



Culinary program graduates display their certificates.



# FY 2023 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Re-Entry Workforce  
Development  
Demonstration Grants

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## BACKGROUND

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The Re-Entry Workforce Development Demonstration Grants Program is an initiative administered by Commonwealth Corporation, on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development with the goal of improving workforce outcomes for individuals returning to their communities after incarceration (i.e., returning citizens). This grant program is funded through a General Appropriation Act in the Fiscal Year 2023 State Budget (7003-0150), as well as the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (WCTF). This report describes the administrative functions of the program and client outcomes. Commonwealth Corporation awarded grants spanning two fiscal years, starting in August 2022 and due to end in September 2023. These resources anticipate serving at least 13 grantees as a result of intensive outreach to smaller community-based organizations.

## JUSTIFICATION OF NEED

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Massachusetts has an incarceration rate of 275 per 100,000 people (including prisons, jails, immigration detention, and juvenile justice facilities). On any given day, approximately 19,338 individuals are behind the wall in Massachusetts correctional facilities.<sup>1</sup>

Today in the United States, 50 percent of formerly incarcerated people remain unemployed in the year following their release. Over the past decade, prisoner re-entry programs have increasingly provided formerly incarcerated jobseekers with services such as job training, job placement assistance, and other job-search-related resources.<sup>2</sup>

# JUSTIFICATION OF NEED: CONTINUED



In Massachusetts, a 2015 study revealed employment posed a serious challenge for men and women, particularly just after release, with nearly 50 percent of respondents indicating they had not secured full-time employment one-year post-incarceration release.<sup>3</sup>

As a percentage of the incarcerated population compared to the general population, Whites are underrepresented, and Black, Latinx, and Indigenous people are overrepresented in Massachusetts correctional facilities.<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, Massachusetts has the highest differential between White and Latinx incarcerated individuals in the nation.<sup>5</sup>

The experiences of formerly incarcerated jobseekers and their perceptions of re-entry services vary across racial groups. Racial inequity must remain at the forefront when considering incarceration, services for returning citizens, and labor market dynamics. The varying perceptions and realities of services for returning citizens may impact the trajectories for individuals re-entering the workforce, calling for the study of employment support and re-entry work more broadly in evaluating the landscape of the state's labor market and workforce system. Understanding the experience of racially diverse formerly incarcerated jobseekers with re-entry programs and employment will extend the study of prisoner re-entry and labor market inequity and help better assist workforce development agencies in identifying factors necessary for job placement and long-term employment outcomes and efficacy.<sup>6</sup>

Post-incarceration and jointly modeling employment and earnings, Blacks and Hispanics are estimated to have lower total earnings than Whites, even after accounting for health, human capital, and criminal involvement. Indeed, Whites have worse health and higher rates of drug addiction, so accounting for covariates increases the estimated race/ethnicity gap in earnings. A decomposition attributes most of the earnings gaps to racial and ethnic inequalities in employment. Qualitative interviews suggest that Whites, more than Blacks and Hispanics, find stable, high-paying jobs through friends and family.

Finally, Commonwealth Corporation is interested in addressing equity to ensure that those regions and locations in the state most impacted by incarceration have access to vocationally centered programs that promote job training and retention. According to the Department of Correction, the number of people incarcerated in their facilities has dropped nearly 50 percent over the past decade. Additionally, major cities generally account for the jurisdictions in which formerly incarcerated individuals reside. The cities include Boston, Springfield, Brockton, New Bedford, Worcester, Fall River, Lawrence, Lynn, Lowell, and Taunton in descending order. The communities most impacted by re-entry should be prioritized in our work and outreach, and the declining census in Department of Corrections facilities should also be considered.

# ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM

## SELECTION OF GRANTEES

In April of 2022, Commonwealth Corporation, on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, issued a Request for Proposals from eligible organizations to provide employment services to the target population to help advance their participation in job training, coaching, and placement activities. Eligible applicants had to:

- 1 Provide an outline of the continuum of services for the program (see example below);
- 2 Identify the specific program component of the continuum of services they proposed to use the grant funds to support;
- 3 Identify the outcomes to be attained by individuals enrolled in the program component of the continuum; and,
- 4 Explain how this outcome will advance the participants along the continuum to unsubsidized job placement.

## PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Applicants could propose to use grant funds to provide one or more of these program components on the continuum to helping participants secure unsubsidized employment.



## CASE MANAGEMENT & SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

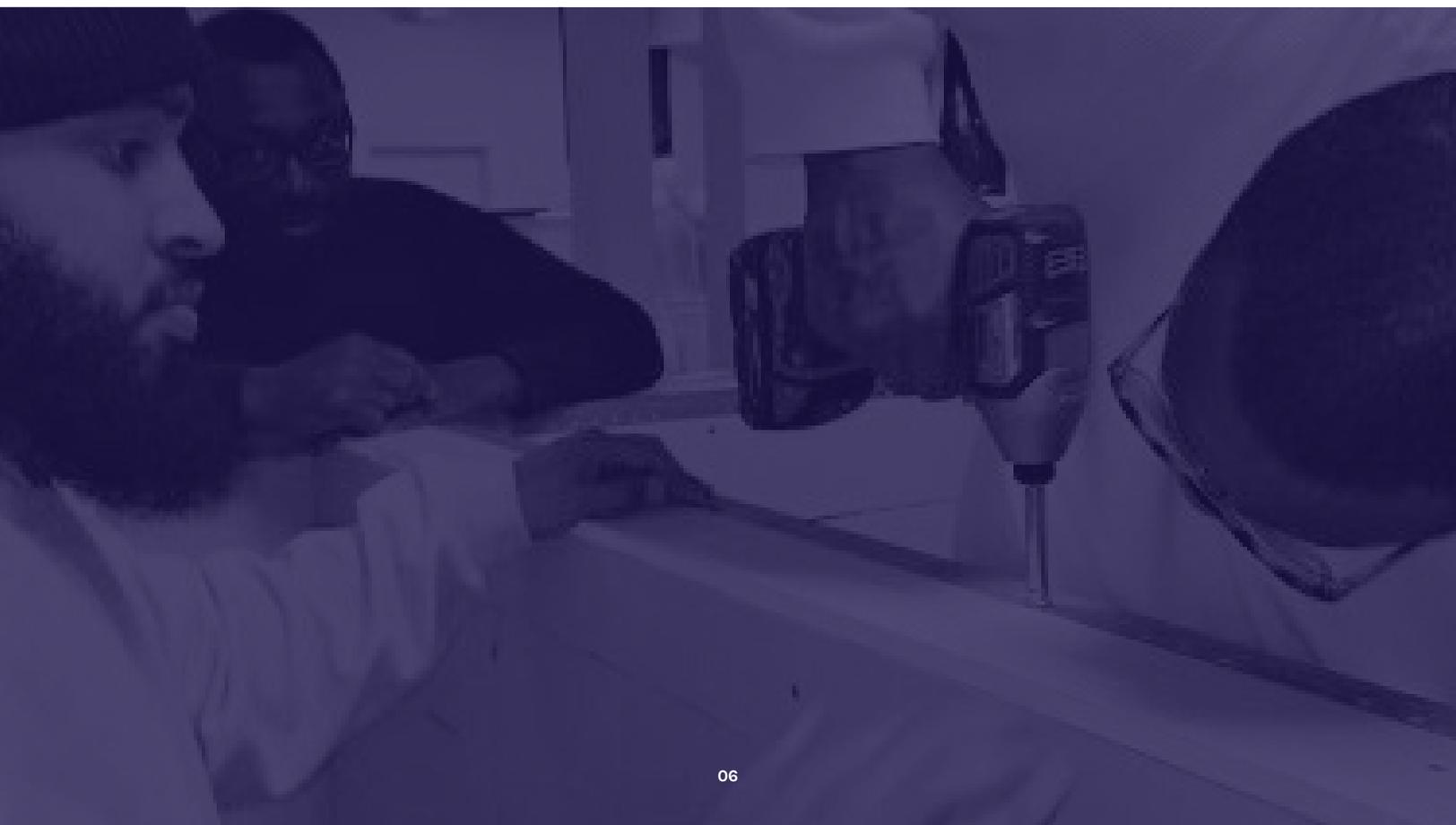
# ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM

Eligible applicants included community-based organizations, non-profit education, training or other service providers, MassHire Career Centers, and post-secondary institutions with existing, successful programs with demonstrated positive outcomes for the following target populations:

- Individuals in a Department of Corrections facility or transitioning back to the community
- Individuals in a House of Correction facility or transitioning back to the community

Applicants were required to demonstrate that they had a relationship with an organization that has access to and would provide referrals to the program, including at least one of the following types of organizations:

- Houses of Correction
- Department of Corrections
- Office of Community Corrections
- Departments of Probation
- Department of Parole



# GRANTS AWARDED IN FY 22

In August of 2022, Commonwealth Corporation, on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, awarded a total of \$1,660,000 to 13 organizations. Grants will operate through September 2023. The following chart provides information about the 13 organizations awarded grants, including the grant award amount and a description of the project.

