

Breakthrough



Annual Impact
Report FY2024
July 1 2023–June 30 2024



Dear Friends,

I'm delighted to share with you about the work we achieved together this past year. As you explore the stories and achievements within these pages, I hope you are overjoyed in knowing that your partnership and generosity directly impact our first-generation college students to break through barriers and achieve their educational goals.

Thanks to your commitment, we were able to serve more students in high school and college than ever before. Our students are not only discovering their purpose, but also transforming their own lives, families, and communities.

We are thrilled to see how your support has enabled us to expand the Passport to College Program into three additional schools—Chelsea High School, Snowden International School, and Boston Arts Academy—increasing the number of school

districts we now serve in from two to three. As we reach more students through our programs, we will have a greater impact on closing the opportunity and achievement gap. I can't emphasize enough how fundamental your contributions are for our students. We're also excited about our future plans to extend our reach into new cities, broadening our impact even further.

This year presented significant challenges, particularly the flawed rollout of the new FAFSA system, which made it difficult for our students to secure the financial aid they needed. These difficulties were further intensified by the shifting landscape of affirmative action and the barriers for students of color to access highly competitive institutions. We will continue to track the long-term impact of these decisions on our students as we advance our advocacy work in the higher education space.

As we look ahead, we are unwavering in our mission to equip first-generation college students with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to forge their own paths. Their determination inspires us daily, and we are honored to partner with them on their journey to greatness.

Thank you for believing in this vital work and for investing in the leaders of tomorrow. Together, we are building a brighter future—one student at a time.

Always grateful,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carolina De Jesus'.

Carolina De Jesus

By the Numbers

School Year 2023-2024

1433

Students Served SY 2023-2024

928 Passport to College | 9th-12th Grade

505 Alumni Success | Postsecondary

Class of 2024 Program Outcomes

402

seniors in the
Passport Class
of 2024



98%

graduated from high
school

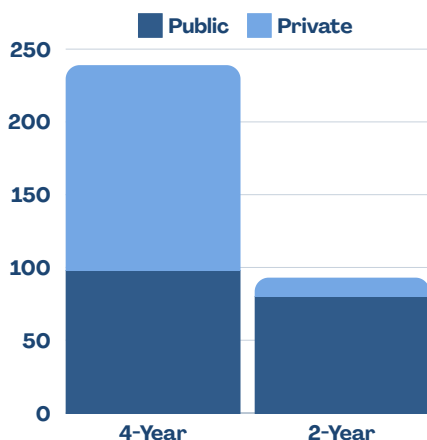


87%

were accepted and planned to
enroll in postsecondary education

82% in college or university
5% in alternative programs

Intended College Enrollment



Top 10 Colleges with the Greatest Intended Enrollment

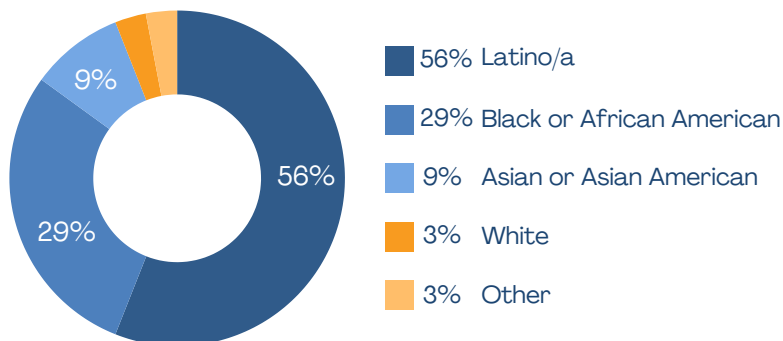
1. UMass Boston
2. Bunker Hill Community College
3. Northeastern University
4. Suffolk University
5. Roxbury Community College
6. Wentworth Institute of Technology
7. Franklin Cummings Tech
8. Boston College
9. Boston University
10. UMass Amherst

Where and Who We Serve

Our School Partners

- Albert D. Holland School of Technology
- Boston Arts Academy
- Charlestown High School
- Chelsea High School
- East Boston High School
- English High School
- Fenway High School
- Josiah Quincy Upper School
- Margarita Muñiz Academy
- New Mission High School
- Revere High School
- Ruth Batson Academy
- Snowden International School

Student Demographics



Of the Passport Class of 2021 who enrolled in college, 75% are still persisting in higher education despite graduating from high school during the pandemic.



Xiomara Perez

"It was really inspirational being around my Passport Coach who was the first in her family to go to college. I felt like I could do it too."

Xiomara Perez's journey with the Boston HERC began in the Community-Based (after-school) program, where she was paired with her Passport Coach, Lorena Marte, who guided her through the complex college application & FAFSA process. As a first-generation to college student, Xiomara faced many challenges, but her perseverance and support system helped her realize her dream of attending college. She is not only the first in her family to graduate from high school but also the first to buy a car and hold an office job, a testament to her hard work and determination.

Today, Xiomara is pursuing a degree in Entrepreneurship at Lasell University with aspirations of becoming a clothing designer. Her first semester has been more difficult than expected, but instead of being discouraged, she pushed through. She says that her Alumni Success Coach, George Vicente, was a big part of her persistence. "He got me through that difficult time. He was like my therapist." Xiomara has found her rhythm at Lasell, made new friends, and embraced the challenges of college life.

Beyond academics, Xiomara is already gaining professional experience through her job at the City of Everett's Youth and Development Department, where she assists the director. Balancing work and school, she's proving her dedication to both her education and her community. Xiomara also immerses herself in entrepreneurial events like Startup Boston, where she has the opportunity to build connections and hone her skills.

