

CATAPULT FORWARD



ACCELERATING A NEXT-GENERATION WORKFORCE
ECOSYSTEM IN GREATER BOSTON

Monitor Institute
by **Deloitte**.

 **SkillWorks**

The Boston
Foundation 

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The Boston Foundation, Greater Boston's community foundation, brings people and resources together to solve Boston's big problems. Established in 1915, it is one of the largest community foundations in the nation—with net assets of \$1.3 billion. The Foundation works in close partnership with its donors, with more than 1,000 separate charitable funds established for the general benefit of the community or for special purposes. It also serves as a major civic leader, think tank and advocacy organization, commissioning research into the most critical issues of our time and helping to shape public policy designed to advance opportunity for everyone in Greater Boston.

ABOUT SKILLWORKS

Established in 2003, SkillWorks is a nationally recognized funder collaborative that has impacted the lives of thousands of low-income jobseekers and low-wage workers and has created a pipeline of talent for the region's highest demand businesses and industries. These include more than 100 employers seeking qualified employees for jobs in healthcare, biotech, construction, financial services, hospitality, green jobs, and most recently, IT/technology. Hosted by the Boston Foundation, SkillWorks acts as a workforce intermediary that pools funding from public, private, and corporate philanthropy to create a flexible set of resources that can be steered towards innovative solutions across community-based organizations, vocational training, community colleges, and employers.

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Monitor Institute by Deloitte is a group within Deloitte LLP that works with social impact-focused organizations and their leaders, helping them to make the hard choices and take the required actions to advance progress on pressing societal challenges. Since the early 2000s, Monitor Institute has worked with more than 200 social sector organizations, including six of the seven largest U.S. foundations and many groundbreaking social innovators, bringing new approaches and impact strategies to clients and contributing to the public debate on prominent issues through renowned thought leadership.

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Preface

As the Greater Boston regional economy continues to grow and the labor market tightens, we're seeing a rapidly expanding gap between the demand for qualified talent and the lack of workers ready to fill in-demand roles. Closing this gap is a complicated matter.

Employers need workers, but not just any worker. Employers need people who can fill specific roles, often with specialized skills. And in their ever-evolving industries, they especially need people who can adapt to change.

Workers need jobs—but not just any job. It has to pay the bills (which not all jobs do), but most people, at all levels, are looking for more than that. They care about benefits, flexibility, career advancement opportunities, a sense of purpose, and enjoying work/life balance.

At the center of Greater Boston's labor market, addressing these entwined challenges, are organizations that the Boston Foundation calls Next-Generation Workforce Providers—market-driven training and education organizations seeking to expand opportunity for lower-income individuals and create competitive advantages for businesses in need of workers. This is a report about them. It is an analysis of the critical competencies these types of providers need to succeed, offering specific examples of leading practices within these competencies, drawn from the work of Next-Generation Workforce Providers across the region. It's also an acknowledgement of the challenges still at hand and ahead, and a call to action for the many players—across the public, private, and social sectors—who have a role in strengthening Greater Boston's workforce development ecosystem.

This report comes out of Project Catapult, a new initiative launched in early 2019 by the Boston Foundation and SkillWorks to invest in Next-Generation Workforce Providers and partner with forward-thinking businesses to leverage the region's potential for sustaining talent via the workforce system. Following the launch of this effort, we collaborated with Monitor Institute by Deloitte, a team within Deloitte LLP that works with social impact-focused organizations, to help us create this report, describing ways that organizations can work toward closing the skills gap and improving outcomes for workers and employers alike.

We hope this report is just a start in tracking how we change Greater Boston's workforce system for the better.



Paul S. Grogan
President and CEO
The Boston Foundation

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Executive Summary

Background

Today's tight labor market, anticipated Baby Boomer retirements in the coming years, and growth of high demand and skilled jobs are contributing to a never-before-seen tension between the demand to fill jobs and the lack of supply ready to fill those jobs.

Unemployment in Massachusetts is at a historic low of 2.9% (lower than the national unemployment rate of 3.7%).¹ In fact, Boston's economy has been booming for a number of years, indicating consistently strong demand for labor despite broader economic fluctuations. In the current labor market, the need for workers has only gotten stronger, making it especially difficult for many employers in the region to meet their needs.

But with great challenge often comes great opportunity. In the words of Boston Foundation President and CEO Paul Grogan, "A tight labor market is a terrible thing to waste."² Together with SkillWorks, the Boston Foundation launched Project Catapult to seize this moment of opportunity for both today and tomorrow—to invest in sustainable workforce solutions that can fill Greater Boston's labor market needs, address growing income inequality, and fuel regional growth for the long term.

Critical to this are organizations that the Boston Foundation calls "**Next-Generation Workforce Providers**"—a type of workforce organization that seeks to expand job and career opportunities for lower-income individuals while also being responsive to employers' talent needs. Not only does investing in "Next-Gen" Workforce Providers today accelerate the number of new participants in the labor force in the short term (a significant opportunity for the region

considering how tight labor market is); it also establishes structures designed to serve the region's workers and employers in the long term, including in times of higher unemployment.

Objectives and Approach

This report examines the role of Next-Gen Workforce Providers in the Greater Boston workforce ecosystem by looking at the work of specific organizations

identified by the Boston Foundation. It identifies leading practices to help Next-Gen Workforce Providers and other organizations learn from each other; catalogues who's doing what to support greater

coordination and collaboration; and highlights where gaps remain in the overall workforce and employment ecosystem.

Our findings are predominantly based on primary research: Over the course of three months, Monitor Institute by Deloitte worked with the Next-Gen Workforce Providers identified by the Boston Foundation as well as seven employers and 13 jobseekers to articulate leading practices in Greater Boston's workforce development landscape and understand critical gaps and opportunities. The specific workforce providers were highlighted for demonstrating the core competencies of a Next-Gen approach, as defined by Project Catapult: **being market responsive, focusing on "good jobs"** (i.e., those that provide living wages, benefits, growth opportunities, etc.), **lifting untapped talent** (i.e., helping non-traditional talent pools access job opportunities), and **investing in organizational capacity**. Examples and quotes mentioned herein come from interviews, and we did not conduct a

In the current labor market, the need for workers has only gotten stronger, making it especially difficult for many employers in the region to meet their needs.

thorough analysis of other data sources. Given the focused scope of our research, we welcome and invite others to build on this work. *More information about the organizations and people involved in our research can be found in the Appendix.*

What We Learned

Next-Gen Workforce Providers play a critical role in the Greater Boston ecosystem. Jobseekers turn to them for training, support, and community, and employers rely on them to help find and train qualified candidates and upskill incumbent workers.

Today, many Next-Gen Workforce Providers are primarily trying to “**build the supply**” of talent, serving many distinct populations in Greater Boston through targeted approaches, focusing on increasing the quality and quantity of available workers. The “untapped” workforce is oftentimes unemployed or underemployed because its members face barriers to employment such as low education levels, limited English language abilities, or criminal records, so tailored programming and wraparound supports that empower specific populations have become even more critical. And while there may be many organizations competing for similar public or philanthropic funding, there is plenty of room for them all to do their work as the need among jobseekers is large and organizations are serving different people in distinct ways. Still, there’s ample opportunity for greater coordination, cross-learning, and outcomes-sharing across workforce providers.

To maximize impact, Next-Gen Workforce Providers in Greater Boston can also increase their focus on “**building demand**,” or adopting an employer-centered lens in their work and working to shift employer mindsets, particularly around how they source, retain, and advance talent. Beyond working with employers to place jobseekers, workforce providers can engage employers more proactively to understand their needs and design training around these needs, as well as help employers evaluate and evolve their hiring, advancement, and retention practices (particularly for untapped talent). At the same time, employers can take a more active position

as partners and co-investors in the workforce development ecosystem, recognizing it as a business imperative rather than a charitable contribution.

The good news is that many Next-Gen Workforce Providers are already adopting these new ways of working in partnership with jobseekers and the region’s leading businesses. In **Table 1** on the next page we briefly summarize the **leading “next-gen” practices** (as they relate to the Boston Foundation’s four-competency framework) that we observed across the workforce providers we worked with; more detailed descriptions and examples can be found in the full report.

While workforce providers are key players in the Greater Boston workforce development ecosystem, **many other parties have a role to play** to increase the effectiveness and cohesion of the system. In fact, several of our interviewees observed that workforce development in Greater Boston is so fragmented that there is no singular ecosystem. Employers, public sector actors, and education institutions, in particular, can benefit from greater coordination with one another and with workforce providers to better serve jobseekers’ needs and fill talent gaps for employers. As Next-Gen Workforce Provider Year Up put it, “We need to close the opportunity divide, but that doesn’t mean [a single workforce provider] has to do all the work. There are things we can’t do if we try to do it all alone.” (*See: Gaps and Opportunities in Greater Boston’s Workforce Development Ecosystem, page 29, for more detail on the roles other parties can play.*)

We hope that all players in Greater Boston’s workforce development system can learn from these leading practices and from other observations outlined in this report to work as individual organizations and a collective system to better serve the needs of jobseekers and employers, help reduce economic inequality in our region, and boost economic growth.

TABLE 1

Summary of Leading Practices

LEADING PRACTICE	DESCRIPTION
Competency: Being Market Responsive	
A. Fostering Deep and Strategic Partnerships with Employers and/or Industries	Shift from purely transactional interactions to deep and strategic partnerships with employer and/or industries to help them fill business needs; includes creating employer consortia, hiring dedicated employer liaisons, and presenting high-quality job candidates.
B. Being Nimble in Response to Regional and Economic Changes	Conduct sensing activities regularly to understand how the market is changing and adjust programming and partnerships to fill these demands.
C. Creating Talent Supplier Agreements, Possibly Including Customized Employer Training	Develop internship and/or full-time talent supplier agreements with employers, such that employers commit to dedicating a number of openings for the workforce provider's program participants, and work with employers to develop customized fee-for-service trainings.
Competency: Focusing on Good Jobs	
D. Defining and Identifying Good Jobs	Define "good jobs" based on the needs of the target population and tailor programming to help workers find jobs that meet these needs.
E. Leveraging Trusted Employer Relationships to Support Untapped Talent in the Long Term	Consult with employer partners to help ensure their hiring, retention, and advancement practices support program participants and other untapped talent to be successful in their roles, while enhancing employers' operational efficiencies and overall talent strategy.
F. Providing Training and Pathways for Advancement and Retention (Not Just Placement)	Support workers in their career progression by providing opportunities for upskilling (e.g., incumbent worker training), paid for by employers in order to help them retain and advance their talent.
Competency: Lifting Untapped Talent	
G. Offering Tailored Programming to Target Population	Design trainings with tailored content, appropriate pedagogical approaches, language instruction (as needed), and other supports that address potential barriers to employment and to help make jobseekers ready for work.
H. Providing Holistic, Wraparound Supports	Recognize the holistic needs of program participants and offer wraparound supports (e.g., training stipends, transportation assistance, coaching) as needed.
I. Offering Laddered Work Experience via Social Enterprise Model	Offer supported work experience by running a business or social enterprise in-house, serving as an employer while providing a structured training environment.
J. Supporting and Leveraging Alumni	Actively offer ways for program alumni to stay connected with, represent, and enhance the program; maintain alumni networks to support the ongoing professional development and advancement of graduates.
Competency: Investing in Organizational Capacity	
K. Cultivating Intentional Partnerships with Other Providers	Build structured, collaborative partnerships to deliver a broader range of services to better serve the holistic needs of jobseekers and employers.
L. Encouraging Organizational Learning and Continuous Improvement	Maintain a mindset of and invest in constantly aspiring to do better, being willing to evolve, integrating participant feedback, and building the internal capabilities to support continuous learning and adaptation.
M. Leveraging Technology and Data Strategically	Use technology and data to support innovative program delivery and indicate program quality to jobseekers and employers.
N. Exploring Innovative Funding Models	Consider opportunities to earn revenue (e.g., running social enterprises, providing paid services to employers) or tap into unconventional funding sources to boost financial sustainability.

I.

Context

Before launching into detail on the leading practices of Next-Gen Workforce Providers, let's consider the backdrop against which their work and that of Project Catapult is happening:

- **BOSTON MIRRORS BROADER U.S. TRENDS IN TERMS OF DECLINING ECONOMIC MOBILITY AND RISING INCOME INEQUALITY.** To make matters worse, Boston is currently ranked #7 in terms of U.S. cities with the highest income inequality (Massachusetts is ranked #6 in terms of U.S. states), according to the Boston Foundation's *Boston's Booming...But for Whom?* report. This makes it harder for people to advance upward (and emphasizes the importance of finding not just any job, but a good job).³ As stated in the first *Catapult Paper*, "This is Boston's economy—white hot, innovating and expanding, and leaving thousands behind."⁴ (See next section for more context on the Catapult Papers.)
- **PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED BY INCOME INEQUALITY AND UNEMPLOYMENT.** The unemployment rate in Massachusetts in the first quarter of 2019 was 2.7% for White workers but 5.1% for Black workers and 4.2% for Hispanic workers.⁵ Many Next-Gen Workforce Providers continuously emphasized that workforce development is inherently an issue of equity. As David Delmar of Resilient Coders put it, "It is morally and economically unacceptable: We are systematically failing a generation that is about to be out of work."
- **INCOME INEQUALITY IS EXACERBATED BY THE SKYROCKETING COST OF LIVING IN BOSTON.** Boston is the tenth most expensive city to live in the U.S., while Massachusetts is the third most expensive state, exemplified by the fact that the median price for a home in Massachusetts is 70% higher than the national figure.⁶

- **THE RISING COST OF LIVING IS PUSHING WORKERS OUT OF THE CITY AND AWAY FROM AVAILABLE JOBS.** This makes it even more difficult for employers to find workers and workers to find jobs. In the words of Year Up's Greater Boston Executive Director, Bob Dame, workers "are getting squeezed out of the city. This makes it hard [for us] to serve them because the majority of available jobs reside closer to the city."
- **IN THE MIDST OF THESE CHALLENGES FOR WORKERS, EMPLOYERS ARE ALSO STRUGGLING TO FILL THEIR TALENT NEEDS.** Given low unemployment rates and evolving needs for new skills, employers are finding it difficult to identify candidates who meet their needs. A 2016 employer survey by the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education indicated that 75% of employers were having difficulty finding talent and cited this as a top barrier to company growth, and this continued to be a theme we heard from employers in our 2019 interviews.⁷

Given the complexity of these systemic challenges, the role of workforce provider organizations that help lift up untapped talent—those often viewed as "left behind" in this economic boom—to meet market demand becomes all the more important.⁸ And given the centrality of their role, it is all the more important that they do it well and in a coordinated manner. This is where Project Catapult comes in.

About Project Catapult and the Next-Gen Workforce Provider Competencies

Project Catapult was launched in 2017 in the wake of a call to action in the *Pinkerton Papers: Job Quality Series*, by distinguished workforce development practitioner and theorist Steven Dawson, who argued

that these times require redesigned institutions, new investment, and a very different approach to workforce development in order to address skills shortages and income inequality.⁹

In response, the Boston Foundation and SkillWorks launched Project Catapult with a vision to set up the Boston workforce system to function more efficiently, create deeper partnerships, and support retention and advancement for workers, such that the leading practices outlined here are institutionalized, even in times of economic downturn. Project Catapult has adopted a three-part strategy to support this vision: Leverage Catapult Networks, Leadership & Learning Labs, and Learning Communities to (a) build capacity across the workforce field (with a focus on workforce providers), (b) streamline and deepen direct services to jobseekers and incumbent workers as a network of incentivized partners (including employers), and (c) create a public platform focused on lessons learned, promising practices, and systems change in Greater Boston.

As part of the launch of Project Catapult, the Boston Foundation published *The Catapult Papers*, a four-part series on the future of workforce development. These were authored by Jerry Rubin, President and CEO of Jewish Vocational Service (JVS) Boston, and Rougui Diallo, Chief of Staff of Resilient Coders, based on their organizations' own transition toward becoming Next-Gen Workforce Providers. (Note: Since JVS

Boston's work is a large focus of *The Catapult Papers*, it will not be heavily featured in this report).