AWARDEE	AWARD AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
College Bound Dorchester dba Boston Uncornered	\$20,000	Boston Uncornered will be issued a \$20K planning grant to support their internal development and participation in CommCorp-issued technical assistance with the aim of preparing them for a successful application process for FY 23 resources in the spring.
Community Action Pioneer Valley	\$160,000	Community Action Pioneer Valley partnership plans to work with the Franklin and Hampshire County Houses of Correction to engage returning citizens in the manufacturing industry. They will partner with Deerfield Packaging/Mayhew Steel, Hillside Plastics, Quabbin Wire & Cable Company, and The Western MA Food Processing Center at the Franklin County Community Development Corporation to place participants into employment.
Community Work Services	\$160,000	Community Work Services partnership plans to work with Suffolk County House of Correction and the Department of Corrections to engage returning citizens in the hospitality industry/culinary arts and green environment services. They will partner with Star Market and Finesse Hospitality to place participants into employment.
Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation	\$20,000	Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation will be issued a \$20K planning grant to support their internal development and participation in CommCorp-issued technical assistance with the aim of preparing them for a successful application process for FY 23 resources in the spring.
Future Hope Apprenticeship and Recovery Program	\$160,000	Future Hope Apprenticeship and Recovery Program partnership plans to work with Suffolk County House of Correction to engage returning citizens in the trades industry. They will partner with Cross Country Painting Inc. and Built Better 55 LLC to place participants into employment.

# GRANTS AWARDED IN FY 22 CONTINUED

AWARDEE	AWARD AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
Justice Resource Institute dba STRIVE Boston	\$160,000	STRIVE Boston will partner with Suffolk and Middlesex County Sheriff's Offices and implement a training program focused on the healthcare industry. Successful program graduates will be placed into patient transportation, environmental services, and therapeutic mentor roles at Brigham & Women's Hospital and Justice Resource Institute, Inc.
Massasoit Community College	\$160,000	Massasoit Community College partnership plans to work with Plymouth County Sheriff's Department, MA Department of Corrections, and Haley House to engage returning citizens in the diesel technology industry, specifically as diesel mechanic-technicians. They will partner with Milton CAT, Waste Management, and Boston Freightliner to place participants into employment.
New England Culinary Arts Training	\$160,000	New England Culinary Arts Training partnership plans to work with Suffolk County House of Correction and the MA Department of Corrections' Roslindale Pre-Release Center to engage returning citizens in the culinary and hospitality industry. They will partner with Encore Boston Harbor, The Smoke Shop BBQ, Dig Inn, Whole Foods, Hyatt Regency Downtown Boston, Somerset Club, SRV, Whittier Street, and various community-based organizations to place participants into employment.
Positive Action Against Chemical Addiction	\$160,000	Positive Action Against Chemical Addiction plans to work with Bristol County Sheriff's Office to create a training program focused on the healthcare industry. Positive Action Against Chemical Addiction will work to successful training program graduates into recovery coach roles at High Point Treatment Center, Common Grounds Café, There Is A Solution, and Seven Hills Foundation.
Interseminarian - Project Place	\$160,000	Project Place partnership plans to work with South Bay House of Correction and various community-based organizations to engage returning citizens in the logistics, warehouse, and transportation industry. They will partner with Essendant and New Market Business Association to place participants into employment.

