



Welcome to

# Immigrant Workers Matter

The Critical Importance of  
Investing in Vocational ESOL

Tuesday, September 16, 2025  
9:00 – 10:30 am



# Andre Green

*Executive Director*

SkillWorks

# Lauren Jones

*Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development*  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts



# Data Presentation: *The ROI of ESOL*

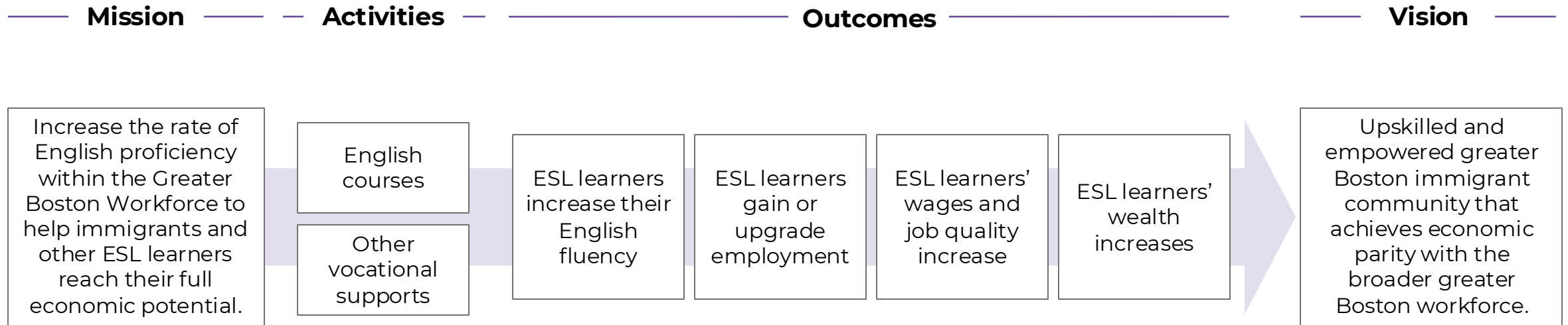


# Matt Brewster

*Principal*

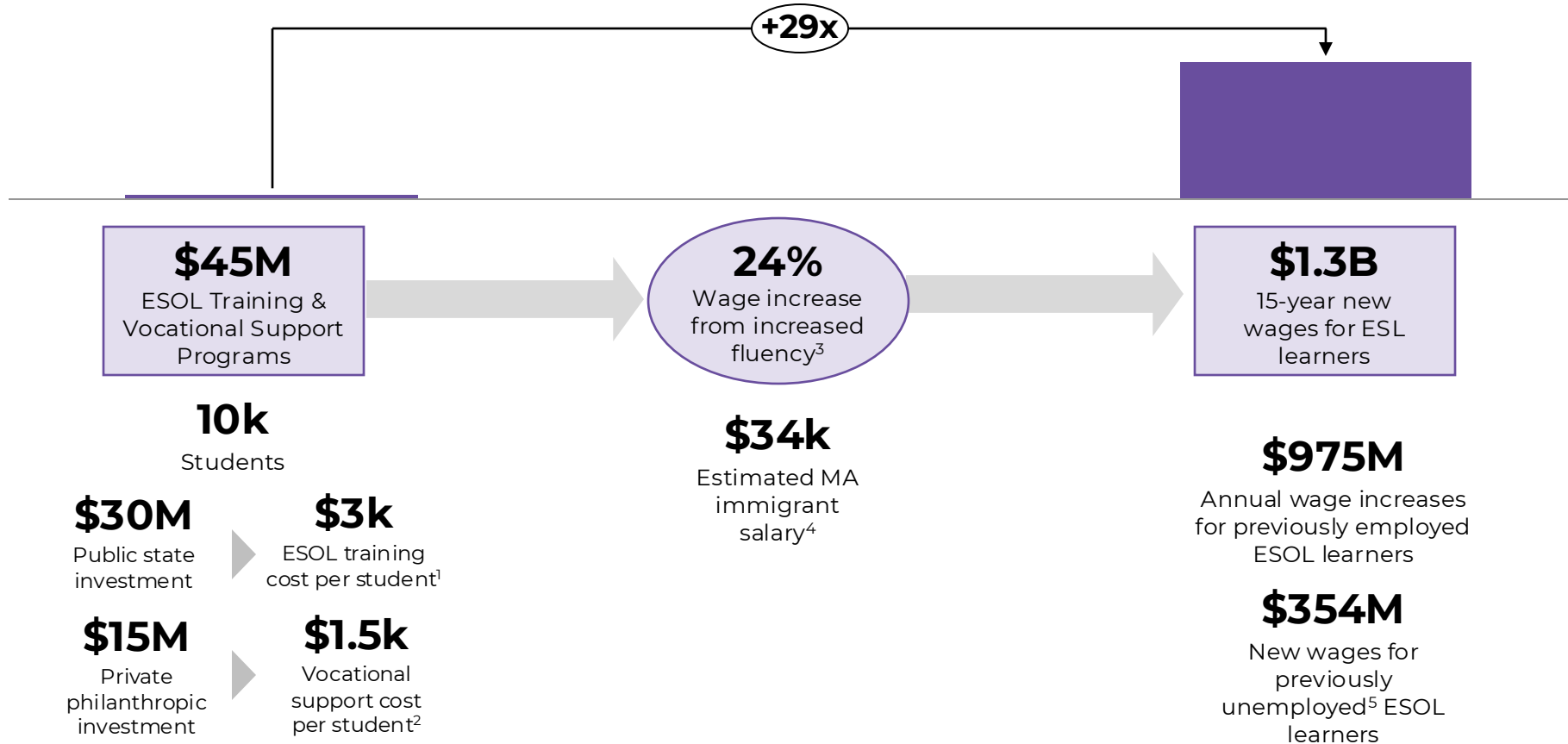
*P2 Advisors*

# Vocational ESOL Training Theory of Change



# Potential Economic Multiplier Effect of ESOL Training

Return on ESOL and vocational support investment  
(new wages as a multiple of program costs)



Notes: Analysis assumes 10k students are served over a 3-year period.

- 1) Based on Governor Healey's proposal to spend \$30M on vocational ESOL training to support 10,000 students.
- 2) Based on the Boston Foundation's estimate of the cost of supplemental vocational supports.
- 3) "Massachusetts Needs an Actionable Strategy to Expand ESOL Services." (MassINC, 2024)