The Catapult Papers argued for workforce development organizations that are consciously designed to respond to the challenges and opportunities of this economic moment. Specifically, they defined Next-Gen Workforce Providers as organizations that are seeking to expand opportunity for lower-income individuals and create competitive advantages for employers in need of workers, and that illustrate four key competencies:*

- **BEING MARKET RESPONSIVE:** Developing deep relationships with employers and being nimble in response to economic changes
- **FOCUSING ON GOOD JOBS:** Preparing workers (and employers) for long-term, quality employment
- **LIFTING UNTAPPED TALENT:** Supporting talent from “non-traditional” backgrounds
- **INVESTING IN ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY:** Developing capabilities to power the organization and maximize impact

This report builds on *The Catapult Papers* by exploring each of these four competencies in further detail, outlining the leading practices that Next-Gen Workforce Providers are exhibiting within them, and illuminating gaps and opportunities for further development across the Greater Boston ecosystem.

* In the spirit of continuous learning, these competencies have been refined since *The Catapult Papers* were published. The versions listed here reflect the latest iteration, which is used to organize this report. For additional background on the four competencies, please refer to *The Catapult Papers*.

Leading Practices for Next-Gen Workforce Providers

Introduction

On the following pages, we share 14 leading practices that emerged through our interviews and site visits with select Next-Gen Workforce Providers (listed on page 12) in Greater Boston, supplemented through interviews with local employers and jobseekers. These practices are organized against the four-competency framework described above and are intended to help workforce providers learn from one another. For each of the four competencies, we provide an overview with supporting employer and jobseeker perspectives, then detail the leading practices beneath that competency with descriptions and examples.

Specifically, the sections headed “Bringing This to Life” provide in-depth looks at how certain Next-Gen Workforce Providers are leading in a given practice today, and include “Other Notable Examples,” which briefly highlight how other Next-Gen Workforce Providers we spoke with are also differentiated in that practice. These examples are not intended as the only or best approaches to the practices we present; rather, they are tangible examples of how these practices come to life. The information in the “Bringing This to Life” and “Other Notable Examples” sections was sourced directly from our exchanges with the featured organizations themselves.

It is also important to consider that not every organization needs to lead on every practice; some of these capabilities can and should come through increased coordination with other workforce providers. Moreover, these leading practices are by no means exhaustive; they are a compilation of observations across a limited set of interviews. There are other Next-Gen Workforce Providers in Boston that are not featured in this report; we welcome others to continue this work to help illuminate other Next-Gen Workforce Providers and leading practices

in Greater Boston in order to cultivate the most effective and coordinated workforce development system possible for workers and employers, in times of economic prosperity and downturn alike.

Catapult Competency I: Being Market Responsive

COMPETENCY OVERVIEW

Many workforce providers in Boston are focused on building the region’s supply of talent. As stated in *The Catapult Papers*, “Throughout its modern history, workforce development has been largely a human-service endeavor built in the context of the anti-poverty drive of the early and mid-1960s.”¹⁰ Sometimes this results in an emphasis on training jobseekers without a clear understanding of what employers need. Being market responsive requires workforce providers to look at the demand side of the equation and design programs around employer needs, lest they turn out program participants who are still unprepared to fill the roles employers have available. In turn, employers should consider paying for workforce providers’ services, recognizing them as a critical part of their talent supply chain. Market responsiveness also involves keeping a critical eye on changes in the market and shifting course quickly to adapt.

Employers that were interviewed underscored how important it is that workforce providers deeply understand and respond to their needs. For example, when Levy Restaurants started participating in union contracts, it turned to Next-Gen Workforce Provider BEST Hospitality Training. Levy partnered with BEST to help fill new job openings as well as create a solid training program for new and seasoned staff. BEST, a partner of the hotel union UNITE HERE Local 26, had a deep understanding of both union and Levy management needs, and of how to effectively train

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (BFIT) is an urban college serving the Greater Boston region and committed to student success and career readiness in technology fields.

BEST HOSPITALITY TRAINING combines pre-employment and incumbent worker training designed to meet the labor needs of its hotel partners and the personal and professional goals of UNITE HERE Local 26 union members.

CONNECT helps people achieve sustainable living wage jobs and financial health and well-being by partnering to provide essential skills, knowledge, and social capital in one central and supportive location.

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF NEW ENGLAND (IINE) seeks to create opportunities for refugees and immigrants to succeed through resettlement, education, career advancement, and pathways to citizenship.

JEWISH VOCATIONAL SERVICE (JVS) works to enhance the education and skills of working-age adults—who often have limited English language, skills, and income—and to meet the hiring, retention, and talent development needs of employers.

JUST-A-START (JAS) is a multi-service community development corporation (CDC) that creates and maintains affordable housing, provides housing resources and services, offers education and workforce training for youth and adults, and builds community engagement.

MORE THAN WORDS (MTW) is a nonprofit social enterprise that “empowers young adults who are in the foster care system, court-involved, homeless, or out of school to take charge of their lives by taking charge of a business.”

NEW ENGLAND CENTER FOR ARTS & TECHNOLOGY (NECAT) empowers adults facing barriers to employment through training in culinary skills, social-emotional development, and career readiness for success and long-term financial stability.

OPERATION ABLE’s mission is to provide employment and training opportunities to mature workers and others from economically, racially, and occupationally diverse backgrounds.

PER SCHOLAS prepares motivated and curious adults who are unemployed or underemployed for successful careers as technology professionals and creates onramps to businesses in need of their talents.

RESILIENT CODERS is a workforce intermediary nonprofit that trains young people of color for high growth careers as software engineers and connects them with jobs in the Boston-area technology sector.

UTECH aspires to “ignite and nurture the ambition of disconnected young people to trade violence and poverty for social and economic success.”

YEAR UP is a one-year, intensive training program that empowers talented and motivated young adults to move from minimum wage to meaningful careers.

jobseekers in hospitality and best-in-class customer service. According to a Levy director, “When I say I really need customer service, BEST gets it.” And, BEST has been willing and able to rapidly evolve its trainings to “move toward Next-Gen service” standards. BEST has become a reliable partner for Levy’s talent needs in today’s tight labor market, providing candidates who can get the job done.¹¹

Particularly as high-skill, high-wage occupations (e.g., in financial services, information technology, health care) expand in Boston, it is critical for Next-Gen Workforce Providers to remain agile in the face of these fast-moving industries and find the “sweet spot” between employers and workers.^{12,13} This can include fostering deep, strategic employer and industry partnerships; being nimble in the face of regional and economic changes; and creating talent supplier agreements with employers, possibly including customized employer training. Examples of leading practices as they relate to this competency are shared below.

LEADING PRACTICE A: **FOSTERING DEEP AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS AND/OR INDUSTRIES**

A key aspect of being market responsive as a Next-Gen Workforce Provider is demonstrating strong employer engagement. This means moving away from transactional interactions with employers and toward deep and strategic partnerships with employers and industries. In practice, this can look like:

- Creating an Employer Advisory Council or similar consortia that allows employers to buy into the program (i.e., by seeing the inner workings of the program and building relationships with participants) and provides ongoing input and support for programs (e.g., through mock interviews, resume reviews, training facilitation, donations)

“The ideal [workforce provider] partner is flexible, willing to learn together, and does not try to direct us into something that doesn’t make sense for our business. They understand that we are unable to commit to taking everyone and help us find the right match between candidate and position.”

– PARTNERS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM STAFF

- Having a dedicated employer engagement liaison or team to oversee all employer relationships. This helps Next-Gen Workforce Providers to set clear expectations and maintain strong communications with employers, which employers highly value

- Engaging with employers to understand their talent needs and presenting the right candidates to fill those needs

Next-Gen Workforce Providers that excel in this practice truly know how to embed themselves with employers and effectively connect jobseekers to them to fill employers’ business needs.

BRINGING THIS TO LIFE

BEST HOSPITALITY TRAINING BEST has established itself as a strategic partner to hospitality employers in the Greater Boston region in several ways. Over the last 10 years, it has built an Employer Advisory Council with 38 dedicated hotel partners; these partners through a Labor Management Trust Fund pay for incumbent worker services and are deeply involved in curriculum design (sometimes offering to teach classes). According to employer partners, BEST is highly communicative, organized, and flexible—keeping jobseeker training programs current and relevant and supplying employers with dependable talent.

“Working closely with employers is the bedrock of our programming. All of our curriculum is developed with our employers.”

– BEST STAFF

“BEST holds quarterly Advisory Council meetings where we can get a sense of what BEST is doing in terms of training and what’s going on in the rest of the city.”

– OMNI HOTELS STAFF

YEAR UP Year Up has built out several mechanisms for engaging with 250+ employers (including 41 of the Fortune 100), such as national and local Corporate Engagement and Account Management teams that work to initiate and cultivate employer relationships. Year Up also launched Grads of Life, which works with employers to provide resources for recruiting, hiring and retaining young people aged 16–24 who are not in school or working, known as Opportunity Youth. Year Up works closely with employers to understand job descriptions and skill needs for open roles, and often integrates these skills into training programs. For several employers (including long-time partner J.P. Morgan Chase & Co., interviewed for this report), Year Up has become a major talent pipeline, providing the opportunity to leverage untapped talent from non-traditional education backgrounds alongside recruiting channels with colleges and universities. Year Up partners cite a 90% satisfaction rate with the workforce provider.

“We bring employers in to ask how they would build curriculum, and ensure we’re continually responding to changes in the workplace and required skills.”

— YEAR UP STAFF

“Year Up regularly takes our feedback on desired skillsets and integrates it into their curriculum. They also attend our intern presentations here on site.”

— J.P. MORGAN CHASE & CO. STAFF

OTHER NOTABLE EXAMPLES:

- PER SCHOLAS offers a robust corporate engagement model, allowing employers the opportunity to volunteer (e.g., conduct mock interviews with students), invest in the program, hire program participants, customize trainings, and recycle old computers for participant use.
- NEW ENGLAND CENTER FOR ARTS & TECHNOLOGY (NECAT) has developed an Employer Advisory Council to inform curriculum design and to review employer hiring practices. NECAT is intentional about working with employers with similar values that will provide well-paying jobs to participants.

- BENJAMIN FRANKLIN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (BFIT) has a career services department where each team member is responsible for helping students find part- or full-time jobs within a specific major. The team focuses on building deep relationships with employers and finding or creating openings for BFIT students.
- OPERATION ABLE’s staff is dedicated to developing internship opportunities with employers, bringing employers in for presentations and volunteer support, and connecting program participants to job openings.
- JVS BOSTON is a “go-to” partner, according to employers like Partners HealthCare System. JVS seeks to understand employer needs quickly and “fine-tunes their sourcing,” narrowing down from multiple hundred candidates to find the best match for employers and jobseekers.

LEADING PRACTICE B: BEING NIMBLE IN RESPONSE TO REGIONAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES

Being truly market responsive also requires looking beyond specific employers and paying attention to broader market shifts and needs. Many Next-Gen Workforce Providers conduct sensing activities regularly to understand how the market is changing and which industries face the greatest labor demands locally; they continuously adjust programming and partnerships to fill these demands.

This responsiveness is a quality that we heard is valued by both jobseekers and employers. For jobseekers, this means connecting them to good jobs (as defined based on the needs of the target population) that are sustainable and well-paying in the long term. For employers, this means program participants are prepared with new and necessary skillsets.

— BRINGING THIS TO LIFE —

JUST-A-START JAS’s flagship Biomedical Careers Program has focused on the high-growth biomedical field in Boston for over 27 years. The free, 9-month program provides specialized instruction to place jobseekers in biotech, life sciences, and medical research roles, with a nearly 100% placement rate. JAS

also recently launched an IT Careers Program to respond to growing market demands; through this course, students can obtain stackable industry-recognized credentials, which is essential in tech where needs are constantly changing. JAS consistently refines both programs with employer input, and partners with Bunker Hill Community College to ensure the courses offer hands-on learning opportunities for students to grow their skillsets.

"We keep our programs relevant, current, and effective so students can get sustaining careers (more than just jobs)."

— JUST-A-START STAFF

"The program pushes you in the right direction, guides you, and opens up pathways."

— JUST-A-START IT CAREERS PROGRAM STUDENT (FROM 2018 ANNUAL REPORT)

OTHER NOTABLE EXAMPLES:

- BFIT offers a number of technical degree programs (e.g., computer technology, construction management) and employer partnerships in response to market needs for high-demand fields, and consistently looks into opportunities to grow its range of programs.
- YEAR UP reassesses legacy partnerships and shifts programming to teach jobseekers new skills as some jobs at legacy partners become automated. Because talent oftentimes lives outside the city, Year Up has also partnered with local community colleges such as North Shore Community College and Roxbury Community College to deliver programming in more places outside of downtown Boston.
- PER SCHOLAS and RESILIENT CODERS, as tech-focused Next-Gen Workforce Providers, constantly evolve their curriculum to match the tech market's needs, adding new credential offerings and customized trainings as required skillsets change.

LEADING PRACTICE C: CREATING TALENT SUPPLIER AGREEMENTS, INCLUDING CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYER TRAINING

One of the most impactful actions that a Next-Gen Workforce Provider can take is to develop internship and/or full-time talent supplier agreements with employers, such that employers commit to dedicating a number of openings for the workforce provider's program participants. As long as the workforce provider can promise a steady stream of qualified and dedicated program participants, this can also help relieve the recruiting burden on employers. For the workforce provider, this may require a mindset shift from being a community-based organization that encourages employers to hire their jobseekers to acting as an intentional talent supplier.

Next-Gen Workforce Providers can make these talent supplier agreements even more appealing to employers through fee-for-service customized training. They may work with employers to understand skill gaps and dedicate a module of their curriculum to teaching those skills to make jobseekers more attractive for specific job openings; and employers can signal value by paying for this level of customization. Nonetheless, the broader curriculum should focus on more generally applicable skills so that jobseekers can walk away with a strong resume and transferrable skills, especially in cases where talent supplier agreements are not in place for jobseekers to join a particular employer after the program.

BRINGING THIS TO LIFE

BEST HOSPITALITY TRAINING BEST offers a 2,000-hour Housekeeping Apprenticeship Program registered with the Massachusetts Department of Labor. It starts with BEST's Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program, and upon completion graduates earn nine college credits and are hired as apprentices at partner hotels. If they successfully finish the apprenticeship, they earn a nationally recognized certification from the MA DOL and three additional credits at Bunker Hill Community College. Employers say BEST frequently involves them in developing training curricula focused on the needs of both the incumbent workers and jobseekers served in their

programs. BEST's talent supplier agreements via the apprenticeship program and custom training are key to placing 86% of jobseekers in the Greater Boston Hotel Employees list of "Hotels with Excellent Benefits" (as of 2016).

"I was able to participate in a training program where I learned how to clean, improve my English, communicate, and shadow a hotel employee. Now that I am employed at Aloft, I am excited to go back and take banquet training with BEST to continue learning."

– BEST GRADUATE

Year Up In partnership with leading employers in the markets it serves, Year Up connects young adults with companies that need talent. On a per-intern basis, corporate partners make a financial investment in Year Up commensurate with entry-level talent costs. Through the 6-month internship, partners gain access to a diverse pipeline of bright, motivated, and skilled entry-level talent; receive 1-to-1 support from Year Up; and have the opportunity to hire graduates at zero cost; in fact, Year Up's internship-to-hire conversion rate [from the internship host company] is 45%. Year Up is increasingly exploring opportunities to form and deepen national partnership with employers that can host interns across multiple Year Up locations, providing them with additional pathways to scale both income and impact.

"We've partnered with Year Up since 2007 and now host approximately 100 Year Up interns every six months nationally. Year Up does a good job of matching the skills we're looking for with the people they have."

– J.P. MORGAN CHASE & CO. STAFF

OTHER NOTABLE EXAMPLES:

- PER SCHOLAS co-invests with technology employers to customize trainings that fit the employers' needs.
- RESILIENT CODERS has built add-on modules to its 14-week bootcamp to teach employer-specific skills, teaching general coding first and then using a few extra weeks to help students become more competitive for specific employers.
- BFIT has developed "learn and earn" and internship agreements with several employers that

provide paid work experience (employers commit to dedicating a set number of spots to BFIT students), often leading to full-time roles. BFIT's Career Services team also engages with employers on LinkedIn or makes personal calls to help students get placed in jobs.

Catapult Competency 2: Focusing on Good Jobs COMPETENCY OVERVIEW

The second critical competency in the Boston Foundation's framework is simply, but importantly, "Focus on Good Jobs." (See *Leading Practice D*, below, and *The Catapult Papers* for additional discussion on what constitutes a "good job.") While the definition of a good job is different for each individual, the goal of providing one is the same, and the impetus to match people appropriately is even higher in a competitive labor market.

