



MURIEL BOWSER
MAYOR

March 12, 2025

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 2024 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 data, 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, Director, ONSE, at kwelli.sneed1@dc.gov.

Sincerely,


Muriel Bowser

PATHWAYS PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2024
March 2025

Introduction

The Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement (ONSE) presents this comprehensive report offering a thorough overview of the Pathways Program for Fiscal Year 2024. ONSE, established in 2016 by the Neighborhood Engagement Achieves Results (NEAR) Act, stands committed to fostering a community-oriented model for violence prevention and public safety.

Pursuant to section 101(d) of the NEAR Act, this report provides essential information on Pathways Program (Pathways) participation during FY 2024 while protecting the disclosure of program participants' personally identifying details. The NEAR Act mandates ONSE submits this report to the Council annually, and that the report incorporate the following information for the preceding fiscal year:

- 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; and
- The arrest or conviction of any participant during or following their participation.

Background

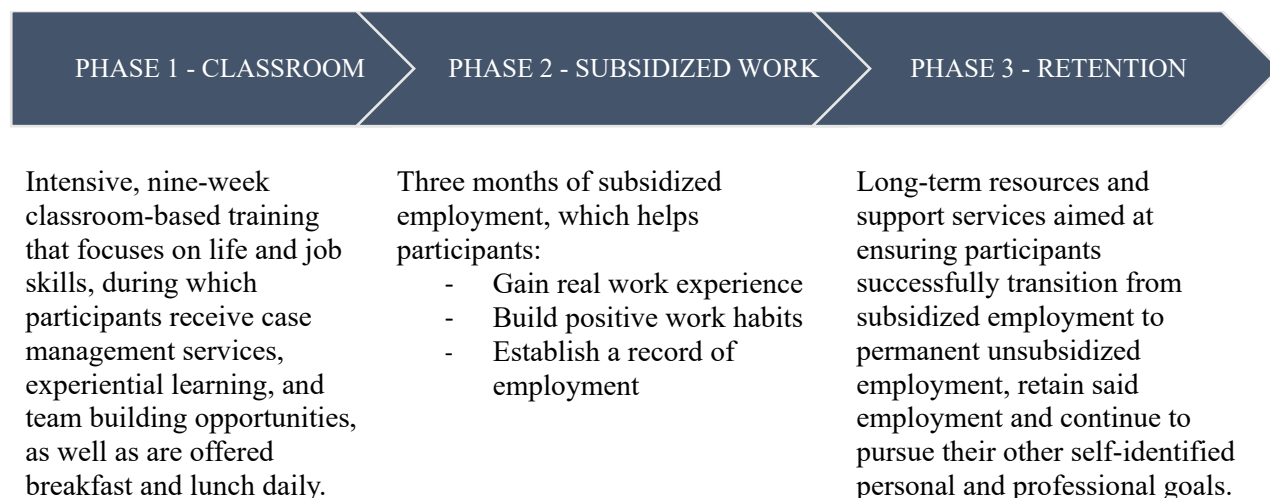
The mission of the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement is to build partnerships and implement strategies that reduce gun-related violence in the District. ONSE fulfills this mission by coordinating the District's gun violence prevention and intervention initiatives, using both public health and public safety tools and focusing on identifying and engaging with those most likely to be involved in gun violence, providing them with alternatives to crime.

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 ages 18-35 and have been identified as at risk of participating in and/or being victims of violent crime. Each Pathways cohort enrolls up to 30 participants, all of whom are District residents. Historically, program participants have identified as male and have been 98% 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.¹ Phase Two offers three months of subsidized employment, which helps participants gain real work experience, build positive work habits, and establish a record of employment. The third phase offers long-term resources and support to ensure participants successfully transition to permanent unsubsidized employment, retain said employment, and continue to pursue their other self-identified personal and professional goals.

¹ The program includes an orientation week, making the total time 10 weeks. Once enrolled in the Pathways Program, ONSE refers to them as ambassadors, no longer as "participants."

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 pro-social extracurricular activities.



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 grantee providers, District government agencies, and community partners with credible sources.

