

STRIVE Boston
Proposal to Framingham State University- Nonprofit Giving Course

Proposal Summary

STRIVE Boston offers an array of employment services designed to meet the needs of chronically unemployed or underemployed individuals in Boston through a skills training and job placement program that focuses on workplace readiness, occupational skills, attitudinal training, job placement and job retention. We work with people like Maria, a middle-aged woman who left her job to care for her elderly parents and lacked confidence in her ability to re-enter the work force, Mateo, a teenager who got swept up in the juvenile justice system and needed a support network to find his way out, and Desmond, a gang-involved twenty year old who suddenly found himself to be an expecting father. Our mission is to help these men and women realize their potential to find and keep jobs that promise sustainable livelihoods and personal growth. Our emphasis on providing a continuum of care and our focus on placing clients with employers who offer a career path uniquely positions us to serve people like Maria, Desmond, and Mateo. STRIVE does not simply place people in jobs, we encourage them to address the issues that have negatively impacted their lives and provide them the support they need to make positive changes for themselves and their families.

STRIVE Boston now respectfully seeks \$10,000 for our CORE training workshop and support services components. Funds would support staff efforts to recruit participants, conduct intakes and assessments, provide case management, develop employer relationships, and provide the intensive five-week CORE training workshop. After graduation from the workshop, grant funds would support participants' movement through additional components as appropriate for each person, including skills training, education, or placement. For Maria this meant rediscovering her self-confidence and securing a full-time job, for Mateo this meant leaving the juvenile justice system and moving into a well-paid union job, and for Desmond this meant connecting to people he cared about and embarking on a career path that he is proud of and will provide for his child. Your donation would support people such as these as they strive to change their lives and support their families.

Program Description

The STRIVE CORE model is a five-week, full-time workshop that simulates the rigors of a full-time job. We run six workshops a year serving an average of 180 clients annually. The goal is to prepare participants for today's professional workplace and enable them to advance to middle or upper-income levels as they progress in their careers. The hallmark of the STRIVE model is that it allows clients to address emotional scars, begin healing, and take critical steps towards a stable and employed life.

Topics covered in the workshop include defining professional development, attitudes, perceptions and stereotypes, writing resumes and thank-you notes, interviewing techniques, how to search for employment, coping with rejection, professional dress, and financial literacy. Other curriculum components include vocabulary work, writing assignments, computer training, participation in mock interviews and meet and- greets, as well as GED/Hi-SET coursework offered in collaboration with X-Cel, Inc.

Once a participant completes the five-week workshop, s/he is able to pursue hard skills training in three career tracks: Culinary Arts, Certified Nursing Assistant, and Construction. Additional certifications are available in CPR, AED, and First Aid or Microsoft Word and Excel. Clients may enroll in Catholic Charities Labouré Center for its Nurse Assistant and Home Health Aide training which provides an experiential clinical practicum and prepares participants for the MA State Certification tests. For STRIVE graduates interested in culinary and hospitality careers, STRIVE provides a direct link to New England Center for Arts & Technology (NECAT), which offers an intensive 16-week culinary arts training program. Upon completion, clients may test for the industry-recognized ServSafe certification, demonstrating competence in food sanitation and food handling. OSHA 10 and OSHA 30 certifications are offered in partnership with Boston's Building Pathways program, a non-profit which provide a pathway to the construction industry through apprenticeship preparedness training and advocacy. Participants may also elect to pursue higher education. Advanced computer training is offered in partnership with Bunker Hill Community College and delivers a stackable credit curriculum, Microsoft Office certification, and Computer Desktop Applications Support certification.

STRIVE's career coaches meet individually with each participant to discuss employment goals, develop an individualized employment plan, and support each client's progress. Clients are coached to lead their employment process while receiving support from STRIVE and using STRIVE's relationships with the local business community. Most jobs obtained by STRIVE graduates are entry-level openings offering career advancement opportunities. STRIVE has placed graduates with several hundred Boston employers and established working relationships with many of them. Many of these employers are familiar with STRIVE, have had good experiences with STRIVE hires, and are "repeat customers." They include large and small businesses, government agencies, non-profit organizations, universities, and hospitals. After securing employment, graduates receive support services for two years to ensure retention, address workplace issues, and advance in position. Participants who leave jobs are placed in new positions. Additional counseling and attitudinal training are provided if needed. STRIVE commits to being a resource for its clients' lifetimes. STRIVE's model works because it doesn't simply focus on placing people in jobs, instead we address the root causes of an individual's struggle with unemployment. Case managers work to discover what barriers to stable employment each client faces and works with them to overcome these barriers. Our emphasis on attitude and professionalism complements the skills training and certification processes we offer and allows our clients to stand out from the crowd of job seekers in the eyes of employers.

