



MURIEL BOWSER
MAYOR

April 22, 2024

The Honorable Phil Mendelson
Chairman
Council of the District of Columbia
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 504
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson:

I am pleased to submit to the Council of the District of Columbia the enclosed Pathways Program Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report, which was prepared by the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (“ONSE”), pursuant to Section 101(d) of the Neighborhood Engagement Achieves Results Amendment Act of 2016, effective June 30, 2016 (D.C. Law 21-125; D.C. Official Code § 7-2411(d)).

This report details, among other things, the number of individuals successfully recruited and engaged by the Pathways Program, the duration of their participation, the status of their progress, and their demographic data.

My administration is available to discuss any questions you may have regarding this report. In order to facilitate a response to any questions you may have, please contact Kwelli Sneed, Interim Director, ONSE, at kwelli.sneed1@dc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Muriel Bowser", written over a large, stylized flourish that extends downwards and to the right.

Muriel Bowser



Pathways Program Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report

Introduction

The Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE) present this comprehensive report offering an overview of the Pathways Program in Fiscal Year 2023. ONSE, established in 2016 under the Neighborhood Engagement Achieves Results (NEAR) Act, is committed to fostering a community-oriented model for violence prevention and public safety.

Aligned with the directives of the NEAR Act, this report provides essential information to the public and Council of the District of Columbia while ensuring the exclusion of personally identifying details. The NEAR Act mandates that ONSE submit an annual report to the Council with the following information:

- The number of individuals successfully recruited and engaged.
- The duration of individuals' participation.
- The status of participants' progress.
- The participants' age, race or ethnicity, gender, and ward of residence.
- The arrest or conviction of any participant during or following their participation.

Background

The Pathways Program (“Pathways”) is a transitional employment program that aims to decrease participants’ involvement in the criminal justice system and improve their employment, education, and training outcomes. Individuals referred to this program are aged 18-35 and identified as being at risk of participating in and/or being victims of violent crime. Each Pathways cohort enrolls up to 30 participants who are District residents. Historically, program participants have identified as male and have been 99% African American.

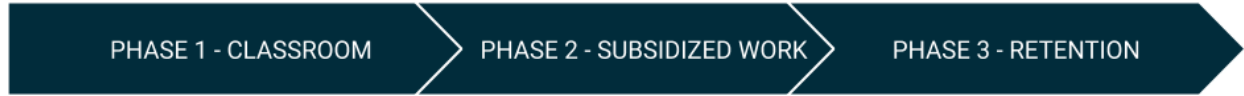
As illustrated in the table below, Pathways follows a three-phase model. The first phase is an intensive, nine-week classroom-based training that focuses on life and job skills. Phase two offers six months of subsidized employment, which helps participants gain real work experience, build positive work habits, and establish a record of employment. The third phase aims to offer long-term retention and resources to ensure participants successfully transition to permanent unsubsidized employment, retain said employment, and continue to pursue their other self-identified personal and professional goals.

Throughout every phase of the program, Pathways participants are offered a host of wraparound services, including transportation benefits, nutritional services, mental health services, housing assistance referrals, clothing and/or uniform assistance, and access to a variety of professional-social extracurricular activities.



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Intensive, nine-week classroom based training that focuses on life and job skills, during which participants receive case management services, experiential learning and team building opportunities, as well as are offered breakfast and lunch daily.

Up to six months of subsidized employment, which helps participants:

- Gain real work experience
- Build positive work habits
- Establish a record of employment

Long-term retention and support services aimed at ensuring participants successfully transition from subsidized employment to permanent unsubsidized employment, retain said employment, and continue to pursue their other self-identified personal and professional goals.

Pathways does not have open enrollment. Individuals are referred to the program by the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (“CSOSA”), ONSE’s violence intervention initiative contractors, District government agencies, and community partners with credible sources.

Overview of FY 2023

At the outset of FY 2023,¹ Pathways staff actively engaged 320 District residents deemed at risk of participating in or becoming victims of violent crimes based on credible sources². In 2023, ONSE was able to lead three new cohorts - 12, 13, and 14 - over the fiscal year, each comprised of men who were meticulously selected based on stringent criteria, including a history of gun violence or gun-related crime, collaboration with the ONSE People of Promise initiative (National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform), and a risk assessment utilizing a scoring model. ONSE collaborated with key partners, conducting thorough reviews and community conflict mapping meetings to ensure the safety of the participants in the program.

