BRIDGING NEW YORKERS INTO GOOD JOBS

A Toolkit for Expanding Bridge Programs in NYC

NYC EMPLOYMENT + TRAINING COALITION
THE STRONG VOICE FOR NEW YORK CITY'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

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ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS

NYC Employment and Training Coalition

NYCETC supports the workforce & economic development community to ensure that every New Yorker has access to the skills, training & education needed to thrive in the local economy, and that every business is able to maintain a highly skilled workforce. Founded in 1997 as the membership organization for New York City workforce providers, NYCETC has played a vital role in the workforce community, focused on advancing policy priorities and convening the sector to build capacity by sharing information and best practices.

Per Scholas

Per Scholas is a national nonprofit that drives positive and proven social change in communities across the country. Through rigorous and tuition-free technology training and professional development, we prepare motivated and curious adults who are unemployed or underemployed for successful careers as technology professionals, and we create onramps to businesses in need of their talents. Today we provide our solutions in eight cities across the country: Atlanta, GA; Greater Boston, MA; Greater Cincinnati, OH; Columbus, OH; Dallas, TX; the National Capital Region; Newark, NJ and New York, NY. To date, Per Scholas has trained 9,000 individuals, helping them build lasting, life changing skills and careers in technology.

The Door

The Door's mission is to empower young people to reach their potential by providing comprehensive youth development services in a diverse and caring environment. Since 1972, The Door has helped a diverse and rapidly growing population of disconnected youth in New York City gain the tools they need to become successful, in school, work and in life. While we pride ourselves on offering all of our services under one roof, The Door is also focused on impacting the lives of young people throughout the city — and the world — and, as such, has served as a model for other, similar organizations locally, nationally and internationally.

General Assembly

General Assembly is a pioneer in education and career transformation, specializing in today's most in-demand skills. The leading source for training, staffing, and career transitions, we foster a flourishing community of professionals pursuing careers they love. What began as a co-working space in 2011 has since grown into a global learning experience with campuses in 20 cities and over 35,000 graduates worldwide. As individuals and companies struggle to compete in an increasingly technological economy, General Assembly provides award-winning, dynamic training to close the global skills gap.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was originally completed in February 2020. However, even through periods of economic growth like the one experienced over the last decade, thousands of New Yorkers still struggled to find stable, well-paying, and quality jobs and careers.

Since mid-March, the economic gap has only been exacerbated by COVID-19 and the related recession, which has increased city unemployment rates to 20.4%. The over 750,000 jobs lost from June 2019 to August 2020 have primarily come from service-based industries, like leisure and hospitality, which are often categorized as low-wage and low-skill jobs. Transitions to more stable, higher-paying fields— such as technology and healthcare — are currently unfeasible for many New Yorkers as they lack the needed skills or educational credentials to access jobs in these fast-growing fields. Historically, access to quality education, professional networks, and skilling opportunities have been denied to the working class, immigrants, and communities of color.

A body of evidence suggests that bridge programs, which prepare individuals with the foundational skills needed to enter and succeed in job training programs, enable a diverse group of New Yorkers to pursue careers that were previously out of reach. However, as with any relatively nascent sector, there remains a lack of consensus around key definitions and approaches to effectively developing, implementing and supporting bridge programs.

This report, commissioned by the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), and produced by the New York City Employment and Training Coalition (NYCETC), Per Scholas, The Door and General Assembly, provides an overview of the landscape of bridge programs in New York City, quantifies the need for those programs, identifies systemic challenges that pose barriers to bridge program expansion, and proposes opportunities and recommendations to further develop and support bridge programs in the city. The report is accompanied by a resource guide providing strategic guidance to organizations interested in developing bridge programs.

The report makes the case for a substantial expansion of bridge programs across the city, both through increased investment by City agencies and through expanded private philanthropic funding. A conservative estimate suggests that as many as 590,000 New Yorkers could be served by bridge programs in the near term, indicating an urgent need for more such programs to build on the existing ecosystem. While the long-term implications of the current financial crisis remain unclear, the demonstrated need for bridge programs in a tight labor market shows that they will be even more critical for New Yorkers facing even greater barriers to employment than prior to the pandemic. It is clear that the need for job transitions and career pathways - particularly for those working in industries that will be slow to recover or are transitioning rapidly - will be more urgent than ever before.

This report has two major goals. First, it aims to jumpstart a discussion about the role of bridge programs in improving not only the employment prospects of individual New Yorkers, but also the city's broader workforce development systems. Second, it offers specific guidance for organizations interested in developing and scaling bridge programs of their own, as well as for policymakers, funders, and advocates interested in supporting them. At this historic moment for New York City, meaningful investment in bridge programs can create the pathway into the middle class, particularly for individuals who previously lacked access to skilling and educational networks.

INTRODUCTION

In New York City, like in much of the United States, the relatively strong economy is creating favorable conditions for job-seekers. New York City's 4.1% unemployment rate is the city's lowest since 1976, and the city's economy added 820,400 jobs between 2009 and 2018, more than all but four states.[1] Sectors such as healthcare, which has added jobs in the city every year since 1990, and tech, which has seen an 80% increase in jobs since 2009, are booming,[2] providing many workers with stable, well-paying careers.

However, many jobs — both in New York and nationwide — are requiring more and more training.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that between now and 2026, the fastest-growing jobs nationwide will be those with the most education requirements.[3] But many New Yorkers lack the requisite literacy and numeracy skills to obtain a high school diploma, let alone a more advanced credential, and are therefore shut out of many growing industries. In 2017, 1.1 million New Yorkers age 25 and over lacked a high school diploma, representing nearly 20% of residents in that age group. They had limited employment prospects, earned a median income of less than $20,400, and one in three were living in poverty.[4]

Moreover, having a high school or equivalency diploma does not equate to having the skills to succeed in a training program and thrive in a job. Nearly 80% of CUNY community college students who are NYC Department of Education graduates were assigned to remediation in at least one subject.[5] This number has been fairly consistent since 2002, despite increasing graduation rates.

> " In too many of our communities, the popularity of New York City has not translated into prosperity for everyday New Yorkers who have been left behind from our economic growth. As we work to expand and diversify the business sectors such as tech that will call our city home in the years ahead, we have a responsibility to correct the longstanding inequities that exist within our neighborhoods. We have to develop the quality talent that businesses need, and that means deeply investing in workforce development programs that go hand in hand with our economic development initiatives. This includes the full gamut of skill development, starting with the expansion of bridge programs that create access for New Yorkers with foundational skill barriers to tap into training programs and the career opportunities they enable.
>
> **— Eric Adams, Brooklyn Borough President**

> **The greatest challenge facing many American businesses like Cognizant is finding the talent that we need. Record low levels of unemployment leading to a tight labor market threaten to constrain the ability of businesses to grow. As jobs increasingly require higher levels of education and training, industry engagement strategies have increasingly required companies like Cognizant to partner with and strategically invest into training organizations that are effectively equipping workers with the specific skills required to succeed in the new digital economy.**
>
> **— Eric Westphal, Director of Global Talent Strategy and Economic Development, Cognizant**

When workforce program clients from these challenging educational backgrounds have attempted to pursue training programs that would increase their employability, they were frequently turned away: an analysis by the New York City Employment and Training Coalition (NYCETC) found that 23% of applicants across 26 workforce training providers in the city were rejected or referred to lower-level training because of insufficient reading, math and/or English language skills.[6]

These findings suggest a need for efforts like bridge programs that teach people the skills they need to be accepted into job training or higher education programs — and pursue careers that were previously out of reach. While a more detailed definition is included further within this report, bridge programs typically combine contextualized preparation for job training with wraparound support services to help students complete their programs and ultimately find stable employment. They are uniquely positioned to fill an unmet — and often unrecognized — need in the city's workforce development ecosystem: endemic educational and skills gaps in literacy, numeracy and/or English language that limit opportunity for millions of New Yorkers, as well as critical 21st century skills like digital literacy, computational thinking, and logic and reasoning that the educational and workforce development systems have yet to develop a systemic, cohesive way of measuring.

"Bridge programs create strategic opportunities to help those not quite ready to catapult to the next steps of their career journeys. Unfortunately, in under-resourced communities this kind of help isn't reliably present, thus further exacerbating income disparity," said Laurie Dien, vice president/executive director for programs at The Pinkerton Foundation. "The concept of bridge programs isn't earth shattering, but these programs can cause seismic positive changes in people's lives."

Policymakers and other stakeholders often assume that the range of adults' literacy and numeracy skills starts at a high school

level, which would qualify them for many job training programs, but in reality, many New Yorkers read and do math at or below an eighth-grade level. These foundational skill gaps and their consequences compound over time, as many individuals grapple with the trade-off of dedicating limited time and resources that need to be used for earning wages to support themselves and their families in the short-term, versus addressing literacy and numeracy barriers that would be beneficial in the long-term.

Bridge programs are designed and contextualized with a specific "next step" in mind, which can open up access to certain industries or training programs to people who lack foundational skills. Though bridge programs have received more attention in New York City in recent years through Mayor de Blasio's 2014 Career Pathways report and the work of advocates such as NYCETC and the Center for an Urban Future leading up to the 2019 "Bridges to Better Jobs" campaign by the Invest in Skills NYC coalition, public awareness of these programs — and funding to expand and scale them — is still limited.

The objectives of this paper are to provide an overview of the landscape of bridge programs in New York City, quantify the need for those programs, identify barriers to program expansion, and offer recommendations for providers, funders, policymakers, and supporters. The report is accompanied by a resource guide for organizations interested in developing bridge programs.

The arguments in this paper are based on 37 interviews with bridge program stakeholders — including service providers, graduates of bridge programs, funders, and policymakers — as well as a survey of 47 current, former, or prospective bridge program providers in New York City.