# GRANTS AWARDED IN FY 22 CONTINUED

AWARDEE	AWARD AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
The Innocent Convicts	\$160,000	The Innocent Convicts will partner with Essex County Sheriff's department to offer a training program with a focus on the construction industry. Successful program graduates will be placed in roles as carpenters at Universal CommonGround, Inc., and Youth for Human Rights International, New England.
Quinsigamond Community College	\$160,000	Quinsigamond Community College will partner with Worcester County Sheriff's Office to implement a training program in the culinary industry. Successful program graduates will be placed into food preparation roles at Snapchef or the Massachusetts Restaurant Association.
WeReach	\$20,000	WeReach will be issued a \$20K planning grant to support their internal development and participation in CommCorp-issued technical assistance with the aim of preparing them for a successful application process for FY 23 resources in the fall.

# COMMONWEALTH CORPORATION PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

## SERVICE DETAILS

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The Re-Entry Workforce Development Demonstration Program, at its core, is designed to support existing, larger agencies with the capacity to implement services immediately, as well as provide training and program design support to smaller agencies that have traditionally been overlooked due to a lack of capacity to implement large-scale projects. Ideal implementation takes place over 16 months and crosses over two fiscal years. These grants are designed to operate with a Program Design window that transitions into full implementation.

Successful applicants will spend the first two to four months in a Program Design phase of their grant period, meeting four times as a large network and attending Technical Assistance Learning Communities facilitated by Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp). These sessions will follow our Program Design model, beginning with Pre-Planning, followed by Planning & Program Design, and wrapping up with Implementation & Improvement. In between these four meetings, individual partnerships will meet with CommCorp support to focus on partnership/site-specific challenges and strategic planning for the implementation window. CommCorp operates this structure through our traditional key components of a successful program design model. This program design window will exist for all successful applicants, whether or not they have received implementation funds in the past. New grantees will spend this time designing their initial program, while prior funded grantees will spend this time working on program innovations and enhancements. All programs will need to submit an Implementation Plan using a CommCorp-provided template before they are eligible to implement services.

Once the implementation window begins, funded partnerships will be expected to begin delivering services. For the next 12 months, sites will meet with CommCorp oversight monthly for Technical Assistance Learning Community meetings as a network. These meetings will have topic-specific content based on feedback from the field, as well as best practice sharing opportunities. Sites will also be able to use this time to present case studies to the network for feedback and support. These regular convenings will also facilitate client-sharing opportunities—sometimes clients relocate to other cities—sites can refer clients to each other if this is something that occurs.

Ensuring a 12-month implementation window is incredibly important to service delivery for re-entry clients. Many are transitioning back into the community with legal, financial, and court-mandated barriers that can take up to eight months to stabilize. Allowing extra time for funded sites to provide the important and necessary case management required to support returning citizens in the first few months of their re-entry is key to a client's success in a workforce training program.

During the final three months of the grant period, partnerships should be shifting into the placement phase of their program. This allows for a grace period if a client has a setback or is unable to achieve their 30-day employment placement retention outcome during the first attempt. It also provides a window of extended support if a client does successfully obtain 30 days of employment retention early- case managers can stay connected to both the client and the employer during this time.