Population Served and Demographics

Ranked the top city for income inequality in America by a recent Brookings Institution Report, Boston is a city which struggles with the three-pronged configuration of poverty, unemployment, and incarceration. In June 2017 the unemployment rate in Boston was 4% according to the US Department of Labor. This number sharply increases as other demographic factors are considered; according to the Boston Redevelopment Authority youth unemployment is 1.62 times higher than the city average, while African American/Black unemployment is 1.72 times higher and Hispanic/Latino unemployment is 1.38 times higher. Unemployment rates for people re-entering society from incarceration surpass even those rates, based on a 2015 report from the Ella Baker Center, 67% of formerly incarcerated people are still unemployed five years following their release. The majority of our clients reside in the neighborhoods of Dorchester,

Mattapan, and Roxbury. According to a March 2016 report released by the Boston Redevelopment Authority, these neighborhoods have an unemployment rate 1.51 to 3 times higher than the city's average. STRIVE's training and employment model operates in this intersection, targeting low-income Boston residents ages 18 and above with an emphasis on: re-entry/ court-involved individuals; at-risk-out-of-school youth; homeless individuals; documented immigrants; English Language Learners; dislocated workers; and long-term underemployed and unemployed individuals. In 2017, former inmates and homeless clients comprised 54% of STRIVE Boston's participants. A majority of our clients struggle with housing, child custody issues, and domestic violence victimization; 85% falling within the ages of 18-35; 86% identifying as Black/African American; approximately half without a high school diploma or equivalent certification; three quarters with dependent children; and about 20% married. STRIVE serves the most underserved communities, reaching out to those who have been disconnected from the workforce; whether through layoffs, incarceration, military service, or personal issues. We serve individuals with significant barriers to employment, but who want to work, and provide them the skills and support they need to succeed.

STRIVE's staff is a dedicated team of human service professionals who are members of the community they serve. The staff of STRIVE reflects the diversity of the people that it serves. Their collective experience covers social work, military service, government positions, private business, and virtually every personal trial encountered by STRIVE's clients, including incarceration, homelessness, addiction, and childhood abuse. The Executive Director oversees all program development and staff. Experienced Workshop Facilitators/Case Managers and Placement Specialists provide clients with instruction and individualized support and coaching. Ed Powell was named Executive Director in 2017. Ed brings over twenty years of experience and has spent his career working to improve the lives of young people through violence prevention, education, and employment. Ed also serves as Vice President for Community Engagement at JRI.

Goals & Use of Funding

STRIVE Boston now respectfully seeks \$10,000 to support our 5-week CORE training and support services components. Funds would support staff efforts to recruit participants, conduct intakes and assessments, provide case management, develop employer relationships, and provide the intensive five-week CORE training workshop. After graduation from the workshop, grant funds would support participants' movement through additional components as appropriate for each person, including skills training, education, or placement. In the period of this grant, our goals are to:

- Enroll 180 participants in our five-week CORE workshop
- Graduate 100 participants from our five-week CORE workshop
- Place a total of 150 graduates in jobs. This includes approximately 70 placements from the newly graduated class and 80 placements for clients from previous years who have returned to STRIVE for assistance in finding additional job placements.
- Ensure that 80 clients retain their employment for a minimum of 90 days
- Increase our roster of employer partners with a specific focus on employers who offer professional development opportunities

