCN Board Member

MAWOCN uplifted, encouraged, and supported Asia through a very challenging period of her life, for which she is grateful. With the support of MAWOCN, Asia completed her studies and obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Rehabilitation, Advocacy, and Justice from Bay Path University. Through her participation in MAWOCN’s programs, she gained new skills, confidently attended interviews, and obtained new employment. Asia states that she has left with a “gem” for her personal treasure box after attending the MAWOCN conferences and events. She emphasizes the necessity of MAWOCN for the community and is thankful that the organization exists.

Program Performance and Organizational Health

Below is a summary of the key measures MAWOCN tracks to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, capture lessons learned, and adjust strategy as necessary.

	FY 2024	FY 2025(P)	FY 2026(P)
Program Performance			
Members attending annual conference	150	200	250
Members attending trainings (including KBSA community members)	757	1,800	2,500
Members receiving professional development funds	0	750	1,250
# Hours of one-on-one counseling	1,037	1, 895	3, 700
Total membership	489	750	1, 250
Organizational Health/Capacity-Building			
Number of full-time staff members	3	6	9
Number of Board members	7	11	11
Total Revenue	\$425, 856	\$838,000	\$1,600,000

Social Impact

MAWOCN recognizes the importance of holistic support by investing in the team's and its members' well-being. These resources include flex funds for leadership development, financial assistance, health and fitness training, and a two-night retreat. These programs and resources are developed to combat burnout in a rewarding yet challenging field.

Below is a summary of the social impact that MAWOCN aspires to have on the staff and members, the BIPOC community, and its stakeholders in the next two years.

Indicator	Current Numbers	2026(P)
Members reporting improved mental health	92%	100%
Members in leadership positions	62%	85%
Members reporting decreased burnout	92%	100%
Members reporting improved physical health	80%	95%
Community members engaged in KBSA trainings	238	2,200

Top Notch Scholars

FOUNDED: 2015

CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: \$840,450

CONTACT: Joanna de Peña, *Founder & CEO*

📞 978.994.8060

✉️ joanna@topnotscholars.org

🌐 www.topnotscholars.org



Once a major producer of textiles and a draw for generations of immigrants, Lawrence had many employment opportunities for its residents. As manufacturing industry moved out, Lawrence's economy was devastated.

Today Lawrence has high unemployment (7.7%) and the lowest high school graduation rate in the state (79%). Lawrence residents face housing and food insecurity, mental health issues, and language barriers.

However, these statistics alone do not tell the full story of present-day Lawrence. Its residents, especially young people, are resilient and motivated.

Top Notch Scholars (TNS) surrounds students (scholars) age 14 to 19 years old with a caring and supportive community that focuses on helping them develop the confidence and knowledge to pursue their passions by providing:

- Personal Development
- Educational Planning
- Connections to mentors and internships

TNS maps out individual educational plans with students and offers high schoolers placement in healthcare, technology, and business internships. For those interested in other fields, TNS finds internships in students' specific interest area.

Two-Year Goals

- Increase the number of high school program participants from 150 to 300
- Expand the number of academies offered from 5 to 6
- Increase the level of individual giving by 20%
- Increase the number of leadership conferences from 1 to 4
- Strengthen the data collection and outcomes measurement systems

Investment Opportunity

Top Notch Scholars provides the support and experience for students to build the social capital that is vital to successfully access the working world. Over the next two years it seeks \$1.8M to double the number of high school students involved with its leadership training, educational planning, and career exploration from 150 to 300 annually. TNS will also expand the number of training and internship academies from 5 to 6 and increase the number of leadership and career conferences from one to four.