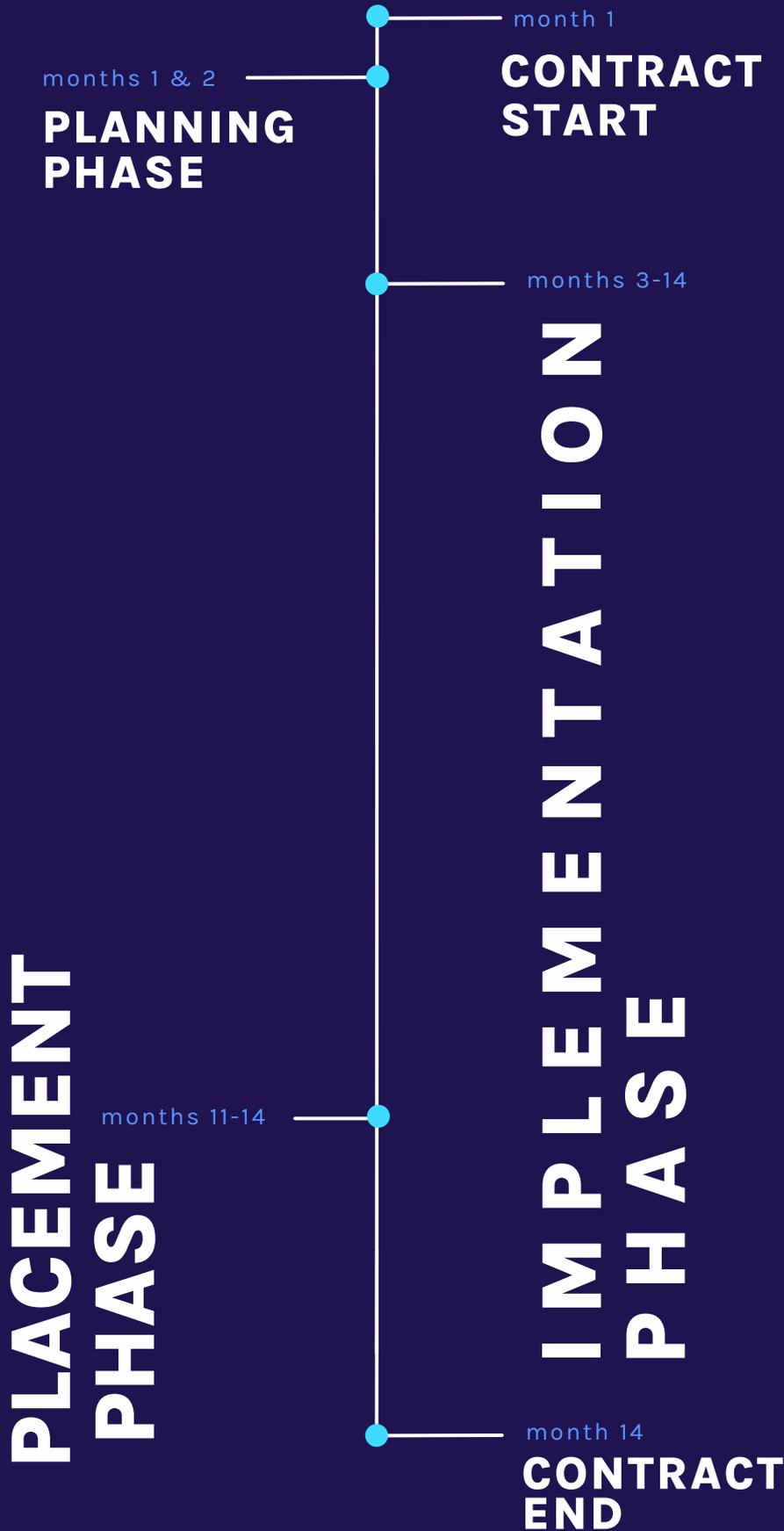
# YEARLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

ACTIVITY	DATE
Request for Proposals Released	March 23, 2022
Bidders Webinar	March 30, 2022
Deadline to Submit Written Questions	April 14, 2022
All Answers to Written Questions Posted on Website	April 18, 2022
Applications Due	April 29, 2022 by 5pm
Applicants Notified of Status	Within 30 days of Initial Deadline
Earliest Anticipated Contract Start Date	August 1, 2022
Contract End Date	September 30, 2023

## IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON PROGRAM

FY 22 Implementation awards were announced in May of 2022, with contracts beginning August 1, 2022, scheduled to run through September 2023. As with prior years, post-COVID, there were occasional service interruptions for program implementation as House of Correction and Department of Corrections facilities dealt with internal outbreaks. For the re-entry grants relying on a behind-the-wall partner like a House of Correction and Department of Corrections facility, this effectively delayed their timeline for program completion. CommCorp has offered a wide variety of assistance, ranging from flexibility to allow programs to pause until facilities re-open, making connections between the grantee network via technical assistance to share best practices and brainstorm solutions, and support programs making and nurturing relationships with other referral sources, such as regional probation and parole departments. Additionally, CommCorp has relentlessly advocated for the much-needed ability of programs to spend resources across fiscal years to meet the needs and barriers returning citizens face as they begin their transition back into the community that COVID has only magnified.