Overview of Fiscal Year 2024:

At the outset of FY 2024, Pathways actively engaged 395 District residents deemed at risk of participating in or becoming victims of violent crimes based on credible sources.² FY 2024 Quarter 2 marked the official start of programming with the initiation of three new cohorts—15, 16, and 17.

The selection process for each Pathways participant is based on stringent criteria. The criteria include having a history of gun violence or gun-related crime, collaboration with the ONSE People of Promise initiative (National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform) and ONSE C.A.R.E.S.³

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.

³ The Creating Assistance, Rehabilitation, and Engagement Support (C.A.R.E.S.) initiative, housed within the Department of Corrections (DOC) Crew Intervention, Prevention, and Mediation Support program, is an initiative that directly aligns with the broader objectives of reducing gang involvement and violence within correctional facilities, promoting rehabilitation, and facilitating successful reintegration into the community. It addresses the root causes of gang involvement and fosters peaceful conflict resolution, which is essential for community safety. The goals are (1) reducing crew involvement and affiliations among incarcerated individuals; (2) minimizing gang-related conflicts and violence within Department of Corrections; and (3) promoting successful reintegration of individuals into the community upon release.

Initiative, 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 83 Pathways participants were enrolled in FY 2024.

Participant Demographics:

TOTAL 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
15	1	1	0	0	4	5	5	3
16	5	0	0	1	3	2	3	9
17	4	0	1	2	3	0	3	7
TOTAL⁴	24	3	1	17	40	52	95	147
% OF TOTAL	6%	1%	0.2%	4%	11%	14%	25%	39%

FY 2024 PATHWAYS PARTICIPANTS' WARD OF RESIDENCE								
COHORT #	WARD 1	WARD 2	WARD 3	WARD 4	WARD 5	WARD 6	WARD 7	WARD 8
15	1	1	0	0	4	5	5	3
16	5	0	0	1	3	2	3	9
17	4	0	1	2	3	0	3	7
TOTAL	10	1	1	3	10	7	11	19
% OF TOTAL	16%	2%	2%	5%	16%	11%	18%	30%

⁴ The number of participants in this chart reflect the participants who completed Phase One of the Pathways Program.

TOTAL 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
14	27
15	28
16	28
17	28
OVERALL AVERAGE AGE	28

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

Race: To date, 98% of participants have identified as African American and 2% have identified as Hispanic or Other.

FY 2024 PATHWAYS PARTICIPANTS' AGE AT ENROLLMENT	
COHORT	AVERAGE AGE
15	28
16	28
17	28
OVERALL AVERAGE AGE	28

Timeline of Cohorts:

- January 22, 2024: Cohort 15 began with an initial enrollment of 31 participants. Cohort 15's promotion date was March 22, 2024.
- April 22, 2024: Cohort 16 began with an initial enrollment of 25 participants. Cohort 16's promotion date was June 21, 2024.
- July 22, 2024: Cohort 17 began with an initial enrollment of 27 participants. Cohort 17's promotion date was September 20, 2024.

The initial nine weeks of Pathways are marked by an array of classroom and hands-on learning opportunities strategically designed for participants. These experiences not only foster trust in a group setting but also play an essential role in fortifying relationships among participants. The range of activities includes team-building events and exhilarating outdoor pursuits such as white-water rafting, fostering a sense of solidarity and expanding the participants' perspectives.

Accompanying these experiential endeavors, participants engage in a well-constructed curriculum delivered by contracted, skilled professionals over the course of the program. This curriculum covers an array of subjects, including behavioral modification, personal and professional development, mental health awareness, and communication skills. Furthermore, participants receive valuable certifications in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10-hour Outreach Training program, flagging, and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training, contributing to their overall skill set and employability.

PATHWAYS FY 2024 CERTIFICATIONS			
Cohort Number	OSHA Certification	Flaggers Certification	CPR Certification
Cohort 15	18	16	17
Cohort 16	20	21	20
Cohort 17	17	19	19

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

In FY 2024, 75% of participants completed the nine-week training, a consistent mark compared with the last three fiscal years. However, it is critical to address the reasons for the 25% of participants who did not successfully complete Phase One, opting to discontinue their participation or were dismissed from the program. This subgroup faced various challenges, including lack of childcare, incarceration, mental health breakdowns, finding full-time employment outside of the Pathways Program, or being removed from the program due to behavioral issues and/or attendance problems.