Workforce providers are not the only ones facing pressure to focus on good jobs. For example, Boston Properties, a large self-administered and self-managed real estate investment trust, has recently found it challenging to source tech talent, particularly as a "non-tech" company with high tech needs. Recognizing the changing market dynamics, Boston Properties has "recalibrated" how it goes to market. It has built new office space for its tech team and systematically revisited job titles, compensation, and responsibilities to ensure alignment with the market and what is attractive to applicants. It has also initiated relationships with Next-Gen Workforce Providers to source talent. These partnerships are mutually beneficial—helping Boston Properties fill critical roles and create a talent pipeline and helping Next-Gen Workforce Providers find quality jobs for workers.¹⁴

Candidates from untapped talent pools are especially in need of good jobs that can increase their economic mobility and potential for career growth. For a Next-Gen Workforce Provider, focusing on good jobs requires helping define and identify good jobs for untapped talent, leveraging trusted employer relationships to support these workers long term, and providing training and pathways to bolster advancement and retention (not just placement).

LEADING PRACTICE D: DEFINING AND IDENTIFYING GOOD JOBS

Next-Gen Workforce Providers consciously define “good job” based on the needs of their target population. A good job means something different for each person; for example, an Operation ABLE program participant mentioned that he “did not want to be locked into 40 hours” of work a week, whereas some Per Scholas graduates noted that their top priority in a job is potential for advancement. These Next-Gen Workforce Providers and others have thus tailored their programming to help workers find jobs that meet their needs and aspirations.

Although the definition of a “good job” may be unique to each person, there are some generally considered baseline parameters.

Specifically, Next-Gen

Workforce Providers should seek to support individuals with placement into pathways for full-time roles that provide—at least—living wages (currently around \$18.61/hour in Boston), benefits, and growth opportunities.¹⁵

For example, a Senior Director at Partners HealthCare System recognizes that “many employees are in entry-level roles, and deserve to make a living wage [and get] good benefits.” As such, all Partners employees are offered opportunities and pathways to help them achieve career advancement to gain and exceed a living wage.

BRINGING THIS TO LIFE

RESILIENT CODERS Resilient Coders considers high pay and strong growth opportunities critical to a good job for its bootcamp students. To ensure that its students get these jobs, Resilient Coders requires them to procure, serve, and invoice one freelance client at the end of the program so that they learn how to find their own employment. It also develops partnerships with rising tech companies to help match students into high-growth roles. Resilient Coders clearly defines and identifies good jobs for its population, placing 100%

of graduates in jobs with an average annual salary of ~\$96,000 (for 2019’s first bootcamp).

“We build our program around the number of jobs we feel we can put our students into, and we ensure they are able to access a nice career path through these jobs.”

– RESILIENT CODERS STAFF

BEST HOSPITALITY TRAINING BEST’s goal is to help move people from “low-wage to quality hospitality jobs.” According to BEST, its program participants are often coming out of low-paying jobs with difficult or inflexible hours and just looking for

a better job, even if it is in the same industry. BEST acknowledges its target population’s goals for a quality job (i.e., good wages, comprehensive benefits, job security, worker voice) and matches people to these through job shadowing and apprenticeship programs with some

of Boston’s highest-quality hotels. Moreover, the partnership with Bunker Hill Community College is beneficial for program participants who are seeking greater qualifications and want to advance further in their careers. BEST creates options for people to define what they’re striving for in their careers.

“Our labor partners infuse worker voice in all the positions we prepare jobseekers for. As a result of training, wages, benefits, and worker voice, workers feel valued in the industry.”

– BEST STAFF

“The number one thing I’m looking for in a job is growth opportunities. Whatever experience I get, I always believe I can do more. I stagnate and lose focus if I’m not growing. Plus, better wages come along with it.”

– PER SCHOLAS ALUMNUS

OTHER NOTABLE EXAMPLES:

- **MORE THAN WORDS (MTW)** focuses on matching young adults with what they call “age and stage appropriate” jobs; after seeing that young adults are stable and successful in their first job out of MTW (“A Job”), MTW tries to place these individuals in a better “B Job” or career “C Job.”
- **NECAT** works with employer partners that pay program participants “living” wages and that provide different levels of work so that they can appropriately match people into good jobs.

LEADING PRACTICE E: LEVERAGING TRUSTED EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIPS TO SUPPORT UNTAPPED TALENT IN THE LONG TERM

Beyond placing jobseekers into good jobs, Next-Gen Workforce Providers also work to ensure that jobseekers are satisfied and successful in their roles over the long term. Specifically, they consult with employer partners around the inclusiveness of their hiring, retention, and advancement practices. More broadly, they also seek to help employers foster an environment that values diversity and inclusion, which can help Next-Gen Workforce Providers' program graduates feel a sense of belonging. Several employers observed that this can help them to retain their workers and improve operational efficiencies.

Some examples of leveraging employer relationships to support untapped talent include consistently reviewing job requirements with employers, engaging directly with hiring managers to develop recruiting practices, and encouraging employers to train direct supervisors on how to manage and support the development of new types of talent. Such practices enable greater trust between Next-Gen Workforce Providers and employers and incentivize both parties to continue working together as partners.

BRINGING THIS TO LIFE

JEWISH VOCATIONAL SERVICE (JVS) JVS Boston has been working in this space for more than 80 years and has built strong employer partnerships in the region. With its long-term partners in particular, JVS Boston conducts needs analyses to identify areas where the employer could improve the employee experience and job quality (e.g., scheduling), and consults with these employers on how to make changes so that workers coming from previously untapped talent sources can succeed at the company.

"JVS was good at giving us a reality check—telling us that some workers could make \$1 more per hour elsewhere. They were able to tell us where we were going wrong with our recruitment efforts for a few frontline roles."

— BOSTON CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL STAFF

RESILIENT CODERS Resilient Coders works closely with employers as an intermediary to promote inclusive hiring and retention practices that will help

their students feel comfortable in the workplace. On hiring, Resilient Coders tries to show new ways of evaluating talent (e.g., signaling that students are fast learners via the 14-week bootcamp rather than by standardized assessments); and on retention, they have shared feedback with specific employers to offer implicit bias trainings after learning about the experiences of its students. This cultivates longer-term relationships with employers and good jobs for jobseekers.

"We don't have consensus on what it means to be exclusionary in hiring practices. We have candid conversations with employers where they may have good intentions but may not realize they are exclusionary."

— RESILIENT CODERS STAFF

OTHER NOTABLE EXAMPLES:

- YEAR UP's Grads of Life is a national initiative that catalyzes market demand for young adults (ages 18–24) by seeking to transform employers' perceptions and hiring practices regarding them. It also works with employers in more local contexts to create programs to support alumni (e.g., at J.P. Morgan Chase & Co.'s Boston site, Year Up alumni have a mentorship program specifically for Year Up interns).
- BFIT coaches employer partners on how to effectively work with its students (who all come from different backgrounds) and ways to set these students up for success.

LEADING PRACTICE F: PROVIDING TRAINING AND PATHWAYS FOR ADVANCEMENT AND RETENTION (NOT JUST PLACEMENT)

Once jobseekers have found initial employment, they often seek opportunities to grow in their careers by enhancing their skillsets. Next-Gen Workforce Providers support workers in their career progression by providing avenues for upskilling, i.e., incumbent worker training. Incumbent worker training should be developed in collaboration with employers to help them retain and advance their workforce. Providing this training helps deepen relationships with employers and fortify workers' job security and growth, while also creating a potential fee-for-service revenue stream for Next-Gen Workforce Providers.

Next-Gen Workforce Providers can also work with employers to help them create career pathways for untapped talent and design any trainings needed within those pathways; see *Leading Practice E: Leverage Trusted Employer Relationships to Support Untapped Talent in the Long Term* for additional commentary on this.

BRINGING THIS TO LIFE

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF NEW ENGLAND (IINE)

In response to growing employer interest in retaining their workforce, IINE recently launched an incumbent worker training in collaboration with Tufts Medical Center. The program teaches soft skills and customer service principles in health care to employees from all departments (e.g., Environmental Services, Billing). The training is a new way for IINE to earn income for its services and to play a role in upskilling the existing workforce in Boston.

“We’ve had a lot of new interest from employers in retaining their workforce so we are taking a whole different part of the workforce (incumbent workers) and upskilling them.”

— IINE STAFF

OTHER NOTABLE EXAMPLES:

- JVS BOSTON contracts with employers to deliver a wide range of services such as English language instruction, computer skills, college and career readiness, job skill-specific training, and coaching for their employees. This line of business, which generates nearly \$2 million annually, led the organization to develop a team of highly skilled instructors, coaches, and project managers who are deeply embedded with employers, respond rapidly to changing employer needs, deliver high quality services, and address problems when they arise.
- BEST offers incumbent worker training (paid for by employer partners) that teaches English, technology, U.S. citizenship preparation, literacy, skills training, and nationally recognized certifications to help participants advance in their personal and professional lives.
- PER SCHOLAS provides industry-recognized certifications (e.g., CompTIA A+, Network+, Java Web Developer) for program participants seeking advancement.

Catapult Competency 3: Lifting Untapped Talent

COMPETENCY OVERVIEW

The third critical competency for Next-Gen Workforce Providers is “Lifting Untapped Talent.” With this term, the Boston Foundation is referring to non-traditional talent pools, i.e., those who do not have a four-year college degree; it may also include minorities, immigrants, older jobseekers, and others. As mentioned previously, these jobseekers are often disproportionately affected by un- and under-employment issues.

As the labor market continues to tighten, many employers are struggling to find qualified talent from their traditional channels and are increasingly looking to tap into new sources. As noted by one of our interviewees at J.P. Morgan Chase & Co., “There will never be one source of talent to fill all your needs—you’ve got to have multiple channels.” Workforce providers can play a critical role in bridging the gap between untapped talent, which tends to be disconnected from traditional hiring processes, and employers.

As an illustration of how the labor market drove one employer to seek new talent sources (and partner with workforce providers to do it), consider the experience of Partners HealthCare System. Facing hundreds of openings for entry-level Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) positions, Partners turned to community-based organizations, such as JVS Boston and Project Hope, to help source new talent. To prepare this talent for CNA roles, Partners provided a five-week training program, in collaboration with The Academy for Health Care Training and its own Spaulding Rehabilitation Network, including some wraparound support for holistic needs (e.g., child care, transportation). Tapping into this new talent pool required Partners to reconsider its existing eligibility criteria and required skills, strengthen its community partnerships, and provide additional training; all of this now enables Partners to fill more roles with formerly untapped talent.¹⁶

While some employers are starting on the journey to explore populations of untapped talent, Next-Gen Workforce Providers should seek to partner with

employers to upskill these high-potential workers and help them find good jobs. Providers can leverage their deep connections to the communities they serve, which employers may not have. This entails tailoring programs for distinct target populations, providing holistic wraparound supports, offering direct work experience, and maintaining an open door for them to keep coming back. Below, we detail each of these leading practices with supporting examples.

LEADING PRACTICE G: PROVIDING TRAINING AND PATHWAYS OFFERING TAILORED PROGRAMMING FOR TARGET POPULATION

Untapped talent pools often have distinct needs and characteristics that can hinder their ability to take advantage of employment opportunities, such as limited English language abilities, low education levels, criminal justice experience, or having young dependents. Individuals may require more from the job training experience, but few workforce providers are able to meet all populations' distinct needs and challenges. Next-Gen Workforce Providers are able to effectively design and/or partner to provide programming with tailored content, appropriate pedagogical approaches for different learners, language instruction (as needed), and other supports. In addition, Next-Gen Workforce Providers offer cohort-style programs for sometimes-isolated jobseekers who may lack connections to the right networks, enabling participants to empower their peers in the job search process and beyond.

Tailoring programming for the holistic needs of distinct untapped talent pools—and clarifying who the programs are intended for—can make jobseekers more likely to participate in and benefit from these programs. Jobseekers are able to effectively build

“There are a lot of jobs that we are having trouble filling due to market forces. Sometimes training programs aren’t producing enough people, sometimes there’s a mismatch between the talent produced and the skills we need. So, we’ve developed pipeline programs in 11 occupations to upskill folks from within and outside into those roles.”

– BETH ISRAEL DEACONESS
MEDICAL CENTER STAFF

both skills and community that can continue to support them beyond the job training experience. Employers can also benefit by receiving candidates who are more prepared for the workplace. As mentioned throughout this report, not every Next-Gen Workforce Provider is expected to adopt all of these

practices themselves, but rather understand whom they serve best and how, and identify the partnerships or added capacity required to adequately serve their target populations.

BRINGING THIS TO LIFE

NECAT As the labor market in Greater Boston has shifted in recent years, many employers have turned to untapped talent to fill roles. This growing demand has enabled NECAT to become a pipeline for some of Boston's leading food service employers. NECAT, facing an increase in program participants with challenging personal narratives, realized it needed to tailor its program for these individuals. To prepare program participants for success with leading employers, NECAT has expanded its social-emotional training, hired dedicated case managers, and shifted to a trauma-informed approach to teaching, emphasizing understanding, empathy, and personal coaching. To ensure that staff had the tools to deliver on these changes, NECAT participated in extensive training on the effects of trauma. These efforts have led to a nearly 30% improvement to NECAT's employment rate at its Boston training site in 2019.

“Students come to us with serious challenges and we incorporate that into the way we teach. We are more than a cooking school; our program is balanced with all of the life skills that people need to help them along the journey.”

– NECAT STAFF

OPERATION ABLE Typically, Operation ABLE's mature workers are returning to work after a gap or are seeking upskilling opportunities for advancement. Operation ABLE offers several programs to meet these varying needs, ranging from basic computer classes to more specialized industry-focused tracks. The organization's staff works with jobseekers individually to understand their needs and coach them accordingly. Moreover, Operation ABLE serves as a safe communal space for all jobseekers, allowing them to continue their relationship with the organization. For those who are not sure where to turn for fundamental career needs and connections, Operation ABLE offers a first step on their career journey.

"I needed to be around other people going through similar things, and I found Operation ABLE. Now I know I'll be ready to go into the workforce – I'm already feeling strong and confident."

– OPERATION ABLE JOBSEEKER

OTHER NOTABLE EXAMPLES:

- IINE offers services ranging from refugee resettlement to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes to support its refugee and immigrant population.
- JUST-A-START offers a cohesive, tuition-free model that embeds technology and career readiness skills, wraparound supports, and employer services to help diverse low-income populations.
- YEAR UP's high support, high expectation model is tailored to create confident, accountable, professional young adults who will thrive in a corporate environment, and has shown strong outcomes for empowering youth.

LEADING PRACTICE H: PROVIDING HOLISTIC WRAPAROUND SUPPORTS

Untapped or non-traditional talent often face different needs than traditional talent pools. These needs often extend beyond the realm of what many might consider "workforce" needs, and may include English language, housing, food, transportation, and others. Next-Gen Workforce Providers recognize the holistic needs of jobseekers and offer wraparound supports

like program stipends (as a means to compensate jobseekers for time spent not employed while in the training program), transportation assistance, coaching, and access to food or clothing. These wraparound supports may be made available internally, or through partnerships or referrals with other community-based organizations.

Wraparound supports help enable candidates from traditionally untapped talent pools to participate in and take full advantage of training programs, reducing their barriers to entering the workforce.

BRINGING THIS TO LIFE

BFIT Many BFIT students come from challenging backgrounds, so BFIT has developed a case management approach to support them beyond the classroom. When a student is admitted, a staff member sits down with him or her for two hours to understand their circumstances and refer them to any wraparound supports needed (e.g., on-campus food pantry, social worker, financial advisor) via the Student Wellness and Support Office. Students can also access Academic Success Centers and meet with coaches. All staff and faculty are coordinated around student success, meeting weekly to check in on "students of concern" and teaching "Life L.O.N.G. (Leadership, Open Communication, Nimble Problem-Solving, and a Growth Mindset) Learning" to students. As a result, BFIT has seen 85% of its graduates join a workplace or continue with education in recent years.

"One thing we do that's unique [compared to others] is to get to know our students very well and make it clear that we care; we anticipate their challenges and put supports around them."

– BFIT STAFF

"They don't let you down here [at BFIT]."