# PROGRAMMATIC TIMELINE



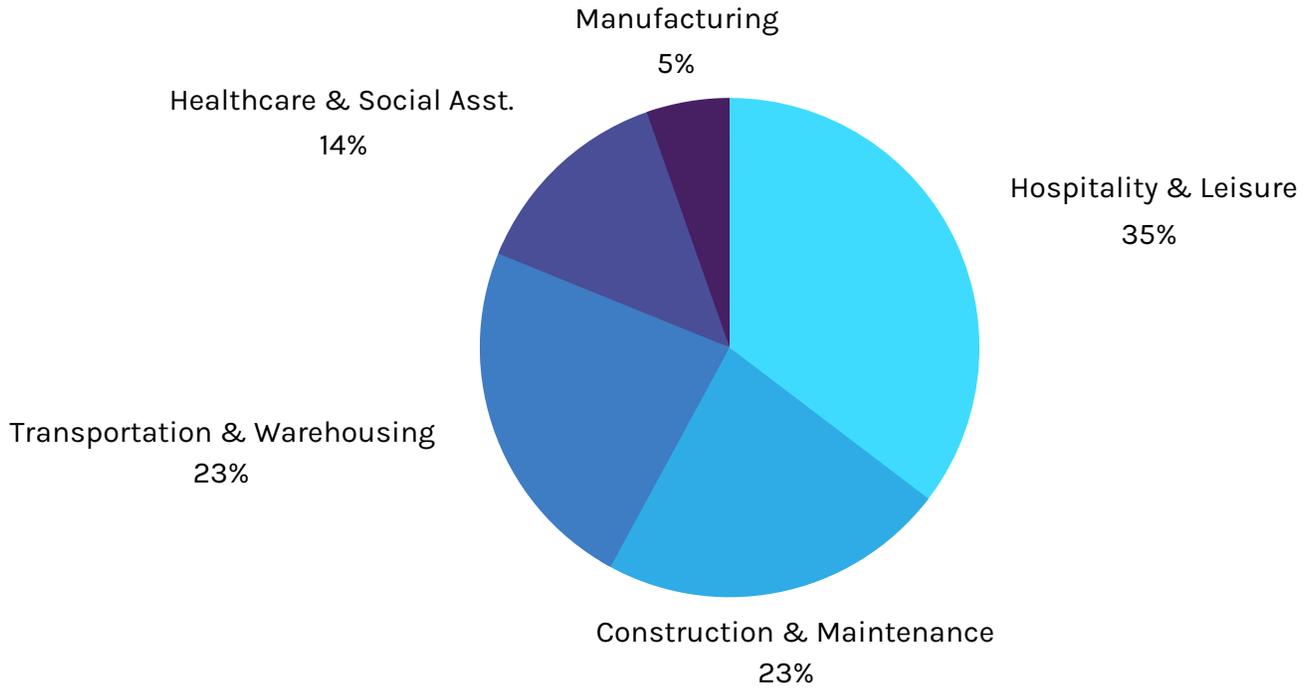
# FY 23 RE-ENTRY PERFORMANCE THROUGH FEBRUARY 2023

**Please note the Re-Entry Workforce Development Demonstration Program operates on a 14-month implementation window, with program completion and employment outcomes expected to begin Month 11. (See “Programmatic Timeline”, page 12). At the current point in time, programs are 50% of the way through their implementation period- Month 7- and 4 months out from their planning/design phase, which ended in Month 3.**

Enrollments	143
Completions	35
Job Placements Retained 30 Days	16
Average Placement Wage	\$18.06
Active in Program	94
Non-Positive Completions	14
Positive Completion Rate	71%
Placement Rate (% of Positives)	46%



# INDUSTRY OF FY 23 RE-ENTRY PLANNED ENROLLMENTS



\*Total planned enrollments: 297

Please note the Re-Entry Workforce Development Demonstration Program operates on a 14-month implementation window, with program completion and employment outcomes expected to begin Month 11. (See “Programmatic Timeline”, page 12). At the current point in time, programs are 50% of the way through their implementation period- Month 7- and 4 months out from their planning/design phase, which ended in Month 3.

# DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

## Age

Age 18-24 Years Old	12%
Age 25-34 Years Old	36%
Age 35-44 Years Old	27%
Age 45-54 Years Old	16%
Age 55+ Years Old	9%
<b>Average Age</b>	<b>37</b>

## Gender

Female	5%
Male	94%
Other/Not Disclosed	1%

## Race/Ethnicity

Hispanic/Latinx	30%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1%
Asian	1%
Black/African American	37%
White	23%
Multi-Racial	3%
Other/Not Disclosed	5%