- 4) "Economic Projections for Asylum Seekers and New Immigrants: Massachusetts" (MassBudget, 2024)
- 5) "State Unemployment Rates for Immigrants" (Center for Immigration Studies, 2020)



**Vocational ESOL in  
Practice:**  
*Learnings from English  
for Advancement*



# Amy Nishman

*Senior Vice President of Strategy*

JVS Boston



SKILLS . JOBS . CAREERS

# ENGLISH FOR ADVANCEMENT: CONNECTING ESOL LEARNERS TO EMPLOYMENT

September 16, 2025

Amy Nishman, SVP of Strategy, JVS

Vic Acosta, Director of English for Advancement, JVS

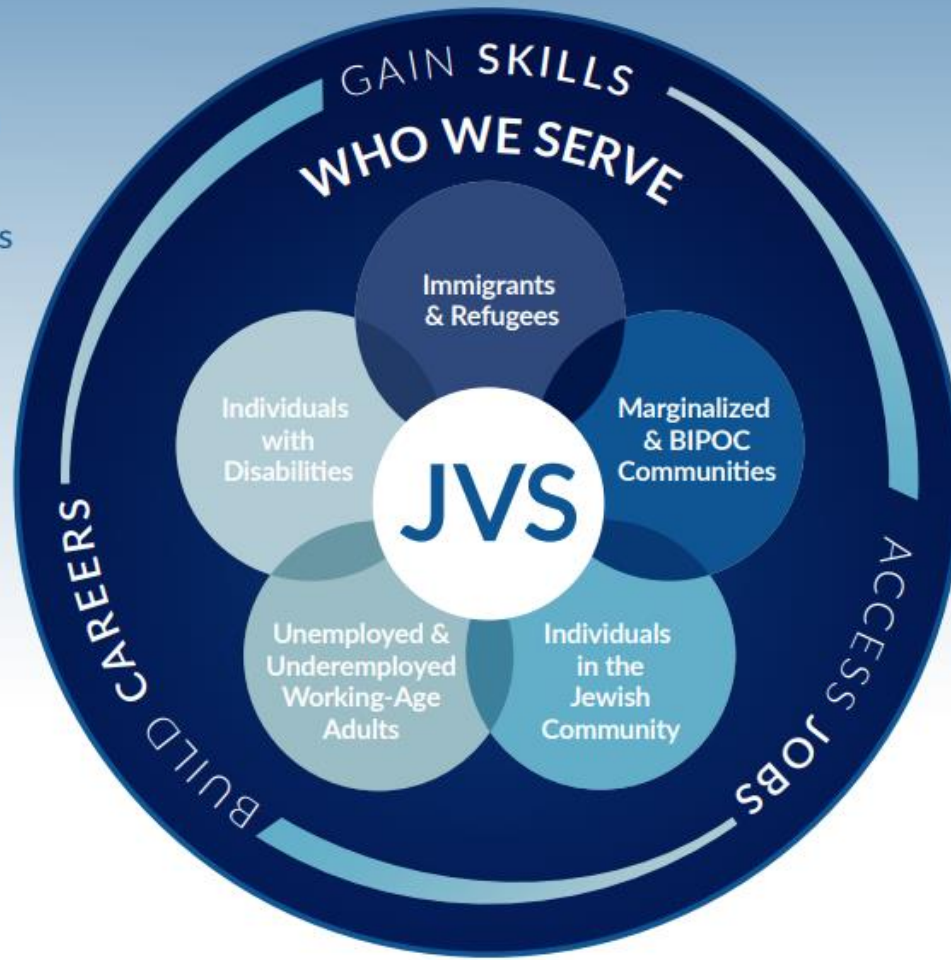
## OUR MISSION

JVS empowers individuals from diverse communities to find employment and build careers, while partnering with employers to hire, develop and retain productive workforces.

## WHAT WE DO

JVS works with individuals so they can develop skills for in-demand jobs.

JVS partners with employers to help them recruit, retain, and reskill their workforces.



## OUR VALUES

Learning  
Partnership  
Quality  
Respect  
Social Justice

JVS promotes equity by building career pathways to economic success.

