



**LAUNCH: AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO  
REACHING OPPORTUNITY YOUTH**  
**Final Evaluation Report**  
**April 2021**

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## Executive Summary

In Spring 2018 the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) selected the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley (United Way) to lead Launch, a network of community-based providers in five Boston-area communities that would collaborate to create a coordinated system of providing outreach, connection and referrals, as well as education, training, and job placements to opportunity youth ages 18-24 living in subsidized housing in Greater Boston. The goal of Launch was:

*To disrupt intergenerational poverty by increasing awareness among 18-24-year-olds living in state subsidized housing of available education and career pathways, and improving their access to opportunities for upward economic mobility through a coordinated network of service providers.*

Two features set Launch apart from other opportunity youth initiatives: (1) *it used subsidized housing as a vehicle to help young adults get and stay on a pathway toward prosperity* (2) *data efforts attempted to define and assess the relationship between “dosage” (the frequency and duration of participation in Launch) and client outcomes.*

Using subsidized housing as a vehicle for identifying and working with disconnected or under-connected 18-24-year-olds (commonly referred to as opportunity youth) was new and uncharted territory for an opportunity youth initiative but DHCD believed there were two benefits to this approach. First, the target population of Launch, sometimes referred to as *opportunity youth*, are by definition disconnected or under-connected to systems and services and therefore are likely not visible to organizations and agencies poised to offer education and career pathways services. Knowing that a sub-population of opportunity youth live in subsidized housing elevates their visibility as potential participants in Launch. Secondly, research indicates that employment of disconnected youth is linked to housing stability. Since Launch clients experience housing stability through their subsidized housing status, they are likely better poised to reap the benefits of participation than opportunity youth who do not have stable housing.<sup>i</sup>

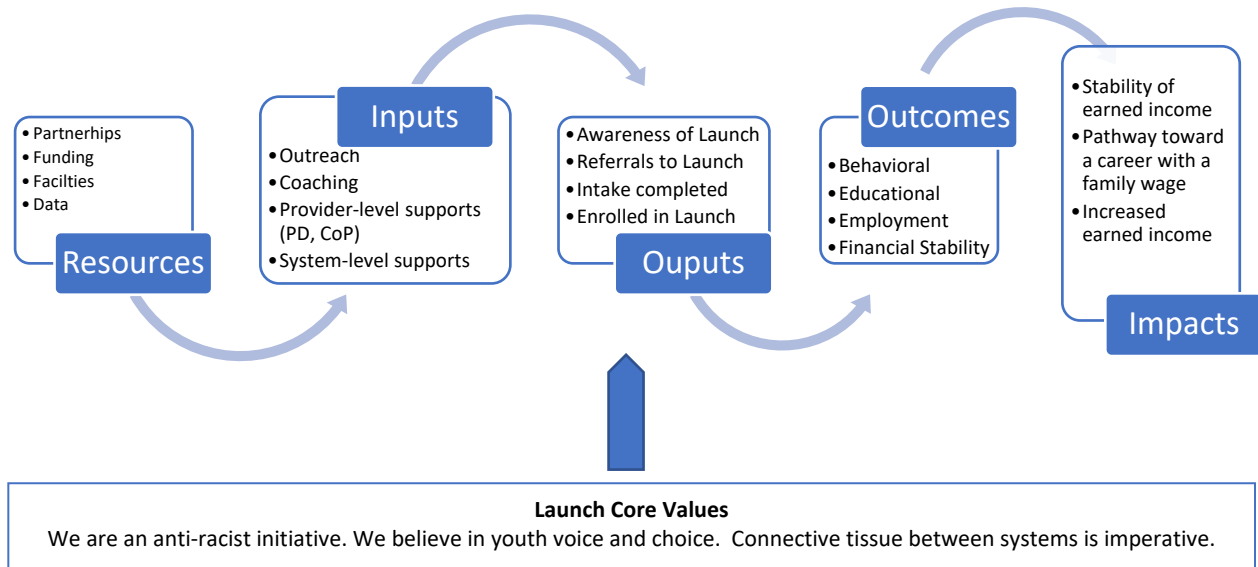
Central to the Launch model was an attempt to define dosage and assess the relationship between dosage and outcomes. While many opportunity youth interventions that have specific participation expectations track length of time in the intervention, a national scan conducted by the evaluation team revealed that most opportunity youth evaluations do not examine dosage and those that do examine dosage focus on duration (length of time in the intervention), not intensity (level of engagement with coaches).<sup>ii</sup> Launch attempted to do both.

The program model brought together leading community-based organizations – Roca, JVS-Boston, the Boston Private Industry Council (PIC), the Lynn Family Success Center, and Chelsea CONNECT<sup>1</sup> – to provide coordinated coaching and college and career navigation services and/or job search assistance and placement services. An additional program design feature included integration with financial coaching services available at three of the partner sites or through a referral arrangement. United Way served as the convenor of Launch, coordinating partnerships, supporting professional development, and supporting a management information system.

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<sup>1</sup> As will be described in this report, after six months of implementation, partners were streamlined, but at the outset of Launch, there were five partners.

The Launch model, depicted below, was created out of the work, research, and best practices developed by the Boston Opportunity Youth Collaborative, and remains closely connected to the work of other opportunity youth serving organizations and programming across Greater Boston.



After a six-month planning process, implementation of Launch began in September 2018. Shortly thereafter, the Forum for Youth Investment was engaged to conduct a one-year process evaluation to better understand implementation, and then to continue conducting evaluation to feed continuous improvement efforts and to better understand success.

**Evaluation results confirmed that Launch is a promising approach to connecting 18–24-year-olds living in subsidized housing to college and career pathways and it merits further investments to better understand implementation and impact in the Boston area.**

### Key Client Outcomes

The evaluation looked at several self-reported client characteristics including: gender, race, ethnicity, dependent status, housing status, and prior work or education experience. Of all the characteristics examined, two client characteristics had a statistically significant impact on goal attainment—housing type and the presence of dependents. The evaluation also examined the relationship between dosage and goal attainment.

- Launch clients who had medium and high dosage scores (i.e., those that, on average, had more frequent interaction with their coach) were more likely to achieve their goals compared to clients who had less frequent interaction with their coach. While the variables examined in the data set could not shed light on what it was about dosage that seemed to matter most, partners reported several factors including length of disconnection, vulnerability, family dynamics in the home, workplace discrimination, and lack of money for clothing, supplies, and transportation, and mental health issues, that inhibit or promote goal attainment.
- By November 2020, 32 percent of clients had achieved a goal they had set. To put this finding in perspective, national data suggests that despite young people’s aspirations to advance and secure family wage jobs, make connections in civic engagement, and improve their communities, once they have experienced disconnection from school and work, it’s very

unlikely they will be able to meet these aspirations, with only 1 percent of youth who have been disconnected ever earn an associate's degree or higher, compared to 36 percent of the general population.<sup>iii</sup> That a full third of the Launch clients achieved a goal that puts them on a pathway toward economic mobility appears to be a promising finding that demonstrates the potential of Launch to alter the trajectory of many of its clients.

- Clients with dependents were significantly less likely to achieve their goals than those without dependents.

### Key Partner Benefits

Partners reported that participation in Launch:

- Helped them be more intentional about “meeting clients where they are”;
- Improved their ability to cultivate meaningful relationships that supported each individual's goals;
- Enabled stronger relationships among the partners;
- raised awareness in their organizations of the importance of supporting opportunity youth.

### Notable Launch Milestones

Launch evolved in an unprecedented national context of the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and structural racism awakening. The story of its evolution signals a commitment of the partners — United Way, providers, and DHCD — to make the course corrections necessary to ensure that Launch remains true to its core values of meeting youth where they are, working to dismantle systemic racism, and be one stop on a young adult's journey toward economic prosperity. The evolution of Launch was punctuated with key milestones that shaped the journey, including:

*An unanticipated planning time for partners to work out some of the kinks in the model and in their relationships.* While it was anticipated that Launch would begin implementation in Spring 2018 when the partner contracts were signed, several factors necessitated a six-month planning phase in order to work out some key aspects of the model. The planning phase was also viewed by Launch partners as an opportunity for United Way to “get its sea legs” in terms of managing a multi-partner initiative.

*Adjusting enrollment targets to better match the level of effort on the part of outreach workers and coaching staff needed for effective engagement with Launch clients.* The original target metric for Launch was to enroll 400 young adults in year 1 (September 2018-August 2019). After a year of implementation, Launch partners, United Way, and DHCD all found this target to be overly ambitious. Collaboratively, the target metrics for Launch were adjusted so that by the end of February 2021, Launch would enroll 360 young adults in coaching services. This adjustment was determined based on an assessment of realistic client caseloads, by establishing estimates of how many clients coaches could manage in the five stages of behavioral change (from pre-contemplation to contemplation to planning to action to maintenance).

*A breakthrough in defining and measuring dosage.* After a thoughtful process of engaging all Launch partners, the evaluation team developed an initial methodology for counting dosage in May 2020. Specifically, a measure of program dosage was calculated that represented a weighted count of the number of contacts between client and coach, averaged into a weekly dosage score. Clients were categorized into three groups based on their average weekly dosage score representing low,

medium, and high levels of dosage. Analyses then examined whether clients' goal achievement differed by dosage group.

*Solidifying Launch's core values.* The summer of 2020 was a summer of racial reckoning for Launch partners. The COVID-19 pandemic had exposed gross inequities in many of the systems that Launch clients interacted with and depended on. Launch partners, especially the direct service team who was seeing firsthand how the pandemic was disrupting already marginalized young adults' efforts to move toward economic prosperity, felt that Launch was at a critical juncture where it needed to "put a stake in the ground" about what Launch stood for so they formalized a set of values to guide the work moving forward: a commitment to anti-racism, centering youth voice and choice in the client experience, and embracing a pathways approach to supporting young adults which acknowledges Launch as a "stop along the way" not a destination.

*Adding mental health support into the model.* From the outset of implementation there was ongoing discussion among partners about how, and how much, mental health support to provide clients. Many clients were experiencing, or had experienced, trauma, systemic racism, and structural inequities that left them feeling disconnected and without a sense of future self. Evaluation findings after a year of implementation made it clear that coaches were not going to become mental health experts (nor should they) but additional support on how to identify needs and be aware of and connect to services continued to be raised as an issue that would improve overall client outcomes. Understanding the significant barrier that mental health issues was playing in Launch client's ability to engage, particularly as a result of COVID-19, the Boston PIC (using re-purposed Launch funds) contracted with a mental health organization staffed by people of color.

## Key Lessons Learned

*Dosage is an elusive but important measure for program planning and accountability.* Knowing how much of an intervention is necessary to achieve results is important for planning staffing, and accountability. However, since client life circumstances and experiences vary there is no prescriptive path or sequence that fit all and therefore no "one size fits all" dosage. There is a tension to be managed between setting data targets for engagement and outcomes, and acknowledging the challenging life circumstance of this kind of initiative's target population. Launch managed this through an iterative process of listening to partners, analyzing data, and keeping its core values at the center of its decisions.

*Often clients need "lifeboat" jobs as a step toward "lifetime" jobs.* Launch client journeys affirmed getting young adults on a pathway toward economic prosperity may begin with "for now," or "lifeboat" jobs. Many clients' circumstances are such that they are balancing very real and immediate economic circumstances and need to find a job, any job, immediately. While many lifeboat jobs do not lead to opportunities to earn high wages or advance, some will allow young people to develop workforce skills that are transferable to other occupations and are needed for their future long-term careers.<sup>iv</sup> However, to promote the level of individual and systemic change needed to get on a pathway toward economic prosperity, young people must be able to access long-term, "lifetime jobs," which pay a family-supporting wage and help young adults build a secure foundation.

*Virtual engagement efforts appear to be an effective approach for working with 18-24-year-olds.*

When face to face contact was limited in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 virus, direct service staff moved all contact to text, email, phone, and, slowly, zoom or other video conferencing. Coaches reported that this manner of engagement has been beneficial in important some ways: it reduces client anxiety coming to the office, allows more flexibility for when to communicate for both the client and direct service staff, and appears to fit the lifestyle of clients better.

*Launch is one stop on a pathway of supports needed to achieve economic mobility.* While there is no single definition of a “pathway” in the field of opportunity youth, there is a shared understanding that pathways for this population should consist of a portfolio of options that can help young people enroll in a postsecondary education or training that leads to meaningful credentials with value in the labor market, and ultimately enter a career that offers a family-sustaining wage. These options should have multiple on-ramps and off-ramps—opportunities to start, pause, and reengage—in order to meet young people’s needs and respond to their assets, skills, and challenges.<sup>v</sup> Launch embraced this approach and its partners over time strengthened and expanded relationships with other community organizations and public agencies to introduce clients to opportunities, organizations, and systems that can support them in the long term.

*The main lesson learned about a multi-partner initiative is the critical role of an intermediary to act as the navigator for the pathways ecosystem.* A pathways ecosystem refers to the many partners and stakeholders that coordinate and collaborate to create, scale, and sustain pathways that connect young adults to education and workforce systems. While there is no “one-size-fits-all” intermediary, they tend to perform a set of functions that help partners work better together. In the context of Launch, this role was played by United Way which served as a convenor that managed the partnerships, supported professional development, and managed the data collection efforts. Early on, United Way identified that partner organizations had different cultures, different ways of interacting with young adults, and different data cultures. Over the course of the initiative, United Way helped partners see themselves as more similar than different, working collaboratively with partners to come to consensus on key aspects of the model as well as promote a common approach to getting and using data to inform programming.

*Communities need a sufficient number of 18–24-year-olds living in subsidized housing to warrant the investment.* A baseline criterion for an initiative that aims to use subsidized housing as a means of recruitment is that a community has a large enough pool of 18-24-year-olds living in subsidized housing to warrant the investment. The full Launch model —outreach, coaching, professional development, and data collection and analysis — costs about \$5000 per client, yet when asked if there were parts of Launch that were “nice but not necessary,” partners assert that it is the full constellation of inputs that renders Launch a high-quality initiative and distinguishes it from other efforts to support the client population.

*Rent waivers are a necessary cost of the Launch model.* To address intergenerational poverty, Launch offers time-bound rent waivers so that income earned by Launch clients is not considered part of household income for rent purposes. Partners believe this is an important component for recruitment, goal progress, and overall agency of the clients served by Launch. They perceive that the impact of the rent waiver while a client is enrolled in Launch gives them a sense of financial stability, the chance to build a job history and explore career options, alleviates potential conflict

between household residents, thus allowing clients to choose the steps that are best for them without the additional pressure related to contributing the household income to make rent payments.

### The Future of Launch

Based on the lessons and experiences of Launch, DHCD made a commitment to fund Launch 2.0 beginning in March 2021. The essence of the Launch model remains the same, with some important modifications based on evaluation findings and experience.

- *Launch 2.0 will be focused on young adults ages 18-24 living in subsidized housing in Boston only.* an initiative such as Launch needs a large enough potential pool of clients to make the investment worthwhile. Given that the estimate of 18–24-year-olds living in subsidized housing in Boston is approximately 3400 and Launch reached 390 clients in its first iteration, there is more than a sufficient potential client pool.
- *To reach that large client pool of young adults living in place-based and Section 8 housing, Launch 2.0 will have a two-pronged approach to outreach.* The Boston PIC will be the outreach lead responsible for the outreach strategy and maintaining partnerships with the Boston Housing Authority and property management companies; Metro Housing Boston will have a Launch Outreach Specialist focused on outreach to Section 8 households.
- *Launch partners, the PIC and JVS, will be responsible for identifying and solidifying three to four priority employment partners* in sectors that are of interest to Launch clients that are interested in and able to hire Launch clients, to address challenges regarding connecting opportunity youth to employers who understand and are responsive to opportunity youth.
- *United Way will implement a new management information system, Salesforce, with a revised approach to tracking client dosage over time.*

### Conclusion

Using subsidized housing as a vehicle for identifying and working with opportunity youth is new and uncharted territory. The first three years of implementation have offered a proof of principle that Launch may be a promising strategy to engage disconnected and under-connected 18–24-year-olds in education and career pathways, using subsidized housing as a vehicle for identification of and outreach to potential clients. Early outcomes suggest a positive relationship between sufficient participation in Launch and client goal attainment. It is anticipated that Launch 2.0 will collect more and better data to deepen the understanding of how it is contributing to the economic prosperity of young adults in subsidized housing, including how the deep and caring connections with Launch staff support the social and emotional competencies essential to long-term economic prosperity.



## Introduction

According to The Aspen Institute, estimates of the number of “opportunity youth,” or young adults ages 16-24 who are both out of school and out of work, vary from 3 million to 5.5 million nationwide.”<sup>vi</sup> The long-term cost implications of not attending to this population in terms of the increased use of social services, in lost revenue, and in the loss of their contributions to civic society is substantial. A 2018 report released by Measure of America found that on average an opportunity youth would generate \$11,900 per year for the federal government in tax revenue if they remained in school or work. With the estimated population of 4.6 million opportunity youth nationwide, that is estimated at \$55 billion in revenue each year. That is in addition to the estimated lifetime cost to society of more than \$900,000 per opportunity youth.

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Workforce service providers who serve opportunity youth note that many of them face multiple challenges to employment. Some have limited or no work experience. Some have not been able to acquire the academic skills or social and emotional readiness necessary for work. Some do not have connections to employed adults who can provide guidance about workplace expectations. And some do not have the knowledge they need to explore career interests, identify labor market opportunities, and navigate application processes.<sup>viii</sup>

In addition to these employment challenges, obtaining the level of skill and education required for jobs that provide a good standard of living can be a long-term pursuit for many young adults. Therefore, workforce programs are incorporating a “now job” approach into their work with young people. According to the Aspen Institute, “now jobs” help connect young adults to employment that addresses immediate income needs, provides them with valuable work experience, and improves their social capital by connecting them to networks of employed adults. A “now job” strategy builds an interim employment step into the continuum of workforce development services that prepare young adults for long-term career opportunities.

