



# My Summer IN THE City

A BOSTON FOUNDATION FUNDING INITIATIVE

# We are changing the trends.

Boston continues to be a national model for summer youth employment. Last summer, approximately 3,500 jobs were filled by strong partners in all sectors of philanthropy, youth dedicated nonprofits, government, and private organizations.

And yet, many of our young people continue to slip through the cracks. Data shows that 25.5% of people between the ages of 16-20 are unemployed, and this number is higher in people of color and immigrant youth. Additionally, the ages of 13-14 are critical for development, yet they are often the same years that jobs and camps are not available.

On top of that, our newly arrived young people, those who identify as LGBTQIA, those with disabilities both seen and unseen, those who are homeless or in foster care, and those who have a criminal record are underrepresented. Based on the data we collected alongside Boston University and Masshousing Department of Community Services, we know that not having a permanent address can be a barrier, and outreach is not done to specifically target these young people, which leaves them out of a nationwide model that is admired by many.

## We want to change these trends.

As we continue to think about equity and inclusion broadly we must be intentional about including these populations. We must provide our partners and young people with support, flexibility and tools so they too can be successful. Thus, in 2018, My Summer in the City (MSITC) prioritized summer employment opportunities within these populations:

1. Young people in middle school, ages 12 to 14 years old and
2. Underrepresented young people

The focus of this approach is twofold. First, we wanted to create quality stipend pre-employment programming as well as a pipeline to summer employment that focused on middle school aged young people. They are often left to “self-care” during summer months, which results in a lower likelihood of participating in structured activities (enrichment as well as employment).

We also wanted to provide job experience and job training to young people who are the least employed and most likely to be left out of the summer employment experience.

# What did we invest?

## \$365,000

in grants were issued during the 2018 summer months.

## \$290,000

went to support young people in pre-employment and employment opportunities.

**28 partners** reported back that **\$161,405** was used to support job opportunities, and **\$54,995** was used for program support. **\$50,000** went to support Camp Harbor View, and **\$25,000** went to support Summer Fund.



"For many of our participants, this was their first job," shared a partner. "Working this summer gave them a sense of empowerment and self-direction as well as independence. It allowed them to test out their own decision-making - especially financially - and to have a sense of pride and ownership. For our older youth, summer employment also meant two youth could help pay for college this fall and three others could save toward that goal."

# How did we do?

# 619

We are proud to have served youth across all of Greater Boston. In total, **619** youth were impacted, and we provided **288** youth employment jobs.