> **Bridge programs are the best way to prepare New Yorkers for the good-paying jobs that are currently available. The City of New York cannot address income inequality as well as meet the complex talent needs of businesses across industries without making a significant investment in this critical area.**
>
> **— Jessica Walker, President and CEO of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce**
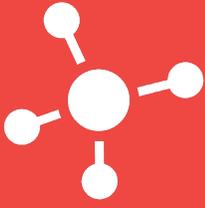
MODELS OF SUCCESS: TECHBRIDGE & CODEBRIDGE

This report and the accompanying resource guide are rooted in TechBridge and CodeBridge, two effective bridge program models developed by The Door, Per Scholas and General Assembly to address the underrepresentation of young adults and individuals with economic barriers in the booming tech sector.

To date, the results of these programs demonstrate the potential of bridge programs as a driver of economic mobility: participants in TechBridge — which raises individuals' literacy and numeracy skills to the 10th grade level requried to enter and succeed within Per Scholas' IT Support program — have equally high graduation and job placement rates as participants who directly entered the IT Support program already equipped with the required 10th grade literacy and numeracy skills. Since 2015, this has meant that 115 talented low-income, young adult New Yorkers who were locked out of one of the fastest growing sectors have entered a field rife with career advancement and opportunities. Without TechBridge, those individuals would have remained locked out and struggling, and the companies that now employ them would be lacking their talent and perspective.

While the examples mentioned in this report are primarily focused on tech training, their structure and best practices can and should be expanded to non-tech occupations that will grow with the tech industry and other projected growth sectors that the City is cultivating.

TECHBRIDGE: AN OVERVIEW

	Activities	Outcomes	Cost
IT Bridge Program 5 weeks	@ Per Scholas: career exploration & IT Support pre-training @ The Door: contextualized academic support & wraparound services (transportation, mental health, childcare etc)	60 enroll / year 83% completed & leveled-up to IT Support 17% pursue other sector training/job	$6,000 /student
IT Suppotrt Program 15 weeks	@ Per Scholas: hands-on IT training, customer service training; CompTIA A+ & Network+ certifications; professional development, resume & interview coaching @ The Door: wraparound services	Internship and/or entry-level job through 200+ employer network Access to high skill training ex. Systems Administrator & Cyber Security 80% graduated program: – 73% secured employment – 27% in internships and/or continuing job search	$9,000 /student

CHALLENGES FOR FOREIGN-BORN NEW YORKERS

The more than 3 million foreign-born residents of New York City face a blend of the challenges enumerated here, and would particularly benefit from bridge programs that combine English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) contextualized to a sector, such as LaGuardia Community College' Bilingual Medical Assistant Training Program (see page 19). Social service providers such as the Chinese-American Planning Council — who predominantly serve the Asian American community, which is the fastest growing racial group in New York City and make up 15% of the population — are uniquely positioned to scale up bridge programs to answer the unmet needs of their clients.

"Unfortunately, this predominantly immigrant community faces barriers to quality employment due to language barriers, immigration status, and education credentials, as illustrated by the community's poverty rate of over 23%," said Wayne Ho, President and CEO of the Chinese-American Planning Council. "As a provider of workforce development programs for over 40 years, CPC knows that bridge programs are effective at building the skills of low-income immigrants and people of color. If the City followed through on its commitment to fund career pathways, CPC and other workforce development providers would be able to expand our training programs and create career opportunities for unemployed and underemployed New Yorkers."

SPOTLIGHT: OPPORTUNITIES FOR TECH TRAINING IN NYC

Over the past 10 years, NYC's technology ecosystem[7] has become one of the city's most steady sources of well-paying jobs, directly employing about 300,000 New Yorkers and indirectly supporting another 250,000 as of 2013. These jobs grew by 18% over the past decade, which is significantly faster than the overall rate of growth citywide (12%). Jobs in the tech ecosystem also have hourly wages that are an average of 50% higher than the overall average, and over 40% of these jobs are open to people who lack four-year degrees.

Even as the tech ecosystem provides opportunities for a growing share of New Yorkers, some New Yorkers still lack opportunities to enter the tech industry in particular. According to a recent report from the Center for an Urban Future (CUF) and Tech:NYC, New York City's network of tech training and education programs lacks the scale and reach necessary to close significant access and opportunity gaps in tech employment. The report finds that the city's tech skills-building ecosystem has made significant progress in recent years, with at least 238 organizations operating 506 tech education and training programs at 857 locations across the five boroughs, including programs aimed at both K-12 students and working adults. But CUF and Tech:NYC's research identified significant programmatic gaps, geographic disparities, and capacity challenges, as well as an alarming share of working adults who are unable to access effective, high-quality training due to more foundational needs around basic literacy and math skills.[8]

"To help more New Yorkers get on the path to a well-paying job in tech, the city will need to dramatically scale up the strikingly small number of intensive training programs that consistently lead to employment in the sector," said Eli Dvorkin, editorial and policy director at the Center for an Urban Future and co-author of the study. "But for many of the most effective in-depth, career-oriented training programs that are free or low cost, acceptance rates are as low as those of selective colleges. Too few working New York adults are prepared to succeed in these programs, in large part due to a lack of basic literacy, numeracy, and/or digital skills, or because applicants lack a high school diploma."

Of the 34 adult programs profiled in depth for this project, one-quarter said that too few New Yorkers have the fundamental skills needed to succeed in their program. Among the most selective programs, a lack of proficiency in basic literacy and/or math skills was cited as the single greatest barrier.

"To create a more inclusive tech sector," said Dvorkin, "investments to scale the in-depth, career-focused programs that lead to tech employment should go hand-in-hand with new funding for bridge programs that provide crucial onramps into further education and tech training."

DEFINING BRIDGE PROGRAMS

Through 30 in-depth interviews with program providers, policy makers and funders, we established a general consensus on what constitutes a bridge program. Those stakeholders characterized bridge programs as **sector-specific preparation for job training programs that is structured to address a specific barrier (e.g., insufficient math, literacy or English language skills; lack of a required credential or license) that is keeping an individual from accessing a training program or postsecondary education.** They offer additional supports and services to help students complete the program and eventually find employment, and they are typically, though not always, delivered through a partnership of two or more organizations (or departments within an organization).

The New York City Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (WKDEV) defines bridge programs slightly differently, as programs that "prepare individuals with low educational attainment and limited skills for entry into a higher educational level, occupational skills training or career-track jobs, building the competencies necessary for work and education alongside career and supportive services." The Mayor's Office goes on to specify:

"Bridge programs contextualize programming to specific industry sectors and have established relationships with partners (occupational skills training, education, and/or specific sector employment) that inform program design and serve as the primary 'next step' destination for program participants.

"Bridge programs pair educational instruction and workforce development services using one of two approaches:

1. **Contextualized Bridge:** teaching academic skills against a backdrop of sector-specific content
2. **Integrated Bridge:** incorporating literacy and numeracy instruction into an occupation-specific training

"These core services are tailored to meet the needs of the target population (e.g., youth, re-entry, low-income clients, etc.) and the bridge destination (e.g., employer, training provider, education provider, etc.)."[9]

According to NYCETC's Annie Garneva, the term "bridge program" remains confusing to some in the service provider community, leading a broad variety of programs to call themselves bridges even if their programming or approach does not meet the City's definition. The confusion of terms is due, at least in part, to underfunding and non-alignment within the workforce development field that have pushed resource-strapped service providers to re-frame disparate program elements as "bridge

programs'' with the aim of tapping into the growing political and philanthropic attention that bridge program advocacy has garnered over the last five years.

Our proposed definition clarifies and narrows the City's definition by specifying that bridge programs should **lead to further education or training**, whereas the City's definition also permits bridge programs to lead directly to jobs. We believe that including jobs as a direct outcome of bridge programs often leads to other training programs being inaccurately described as bridge programs. In contrast, our definition helps differentiate bridge programs from so-called "last-mile" training.[10]

Using our more specific definition of bridge programs will also help clarify the need for these programs and the role that they serve in New York City's workforce system. Clarity around the definition is important to ensure that stakeholders can effectively communicate about bridge programs, correct misperceptions, communicate value to funders, and serve New Yorkers well. For instance, a funder who expects bridge programs to lead directly to jobs may be less inclined to support a program whose objective is to prepare people for further training.

This definitional clarity also supports the long-term development of a workforce system that offers a continuum of services that reflects the range of employment and training needs of New Yorkers as they progress throughout their careers. Over the past 20 years, the City's workforce system has focused on placing New Yorkers into jobs as quickly as possible, an approach known as "rapid attachment." For the most part, this approach has resulted in a higher quantity of hires but not necessarily an equivalent quality of sustained outcomes, with many previously unemployed New Yorkers finding employment in overwhelmingly low-wage positions with few benefits, irregular scheduling, and limited advancement potential. As the 2014 Career Pathways report framed it, "these were jobs that failed to provide a path to economic security" resulting in many clients churning back into the system seeking the same employment services, but now more frustrated and in greater need than before. Among services offered by the Human Resources Administration (HRA), one out of every four Cash Assistance recipients who left the welfare rolls for employment were receiving assistance again within twelve months.[11]

In order to support the City's stated vision for an improved workforce system that moves away from this unsuccessful rapid attachment model and toward one of a continuum of services that tackles the deeply rooted barriers keeping millions of New Yorkers from tapping into the city's economic growth, programs need to be designed and funded with more specific expected outcomes — ex. skill level gain, exam pass rates, credential attainment, rate of entry into the next step training program — that reflect this continuum, not just job placement.

For all of these reasons, we recommend aligning stakeholders around the consensus definition developed through our interviews, which defines bridge programs as leading only to further education or training, not directly to employment.

PARTNERSHIPS

Organizations partner & are funded
to maximize own core competencies

WRAPAROUND SERVICES

Childcare,
legal support,
supportive housing,
food, transportation

CONTEXTUALIZED TO SECTOR/INDUSTRY

Contextualized & developed
to meed specific needs of
population served &
in-demand sector

CAREER EXPLORATION

Outreach and engagement with local
employers in relevant fields of study

COUNSELING

Case management, mental health
counseling, assistance to benefits

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> **Sector-specific preparation:** Sector-specific preparation, often called contextualization, is an essential component of successful bridge programs because it introduces students to a certain sector of the labor market and teaches them the skills and the professional norms to succeed in that sector. As NYCETC's Jose Ortiz, Jr. put it, this means "putting the skills they need in the context of what they need" to succeed in a specific training program. The goal of contextualization is to ensure stronger program outcomes than non-contextualized programs by increasing buy-in from participants, giving them a clearer roadmap to where they are going and how the program will get them there.