In her downtime, she enjoys playing volleyball, has picked up golfing as a new hobby, and deepens her faith through Cru, a club on campus. Looking ahead, she's considering an accelerated program to graduate early and begin her entrepreneurial career.



Xiomara and her family head out to her high school graduation



Xiomara preps for midterms

Julio Alvarado

“The feeling of being the first one in my family to finish high school and just a month later, enter college, is amazing. I’m accomplishing the dream.”

Julio Alvarado’s journey is one of breakthrough and resilience. Born in El Salvador, Julio arrived in the U.S. at age 11, facing the challenges of learning a new language and adjusting to a different culture and education system. No one in his family had the opportunity to go past elementary or middle school, and even from a young age, he knew he wanted to be the one to change that. At Charlestown High School, Julio built meaningful relationships with his teachers and his Passport Coach, Erica Telisnor (known as Ms. T to her students). Erica’s support was critical, particular in his senior year, as he navigated the complex application process. He says, “If it wasn’t for Ms. T, I would not be heading to college right now. I feel at home at Boston HERC. I have another family here.”



Julio received a full scholarship as part of the inaugural cohort at Messina College, a life-changing opportunity for him and his family. Messina’s program offers students the chance to transfer to Boston College, provided they maintain a 3.4 GPA. Julio says, “I am determined to keep up my grades and get accepted into BC.” Julio, who is pursuing a degree in Applied Psychology, is thriving academically and has access to Boston College’s library and resources, an opportunity he doesn’t take for granted, and of which he’s making the most while at Messina.

His family remains his anchor, with his mother’s constant belief in him serving as a daily reminder of the support he has. Julio knows that by excelling, he not only sets a strong example for his 7-year-old brother but also proves to himself that he belongs in higher education. His goal is to become a lawyer in order to help other immigrant families.



Julio and his family at his high school graduation



Julio, pictured with Passport Coach Erica (L) and his Alumni Success Coach Ferlisa (R) over the summer

Passport to College & Alumni Success Programs



Passport students across 6 BPS high schools on a college tour of UMass Dartmouth



Niliana Pires works on a scholarship application with Passport Coach, Erica Telisnor

 **12,500+**
Hours of Programming



Students hike Wachusett Mountain during summer programming



Reverse High School workshop in action



Darareaksmev Chhim gets his CPR & First Aid certification

84
College Visits, Field Trips
& Special Events



English High School students celebrate their Passport graduation

Carolina Mendez

“The Boston HERC kept me on track and motivated me to break through the many challenges I faced.”



Carolina Mendez, born in El Salvador, moved to the U.S. with her mother in 2008 when she was a freshman in high school. They settled in Jamaica Plain. While at Boston International Newcomers Academy (BINCA) she worked hard to learn English. She joined the Boston HERC’s after-school Community-Based Passport Program, receiving crucial support in navigating the college application process with help from her Passport Coach, Carolina De Jesus, who is now the Boston HERC’s CEO. Balancing SAT prep, part-time work at the Cambridgeside Galleria Mall, and school, Carolina persevered, determined to make her family proud as a first-generation college student.

She enrolled at UMass Dartmouth, excelling as an honors student while majoring in Marketing with two minors, International Business and Management Information Systems. In 2017, she continued her studies at UMass Boston, earning her MBA in a year and a half. Now a Program Analyst in the federal Department of Transportation, she coordinates contract programs for small businesses through the Small Business Innovation Research Program, working with companies that provide solutions for rail, highways, and transit systems.

Carolina is deeply grateful for the support from the Boston HERC during a time when she was uncertain about navigating the U.S. college system. She says, “I’m so grateful for the supportive community of fellow students who were part of my journey and for the guidance in applying to college.” Through her dedication, Carolina has shown that with the right people and resources, dreams can come true.



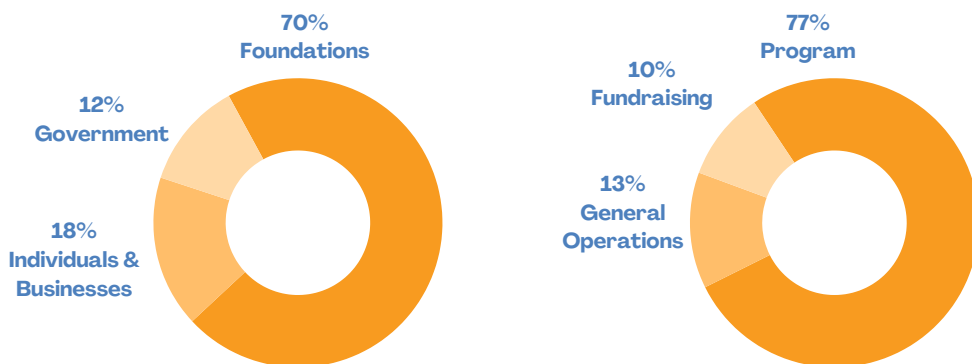
Carolina (pink shirt) with the Passport Class of 2012



Carolina earns her MBA from UMass Boston

Audited Financials

FY 2024



Revenue: **\$1,103,968**

* Total Expenses: **\$1,225,748**

Total Assets as of June 30th : **\$1,044,207**

* Expenses in excess of revenue were partially planned this year, including spending of multi-year grants accounted for in the prior fiscal year which were designated to be spent in this year. We also chose to invest some of the organization's cash reserves into programming, always maintaining nearly 6 months of operating reserves available for the coming year.

Thank you to our **170+** philanthropic partners and volunteers!

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