Ways to Invest

- Provide an internship opportunity for a scholar in your workplace
- Host a workplace tour for a group of scholars
- Sponsor college visits for scholars (\$250 per student)
- Support the establishment of a new academy in real estate & property management
- Host a leadership conference at your workplace

Top Notch Scholars Model



Personal Development Shapes Positive Future

Based in a historic Lawrence mill building, TNS offers five academies (10- to 15- week modules) that allow students to go deeper into setting goals and understanding careers. TNS is flexible to fit various schedules, and students can participate in any or all academies, including:

Leadership Academy: The cornerstone of the TNS experience, it focuses on developing student confidence and emotional independence to set and achieve educational, career, and life goals. Youth explore their interests, identify their priorities, and intentionally prepare to accomplish them. They have access to 1:1 mentoring and engage in community service, personal/professional development workshops, and specialized skills training. TNS also conducts a series of motivational speaking conferences.

College & Career Pathways Academy: Scholars map out an educational plan to launch their career. They learn how to get scholarships, understand financial aid, and how to minimize their debt. Students go on college tours,

learn about trade schools and hear from many Lawrence-based business owners to get a full understanding of educational options post high school.

In addition to the structured academies, TNS engages scholars in regular community-building activities. They go on whitewater rafting trips, attend concerts and community fairs, hike in the White Mountains, and perform regular community services, including food drives and serving meals in shelters. The goal is to expose scholars to new experiences and to knit together a network of individuals who will be able to support each other in the years to come.



Training and Internships to Build Meaningful Careers

TNS offers three career-focused trainings and internships.

Healthcare Internship Academy: Lawrence General Hospital partners with TNS providing fifteen-week internships for scholars. Scholars intern in various departments, including the emergency room, pediatrics, maternity, and nutrition. They receive mentorship from doctors, nurses, and other hospital professionals.

Entrepreneurship Academy: TNS scholars learn how to manage a water business, Top Notch Water. Scholars conduct cold calls to businesses, manage accounts, and sell TNS branded natural spring water at events. TNS supplies its product to over twenty restaurants and businesses. All profits go directly to creating student scholarships. Last year TNS raised over \$60,000.

Coding & Technology Academy: TNS partnered with Code Wiz to embed “Scratch” (developed by the MIT Media Lab) within the Academy. The experience promotes computational thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving. This academy is ever-evolving and seeks to lay a foundation for future learning and jobs in cutting-edge technology.

“Top Notch Scholars has become my special place. The TNS crew inspire and motivate me to be the best version of myself.”

— Lesley Hernandez, Top Notch Scholar

Leadership & Governance

Raised in Lawrence, Joanna de Peña, Founder & CEO, and Jenny Alvarez, Vice President, worked tirelessly to develop Top Notch out of needs they saw in their community to build more business connections and opportunity for young people. Joanna earned a bachelor’s degree in business management at Lasell University and master’s in education at Merrimack College. She oversees the overall strategic vision of the organization, leads academies, and guides the youth. Jenny has over twenty years of business experience and is responsible for managing relationships with community partners. Today they lead TNS with a six-person board of directors who come from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Financial Sustainability

TNS has grown from a two-person operation to a staff of eight with consistent support from businesses and foundations and a commitment to diversify its funding. It earned \$60K revenue in 2023 from its product sales. The Cummings Foundation made a \$1 million pledge in 2023 that will guarantee \$100,000 each year for ten years. TNS has a base of solid funding and a realistic plan for growth that will provide stability in the years to come. In the future, TNS will increase student participation and the level of involvement businesses and nonprofits have with scholars.