Launch utilizes both a “now jobs” and a “career” jobs approach to help young adults living in subsidized housing get and stay on a pathway toward economic mobility. Similarly, it recognizes a continuum of educational supports from short-term training to degree programs that young adults may need as part of their journey to mobility. As such, Launch fits nicely into the landscape of programs across the country that aim to improve the economic mobility of opportunity youth. However, with two notable and innovative exceptions: *(1) it uses subsidized housing as a vehicle to help young adults get and stay on a pathway toward prosperity (2) it has attempted to define and assess the relationship between “dosage” (the frequency and duration of participation in Launch) and client outcomes.*

### Opportunity Youth Defined

Nationally, opportunity youth (OY) are identified as 16- to 24-year-olds who are not employed and not in school or training. These youth are seen as disconnected from the usual supports and opportunities for development. There are plenty of reasons for youth disconnection – including societal, familial, financial, educational, or personal. Often, OY have experienced public systems such as child welfare, juvenile justice, or behavioral health. Many have experienced multiple traumas.

The target population defined by Launch is a subset of these youth. For Launch, these include **18- to 24-year-old youth living in subsidized housing who are disconnected or under-connected (part-time or intermittently) to the workforce or education.**



This approach was new and uncharted territory for engaging opportunity youth but DHCD believed there were two benefits to this approach. First, the target population for Launch, *opportunity youth*, by definition are disconnected or under-connected to systems and services and therefore are likely not visible to organizations and agencies poised to offer education and career pathways services. Knowing that a sub-population of opportunity youth live in subsidized housing elevates their visibility as potential participants in Launch. Secondly, research indicates that employment of disconnected youth is linked to housing stability, with youth who have stable housing more likely to get and stay employed.<sup>ix</sup> Since Launch clients experience housing stability through their subsidized housing status, they are likely better poised to reap the benefits of participation than opportunity youth who do not have stable housing. Launch was an effort to overcome both these barriers to working with opportunity youth—finding them and connecting them to supports, and providing stable housing while they worked on their goals.

Over the course of the three-year initiative, evaluation efforts documented the evolution of the Launch approach from pre-implementation to course-correction to revised implementation. This final, field-informing report discusses how Launch was developed and implemented, how it evolved, and what was learned about its theory of change regarding using subsidized housing as a leverage point to improve economic stability for residents ages 18-24. It concludes with a preview of Launch 2.0.

### [Roadmap to the Report](#)

The report opens with a brief review of the evaluation process and approach. It then describes the model, presents key outcomes, and offers lessons learned.

Section 1:	Evaluation Overview
Section 2:	The Current Launch Model
Section 3:	Key Milestones in the Evolution of Launch
Section 4:	Key Outcomes of Launch
Section 5:	Lessons Learned
Section 6:	Preview of Launch 2.0

## Section 1: Evaluation Overview

The evaluation was conducted from October 2018 – February 2021 and consisted of two phases.

**Phase 1:** In October 2018, the Forum for Youth Investment began a one-year evaluation of Launch to:

- Examine the development and roll-out of Launch's first year of implementation;
- Provide formative evaluation information to help with mid-course correction;
- Provide a one-year report that will help with improvement and adaptation of Launch in subsequent years.

Evaluation activities during the first year were:

- Document review;
- Participation at Launch partner meetings;
- Two rounds of 15 interviews and focus groups with directors, coaches, outreach workers, career navigators across the partners, Youth Voice Project staff, the United Way team, and Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) staff (January - February 2019 and September - October 2019).

**Phase 2:** In October 2019, the Forum began its second phase of the evaluation in order to address one main question: *"Given the three-year timeframe of Launch, are we on a pathway toward Launch being a promising approach to improve economic stability for young people ages 18-24 living in subsidized housing?"*

This phase expanded evaluation activities to include:

- A field scan to determine how Launch fits in the national context of improving the odds for opportunity youth (March 2020);
- Youth survey to understand behavioral changes and youth perceptions of the Launch model;<sup>2</sup>
- Two rounds of interviews and focus groups with key Launch stakeholders (April 2020 and January 2021);
- Analysis of existing administrative data being collected in Efforts to Outcomes, Launch's management information system, to better understand key logic model activities and indicators (April 2020 and January 2021);
- Participation at Launch partner meetings (ongoing).

This report presents a synthesis of evaluation findings from October 2018 – February 2021.

### Launch Roles

Directors lead the specific organizations' Launch Teams  
Outreach workers are responsible for recruitment into Launch  
Coaches work with clients to identify goals  
Career navigators help connect clients to employers  
United Way is the intermediary that manages the partners  
DHCD funds the initiative; the DHCD program officer is an active participant in Launch implementation

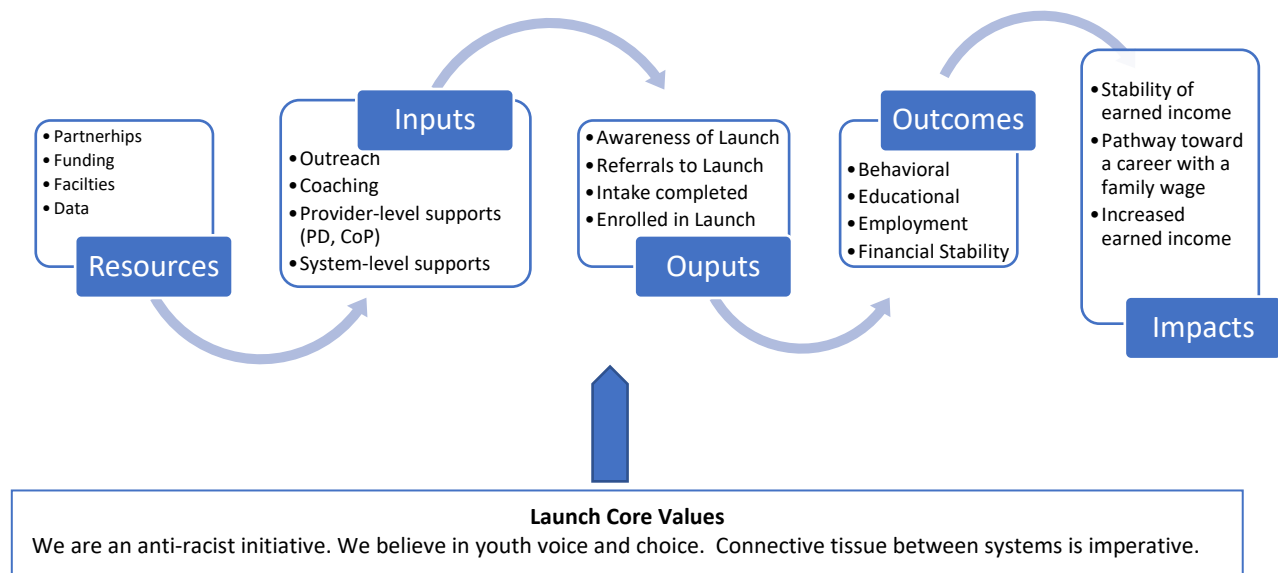
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<sup>2</sup> As described later in the report, the youth survey was put on hold until the next phase of Launch.

## Section 2: The Current Launch Model

Launch has many interrelated components that contribute to client engagement and success. Starting with a good relationship with housing partners to be able to identify a pool of potential clients, the model then includes: outreach, warm-handoffs, coaching, referrals, and supports to clients once enrolled on a pathway. It is supported by a strong convenor that offers professional development and partner coordination as well as a supportive housing policy that enables families to “say yes” to participation without having it hurt their income status. (Appendix A illustrates Launch’s full theory of change). Figure 1 illustrates the key components of Launch.

Figure 1. Launch Framework



From a client perspective, the Launch model consists of outreach to potential clients, referral to coaches, and helping them get on a path toward education and/or employment.

Outreach methods include door-knocking when appropriate and safe, phone calls, texts, mailings, and building relationships with property management staff. A component of the outreach strategy is to target specific developments and neighborhoods to create good relationships with Boston Housing Authority (BHA) property managers and tenants, and with property management companies such as Winn Companies and Beacon Communities. Metro Housing Boston is the outreach partner for 18-24-year-olds living in Section 8 housing. Prior to the onset of COVID-19, outreach was primarily conducted in person through door-knocking as well as distributing flyers about Launch, attending community meetings, and setting up desks at the housing properties so the outreach worker had a visible presence — this was referred to as the “saturation model.” However, since March 2020, outreach has been conducted virtually and, as will be discussed in the Lessons Learned section below, this has had some unintended benefits.

The outreach team provides an initial connection between potential clients and their coaches, via texting and phone calls – this is referred to as the warm handoff. Establishing a warm handoff is a

signature part of Launch. In clinical settings, the warm handoff is seen as a best practice for patients. In essence, it involves the transfer of care or responsibility between two members of a team. In a warm handoff, this transfer occurs in the presence of the client and/or family. This creates transparency and better allows the client to develop trust and engagement with the next member of the team.<sup>x</sup>

In the Launch model, the warm handoff consists of an outreach worker introducing the client to a coach. This personal touch is important since it reinforces in a tangible fashion the trust the youth have given to the outreach worker as the youth has engaged in the process. Initially in Launch, this warm handoff took place primarily in the home of the youth. As partners refined the process, it sometimes took place at the coaches' offices. As will be noted later in the report, even prior to the pandemic, some warm handoffs evolved to become virtual through texts and phone calls. Once a warm handoff is made, coaches conduct an intake interview with each client to better understand what they want and need. Then they help the clients set short- and longer-term goals, identify possible barriers that could get in the way of accomplishing those goals, and offer continued support once a placement to education/training or employment has been made.

Youth voice is integral to the Launch model. During intake, clients exercise choice in determining what they want to work on and at what pace, rather than the coaches making decisions for them. Client interviews are conducted individually to allow clients space to voice their experience with the program and offer their insights on how to improve and market Launch. Launch Ambassadors are clients hired to work with partners, develop a personal project, conduct outreach in their own communities, and gain workplace experience.

#### Youth Voice and Choice

*"Every time we talk, he's [coach] got answers. He always says 'let me know' when proposing things. He always has a way to make progress in person and offline. He understands my speed. He's very affirming, like 'you been coming and you're trying hard'. I don't feel like just another number. He understands my highs and lows and how to respond."*  
-Launch Client

To ensure that the client experience is as impactful as possible, United Way serves as the initiative convenor. There is abundant research on the importance of collaboration and partnership being instrumental in addressing complex problems such as employment for this population.<sup>xi</sup> That research indicates that effective multi-partner efforts require a convening or organizing function. This role is often conducted by an intermediary or backbone organization who is responsible for managing the partnership, communications, funding, logistics, data, governance, planning, and other key functions necessary to create a productive path towards achieving outcomes. As a multi-partner effort, Launch was designed to include just such an entity from the outset — the United Way. As the grant recipient from DHCD, the United Way manages the contracts for the lead partners, but their role goes beyond contract management to include: building the capacity of the partners to work effectively with opportunity youth; facilitating peer learning; managing data collection, monitoring, and reporting using Efforts to Outcomes (ETO); and managing internal and external communications about Launch.

Central to the Launch model is an effort to [define dosage and assess the relationship between dosage and outcomes](#). While many opportunity youth interventions that have specific participation expectations track length of time in the intervention, a national scan conducted by the evaluation team revealed that most evaluations of opportunity youth interventions do not examine dosage and

those that do examine dosage focus on duration (length of time in the intervention), not intensity (level of engagement with coaches).<sup>xii</sup> Launch does both.

To address intergenerational poverty, DHCD provides [rent waivers](#) to eligible Launch clients for the duration of their participation in Launch. These rent waivers allow the families of Launch clients who obtain employment during their Launch journey to have an adjusted rent, meaning their rent will not increase due to their increase in income.

[Foundational to Launch are its core values:](#)

**[Anti-racism:](#)** Launch is rooted in the truth that racism and structural oppression not only exist, but deeply impact the way Launch clients are able to engage in career pathways and Launch coaching. United Way and the program partners are committed to making Launch anti-racist using strategies of team professional development and continuous improvement.

**[Youth Voice & Choice:](#)** Launch recognizes that young adults can identify their own goals, name the barriers to achievement, and generate solutions for themselves. In outreach, coaching, placement, and persistence – youth voice and choice are at the center of the client experience.

**[Connective Tissue Between Systems is Imperative:](#)** Launch serves as the connective tissue between housing, education, and employment systems to support clients in navigating their options for career. Launch is not an end destination for young adults, Launch is a stop along the career path of a young adult.

#### [A Note on Costs](#)

Launch implementation costs for 30 months were approximately two million dollars. Subawards to the partner organizations comprised the largest share of the budget, with 75% of the budget distributed among them. As the convenor, United Way drew approximately 11% of the budget, and the evaluation comprised another 7%. The remainder of the budget was spent on: technology, mini-grants to resident associations, flex-funds for clients (text books, transportation passes, and subsistence allowances to support clients during the pandemic). Overall, the average cost per client was \$5000. By contrast, YearUp is a program that serves 18-24-year-old young adults from urban, economically disadvantaged communities, including opportunity youth. After a competitive selection process, participants receive six months of vocational training and then do a six-month internship, they also receive stipends. This one-year intensive program costs approximately \$24,000 per clients.

#### **The Role of an Intermediary in Promoting Anti-racism**

*“It is important for intermediaries to not only reject false stereotypes about youth of color, but to challenge the internalization and perpetuation of those stereotypes by those who work with youth. Young people benefit from discovering their personal assets as well as learning about the community-based assets they can call on to help overcome barriers. Intermediaries need to also be proactively anti-racist in their practices to ensure that students of color experience a culture of instruction and support that enables them to recognize and build on their assets to overcome the anticipated challenges associated with a career pathway.”*

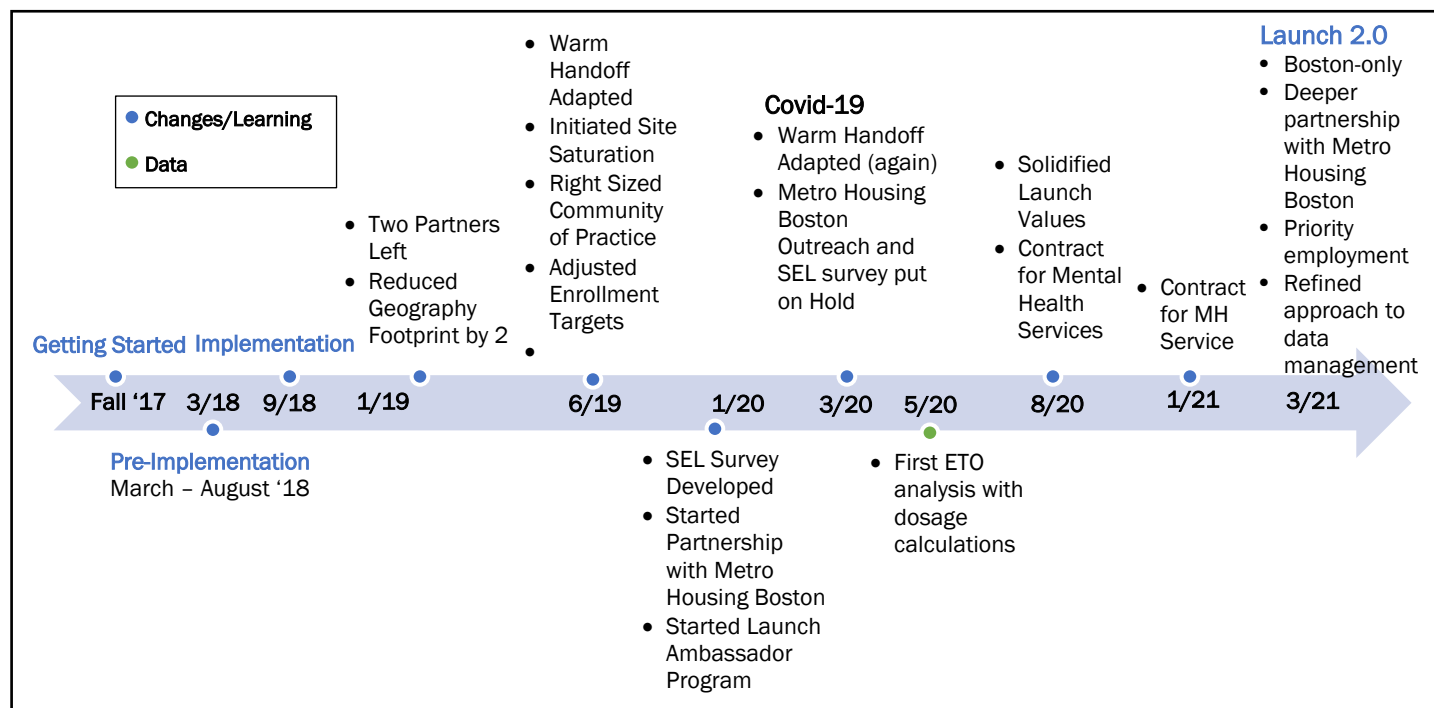
[How intermediaries can help Black and Latinx develop a strong occupational identity](#), p. 6

### **Section 3: Key Milestones in the Evolution of Launch**

Launch evolved in an unprecedented national context of the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and structural racism awakening. The story of its evolution signals a commitment of the partners – United Way, providers, and DHCD – to make the course corrections necessary to ensure that Launch

remains true to its core values of meeting youth where they are, working to dismantle systemic racism, and be one stop on a young adult's journey toward economic prosperity. This section tells the history and evolution of Launch, describing key milestones that mark adaptations to the model to ensure that it was best drawing on partner strengths and meeting client needs. Figure 2 illustrates the key milestones that mark the evolution of Launch.