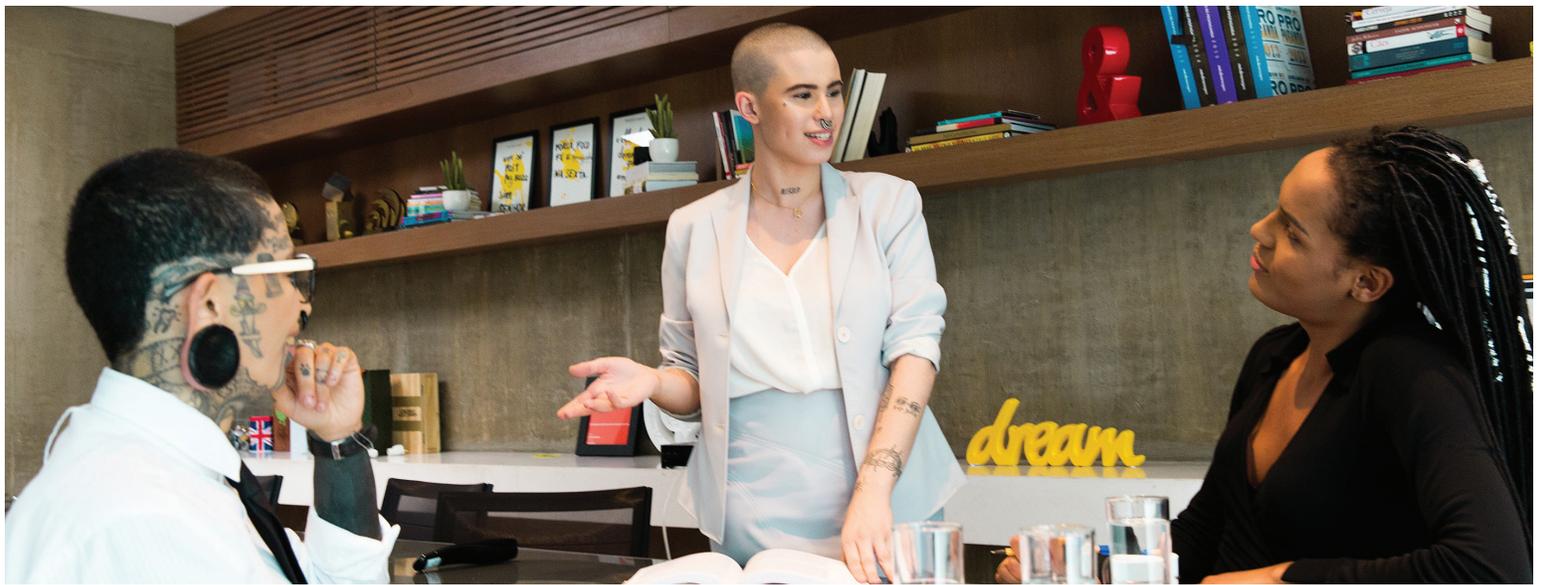
# 331

Specifically, we served **331** youth between the ages of 12-14 through camp-like hybrid experiences as well as through jobs, meeting our goal to address this audience.

## Our partners also served:

- **74** LGBTQ Youth
- **58** Undocumented/immigrant youth
- **41** Foster youth
- **55** Homeless Youth
- **46** Court involved youth
- **77** Youth with disabilities





## Here's how our partners targeted their outreach to the communities we wanted to serve:



**PBHA:** "To recruit homeless youth, we worked with Youth On Fire, Bridge Over Troubled Waters, the Cambridge Health Alliance, and the Cambridge Police Department."



**Silver Lining Mentoring:** "Silver Lining Mentoring works exclusively with young people impacted by foster care through all of its programming. For My Summer in the City, Silver Lining Mentoring recruited youth engaged in its other services to participate in the additional offerings provided by this program."



**Immigrant Student Program (UMASS Boston):** "[We reached out to] students who self-identified as DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival) and gave permission to be contacted, through pre-existing mentoring networks of DACA and TPS (Temporary Protected Status) students by ISP staff, through our applicants and winners of our Immigrant Achievers scholarship, through the Student Immigrant Alliance student group, and through our multicultural student centers."



**Boys & Girls Club:** "We recruited through flyers in our Club and through partnering with the Boston Police district B-3 Community Relations officer, Youth Connect, and Casa Myrna."

# We helped youth develop key skills.



"Our MSITC youth gained skills in the following areas: team building / group cohesiveness, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, resume building, S.M.A.R.T goals, job shadowing, time management, critical thinking, conflict management, work priorities, recommendation letters, public speaking, and developing a personal brand," shared one partner.

## Because of their MSITC experience this year, our participating youth...

Are better prepared to be successful in the workplace in the future.	90%
Are more confident and feel better about themselves.	90%
Can better see how they can make a difference in their neighborhood and community.	97%
Are more comfortable with people from different backgrounds.	79%
Made better connections to adults who can guide their future and help them to be successful.	90%
Have developed leadership qualities.	90%

# What other skills did our young people gain?

- Active Listening
- Civic Engagement
- Code Switching
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Conflict Resolution
- Email Etiquette
- Emotional Intelligence
- Facilitation
- Gender Sensitivity
- Group Facilitation
- Personal Brand
- Presentation Delivery
- Research
- Self-Awareness
- Teamwork
- Work/Life Balance





## We also helped them grow beyond the job.

MSITC youth did more than develop skills on the job. They also participated in other activities that helped them to develop as a person. Here's what some of our youth did this summer:



"We visited City Soil to learn about large scale composting and jobs related to processing. We also toured the nature conservancy to learn about permaculture and related jobs, including starting a small business and different types of business models."



"We worked with local artists to create benches that told an artistic story collectively about our summer work and learned firsthand about working as an artist and about being a teaching artist."



"As part of Jóvenes, all youth, including the 14 year olds who were enrolled, attended college visits to Harvard, UMass Boston, and Northeastern University, and they also visited Year Up."