## Pre-Program Status

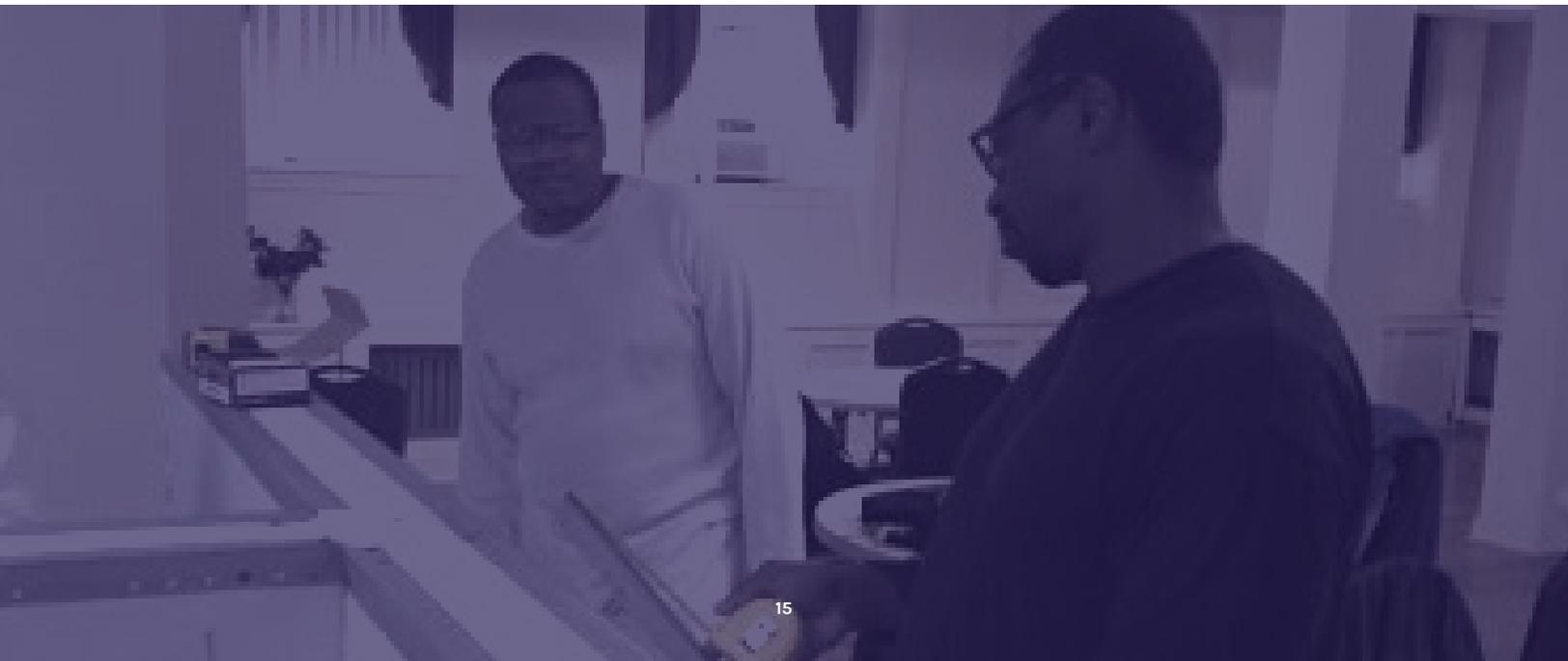
Unemployed	85%
Under-employed	15%

## Educational Attainment Level

Less Than High School	18%
High School Diploma	33%
HiSET/GED	36%
Some Postsecondary/College	10%
Associate Degree or Higher	3%

## Other Characteristics

Persons with Disabilities	13%
Immigrant	12%
Language Not English	7%
Receiving Public Assistance	45%



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5. Nellis, A., Litson, S., & En, S. (2021, October). The color of justice racial and ethnic disparity in state... The Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in State Prisons. Retrieved December 6, 2021, from <https://www.sentencingproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/The-Color-of-Justice-Racial-and-Ethnic-Disparity-in-State-Prisons.pdf>.
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**WE THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR CONTINUED  
SUPPORT.**

## **Contact**

33 Harrison Ave, 3rd Floor  
Boston, MA 02111  
(617) 727-8158

 [www.commcorp.org](http://www.commcorp.org)  
 [info@commcorp.org](mailto:info@commcorp.org)  
 [@commcorp](#)