**Figure 2. Key Milestones in the Evolution of Launch**



Key to Acronyms		
SEL: social and emotional learning	ETO: Efforts to Outcomes	MIS: Management Information System

### Getting Started

In Fall 2017, as part of its Economic Prosperity Agenda, the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) issued a request for proposals from qualified providers to recruit and connect youth ages 18-24 living in subsidized housing in the Boston area to programs and services that would help them obtain employment and a sustaining wage. At that time, there were at least 1900 youth aged 18-24 living in subsidized housing in the Boston area who were not in school and may have benefitted from these services. In Spring 2018, through a competitive selection process, [United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley](#) (UW) received a three-year award from DHCD to implement Launch.

At the outset of Launch, it was designed as a partnership among five leading community-based organizations – [Roca](#), [Jewish Vocational Services](#) (JVS)-Boston, the [Boston Private Industry Council](#) (PIC), the [Lynn Housing Authority and Neighborhood Development](#) (LHAND) and [Chelsea CONNECT](#) – each with specific roles to provide coordinated coaching and college and career navigation services,



job search assistance, and placement services for those participants who need immediate employment. Roca was primarily responsible for outreach to identify potential Launch clients that could be then referred to JVS, PIC, LHAND, and Chelsea CONNECT for workforce and career coaching. As noted previously, United Way, by design, was the coordinator and convener of Launch, managing data collection, professional development, and learning, and serving as a liaison between the program partners and DHCD.

#### Unanticipated Planning Phase (March – August 2018)

While it was anticipated that Launch would begin implementation in Spring 2018 when the partner contracts were signed, several factors necessitated a six-month planning phase in order to work out some key aspects of the model. First, the model was based on partnerships and while the five organizations and United Way knew each other prior to Launch, they had not all worked together so it was necessary to invest time in building the partnerships. Three additional issues were raised during the planning phase: “right-sizing” the outreach targets, what a “warm handoff” meant, and alignment of coaching.

While the planning phase did not resolve concerns about outreach targets (discussed below) it did help partners define what was meant by a warm handoff and how coaches could better align to support clients. This was pre-pandemic, so the definition of warm handoff became a physical meeting with the outreach worker, the coach, and the client to transfer the relationship with the client from the outreach worker to the coach. Alignment of coaching was a concern early on because the partners had varying levels of expertise and experience working with the target population of under and disconnected youth ages 18-24. As one partner stated: *“at the outset there was a culture clash between the partners that had a youth development background and the partners that focused on adult training and employment. We needed to work through that.”*

The planning phase was also viewed by Launch partners as an opportunity for United Way to “get its sea legs” in terms of managing a multi-partner initiative. Over the course of the six months of planning, United Way developed clear processes and expectations for how it would engage partners in decision-making and governance of the initiative.

#### Streamlining Partners and Geography (March 2019)

Six months into implementation two key events occurred that shaped the subsequent implementation of Launch. Roca, the main outreach partner working with JVS, PIC, LHAND, and Chelsea CONNECT, realized that the population of Launch clients were not the population of Roca clients. To be the outreach lead for Launch was a mission-drift for Roca and therefore Roca decided to leave the Launch partnership. Without Roca, Launch had to rethink its capacity to do outreach across the geographic footprint and a decision was made to focus on Boston and Lynn, and therefore the partnership with Chelsea CONNECT wound down. The Boston PIC had prior experience in outreach for other initiatives and took on outreach efforts across Boston. Since LHAND is a housing authority and has access to resident data for outreach efforts, LHAND took on outreach responsibilities for Lynn. With Roca and Chelsea CONNECT no longer Launch partners, there was a narrowed Launch footprint, focusing on Boston and Lynn. Outreach efforts became focused not just on the door-knocking that Roca was conducting but also renewed a focus on building relationships with property management companies, housing authorities, resident taskforces and all of the “gatekeepers” prior to door knocking. The lead outreach worker for Roca stayed with Launch as the

lead outreach worker housed at the Boston PIC. This provided substantial continuity in the face of substantial change.

### Shifts in Model Components (June 2019)

With nine months of implementation experience Launch partners used the lessons it had learned about the model to make some changes in order to improve both client and partner experiences.

After experimenting with various approaches to warm handoffs, [the direct service team began using texting to augment options for conducting a warm handoff](#). Outreach workers began including the prospective coach from a partner agency in texts with the client as the engagement process took hold. This early introduction to the coach gave the coach the ability to communicate with the youth early on in the process, which helped ease the transition process. Launch partners reported that the use of texting for warm handoffs was a significant positive change to the model because for many clients, they were more comfortable meeting their coach virtually than in person. Perhaps a foreshadowing of what would become a necessary way of doing business, the shift in warm handoffs was an important milestone in the Launch evolution.

A second shift in the Launch model was [a focus on saturation at specific housing properties](#). Starting in the fourth quarter, Boston Launch outreach became focused on Boston Housing Authority (BHA) properties. United Way and the Boston PIC had a holder agreement with the BHA which allowed the Launch team to have contact information for all prospective clients prior to outreach. Outreach meant saturating a select number of BHA properties, focusing less on reaching a large quantity of prospective clients and focusing more on turning “aware” young adults to enrolled clients. Saturation meant more ways potential clients learned about Launch, with peers, family members, neighbors, and housing staff all contributing to outreach. As discussed below, this had an impact on outreach targets, reducing how many clients the outreach worker tried to engage per quarter.

A third major shift was to [adjust the enrollment targets for Launch](#). The original target metric for Launch was to enroll 400 young adults in year 1 (September 2018 - August 2019). After a year of implementation, Launch partners, United Way, and DHCD concluded that the original enrollment target was overly ambitious. Collaboratively, the target metrics for Launch were adjusted so that by the end of February 2021, Launch would enroll 360 young adults in coaching services. This adjustment was determined based on an assessment of realistic client caseloads by establishing estimates of how many clients coaches could manage in the five stages of behavioral change (see Figure 3).<sup>3</sup>

In this approach, coaches began to track how much time, on average, they were spending with clients in each stage of change from pre-contemplation to contemplation to planning to action to maintenance. Tracking client interactions through stages is used as a proxy for dosage and helped coaches predict their caseloads in terms of how much time they were spending with clients in each

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<sup>3</sup> A stages of change approach is used to explain an individual's readiness to change their behavior and is commonly used to promote healthy decision-making. At each stage the intervention is customized to meet the client's readiness to change. For more information on stages of change: <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/health-promotion/2/theories-and-models/stages-of-change>

stage. This was a critical point in the evolution of Launch because for the first time, the partners were in agreement about what it would take to help clients get and stay on a pathway toward completion of their goals.

**Figure 3. Stages of Change**

Stage of Change	Description	Coaching Contact Minimum
<b>Pre-contemplation</b>	Client is disengaged, dodging communication.	Bi-Weekly contact via phone or in person
<b>Contemplation</b>	Client is thinking about getting a job, going to school, etc. Client is unreliable and does not consistently show up.	Weekly contact via phone, text, or in person In person meeting once per month (twice per month suggested)
<b>Planning</b>	Client understands his/her goals and more consistently shows up. Client has an action plan and has started to research options.	Bi-weekly contact via phone, email, text, or in-person In person meeting once per month
<b>Action</b>	Client understands his/her goals and is working towards them such as completing job applications, going to college tours, etc.	Bi-weekly contact via phone, email, text, or in-person In-person meeting once per month strongly suggested
<b>Maintenance</b>	Client has enrolled in education, training, or attained a job. Client is not currently pursuing another goal.	Bi-weekly contact via phone, email, text, or in-person

Another decision related to enrollment in Launch was that once a client had enrolled, they could continue to receive Launch support throughout the entire timeframe of the initiative, cycling through more than one goal completion. This enabled 36 clients to accomplish more than one goal over the course of the initiative.

A fourth adjustment to the Launch model that occurred in the fourth quarter was “right-sizing” professional development expectations and partner supports. At the outset of implementation, United Way supported four kinds of meetings:

1. *Launch partner meetings*, which occurred monthly and anyone affiliated with Launch was invited and expected to attend;
2. *Launch Learning Sessions*, which occurred monthly and were for the direct service staff;
3. *Community of Practice (CoP)*, which occurred bi-monthly for direct service staff and were on specific topics;
4. *Case conferencing calls*, which occurred weekly and were for direct service staff.

First wave evaluation findings as well as partner feedback directly to United Way resulted in streamlining the meetings and professional development offerings. Direct service staff reported that the CoP meetings were the most valuable to their work because they addressed issues of relevant substance, but they weren’t always clear on the difference among all the meetings. Directors reported that the Launch partner meetings did not meet their needs as directors and expressed a desire to have director-only meetings to dig into issues regarding data. Finally, with regard to meetings, directors, in particular, noted that the “youth development feel” of meetings (opening with

ice breakers, hands-on activities) was not well-suited to directors who “just want to get down to business,” reflecting that there were still some “culture clash” issues to be worked out.

In response, United Way both streamlined the meetings and provided clarity on the purpose of them. Launch partner meetings were shifted to once per quarter, to coincide with Efforts to Outcomes quarterly analysis. During those meetings, the directors and direct service teams began to meet separately to discuss key data findings relevant to their roles, and also had time for joint group reflection. Evaluation partners began attending these meetings to share insights gleaned from evaluation efforts to promote “real time” learning and improvement.

Differences between CoP and Learning Sessions were clarified and streamlined so that each kind of professional development experience only occurred once a month. CoP sessions were facilitated by an external contractor and focused on issues related to working with Launch’s target population of opportunity youth living in subsidized housing. Learning Sessions became an opportunity to discuss Launch-specific challenges and barriers such as the critical need for mental health supports, and connecting Launch clients to other systems and services. Finally, case conferencing calls were only scheduled for the weeks when there were not either a CoP or a Learning Session. Launch partners universally reported that the shifts in United Way’s approach to supporting them was beneficial to their work.

#### [New and Expanded Model Components \(January 2020\)](#)

The start of 2020 brought three additions to the Launch model: the development of a survey to understand how, if at all, Launch was supporting the development of social and emotional skills and competencies that would help clients get and stay on a pathway toward prosperity; a relationship with Metro Housing Boston to be able to fully recruit potential clients living in Section 8 housing; and, the start of the Launch Ambassador program.

As depicted on the Launch framework (page 12, this report), behavioral outcomes are a component of what Launch hopes to impact. With implementation well underway, and trusting relationships with clients beginning to form, the evaluation team engaged the partners in a discussion about the key behavioral outcomes, specifically social and emotional outcomes, they thought Launch might be affecting. Informed by national surveys designed to be administered to older youth and young adults, *Launch partners agreed on a set of social emotional learning (SEL) indicators that would shed light on how, if at all, Launch participation was helping clients feel more confident and competent, with a sense of future self* (see Appendix B for full survey). The survey methodology is a retrospective pre-test, asking clients to rate how they feel at the time of the survey, and then reflect back to how they felt at the outset of their engagement with Launch. Coaches planned to administer the survey to clients after they had been engaged for at least three months. SEL survey data would be entered into the Efforts to Outcomes management information system so that evaluators could analyze SEL responses related to key Launch outcomes. The survey was scheduled to pilot in March 2020, however, as discussed below, the survey was put on hold because of the pandemic.

A second new component of the model was to *expand Launch’s commitment to youth voice by starting the Launch Ambassador program*. Launch Ambassadors are paid Launch client interns who conduct outreach; are an integral part of conferencing calls and direct service meetings; maintain progress towards professional and personal goals with their coach; and, develop a reflection project

that captures their internship experience. One Launch Ambassador was hired in January, with plans to expand the program in subsequent quarters.

A third development at the beginning of 2020 was the *solidification of a relationship with Metro Housing Boston to obtain the lists of 18–24-year-olds living in Section 8 housing across the city*. This was an important milestone because it meant that Launch could fully expand outreach beyond public housing and subsidized properties to reach a broader population of young adults living in affordable housing. Because the list of 18-24-year-olds who are members of Section 8 households could not be shared with a staff person external to Metro Housing Boston, United Way was able to place a Launch Ambassador at Metro Housing Boston who could then do outreach to these 18-24-year-olds.

#### COVID-19 Impacts the Model (March 2020)

At the end of the first full year of implementation, Launch partners reflected that the first year of Launch was a “build year” and now they were in stride. The coaches were a cohesive team, directors were satisfied with the amount and kind of professional development that their direct service teams were receiving, and, as will be discussed below, the Launch target metrics were being met. But in March 2020 the COVID-19 global pandemic changed the Launch model including method of outreach, coaching, and the facilitation of the Launch team. By March 16th all Launch members were working remotely. By necessity, coaching, outreach, and all regular meetings moved to virtual platforms. What had started as an alternative to the warm handoff—texting—became the norm for outreach workers and coaches. With the closure of Metro Housing Boston offices, outreach to Section 8 residents was put on hold. With client mental health needs exacerbated by the pandemic, the evaluators advised that the planned SEL survey be put on hold because clients potentially had a worse outlook on life than they did at the start of Launch.

#### Refining Launch’s Approach to Metrics and Counting Dosage (May 2020)

From the outset, United Way used Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) to track quantitative data from each partner. The purpose of this information was to provide progress towards deliverables outlined in the United Way/DHCD contract and subcontracts between United Way and Launch partners. Information tracked by ETO included: client demographic information, housing status, engagement, referrals, intake forms, enrollment status, and workforce, financial, and education outcomes. At the start of the initiative ETO was still getting up and running and partners were learning how to use the system. Early on they acknowledged that using ETO was a “work in progress” and that data entry was getting easier. However, there was a lack of clarity on some key terms and definitions, such as “what constitutes a ‘contact.’” Partners, particularly the directors, expressed the desire to get help understanding how to use the ETO data to reflect on program performance.

After a thoughtful process of engaging all of the Launch partners, the evaluation team developed an initial methodology for counting dosage in May 2020. Specifically, a measure of program dosage was calculated that represented a weighted count of the number of contacts between client and coach, averaged into a weekly dosage score. Clients were categorized into three groups based on their average weekly dosage score representing low, medium, and high levels of dosage. Analyses then examined whether clients’ goal achievement differed by dosage group. As discussed in the client outcomes section below, analyses revealed a statistically significant relationship between dosage and client outcomes. (See Section 4 for a thorough analysis of client data).

#### Launch Values Solidified (August 2020)

The summer of 2020 was a summer of racial reckoning for Launch partners. The COVID-19 pandemic had exposed gross inequities in many of the systems that Launch clients interacted with and depended on. Launch partners, especially the direct service team who was seeing “firsthand” how the pandemic was disrupting already marginalized young adults’ efforts to move toward economic prosperity, felt that Launch was at a critical juncture where it needed to “put a stake in the ground” about what Launch stood for so they formalized a set of values to guide the work moving forward: a commitment to anti-racism, centering youth voice and choice in the client experience, and embracing a pathways approach to supporting young adults which acknowledges Launch as a “stop along the way” not a destination.

#### Mental Health Services Added as a Model Component (August 2020)

From the outset of implementation there was ongoing discussion among partners about how, and how much, mental health support to provide clients. Many clients were experiencing, or had experienced, trauma, systemic racism, and structural inequities that left them feeling disconnected and without a sense of future self. The Launch CoP’s were training coaches to teach clients “*how to fish*,” but it was noted that when clients don’t have good supports in place when they enroll, it is much harder to work with them. Evaluation findings after a year of implementation made it clear that coaches were not going to become mental health experts (nor should they) but additional support on how to identify needs and be aware of and connect to services continued to be raised as an issue that would improve overall client outcomes.

Understanding the significant barrier that mental health issues was playing in Launch client’s ability to engage, particularly as a result of COVID-19, the Boston PIC (using re-purposed Launch funds) contracted with a mental health organization staffed by people of color. New Generation therapists provide one-on-one referrals for clients seeking individualized mental health supports, weekly affinity groups led by a licensed therapist and member of the Launch team, and professional development related to coaching. The professional development is focused on both having conversations with coaches about their clients’ mental wellness as well as on how coaches can protect their own mental health as a youth worker.

#### Summary

Launch evolved in an unprecedented national context of the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and structural racism awakening. The story of its evolution signals a commitment of the partners — United Way, providers, and DHCD — to make the course corrections necessary to ensure that Launch remains true to its core values of meeting youth where they are, working to dismantle systemic racism, and be one stop on a young adult’s journey toward economic prosperity.

### Section 4: Key Outcomes of Launch

As described above, Phase 2 of the Launch evaluation included an analysis of the administrative data collected in Launch’s management information system, Efforts to Outcomes (ETO). In early 2020, having spent the first year of implementation using experience and evaluation results to refine



the Launch model, the Launch partners gave input on research questions of interest to them that could be answered by the evaluation's analysis of client data from ETO.

Five research questions were selected as a focus for analysis:

1. What are the overall demographic characteristics of Launch clients?
2. In what kind of housing are Launch clients living?
3. Is there a relationship between demographic characteristics and outcomes?
4. Is there a relationship between experience prior to Launch and outcomes?
5. Is there a relationship between dosage and outcomes?

This section of the report presents findings for each research question. Data for client characteristics was self-reported. Appendix C describes the methodology used for analysis. Additional graphs, including all site-level findings are in Appendix D.

### Client Characteristics

From the start of implementation in October 2018 through November 2020, Launch served 331 clients.<sup>4</sup> JVS-Boston served the largest number of clients at 155, followed by the Boston PIC with 141 clients, and LHAND with 35 clients. It makes sense that LHAND would have served the fewest clients because they had the smallest housing footprint to draw from; the one LHAND coach also had the split responsibility of outreach and coaching.