"The 14-year-old JCITs created a social justice curriculum that they ran for the elementary school students once a week. They visited local businesses and talked to the owners. They also did a project with a Lesley Art Therapy intern in which they created "altered books" to explore their own identities."



"Each youth co-created and co-lead a 1.5 hour workshop exploring a topic of their choosing. By leading a workshop, each participant applied facilitation and curriculum development skills they have been learning throughout the summer. Examples of workshops ranged from Police Brutality to Homelessness and LGBTQ issues. Youth leaders showed video clips, shared statistics, and led discussions about their topics. At the end of their workshop, participants shared feedback and growth areas."

## Each of our partners provided a unique and valuable experience for the youth with whom they worked. Here are just a few stories:

**Phillips Brooks House Association:** “This summer, PBHA piloted an employment program for youth experiencing homelessness. Summer Science, which supports the Summer Urban Program’s 10 day camps, employed two young people experiencing homelessness to serve as science teachers. They worked alongside college students conducting hands-on experiments in biology, chemistry, and physics. Both built confidence working closely with the children in their classes and collaborating with their college-student peers. In staff meetings, the two populations were indistinguishable. MSITC youth encouraged their peers to consider LGBTQ+ issues and challenges that many families face. They pushed the group to slow down, to take the time to listen to and engage with the children. Ultimately, one of the two participants emerged as a program leader. Both connected with co-teachers, made friends, and enhanced the work of the entire group.”

**Silver Lining Mentoring:** “I think the best thing Silver Lining taught me is good decision making, weighing the pros and cons and understanding the consequences of your actions,” shared a participant. “This one was really important to me and I continue to use what I learned today. Silver Lining knows we need to learn how to get a job and work. They take us seriously and teach us in a way that respects who we are and what we’re dealing with. There have been challenges along the way, but Silver Lining Mentoring has given me the tools to deal with them.”

**Immigrant Student Program at UMASS Boston:** “The program was designed to train DACA and TPS students in basic professional, mentoring, and leadership skills so that they will become peer mentors for new students with similar immigration status during the academic year.

Students stated that they often feel isolated on campus because of their immigration status, and the SLI gave them the opportunity to build more substantive relationships and trust with other students, and with staff and faculty who facilitated workshops.”



**Boys & Girls Club Boston:** “Teens that participated in Young Leaders were able to gain a deeper insight on career readiness. With the completion of the program, they developed a better sense of group work. The Young Leaders programs helped our 13-14 year old members with both their professional and personal growth, as they had to rise to the occasion to engage in more peer to peer interactions.”

**Catholic Charities of Boston:** “The majority of our youth this summer were from various parts of the city. [We] noticed many times over that students were connecting and interacting with other students they were not familiar with. We stressed a lot of networking and building relationships this year.”

**Triangle Inc.:** “You are not simply assisting one person, but you are navigating through numerous support systems (i.e. the student’s family, public benefits programs, and supporting state agencies). For this reason, we assist our students as they progress towards a singular educational or employment goal while also serving as a resource navigator for students who, for instance, were inspired by the Friday culinary exploration activities and want to pursue further educational training.”

# What did our partners think?



"We feel that MSITC understood the business of our summer and was respectful in making sure we are able to dedicate the majority of our time to the program and its needs."

## 100%

of partners strongly agreed/agreed that MSITC program's policies and expectations for the organization were made clear from the start.

## 90%

of partners strongly agree/agreed that there was good communication about the program to the organization throughout the summer.



"A few of our teens enjoyed their work with us so much that they requested to continue working with us in the school year," shared a partner. "For those that are old enough to obtain working permits, we are able to hire them for part-time employment through a different grant program, in the fall. They will continue to help with the same kinds of programming they helped with during the summer."

That doesn't mean there aren't things we could do better. Here are some of the challenges our partners identified:

## Paperwork

"A challenge we encounter every year is getting IDs, social security cards, and/or working papers for youth so we can pay them through our payroll system."

"[We struggle with] reporting requirements, which vary widely from employment program to employment program and sometimes offer little flexibility in responding."

## Special Needs

"These vary from person to person, but we can point to common issues, many of which are related to others:

- PTSD
- Affected by racism, sexism, homophobia
- Involvement in the criminal justice system
- Parents or self under threat of deportation
- Marginal housing situation
- Cognitive issues including autism
- Emotional/behavioral regulation
- Exposure to violence (at home/school/streets, by family/strangers/police)"

"Due to the instability of life in foster care, it is often difficult for individual young people to commit to enough hours to meet this threshold."