A total of 80 participants, over 3 cohort classes, were enrolled in FY 2023.

¹ In FY 2023 Quarter 1, Cohort 11 Ambassadors from FY 2022 continued their involvement with offsite activities, experiencing suit fittings, meetings with City Officials at the Wilson Building, and participating in a Business Pitch Competition, resulting in the promotion of 21 Ambassadors.

² A credible source encompasses community members, organizations, personnel from the District’s public safety agencies, and federal agencies. These individuals or entities either supervise, monitor, collaborate with, or possess affiliations with individuals affected by or susceptible to gun violence.

Participant Demographics

PATHWAYS PARTICIPANTS' WARD OF RESIDENCE								
COHORT #	WARD 1	WARD 2	WARD 3	WARD 4	WARD 5	WARD 6	WARD 7	WARD 8
1	3	0	0	1	2	2	5	12
2	0	0	0	1	0	3	6	15
3	0	0	0	1	1	3	7	12
4	1	0	0	1	2	5	7	9
5	2	0	0	0	3	5	2	6
6	1	1	0	1	3	0	3	9
7	0	0	0	0	2	3	7	6
8	1	0	0	1	0	9	10	6
9	1	0	0	1	3	6	3	2
10	2	0	0	0	1	4	4	10
11	0	0	0	1	2	1	7	9
12	0	1	0	1	2	2	8	12
13	1	0	0	0	4	2	10	12
14	2	0	0	5	5	0	5	8
% OF TOTAL	4.5%	1%	0%	4.5%	10%	14%	26%	40%
TOTAL	14	2	0	14	30	45	84	128

PATHWAYS PARTICIPANTS' AGE AT ENROLLMENT	
COHORT	AVERAGE AGE
1	26
2	25
3	26
4	27
5	25
6	30
7	28
8	29
9	26
10	29
11	28
12	29
13	29



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Table with 2 columns and 2 rows. Row 1: 14, 27. Row 2: OVERALL AVERAGE AGE, 27.

Gender: To date, all participants have identified as male.

Race: To date, 99% of participants have identified as African American and 1% have identified as Hispanic or Other.

Timeline of Cohorts

- January 17, 2023: Cohort 12 began with an initial enrollment of 30 ambassadors. Cohort 12's promotion date was March 24, 2023.
May 2, 2023: Cohort 13 began with an initial enrollment of 27 ambassadors. Cohort 13's promotion date was July 7, 2023.
July 24, 2023: Cohort 14 began with an initial enrollment of 23 ambassadors. Cohort 14's promotion date was September 30, 2023.

The initial nine weeks of Pathways were marked by an array of opportunities specifically designed for ambassadors. These experiences not only served to foster trust but also played an essential role in fortifying relationships among participants. The range of activities included team-building events, as well as outdoor pursuits such as white-water rafting and kayaking, fostering a sense of solidarity and expanding ambassadors' perspectives.

Accompanying these experiential endeavors, ambassadors engaged in a contracted curriculum over the course of the program. This curriculum covered an array of subjects, including behavioral modification, personal development, mental health awareness, and communication skills. Furthermore, participants received valuable certifications in OSHA 10, flagging, and CPR, contributing to their overall skill set and employability.

Table titled 'Pathways FY 2023 Certifications' with columns: Cohort Number, OSHA Certification, Flaggers Certification, CPR Certification. Rows: Cohort 12 (11, 3, 16), Cohort 13 (18, 14, 14), Cohort 14 (20, 21, 17).

As the program progressed, Pathways Ambassadors actively maintained meaningful connections with the Mayoral executive cabinet. This engagement took the form of roundtable discussions, offering a platform for open dialogue with key officials from various city departments. Through these interactions, strong partnerships were forged, contributing to positive change within the community and reinforcing the program's commitment to impactful engagement and collaboration.



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In FY 2023, 80% of all ambassadors completed the nine-week training. However, it is crucial to address the 20% who did not complete the training, opting to discontinue their participation or who were dismissed from the program. This subgroup faced various challenges, including childcare issues, incarceration, mental health breakdowns, finding full-time employment outside of Pathways, or were removed from the program due to behavioral issues and attendance problems.

Among those who completed the nine-week training, 59.3% secured subsidized work experience offers and an additional 23% secured unsubsidized traditional job opportunities. Unfortunately, 17% faced hardships, including observed substance abuse, refusal to commit to a work experience placement, transportation issues, outstanding safety concerns in different wards, and family trauma.

BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPANTS' PROGRESSION THROUGH PROGRAM PHASES BY COHORT (As of 10/6/23)					
Fiscal Year	Cohort #	Number Enrolled	Completed Phase 1 (9-week classroom course)	Completed Phase 2 (placed in subsidized employment)	Completed Phase 3 (secured unsubsidized employment)
2018	1	25	18	17	13
2019	2	25	24	22	15
2019	3	24	18	18	5
2020	4	25	22	19	9
2021	5	20	16	12	9
2021	6	20	18	14	7
2021	7	21	14	9	9
2022	8	26	22	14	3
2022	9	28	17	18	13
2022	10	25	22	16	1
2022	11	25	22	15	3
2023	12	30	23	18	10
2023	13	27	19	3	9
2023	14	23	20	19	0 ³
TOTAL		359	275	214	106

To keep track of participants' interactions with the criminal justice system, ONSE worked closely with CSOSA to monitor and report criminal data. Despite the Program's efforts, the FY 2023

³ Cohort 14 is currently within the 4-6 month timeframe of their Work Experience (WEX) subsidized employment placements. In Quarter 2, the ONSE workforce development team will engage ambassadors to assist in securing unsubsidized employment opportunities.



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cohorts met various challenges. A total of two ambassadors faced arrests prior to their participation in the Program, while twelve were arrested after Program completion. It is crucial to note that being arrested does not necessarily equate to conviction.

Arrests and Offenses

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM INTERACTIONS BREAKDOWN BY COHORT						
Cohort	# of Clients Arrested During Phase 1	# of Clients Arrested After Phase 1	Violent Offense	Gun Related Offense	Other Offense	Detained for Parole / Probation Violation
9	1	6	1	6	8	1
10	4	3	1	5	10	1
11	1	11	4	6	7	3
12	0	3	1	2	3	0
13	1	4	3	3	3	0
14	1	5	0	3	5	2
Total	8	32	10	25	36	7

Convictions

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM INTERACTIONS BREAKDOWN BY COHORT (cont.)					
Cohort	Received a Conviction for a New Charge During Phase 1	Received a Conviction for a New Charge After Phase 1	Violent Offense Conviction	Gun Related Conviction	Other Conviction
9	0	1	0	1	0
10	0	0	0	0	0
11	0	2	0	1	1
12	0	1	1	1	0
13	0	0	0	0	0
14	1	1	0	1	1
Total	1	5	1	4	2

In FY 2024, Pathways aims to increase the success rate of ambassadors by deepening behavior modification for positive outcomes and providing transferable occupational skills. Observing past cohorts makes it evident that certain components need modification to offer a more comprehensive



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and restorative vocational training program. Our primary objective is to equip participants with practical skills, fostering positive community engagement, and reducing the likelihood of involvement in violent activities.

This strategic shift reflects our commitment to empowering ambassadors with tangible, transferable skills for sustained employment, contributing to the enhancement of their overall behavioral and professional trajectories.

Pathways Participant Success Story

The following account is of a participant's journey before, during, and after the Program. This anecdote offers a unique perspective of how lives are transformed by the Program.

Mr. T, age 34, Cohort 14

After being released from jail, Mr. T had little enthusiasm for anything beyond returning to his familiar "street" life. Mr. T was unaware of any programs and uninterested in change. His friend, aware of his involvement in a gun violence incident, introduced him to the Pathways Program.

Upon entering Pathways, Mr. T held low expectations and intended only to do the bare minimum. However, within a few days, he noticed the staff's genuine care and enthusiasm about him, prompting a shift in his mindset. He realized the program wanted better for him, and he, in turn, wanted better for himself.

Mr. T's journey included learning practical skills like creating a resume, a significant achievement for someone with no prior job experience due to his past. Recognized as one of the outstanding ambassadors during the promotion ceremony, he was interviewed for a program support specialist position at a DC government agency. Currently, in a work experience role, Mr. T aims to secure full-time retention, showcasing the transformative impact of the Pathways Program on individuals seeking positive change.

Conclusion

In the past year, the Pathways Program has worked hard to help people in the community break out from cycles of violence and find better opportunities. Participants have been successful in completing the program and obtaining employment opportunities.

ONSE's focus is on giving participants practical skills for lasting employment and positive community involvement. Stories like Mr. T's show that the program is making a real difference in people's lives. ONSE is dedicated to building safer and stronger communities for everyone.