In terms of demographics, based on self-report, [Launch appears to be serving clients across gender and race:](#)

- 51 percent of clients were male and 49 percent female (see Figure A1).
- [Most clients were young adults of color, but split evenly across Hispanic or Latino and non-Hispanic Black or African American:](#) almost half (49 percent) of clients described themselves as Hispanic or Latino and another 44 percent were non-Hispanic Black or African American (see Figure A2). A small percentage of clients were either non-Hispanic white (3 percent) or non-Hispanic 'other' (5 percent).
- [Most clients \(85 percent\) reported that English was the primary language spoken in their home,](#) followed by Spanish (11 percent), and other languages (4 percent) (see Figure A3). These numbers might have been different if the Launch program had been offered in other languages besides English. The average age of a client at intake was 21 clients ranged in age from 17 to 26.

[At time of intake, most Launch clients self-reported that they had at least some secondary or post-secondary education, and most were unemployed or underemployed:](#)

- [Almost 75% of the clients had some form of secondary or post-secondary education.](#) Only one quarter of clients had less than a high school education, another 38 percent had a GED or high school diploma, and 30 percent had attended some college (see Figure A4). Only 7 percent of clients had some type of post-secondary degree or vocational certificate.
- [Most clients were either unemployed \(61 percent\) or employed part time \(30 percent\) at intake](#) (see Figure A5). Only 9 percent of clients were employed full time at intake.

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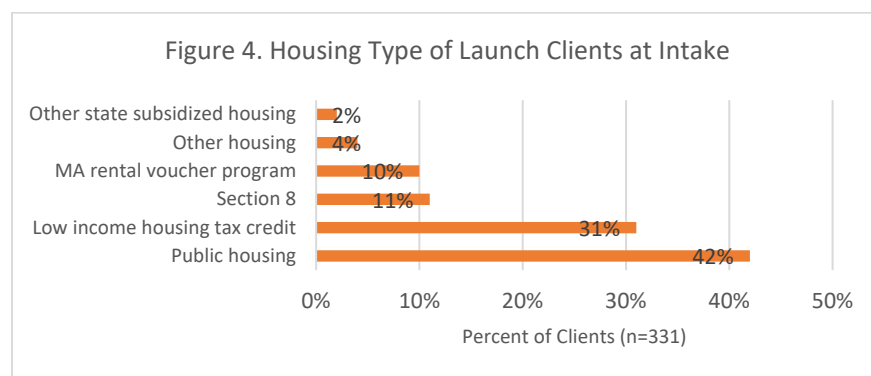
<sup>4</sup> By the end of the February, Launch had exceeded its target goal and 391 clients had enrolled.

- Ten percent of clients reported having at least one dependent (see Figure A6) and 13 percent reporting receiving TAFDC or cash benefits in their household (see Figure A7).

### Housing Status

The type of housing in which clients lived at the time of intake varied by partner site (see Figure A8).

- Overall, 42 percent of clients reported living in public housing and 31 percent reported living in Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) housing (see Figure 6). Another 11 percent of clients were living in Section 8 housing, 10 percent were in housing through the Massachusetts rental voucher program (MRVP), and 6 percent were in some other type of housing. The kinds of housing that Launch clients were living in during the period of Launch needs to be put into perspective with regards to outreach, which primarily occurred in place-based, not Section 8, housing, due to efforts to saturate BHA properties. It should be noted that outreach to clients living in Section 8 housing was put on hold as of March 2019.



### Client Characteristics and Prior Experience Related to Goal Achievement

The main outcome explored through the analysis of client data in ETO was whether a client achieved a goal they had set over the course of their involvement with Launch. Through the work with their coach, Launch clients set either an education goal, a job goal, or both.

Analysis reveals that clients were evenly distributed between education and job goals. Of the 331 clients served:

- one third set only an education-related goal, meaning their goal was to complete an education, training, or certificate program.
- Another third set only a job-related goal, meaning their goal was to secure a job or be promoted in their existing job.
- A third of clients set both an education-related and job-related goal.

By November 2020, 32 percent of clients had achieved a goal they had set (see Figures A9-A10). To put this finding in perspective, national data suggests that despite young people's aspirations to advance and secure family wage jobs, make connections in civic engagement, and improve their communities, once they have experienced disconnection from school and work, it's very unlikely they will be able to meet these aspirations, with only 1 percent of youth who have been disconnected ever earn an associate's degree or higher, compared to 36 percent of the general population.<sup>xiii</sup> That a full third of the Launch clients achieved a goal that puts them on a pathway toward economic mobility

appears to be a promising finding that demonstrates the potential of Launch to alter the trajectory of many of its clients.

On reviewing this data, Launch partners agreed that a binary variable of goal achieved-goal not achieved, did not reflect client progress in a meaningful way and that a future data system should incorporate milestones toward a goal such as: creating a resume, getting an interview, and course completion.

To understand whether certain client characteristics were associated with greater goal achievement, the evaluation looked at the percent of clients who achieved goals, compared across demographic and other client characteristics, and tested the differences for statistical significance.

The two client characteristics had a statistically significant impact on goal attainment—[housing type](#) and the [presence of dependents](#).

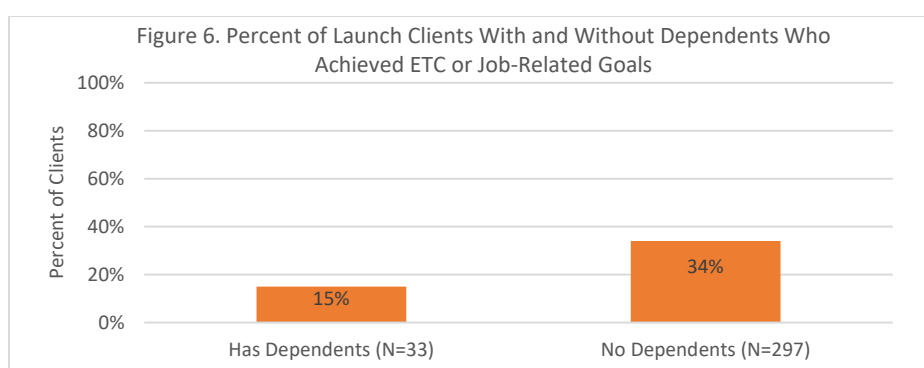
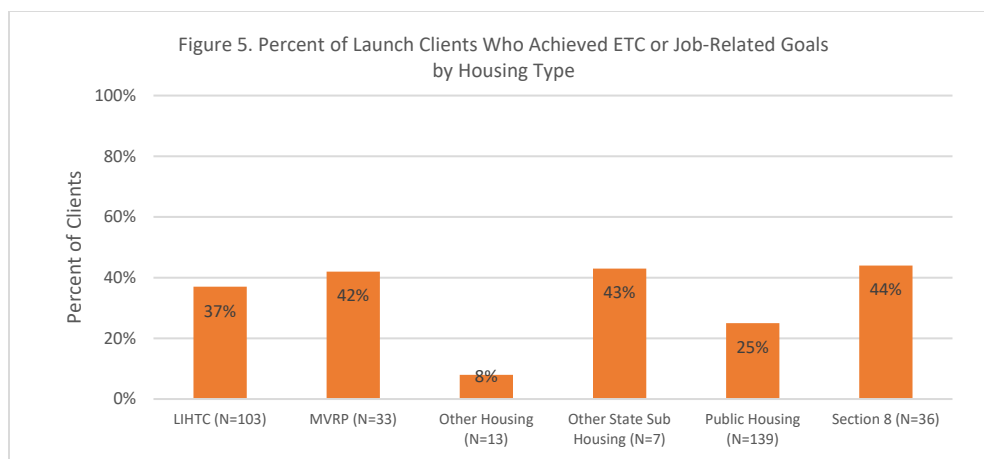
- [Clients living at LIHTC, MVRP, and Section 8 housing had significantly higher rates of goal achievement than those living in public housing or other housing types](#) ( $p=.03$ ) (see Figure 7). Higher goal achievement rates at these housing types seem to be at least partially driven by the clients' longer duration of Launch participation. Launch targeted certain housing types early on in the initiative and therefore clients with a longer duration of participation would be more likely to have achieved their goals. Indeed, the data show that clients living at LIHTC, MVRP, and Section 8 housing were, on average, involved in Launch longer than clients who reported living in public housing<sup>5</sup> ( $p=.001$ ) (see Figure A11).
- [Clients with dependents were significantly less likely to achieve their goals than those without dependents](#) ( $p=.009$ ) (15 percent compared with 34 percent, respectively) (see Figure 8). This is not surprising given the added demands of being a parent and trying to navigate education and career opportunities.

[Goal attainment did not differ significantly by gender, race/ethnicity, or whether the client reported receiving TAFDC or other cash assistance](#) (see Figures A12-14):

- A client's education and job status at intake also appear to be unrelated to goal achievement, with fairly equal percentages of clients with some high school education and clients with a high school diploma or higher having achieved their education or job-related goals (see Figure A15).
- Those that were unemployed at intake achieved their goals at a similar rate to those that were employed either full or part time (See Figure A16).

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<sup>5</sup> Clients from "other housing" or "other state subsidized housing" were excluded from the analysis of duration of Launch participation by housing type due to low Ns.

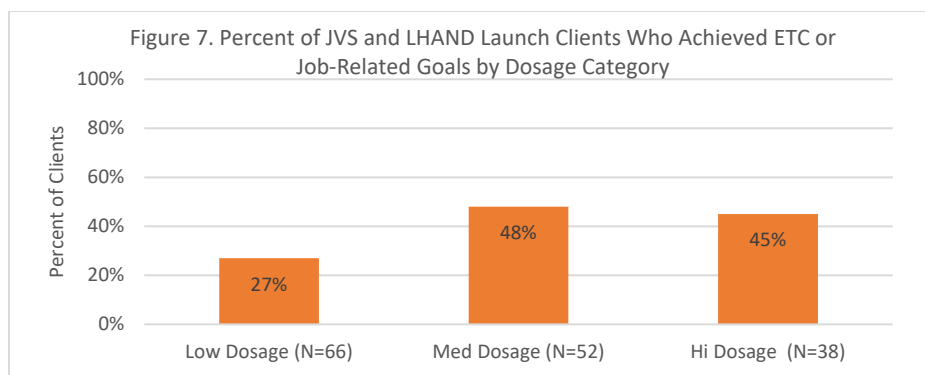


### Dosage and Goal Achievement

As described in Appendix C, a measure of program dosage was calculated that represents a weighted count of the number of contacts between client and coach, averaged into a weekly dosage score. Clients were categorized into three groups based on their average weekly dosage score representing low, medium, and high levels of dosage. The evaluators then examined whether clients' goal achievement differed by dosage group.<sup>6</sup>

Launch clients who had medium and high dosage scores (i.e., those that, on average, had more frequent interaction with their coach) were more likely to achieve their goals compared to clients who had less frequent interaction with their coach (see Figure 9). The difference between dosage groups was statistically significant ( $p=.046$ ).

<sup>6</sup>As noted, this analysis of goal attainment by dosage includes only clients from JVS-Boston and LHAND where coaches used the case notes system. An additional filter was applied to the RQ5 analysis which limited the population to clients who had more than six weeks in Launch and more than one contact with their coach. This filter was applied to exclude clients who may not have been in Launch long enough to reasonably achieve a goal and those that had only a single interaction with their coach.



While the variables examined in ETO could not shed light on what it was about dosage that seemed to matter most, qualitative data provides insights on the factors that inhibit or promote goal attainment. Partners reported several factors:

- Clients who have a better sense of what they want from the outset and/or have a higher previous level of engagement with systems tend to move forward faster. If a client hasn't had an opportunity to explore education, training, or employment opportunities in the past, it takes longer for them to think about their options.
- The length of disconnection appears to be related to the client journey, with the longer the disconnection, the harder and potentially longer it is to re-engage.
- When clients are rejected after applying for something, there tends to be a slow-down in progress toward goals.
- Clients feel very vulnerable right before they start something new, and this can lead them to not even try.
- Family dynamics and parental involvement impact timeline, and this varies client by client. Roadblocks in the home include: family responsibilities, taking care of family members, toxic home environments, worry about reduced income because the rent waiver is not permanent.
- Workplace discrimination is a challenge for many Launch clients. Many business settings are not used to working with minority youth entering a work culture often defined by older white cultural values. A 2019 study of diversity and inclusion in the workplace concluded that *"unfortunately, it is not a matter of if a person of color will encounter discrimination at the workplace, it is a matter of when."* The study also states that *"younger employed adults are more likely to experience or witness some form of discrimination at work than their older peers."*<sup>xiv</sup>
- Lack of money for textbooks, transportation, work clothes, prevents barriers to participation, but United Way was able to offer some of these basic supports. One coach started running driver's education classes so her clients could get licenses so they could commute to jobs that were not accessible via public transportation.

Launch partners generally agreed that Launch clients could be characterized as "disconnected but ready," in other words, young people who already have the ability to "show up" ready to participate. But even within this broad category, there was wide variability in the capacity of the clients to engage with Launch.

To supplement the evaluation efforts, United Way analyzed a subset of the case notes to compile client journey maps to illustrate the twists and turns that clients take as they work toward goal attainment. Some themes that emerged from these journeys are:

- Some clients are already connected to education but need additional supports to keep them on a trajectory toward completion;
- The flexibility to connect, disconnect, and re-connect helps keep clients on track;
- Career exploration helps clients find the “right fit.”

See Appendix E for five client journey maps.

### Partner Benefits

The main goal of Launch was to help young people in subsidized housing get on a pathway toward economic prosperity, but participation in Launch also had benefits to the Launch partner organizations. Partners agreed that while the partnership started with some different levels of understanding around the intervention and approaches, the partnership grew to a common understanding. Even for the partners who had collaborated in the past, the intensive supports provided by United Way enabled stronger relationships among them. The evaluation documented the growth in staff understanding of key elements around a holistic approach to supporting young adults and the need for relationships and trust.

Partners reported that participation in Launch helped them be more intentional about “meeting clients where they are,” to cultivate meaningful relationships that supported each individual’s goals. Partners also reported that being part of Launch raised awareness in their organizations of the importance of supporting opportunity youth. As one partner stated: *“Despite an extensive... services portfolio, the Launch Program brought forth work with a population not often visible or attended to. The opportunity youth age group differs than that focused upon in most programs. The Launch program brought front and center a slice of the population that needs and deserves the focus and resources offered by programs.”*

United Way also reports benefiting greatly from being part of the Launch initiative. It has allowed United Way Community Impact staff to zoom in on a specific population of older youth that are living in subsidized housing and the wide variety of barriers they face. Although United Way had a history of funding in the opportunity youth space, United Way reports that Launch deepened its collective understanding of the opportunity youth population.

## Section 5: Lessons Learned

Interviews with Launch partners — directors, direct service staff, the United Way Launch team, and the DHCD Launch program officer — converged on a set of lessons for other communities who want to work with under-connected and disconnected 18–24-year-olds using the Launch model. Three kinds of lessons emerged: lessons about the Launch model itself; lessons about implementing a multi-partner initiative, and lessons about using subsidized housing as a vehicle for engagement.

### Lessons Learned about The Launch Model

*Dosage is an elusive but important measure for program planning and accountability.*



Knowing how much of an intervention is necessary to achieve results is important for planning staffing, and accountability. However, since client life circumstances and experiences vary there is no prescriptive path or sequence that fits all clients and therefore no “one size fits all” dosage. This causes a tension to be managed between setting data targets for engagement and outcomes and acknowledging the challenging life circumstance of this kind of initiative’s target population.

Many Launch partner discussions focused on dosage: Questions discussed include, “*How do you count “touches”- is it every text? Even unanswered ones? What should be the criteria for youth to formally exit the program? When they have a job or enroll in an education program? After 6 months, 12 months, any defined period?*” While relevant questions for any program, these are particularly perplexing when dealing with this population. Launch managed this through an iterative process of listening to partners, analyzing data, and keeping its core values at the center of its decisions.

#### [A client journey is not linear and flexibility is the key to successful engagement.](#)

Once engaged, progress to the goals is often not linear. Launch staff learned that helping youth attend to family, housing, trauma, relationships and other issues was crucial to their success. It also meant that the level of contact with clients varies based on individual circumstances and motivation. Coaches described periods of time when clients would be non-responsive to their reaching out as “ghosting.” They also learned that the door kept open for the client’s return was often used. The flexibility to reengage even after ghosting for a period of time was reported by Launch clients themselves to be very important to them as they continued to connect to education and employment. The open-ended timing for closing a case made determining caseloads a challenge but it was also deemed necessary when working with this population of young adults. Opportunity youth are often slow to engage or may be non-responsive for weeks but can still come back and become fully engaged. Understanding the pathways clients took because of the impact of their life experiences reinforced for staff the value of giving time for clients to decide to come back after ghosting.

#### [Often clients need “lifeboat” jobs as a step toward “lifetime” jobs.](#)

Launch client journeys affirmed getting young adults on a pathway toward economic prosperity may begin with “for now,” or “lifeboat” jobs. Many clients’ circumstances are such that they are balancing very real and immediate economic circumstances and need to find a job, any job, immediately. While many lifeboat jobs do not lead to opportunities to earn high wages or advance, some will allow young people to develop workforce skills that are transferable to other occupations and are needed for their future long-term careers.<sup>xv</sup> As one Launch stakeholder reflected (pre-COVID-19) “*Even if it isn’t a job in a career they want to pursue, clients are learning the discipline of getting up, getting dressed, and going to the workplace...life skills that are transferrable to other settings.*” However, to promote the level of individual and systemic change needed to get on a pathway toward economic prosperity, young people must be able to access long-term, “lifetime jobs,” which pay a family-supporting wage and help young adults build a secure foundation. Launch coaches have helped clients understand the differences between job openings, what constitutes a career ladder, and how to identify skills and opportunities that will open doors to economic advancement. A similar phenomenon was observed in connecting clients to education opportunities. Taking on the goal of college completion seemed daunting to many Launch clients, but connecting them to shorter term training and certificate programs helped them incrementally build education credentials that positioned them better for career opportunities.