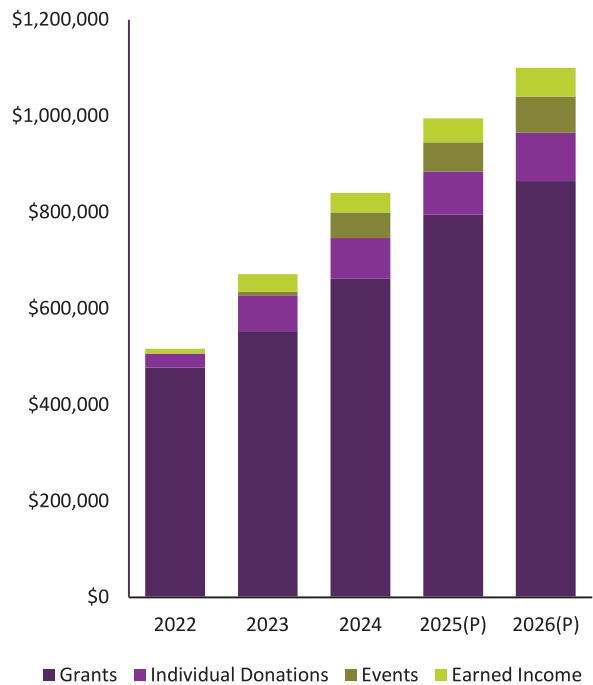
KEY INVESTORS

- Amelia Peabody Foundation
- Cummings Foundation
- The Lenny Zakim Fund
- Rogers Family Foundation
- Stevens Foundation

KEY PARTNERS

- Business Network International
- Lawrence General Hospital
- Lawrence Public Schools
- Merrimack College
- Greater Lawrence Family Health Center
- Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce

Revenue by Source





Success Story

SAVIEL ORTIZ

Saviel's journey with Top Notch Scholars began during his sophomore year of high school, a pivotal time when he lacked structure and motivation. Through the program's guidance and support, he discovered the importance of striving for excellence. With new determination, he embraced academic challenges, realizing there were pathways to success. Engaging in leadership academies, mentorship sessions, and internships at Reading Cooperative Bank and Silverio Insurance, Saviel blossomed. He emerged as a leader, captaining his swimming team and excelling in his internships. His efforts culminated in being named a Presidential Scholar for his outstanding academic achievements. Now, on the brink of graduating from UMass Amherst, Saviel stands poised for success. With promising job offers in banking in Boston awaiting him, his transformation from a struggling student to a future leader is a testament to the transformative power of dedication and support provided by Top Notch Scholars.

Program Performance and Organizational Health

Below is a summary of the measures that TNS will track to demonstrate progress, create accountability, incorporate lessons learned, and adjust strategy to meet goals.

	FY 2024	FY 2025(P)	FY 2026(P)
Program Performance			
# academy scholars	150	250	300
# of academies	5	6	6
# of leadership conferences	1	3	4
# of internship site partners	4	10	15
Organizational Health/Capacity-Building			
# of full-time equivalent employees	5	6	8
# of Board members	6	11	11
Funds generated by Top Notch Water for scholarships	\$60,000	\$70,000	\$100,000
Total Revenue	\$840,450	\$995,000	\$1,100,000

Social Impact

Studies show that students who have internships during high school have higher earning power throughout their life. Low-income and first-generation young people have significantly lower internship participation rates than those of their wealthier peers. TNS fills a gap by providing mentorship, career exploration, and internships to Lawrence students in a variety of fields. TNS connects students to caring adult supervisors who become mentors and can provide job references into the future. At the same time, TNS helps to enhance workplaces, strengthening employers' supervisory and communication skills to work with a new generation of diverse employees.

Indicator	Current Numbers	2026(P)
% of scholars who report an increase in confidence and connections	NA	90%
% of scholars who have a post secondary education plan upon high school graduation	90%	95%
% of scholars who complete an internship	50%	80%
% of scholars who have knowledge of options for education with reduced debt	60%	98%
% of scholars who graduate from high school	100%	100%



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Marcus Partners is proud to support the Social Innovation Forum & the annual Social Innovator Showcase.

Thank you for your contributions
to our community.



Nutter is honored to support the
2024 Social Innovator Showcase

and welcomes new Executive Director, Wyona Lynch-McWhite.





We are proud to support

The Social Innovator Showcase

Through our focus on economic development, social engagement and environmental sustainability, we're creating better outcomes for a better world.