– BFIT ALUMNUS AND CURRENT EMPLOYEE

OTHER NOTABLE EXAMPLES:

- CONNECT serves low-income individuals in urban neighborhoods who require a number of wraparound supports along their career journey. Through its multi-agency model, CONNECT provides help with housing, finances, workforce training, child care, and more.

LEADING PRACTICE I: OFFERING LADDERED WORK EXPERIENCE VIA SOCIAL ENTERPRISE MODEL

While some workforce training programs provide classroom or field instruction, others may offer direct, paid work experience. This is particularly compelling for people from untapped talent pools who may otherwise have limited work experience and struggle to get a job as a result. Next-Gen Workforce Providers can offer work experience—sometimes even a first job—by running a business or social enterprise in-house (“trainers-as-employers”). This can help jobseekers pay bills while developing skills on the job (especially critically important “soft” skills), signal their credibility to future employers, and help workforce providers subsidize their programming costs.

Furthermore, leading “trainers-as-employers” provide participants opportunities for promotion between program levels. Each level is accompanied by increasing responsibility and scaffolded supports to meet participants where they are and help them grow. The supportive but ladder program structure creates an incentive for jobseekers to take the job seriously and learn leadership skills for success in future jobs.

Note: While leading, this practice may not be appropriate for every organization given the additional capacity needed to run a business. More Than Words (MTW) and UTEC were the only two models of this practice observed in this research.^{17,18}

BRINGING THIS TO LIFE

MORE THAN WORDS (MTW) Young adults work ~20 hours/week managing MTW’s online, retail, pop-up and wholesale bookselling businesses and running a high-end event space; they also gain life skills (their “YOU job”) and work experience (their “business job”) while generating revenue that helps offset program costs. The program has four “pods,” or tiers: Trainee, Associate, Partner, and Senior Partner, with each tier accompanied by new expectations, increased responsibilities (e.g., giving feedback, customer service), and greater pay. ~80% of MTW graduates are productively engaged in work and/or school after completing the tiered social enterprise program.

“At More Than Words, you MUST be moving your life and the business forward to get the paycheck. There are distinct responsibilities and privileges that come with each pod. We believe youth won’t be as successful if they don’t go through all levels of the progressive model.”

— MTW STAFF

UTEC UTEC’s three social enterprises (mattress recycling, food services, and woodworking) offer young adults a paid platform for learning applied “soft” skills such as punctuality, problem-solving, and leadership as well as industry-specific skills and certifications. They also provide flexibility for UTEC to close business on certain days and run professional development workshops. Young adults can graduate to higher levels in the program and move up or down within these higher levels; the staged approach allows them to get used to higher expectations and stricter consequences over time while learning a variety of skills to bring to future jobs. As of FY17, ~80% of young adults who left UTEC were employed two years later.

“We started enterprises intentionally so we could set rules, a platform for young adults to be able to fail, and have discussions about their future. For this population, the structure works well—it gives them enough room to deal with their challenges without turning them away.”

— UTEC STAFF

LEADING PRACTICE J: SUPPORTING AND LEVERAGING ALUMNI

For untapped talent pools, participation in workforce development training programs can be just the start of a career journey. Once they graduate from these programs, participants often seek continued engagement and support. Many Next-Gen Workforce Providers actively offer ways for program alumni to stay connected with, represent, and enhance the program. This can include:

- Creating an open-door environment where alumni can come back to get help finding jobs, pursue additional training or credentials, and connect with peers; the latter helps others who may not have access to traditional career networks build a professional alumni network or community

- Involving alumni as thought partners in curriculum development and as role models or advisors for new students in future programming
- Leveraging alumni who are employed by employer partners to collect inputs on employer practices and job openings and improve feedback loops
- Empowering alumni to be ambassadors and storytellers for the organization and its impact
- Through ongoing alumni engagement, Next-Gen Workforce Providers can better serve untapped talent by offering a more holistic and longer-lasting support system and improve their own programs and relationships with employers.

BRINGING THIS TO LIFE

PER SCHOLAS Per Scholas has a team dedicated to working with students for two years after program completion as alumni. In Greater Boston, Per Scholas recently graduated its first two classes of students and continues to host them onsite for informal career coaching, financial advising, and advanced training opportunities. Nationally, Per Scholas hires a number of alumni as staff and invites several to serve on the board as ambassadors to inform the organization's vision. This allows Per Scholas to improve its offerings with former student input, and to better reflect the diversity and needs of the student population. Staff alumni can serve as role models to current students, sharing tips on how to succeed in class and during the job search. Per Scholas has been able to create a true community for alumni.

"It really is like having a recruiter work for you [in reference to a Per Scholas staff member]. They assist you in any way that they can."

– PER SCHOLAS STAFF

"A good number of our staff are alumni; staff who are alumni can relate in a special way."

– OMNI HOTELS STAFF

OTHER NOTABLE EXAMPLES:

- RESILIENT CODERS relies on its alumni to share feedback on employers once they are in the workforce, to share advice with current students on how to succeed, and to help shape curriculum based on what they are seeing in the marketplace.

- YEAR UP's YUPRO program helps graduates with long-term career advancement opportunities, ongoing coaching and training, and professional resources. In just three years of operation, YUPRO has provided career guidance and resources to more than 3,000 Year Up alumni and supported more than 500 alumni in finding jobs and advancing in their careers.
- BEST has created a mentorship program for former graduates to mentor new students and graduates. BEST has a team of 11 trained mentors across eight partner hotels who serve as an additional level of support for newly hired students.
- OPERATION ABLE allows alumni to return and continue receiving further training and assistance.

Catapult Competency 4: Investing in Organizational Capacity

COMPETENCY OVERVIEW

Finally, we would be remiss if we did not discuss some of the leading practices that help power Next-Gen Workforce Providers: the investments they make in their own organizational capacity. It's a bit like the oxygen mask: You have to put on your own before you can help others. In that spirit, Next-Gen Workforce Providers make intentional investments in their own capabilities, helping them best serve jobseekers and employers.

Employers acknowledge this need, too. Ultimately, they need the most qualified workers they can find, and they need ways of knowing that the people coming through workforce provider partner programs meet that bar. As Partners HealthCare System put it, "We are a mission-driven organization, but we cannot accept individuals who are not well-prepared to work, even in our more entry-level roles; our patients and families come to us for world-class health care, and they must be greeted and cared for by highly skilled, customer-focused team members, who are able to go above and beyond to ensure the right patient experience." And the same is true for jobseekers. They are placing their trust in workforce providers to provide the training and support they need to build a new livelihood. This simply isn't possible if the workforce providers are

not investing in their own capacity to run an effective organization.

There is a long list of leading practices we could include on “how to run an effective organization.”

The Next-Gen Workforce

Providers we spoke with are demonstrating practices up and down this list, and these practices are not all listed here (for example, practices we omitted include hiring mission-aligned staff and establishing strong governance systems). The ones we have chosen to highlight here were selected for their relevance to workforce development and/or their relative distinctiveness in the workforce field. They are: Cultivate intentional partnerships with other providers; encourage organizational learning and continuous improvement; leverage technology and data strategically; and explore innovative funding models.

LEADING PRACTICE K: **CULTIVATING INTENTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER PROVIDERS**

Perhaps the single greatest way to boost organizational capacity is to share that capacity with others. Next-Gen Workforce Providers recognize opportunities to “outsource” services outside of their core competencies, adopting a “don’t have to do it all” mentality.

While partnering might be considered a general best practice, it can be especially critical in the workforce development field, in which untapped talent may have a wide range of needs. Building structured, collaborative partnerships to deliver a broader range of services can thus position workforce providers to better serve the holistic needs of jobseekers and employers. According to Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, “More collaboration across workforce providers would be really helpful for us, as employer partners—especially to have our local neighborhood-based community-based organizations partner with the larger, more sophisticated ones, who understand our workforce needs and train many qualified candidates. This could connect more local people to our jobs.”

“Year Up is an amazing partner because of their ability to evolve with us. It’s not just where we are but where we’re going. Their ability to learn and grow with us is huge.”

– J.P. MORGAN CHASE & CO. STAFF

It is worth remembering (particularly for funders) that effective collaboration requires an investment of resources, as well as a reduction in the competitive nature of the nonprofit field (*see more on these two points in: Gaps and*

Opportunities in Greater Boston’s Workforce Development Ecosystem, page 29). Nonetheless, even simple mentorship or learning relationships with other organizations can be valuable, especially for newer workforce providers in the Boston region.

BRINGING THIS TO LIFE

CONNECT By co-locating, integrating, and collectively managing the services of five agencies (Bunker Hill Community College, MassHire Metro North, Metro Credit Union, Metro Housing Boston, and The Neighborhood Developers), CONNECT is able to achieve greater impact for clients and greater efficiencies for service providers. CONNECT is also strategic in building external partnerships to expand the resources offered to its constituents, such as delivering partner-led training in customized ways in order to help participants qualify for jobs. For example, when the Encore casino and resort opened near Chelsea, CONNECT partnered with IINE to provide hospitality and financial capability trainings to Chelsea residents, boosting their chance of finding a job at the new property.

“We decided we should work with existing training providers vs. coming up with our own—partnerships are in our DNA, and co-location is necessary!”

– CONNECT STAFF

OTHER NOTABLE EXAMPLES:

- JUST-A-START has created strong partnerships with other community organizations to support students before, during, and after they participate in Just-A-Start’s programming, including bridge programming and community college.

LEADING PRACTICE L: ENCOURAGING ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Next-Gen Workforce Providers have largely become “next-gen” by constantly asking what they can do better, being willing to evolve, and building the internal capabilities to support continuous learning and adaptation. This often means undergoing rigorous evaluation and being open to iteration and failure. It also requires investing in leadership, staff, professional development, and all other elements that make for a strong enterprise.

In workforce development, it is especially important to hone these organizational sensing mechanisms in order to adapt to changing market conditions or, relatedly, changes in the needs of the people the program serves. For example, some workforce providers shared with us an increasing need for English language classes among their program applicants.

Building systems that collect and incorporate participant voices in program design (feedback loops) can be a particularly effective way to help ensure that programs are keeping participants at the center and evolving to meet their needs, and that the organization is consistently learning and growing.

BRINGING THIS TO LIFE

NECAT In considering its critical success factors, NECAT points to its organizational orientation toward perpetual learning. Importantly, this has the full support of NECAT’s board, enabling the organization to prioritize this need. Examples include:

- Reserving two days between every program cycle to invest in professional development and adapt the curriculum based on participant feedback and market needs
- Hosting an external training (6-session workshop) for staff on adopting a trauma-informed approach to their work
- Adding basic skills, like note-taking and listening, into the curriculum upon realizing this may be a gap for the target population

“Each cohort ends with a debrief—we look at our failures and ask how do we fix this and at our successes and say how can we do even better?”

– NECAT STAFF

OTHER NOTABLE EXAMPLES:

- YEAR UP and PER SCHOLAS have both participated in gold standard Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) to assess their impact. Though rigorous and time-consuming (in their cases lasting two to three years), they have enabled the organizations to continue strengthening their programs, as well as to clearly communicate their impact.¹⁹
- RESILIENT CODERS conducts a “tour of why not” with employers who do not hire their students, in order to understand how they might improve their programming and place students there in the future. They also survey ex-participants (alumni) to make real-time changes to programming.

LEADING PRACTICE M: LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY AND DATA STRATEGICALLY

It is no great secret that using technology to enable data collection and inform decision-making is a generally accepted leading practice. This holds true for Next-Gen Workforce Providers, too. More specifically, we would like to highlight three specific use cases that surfaced in the context of workforce development:

- **To support innovative program delivery:** Next-Gen Workforce Providers are increasingly experimenting with hybrid training solutions that combine in-person and remote delivery to offer more flexibility to participants and reach new populations (such as those who may not be able to stop working to take a full-time training course, for instance).
- **To indicate program quality:** Employers emphasized that before partnering with a workforce provider, they have to know that the provider can connect them to quality talent. This means workforce providers must be able to tell a clear and compelling story about their own impact, supported by data. As one employer said when asked how she thinks about workforce provider

partnerships, “What about their stats? JVS has a [very high] pass rate. That’s important to us. What’s the size of the nonprofit? How long have they been doing the work? All of these things help us paint a clearer picture.”

- **To track client outcomes cohesively across a set of shared services and/or success metrics:** Cultivating intentional partnerships with other providers to refer participants to needed services should be accompanied by integrated data tracking across providers to maintain a singular view of participants and their progress. This can help Next-Gen Workforce Providers show collaborative, meaningful impact to funders against a unified set of metrics.

BRINGING THIS TO LIFE

CONNECT Collaboration across CONNECT’s five agencies is supported by a secure, shared customer relationship management (CRM) platform. Each agency has access to the shared system, enabling any CONNECT member to quickly see and track an individual participant’s journey (e.g., services received, bundling behaviors, outcomes, even referrals to other community partners) in order to provide them with appropriate services. This integrated system allows CONNECT to holistically measure change in income, credit score, housing status, debt, and other key metrics, which it uses to indicate the quality and comprehensiveness of its programming to employers and jobseekers.

“Partner agencies share the CRM platform to track participant data in an integrated way—it is a godsend and our lifeblood.”

—CONNECT STAFF

OTHER NOTABLE EXAMPLES:

- BEST constantly innovates on incorporating technology to improve learning gains and offer alternative ways to study beyond the classroom.

LEADING PRACTICE N: EXPLORING INNOVATIVE FUNDING MODELS

Exploring innovative funding models can help improve financial sustainability by making organizations more resilient to changes in any one source of funds. Some workforce-specific ways we saw this manifest include: increasing earned revenue from employers, establishing a social enterprise in-house, and tapping into non-workforce development-related public funding streams that support the same target population (e.g., Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program funds, Department of Transitional Assistance funds). Many organizations we spoke with also expressed interest in increasing employer funding for training (especially customized training), though few workforce providers are doing this today; *see additional detail in Leading Practice C: Create Talent Supplier Agreements, Including Customized Employer Training.*

BRINGING THIS TO LIFE

YEAR UP Year Up receives earned revenue from employer partners hosting Year Up interns; in 2019, internship revenues accounted for 45% of Year Up’s total revenues. This strategy is supported by a robust infrastructure within Year Up: National and local Corporate Engagement teams find employers that need interns and would be a good fit for Year Up. Once the employer is committed, Account Managers oversee the relationships throughout the year, ensuring both the employer and the interns have a positive experience. Year Up has uncovered an innovative source of funding via employers by becoming a talent supplier.

“Year Up’s mission to have students find internships is not only a moral goal, but a financially sustainable one. ‘If our retention rates are higher, we’re going to send more students to internships and we’ll make more money,’ [former Year Up employee] Lisa Chin said. ‘If we lose more students, we’ll make less money.’”

—FROM GEEKWIRE²⁰

MORE THAN WORDS More Than Words generates 44% of its annual revenue from its social enterprise. Young adult employees collect books and other items via donation trucks daily, and then sell these products for a profit via multiple channels; they

also sell products from other local social enterprises in stores. This integrated business model allows MTW to be less reliant on external sources of funding and focus on advancing its vision. As stated in its 2018 Annual Report, “Through our innovative social enterprise, youth contribute directly to their futures and our bottom line by generating revenue that offsets the cost of services.

“Our highly sustainable hybrid-funding model means we can do more with every philanthropic dollar, putting them to work for our youth.”

– MORE THAN WORDS 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

OTHER NOTABLE EXAMPLES:

- NECAT seeks funding from both public and private sources, looking beyond workforce development funds alone. For example, NECAT recently accessed pilot grants targeted to programs serving individuals receiving public benefits, returning to the community from incarceration, and in the transitional phase of substance abuse recovery.
- UTEC generates 14% of its annual revenue from its three in-house social enterprises.
- PER SCHOLAS increases its revenue by co-investing with technology employers to customize trainings.

III.

Gaps and Opportunities in Greater Boston's Workforce Development Ecosystem

As these practices and examples demonstrate, there is much good work to be lauded across the Greater Boston workforce development ecosystem. Over the course of our research, workforce providers, jobseekers, and employers all

emphasized there is room for improvement, too. The following section summarizes some of the gaps and opportunities we surfaced. Note that we use the terms “workforce development system” and “ecosystem” here to refer to the many individuals and institutions that have a hand in what it means to work in the Greater Boston region (workers, employers, workforce providers, government, education, philanthropy, etc.)—and the relationships among them.