### Youth voice needs to be cultivated at the client and the program design levels.

From the outset, *youth being at the center* represented a core value of Launch. For some of the partners whose organizations had worked primarily with adults, this focus was new. Some of the earliest Launch trainings were aimed at helping the direct service team operationalize a youth-centered approach. Early training and having the Youth Voice Project lead (see box, this page) participate in Launch sessions supported this shift. Early interviews and focus groups with Launch clients by the Youth Voice Project brought insights from Launch clients directly into conversations with coaches. However, shortly after the implementation of Launch, the Youth Voice Project ended. As noted below, however, the ongoing community of practice sessions continued to reinforce the importance of youth voice at the client level, connecting them to supports and resources beyond education and employment to include mental health services and obtaining drivers licenses.

**Youth Voice Project** was composed of youth leaders who reach out to opportunity youth and advise Boston's Opportunity Youth Collaborative (OYC). As a team, the Peer Leaders provided research and outreach strategies to find data that may help the OYC engage youth in Boston. As a partner in Launch, YVP assisted with outreach and working to ensure that youth voice is a key ingredient of outreach and engagement.

As important as it is that coaching engagements are youth-centered, it is equally important to engage youth voice in program design and implementation and this is an area where Launch partners felt there was room for improvement. When asked what advice they had for other communities as they consider designing a Launch-type initiative, the number one response was to engage young people in the design of the initiative and include them in ongoing planning, course correction, and evaluation efforts.

### Virtual engagement efforts appear to be an effective approach for working with 18-24-year-olds.

When Launch started, outreach was mostly cold calls or knocks on doors of potential clients. When a client was engaged, the warm handoff was usually conducted in the client's home with the outreach worker and coach. Once engaged, meetings with the clients were primarily in the coach's office. As relationships were built with public housing managers, the saturation approach to outreach enabled more connections with families and clients. The warm handoffs evolved to often being at the coach's office. Then use of texting, email, and phone calls became more predominant. These changes improved client engagement in a few ways: coaches no longer lost time traveling to homes; virtual engagement reduced transportation issues for clients getting to coaches' offices; and, virtual engagement eased some of the discomfort clients felt in the office environments which sometimes impacted successful engagement.

When face to face contact was limited in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 virus, direct service staff had to make immediate adjustments to their engagement practices. All contact moved to text, email, phone, and, slowly, zoom or other video conferencing. Coaches reported that this manner of engagement has been beneficial in some important ways. It reduces client anxiety coming to the office and allows more flexibility for when to communicate for both the client and direct service staff. Coaches feel it fits the lifestyle of their clients better. While they still would find some face-to-face contact valuable in building relationships, they think that COVID-19 tested their assumptions about how to interact with clients and they learned that their assumptions of in-person meetings being the "gold standard" for coaching were not necessarily what clients wanted or needed.

Getting the “right” coaches is essential — you can train on skills but can’t train on coach attributes.

To a person, Launch stakeholders asserted that the core of the Launch model is a trusted relationship between client and coach. Recent brain science affirms that trusting relationships with caring adults is a core component of optimal learning and development experiences for young adults.<sup>7</sup> As one person said “good coaches are the success of the entire program.”

When asked “what skills and characteristics would you say a coach needs?” responses included:

- Being organized, with effective time management, and self-motivated
- Persistent but not “pushy”
- Good interpersonal skills, not only with clients but with the people to whom they refer clients
- Reliability, so that clients know they will have a consistent coach
- Flexible schedule to meet the needs of the clients and be willing to travel to them
- Case management skills
- Background in mental health, especially anxiety and depression
- Strong writing and editing skills to assist clients with resumes, cover letters, etc.
- A three-pronged attitude toward coaching: education, professional, and life-coach

Over the past two and a half years, Launch partners have staffed their organizations with coaches that already have or have been trained on these attributes. The United Way’s community of practice calls for coaches are viewed as instrumental in supporting coaches’ capacities to build trusting relationships.<sup>8</sup>

Launch is one stop on a pathway of supports needed to achieve economic mobility.

While there is no single definition of a “pathway” in the field of opportunity youth, there is a shared understanding that pathways for this population should consist of a portfolio of options that can help young people enroll in a postsecondary education or training that leads to meaningful credentials with value in the labor market, and ultimately enter a career that offers a family-sustaining wage. These options should have multiple on-ramps and off-ramps—opportunities to start, pause, and reengage—in order to meet young people’s needs and respond to their assets, skills, and challenges.<sup>xvi</sup> Pathways may engage any or all of the institutions that comprise the landscape for opportunity youth from schools and community-based programs to government agencies and employers. Recognizing this, Launch helps clients at a moment in time to introduce them to opportunities, organizations, and systems that can support them in the long term.

Not all business partners are set up to work with Opportunity Youth.

Launch’s success, in part, relies on partners having good connections with the business community. But there are many of the issues inherent in that part of the work. This population presents challenges to employers as opportunity youth may not have developed good workforce skills, there are generational perspectives towards work and there are often cultural differences. Feeling a sense of belonging in a new setting is often a challenge, with this population and the work sites, it can be a

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<sup>7</sup> For more information about the science of learning and development, visit <https://www.soldalliance.org/>

<sup>8</sup> For more information about how to integrate positive youth development into workforce training programs, see the [PILOT Assessment](#).

salient problem. The attention to diversity and systemic racial inequities nationally serves to highlight these issues. In addition, careful coordination between Launch partners, other organizations in the community and even other internal units are required to avoid duplicate contacts with employers with different demands and rules for referrals.

## Lessons Learned about a Multi-Partner Initiative

### Multi-partner initiatives need a pre-implementation planning phase.

DHCD funded United Way in Spring 2018 with the expectation that outreach and coaching will follow shortly after. However, as described earlier, one of the key milestones of Launch was the unanticipated planning time that was necessary to get the initiative up and running. It took a full six months of planning before partners were ready to implement Launch in Boston.

### Common professional development fosters cohesion in a multi-partner effort.

A strong ingredient of the Launch community of practice (CoP), as reported by direct service staff, includes how much they learn from each other, with all of the direct service staff articulating a mutual respect for each other's passion and commitment. This was true for those who had been with Launch since the beginning as well as those who had joined within the previous six to ten months.

Direct service partners also commented on the quality of the CoP sessions that both supported their skill development and reinforced their culture and values. Topics for skill building session were identified by the coaches themselves and included motivational interviewing and understanding trauma, as well as more macro-level issues such as poverty and racism.

### Multi-partner initiatives need an intermediary to act as the navigator for the pathways ecosystem.

A pathways ecosystem refers to the many partners and stakeholders that coordinate and collaborate to create, scale, and sustain pathways that connect young adults to education and workforce systems. Essential to developing, organizing, and mobilizing equitable education and career pathways are intermediaries.<sup>xvii</sup> While there is no "one-size-fits-all" intermediary, they tend to perform a set of functions that help partners work better together. In the context of Launch, this role was played by United Way which served as a convenor that managed the partnerships, supported professional development, and managed the data collection efforts. This role was deemed by partners as critical to Launch's success: *"United Way is crucial, especially as we developed the partnership model...the amount of professional development they have provided has been amazing, the learning they have built into the model is critical to replicate."* Early on, United Way identified that partner organizations had different cultures, different ways of interacting with young adults, and different data cultures. Over the course of the initiative United Way helped partners see themselves as more same than different, working collaboratively with partners to come to consensus on key aspects of the model as well as promote a common approach to getting and using data to inform programming.

The strength of many initiatives evolves from the competence of the staff. An important intermediary function that United Way played was to support consistency of staffing across partner organizations. As the Youth Voice Project wound down, United Way hired the Youth Voice Project lead to manage Launch. The former Launch manager transitioned to supporting the direct service team's community or practice. And, when ROCA decided to withdraw from the initiative, the main outreach worker

continued as a staff person with the PIC. This continuity in staffing, orchestrated by United Way, was viewed a positive benefit of having an intermediary which could help navigate staff changes.

## Lesson Learned about Housing

### Strong relationships with housing partners lead to effective outreach.

Developing good relationships with housing partners was deemed essential to successful outreach so that outreach workers knew where and to whom to target their efforts. In Boston, it was noted by several partners that part of the success of Launch has been a strong, well-run housing authority with good relationships with providers. This relationship resulted in the housing partners providing space for training and participation in housing project events. At the site-based housing projects, outreach workers also observed some increase in peer or family referrals to Launch as a result of being known at those sites. Over time, housing partners for Launch expanded beyond the housing properties in Lynn and Boston to include Metro Housing Boston in order to access the Section 8 lists.

### Communities need a sufficient number of 18-24-year-olds living in subsidized housing to warrant the investment.

In addition to good relationships with housing partners, a baseline criterion for an initiative that aims to use subsidized housing as a means of recruitment is that a community has a large enough pool of 18-24-year-olds living in subsidized housing to warrant the investment. The full Launch model — outreach, coaching, professional development, and data collection and analysis — costs about \$5000 per client, yet when asked if there were parts of Launch that were “nice but not necessary,” partners assert that it is the full constellation of inputs that renders Launch a high-quality initiative and distinguishes it from other efforts to support the client population.

### Rent waivers are a necessary cost of the Launch model.

To address intergenerational poverty, Launch offers time-bound rent waivers so that income earned by Launch clients is not considered part of household income for rent purposes. Partners believe this is an important component for recruitment, goal progress, and overall agency of the clients served by Launch. The Launch outreach and coaching staff have noted the significance of offering this opportunity. They perceive that the impact of the rent waiver while a client is enrolled in Launch gives them a sense of financial stability, the chance to build a job history and explore career options, alleviates potential conflict between household residents, thus allowing clients to choose the steps that are best for them without the additional pressure related to contributing the household income to make rent payments.

There is value in engaging housing as an active partner in opportunity youth initiatives. DHCD invested in Launch with the belief that housing was a promising vehicle for identifying an often “invisible population” —opportunity youth—and that the stability providing by housing would enable opportunity youth to engage in workforce and education supports. Both beliefs appear to be born out through the implementation and evaluation of Launch. Using housing as a vehicle for outreach, almost 400 young people living in subsidized housing were connected to pathways supports. As such, whether housing is a core funding partner or not, leveraging housing partners to identify and provide stability for opportunity youth while they explore college and career pathways is a promising strategy for opportunity youth initiatives to utilize.

## Section 6: A Preview of Launch 2.0

Based on the lessons and experiences of Launch, DHCD made a commitment to fund Launch 2.0 beginning in March 2021. The essence of the Launch model remains the same, with some important modifications based on evaluation findings and experience.

*Launch 2.0 will be focused on young adults ages 18-24 living in subsidized housing in Boston only.*

As noted previously, an initiative such as Launch needs a large enough potential pool of clients to make the investment worthwhile. Given that the estimate of 18–24-year-olds living in subsidized housing in Boston is approximately 3400 and Launch reached 390 clients in its first iteration, there is more than a sufficient potential client pool.

*To reach that large client pool of young adults living in place-based and Section 8 housing, Launch 2.0 will have a two-pronged approach to outreach.* Outreach will be conducted by the Boston PIC and Metro Housing Boston. The Boston PIC will be the outreach lead responsible for the outreach strategy and maintaining partnerships with the Boston Housing Authority and property management companies such as Winn and Beacon Communities. The PIC Outreach Manager will focus on prioritizing BHA residents in state subsidized developments and MRVP households, and LIHTC units managed by property management companies. Outreach methods include door-knocking when appropriate and safe, phone calls, mailings, and building relationships with property management staff. Metro Housing Boston will have a Launch Outreach Specialist focused on outreach to Section 8 households. Outreach will consist of mailings and phone calls. The Launch Outreach Specialist will dual-report to a Metro Housing Boston staff person and the PIC Launch Outreach Manager. United Way and the PIC will write the job description in partnership with Metro Housing Boston and will be involved in the entire hiring process including recruiting, interviewing, and selecting the staff person. The Metro Outreach Specialist will be onboarded to Launch by the United Way Launch Program Manager and will be trained in outreach by the PIC Outreach Manager. The PIC Outreach Manager will work closely with the Outreach Specialist to ensure effective outreach methods are used.

To address some of the challenges noted in this report about connecting opportunity youth to employers who understand and are responsive to opportunity youth, *the PIC and JVS will be responsible for identifying and solidifying three to four priority employment partners on behalf of Launch.* These will be employers that are interested in and able to hire Launch clients, in sectors that are of interest to Launch clients. Priority partners are not meant to force clients into employment or training opportunities but rather build a small network of employers that the Launch partners have strong relationships with, building the ecosystem of entities that support Launch clients. These priority partnerships could result in activities such as job fairs for Launch clients and feedback loops to the Career Navigator about the interview process of clients.

A fourth and significant change is that *United Way will implement a new management information system, Salesforce, with a revised approach to tracking client dosage over time.* As noted previously, calculating dosage was an ongoing challenge in Launch 1.0 and a component of this evaluation was to do a “forensic” analysis of the current data system, ETO, to look for ways to streamline data entry and better define and track dosage. This analysis resulted in the recommendation that client coaching dosage be captured in the shared client database through weekly entries from Launch direct service team. Each week, coaches will record summaries per client of contacts made, type of



contact, if client engaged in contact, content discussed, and open field for any additional notes. Goal progress will also be captured on a weekly basis. Leveraging Salesforce's add-on capabilities, texts and email exchanges will automatically be recorded. Additionally, a Salesforce add on Calendly will allow clients to book their own time on a Launch coach's calendar, which will aid in the data collection process. By using these Salesforce add-ons, along with weekly entries to capture frequency, type, and content of communications, United Way will be able to fully capture and analyze coaching dosage related to client progress towards goals.

## Conclusion

Using subsidized housing as a vehicle for identifying and working with opportunity youth is new and uncharted territory. The first three years of implementation have offered a proof of principle that Launch may be a promising strategy to engage disconnected and under-connected 18–24-year-olds in education and career pathways, using subsidized housing as a vehicle for identification of and outreach to potential clients. Early outcomes suggest a positive relationship between sufficient participation in Launch and client goal attainment. It is anticipated that Launch 2.0 will collect more and better data to deepen the understanding of how it is contributing to the economic prosperity of young adults in subsidized housing, including how the deep and caring connections with Launch staff support the social and emotional competencies essential to long-term economic prosperity.

## Acknowledgements

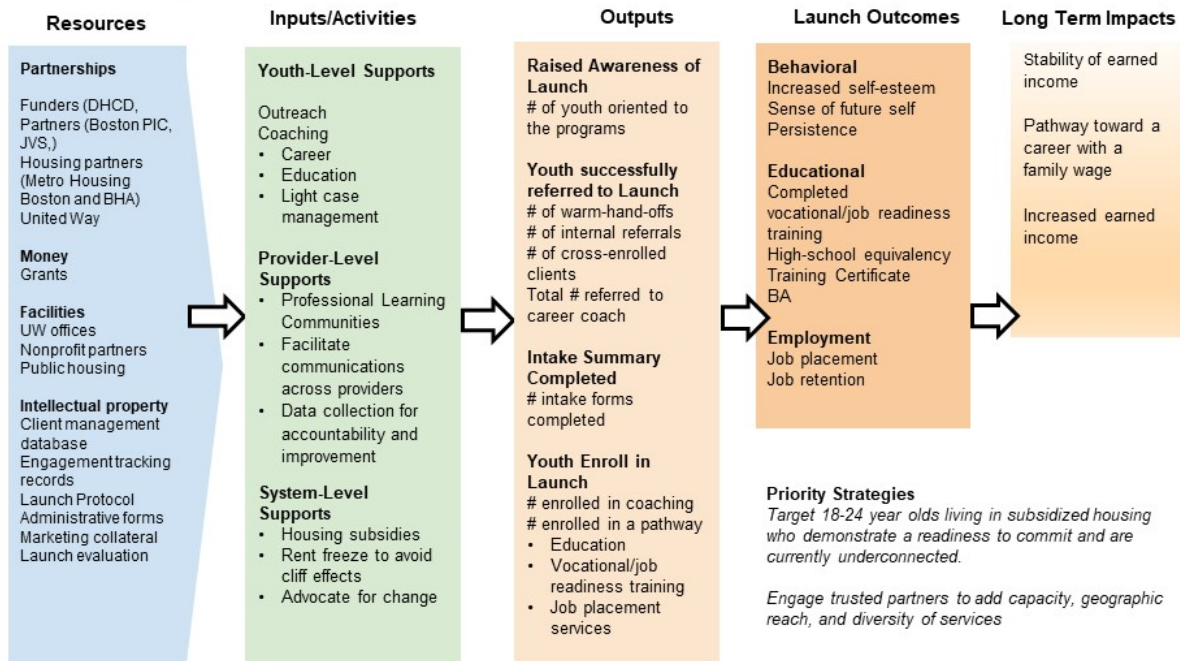
The evaluation team wishes to express its gratitude to all the Launch partners — Directors, Direct Service Staff, the United Way team, and our DHCD program officer — for their participation in our evaluation efforts. We had full participation of all partners in each wave of data collection and we were welcomed at partner meetings to share findings and engage in dialogue in service of strengthening the initiative. The level of candor, competence, and passion expressed during our interviews and focus groups was a further manifestation of the trust that was developed among the partners. Even while working through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Launch partners graciously gave their time to the evaluation team.