JVS pursues changes in public policy to support economic advancement.

JVS changes the lives of job seekers, their families, and future generations.

## THE JVS IMPACT

53%

of people placed in jobs earn the Boston Living Wage, working full-time with benefits

268

alumni engaged in next-step services to advance their careers

374

job seekers gained in-demand skills through training

1.2K

job seekers found employment through our services

4.9K

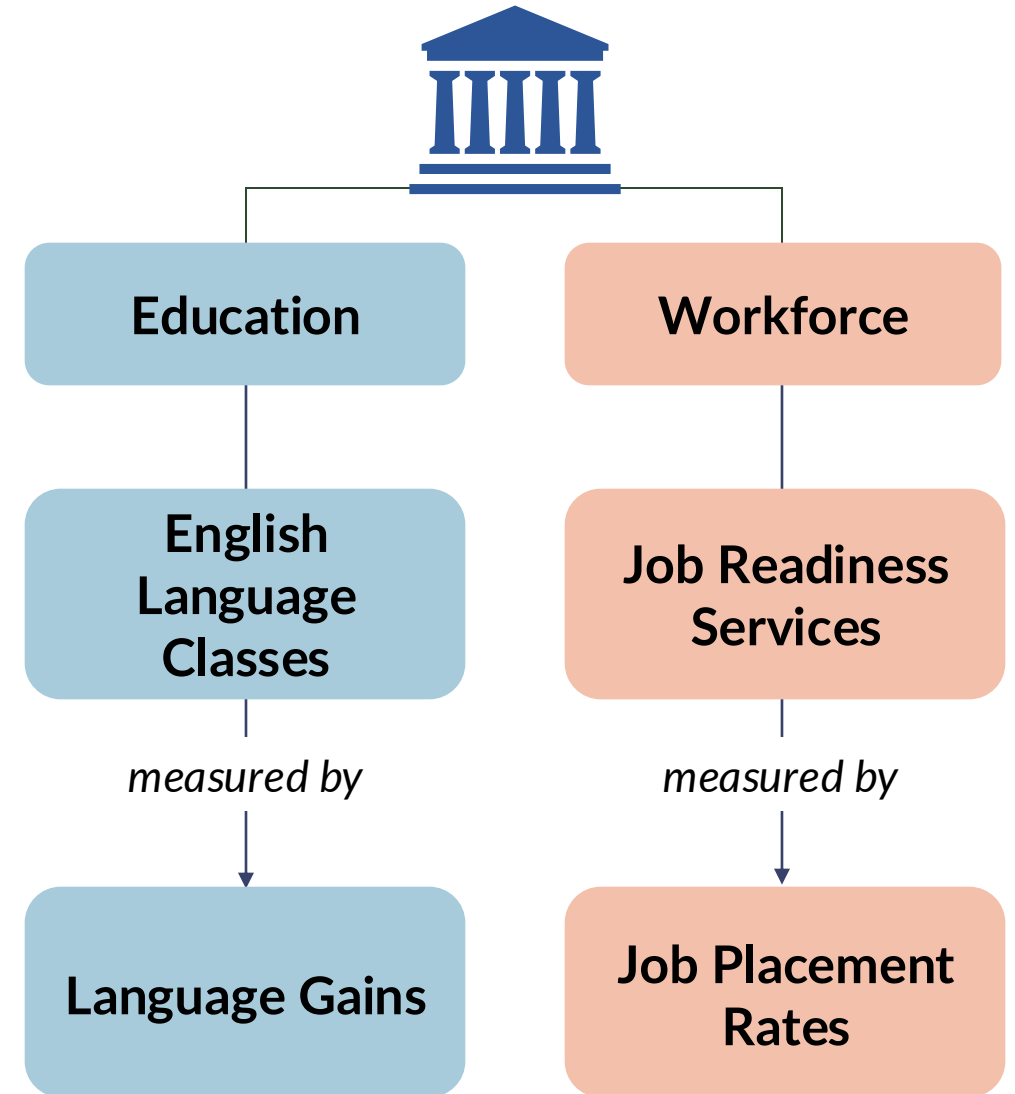
job seekers enrolled in our programs

9.7K

job seekers received services from JVS & MassHire in 2023

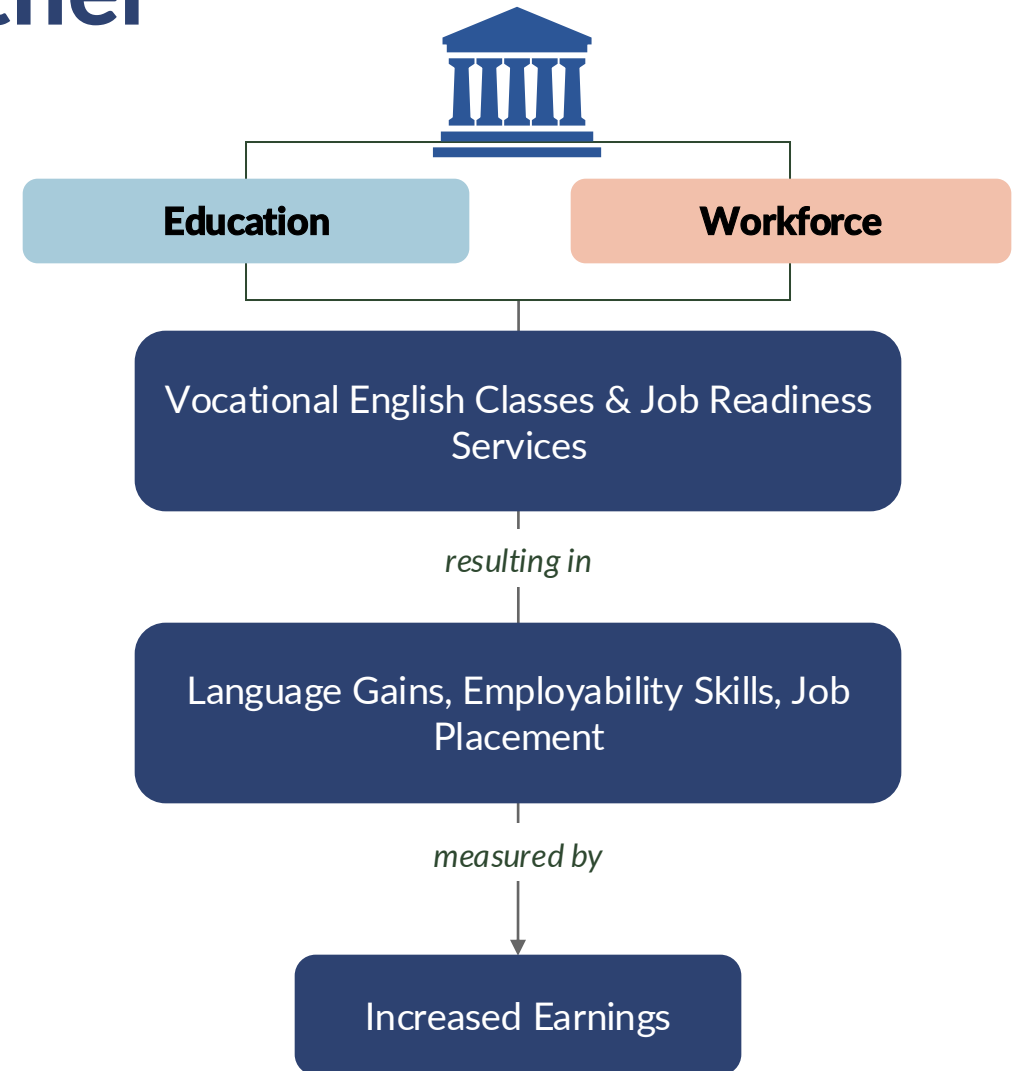
# Adult Education & Workforce Development: Worlds Apart

- Massachusetts, like many states across the country, allocates funding for Adult Basic Education and Workforce Development services separately
- Consequently, the services and outcome measurements of these services are disparate, while serving a similar population
- For English language classes, the focus has been language acquisition, with little attention to work readiness nor assistance with job placement
- However, 70% of adult participants in English language classes cited work as their motivator to enroll in education services



# English for Advancement brings education & workforce development together

- EFA bundles adult education and workforce development services, contextualizing curriculum to employment.
- EFA provides a model for adult education that meets students' demand for increased skills for employment and career advancement and meets employers' needs by preparing new talent for the labor force.
- **EFA has demonstrated a successful model for measuring and paying for employment outcomes in adult education, resulting in a program that meets student demand and fuels economic growth.**