The gaps and opportunities outlined below reflect our research's focus on workforce providers: These are primarily from the perspective of workforce providers, or about workforce providers or relationships with workforce providers. In other words, this is not a comprehensive assessment of policy, the role of higher education, philanthropy, etc. Even so, our research made it clear that **all parts of the system—public, private, and nonprofit—have a role to play in creating a framework that works better for both jobseekers and employers.** Here are some ways to help all players strengthen their roles.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORKFORCE PROVIDERS

Adopt the relevant Next-Gen practices outlined in this report.

First and simply, the region could benefit from greater adoption of the leading practices outlined here given

“[The ideal workforce provider] consistently communicates, sets expectations, and prepares and presents jobseekers with a high likelihood of being hired and retained.”

– BETH ISRAEL DEACONESS
MEDICAL CENTER STAFF

their demonstrated impact among workforce providers (as corroborated by employers and jobseekers). As previously mentioned, we are not suggesting that every workforce provider should adopt every practice included. However, they should carefully consider

which practices they might adopt themselves and which they might partner with others on to drive better results for both employers and jobseekers.

Demonstrate the quality of impact to both employers and jobseekers.

Greater adoption of leading practices means nothing if their impact cannot be communicated to workforce providers' “customers”: jobseekers and employers. This communication could be aided by:

- Robust data management systems for participant tracking and impact analysis
- Strong marketing and communications expertise/tools to support storytelling
- Standards to create a common language across providers and employers (e.g., shared definitions of metrics for impact)

Collaborate with other workforce providers.

Given the depth of need and similarity in services across workforce providers, collaboration could yield greater efficacy and efficiency. Areas that seem particularly ripe for collaboration include:

- Streamlined participant recruitment, e.g., create partnerships to help refer “overflow” applicants, or those who would be better suited for another program

- Shared participant outcomes, e.g., agree to track the same metrics as others and share data as permitted to improve regional analysis and holistic tracking of participants' journeys
- Collective employer engagement, e.g., bring a singular point of contact and collective voice to employers to influence employer practices and/or simplify employer partnering

Note: Workforce providers are often disincentivized, implicitly and explicitly, from collaborating due to competition for, and/or restrictions on, funding. See Opportunities across the System, next page, for further detail.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYERS

Update hiring, retention, and advancement practices.

Continuously and intentionally assessing the ways workers are recruited, trained, supported, and promoted can help employers identify “leakage” points for talent and improve their overall talent strategy, driving operational efficiencies. This might include:

- Regularly reviewing institutionalized hiring practices and opportunities to adjust job descriptions or requirements (e.g., eliminate unnecessary degree requirements to broaden the eligible talent pool)
- Increasing transparency for jobseekers along the application process (e.g., more communications on application status, sharing feedback on the interviewing process as appropriate)
- Emphasizing retention and advancement practices, especially for frontline workers (e.g., through incumbent worker training, career pathways, mentorship programs, and/or incentives)
- Offering specialized training for managers of untapped talent to help ensure new hires are set up for success

Deepen relationships with workforce providers.

The employers we spoke to universally described their most positive experiences with workforce providers as the ones in which they had a deep and trusting relationship. Just as we encourage workforce providers to “foster deep and strategic employer partnerships” (Leading Practice A), we encourage employers to reciprocate and develop deep, mutual partnerships to fill business needs. This might entail:

- Getting involved in workforce programs early on to influence program outreach and recruiting
- Crafting customized trainings with workforce providers and compensating them as appropriate
- Developing talent supplier agreements to support talent placement following programs

Collaborate with other employers.

As the tight labor market drives more and more employers to consider new workforce practices, the time is ripe for employers to learn from and partner with one another for the long term, especially on openings for entry-level roles. Employers might collaborate and propel business growth by:

- Sharing best practices and/or creating coalitions to support untapped talent and advocate for specific workforce policies
- Coordinating partnerships with workforce providers
- Identifying roles of shared need (e.g., nurse practitioners) and working closely with workforce providers to design or adapt training programs to prepare untapped talent

Note: All of these opportunities for employers require investment of resources. While this investment will most likely need to come foremost from employers themselves (there are dedicated bodies of work on the topic of treating workers as an investment, not an expense; see, for instance, Zeynep Ton’s Good Jobs Strategy),²¹ this is also an area

“Employers spend a great deal of time, energy, and money finding talent, and they may be overlooking programs right in their backyard that could provide it.”

– JUST-A-START STAFF

where philanthropic and/or government funders can help support employers in developing these practices.

OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS THE SYSTEM

Eliminate systemic barriers to sustained employment.

We repeatedly heard about the many barriers outside of work that affect a person's ability to work. At the Monitor Institute by Deloitte, we have been increasingly referring to these barriers as "social determinants of work" (inspired by the well-known concept of "social determinants of health," which refers to the external conditions that affect a person's health).²² While these largely fall under the purview of government assistance programs and other human service providers, some of these can also be addressed by workforce providers (e.g., through their wraparound services or partnerships) and employers (e.g., via expanded employee benefits and assistance or policy/advocacy). Some of the most notable suggestions we heard regarding systemic barriers or social determinants of work include:

- Explore public transportation alternatives, such as workforce providers and employers subsidizing transit costs for participants and/or partnering with private sector rideshare services to offer discounts
- Consider ways to increase access to affordable child care
- Lower housing costs and increase share of affordable housing
- Address benefits "cliff effect" (the abrupt tapering off or loss of benefits that can occur when household earnings increase; this can be very disruptive for poor families because earnings have usually not increased enough to offset the need for benefits or create complete self-sufficiency)^{23, 24}

Create additional avenues or programs for basic skills instruction.

Relatedly, both employers and workforce providers emphasized the importance of adult basic education to lay the foundation for additional training and skills development. While some workforce providers offer (or provide referrals for) such services today, increasing the reach of these programs via government or education institutions could help prepare more jobseekers in Greater Boston for work. The basic skills we heard most needed include:

- English language
- Basic administrative and computer skills, and comfort with digital tools
- Financial literacy
- Basic professional/job readiness skills (e.g., punctuality, dress codes)

In addition, there is a need for stronger bridge programs or "onramps" from these basic skills trainings into more advanced courses (such as the ones offered by several Next-Gen Workforce Providers highlighted in this report). Training providers, education institutions, and the government can help foster this connectivity.

Increase attention to social justice and access issues underlying workforce development.

Underlying the broader challenge of access to good work is the more fundamental issue of inequity in access to opportunity. While most workforce providers are actively trying to tackle this challenge, it is important to call out these issues as areas for ongoing and increased attention across the ecosystem. Some specific opportunities we heard include:

- Increasing the diversity of leadership among workforce providers
- Incorporating program participant feedback loops into workforce provider programming

"Finding work is competitive in Boston; I wish Boston had a better system in place to access jobs."

– YEAR UP JOBSEEKER

"People already face so many barriers [outside of work], we need to reduce the barriers for people seeking employment."

– IINE STAFF

- Building the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures at employers (e.g., conducting implicit bias trainings)
- Addressing policy and systemic barriers at the local, state, and federal government levels that disproportionately affect people of color and other minorities

Coordinate funding and align incentives.

Given the need for greater collaboration across workforce providers and others, philanthropic funders should be wary of practices that foster competition and further fracture the nonprofit field. Helpful funding practices we heard include:

- Providing funding for collaboration, e.g., partnerships, shared outcomes, development of standards for common language, field-level convening
- Providing unrestricted funding, i.e., allow workforce providers to invest in their strengths vs. allocating funding to a restricted set of activities (which often inhibits them from building out vital capabilities traditionally considered to be “overhead,” e.g., technology, good wages, professional development)
- Acknowledging and investing in the resources required to support process improvements, capacity building, and systems change (needed for both workforce providers and employers)
- Increased collaboration with other funders to create a more collective and strategic workforce development strategy (e.g., SkillWorks’ workforce funder collaborative and the Project Catapult Fund)

Improve connection and understanding across the system.

Given the scale and complexity of workforce development, it is little surprise that we consistently heard the need for better coordination among the many actors. A few specific ideas that surfaced include:

- Coalition-building and data-sharing across sectors to help ensure jobseekers are understood and referred appropriately to needed workforce and wraparound services

- Stronger public sector engagement from workforce providers (e.g., individual/collective advocacy, partnerships with public sector workforce organizations like the Workforce Solutions Group and the Job Training Alliance)^{25, 26}
- Closer partnerships and pipelines between education institutions (e.g., community colleges), youth networks, employers, and workforce providers

It is important to recognize that even though we use the terms *system* and *ecosystem* for convenience, they suggest a level of coordination (or perhaps a mechanism for it) that does not currently exist. As one of our interviewees put it, “What ecosystem? We don’t have an ecosystem. We have organizations that get together and funders that try to consolidate, but we’re missing coherence.” Another agreed, “Everyone recognizes these systems should work together more across a continuum of care, but there’s a lack of cohesion around what that solution is and not a centralized point to have that conversation.”

This broader challenge—the lack of system itself—is one that Project Catapult hopes to explore, at the very least by raising it with others for further interrogation. The more complex a challenge is, the more it requires the power of many to create change; we know we cannot do this work alone.²⁷



We hope this report can be a tool for conversation and collaboration: for workforce providers to see opportunities for learning, leading, and partnership; for employers to identify and support new sources of untapped talent; and for funders and public sector actors to bolster the good work happening today and facilitate coordination across the field.

Let’s create a Boston that works—for today and tomorrow.

APPENDIX

Methodology

Approach

Over the course of three months, Monitor Institute by Deloitte worked with 12 Next-Gen Workforce Providers identified by the Boston Foundation, seven employers, and 13 jobseekers to help elevate leading practices in Greater Boston's workforce development landscape and understand critical gaps and opportunities. The selected workforce providers were highlighted for demonstrating the core competencies of a "next-gen" approach, as defined by Project Catapult: being market responsive, focusing on good jobs, lifting untapped talent, and investing in organizational capacity.

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APPENDIX









Organizational Profiles

This section contains Next-Generation Workforce Provider organization profiles that reflect key learnings from the Monitor Institute by Deloitte interviews and site visits as part of Project Catapult, an initiative by the Boston Foundation and SkillWorks. The first page of each profile contains background information on the organization (as provided by each organization) and the subsequent page(s) feature the leading practices that are mentioned in the body of the report.

In these profiles, we:

Highlight 2-4 of each organization’s leading practices as they relate to the Project Catapult competency framework (recognizing that each organization has other notable practices not highlighted here)

Feature a representative mix of all identified leading practices.

CATAPULT COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK LEGEND	
 Market Responsive	 Good Jobs
 Untapped Talent	 Organizational Capacity
PRACTICE ID	PRACTICE NAME
 Being Market Responsive	
A	Fostering Deep and Strategic Partnerships with Employers and/or Industries
B	Being Nimble in Response to Regional and Economic Changes
C	Creating Talent Supplier Agreements, Possibly Including Customized Employer Training
 Focusing on Good Jobs	
D	Defining and Identify Good Jobs
E	Leveraging Trusted Employer Relationships to Support Untapped Talent in the Long Term
F	Providing Training and Pathways for Advancement and Retention (Not Just Placement)
 Lifting Untapped Talent	
G	Offering Tailored Programming for Target Population
H	Offering Holistic, Wraparound Supports
I	Offering Laddered Work Experience via Social Enterprise Model
K	Supporting and Leveraging Alumni
 Investing in Organizational Capacity	
K	Cultivating Intentional Partnerships with Other Providers
L	Encouraging Organizational Learning and Continuous Improvement
M	Leveraging Technology and Data Strategically
N	Exploring Innovative Funding Models

Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology: Background

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (BFIT) IS AN URBAN COLLEGE SERVING THE GREATER BOSTON REGION AND COMMITTED TO STUDENT SUCCESS AND CAREER READINESS IN TECHNOLOGY FIELDS.

OVERVIEW

BFIT was established in 1908 with the goal of creating a career path by developing a learning environment, through industry partnerships, shared resources, and effective classroom and laboratory practices, that sets the standard for a job-oriented technical education. Under Anthony Benoit’s leadership (as of 2014), BFIT has added five new technology programs, expanded its student support and career services, and created an accelerated degree program for high school students, while not raising tuition for the past seven years. Through personalized support, hands-on learning, and industry-informed curricula, BFIT prepares graduates for work, life-long learning, and global citizenship.

POPULATION SERVED: Boston area youth

GEOGRAPHY: Greater Boston

REVENUE MODEL: Earned revenue (through tuition and fee-for-service workforce development programming) and philanthropy

SELECT PROGRAM OFFERINGS

STEM Degree Programs: BFIT currently offers three certificate programs, 12 associate degrees, and bachelor degrees in automotive management, health information technology, mechanical engineering technology, and electrical engineering. Programs are designed specifically for jobs in high demand. BFIT trains students to diagnose and solve problems, while becoming leaders in technology industries.

BFIT works closely with leading companies to create pipelines for training, jobs, and internships during education and upon graduation. Along with a strong technical foundation, majors incorporate general education courses to prepare students with team building, problem solving, and communication skills.

SUPPORTS PROVIDED

Alumni follow-up services	
Wraparound services	✓
Professional development skills	✓
Technical skills	✓
Career placement services	✓
Credentialing pathways	✓
Paid work experience	✓
Job Shadowing	✓

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS (FY19)

~600

Students served per year

85%

BFIT graduates join the workplace with full-time, in-field jobs or continue their education (5-year average)

\$39K

Median 1-year-out salaries for BFIT associate degree holders (\$60K for some majors)

Source: Monitor Institute by Deloitte discussion with BFIT Staff and Alumnus, June 11 and 13, 2019; organization’s website

Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology: Leading Practices

BFIT PROVIDES TECHNICAL, MARKET-RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING ALONG WITH WRAPAROUND SUPPORTS TO HELP STUDENTS SUCCEED AND FIND EMPLOYMENT



OFFERING HOLISTIC, WRAPAROUND SUPPORTS TO LIFT UNTAPPED TALENT

Many of BFIT's students come from challenging backgrounds, so BFIT has developed a **case management approach to support them beyond the classroom**. When a student is admitted, a staff member sits down with him or her for two hours to understand their circumstances and **refer them to any wraparound supports needed** (e.g., on-campus food pantry, social worker, financial advisor) via the Student Wellness and Support Office. Students are also able to access **Academic Success Centers** and meet with **success coaches**. All staff and faculty are coordinated around student success, meeting weekly to check in on "students of concern", and **teaching "Life L.O.N.G. (Leadership, Open Communication, Nimble Problem-Solving, and a Growth Mindset) Learning"** to students.

"One thing we do that's unique [compared to others] is to get to know our students very well and make it clear that we care; we anticipate their challenges and put supports around them."

"They don't let you down here [at BFIT]."

(Alum)



BEING NIMBLE IN RESPONSE TO REGIONAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES TO BE MARKET RESPONSIVE

BFIT offers a number of **technical degree programs** (e.g., computer technology, construction management) and **employer partnerships in response to market needs** for high-demand fields, and consistently looks into opportunities to grow its range of programs. To support these programs, BFIT **hires faculty directly from the relevant industries**. Moreover, classes are designed to help students **apply their skills** so that they can enter the workplace with **hands-on experience**.

"Students' hands-on experience is a huge plus to get them in [employers'] door. The people we are graduating are more in demand than ever."



CREATING TALENT SUPPLIER AGREEMENTS, POSSIBLY INCLUDING CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYER TRAINING TO BE MARKET RESPONSIVE

BFIT has developed "**learn and earn**" and **internship agreements** with several employers that **provide paid work experience** (employers commit to **dedicating a set number of spots** to BFIT students), often leading to full-time roles. BFIT's Career Services team also **engages with employers** on LinkedIn or makes personal calls to **help students get placed in jobs**. For example, Prime Motors has 15 BFIT students working part-time and provides scholarships toward their tuition each year.

"We have dedicated spots for BFIT students, which gives our students a chance to have their resume looked at and not get tossed aside."

BEST: Background

BEST'S MISSION IS TO PROVIDE INDIVIDUALS WITH THE EDUCATION, SKILLS, AND TRAINING NEEDED TO BE ABLE TO EXCEL IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY AND IN THEIR PERSONAL LIVES.