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## Appendix A. Launch Logic Model

**Launch** disrupts intergenerational poverty by increasing awareness among 18-24 year olds living in state subsidized housing in Boston of available education and career pathways and improving their access to opportunities for upward economic mobility through a coordinated network of service providers.



## Appendix B. SEL Survey

**What is your name?** \_\_\_\_\_.

**How are you feeling?**

*Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements*

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
I feel good about myself	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I have the life skills and tools I need to succeed	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I understand who I am now and who I want to be in the future	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I am willing to work hard to achieve goals even if things get in the way	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I do not want to let setbacks throw me off course	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I want to find good ways to deal with things that are hard in my life	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I know how to set priorities for my day	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I am eager to do well in my job/or my training/education	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I feel prepared to take on new challenges	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I feel in charge of my life and my future	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

**Think back to when you started Launch, how would you have responded to these?**

*Please tell us if you agree or disagree with the following statements*

I feel good about myself	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I have the life skills and tools I need to succeed	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I understand who I am now and who I want to be in the future	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I am willing to work hard to achieve goals even if things get in the way	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I do not want to let setbacks throw me off course	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I want to find good ways to deal with things that are hard in my life	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I know how to set priorities for my day	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

I am eager to do well in my job/or my training/education	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I feel prepared to take on new challenges	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I feel in charge of my life and my future	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

**Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your experience with Launch?**

## Appendix C: Approach to ETO Analysis

United Way staff pulled flat files from ETO that included data on clients from the beginning of Launch implementation through November 2020.<sup>xviii</sup> They also pulled the case notes data for the same time period that document each contact made between client and coach for JVS and LHAND clients<sup>xix</sup>. To maintain confidentiality, United Way staff removed personal identifiers from the data files before sending to the Forum for analysis. The data files were cleaned, aggregated to the client level, and prepped for analysis. The findings presented in this section are based on frequencies, cross-tabulations, t-tests, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). For research questions 3-5, which examine the relationship between certain client characteristics and outcomes, statistical significance tests were conducted and P values are noted for significant findings.

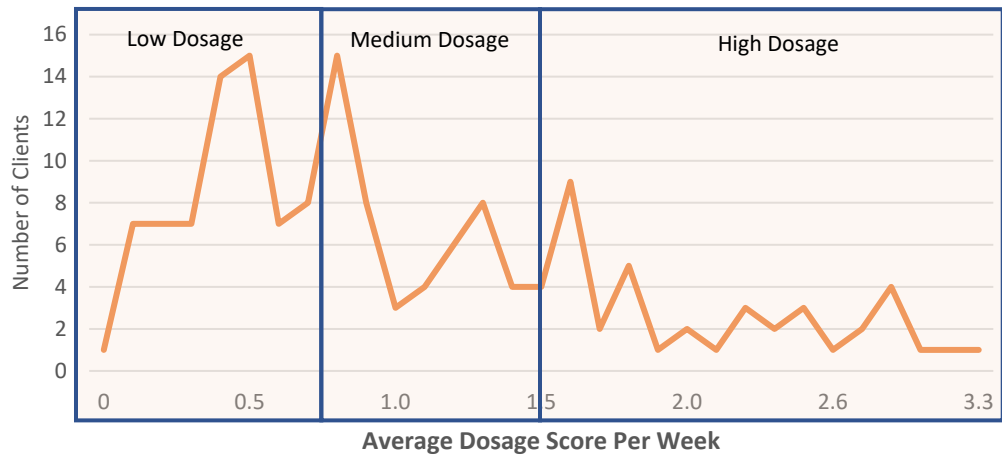
Dosage was calculated by assigning point values to each contact between coach and client documented in the case notes data system. Higher point values were given to higher-touch contact methods (i.e., phone calls, video calls, and in-person meetings) and lower point values to lower-touch methods like texts and emails. Points were also given to those contacts that were documented as unsuccessful (e.g., a coach-initiated contact, but the client did not respond). Descriptive statistics for each contact method and the point values assigned to each are shown in Figure 8.

**Figure 8. Contact Attempt Descriptives**

Method	Min	Max	Mean	# of clients using method (of 182 clients)	Average % of successful contact attempts	Point value assigned to successful attempt	Point value assigned to unsuccessful attempt
Text	0	78	10	160	56%	2	1
Email	0	80	4	109	41%	2	1
Phone	0	28	3	124	61%	3	1
Video	0	7	<1	24	99%	3	1
In-Person	0	50	6	138	82%	3	1
All Types	1	136	22	182	66%	-	-

After assigning point values for each contact between client and coach, the point values were summed for each client and divided by the number of weeks<sup>xx</sup> in Launch. The result is a dosage score that represents a weighted weekly average of contacts. By using this weekly average, rather than the total sum of contacts, the dosage measure used in analysis is independent of the length of Launch participation. In doing so, the dosage measure represents the average frequency of interaction between client and coach, rather than the total amount of interaction. Clients were categorized into three groups based on their average weekly dosage score representing low, medium, and high levels of dosage (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Weekly Dosage Scores of JVS and LHAND Clients (N=156)





## Appendix D. Client Outcomes

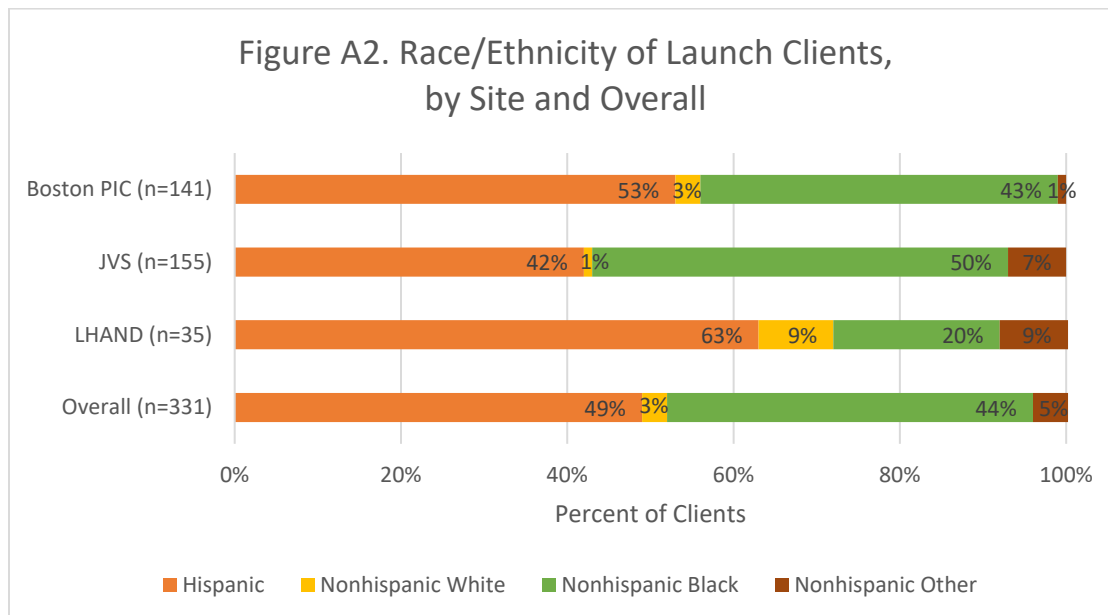
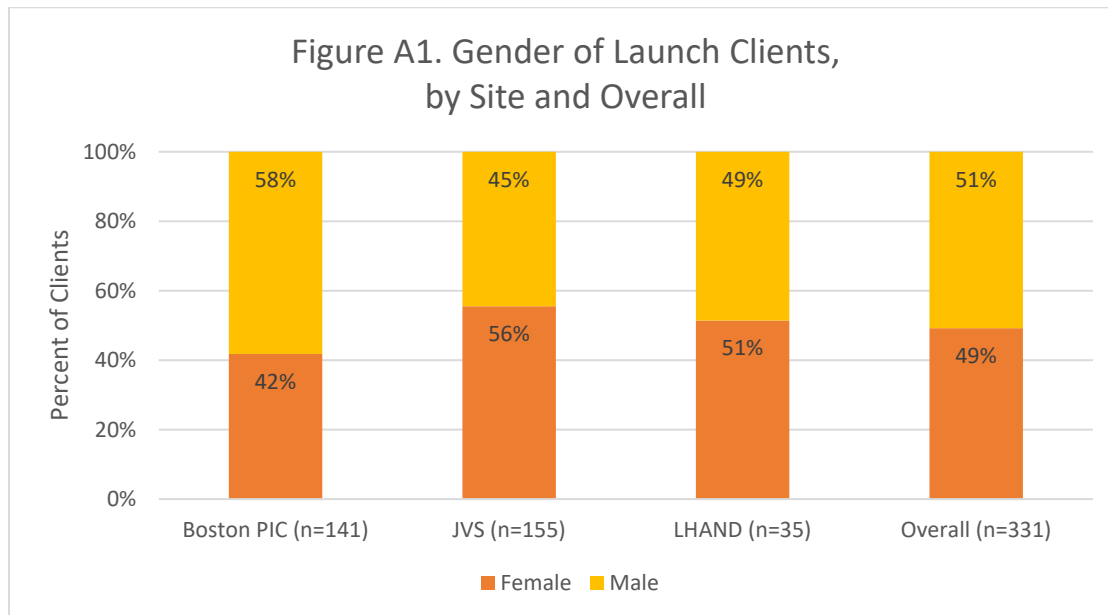


Figure A3. Primary Language of Launch Clients, by Site and Overall

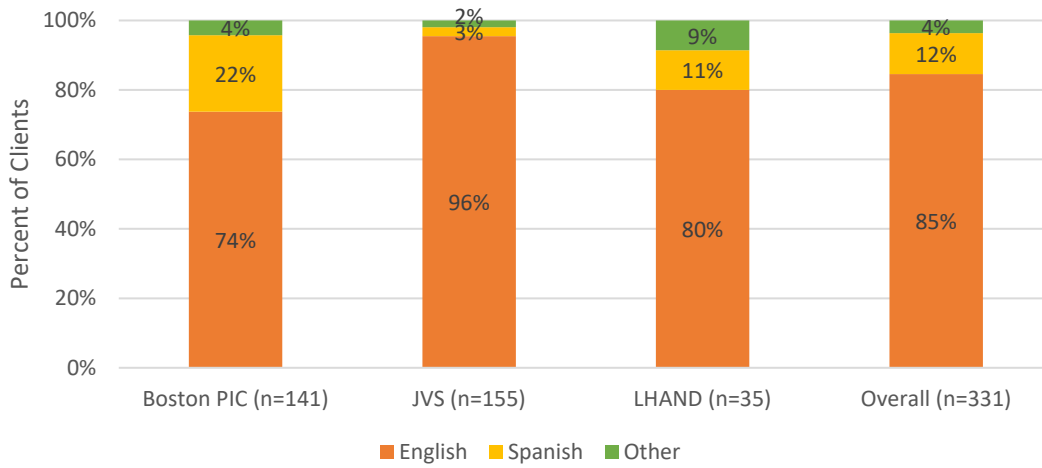
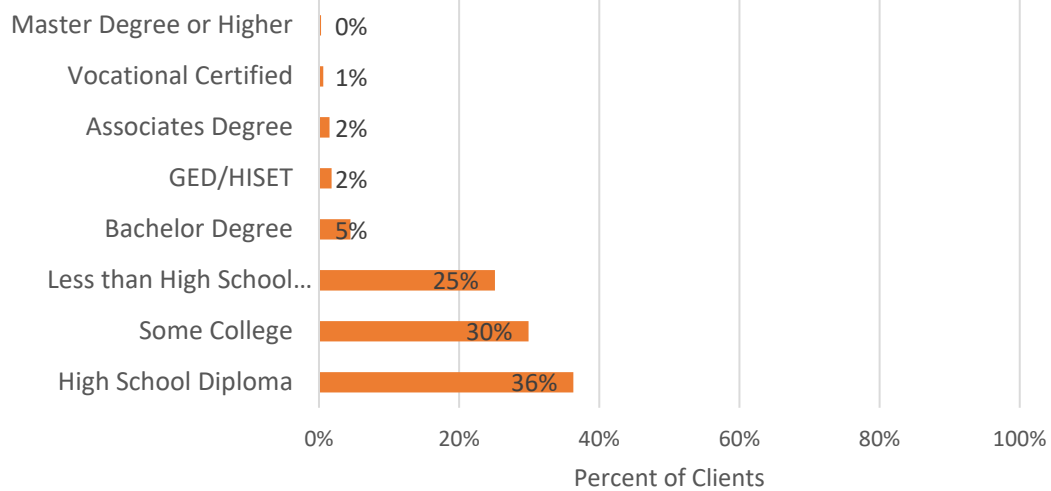


Figure A4. Highest Education Level Completed at Intake of Launch Clients (N=331)



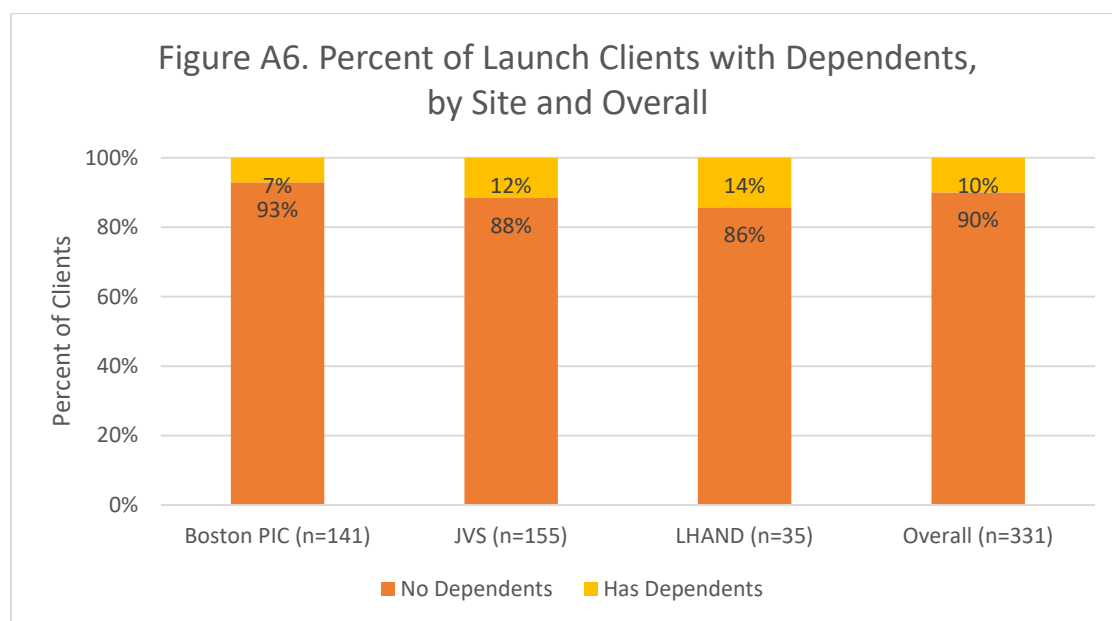
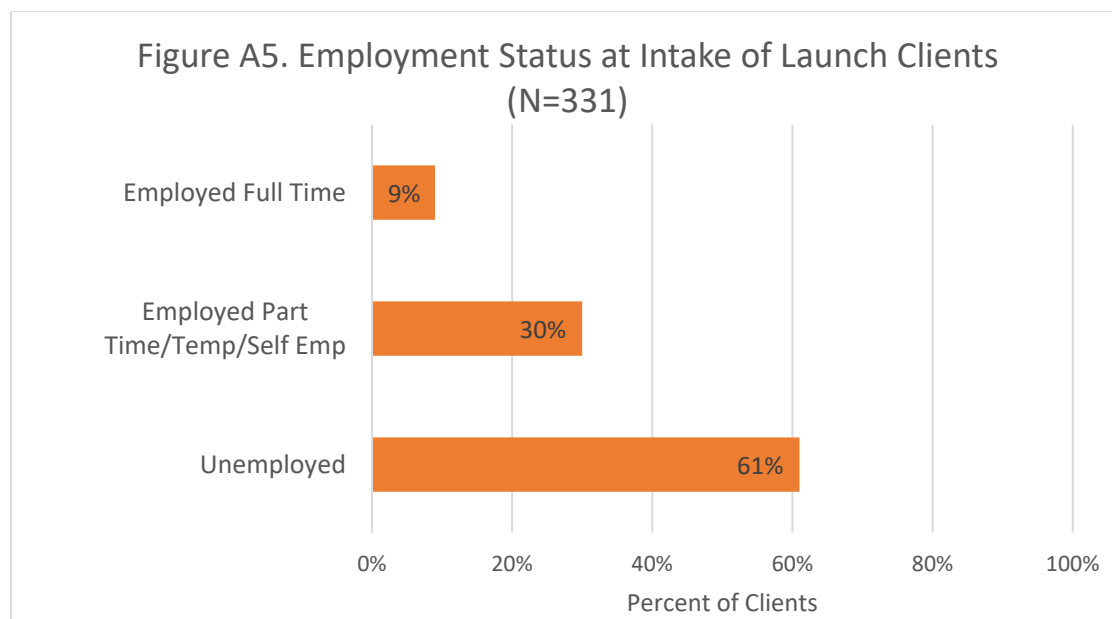


Figure A7. Percent of Launch Clients Receiving TAFDC or Cash Benefits, by Site and Overall