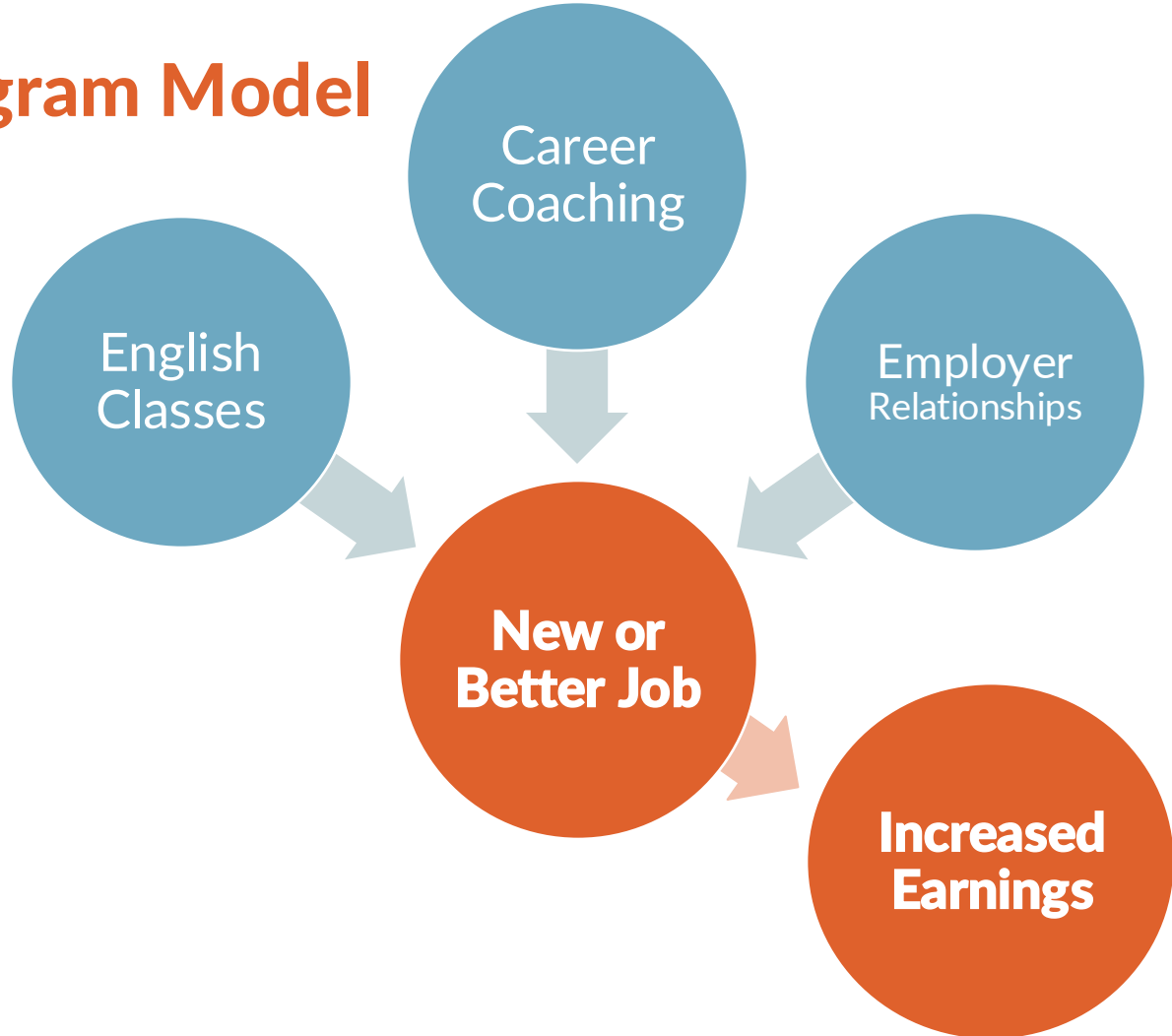
# English for Advancement: Program Design & Scale

**~400** Enrollments per year

**100s** Referrals per month

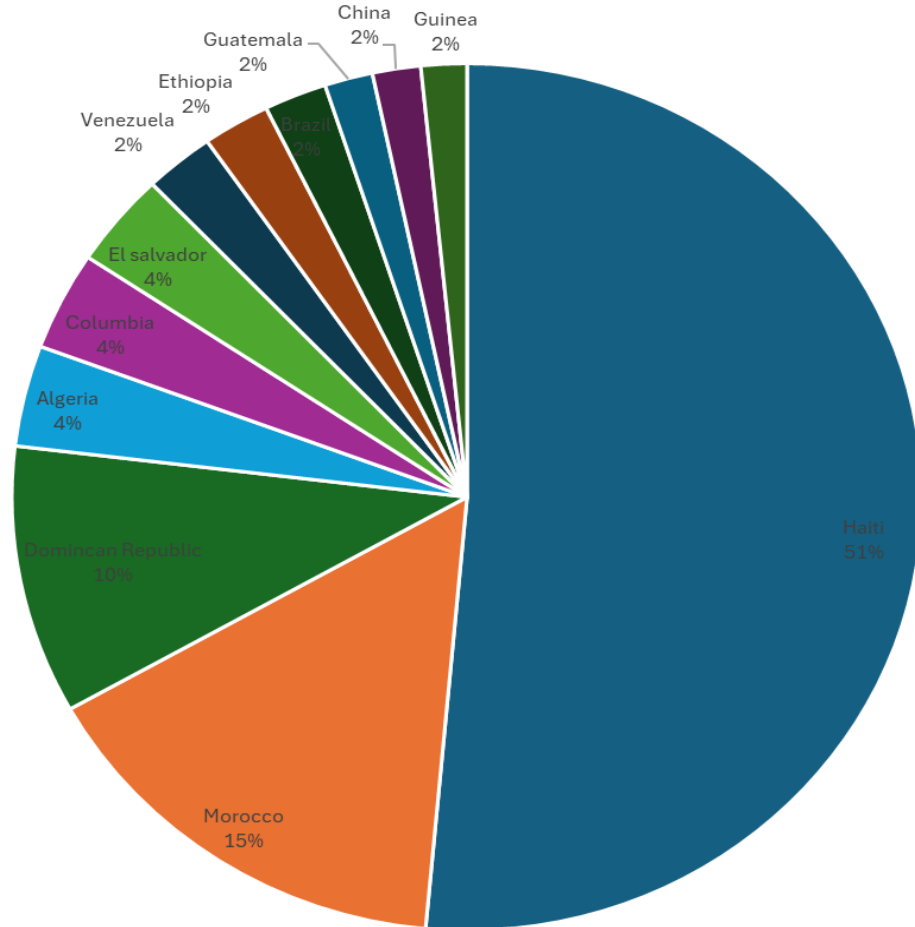
**FULL** Waitlist; currently at capacity

## Program Model



# About EFA Participants Now

EFA participants country of origin FY23-FY25



■ Haiti ■ Morocco ■ Dominican Republic ■ Algeria ■ Columbia ■ El Salvador ■ Venezuela ■ Ethiopia ■ Brazil ■ Guatemala ■ China ■ Guinea