"[We need assistance] securing funding for supervisors, not only youth participants. PBHA employs youth supervisors who come from the same populations they are serving."

## Capacity

"We know firsthand the demand is greater than the supply. Our registration filled up in 4 days, and our waitlist was over 60 youth long. We'd love to be able to continue to grow the program to serve more youth but have capacity issues due to physical space availability, transportation, and staffing. We are starting to think more creatively about how to expand the program by partnering with other youth development agencies to duplicate the program elsewhere in the city."

# Moving Forward

In addition to the real-time experiences of the MSITC program, we also implemented a research program, funded by Mass Housing, to examine barriers to youth employment.

Boston University, with the support of the Boston Foundation, worked to recruit a diverse group of Boston youth to serve as the core research team. The team completed a photovoice project and surveyed **209** Boston-area youth about their employment experience and barriers to employment.

Nearly **95%** of survey participants were people of color, mostly representing the Boston neighborhoods South End, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, and Dorchester.

## Here are some of their findings:

- Most youth use public transportation or get rides from a family member to get to work, spending an average of 26 minutes in commute.
- Original social security card, photo identification, and original birth certificate are the three most common documents required of youth to get a job.
- The Boston Public Schools don't provide photo IDs for all students. Students in grades 10-12 more likely to receive school photo IDs.
- Not hearing about jobs and not having transportation to jobs were the two most common barriers identified by survey respondents.
- 66% of youth with jobs found their current job through personal contacts (either family, friends, or staff at youth organizations).

## Some of their recommendations included:

- T-passes could be made more accessible for individuals under 21, particularly for youth enrolled in school (or training programs) and during the summer time, as well as homeless youth and systems involved youth.
- Ensure that school district staff are aware of work permit requirements and providing the same information to all youth.
- Create a platform through which community organizations can share information about positions, trainings, youth career development opportunities with one another and the broader community
- Share youth employment information with foster parents and child welfare agencies.

The recommendations they put together will be considered carefully alongside the feedback from our partners as we continue to develop an inclusive program that reaches our targeted communities.

## Thank You to Our Researchers

- Astraea Augsberger, PhD, Boston University School of Social Work
- Whitney Gecker, MA, Boston University School of Social Work
- Linda Sprague Martinez, PhD, Boston University School of Social Work



Thank you to Boston University  
and Masshousing Department  
of Community Services

# Meet Our Grantees

- African Community Economic Development of New England
- Bikes Not Bombs
- Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC)
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Boston, Inc.
- Caribbean Youth Club
- Catholic Charitable Bureau of the Archdiocese of Boston, Inc.  
d/b/a The Teen Center at St. Peter's
- Center to Support Immigrant Organizing
- East Boston YMCA
- Foundation for Boston Centers for Youth & Families
- Friends of St. Stephen's Youth Programs
- Groundwork Somerville
- Hawthorne Youth and Community Center Incorporated
- Hyde Square Task Force
- IBA - Inquilinos Boricuas en Accion, Inc.
- Immigrant Student Program, University of Massachusetts Boston
- Level Ground Mixed Martial Arts
- Medicine Wheel
- Mothers for Justice and Equality
- My Life My Choice
- Phillips Brooks House Association, Inc. (PBHA)
- Project RIGHT, Inc.
- Silver Lining Mentoring
- Sociedad Latina
- Sportsmen's Tennis & Enrichment Center
- The City School
- Transformative Culture Project
- Triangle, Inc.
- Urban Guild, Inc.
- West End House, Inc.



"MSITC makes critical impact on young people who are overlooked during the summer," shared a partner. "MSITC fills an important void that if unfulfilled will leave many young people with little to do, which means they then get drawn into negative activities."



"I learned a lot about myself, including my strengths, weaknesses, and my limits," shared Kaleesha Joseph, a program participant. "Some of my strengths include contributing thoughtful input to group discussions and taking initiative. One of my weaknesses is being more personal with my [team] members. All in all, I feel very fortunate to have been able to take part this summer. Being on the [team] taught me how to build a community and how to contribute to one. This summer was one to remember!"