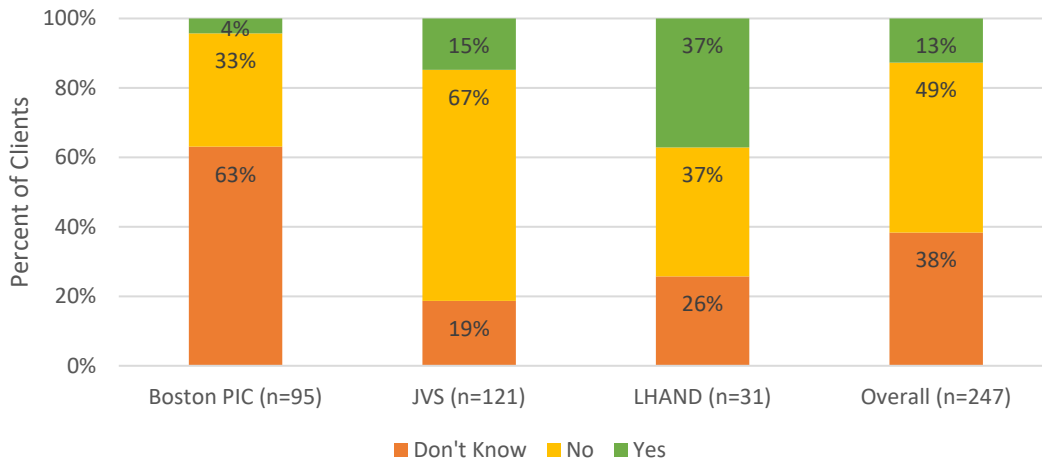
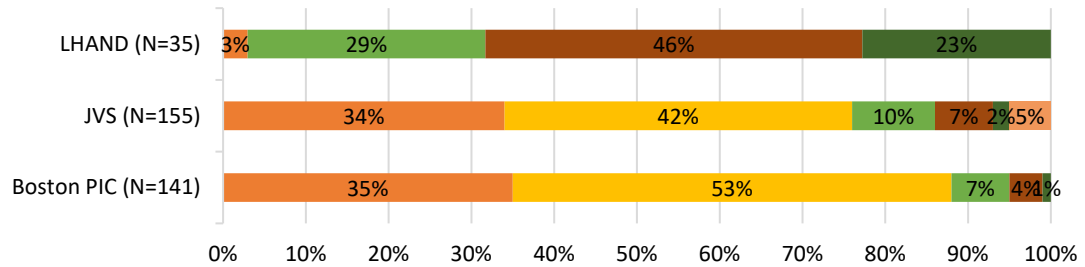


Figure A8. Housing Type of Launch Clients at Intake, by Site



	Boston PIC (N=141)	JVS (N=155)	LHAND (N=35)
Low income housing tax credit	35%	34%	3%
Public housing	53%	42%	
Section 8	7%	10%	29%
MA rental voucher program	4%	7%	46%
Other housing	1%	2%	23%
Other state subsidized housing		5%	

■ Low income housing tax credit 
 ■ Public housing 
 ■ Section 8  
■ MA rental voucher program 
 ■ Other housing 
 ■ Other state subsidized housing

Figure A9. Goal Status for Launch Clients with Education/Training/Career or Job-Related Goal (N=331)

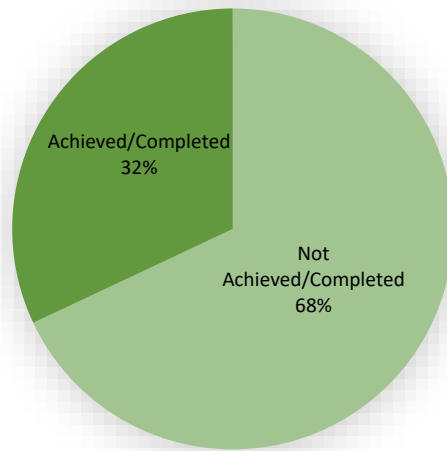


Figure A10. Goal Status for Launch Clients with ETC or Job-Related Goal, by Site

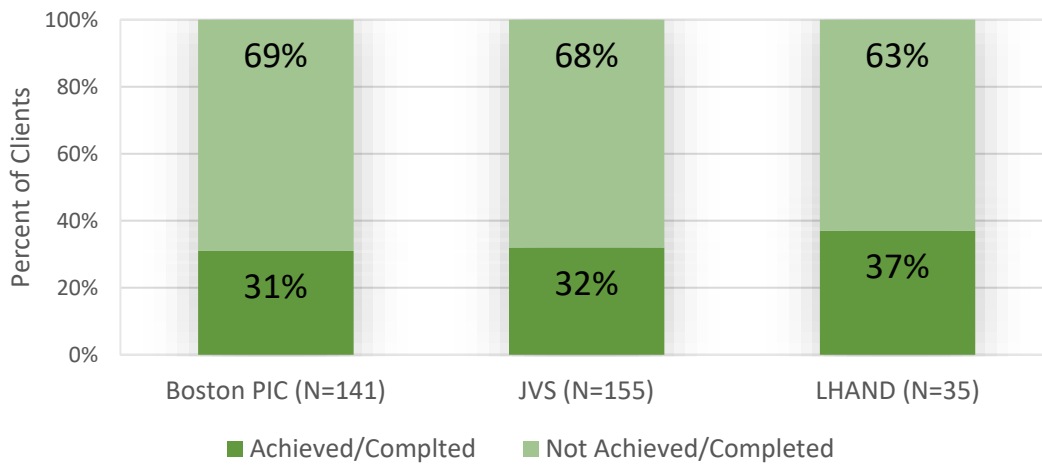


Figure A11. Duration of Launch Participation for JVS and LHAND Clients by Housing Type

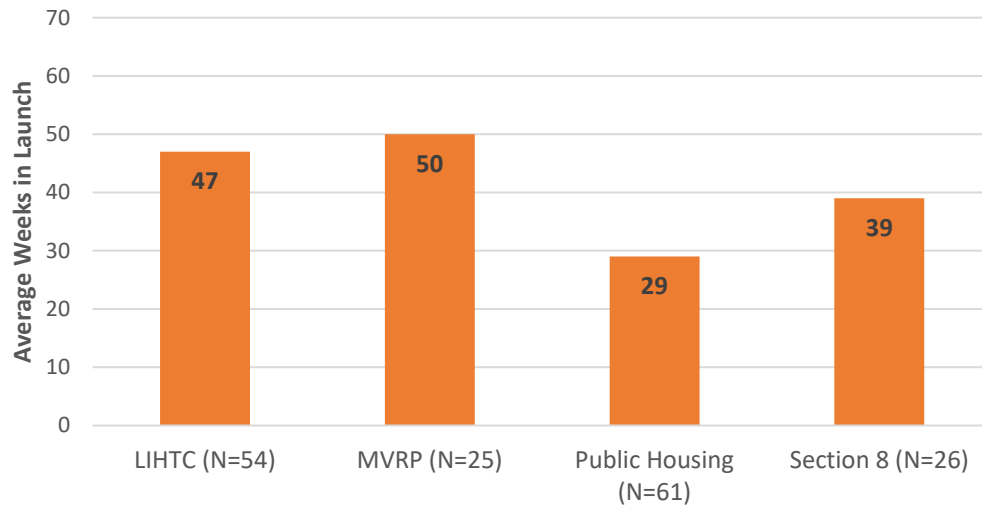


Figure A12. Percent of Launch Clients Who Achieved ETC or Job-Related Goals by Gender

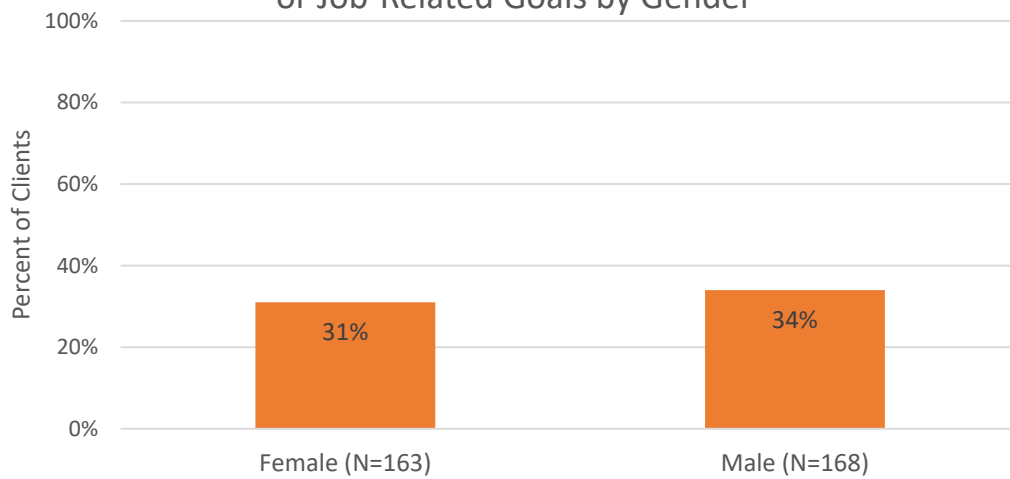


Figure A13. Percent of Launch Clients Who Achieved ETC or Job-Related Goals by Race/Ethnicity

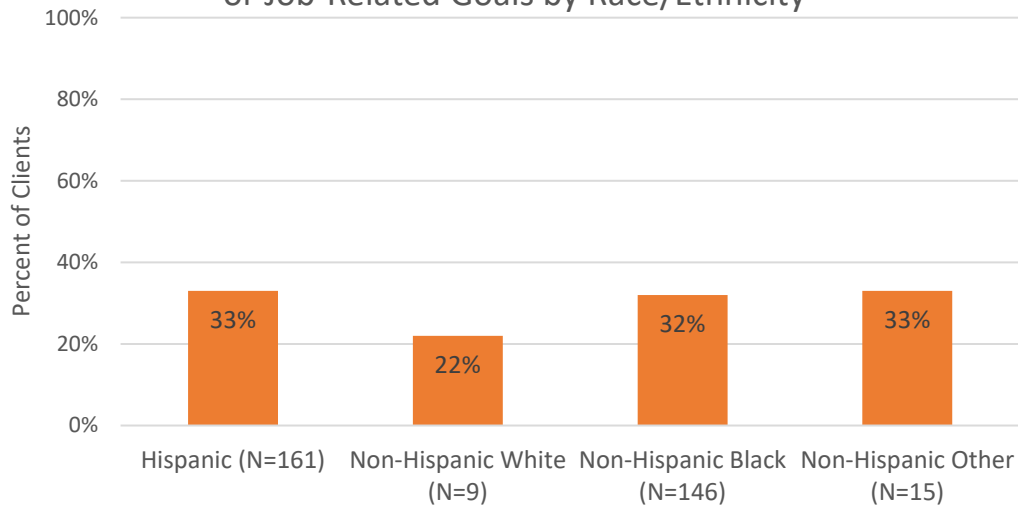
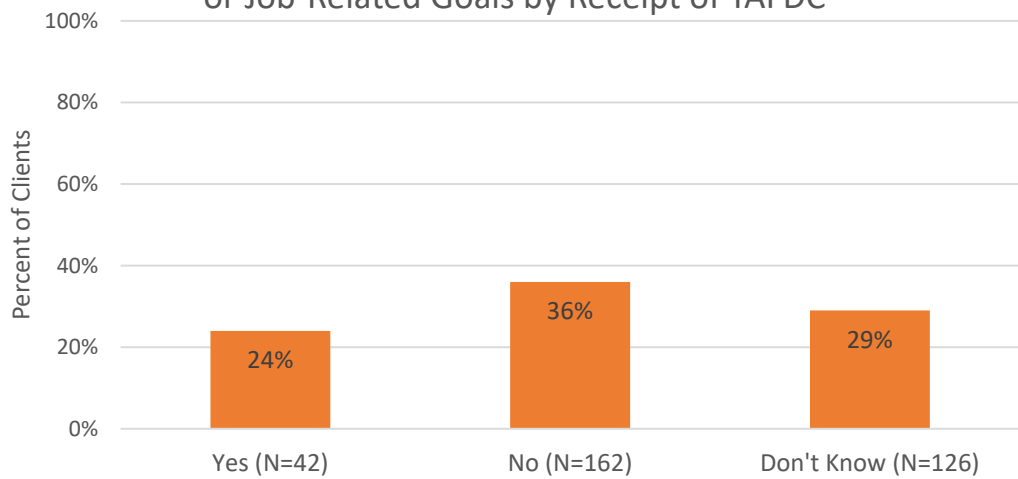
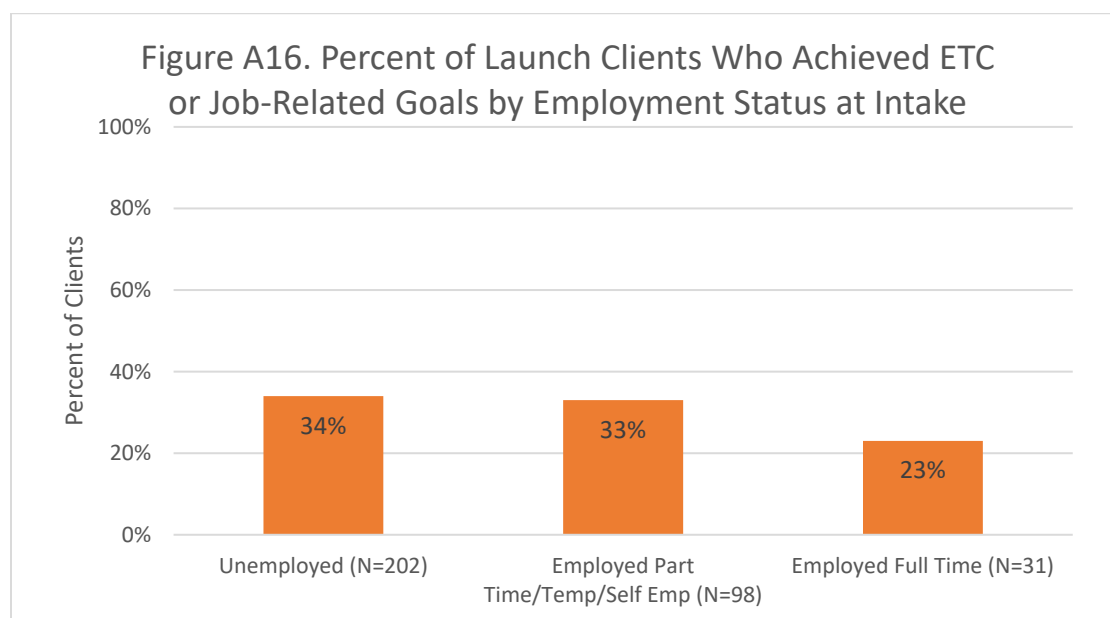
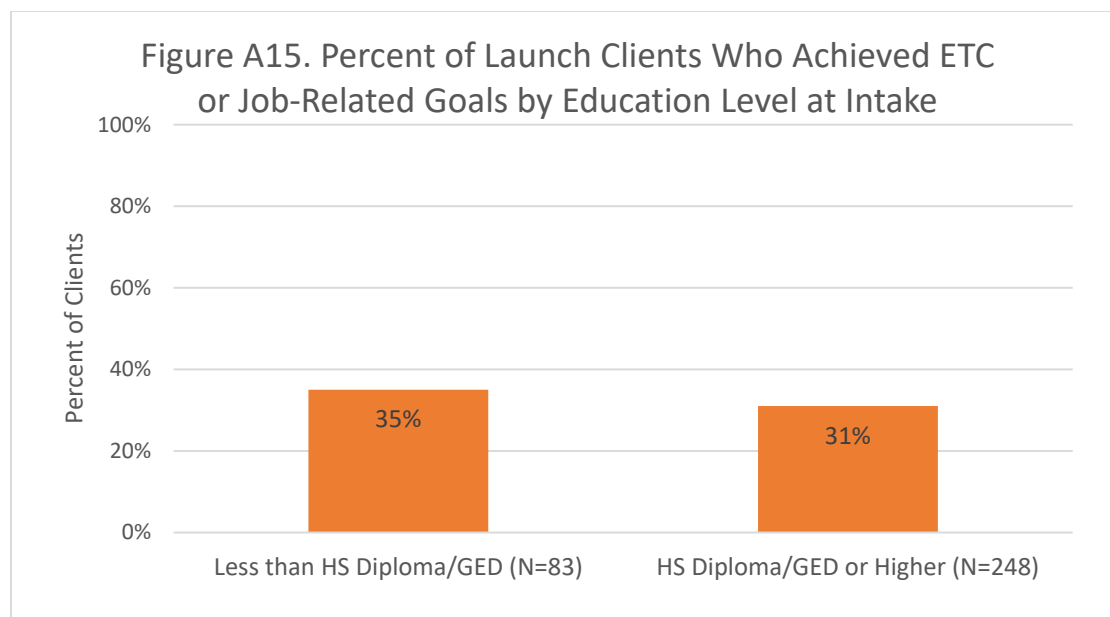


Figure A14. Percent of Launch Clients Who Achieved ETC or Job-Related Goals by Receipt of TAFDC