## Geography

### Where Participants Live

Suffolk County: 42%

Essex County: 26%

Middlesex County: 19%

**What do most programs do?**



**One in,  
one out**

**Textbook led**



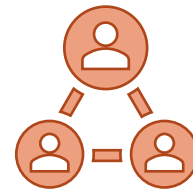
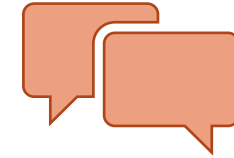
**Generalized  
Curriculum**

# What does EFA do differently?



**Managed  
Enrollment**

**Differentiated  
Instruction**



**Student Driven**

**Contextualized**



# Traditional English Programs vs. EFA

## English Skills

Prepositions of Time

Developing Listening Skills

Using Past Tense

## Workplace & Career Skills

Talking about Availability and  
Schedules

Voicemail Recordings

Explaining Work History

# Sample Lesson: Grammar

## What are your strengths?



## What are strengths?

A strength is about who you are.  
It may show skills that you have.

- I **am** careful.
- I **am** a fast cleaner.
- I **am** a good listener.



## Strengths

- I can cook well
- I am a good driver
- I can paint and draw
- I love to help my family



# Sample Lesson: Vocabulary

## Strengths: Vocabulary



### Are you punctual?

I am *punctual*.

I come on time.

“My shift starts at 8am, so I always leave home at 7:10am to be sure I arrive on time.”

JVS



## Strengths: Vocabulary

punctual

1



I am **punctual**.  
I come on time.

organized

2



I am **organized**.  
I can find everything.

flexible

3



I am **flexible**.  
I work different shifts.  
I can do different tasks.

efficient

4



I am **efficient**.  
I complete tasks quickly.

JVS



## Strengths Vocabulary – Matching

1. does something well and with no waste of time or money
2. plans their work and life very neatly
3. is always on time.
4. is determined to be successful
5. figures out issues and resolves difficulties
6. supports and advises other people
7. is always working very hard
8. is optimistic and thinks of the good things in a situation

- a. a positive person
- b. goal-oriented
- c. helpful
- d. a problem-solver
- e. punctual
- f. efficient
- g. hardworking
- h. organized

JVS



# Sample Lesson: Interview Question

What strengths does a childcare worker need?



JVS



What do you do at your job?



JVS



- What is your job?
  - What was your job?
- What strengths do you need?
  - What strengths did you need?
  - I need to be \_\_\_\_.
  - I needed to be \_\_\_\_.

# Sample Lesson: Practice

## Find someone who...

1. understands new information quickly.

Do you do understand new information quickly?

2. plans their work and life very neatly.

Do you plan your work and life very neatly?

3. is always on time.

Are you always on time?

4. is determined to be successful.

Are you determined to be successful?



## Write about your strengths.

Write sentences for 3 strengths.

I am \_\_\_\_\_ .



efficient

hardworking

honest

punctual

flexible

helpful

reliable

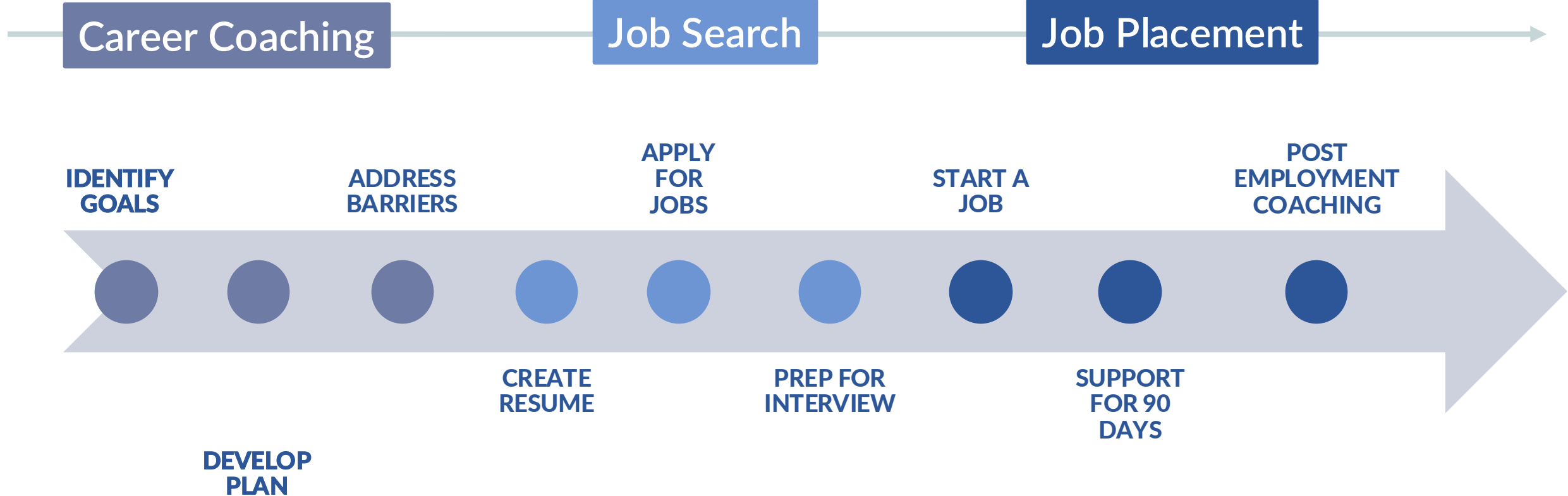
organized





# CAREER COACHING

# Individual Career Pathway Coaching





# EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIPS

# How We Work With Employers

Build relationships with community employers

Understand employer's hiring needs

Streamline the application process to make the best possible matches

Clients start employment and employers meet hiring goals



Laundry attendants

Food preparation  
Cashier  
Sanitation

**Tatte**  
BAKERY & CAFÉ


Beth Israel Lahey Health   
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center