SUPPORTS PROVIDED

Alumni follow-up services	✓
Wraparound services	✓
Professional development skills	✓
Technical skills	✓
Career placement services	✓
Credentialing pathways	✓
Paid work experience	
Job Shadowing	✓

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS (FY16)

186

Individuals participated in Introduction to Hospitality Training Program from 2011–16

86%

Placements at GBHE “Hotels with Excellent Benefits” (valued at \$8.88 per hour)

83%

Retention rate since 2011

678%

Calculated social return on investment

Source: Monitor Institute by Deloitte discussion with BEST (June 13, 2019), BEST program graduate (July 11, 2019), Levy Restaurants (July 15, 2019), and Omni Hotels (July 18, 2019); organization's website

OVERVIEW

BEST Hospitality Training combines pre-employment and incumbent worker training designed to meet the labor needs of its hotel partners and the personal and professional goals of UNITE HERE Local 26 (hospitality workers union) members. BEST was founded in 2006 as a nonprofit incumbent workforce development program in response to the growing skills gap in the hospitality industry, specifically based on a needs analysis with major hotel employers, hotel employees, and UNITE HERE Local 26. It has grown to serve, train, and connect low-wage jobseekers to quality jobs in hospitality.

POPULATION SERVED: Adult jobseekers and UNITE HERE Local 26 union employees and affiliates

GEOGRAPHY: Greater Boston, with locations in Medford and Dudley Square

REVENUE MODEL: Labor Management Education Fund, public and private contractual funding, philanthropy

SELECT PROGRAM OFFERINGS

Introduction to Hospitality Training Program

(Pre-Apprenticeship): Six-week, full-time, 150-hour program trains participants for positions in hotel housekeeping departments. This includes hands-on skills training in a model hotel room, ergonomics, chemical safety and blood-borne pathogens, cross-cultural communication skills, customer service, professionalism, workplace harassment, financial literacy, computer skills, interviewing skills, hotel branding, and two weeks of job shadowing. Upon completion, participants work with career coaches on their job search. Graduates also receive a MA Department of Labor Housekeeping Pre-Apprenticeship credential. An articulation agreement between Bunker Hill Community College and BEST awards nine college credits to pre-apprentice graduates pursuing a hospitality certificate or an Associates degree.

Housekeeping Apprenticeship: Graduates of BEST's pre-apprenticeship program seek hotel housekeeping positions in partner hotels. Upon hire, graduates begin their apprenticeship. Upon successful completion of the 2,000-hour apprenticeship, graduates earn a nationally recognized certification from the MA Department of Labor and three additional credits at Bunker Hill Community College.

BEST: Leading Practices

BEST IS WELL-KNOWN FOR STRONG TRAININGS PROGRAMS IN THE HOSPITALITY SPACE; IT FOCUSES EQUALLY ON INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING AND ON MATCHING JOBSEEKERS WITH QUALITY JOBS AND EMPLOYERS WITH WELL-PREPARED, RELIABLE TALENT.



FOSTERING DEEP AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS AND/OR INDUSTRIES TO BE MARKET RESPONSIVE

BEST has established itself as a **strategic partner to hospitality employers** in the Greater Boston region in several ways. Over the last 10 years, it has built an **Employer Advisory Council with 38 dedicated hotel partners**; these partners through a Labor Management Trust Fund **pay for incumbent worker services** and are deeply **involved in curriculum design** (sometimes offering to teach classes). According to employer partners, BEST is **highly communicative, organized, and flexible**—keeping jobseeker training programs current and relevant and supplying employers with dependable talent.

“Working closely with employers is the bedrock of our programming. All of our curriculum is developed with our employers.”



DEFINING AND IDENTIFYING GOOD JOBS

BEST’s goal is to help move people from “**low-wage to quality hospitality jobs.**” According to BEST, its program participants are often coming out of low-paying jobs with difficult or inflexible hours and just looking for a better job, even if it is in the same industry. BEST **acknowledges its target population’s goals for a quality job** (i.e., good wages, comprehensive benefits, job security, worker voice) and matches people to these through **job shadowing and apprenticeship programs with some of Boston’s highest-quality hotels**. Moreover, the partnership with Bunker Hill Community College is beneficial for program participants who are seeking greater qualifications and want to advance further in their careers. BEST **creates options for people to define what they’re striving for in their careers.**

“BEST holds quarterly advisory council meetings where we can get a sense of what BEST is doing in terms of training and what’s going on in the rest of the city.”



CREATING TALENT SUPPLIER AGREEMENTS, POSSIBLY INCLUDING CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYER TRAINING TO BE MARKET RESPONSIVE

BEST offers a **2,000-hour Housekeeping Apprenticeship Program** registered with the Department of Labor (DOL). (See previous page for details.) According to employers, BEST frequently involves them in **developing training curriculum** focused on the **needs of both the incumbent workers and jobseekers** served in their programs. BEST’s **talent supplier agreements** via the apprenticeship program and **custom training go hand-in hand to place 86% of jobseekers** in Greater Boston Hotel Employees (GBHE) “Hotels with Excellent Benefits” (as of 2016).

“At BEST, I was able to participate in a training program where I learned how to clean, improve my English, communicate, and shadow a hotel employee. Now that I am employed at Aloft, I am excited to go back and take banquet training with BEST to continue learning.”

CONNECT: Background

CONNECT “HELPS PEOPLE ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE LIVING WAGE JOBS AND FINANCIAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING BY PARTNERING TO PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND SOCIAL CAPITAL IN ONE CENTRAL AND SUPPORTIVE LOCATION.”

OVERVIEW

CONNECT is a Financial Opportunity Center created by The Neighborhood Developers (TND) to help increase financial mobility in coordination with five separate agencies: TND, MassHire, Metro Housing Boston, Metro Credit Union, and Bunker Hill Community College. TND launched CONNECT in 2012, completing the construction of the Financial Opportunity Center the following year. In 2016, CONNECT 2.0 (a data-driven approach to increase CONNECT’s capacity) was rolled out.

POPULATION SERVED: Underserved local adults, age 17+ (often low-income, Hispanic women with kids, between ages of 28 and 50)

GEOGRAPHY: Primarily Chelsea, with some work in Revere

REVENUE MODEL: Philanthropy (all donations go to CONNECT General Operating Fund)

SELECT PROGRAM OFFERINGS

MassHire (for job placement): CONNECT works with existing training providers to bring content to local participants. For example, they brought in IINE to run hospitality training in preparation for Encore Boston Harbor’s arrival, with CONNECT offering financial capability training in the same program. MassHire also supports participants with standard professional development skills (e.g., resume reviews, job applications).

Coaching: Coaching brings a qualitative approach to the problems facing many Chelsea residents and helps them organize finances/budgets, improve credit scores, and increase assets.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance: The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) help “keep nearly 2 million people out of poverty each year. Through volunteer training, client outreach, and operating multiple sites, CONNECT provides a robust VITA programs in the region with 42 volunteers serving 1,100 and returning \$1.7 million to residents.”

SUPPORTS PROVIDED

Alumni follow-up services	
Wraparound services	✓
Professional development skills	✓
Technical skills	
Career placement services	✓
Credentialing pathways	
Paid work experience	
Job Shadowing	

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS (FY18)

~2.5K

People served

\$11K

Median annual income change for coached clients who received bundled services

284

Employment placements, with an average wage of \$18/hour

194

Median point increase in credit score

Source: Monitor Institute by Deloitte discussion with CONNECT, June 10, 2019; organization’s website.

CONNECT: Leading Practices

CONNECT'S KEY TO SUCCESS LIES IN ITS COLLABORATIVE, DATA-DRIVEN MODEL, WHICH BRINGS A MULTITUDE OF SERVICES TO CHELSEA RESIDENTS



CULTIVATING INTENTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER PROVIDERS TO ENHANCE ORG CAPACITY

By **co-locating, integrating, and collectively managing the services of five agencies** (Bunker Hill Community College, MassHire, Metro Credit Union, Metro Housing Boston, and The Neighborhood Developers), CONNECT is able to achieve **greater impact for clients** and **greater efficiencies for service providers**. CONNECT is also strategic in **building external partnerships to expand the resources** offered to their constituents, such as delivering partner-led training in customized ways in order to **help participants qualify for jobs**. For example, when the Encore casino opened near Chelsea, CONNECT partnered with IINE to provide hospitality and financial capability trainings to Chelsea residents, boosting their chance of finding a job at the new property.

“We decided we should work with existing training providers vs. coming up with our own—partnerships are in our DNA, and co-location is necessary!”



LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY AND DATA STRATEGICALLY TO ENHANCE ORG CAPACITY

Collaboration across CONNECT's five agencies is supported by a **secure, shared customer relationship management (CRM) platform**. Each agency has access to the shared system, enabling any CONNECT member to quickly **see and track an individual participant's journey** (e.g., services received, bundling behaviors, outcomes, even referrals to other community partners) in order to **provide appropriate services**. This integrated system allows CONNECT to **holistically measure change** in income, credit score, housing status, debt, and other key metrics, which it uses to **indicate the quality and comprehensiveness** of its programming to employers and jobseekers.

“Partner agencies share the CRM platform to track participant data in an integrated way—it is a godsend and our lifeblood.”

International Institute of New England: Background

THE MISSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF NEW ENGLAND IS TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS TO SUCCEED THROUGH RESETTLEMENT, EDUCATION, CAREER ADVANCEMENT, AND PATHWAYS TO CITIZENSHIP.

OVERVIEW

Founded in 1918, the International Institute of New England (IINE) is one of the oldest and largest social service organizations for new Americans in the region. IINE annually serves more than 2,000 refugees, asylees, unaccompanied minor children, victims of human trafficking, and other immigrants. In addition to refugee resettlement and stabilization, IINE offers legal services; employment; a robust, multi-tiered English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program; and three specialized training programs designed to prepare immigrants to acquire and keep good jobs in the health care and hospitality industries.

POPULATION SERVED: Refugees, asylees, and other immigrants

GEOGRAPHY: Boston and Lowell, MA, and Manchester, NH

REVENUE MODEL: Public and private funding, including fundraising and affordable fee programming

SELECT PROGRAM OFFERINGS

Refugee Services: For more than 100 years, IINE has helped newly arrived refugee families and individuals during their first few months in the United States. IINE staff helps refugees find a home and a job, registers children for school, enrolls families in health plans, and helps newcomers navigate a new community. During the past 13 years, IINE has resettled nearly 7,000 refugees from more than 70 countries.

Legal Services: IINE offers affordable legal services to people seeking help with immigration forms and procedures, including work authorization, permanent resident status, citizenship, family reunification, and much more. During the past two years, IINE's legal team has helped 400 local immigrants apply for and obtain paperwork that moves them along the pathway to citizenship.

Job Training & Placement: For more than 20 years, IINE has provided immigrants the vocational skills and training they need to be able to succeed in the workplace. The organization's courses are centered on an evidence-based curriculum augmented by job shadowing components that result in 90% of graduates securing higher-paying jobs. IINE staff work with employers to place program graduates in the right position, and offer significant supports for onboarding.

SUPPORTS PROVIDED

Alumni follow-up services	✓
Wraparound services	✓
Professional development skills	✓
Technical skills	✓
Career placement services	✓
Credentialing pathways	✓
Paid work experience	
Job Shadowing	✓

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS (FY19)

231

Students served in intensive vocational training programs

76%

Clients who arrived between October–September received their first job placement in less than 6 months of arrival

80%+

Clients in skills training programs receive job placements in less than 6 months of program completion

Source: Monitor Institute by Deloitte discussion with IINE, June 11, 2019; organization's website

International Institute of New England: Leading Practices

IINE'S CORE TRAINING PROGRAMS FOCUS ON ENGLISH VOCABULARY, WORKPLACE SKILLS, AND PLACEMENT FOR WORKERS WHO ARE NEWCOMERS. IINE ALSO HAS EXPERIENCE IN TRAINING AND UPSKILLING WORKERS WHO ARE NOT IMMIGRANTS.



PROVIDING TRAINING AND PATHWAYS FOR ADVANCEMENT AND RETENTION (NOT JUST PLACEMENT)

In response to growing employer interest in retaining their workforce, IINE recently launched an **incumbent worker training in collaboration with Tufts**. The program **teaches soft skills and customer service principles in health care** to employees from all departments (e.g., Environmental Services, Billing). The training is a **new way for IINE to earn income for its services** and to play a role in **upskilling the existing workforce** in Boston.

“We’ve had a lot of new interest from employers in retaining their workforce so we are taking a whole different part of the workforce (incumbent workers) and upskilling them.”



OFFERING TAILORED PROGRAMMING FOR TARGET POPULATION TO LIFT UNTAPPED TALENT

IINE offers services ranging from **refugee resettlement to ESOL classes** to support its refugee and immigrant population. Recognizing these jobseekers may face **language barriers** and possess **skills or credentials from different countries**, IINE focuses on helping them communicate their **transferrable skills** and **learn the technical terminology or access the certification** required for specific jobs in the United States.

“Customer service is a key component of our curriculum, and by mastering that skill, our program graduates set themselves apart for success in the workplace.”

Just-A-Start: Background

JUST-A-START (JAS) IS DEDICATED TO BUILDING THE HOUSING SECURITY AND ECONOMIC STABILITY OF LOW- TO MODERATE-INCOME PEOPLE IN CAMBRIDGE AND NEARBY COMMUNITIES.

OVERVIEW

JAS is a multi-service community development corporation (CDC) that creates and maintains affordable housing, provides housing resources and services, offers education and workforce training for youth and adults, and builds community engagement. JAS was founded in 1968 as a community revitalization and youth training program focused on improving Cambridge's then-struggling Wellington-Harrington neighborhood, and officially incorporated as a multi-service organization for community development programs in 1971. Its workforce programs are the Biomedical Careers Program, the new IT Careers Program, and YouthBuild.

POPULATION SERVED: Low- to moderate-income individuals and families

GEOGRAPHY: MetroNorth/Cambridge

REVENUE MODEL: Philanthropy from corporations, foundations, other organizations, and individuals, and public funding

SELECT PROGRAM OFFERINGS

Biomedical Careers Program (BCP): Free, 9-month program that provides instruction in biology, chemistry, medical terminology, computer/lab, and job-readiness skills. It prepares local adults for careers in biotech, life sciences, and medical research, and supplies employers with diverse employees. After graduation, students receive follow-up services for up to one year, until they are placed in relevant employment.

IT Careers Program (ITCP): Free educational and career skills program that prepares individuals for Computer User Support Specialist positions. Launched in 2018, this new program enables students to obtain stackable industry-recognized credentials and certificates.

YouthBuild: Full-time comprehensive youth development program for 16- to 24-year-old out-of-school youth that provides education leading to grade-level increases and credential attainment, as well as comprehensive guidance, counseling, and case management. Youth who complete the program transition to employment, training, and/or college and receive intensive follow-up support for at least one year, with additional support beyond

SUPPORTS PROVIDED

Alumni follow-up services	✓
Wraparound services	✓
Professional development skills	✓
Technical skills	✓
Career placement services	✓
Credentialing pathways	✓
Paid work experience	
Job Shadowing	

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS (FY18)

51

Individuals served across three programs

\$14K

Average annual salary increase for BCP graduates with their first job placement

100%

BCP graduates secured employment, with a 94% in-field placement rate (2017)

Source: Monitor Institute by Deloitte discussion with Just-A-Start, June 4, 2019; Just-A-Start 2018 Annual Report; organization's website

Just-A-Start: Leading Practices

JAS EVOLVES PROGRAMMING AND PARTNERSHIPS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS, JOBSEEKERS, AND THE OVERALL MARKET IN BOSTON, WITH A FOCUS ON BIOMED AND IT.



BEING NIMBLE IN RESPONSE TO REGIONAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES TO BE MARKET RESPONSIVE

JAS's flagship Biomedical Careers Program has focused on the high-growth biomedical field in Boston for over 27 years. The free, nine-month program provides specialized instruction to place jobseekers in biotech, life sciences, and medical research roles, with a nearly 100% placement rate. JAS also recently launched an IT Careers Program (ITCP) to respond to growing market demands; through this course, students can obtain stackable industry-recognized credentials, which is essential in tech where needs are constantly changing. JAS consistently refines both programs with employer input, and partners with Bunker Hill Community College to ensure the courses offer hands-on learning opportunities for students to grow their skillsets.