For example, a math lesson in a bridge program for the healthcare industry might be based on prescriptions and doses, while the math in an IT-focused bridge program might be focused on routers and switches. Bridge programs are also set up to meet the specific needs of the students in a particular cohort, whether that means altering the class schedule to better serve the current cohort of students or adding a lesson on how to dress for a job in information technology.

> **Preparation for job training programs or postsecondary education:** Bridge programs differ from job training programs in that the former prepares students for workforce training and postsecondary education programs and the latter prepares students for employment. In college parlance, the training program is akin to an introductory, 100-level course in a specific field and the bridge program is more like a pre-100-level course that prepares students to succeed in the 100-level course. "The whole idea is that someone needs an additional layer of skill-building to access an advanced set of skills," explained Liliana Polo-McKenna, Executive Director of Opportunity for a Better Tomorrow.

Some bridge programs partner with a single training or education provider and route students directly from the bridge to the next step, while other programs refer students to multiple programs in the same industry or give students broader and shallower exposure to different careers in multiple industries.

> **Offer additional supports and services:** Because students often face several barriers to accessing training and employment, bridge program providers usually need to offer other services in addition to skill-building in order to break down those barriers. These are commonly called "wraparound services," a term that is common in healthcare and human services and has begun to spread to higher education.

People Encouraging People, a healthcare organization in Baltimore, Maryland, defines wraparound services as "comprehensive, holistic services aimed at meeting the unique needs of specific groups of clients."[12] In the postsecondary world, the National College Transition Network suggests that the phrase "might represent individualized and coordinated services and supports across a wide variety of departments and systems."[13]

For the purposes of bridge programs, our working definition is that wraparound services are non-academic supports that increase students' ability to engage with and master the academic content, such as childcare, food, transportation, career coaching or resume assistance, mental health counseling, and housing assistance. It is rare for a provider to offer all of these services; rather, the services available to a particular cohort are often based on their specific needs. For example, students in early-morning classes may need childcare, whereas providing food is more important for students in evening classes.

> **Partnership of two or more organizations (or departments within an organization):** Most bridge programs are operated as partnerships between two or more organizations which have different — but complementary — expertise that allows them to together expand access to the training program. In many cases, one organization has population-specific expertise (e.g., outreach, wraparound services, case management, contextualized academic support), while the other brings sector-specific expertise (e.g., curriculum development, career exploration, employer relationships, certifications, professional development).

However, it is also possible for organizations to operate bridge programs without a dedicated partner that offers occupational training and job placement services. Community colleges are particularly well-positioned to operate bridge programs independently because they tend to have both the infrastructure and the curricular expertise. The lack of a dedicated partner may make it more difficult to place graduates in a specific next step, but organizations may mitigate this by exposing students to a variety of industries within a single bridge program and/or by establishing a strong referral pipeline with multiple training or education providers.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BRIDGE PROGRAMS

While this consensus definition focuses bridge programs around several key characteristics, it also leaves needed room for variation in program design, logistics, goals, and outcomes based on industry needs, student population, and other factors. At their core, bridge programs and their design process are flexible and reactive to the needs of a specific subset of clients that an organization has identified as facing unique barriers and challenges to accessing a training program. Examples of targeted groups in existing bridge programs include immigrants with low English proficiency aiming to develop bilingual healthcare careers, and NYCHA residents needing proficiency in construction math in order to qualify for apprenticeship programs in the trades. This variance in client needs, target sectors and qualifications needed to enter the advanced training program will inform program length, cost, type, and expected outcomes. Indeed, the programs we talked to had substantial differences, including:

> **Types of training:** Bridge programs often focus on literacy, numeracy, and/or English as a second language, but they can also teach introductory technology principles, preparation for apprenticeship programs, or even skills needed in high-demand fields such as commercial driving. Depending on the skills being taught, bridge programs may require certain prerequisites—such as a certain level of literacy, a high-school degree or equivalent, or a permit such as the one for commercial driving—or be open to anyone.

> **Outcomes:** Bridge program graduates typically pursue higher education, apprenticeship programs in skilled trades, or other training programs in fields such as IT. Sometimes, students receive a certification or license at the end of the bridge or training program, such as a high school equivalency or a trade certificate.

> **Program structure:** Each program operator may structure their programs differently, including the course schedule and intensity, class size, and scope of wraparound services.

> **Types of partnerships:** Because bridge programs offer a variety of instruction and services, it makes sense that the types of partnerships that operate them also vary. Non-profit organizations, employers facing worker shortages, labor unions, city government, and institutions of higher education are all involved in certain types of bridge programs.

> **Funding sources**: Each bridge program has different funding sources and cost constraints, which influence the scope, structure, and design of their bridge programs.

THE LANDSCAPE OF BRIDGE PROGRAMS IN NYC

New York City is home to dozens of public and private programs that help connect workers to jobs. The city's publicly-funded bridge programs include CUNY's CUNY Prep and Math Start; Department of Youth and Community Development's Advance and Earn, Out of School Youth, and Young Adult Literacy programs; the Department of Education's Out of School Youth program; and several bridge programs administered by the Department of Small Business Services.

This report provides an overview of bridge programs in New York City, both public and private, based on an online survey administered between September and November 2019. NYCETC reached out to over 150 workforce organizations, and 49 people representing 40 organizations responded to the bridge program survey.

Thirty-seven respondents were from organizations that currently operate bridge programs, while three were at organizations that used to but no longer operate bridge programs and nine were at organizations that have never operated bridge programs. The majority of respondents at organizations that currently operate bridge programs reported that their organizations operate one or two bridge programs, and nine said that their organizations operate four or more programs. In total, our survey represented at least 98 programs that combine to serve approximately 2,250 students per year. Notably, nearly all organizations represented that do not currently operate bridge programs do refer clients to other providers. While these are useful programs in their own right, bridge programs would be a more effective option in cases where entry into the labor force is the end goal.

SURVEY

| 40	98	2,250
ORGANIZATIONS	PROGRAMS	STUDENTS

STRUCTURE AND DESIGN

Most bridge programs represented in this survey are relatively new: 74% are less than ten years old and 43% are one to five years old. They focus on a range of fields including technology (31%), construction (26%), healthcare (21%), and hospitality (15%) and each serve anywhere from 20 to 500 students per year. The programs tend to be relatively short, with 68% lasting 10 weeks or fewer. 40% of respondents said their cohorts are typically larger than 20 students, 40% said their cohorts are 11 to 20 students, and 21% said their cohorts are 10 or fewer students.

The programs have a wide variety of partners, but six respondents mentioned partnering with New York City government departments or with elected officials. Others mentioned Hostos Community College and LaGuardia Community College, trade unions, and various non-profits and community-based organizations as the next step after bridge program completion.

THE TYPICAL BRIDGE PROGRAM

LESS THAN 10 YEARS OLD

10 WEEKS OR FEWER

FOCUS
- Technology
- Construction
- Healthcare industry

LEADS TO

A SPECIFIC TRAINING PROGRAM

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

$6,800 PER STUDENT TO OPERATE

FREE FOR STUDENTS

FUNDING

GOVERNMENT + PHILANTHROPIC DOLLARS

MEASURES
- Student completion rates
- Job placement rates
- Attendance

COSTS AND FUNDING

All but one respondent indicated that their organization's bridge programs are free for students. However, the operating costs for each organization vary significantly, ranging from $700 to $16,500 per student. The median operating cost is $6,800 per student, but six respondents — 27% of those who answered this question — indicated that the cost is at least $10,000 per student.

Those costs are most commonly covered by government funding (80% of respondents indicated that it is a primary source of funding) and philanthropic support (59%), and less often by individual donors (21%) or corporate (15%) sponsors.

Operating Cost Per Student for Bridge Programs in New York CIty
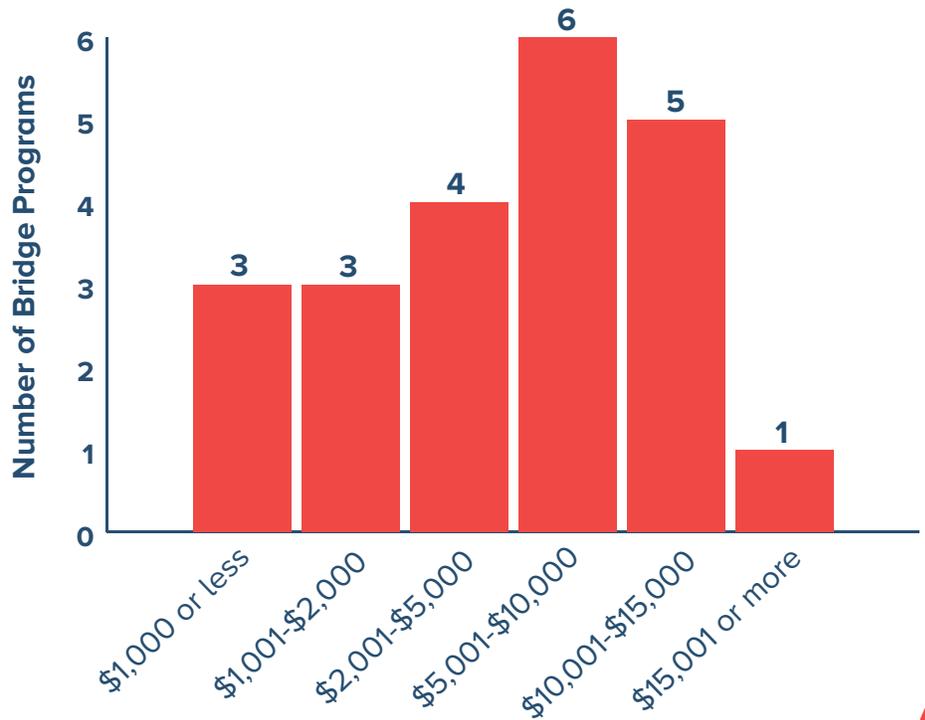
STUDENT ADMISSIONS

The average number of applicants for a single cohort ranged from five to 300, with a median of 35 applicants. The programs also use several different strategies for selecting their student cohorts. Over 90% of respondents indicated that their bridge programs have admissions requirements. Eight in ten respondents said that their programs turn away at least 10% of applicants for not meeting them; 27% said that they turn away at least half of applicants. English language skills were the most common requirement (62%), followed by literacy requirements (51%) and numeracy requirements (35%). These literacy and numeracy requirements most often demanded that applicants have at least a fifth through eighth grade skill level. High school diplomas or their equivalents (27%), education beyond high school (5%), and preliminary licenses or certifications (3%) were less common requirements.