Phlebotomist  
Lab asst.  
Clinical asst.  
Patient care tech

Pharmacy Tech  
Food services  
Administration  
Sanitation

# Students are getting what they want and need

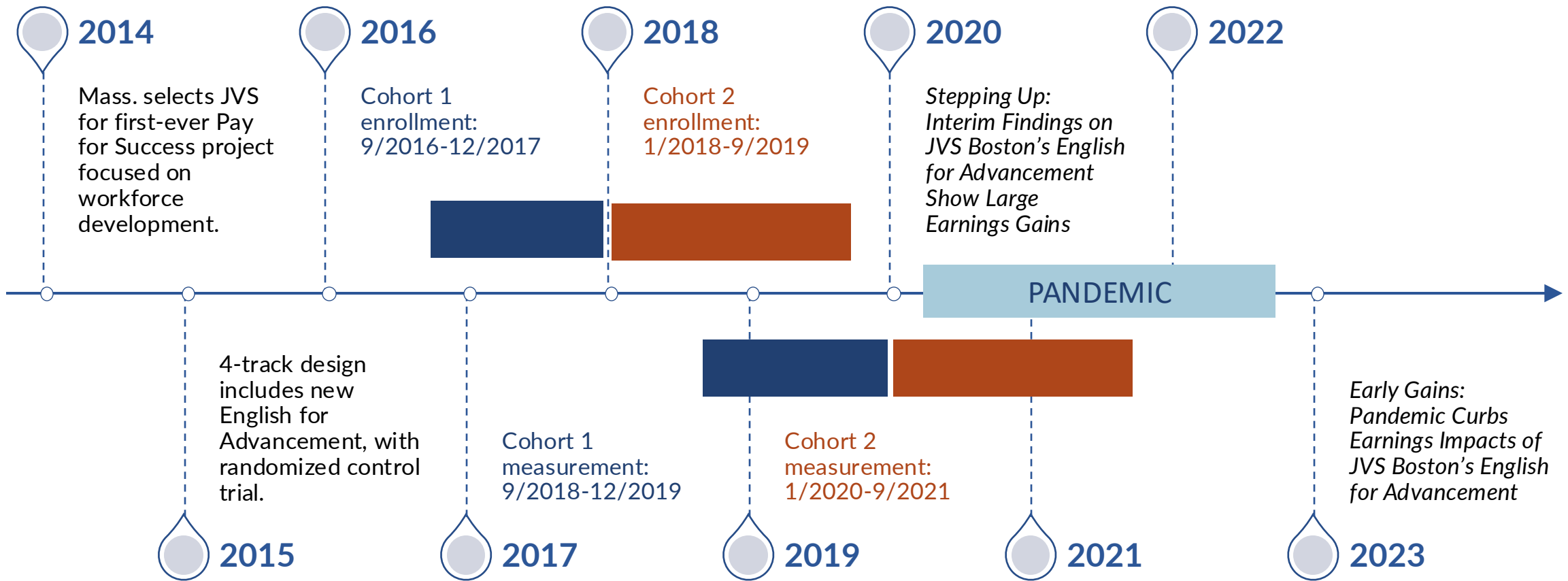
 “I cannot believe my improvement!” - Lorena

 “My life now is better because I understand most. I can talk with my co-workers and my teacher.” - Mayra

 “I feel comfortable and secure with my career coach and teacher. They are working with me, and every day try to give me support and knowledge.” - Gianni