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Notes

Notes

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SOCIAL INNOVATOR PORTFOLIO

2024

Beat the Odds (BTO)
Boston Food Forest Coalition
Family Independence, Inc.
Just A Start Financial Empowerment Collaborative
Kids in Tech, Inc.
Latinx Community Center for Empowerment (LCCE)
Massachusetts Women of Color Network (MAWOCN)
Top Notch Scholars

2023

chica project
GenUnity
Justice 4 Housing
The Latino Health Insurance
Program (LHIP)
Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust
MissionSAFE
RIA, Inc.
United Interfaith Action of
Southeastern Massachusetts (UIA)

2022

The Boston Alliance of LGBTQ+
Youth (BAGLY)
The Center for Hope and Healing
The Chinatown Community
Land Trust
Lowell Community Health Center
Teen BLOCK
Mattapan Food and Fitness
Coalition (MFFC)
Sisters Unchained
Transformational Prison Project
Young Man with a Plan (YMWAP)

2021

Breaktime
Everyday Boston

Immigrant Family Services
Institute (IFSI)

The Loop Lab
Neighbor to Neighbor
Project Place

2020

The 1647, Inc.
Adaptive Sports New England
Boston HERC (Higher Education
Resource Center)
Elevated Thought
OrigiNation Cultural Arts Center
PAARI (Police Assisted Addiction &
Recovery Initiative)
Vital Village Networks
WHALE (Waterfront Historic
Area League)

2019

Beat the Streets New England
Disability Policy Consortium
Dream Out Loud Center, Inc.
English for New Bostonians
LEAP for Education
Paige Academy
Urban Farming Institute
Y2Y Network



2018

ACT Lawrence
Community Boating Center
Fathers' UpLift
GreenRoots
HomeStart
Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD)
Political Asylum/Immigration Representation (PAIR) Project
Strategies for Youth

2017

Boston CASA
Citizens for Juvenile Justice
Community Economic Development Center
Institute for Nonprofit Practice
Julie's Family Learning Program
Project Citizenship
Room to Grow

2016

African Community Education (ACE)
Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association
Dorchester Community Food Co-op
Hale
Louis D. Brown Peace Institute
MassCOSH
SMART Team at JRI
Women's Money Matters

2015

Catie's Closet
Company One Theatre
Courageous Parents Network
Massachusetts Public Health Association
Mystic River Watershed Association
Transformative Culture Project
Waypoint Adventure

2014

Coaching for Change
Doc Wayne Youth Services, Inc.
Mill City Grows
Silver Lining Mentoring
Veterans Legal Services

2013

AgeWell West Roxbury
Dorchester Youth Collaborative
GRLZ Radio
Groundwork Lawrence
Shelter Music Boston

2012

Cooking Matters
InnerCity Weightlifting
LGBTQIA+ Aging Project
Science Club for Girls
Wayside Youth and Family Support Network
Father's Bill & Mainspring

2011

Fiscal Health Vital Signs
Future Chefs
Massachusetts Senior Action Council
MathPOWER
Smart from the Start

2010

Literations
Massachusetts Housing & Shelter Alliance
SPOKE
My Life My Choice
Playworks New England
Project Hope

2009

Bessie Tarrt Wilson Initiative for Children
College Bound Dorchester
Hearth, Inc.
More Than Words
Raw Art Works
uAspire

2008

CitySprouts
Cradles to Crayons
Girls' LEAP
ReVision Urban Farm
The Theater Offensive
UTEC

2007

The TRUST Project
Building Impact
Actors' Shakespeare Project
Strong Women, Strong Girls

2006

Boston Black Women's Health Institute
Roca
Treehouse Foundation
WriteBoston
Zumix, Inc.

2004

Boston Children's Chorus
Boston Health Care and Research Training Institute
Close to Home
Common Impact
Rediscovery House
VietAID

2003

Boston Learning Center
Madison Park Development Corporation
Eagle Eye Institute
Haley House
Social Capital Inc.
Year Up





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