In addition, common assessments used to admit students and/or track outcomes included Tests of Adult Basic Education, or TABE (used by 93% of respondents); interviews (30%); an assessment designed by the organization (19%); and the BEST Plus exam (15%).

STUDENT OUTCOMES

On average, respondents said that 82% of students who begin their organization's bridge program complete it, and one-quarter of respondents reported completion rates of at least 90%.

82% of students complete their organization's bridge program

The bridge programs represented in this survey allowed students to pursue a variety of next steps after graduation. 36% of respondents said that their organization's bridge program leads to a specific training program run by the same organization, while 28% said it leads to a specific training program run by another organization. 42% indicated that their organization's bridge program leads to multiple training options or career pathways. Just 11% mentioned college or other postsecondary education as a possible next step.

Somewhat surprisingly, only half of respondents said that their organization measures the success of its bridge programs based on graduates' rate of entry into the intended next step. Bridge programs' completion rates (81%), job placement rates (72%), attendance (72%), and pre- and post-tests of students' skills (64%) are all more common outcome measures than matriculation. While respondents were not asked to provide a rationale for choosing these metrics, we suspect that program operators are more likely to measure outcomes that are either easy for their own organization to track (e.g., bridge program attendance and completion rates) or reflect the ultimate goals of their program (e.g., job placement).

SPOTLIGHT: BRIDGE PROGRAMS IN HIGH-GROWTH FIELDS

TechBridge: TechBridge is a bridge program offered by Per Scholas and The Door for 18- to 24-year-olds interested in careers in tech. In addition to specialized tech training, which is free to students, students also benefit from wraparound services to address challenges such as childcare, food insecurity, and housing stability. Since 2015, 175 students have enrolled in TechBridge, of which 87% went on to Per Scholas's 15-week IT support training program. TechBridge's success has also served as a model for other bridge programming in New York City's Lower East Side.

CodeBridge: CodeBridge is an 18-week course in web programming offered by Per Scholas and General Assembly for individuals who are receiving public benefits and/or who are not employed in full-time jobs. The first six weeks cover introductory web development concepts and are taught by Per Scholas; students then progress into General Assembly's more advanced software engineering class. CodeBridge is full-time and free for students to attend, and students also receive career coaching, internship and job placement services, and soft skills training. Between 2006 and 2009, 159 students graduated from CodeBridge in New York, and 83% have found jobs in the tech industry.

Bilingual Medical Assistant Training Program: The Bilingual Medical Assistant Training Program, offered at no cost to students by LaGuardia Community College and funded in part by the NYC Department of Small Business Services, aims to help people with limited English proficiency find work in the healthcare industry and to diversify the pool of medical assistants in New York City. Students start with a contextualized English for Speakers of Other Languages course and progress to clinical medical assistant training that prepares them to receive several industry certifications. In the program's first year, 91% of the 44 students completed both the ESOL bridge and the medical assistant training, and 85% found jobs as medical assistants.

S.A.V.E. EMT: Supporting Adults Through Vocational EMT Training (S.A.V.E. EMT) was a program offered by LaGuardia Community College from 2011 to 2015 to help address a local shortage of emergency medical technicians. Students were given basic skills instruction at no cost and were certified in CPR before progressing to sector-specific training, which included two clinical rotations. Most students entered the program unemployed and without prior work experience in healthcare. In total, 312 students participated in the program, and 88% completed the class and passed the EMT certification exam. Unfortunately, the program shuttered after its funding ended in winter 2016.

QUANTIFYING THE NEED FOR BRIDGE PROGRAMS

There is widespread agreement among policymakers, workforce development organizations, employers, and other stakeholders that bridge programs can provide much-needed pathways to education and skills training. Below, this report estimates the need for bridge programs based on the premise that individuals who are either unemployed or working in low-wage jobs, and who lack education beyond high school, are the most relevant target population for such programs.

UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS

According to 2017 Census data, New York City is home to 5.6 million people ages 18 to 64[14] — the age range that is most likely to be seeking employment and/or training. An estimated 1.03 million people in that age range lack a high school degree, and just over 577,000 have less than a ninth grade education.

This subset of New Yorkers — those without a high school degre — represents perhaps the largest potential addressable market for bridge programs. However, not all of those individuals are seeking employment or training. The Census reports that the labor force participation rate for adults ages 20-64 is 76.5%, and slightly lower for ages 15-19. Reducing the counts of people lacking basic skills to account for the labor force participation rate yields estimates of about 769,400 people in the labor force without a high school degree and 433,200 people in the labor force with less than a ninth grade education.

The most immediate candidates for bridge programs are individuals who are unemployed. The Census reports that the unemployment rate in New York City for people without a high school degree is 10.3%. Applying that percentage to the previous estimate yields about 77,000 people who are unemployed and lack a high school degree.

INDIVIDUALS IN LOW-WAGE JOBS

Many other New Yorkers are employed but working in low-wage jobs, and therefore are potentially open to bridge programs to put them on a path toward more stable or better-paying careers. A 2019 report from the Brookings Institution estimates that there are 3.5 million low-wage workers in New York City and breaks these workers down into nine clusters based on age and educational attainment.[15] Combining the data from the relevant clusters, we estimate that there are about 512,300 low-wage workers in New York City who are between the ages of 18 and 64 and lack a high school diploma.

Taken together, these estimates indicate that roughly 590,000 New Yorkers could benefit from bridge programs in the near term. This is, of course, an approximation that does not take into account other populations (e.g., individuals with some college credit and no degree who might benefit from bridge programs). The above metrics were chosen based on the populations expected to have the most immediate need, and those in which the greatest percentage of individuals would likely benefit from the specific mix of programming and support services provided by bridge programs.

NYC HRA'S CALL FOR BRIDGE PROGRAMS

Existing evidence corroborates the hypothesis that there is significant unmet need for bridge programs to be launched, scaled up, and linked to existing educational and employment opportunities. In 2015, the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) published a concept paper advocating for the development of a bridge program for Cash Assistance recipients. HRA reported that, of nearly 47,000 clients they deemed "employable," 27,948 lacked a high school diploma or equivalent and therefore lacked the basic education needed to benefit from career pathway programs. Of those nearly 28,000 clients, 8,223 scored below a ninth-grade level on Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) in reading or math, which indicates further need for programs (such as bridge) that can raise their basic skills to a level appropriate for most job training programs.

Too many workforce system clients lack basic skills:
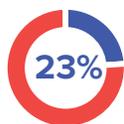
23% HRA Back to Work clients   **45%** DYCD Out-Of-School   **25%** DYCD Adults clients
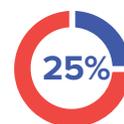
— have between 7th and 10th grade reading levels.

Overall, these estimates suggest that the official de Blasio Administration Career Pathways blueprint provides at most a minimum goal for the provision of these programs: $60 million, spread across multiple agencies, could potentially serve nearly 9,000 individuals per year at the $6,800 per-student median operating cost. This is just a fraction of the total potential need for bridge programs, but would be enough to substantially increase the number of individuals being served and allow for more robust data collection to inform future programs. As such, our first recommendation is for the City to develop ways to, at a minimum, fulfill the vision of Career Pathways and fund at least $60 million in bridge programs per year by the final year of the de Blasio Administration.

FINDINGS: BRIDGES LEVERAGE EXISTING INVESTMENTS; SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES SLOWING EXPANSION

Bridge Investments Leverage Other Training Investments
Our research into the need and relative availability of bridge programs in NYC uncovered a high potential return on investment for dollars spent on new or expanded bridge programs, provided those programs are linked to established advanced training or educational opportunities.

Specifically, we discovered that the bulk of training programs that connect clients to higher-paying sectors (such as tech and construction especially) require specific and unavoidable pre-requisite levels of educational attainment or foundational skills (most often measured through TABE scores). However, Census-level data makes it clear that a large and growing proportion of the unemployed and underemployed population in New York lacks these specific skills for entry (20% of NYC residents of working age lack an HS or HSE degree; this proportion is at least twice as high among unemployed residents). This broad-based data would suggest that higher-skill training programs ought to be encountering significant numbers of interested potential clients who are not able to begin their programs - and indeed, our snapshot of advanced tech training programs suggests that a number of interested potential clients are being turned away or sent to bridge programs (where available) for this very reason. Both the NYCETC survey of broad workforce programs and CUF's profile of tech training programs point to approximately one-quarter of training providers stating that many New Yorkers that seek their services do not have the fundamental skills needed to succeed within training programs. However, more data and research are needed on a system-wide level to understand the depth and breadth of foundational skill shortfalls among New Yorkers who aspire to participate in programming but do not meet skill and certificate based entry requirements. Coupled with the uncounted number of potential clients who do not even approach advanced training programs because they are aware of the barrier posed by their low levels of educational preparation, our key finding is that the relative lack of bridge programs is creating a limit on the number of clients successfully served by the highest-quality advanced training programs.

As a result, investing new resources in launching or expanding bridge programs directly linked to these sectoral trainings or education that prepare clients for higher-wage jobs presents funders (both public and private) with a high relative return on their investment (relative to vocational-only or literacy-only investments, for example).