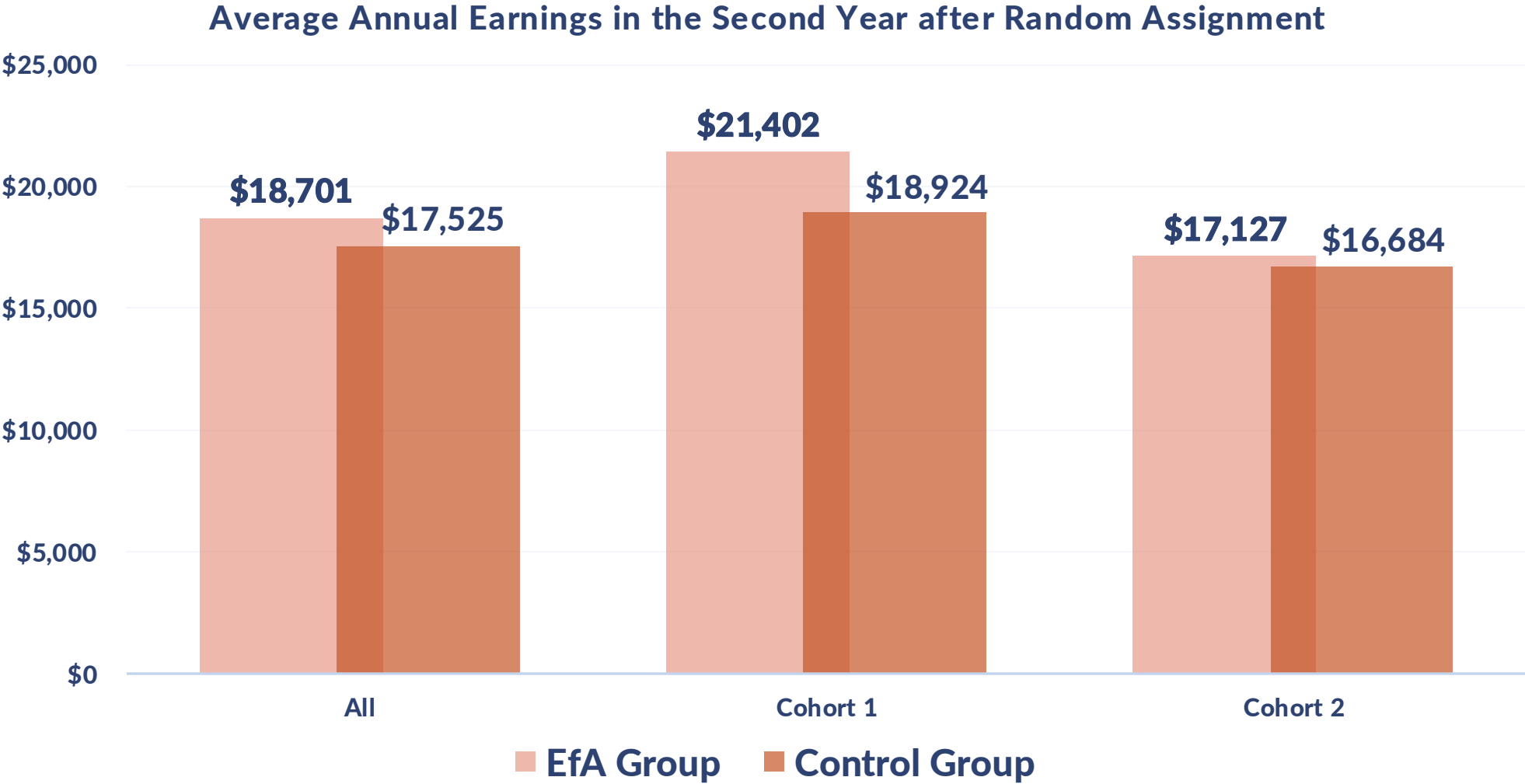
# EFA Timeline

Interim report shows significant statistically significant impact, with earnings gains averaging \$3,505.



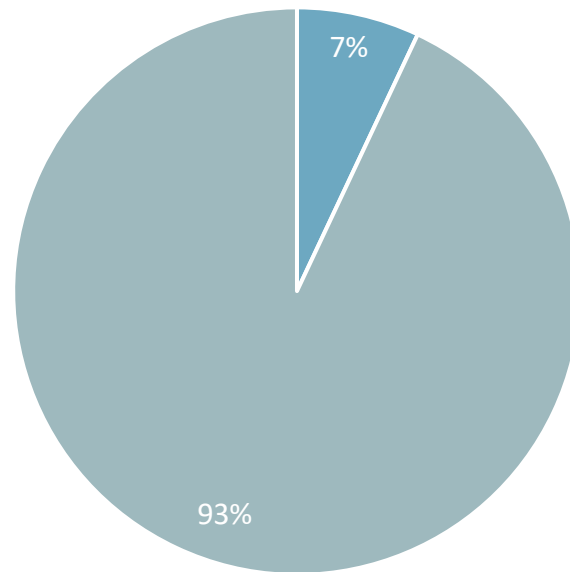
Final report shows impact of pandemic on cohort 2.

# Average Annual Earnings during measurement period



# Vocational ESOL vs Traditional ESOL

Breakdown of ESOL Offerings in Greater Boston



■ Vocational ESOL classes    ■ Non-Vocational focused ESOL

just 7% of the nearly 116 ESOL programs that operate in Greater Boston are vocational.

# What's next?

## Employer Need

There are thousands of unfilled jobs in the MA economy, and EFA is the optimal tool to move low and intermediate speakers of English into and up in the labor market.

## Increased demand

The need for ESOL continues to grow, and resources lag behind increased demand. Currently there are hundreds on ESOL waitlists and students consistently report their main goal in learning English is to get a new or better job.

## Mentorship

Agencies already implementing vocational ESOL can provide technical assistance to programs wanting to implement this proven successful model of moving English language learners into employment.



# Panel Discussion





**Tonja Mettlach**, *Executive Vice President*, Massachusetts Business Roundtable

**Emmanuel Owusu**, *Executive Director*, African Bridge Network

**Wyvonne Stevens-Carter**, *Associate Commissioner, Adult & Community Learning Services*, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

**Liz Sweet**, *Executive Director*, MIRA Coalition (moderator)





# Audience Q&A



# Marty Martinez

*President & CEO*

United Way of Massachusetts Bay



Thank you for attending

# Immigrant Workers Matter

The Critical Importance of  
Investing in Vocational ESOL