CULTIVATING INTENTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER PROVIDERS TO ENHANCE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Just-A-Start has created strong partnerships with other community organizations to support students before, during, and after they participate in Just-A-Start's programming, including bridge programming and community college. Specific partners include:

Community Learning Center: Created "bridge" program to help people build skills in order to eventually enroll in JAS programs

Bunker Hill Community College: JAS students attend classes and receive relevant credentials

Employers (biomed/IT): Strong connections with Cambridge-based firms

"We keep our programs relevant, current, and effective so students can get sustaining careers (more than just jobs)."

"The program pushes you in the right direction, guides you, and opens up pathways."

(ITCP student)

"JAS is well-known in job training — a major provider in Cambridge doing this work. We have a nice relationship with Bunker Hill...and employers know all this about us."

More Than Words: Background

MORE THAN WORDS (MTW) IS A NONPROFIT SOCIAL ENTERPRISE THAT “EMPOWERS YOUNG ADULTS WHO ARE IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM, COURT-INVOLVED, HOMELESS, OR OUT OF SCHOOL TO TAKE CHARGE OF THEIR LIVES BY TAKING CHARGE OF A BUSINESS.”

SUPPORTS PROVIDED

Alumni follow-up services	✓
Wraparound services	✓
Professional development skills	✓
Technical skills	
Career placement services	✓
Credentialing pathways	✓
Paid work experience	✓
Job Shadowing	

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS (FY19)

80%

Graduates were productively engaged in work and/or school >30 hours/week

83%

Graduates worked in 2019, and 65% held a job for 6+ months

93%

Youth were on track with high school, and 49% pursued postsecondary education

OVERVIEW

MTW is a job training and youth development program that empowers over 350 youth each year to take charge of their lives by taking charge of MTW's \$3.75M bookselling business. MTW began as an online bookselling training program in 2004. After years of planning, MTW recently completed the physical and staff capacity expansions it needed to double space and support 60% more young people. In 2018, it opened its doors on a two-floor hub of social enterprise (SE) in the South End, and is growing in Waltham, too, with 3,000 new sq. ft.

POPULATION SERVED: Youth, ages 16 to 24, who have been court-involved, homeless, in foster care, or out of school

GEOGRAPHY: Boston and Waltham (stores)

REVENUE MODEL: 44% earned revenue from SE, 42% philanthropy, 14% government (as of FY18)

SELECT PROGRAM OFFERINGS

Business Job: Young adults work ~20 hours/week managing MTW's online, retail, pop-up and wholesale bookselling businesses, running a high-end event space, and gaining life skills and work experience while generating revenue that offsets program costs. Youth facilitate peer-led trainings and weekly team meetings, manage sales, and plan/host events. Youth also run daily pickups, sourcing +4M donated books annually to run their businesses.

“YOU” Job: Youth also achieve personal milestones such as obtaining an ID, opening a bank account, and finding housing, and participate in site visits with businesses, trade schools, and universities, hands-on workshops, mock interviews, education coaching and regular meetings with Youth Development Managers.

Career Services Support: After 6-12 months working their Business and YOU jobs in the Core Social Enterprise Program, young adults graduate and receive at least two years of proactive support in the Career Services Program as they apply what they learned in other jobs and education.

Source: Monitor Institute by Deloitte discussion with More Than Words, June 6, 2019; More Than Words 2018 Annual Report; organization's website

More Than Words: Leading Practices

MTW'S LADDERED SOCIAL ENTERPRISE MODEL PROPELS PARTICIPANT GROWTH AND EARNED REVENUE GROWTH FOR THE ORGANIZATION.



MTW'S LADDERED SOCIAL ENTERPRISE MODEL PROPELS PARTICIPANT GROWTH AND EARNED REVENUE GROWTH FOR THE ORGANIZATION

Young adults work ~20 hours/week managing MTW's online, retail, pop-up, and wholesale bookselling businesses and running a high-end event space; they also **gain life skills** (their "YOU job") and **work experience** (their "business job") while generating revenue that helps offset program costs. The **program has four "pods," or tiers**: Trainee, Associate, Partner, Senior Partner, with each tier accompanied by **new expectations, increased responsibilities** (e.g., giving feedback, customer service), and greater pay. **Around 80% of MTW graduates are productively engaged** in work and/or school after completing the tiered social enterprise program.



EXPLORING INNOVATIVE FUNDING MODELS TO ENHANCE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

More Than Words **generates 44% of its annual revenue from its social enterprise**. Young adult employees collect books and other items via donation trucks daily, and then sell these products for a profit via multiple channels; they also sell products from other local social enterprises in stores. This **integrated business model allows MTW to be less reliant on external sources of funding** and focus on advancing its vision. As stated in its 2018 Annual Report, "Through our innovative social enterprise, youth contribute directly to their futures and our bottom line by generating revenue that offsets the cost of services."

"At More Than Words, you MUST be moving your life and the business forward to get the paycheck. There are distinct responsibilities and privileges that come with each pod. We believe youth are most successful when they've gained skills and experience at each tier of our progressive model."

"Our highly sustainable hybrid-funding model means we can do more with every philanthropic dollar, putting them to work for our youth."

NECAT: Background

NECAT, OR THE NEW ENGLAND CENTER FOR ARTS & TECHNOLOGY, EMPOWERS ADULTS FACING BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT THROUGH TRAINING IN CULINARY SKILLS, SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND CAREER READINESS FOR SUCCESS AND LONG-TERM FINANCIAL STABILITY.

SUPPORTS PROVIDED

Alumni follow-up services	✓
Wraparound services	✓
Professional development skills	✓
Technical skills	✓
Career placement services	✓
Credentialing pathways	
Paid work experience	✓
Job Shadowing	✓

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS (FY18)

~210

Students served per year

71%

Graduates secured employment and 81% retained jobs for 3+ months at Boston site

77%

Employment rate for graduates of first class at Everett site (with graduation rate of 87%)

OVERVIEW

NECAT's Culinary Arts Job Training Program provides free culinary and career readiness training to some of Boston's lowest-income populations. The food service and hospitality industry in Boston is booming, yet many restaurateurs and hotel food service managers face a large shortage of trained prep and line cooks and run their businesses understaffed. NECAT is the nexus. NECAT opened its doors in 2013, inspired by the Manchester Bidwell Corporation in Pittsburgh, a nationally renowned career and cultural training center. NECAT launched its first replication site in January 2018 to serve residents of Everett and surrounding communities.

POPULATION SERVED: Low-income, unemployed, and underemployed individuals, often facing serious barriers to employment

GEOGRAPHY: Greater Boston, specifically Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan; Everett site now serves Everett, Malden, Chelsea, Revere

REVENUE MODEL: Philanthropy, government grants, job training vouchers, social enterprise (new for 2020)

SELECT PROGRAM OFFERINGS

Culinary Arts Job Training Program and Placement: The 16-week program serves approximately 210 students annually across two locations, at no tuition cost. In addition to strong culinary training, the program provides job readiness skills, job placement counseling, social-emotional coaching, financial literacy and case management, as well as on-site catering experience.

Social Enterprise (upcoming): NECAT is launching a social enterprise in partnership with Sodexo. Plans are under way to build a commissary on-site at the Boston center that will prepare grab-and-go menu items for local Sodexo hospital clients in Boston. While providing a new source of revenue for NECAT, the commissary will offer part-time employment for NECAT students and graduates and act as a gateway to full-time culinary positions within Sodexo's extensive food service network.

Source: Monitor Institute by Deloitte discussion with NECAT, June 12, 2019; organization's website

NECAT: Leading Practices

NECAT HAS DISTINGUISHED ITSELF AS AN ORGANIZATION COMMITTED TO CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT, WITH A STEADFAST ALIGNMENT TO ITS MISSION OF UPLIFTING INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY MARGINALIZED.



OFFERING TAILORED PROGRAMMING FOR TARGET POPULATION TO LIFT UNTAPPED TALENT

As the labor market in Greater Boston has shifted in recent years, many employers have turned to untapped talent to fill roles. This growing demand has enabled NECAT to become a pipeline for some of Boston's leading food service employers. NECAT, facing an **increase in program participants with challenging personal narratives**, realized it needed to tailor its program for these individuals. **To prepare program participants for success** with leading employers, NECAT has **expanded its social-emotional training, hired dedicated case managers, and shifted to a trauma-informed approach** to teaching, emphasizing understanding, empathy, and personal coaching. To ensure that staff had the tools to deliver on these changes, NECAT participated in **extensive training on the effects of trauma**. These efforts have led to a nearly **30% improvement to NECAT's employment rate** at its Boston training site in 2019.

“Students come to us with serious challenges and we incorporate that into the way we teach. We are more than a cooking school; our program is balanced with all of the life skills that people need to help them along the journey.”



ENCOURAGING ORG LEARNING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT TO ENHANCE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

In considering its critical success factors, NECAT points to an **organizational orientation toward perpetual learning**. Importantly, this has the full **support of NECAT's board**, enabling the organization to prioritize this need. Examples include:

1. **Reserving two days** between every program cycle to invest in professional development and adapt the curriculum
2. **Hosting an external training** (6-session workshop) for staff on adopting a trauma-informed approach to their work
3. **Adding basic skills**, like note-taking and listening, into the curriculum upon realizing this may be a gap for the target population

“Each cohort ends with a debrief—we look at our failures and ask how do we fix this and at our successes and say how can we do even better?”



EXPLORING INNOVATIVE FUNDING MODELS TO ENHANCE ORG CAPACITY

NECAT **seeks funding from both public and private sources**, looking beyond workforce development funds alone. For example, NECAT **recently accessed pilot grants** targeted to programs serving individuals receiving public benefits, returning to the community from incarceration, and in the transitional phase of substance abuse recovery. **Deepening and expanding its impact with these populations continues to be a focus for NECAT, both for mission and funding purposes.**

“NECAT makes a strong case for the role of job training in helping people stay sober.”

Operation ABLE: Background

OPERATION ABLE'S MISSION IS TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES TO MATURE WORKERS, AND OTHERS, FROM ECONOMICALLY, RACIALLY, AND OCCUPATIONALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS.

SUPPORTS PROVIDED

Alumni follow-up services	✓
Wraparound services	✓
Professional development skills	✓
Technical skills	✓
Career placement services	✓
Credentialing pathways	
Paid work experience	✓
Job Shadowing	✓

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS (FY18)

102

Participants complete ABLE skills training program

170

ABLE graduates and SCSEP participants placed into jobs

85%

Job placement rate

OVERVIEW

Since 1982, Operation ABLE, Inc., has provided jobseekers with training programs and employment services. Operation ABLE was originally dedicated to providing technical assistance to area nonprofits. The economic downturn of the mid-1980s had an unusually large effect on older workers, many of whom found it difficult to re-enter the job market after losing their jobs, so the organization shifted its mission at that time to focus on mature workers with updated programming and new leadership.

POPULATION SERVED: Open to all, with a focus on jobseekers ages 45+

GEOGRAPHY: Headquarters in Boston with services and offices in Eastern MA and New Hampshire

REVENUE MODEL: Primarily government funding, supplemented by philanthropy and a growing fee-for-service training program for employers

SELECT PROGRAM OFFERINGS

Skills2Work: 18-week, full-time, computer and office skills training program for low-income mature workers

ABLE Beginnings: 6-week basic computer class with a focus on preparing unemployed individuals for the modern, computer-based job search

Medical Office Skills: 18-week training program which prepares individuals for a range of opportunities in administrative jobs in Boston's health care industry

ABLE Job Resource Center : Computer and job search skills to jobseekers with higher-level skills

Workers Age 55 and Up: Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP): On-the-job training at community-based nonprofit or government agencies for low-income jobseekers 55 and older; supported by Department of Labor

Source: Monitor Institute by Deloitte discussion with Operation ABLE (June 11, 2019) and Operation ABLE jobseekers (July 10, 2019); organization's website

Operation ABLE: Leading Practices

OPERATION ABLE CUSTOMIZES ITS PROGRAMMING AND EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE NEEDS OF OLDER WORKERS, AND OTHERS, HELPING THEM RECONNECT TO THE WORKPLACE.



OFFERING TAILORED PROGRAMMING FOR TARGET POPULATION TO LIFT UNTAPPED TALENT

Typically, Operation ABLE's mature workers are **returning to work after a gap or are seeking upskilling opportunities for advancement**. Operation ABLE **offers several programs to meet these varying needs**, ranging from basic computer classes to more specialized industry-focused tracks. The organization's staff **works individually with each jobseeker** to understand their needs and coach them accordingly. Moreover, Operation ABLE serves as a **safe communal space for all jobseekers, allowing them to continue their relationship** with the organization. For those who are not sure where to turn for fundamental career needs and connections, Operation ABLE is the **first stop on their career journey**.



PROVIDING DEDICATED EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT LIAISON TO BE MARKET RESPONSIVE

Operation ABLE's staff is **dedicated to developing internship opportunities with employers**, bringing employers in for presentations and volunteer support, and **connecting program participants to job openings**. As a result, Operation ABLE now has **over 30 employer partners committed to the success of the program**, compared to ~10 just a few years ago.

"I needed to be around other people going through similar things, and I found Operation ABLE. Now I know I'll be ready to go into the workforce—I'm already feeling strong and confident."

"Employers rely on us vetting and assessing talent so they know they are getting a qualified and dependable person. We bring them in all the time."

Per Scholas: Background

PER SCHOLAS WAS FOUNDED 25 YEARS AGO WITH A MISSION TO OPEN DOORS TO TRANSFORMATIVE TECHNOLOGY CAREERS FOR INDIVIDUALS FROM OFTEN OVERLOOKED COMMUNITIES.

SUPPORTS PROVIDED

Alumni follow-up services	✓
Wraparound services	
Professional development skills	✓
Technical skills	✓
Career placement services	✓
Credentialing pathways	✓
Paid work experience	
Job Shadowing	

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS (FY19)

2,000

Students enrolled nationally

400%

Increase in post-training income

85%

PS students graduate training in 10-19 weeks (depending on training track)

80%

...of those graduates land jobs within one year of graduation

OVERVIEW

Per Scholas (PS) is a national nonprofit that drives proven social change in communities across the country. Through rigorous and tuition-free technology training and professional development, Per Scholas prepares motivated and curious adults who are unemployed or underemployed for successful careers as technology professionals, and creates onramps to businesses in need of their talents. Per Scholas began scaling operations in 2012 and now operates in 11 cities nationwide (including Greater Boston, Dallas, and Columbus) with plans to open more sites in the coming years.

POPULATION SERVED: Individuals from overlooked communities who are un- or underemployed

GEOGRAPHY: Greater Boston and 11 other US cities

REVENUE MODEL: Corporate and private philanthropy, state and federal government as well as earned income from paying employers

SELECT PROGRAM OFFERINGS

For Jobseekers

Training Course 1: Network Support offers the CompTIA A+ and Network+ certifications and equips students with the knowledge to fill a wide range of entry-level technology jobs as a support technician.

Training Course 2: Full stack Java Web Developer program offers students curricula customized to specific employer needs, putting local talent in direct hiring pipelines with major technology employers.

Both courses are free, and application-based.

For Employers

Per Scholas works with employers to design industry- and job-specific courses based on their IT needs, and then provides technology skills and professional development training to students to meet those needs.

Its employer partnership program is rooted in five pillars of engagement: Volunteer (sit on advisory board or coach learners), Hire (employ graduates), Invest (support IT job training for students in overlooked communities and/or national initiatives such as Diverse by Design), Customize (invest in Per Scholas training developed exclusively for the company's nuanced job specifications), and Recycle (partner to process company's retired IT equipment).

Source: Monitor Institute by Deloitte discussion with Per Scholas (June 6, 2019), and Per Scholas graduates (July 10, 2019); organization's website

Per Scholas: Leading Practices

PER SCHOLAS EXEMPLIFIES STRONG EMPLOYER AND ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT, INVESTING DEEPLY IN BOTH OF THESE RELATIONSHIPS TO HELP BOOST TRAINING AND BETTER SERVE JOBSEEKERS.