A related finding is that the specific return on investment from bridge programs hasn't been rigorously studied or quantified. While all the indicators above suggest this category of workforce investment would be an especially effective one to invest in, the detailed data supporting that conclusion isn't yet publically available. Hopefully as bridge programs are expanded, the return on investment they offer is more thoroughly documented (and one of the specific recommendations to follow offers the example of newly launched bridge programs at DYCD as ones worth studying).

SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES

Despite the clear need to expand the pool of trained workers and offer paths to stable careers for more New Yorkers—and the potential of bridge programs to solve both of those challenges—there aren't nearly enough programs, or enough support for those that do exist. This stems, in part, from existing systemic challenges in the city's workforce development ecosystem. Those challenges include:

> **Lack of funding:** Nearly every interviewee mentioned funding as a major challenge for bridge programs. However, the baselined annual New York City budget makes no specific mention of bridge programs or other strategies to help New Yorkers prepare for, and access, postsecondary education or training. About two-thirds of the city's annual budget for workforce services is directed toward programs that help job seekers find "entry-level positions with low wages and limited advancement prospects." Just 7% supports training programs "that can provide skills that lead toward career-track jobs with opportunities for advancement."[16]

If funding is available, it tends to be limited and/or short-term. In 2014, New York City mayor Bill de Blasio launched a career pathways framework that specifically mentioned bridge programs as a way to support job-seekers, and the mayor's Jobs for New Yorkers Task Force recommended that the City invest $60 million per year in bridge programs by 2020. However, as of fiscal year 2020, the city had only budgeted $21 million. And according to Evelyn Ortiz, deputy director of the New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals (NYATEP), thousands of constituents have had to rally each year in order to secure government funding for basic adult literacy programs.

"There has not been a strong attempt at a city level to create a workforce that includes my constituents," said New York City Councilmember Ritchie Torres, who represents the city's 15th district. "Education systems tend to prioritize college readiness at the expense of career readiness, while economic development focuses predominantly on physical rather than human capital development. At every level of education, people are left behind. Without targeted and increased investments in a full gamut of workforce programs such as bridge, the message we're sending to constituents like mine is that they are destined to be homeless or working poor."

> **Lack of common metrics for evaluating bridge programs:** As detailed in the "definitions" section, the lack of understanding of bridge programs is an ongoing challenge for providers and supporters. Funders and students alike often conflate bridge programs with job training programs, which can give them unrealistic expectations for how quickly students can find employment and what the immediate outcomes will be. In

CITY–OPERATED BRIDGE AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

Program Name	Agency	Target Population	FY19 Budget	FY20 Budget*
CUNY Prep	CUNY	16-24 year olds who lack HS credential	$2,700,000	$2,700,000
Math Start	CUNY	Incoming CUNY associate-degree seeking students with significant remedial math needs	$3,100,000	$3,100,000
Advance and Earn**	DYCD	Young adults aged 16 to 24 not working and not in school	—	$13,000,000
Out of School Youth (OSY) program: bridge	DYCD	Young adults aged 16 to 24 not working and not in school	$2,035,595	$2,035,595
Young Adult Literacy Program**	DYCD	16-24 year olds with limited educational attainment	$3,795,488	—
Out of School Youth (OSY) program: D79 teachers	NYC-DOE	Young adults aged 16 to 24 not working and not in school	$100,000	$100,000
SBS Bridge Programs	SBS	Low-income New Yorkers, including immigrants and young adults aged 18 to 24 not working and not in school	$841,216	$969,640
Total			$12,578,829	$22,262,234

addition, funders often prefer to fund the academic components of bridge programs over wraparound services and other non-instructional costs, but these non-instructional costs are crucial to support the success of a student population that faces unique barriers to entering the labor market.

Even the most enthusiastic supporters of bridge programs are often surprised by the time horizon of bridge program outcomes, which can take years to materialize. Providers need to set clear expectations for funders: in many cases, that means setting clear short-term, interim and long term outcome measures that demonstrate the effectiveness of both the bridge and the training program to move individuals into employment.

> **Lack of knowledge about how to run successful programs:** Without a consensus definition of bridge programs, it is difficult for programs to collaborate and share best practices and for those interested in operating bridge programs to find resources that

help them get started. New York City does offer a "bridge bank" with open-source curricula and resources for developing bridge programs,[17] but it is not clear how many providers know about, use, and/or contribute to this resource.

Throughout the five years that TechBridge has been operating, Per Scholas and The Door have received an increasing number of inquiries from employment and training providers across the city on their best practices for the development of bridge programs, reflecting the growing interest and lack of institutionalized resources for organizations seeking to build bridge programs. The resource guide, case studies, sample timeline and budget within this report are meant to begin mitigating this lack of knowledge among providers and provide a practical springboard for organizations interested in developing and/or scaling up a bridge program.

> The lack of bridge funding in the NYC budget is a function of a number of issues: (1) lack of understanding of what bridge funding is (definitional challenge) (2) lack of clear evidence that bridge funding is the most effective solution (3) #2 is exacerbated by the high per person cost leading to low return on investment and (4) other priorities with higher ROI or visibility.
>
> Despite the challenges, it doesn't excuse the fact that there are millions of New Yorkers that need assistance and training now, and that there does not appear to be any other option other than universal basic income, which has its own issues. Framing the issues and making case for bridge funding has been done. When weighed against the options bridge funding is the clear and only choice.
>
> **— Barbara Chang, Executive Vice President at HERE to HERE**

RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR FUNDERS, POLICYMAKERS, AND ADVOCATES

Based on the challenges identified in the previous section, the respondent team — in consultation with bridge program operators and advocates — developed a set of recommendations designed to address those challenges. These recommendations are enclosed below, organized by these three main challenges — **funding, capacity, and metrics** — as well as overall systemic barriers that intersect with one another. Throughout these areas, we include recommendations for quality program design, which are supported by the resource guide provided in the following section for funders and service providers working to develop and/or scale up bridge programs.

By continuing not to invest in bridge programs relative to the scale of need found among millions of New Yorkers, the City is punting the root problems down the line, compounding underserved communities' inability to access growing, living-wage jobs and the economic benefits that come with them for individuals, families and the City's tax base. While the upfront investment in bridge programs (typically $6,500 - $10,000 per student for a high-quality six-month program) and the next step training or postsecondary program that they bridge into is substantial, the longer-term return on investment will be much higher when taking into account increased taxes, decreased spending on public benefits, and stemming the tide of gentrification by nurturing homegrown talent that can afford to remain and thrive in their neighborhoods and communities.

This funding challenge was well enumerated by Abby Marquand, vice president and program officer at JPMorgan Chase Global Philanthropy: "The sticker shock is still there for people. I don't think the field has fully begun to appreciate what it costs to get people all the things that they need to get into a job and that the cost is worthwhile. We need to get comfortable supporting that full-freight." Increased public, philanthropic and employer-driven investments should be targeted at scaling up existing bridge programs and the training and/or postsecondary programs that they bridge into, and developing new ones in growing sectors and communities.

SYSTEM-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS ACROSS THE ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

NYC should scale & fund bridge programs linked to existing career pathways across agencies
To support this effort, New York City's government should commit to funding bridge programs alongside existing and anticipated vocational training programs to create strong pathways into growing industries. In many cases, City agencies are already managing initiatives or programs that could add a bridge component or partner with entities that are interested in creating a new program. In other cases, agencies can and should fund bridge programs without operating them themselves. Specific public entities that should look to start, host, or increase their funding of bridge programs

include **EDC, HRA, DYCD, CUNY** and **NYCHA** (with **SBS** as a partner for CUNY and NYCHA). Details on how each agency could achieve this outcome are broken out below. These new and expanded bridge program offerings should be guided in their program design by the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (**WkDev**), and WkDev should play a role in facilitating communication and coordination between them so as to ensure that all jobseeking New Yorkers are able to access an appropriate program.

Scale up "next step" training programs to absorb scaling up of bridge programs & include wraparound supports as a best practice

If our key recommendation of expanded bridge programs is implemented, one ramification will be an over-extension of the existing capacity of the high quality advanced training programs that these programs bridge into. However, this should be seen as a feature, not a bug, of a strong career-centric workforce system: for years, funders and researchers have been asking for the highest-quality programs to be scaled up. Creating a steady pipeline of qualified and motivated entrants to these programs should only further the case for increased investment in those vocational programs with the best employment outcomes (judged not exclusively by placement and retention, but also taking into account the wages and opportunities for advancement afforded by their new careers). With more vulnerable populations served through bridge entering training programs, the best practices recommended for bridge design — comprehensive wraparound supports and dedicated staff/social workers — should be built into advanced training program design as well.

Develop innovative sustainable sources of funding that link workforce and economic development systems via public subsidies and business contributions

The City should develop a flexible workforce training fund that can provide sustainable, long-term funding for training programs, including bridge programs, across all agencies and initiatives. This fund should be made up of the two major stakeholders driving economic development in New York City:

> **Economic development projects and initiatives sponsored by City & State entities such as the NYC Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) and Empire State Development (ESD) —** All future economic development proposals by public entities should include a portion of a project's subsidies into this city-wide workforce fund. This funding should be a meaningful portion of the project's total public cost — approximately 10% of the full public subsidy/investment should be directed at workforce training initiatives.

> **The city's current and future employer community —** Private sector companies doing business or looking to grow in the city should contribute to the development of the skilled labor pool they will be hiring and that will be fueling their growth. The City should develop a mechanism for all businesses to pay into the system-wide fund, for example through an annual payroll tax contribution (ex. Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund is supported by a 0.056% contribution rate from all employers, administered as a payroll tax similar to unemployment insurance contributions).

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS THE LACK OF FUNDING FOR BRIDGE PROGRAMS

NYCEDC: 1. Fund bridge programs into New York Works target sectors, and 2. Create new spaces for bridge and advanced training programs

NYCEDC is referenced in the "systemwide recommendations" above, with a proposal for NYCEDC to aim to allocate 10% of the budget for each new development initiative towards workforce training and placement programs. This is an ambitious goal which would embed significant workforce targets and investments into all new economic development in the city; as such we are offering two sub-goals and strategies which could be implemented by NYCEDC's existing process.