Among those who completed the nine-week training, 60% secured subsidized work experience offers. Of the 60% who secured subsidized employment, 19% secured unsubsidized employment. Another 23% of those who completed the nine-week training transitioned into occupational skills training. The occupational skills training offered to the participants are Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Class B, welding and Comp-TIA IT training. CDL Class B training prepares participants to drive vehicles such as charter buses, campers, and box trucks. Comp-TIA IT training enables entry-level certification that validates a candidate's skills in computer hardware, networking, and IT support tasks. Welding training offers the participants with an OSHA 30-hour Outreach Training Program certification, safety certification and shielded metal arc training.

Unfortunately, 17% faced hardships, including observed substance abuse, refusal to commit to the work experience placement, transportation issues, outstanding safety concerns in various parts of the city, and family trauma. This prevented them from fully participating and completing Phase Two of the program.

BREAKDOWN OF PARTICIPANTS' PROGRESSION THROUGH PROGRAM PHASES BY COHORT (As of 10/9/2024)					
Fiscal Year	Cohort #	Number Enrolled	Completed Phase 1 (nine-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	2
2024	15	31	19	11	4
2024	16	25	23	12	2
2024	17	27	20	14	1
TOTAL		427	337	251	115

One of the key metrics tracked during the program is participants' interactions with the criminal justice system. ONSE works closely with CSOSA to monitor and report criminal data. Despite the Pathways Program's efforts, the cohorts in FY 2024 met a few challenges. Ten participants faced arrests during Phase One of the program, and five participants were arrested after Phase One. Additionally, two participants were convicted for a new criminal charge during Phase One, and three were convicted for a new charge after Phase One. 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
12	0	3	1	2	3	0
13	1	4	3	3	3	0
14	1	5	0	3	5	2
15	4	5	0	2	10	2
16	4	0	0	1	3	0
17	2	0	0	0	2	0
Total	12	17	4	11	26	4

Convictions

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM INTERACTIONS BREAKDOWN BY COHORT					
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
12	0	1	1	1	0
13	0	0	0	0	0
14	1	1	0	1	1
15	1	3	0	0	5
16	0	0	0	0	0
17	1	0	0	1	0
Total	3	5	1	3	6

In FY 2025, Pathways aims to increase the success rate of participants by deepening behavior modification for positive outcomes and providing transferable occupational skills. Observing past cohorts makes it evident that certain design components need modification to offer a more comprehensive restorative vocational training program. The primary objective is to equip participants with practical skills, fostering positive community engagement and reducing the likelihood of involvement in violent activities.

Pathways Participant Success Story

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

Mr. B, age 33 of Cohort 16

"Hi, my name is BP, I'm a walking testimony of the ONSE agency. I was referred to the Pathways Program from a friend and the CHV violence interrupters. I was homeless sleeping in my car and unable to provide stability for my daughter. I was referred to Pathways by Mr. CK and had a man-to-man conversation with him because I was tired of sleeping in my car, not generating legal money and not feeling safe. I couldn't pay my bills, and I would do side jobs to keep gas in the car and take my daughter out. "I expected to just get a job." I worked hard to land a job when I got into the program. Once I completed the program, I was nominated for the integrity award, which I was excited about. My daughter accompanied me to the graduation and cheered me on. That made me proud. Once completion of the program, I started the CDL program and once it was finished, I applied for DPW and was offered a term position. I'm happy to report that I have my first apartment in my name, and I have been extended to my job for another year. "I'm grateful for this transition and look forward to giving back to Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement."

Conclusion

In the past year, the Pathways Program has worked to lift up Pathways participants and help them reduce violence in their own neighborhoods and neighborhoods across the District. Participants have been successful in completing the program, obtaining employment, and becoming certified in high-demand industries.

In FY 2025, ONSE's focus is on giving participants practical skills for lasting employment and positive community involvement. Stories like Mr. B's are positive examples of how the Pathways program is making a real difference in people's lives and for the District's residents. ONSE is dedicated to building partnerships and implementing strategies that reduce gun-related violence in the District, creating a safer, stronger community for everyone.



Photo from Pathways 12 Cohort Ambassadors