SUPPORTING AND LEVERAGING ALUMNI TO LIFT UNTAPPED TALENT

Per Scholas has a team dedicated to **working with students for two years after program completion** as alumni. In Greater Boston, Per Scholas recently graduated its first two classes of students and continues to host them onsite for **informal career coaching, financial advising, and advanced training opportunities**. Nationally, Per Scholas hires a number of alumni onto the staff and invites several to serve on the board as ambassadors to inform the organization's vision. Having alumni on staff allows Per Scholas not only to **improve training with former student input**, but also to better **reflect the diversity and needs of the student population**. These staff alumni can serve as role models to current students, sharing tips on how to succeed in class and during the job search. Per Scholas has been able to **create a true community for alumni**.

“A good number of our staff are alumni; staff who are alumni can relate in a special way.”

“It really is like having a recruiter work for you [in reference to a Per Scholas staff member]. They assist you in any way that they can.”



CUSTOMIZING TRAINING FOR EMPLOYERS TO BE MARKET RESPONSIVE

Per Scholas **co-invests with technology employers to customize trainings** that fit the employers' needs. For example, Per Scholas partners with TEKsystems (a leader in full-stack technology services, talent services, and real-world application), working together to connect individuals with the critical skills companies are demanding in emerging tech hubs like Boston.

“We rely on our employer partners to inform our curriculum. We also work with companies to customize training to their needs.”



FOSTERING DEEP AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS AND/OR INDUSTRIES TO BE MARKET RESPONSIVE

Per Scholas offers a **robust corporate engagement model**, allowing employers the opportunity to volunteer (e.g., mock interviews with students), invest in the program, hire program participants, customize trainings, and recycle old computers for participant use. Nationally, Per Scholas has **500+ employer partners**, with the newer Greater Boston site working to build up local **relationships with community-based organizations** and the tech sector.

“At the heart: the employer is our customer. We provide them quality talent in the tech field.”

Resilient Coders: Background

RESILIENT CODERS (RC) BELIEVES IN SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND IN THE OPPORTUNITY FOR MERITOCRACY IN TECH. “THIS ISN’T ABOUT ONE-OFF CAMPS OR HACKATHONS. THIS IS ABOUT MEANINGFUL CHANGE.”

SUPPORTS PROVIDED

Alumni follow-up services	✓
Wraparound services	
Professional development skills	
Technical skills	✓
Career placement services	✓
Credentialing pathways	
Paid work experience	
Job Shadowing	

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS (FY19)

~60

Students served in bootcamps per year

100%

Graduates placed into jobs with an average salary of ~\$96,000 (from first bootcamp cohort of the year)

79%

Graduates placed into jobs to date with an average salary of ~\$100,000 (from second bootcamp cohort of the year)

OVERVIEW

RC is a workforce intermediary nonprofit that trains young people of color for high growth careers as software engineers and connects them with jobs in the Boston-area technology sector. RC was founded 2014

by David Delmar, the current Executive Director, who used to take vacation days from his job at PayPal to give coding lessons to young men in a youth correctional facility; his lessons transitioned from a program embedded in high schools and correctional institutions, to a summer camp for high schoolers, to a full-time bootcamp today.

POPULATION SERVED: Young people of color

GEOGRAPHY: Greater Boston, with a focus on communities of color (e.g., Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan)

REVENUE MODEL: Philanthropy and earned revenue

SELECT PROGRAM OFFERINGS

Resilient Coders Bootcamp: For 14 weeks, a select cohort of early-career individuals (recruited through hackathons) meet daily to receive free direct instruction, and begin building their own apps across multiple coding platforms. To graduate, every student needs to build an app from scratch, and to procure, service, and invoice their own freelance client. Currently, RC is in the process of transitioning this from three 14-week bootcamps per year to two 20-week ones to deepen learning.

Community (open-door, drop-in): Current Bootcampers use this time as a supported study hall; aspiring Bootcampers stop by to learn more before applying; alumni who are in the workforce use this time to improve skills relevant to their jobs; and younger coders in high school are also welcome.

Employment Services: Armed with their knowledge of JavaScript, React, and Node, RC students are ready for full-time engineering jobs at partner companies. RC partners deeply with local tech-based employers to provide bootcamp-trained talent, and continues to work with employers to monitor talent retention.

Source: Monitor Institute by Deloitte discussion with Resilient Coders, June 5, 2019; organization's website

Resilient Coders: Leading Practices

RC DEMONSTRATES FORWARD-LOOKING EMPLOYER AND ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES TO IDENTIFY GOOD JOBS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE OF COLOR IN BOSTON.



DEFINING AND IDENTIFYING GOOD JOBS

Resilient Coders considers **high pay and strong growth opportunities critical to a good job** for its untapped bootcamp students. To ensure that its students are able to get these jobs, it requires them to procure, serve, and invoice one freelance client at the end of the program to **teach them how to find their own employment**. Moreover, it has **developed partnerships with rising tech companies** to help match students into high-growth roles. Resilient Coders **clearly defines and finds good jobs** for its target population.



LEVERAGING TRUSTED EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIPS TO SUPPORT UNTAPPED TALENT IN THE LONG TERM AND FOCUS ON GOOD JOBS

Resilient Coders works closely with employers as a middleman to **promote inclusive hiring and retention practices that will help its students feel comfortable** in the workplace. On hiring, Resilient Coders tries to show **new ways of evaluating talent** (e.g., signaling that students are fast learners via the 14-week bootcamp rather than by standardized assessments); and on retention, RC has **shared feedback with specific employers** to offer implicit bias trainings after learning about the experiences of its students. This cultivates **longer-term relationships with employers and good jobs for jobseekers**.



CUSTOMIZING TRAINING FOR EMPLOYERS TO BE MARKET RESPONSIVE

Resilient Coders has **built add-on modules** to its 14-week bootcamp to **teach employer-specific skills, teaching general coding first** and then using a few extra weeks to **help students become more competitive for specific employers** (e.g., Wayfair). Wayfair has been a key partner in this effort, **taking on a number of Resilient Coders as employees** in the last year.



SUPPORTING AND LEVERAGING ALUMNI TO LIFT UNTAPPED TALENT

Resilient Coders **relies on its alumni to share feedback on employers** once they are in the workforce, to **share advice with current students** on how to succeed, and to help **shape curriculum** based on what they are seeing in the marketplace. Alumni essentially **serve as a liaison with the employer**, providing Resilient Coders with updates so that it can understand the employer's best practices, issue areas, and **how to serve as an intermediary to help make the relationship work well**.

“We build our program around the number of jobs we feel we can put our students into, and we ensure they are able to access a nice career path through these jobs.”

“We don’t have consensus on what it means to be exclusionary in hiring practices. We have candid conversations with employers where they may have good intentions but may not realize they are exclusionary.”

“Employer-specific training makes our students commercially competitive because they have to compete with 4-year degree holders.”

“Alumni have a stronger voice in curriculum development than current students. They have hindsight after hitting the market.”

UTEC: Background

UTEC'S "MISSION AND PROMISE IS TO IGNITE AND NURTURE THE AMBITION OF DISCONNECTED YOUNG PEOPLE TO TRADE VIOLENCE AND POVERTY FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SUCCESS"

OVERVIEW

Founded in 1999 as the result of an organizing movement driven by young people to develop their own teen center in response to gang violence in Lowell, UTEC is dedicated to helping young people overcome the challenges of poverty, gang involvement, unemployment, and cultural barriers that are pervasive in the communities served. Through referrals, UTEC streetworkers identify "proven-risk young adults" and conduct outreach/intake into UTEC's social enterprise program; subsequently, young adults partake in these enterprises and receive wraparound supports. UTEC enrollment typically lasts 18-24 months, with two years of follow-up support.

POPULATION SERVED: Justice-involved young adults, ages 17-25, with proven risk factors

GEOGRAPHY: Lowell, Lawrence, and Haverhill

REVENUE MODEL: Philanthropy and earned income from social enterprises (14% of total revenue)

SELECT PROGRAM OFFERINGS

Streetworker Outreach Streetworkers build relationships with proven-risk young adults, conduct gang peacemaking, visit young people in correctional facilities to provide supports, and recruit individuals to engage in UTEC's programs upon their return to the community.

Workforce Development in Social Enterprise (SE) UTEC's social enterprises (mattress recycling, food services, and woodworking) offer young adults paid work experience to develop job and life skills that translate to the workplace.

Transitional Coaching Transitional Coaches are mentors and wraparound service coordinators who meet 1:1 to help young adults overcome barriers and connect them with essential supports, including onsite mental health and substance abuse counseling, throughout the program.

2Gen Programming Includes parenting workshops and intensive family engagement in addition to free onsite childcare from six weeks to kindergarten for all young parents enrolled in UTEC's core programs.

Supplemental Offerings Includes onsite GED education, youth-led policymaking coalition, field trips, monthly celebrations, enrichment, and recreational spaces.

SUPPORTS PROVIDED

Alumni follow-up services	✓
Wraparound services	✓
Professional development skills	✓
Technical skills	
Career placement services	✓
Credentialing pathways	✓
Paid work experience	✓
Job Shadowing	

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS (FY18)

97%

Young adults achieved no new convictions

63%

Young adults received an industry certification

78%

Young adults who left UTEC programming were employed two years later (FY17)

Source: Monitor Institute by Deloitte discussion with UTEC, June 4, 2019; organization's website

UTEC: Leading Practices

UTEC OFFERS STRUCTURED WORK EXPERIENCE VIA ITS SOCIAL ENTERPRISE BUSINESS MODEL, AND CONSISTENTLY HIRES MISSION-ALIGNED STAFF.



OFFERING LADDERED WORK EXPERIENCE VIA SOCIAL ENTERPRISE MODEL TO LIFT UNTAPPED TALENT

UTEC's three social enterprises (mattress recycling, food services, and woodworking) offer young adults a **paid platform for learning applied "soft" skills** such as punctuality, problem-solving, and leadership as well as **industry-specific skills and certifications**. They also provide flexibility for UTEC to close business on certain days and run professional development workshops. Young adults can graduate to higher levels in the program and move up or down within these higher levels; the staged approach allows them to get used to **higher expectations and stricter consequences over time** while learning a variety of skills to bring to future jobs. As of FY17, **~80% of young adults who left UTEC were employed two years later.**



MAINTAINING A LASER FOCUS ON STAFF-MISSION ALIGNMENT TO ENHANCE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

UTEC is **intentional about instilling consistency** in its staff. The CEO takes all staff through **values training** to teach / remind team members how to show a **"madd love mentality"** to young adults. In addition, the young adults **help interview candidates for the streetworker role** as part of the arduous hiring process to **ensure proper fit** with the organization.

"We started enterprises intentionally so we could set rules, a platform for young adults to be able to fail, and have discussions about their future. For this population, the structure works well—it gives them enough room to deal with their challenges without turning them away."

"I say that some staff who have been here a long time 'bleed orange' and exemplify behavior for newer folks."

Year Up: Background

YEAR UP'S MISSION IS TO CLOSE THE OPPORTUNITY DIVIDE BY ENSURING THAT YOUNG ADULTS GAIN THE SKILLS, EXPERIENCES, AND SUPPORT THAT WILL EMPOWER THEM TO REACH THEIR POTENTIAL THROUGH CAREERS AND HIGHER EDUCATION.

SUPPORTS PROVIDED

Alumni follow-up services	✓
Wraparound services	✓
Professional development skills	✓
Technical skills	✓
Career placement services	✓
Credentialing pathways	✓
Paid work experience	✓
Job Shadowing	

IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS (FY19)

4700+

Opportunity Youth served

90%

Graduates employed and/or enrolled in postsecondary education within four months of program completion

\$40K

Average annual salary for employed graduates (with a starting wage of \$20/hr)

75%

Graduates employed full-time in roles aligned with one of Year Up's five career pathways

Source: Monitor Institute by Deloitte discussion with Year Up (June 20, 2019), Year Up program participant and graduate (July 10, 2019), and JP Morgan (August 5, 2019); organization's website

OVERVIEW

Gerald Chertavian founded Year Up in 2000 in Boston to create equitable access to the economy for Opportunity Youth—young adults who are disconnected from employment and education pathways due to systemic socio-economic barriers. Year Up is a one-year, intensive training program that empowers these talented and motivated young adults to move from minimum wage to meaningful careers. Students spend the first six months learning in-demand technical and professional skills before a six-month corporate internship. Throughout the program, students earn an educational stipend, complete coursework for college credits, and receive wraparound support from staff advisors, professional mentors, dedicated social services staff, and a powerful network of community-based partners.

POPULATION SERVED: Underserved young adults, ages 18–24, with a high school diploma or GED

GEOGRAPHY: ~30 locations nationwide as of 2019, including three locations in the Greater Boston area

REVENUE MODEL: Philanthropy and internship program revenue from employer partners

SELECT PROGRAM OFFERINGS

In-Demand Training Solutions: Through Year Up offerings young adults acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for roles in one of five career pathways—Business Operations, Financial Operations, Information Technology, Sales & Customer Support, or Software Development & Support—and corporate partners gain access to a strong pipeline of talent to meet their evolving hiring needs.

Soft Skills Training That Works: Alongside its rigorous technical training, Year Up emphasizes skills development to help create confident, accountable, professional young adults who thrive in a corporate environment. Year Up equips young adults with soft skills that are highly sought by employers—effective communication, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, time management, and more.

National Alumni Association (NAA): Year Up's nationwide alumni network currently has 11,700 members. The network is a collaborative partnership between Year Up alumni and staff, focused on "ACT" (Advancing Careers and Education, Contributing to Year Up's Success, and Taking Action in the Opportunity Movement).

Year Up: Leading Practices

YEAR UP HAS ESTABLISHED ITSELF AS A LEADING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, EQUIPPING PARTICIPANTS WITH THE TRAINING, SKILLS, AND EXPERIENCE NECESSARY FOR IN-DEMAND CAREERS, WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY HONING ITS CURRICULUM TO MEET EVOLVING EMPLOYER NEEDS AND PROVIDE THEM WITH ACCESS TO A DIVERSE PIPELINE OF TALENT.



FOSTERING DEEP AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS AND/OR INDUSTRIES TO BE MARKET RESPONSIVE

Year Up has built out several mechanisms for engaging with 250+ employers (including 41 of the Fortune 100), such as **national and local Corporate Engagement and Account Management teams** that work to **initiate and cultivate employer relationships**. Year Up also launched **Grads of Life**, which works with employers to provide resources for **recruiting, hiring, and retaining Opportunity Youth**. Year Up works closely with employers to **understand job descriptions and skill needs for open roles**, and often integrates these skills into **training programs**. For several employers (including long-time partner J.P. Morgan Chase & Co., interviewed for this report), **Year Up has become a major talent pipeline**, providing the **opportunity to leverage talent from non-traditional education backgrounds** alongside recruiting channels with colleges and universities. Year Up partners cite a **90% satisfaction rate** with the workforce provider.

“We bring employers in to ask how they would build curriculum, and ensure we’re continually responding to changes in the workplace and required skills.”

“Year Up regularly takes our feedback on desired skillsets and integrates it into their curriculum. They also attend our intern presentations here on site.”



OFFERING TAILORED PROGRAMMING FOR TARGET POPULATION TO LIFT UNTAPPED TALENT

Year Up’s **high support, high expectation model** is tailored to create confident, accountable, professional young adults who will thrive in a corporate environment and has shown **strong outcomes for empowering youth**. Year Up sets high expectations and provides high support to exceed them, including a **peer learning community, orientation, mentorship, and participant contract**, which all contribute to holding participants accountable and **putting it in their hands to succeed**.

“The whole system is set up to support students as they go through the Year Up experience — we are very intentional with things like our contract and language.”



CREATING TALENT SUPPLIER AGREEMENTS, POSSIBLY INCLUDING CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYER TRAINING TO BE MARKET RESPONSIVE

In partnership with leading employers in the markets it serves, **Year Up connects young adults with companies that need talent**. On a per intern basis, **corporate partners make a financial investment in Year Up** commensurate with entry-level talent costs. Through the six-month internship, partners gain access to a diverse pipeline of bright, motivated, and skilled entry-level talent, receive 1-to-1 support from Year Up, and **have the opportunity to hire graduates at zero cost**; in fact, Year Up’s internship-to-hire conversion rate [from the internship host company] is 45%. Year Up is also increasingly **exploring opportunities to form and deepen national partnership with employers** that can host interns across multiple Year Up locations, providing them with additional pathways to scale both income and impact.

“We’ve partnered with Year Up since 2007 and now host ~100 Year Up interns every six months nationally. We find Year Up does a good job of matching the skills we’re looking for with the people they have.”

Endnotes

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