First, NYCEDC should become a strategic supporter of bridge programs that feed into the sectoral training or sectoral employment opportunities envisioned by existing NYCEDC projects. For example, the New York Works blueprint for 100,000 new "middle-class" jobs in New York projects the creation of 10,000 new cybersecurity jobs over 10 years.[18] NYCEDC is already engaged in efforts to cultivate the employers of these new jobs (through incubators and office space) and is already supporting advanced training to prepare students for these jobs (through the Applied Learning Initiative and the Cyber Boot Camp). Adding a sector-specific bridge program to the suite of investments and programs NYCEDC is making to stimulate the growth of cybersecurity in NYC would be a logical next step. Ultimately, this type of combined workforce and economic development investment strategy — pairing bridge programs and occupational training with job creation initiatives and incentives — should be implemented for all New York Works target sectors. As a best practice, NYCEDC should strive to ensure that bridges are available into any advanced training or educational program it supports.

Second, NYCEDC should leverage its site-specific role in development to create new spaces for training programs to use, especially in neighborhoods of the city where employment is changing or growing. Creating classroom space for both bridge and more advanced sectoral trainings would reduce the burden on training providers to fundraise for facilities as well as programming, and thus reduce the cost of training programs sponsored by both NYCEDC and other City agencies. A priority could be classroom space tailored to meet the needs of the sectors identified in the New York Works blueprint: tech training facilities, biosciences training facilities, culinary training facilities (for the growing entertainment and nightlife sector), freight and transportation training facilities, etc. Spaces could be multi-functional and shared-use (ie, one space could function for multiple training providers to use), and should have the appropriate capacity for the trainings to be hosted (ie, reliable wifi for tech training spaces).

An example of these approaches can be seen in NYCEDC's current redevelopment of the Brooklyn Marine Terminal into the South Brooklyn Maritime Shipping Hub, where NYCEDC is contracting with multiple community nonprofits to provide training by integrating an on-site workforce development center to connect local talent to the projected maritime jobs created by the development. Within this project, the training programs have been incorporated into the plan for the redevelopment of the Terminal, not created after the fact. This project reflects both a targeted economic development investment into workforce training and the infrastructure needs associated with that training. If a

bridge program is not already built into the plans for the workforce center, it should be considered as an efficient addition that will broaden access to the jobs being created.

DSS/HRA should launch a new bridge program in 2021

The NYC Department of Social Services/Human Resources Administration can and should utilize its existing infrastructure of job training and placement programs and student tracking systems as a baseline for serving the 2,300 to 6,500 HRA clients who might benefit from bridge programs. As HRA is currently launching a one-year pilot bridge program (serving up to 100 clients with a bridge to tech training), the following year provides an ideal time for the agency to incorporate a new bridge program into its suite of employment services. NYCETC and its partners in the Invest in Skills NYc Coalition recommend allocating between $10 and $20 million for HRA to create such a bridge program to serve at least 1,000 HRA clients per year.

CUNY should expand bridge offerings and partner with CBOs

The City University of New York currently offers systemwide bridge programs (CUNY Prep, CUNY Start, and CUNY Math Start) to several hundred students each year who are slated to begin a course of study after completion. In addition, individual CUNY schools offer bridges into some of their vocational programs; for example, LaGuardia Community College and SBS have partnered to offer the Bilingual Medical Assistant Training Program (see page 19). Building on the demonstrated need and success of these programs, CUNY should seek partner organizations to help it scale up bridge program offerings to students, and to launch similar bridge programs at CUNY colleges that do not currently offer them. CUNY's vocational programs offer a wide range of valuable sectoral skills, and pairing these programs especially with contextual bridge programs as entryways would help a larger number of students take advantage of these courses of study.

One way we recommend CUNY expand its capacity to offer bridge programs is by working with local community-based organizations (CBOs) well-equipped to focus on the wraparound services components of bridge programs. Taking advantage of the core strengths of many CBOs to support individuals with the range individual of services they need, would allow CUNY to focus on the educational and vocational elements of the programs, while offering more students the supports they need to enroll and succeed in these programs.

DYCD should expand high-quality bridge programs

The Department of Youth and Community Development is home to some of the highest-quality bridge models, through programs such as the recently-launched Advance and Earn program combining internships and classroom instruction (and, potentially, the proposed NYC Unity Works bridge program for homeless LGBTQ youth). However, transitioning to high-quality bridge models such as Advance and Earn without increased budgetary support has meant that DYCD now serves fewer young adults in this program than were served in its predecessor programs (Young Adult Internship Program (YAIP) and Young Adult Literacy Program (YALP)). Advance and Earn could be progressively expanded over time to serve significantly more people (it is currently budgeted to

serve 900 young adults per year, compared to approximately 2,400 served annually in YAIP and YALP), as the universe of NYC young adults needing bridge programs is certainly in the thousands, not the hundreds. Starting in 2021 and beyond, DYCD should seek additional resources from the City to increase the scale of Advance and Earn (and, if it is proven successful, to also expand the Unity Works model to other homeless youth) which can and should ultimately reach two to three times as many clients. In preparation for serving the full population of young adults who could benefit from bridges, DYCD should also make use of these two new bridge programs as vehicles for measuring the impact and return on investment of bridge programs.

NYCHA & partners should develop bridge programs linked to existing programs (JobsPlus, Tech51, Training Academy & trades apprenticeships)
The New York City Housing Authority is not currently a sponsor of bridge programs, and would functionally need to partner with another agency to operate programs, but it would be a natural home for new bridges aimed at NYCHA residents and tied to existing employment programs that serve those residents. The existing JobsPlus program offers a variety of basic job readiness services, and both the NYCHA Resident Training Academy and the Council-funded Tech51 program offer NYCHA residents pathways to higher-paying jobs (in building trades and in technology, respectively). All would benefit from a bridge model connected to them (as a referral option for JobsPlus, or as an on-ramp for trades or Tech51 training). Depending on the rollout time of other new bridge programs (such as DYCD's Advance and Earn) and whether NYCHA residents were identified as a key population to serve with new bridge programs, potential agency partners (such as NYC Opportunity, SBS, or the Council) could likely develop new bridge programs tied to these existing offerings within 2-3 years.

Philanthropic funders should invest in bridge programs tied to advanced training programs
Private funding will also be critical to the success of bridge programs, and funders should be mindful of the all-in costs that successful bridge programs require and commit to funding all types of costs, not just academic instruction. As philanthropy in New York evaluates options for future investment, it would be well served to counterbalance the inherent desire to fund final stage workforce programs (such as high-quality advanced training programs that have well established employment outcomes) with necessary levels of investment in basic skills training and essential wraparounds through bridge programs. Each foundation should consider what its desired demographic outcomes are, and determine how much additional investment in these early stage workforce programs is necessary to create a full pipeline from poverty to self-sustainability.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS INCONSISTENT METRICS & OUTCOME TRACKING

Bridge program providers and advocates should develop a consistent language for measuring and tracking outcomes
Today, there is no consistent set of practices for measuring and tracking the outcomes of bridge programs. As such, despite the effectiveness of programs like CodeBridge (70% of whose graduates have secured jobs in the tech industry), the sector as a whole lacks clarity on how to communicate that effectiveness in ways that clearly demonstrate the value of bridge programs for funders. Bridge

program providers and advocates should align on a common set of outcomes with two primary elements: matriculation into job training programs, and subsequent job placement rates (after the bridge and vocational training, not imposing job placement targets on bridge programs as a standalone). The experience of successful bridge programs suggests that these are the clearest measures of efficacy.

In addition, bridge providers should stipulate that job training providers maintain comparative data regarding the success of bridge participants compared to non-bridge students. Available evidence suggests that bridge program participants achieve employment outcomes commensurate with non-bridge students — a remarkable feat given the relative "distance traveled" by bridge participants. To date, bridge programs have demonstrated that they can close the readiness gap between individuals who are prepared for job training and those who aren't, which should be a critical part of illustrating the effectiveness of bridge programs for the populations they are designed to serve. This alignment and data collection should be guided by the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (WkDev), and WkDev should play a role in facilitating communication and coordination between bridge and training providers.

Incorporate dedicated staff members as main point of contact
Providers of bridge programs must have dedicated staff to act as the main point of contact for the participants and for the partner organization. This dedicated staff member, often a social worker, works to provide continuity for the participant as they move through admissions, the bridge and into the next step program. They build rapport and trust with the participants and the partner organization, ensure a smooth transition for participants between bridge components and must oversee information management.

Incorporate comprehensive wraparound services in bridge programs
It is clear that students who have lower literacy and math skills can achieve the same results as other, more immediately qualified students if given appropriate and intensive support. With the multiple types of support offered to students in conjunction with bridge programs, bridge program participants not only increase their reading and math skills but matriculate into general courses with similar outcome rates as conventional enrollees.

Organizations that provide bridge programs must provide participants with additional services to assist in eliminating external barriers that too often prevent students from succeeding in the course. Bridge programs must have qualified social workers and/or experienced case management staff to help students by addressing their potential support needs prior to enrollment, providing case management, identifying and addressing real-life problems and barriers that can subvert their efforts to succeed, and referring students to community partners that can provide additional support (i.e., legal services, mental health counseling, financial coaching, childcare, emergency food, and housing assistance). Additionally, these wraparound support staff often work with bridge participants to address other barriers to course success — including criminal justice backgrounds, youth transitioning from foster care, and support to access to public benefits.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS SYSTEM CAPACITY & KNOWLEDGE GAPS

Fund technical assistance and capacity building for organizations to develop new bridge programs and partnerships

Currently, there is no existing mechanism or funding for technical assistance or capacity building in regards to the development of bridge programs. For organizations to build new bridge programs as well as scale up existing ones, the service provider community needs capacity building support from private and public funders to build partnerships and processes that support all aspects of program delivery, including recruitment, curriculum development, infrastructure, industry engagement, wraparound services, job placement, and retention. Professional development and talent recruitment to build and operate quality programs will also be critical.