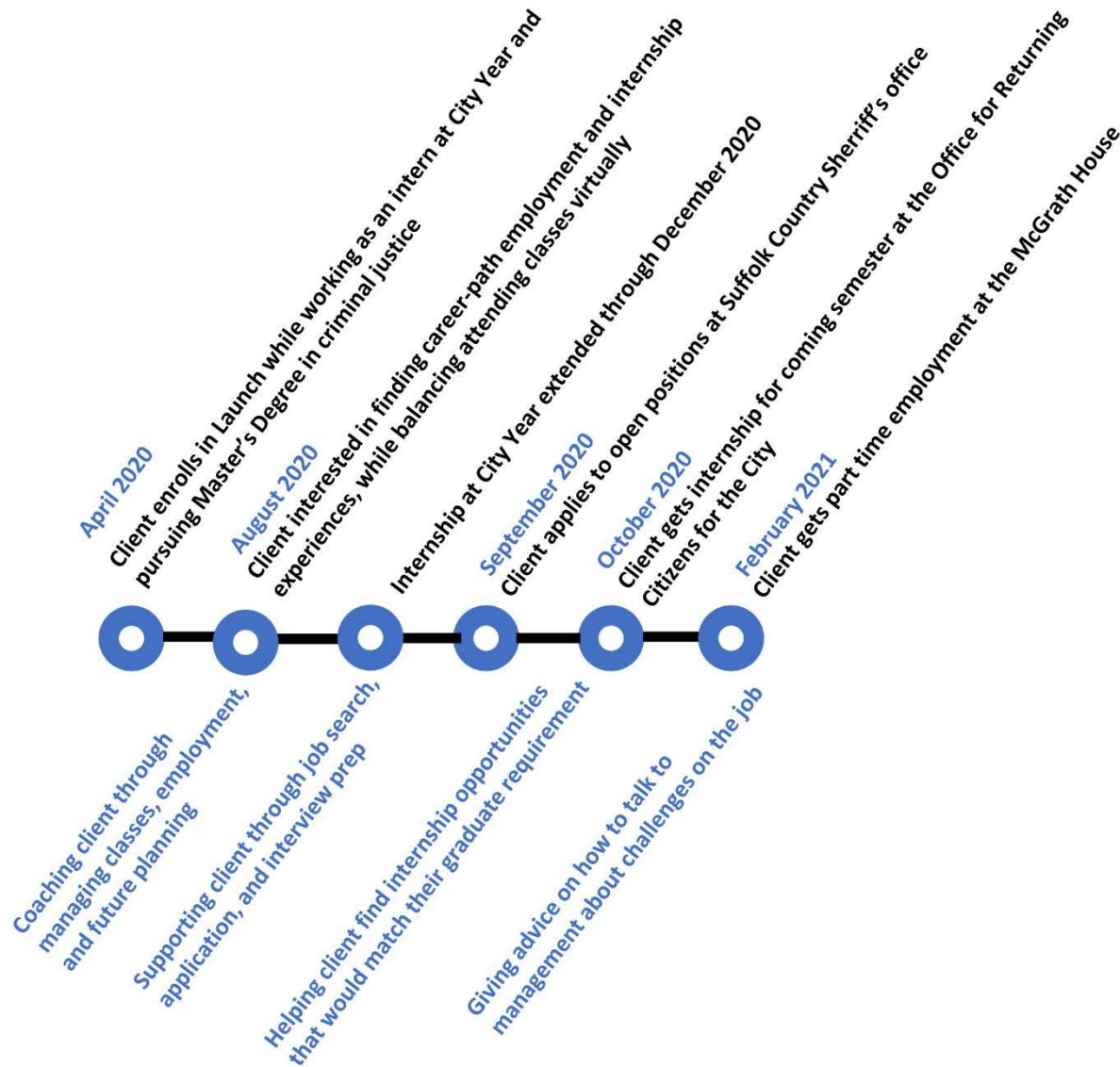


<sup>xviii</sup> In order to have time to do the analyses of the ETO data for this report, the last two months of data collected were not included.

<sup>xix</sup> Analyses presented in this report related to dosage were calculated from case notes data. Since the coaches at the Boston PIC did not use the case notes system in ETO to document interactions with clients, the analyses are only for JVS and LHAND clients.

<sup>xx</sup> The number of weeks was calculated from the date of intake to the last date of contact between client and coach in case notes.

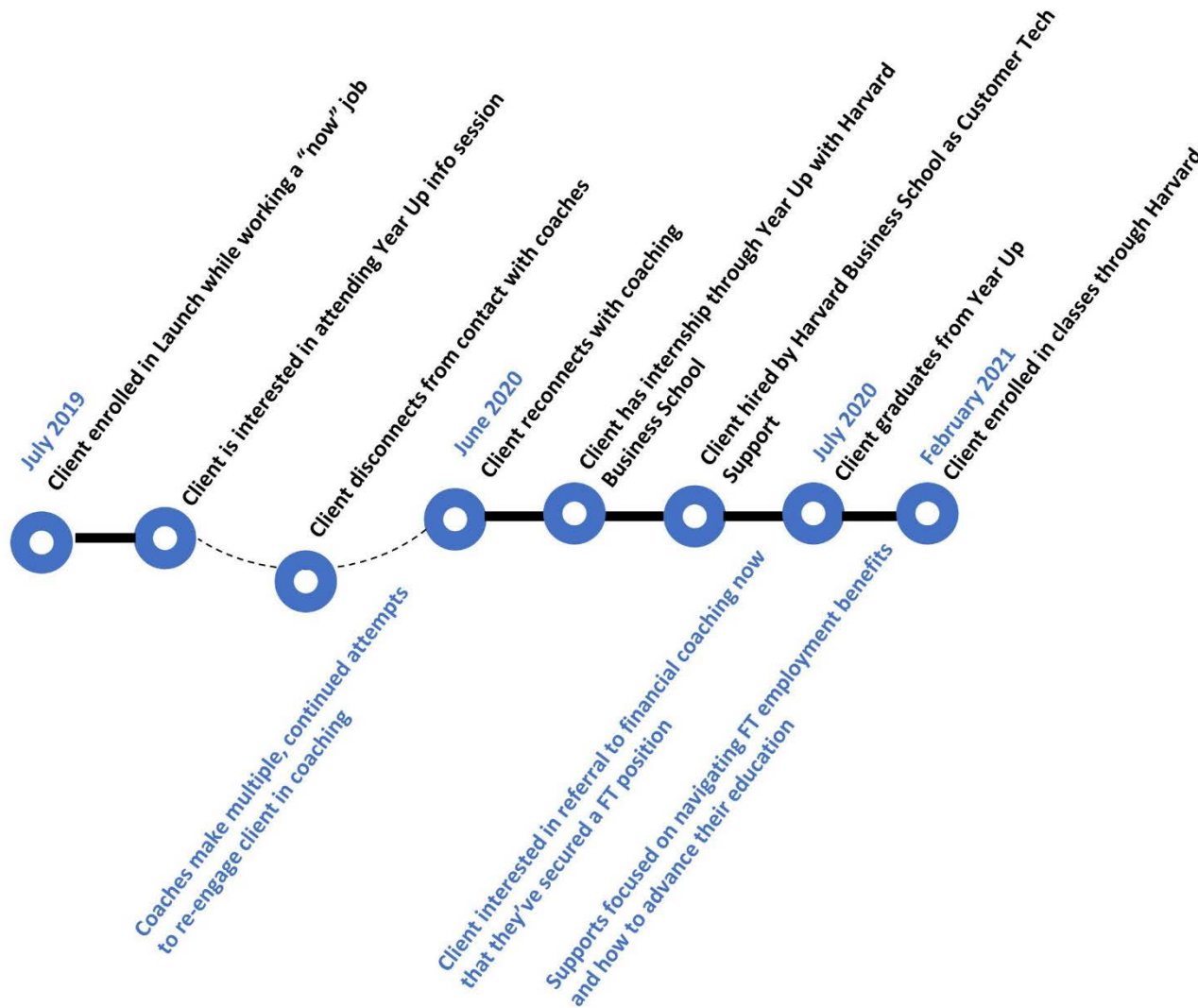
Appendix E. Client Journey Maps  
Compiled by Amanda Shabowich, Launch Project Director



**Client Story 1: This client, on paper, was already “connected” but needed support along the different steps.**

This client had an internship but was worried about getting another to meet graduation requirements, or how these experiences could translate into consistent employment. Additionally, they were not sure how to self-advocate on the job – how do I talk to management or tackle other challenges in a professional setting?

They joined Launch while already juggling a paid internship and a Master's program – all during a pandemic. This client wanted to be proactive and get support in managing classes and what next steps could happen after this paid internship with City Year ended. Coaching focused on the job search and application process, and for this client it was focused on career-level employment in the criminal justice field. Simultaneously, the client and coach were working together to find another internship placement that would satisfy graduation requirements, which they landed through the city. This client then applied those job search skills to get a job in their desired field, which they're balancing along with the internship and classes. Now that they're on the job, this client and coach have focused on self-advocacy and how to handle challenges in their place of employment.



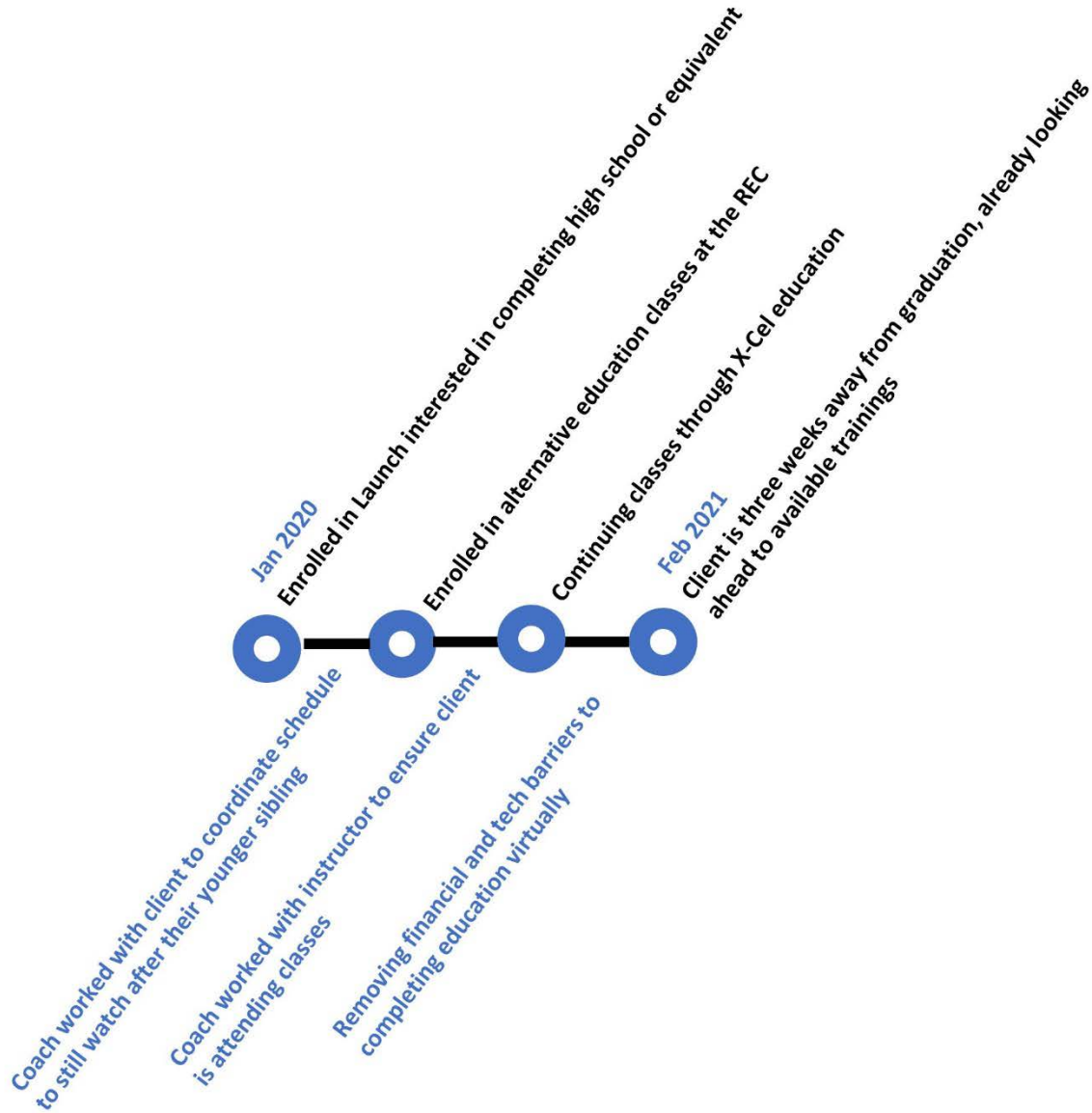
### Client Story 2: Being able to reconnect with coaching as needed.

This client enrolled in Launch, expressed interest in YearUp, and then disconnected for almost a full year, despite coach's outreach efforts. The client reconnected when they were close to their Year Up graduation. Coaching has been focused on translating training program/internship to employment, and then how to navigate financial coaching and employment benefits now that they have secured a full-time position working at Harvard Business School as a Customer Tech Support person at \$34/hour.



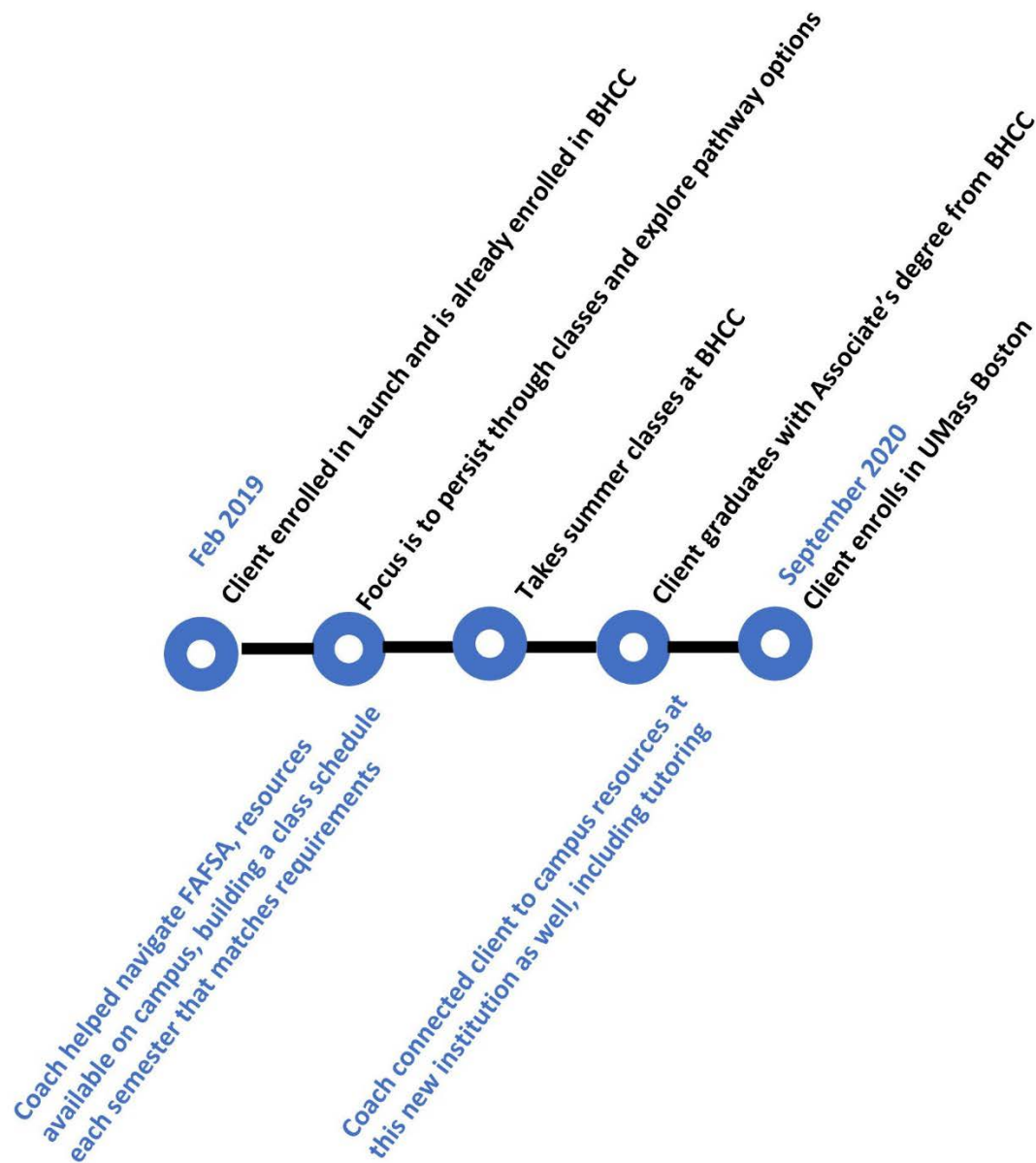
**Client Story 3: Client needed to find their right fit, illustrating how essential the career exploration piece can be.**

Coaching can happen for years without reaching concrete milestones. The coach offered multiple ways for the client to explore his/her passions and interests and as a result the client is much more confident and has a better sense of what does/doesn't work for them than they did before enrolling in Launch. Even though the client still hasn't found his/her ideal job, the client got a part time job on top of career exploration and training due to financial challenges at home as a result of the pandemic. Coaching included helping the client get a drivers license to open up a wider net of career opportunities.



#### Client Story 4: Creating a flexible pathway for a client.

This client had previously enrolled in programs to get their diploma, but never stuck with it or thought they could because they had to take care of a younger sibling while their parent worked. The Launch coach worked out a schedule with the client, coordinated with their teachers, and created a net of support to encourage them to get their diploma. When the pandemic threatened to disrupt this client's journey, the coach worked with them to remove technical and financial barriers so they could get to the point where they have almost gotten their diploma.



**Client Story 5: The need for coaching to navigate these transitional steps in life, as well as connecting to on-campus resources.**

One might think that a client already enrolled in college as not needing assistance, but to have a supportive person alongside to help with building a class schedule, ensure registration and enrollment in the required classes, and figure out what campus supports is available and how to access can make a big difference. With support from the Launch coach, this client transitioned from Associate's to Bachelor's program—a hard transition to make.