Some of these supports around curricula and program development used to be provided to the workforce development field by LaGuardia Community College's College and Career Pathways Institute (CCPI), which provided professional development for educators preparing adults and out-of-school youth to get back on track to college and new careers through innovative contextualized and integrated instructional strategies such as bridge programs. Unfortunately, CCCI closed down in 2018. Institutional knowledge within CUNY and other workforce intermediaries in NYC should be leveraged to support the broader field in bridge expansion.

Increase the variety and flexibility of bridge programs offered

In order to best achieve the scaling up of bridge programs envisioned in this report's recommendations, funders — both City agencies and private philanthropies — will have to acknowledge that clients of bridge programs have differing constraints on their time and different needs for educational attainment, and therefore incorporate greater flexibility into their bridge contracts with providers and not overly prescribe the delivery model for the bridge training.

Other elements that should remain flexible and reactive to the specific client needs and envisioned "next step" outcomes include the length and number of hours of training cycles, number of participants within a given training cohort, and the incorporation of paid internship components so that providers can develop programs that will best equip clients with the skills and knowledge they need to meet employer hiring requirements. Funders and service providers should also be aware that bridge programs can offer beneficial outcomes to their students even when they do not achieve the intended career objectives — outcomes such as improved baseline of foundational skills for other opportunities and improved awareness of career options.

Develop capacity building and sustainable funding models between partnering organziations
Providers of bridge programs must work together to ensure funding is sustainable, develop models of inter-organizational fundraising, share best practices, and ensure contextualized curriculum is up to date and reflects current industry standards.

As they exist now, bridge programs are often funded with a small pot of money that allows for planning, partnership building, program recruitment, operations and some degree of retention. The challenge that bridge providers face is that after the heavy lift of getting the new program off the ground, before clear outcomes can be measured, the partner organizations must immediately begin fundraising to keep the bridge running at all.

Within this initial period, the partners must identify internal success metrics — as simple as matriculation to the main program — that would support inter-organizational fundraising opportunities. Also, built into the pilot agreement is a commitment that if terms and outcomes are met to the satisfaction of both parties, joint prospecting and fundraising would be part of the process. Bridges are a heavy lift for providers and their scalability is determined by sustained funding.

RESOURCE GUIDE

RESOURCE GUIDE

The following resource guide is designed for organizations interested in developing and implementing bridge programs of their own.

The guide is divided into four parts based on the key elements of bridge programs that distinguish them from other educational or workforce programs, as identified by stakeholders who contributed to this report. For organizations interested in offering bridge programs, as well as policymakers and funders supporting them, it is critical to consider and address these four elements in order to ensure that the program will be effective.

1. **Setting Goals and Defining Target Population**
2. **Developing the Program (Length, Curriculum, Partners)**
3. **Funding the Program**
4. **Standing Up Program Operations**

1 Setting Goals and Defining Target Population

The first key to successful bridge programs is that they must be a bridge "to somewhere." Creating a bridge program must begin by identifying specific goals (e.g., employment outcomes) that meet identified needs (e.g., unemployment or local labor market demand). CodeBridge and TechBridge, for example, are both designed with both a specific industry and a specific target population in mind. Beginning with those goals will help guide organizations through the next few phases of bridge program development.

While these program goals could be described as the "outputs" of bridge programs, equally important are the "inputs"—that is, the learner populations being served by bridge programs. Effective bridge programs are typically designed to address the needs of specific target populations, who often require specific types of wraparound support. In the case of CodeBridge, the program is designed to support individuals who are not employed in full-time jobs and/or who receive public benefits; TechBridge is specifically focused on supporting young adults between ages 18-24.

Examples of target populations and wraparound support services include:
> Young adults (18-24): May need support with fundamental career skills (e.g., resume building, verbal and written communication, professional dress).
> English learners/immigrants: May need support with language learning (spoken and written) and navigating cultural and professional norms.

> People who were formerly incarcerated: May need legal assistance and mental health counseling.

> People without housing: May need housing assistance and a place to study in their off hours.

> People with disabilities: May need accommodations to participate in bridge programs and/or support in requesting accommodations from future employers.

> People who are receiving (or eligible for) public benefits: May need housing assistance and help completing benefits paperwork.

Before beginning the design process for a bridge program, consider your responses to the self-assessment in Appendix A.

Key Questions:

> What are the greatest local employer needs in my community?

> What is the size/scale of those needs (how many graduates can they absorb? How many jobs are there?)?

> How will acquiring this training help people in their careers?

> What outcomes is the program designed to achieve (graduation rates, job placement rates)? How will they be measured, and over what period of time?

> Who is the target population (geography, age, education level, current living situation, income)?

> What specific support services will they need?

> Which organization is best-served to provide those support services? If a third-party organization is needed for a specific support, who is that organization?

> How will we conduct outreach to potential students?

> What is the size/scale of the potential target market?

> What recruitment strategies are likely to be most effective?

2 **Developing the Program (Length, Curriculum, Partners)**

Once the goals and target population are identified, the second phase of developing a bridge program is the program design itself, including curriculum, logistics (e.g., length), and partners. Bridges typically rely on partnerships with advanced training providers, higher educational institutions, or job placement programs, which play two vital roles for the bridge program's success.

First, these partnerships define the potential, capacity, and curricular needs of a bridge program (by, for example, laying out a clear pre-requisite level of math skills a student would need to enroll in a tech training course). Second, they provide the bridge students with a clear next step upon completion of the instructional element of the bridge program. In the case of CodeBridge, for instance, Per Scholas brings experience with the target population and existing foundational curricula, while General Assembly offers a proven track record of employment outcomes.

Key Questions:

> In what area(s) (e.g., curriculum design, employer relationships, translation services for students whose first language is not English, positive youth development) is my organization the strongest?

> In what area(s) is my organization deficient? Where do we need another organization to lead?

> What existing partners does my organization have? Could any of them help fulfill the goal(s) of my potential bridge program?

> What employers could I partner with/network with/get advice from?

> How should responsibility be divided between partners? Which roles and tasks should fall to which organization?

> Do we have an existing network of training programs or other career opportunities to which we could refer students and/or graduates?

> What do people who have completed the bridge have to do to pursue the intended next step (whatever that looks like)—will they be automatically admitted? Will they need to apply?

> How long does the program need to be?

> Who will the instructors be and how can we recruit them? Will they be paid or volunteers?

> Do there need to be any prerequisites/cutoffs for eligibility?

3 **Funding the Program**

The third key to successful bridge programs is prospecting and identifying corporate/private philanthropy that prioritize your target populations or your set goals. Organizations need to engage funders as thought partners to build relationships and allow the funder access to the program from the ground level.

Key Questions:

> How much will the program cost to operate per student? How do these costs break down between academic instruction, wraparound support services, and other costs?

> Will students be expected to shoulder any of the operating costs? If so, how much?

> What existing partners and funders may be able to provide resources to help us fund this program?

> What new partners and funders should we connect with who may be able to provide resources to support this program?

> How will we make the case for investment in our program to funders? What data (e.g., community-level statistics about unemployment or unmet demand for jobs) will we need to make that case effectively?

> Will our program launch wholesale or begin with a pilot?

> What metrics are we using to communicate the value proposition of our program to funders? How can we communicate success on a regular basis?

4 Standing Up Program Operations

Ultimately, the success of bridge programs depends on an infrastructure, both physical and organizational, that is equipped to handle the flow of students to, through, and beyond the instructional element of the bridge program. This includes having the physical space to provide the necessary hours of educational content, the tracking systems to manage the progress of the students and report to funders, the ability to refer graduates to training programs or other career opportunities, and the outreach capabilities to identify the next cohort of potential students who could benefit from the bridge program.

Key questions:
> Does my organization (or a partner) have the physical space necessary to provide the requisite training content?

> Does my organization have the digital resources necessary to provide information about this program? Is there a single source (e.g., a page on a website) where current and potential students can access information about the program?

> Does my organization (or a partner) have the human capital resources necessary to provide the requisite logistical and operational support for the program?

> What tracking system will we use to manage student progress and report that progress to funders and other stakeholders?

CASE STUDIES

TechBridge, which is operated as a partnership between Per Scholas and The Door, is a five-week course that provides participants with foundational skills to enter Per Scholas' tech training program. CodeBridge, which is a more intensive, higher-level program, is a bridge between Per Scholas and General Assembly's immersive web development course.

Graduates said that their bridge programs were like mini-training programs, giving them a chance to try out IT or web development before committing full-time. These programs also helped them acclimate to the workload and expectations of a training program while having wraparound services to help them succeed. Graduates tended to say that the hands-on, technical training was the most useful aspect of their bridge program, but also appreciated the soft skills and career development aspects of the curriculum.

Note: The names of the individuals in these case studies have been changed and some details have been edited to preserve privacy.

CODEBRIDGE

In partnership with General Assembly, Per Scholas began offering the CodeBridge training track in September 2016. CodeBridge is Per Scholas' first sustained effort to teach in-demand web programming skills in an accelerated tech workforce development program. It is full-time and free for students to attend. The 18-week curriculum teaches students the skills they need to become front end and full stack web developers is comprised of two modules:

> A six-week introductory course at Per Scholas, during which students learn web development fundamentals including using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript to build their own sophisticated website; and

> A twelve-week advanced-level portion, taught at General Assembly, where Per Scholas students attend the same "Software Engineering Immersive" classes as students paying the full $15,000 tuition. This course teaches comprehensive web development skills, including modules devoted to computing, networks and data structures; basics of product development, including modeling, wireframes and collaborative processes; front-end web development, which focuses on mastery of JavaScript and CSS; back-end web development, using Ruby on Rails and node.js, as well as other APIs; and working effectively in teams to develop, maintain, change and secure an application.

Jesse and Lucy are two CodeBridge alums who have used the program to land a fellowship in software engineering and a job in financial services, respectively. Jesse, a former mechanic and self-taught coder, was referred to CodeBridge through General Assembly. He thought CodeBridge would be a better option than coding bootcamps to help him get into the tech industry because he would not need to take out a loan. Lucy is a career-changer who applied to participate in CodeBridge after losing her job in a non-tech field. "I liked how practical it was," Lucy said of CodeBridge, "and I liked that they get you up and running right away."

CodeBridge, like all of Per Scholas' trainings, is accompanied by a closely integrated curriculum of career development/soft skills instruction, rooted in six core values: ambition, integrity, professionalism, resourcefulness, perseverance and commitment to service. Corporate volunteers, like AT&T and Chubb, play a prominent role in delivering this curriculum for students, as do cutting-edge techniques like peer mentoring and motivational interviewing. Once at General Assembly, students continue soft skills/career development training and related activities through the school's own programming.

CodeBridge students also have access to the same set of support services available to all Per Scholas students. These include comprehensive financial literacy coaching services, along with coordinated access to needed wraparound services. Graduates receive career coaching and our other alumni services, including all advanced training offerings, for two years, along with all the ordinary alumni benefits of General Assembly.

Following graduation from the program, Per Scholas' Business Solutions team provides students with comprehensive internship and job placement services. The Business Solutions team also recruits new employers to join its partnership network and raises awareness among employers about Per Scholas as a source of skilled and diverse candidates for entry-level employment.

From 2016 to 2019, 202 students enrolled in CodeBridge in New York, and 159 (nearly 80%) graduated. 70% have been placed in positions including front-end and full-stack web developers, earning an average starting wage of $26/hour or $54,000, a 130% increase over their average pre-training wage. "There's no way I would've got into this [fellowship] program without the interview skills they taught me at Per Scholas," Jesse said. Meanwhile, Lucy said that CodeBridge had prepared her so well for her current job that she has even been able to create programs to automate some of her tasks.

TECHBRIDGE

In order to create more opportunities for young adults, Per Scholas and The Door developed TechBridge, an innovative and highly efficient bridge model for 18- to 24-year-olds to begin careers in tech. TechBridge offers a specialized and contextualized connection to Per Scholas technology training, job placement and career services.

TechBridge can be helpful to young adults from a variety of backgrounds, as shown by the experiences of TechBridge alums Mark and Steve. Mark graduated college with a cybersecurity degree and used TechBridge to prepare to earn an IT certification, while Steve completed some college and had to work in retail before beginning TechBridge. "I definitely think that Per Scholas has helped me in starting a career," Steve said. TechBridge taught him not only the IT skills he needed to find a job, but also softer skills such as time management that are necessary in the workforce.

Throughout the five years that TechBridge has been operating, Per Scholas and The Door worked in tandem to refine components of the program in order to maximize impact. Although academic remediation was the initial focus of the program, TechBridge has evolved to take a more holistic approach to supporting young people who are interested in tech. This includes the support of a full-time social worker (employed by Per Scholas) who works with students as soon as they enroll to identify and address any and all barriers to success such as childcare, housing stability, food insecurity, and other challenges.

Since 2015, 175 young adult students have enrolled and 152 (87%) have matriculated to Per Scholas' 15-week IT Support training. 80% of students who matriculated to Per Scholas graduated and 76% have been placed in jobs, earning an average current wage of $17/hour or $35,360/year, an increase of 180% over their average pre-training wage. Mark currently works as an IT help desk technician, while Steve has come full circle as a teaching assistant for TechBridge.

TechBridge has served as a model for other bridge programming in NYC's Lower East Side in partnership with the Lower East Side Employment Network and in Newark, New Jersey, where Per Scholas opened a training site in April 2019 in partnership with La Casa de Don Pedro. These bridge programs have helped connect 17 job-seekers to Per Scholas in 2019 alone.

Nationally, the success of the TechBridge model spurred expansion of Bridge programming at Per Scholas. In 2019, Per Schoals was granted a pilot grant from a national philanthropic institution to expand out bridge programs across 4 sites.

SAMPLE 18-MONTH TIMELINE AND BUDGET

(6-month planning period + 12-month implementation period)
Based on Per Scholas TechBridge Program

TIMELINE

	Months	Action Items	Key Bridge Elements
Startup	1-3	**Target population established; Begin preliminary partnership meetings**	I- Setting Goals and Defining Target Population
	4-6	**Identify key stakeholders in each organization** **Begin to review goals to establish buy-in and develop inter-organizational trust**	I- Setting Goals and Defining Target Population
	6	**Establish roles and responsibilities**	II- Developing the Program IV- Standing Up Program Operations
Implementation	6-7	**MOU and budget**	III- Funding the Program
	7	**Formally launch pilot** **Staff hiring and curriculum design** **Establish communication and information management protocol**	II- Developing the Program IV- Standing Up Program Operations
	8	**Draft marketing materials**	II- Developing the Program IV- Standing Up Program Operations
	8-9	**Train the trainers - program overview and career pathways review** **Final marketing materials**	IV- Standing Up Program Operations
	8-9	**Recruitment and initiate screening (6-8 weeks)**	IV- Standing Up Program Operations
	9	**Finalize Enrollments**	IV- Standing Up Program Operations
	10	**Bridge program runs**	IV- Standing Up Program Operations

Months	Action Items	Key Bridge Elements
11-16	**Bridge participants matriculate into other program(s)** **Partner organizations have regular check-ins (case conference calls)** **Bridge provider maintains regular contact with participants**	IV- Standing Up Program Operations
17-18	**Graduation** **Employment and retention outcomes review** **Success stories to funders**	III- Funding the Program IV- Standing Up Program Operations
Ongoing	**Retention** **Partner organizations have regular check-ins (case conference calls)** **Bridge provider maintains regular contact with participants**	

Implementation (side label)

BUDGET

Startup

6 MONTHS

$100,000 total budget

Implementation

12 MONTHS

10 5-week cycles of 10 students each

$5,250/ student
_____
$557,200 total budget

100 STUDENTS

TRAINING PARTNER

Personnel			
Program Director	$15,000	$12,500	
Case manager		$60,000	Designated case manager/support staff for bridge participants
Community engagement	$5,000	$25,000	Engages community partners, train the trainers, and ongoing recruitment
Admissions	$5,000	$20,000	Conducts intake assessments for program candidates
Director of Technical Instruction	$15,000	$10,000	Develops and reviews curriculum
Tech instructor		$20,000	II- Developing the Program IV- Standing Up Program Operations
Instructional assistant (IA)		Train the trainers — program overview and career pathways review Final marketing materials	IV- Standing Up Program Operations
Fringe		$31,200	Leads hands-on tech instruction, reviews and updates curriculum
OTPS			
Marketing/ communications		$10,000	IV- Standing Up Program Operations
Supplies		$25,000	
Technology/ equipment		$2,000	
Travel stipends		$16,500	Weekly Metrocards at $33 for 100 students for 5 weeks
Rent/utilities		$30,000	3 days/week at bridge partner
Food/ refreshments		$5,000	
Subtotal	**$46,00**	**$228,695**	

BRIDGE PARTNER

Personnel				
	Program Director	$15,000	$12,500	
	Director of ABE instruction	$15,000		
	Program staff - various	$10,00		
	Admissions & recruitment		$25,000	Conducts intake assessments for program candidates
	Program manager/ supervisor		$10,000	
	ABE instructor		$50,000	Leads daily activities/ contextualized ABE instruction
	Support services specialist(s)		$20,000	Other wrap-around support service specialists (housing, childcare, legal)
	Fringe (28%)	$6,000	$22,695	Leads hands-on tech instruction, reviews and updates curriculum
OTPS				
	Marketing/ communications		$10,000	
	Technology/ equipment		$25,000	
	Travel stipends		$2,000	Weekly Metrocards at $33 for 100 students for 5 weeks
	Rent/utilities		$16,500	3 days/week at bridge partner
	Food/ refreshments		$30,000	
	Food/ refreshments		$5,000	
	Subtotal	$46,000	$228,695	

Third-Party Evaluator			$10,000	
Subtotal		$92,000	$499,200	
Indirect Costs		$8,000	$58,000	
Total		$100,000	$557,200	

SELF-ASSESSMENT

If you reply "strongly agree" to every statement in each section, you are likely equipped to undertake the activity stated in that section. If you reply "strongly agree" to at least three statements, you are in a position to begin undertaking that activity and should seek out technical assistance or other support for the areas in which you are deficient.

SETTING GOALS AND DEFINING TARGET POPULATION

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
There is a workforce need in the community that my organization serves (or intends to serve) that existing programs don't currently fill.				
There is a need (and/or desire) among individuals in my community to access more upskilling programs.				
Training providers serving my community face a specific readiness gap that a bridge program could effectively fill.				

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
I understand the content areas my organization could deliver as part of the bridge and can identify the areas we need to have a partner deliver.				
My organization has existing partners who could help co-facilitate a bridge program (or we know who we could approach).				
I understand the length of time that the program will need to be in order to effectively prepare students for our stated goals.				
My organization has the resources and capacity to develop a curriculum for this program (or we know who we could approach to do so).				
I understand how to develop the intended "next step" for students from my program to the partner's.				
I understand how to communicate the intended "next step" from my program to both partners and potential students.				
My organization (or our identified partner) has access to a physical space in which we could operate a bridge program.				

FUNDING THE PROGRAM

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
My organization has calculated (or is prepared to calculate) the cost per student of developing a bridge program, including estimates of the financial commitment expected from partners and the costs associated with wraparound services provided by third parties.				
My organization has existing funders who would be interested in helping us build and sustain a bridge program (or we know who we could approach).				
I understand how to pitch this program in ways that will resonate most strongly with potential funders.				
I understand what data or metrics will be required in order to make the case for both initial and continued investment with the funders I have identified.				

STANDING UP PROGRAM OPERATIONS

	Strongly disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Strongly agree
My organization has staff (or the ability to hire staff) who can take on the work of setting up, operating, and maintaining a bridge program.				
My organization has the digital resources necessary to provide information about the program and track relevant metrics online as appropriate.				
My organization has, or can develop, a tracking system to manage student progress and report that progress to stakeholders.				

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