Indicators of Success

STRIVE utilizes Apricot, a cloud-based data reporting platform for tracking client information, program interventions, case management activities, and participant progress. The Apricot system can generate individual and aggregate reports allowing the program to evaluate both client and program performance. Case notes are regularly added to each participant's file to guide career coaches in developing or adjusting individualized employment plans. STRIVE's administrative team reviews systems, processes, and methods to ensure continuous program quality. Service outcomes and the achievement of goals for persons served are measured as part of regular reviews of each person's individual action plan. Staff members keep thorough records of client attendance and progress towards individual goals. Program benchmarks include the number of persons starting training, completing training, obtaining employment, retaining employment at various intervals up to two years after graduation, and progressing on the career ladder. STRIVE also measures educational outcomes including the number of participants who enter GED or high school courses, gain GED certification or high school diploma, complete college preparatory classes, enroll in a community college, earn a college degree or certificate, enroll in vocational training or certification programs, and complete vocational training or certification programs. STRIVE's track record demonstrates a high level of success. Since its inception in 1994, STRIVE has graduated 4,800 clients and placed 4,834 in jobs, of whom nearly 68% were still employed two years later. STRIVE has also demonstrated success in placing clients in jobs with wages far above minimum wage. For several years, STRIVE's clients have, on average, earned \$3.00 more than the Massachusetts minimum wage. Our focus on providing our clients with a career pathways continuum further enables our clients to increase their wages as they climb the career ladder.

Numbers alone cannot adequately express the impact of STRIVE's programs. The stories of our clients are the true measure of our success. For example, the story of Desmond demonstrates how the support and training provided by STRIVE can help someone change their life. Desmond was gang-involved from the moment he was born. His father was a well-known gang leader in New York City and Desmond grew up in a social circle which tacitly, and occasionally overtly, encouraged him to adopt this lifestyle. He lacked a stable support system as he moved frequently. He became drug involved at the age of nine and throughout his life was in and out of jail and unable to find a job. Desmond thought that this was how his life was going to be. Then his girlfriend told him that they were expecting their first child. With her encouragement, he came to STRIVE. He was hesitant and clearly did not want to participate in the program but he signed up. Over the course of the program, he came to feel as though the staff were his family and he began to emotionally connect with them. These connections allowed him to begin to envision a path to a new future. He worked at reconciling his past with the person he wanted to be and began to let go of the people and connections that could draw him down the wrong path. Having always aspired to be a musician Desmond began to develop the work ethic and skills that he knew he would need to succeed in this industry. He changed his look to match his changing perception of himself and started wearing a suit every day. At his graduation from STRIVE his family, including his father and girlfriend, came to support him. Desmond told staff that this was one of his greatest life accomplishments as he had never graduated high school. Recently, Desmond interviewed at a major music venue in order to begin making the connections he will need to succeed at a career in music. He is excited about his future and proud of the path he has chosen.

Sustainability

STRIVE's 2018 revenue is projected at \$651,756, comprised of \$48,046 from the United Way; \$305,000 from private, government, and foundation donors; \$296,210 from the STRIVE Forward Juvenile Justice Initiative grant, and \$2,500 from other income. STRIVE is well positioned to further promote its unique expertise in workforce development. STRIVE will continue to primarily raise revenue from its established base of foundations, corporations, and individuals. STRIVE will seek city, state and federal grants; continue to strategically partner with affiliate STRIVE programs to scale impact; seek funds directly from state agencies involved with corrections training and public safety; and continue to apply to local private foundations. With the continued assistance of its funders and JRI, STRIVE intends to continue to expand operations in the years ahead.

STRIVE is committed to leading collaborations that reduce chronic unemployment and foster the success of Boston's low-income populations and we are honored that you have considered partnering with us in this mission. We would like to leave you with the story of Mateo as his story demonstrates how impactful the STRIVE program can be for its participants. One night STRIVE's staff received a frantic call from Mateo mother. Mateo had just been arrested on several serious gun charges and was due to appear in court the next day. His family did not know what to do. Mateo had heard about STRIVE from a friend and suggested that they reach out for help. After being released from custody, Mateo enrolled in the program and was determined to turn his life around. He showed up every single day and got to work making the changes he needed to make to improve his life. He became certified in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel. He developed a close relationship with his case manager allowing him to be confident in the knowledge that there was someone who was there for him. Mateo worked hard in the program, graduated, and found employment with the Iron Worker's Union where he will have a clear career path and the opportunity to advance. At his final court date, Mateo's case manager accompanied him and spoke on his behalf, outlining the progress he had made in the STRIVE program and the promising future he was building for himself. His case was resolved, allowing Mateo to stay out of prison and continue on his new path. The District Attorney who was prosecuting his case and had previously advocated for him to receive harsher punishment even approached Mateo asking to shake his hand and telling him how proud he was of the person Mateo had become¹. We envision a world where everyone has this opportunity to reconcile with their past and embark on a new path which allows them to achieve economic self-sufficiency, dignity and a promising future for themselves and their families. Thank you for considering partnering with us to achieve this vision.

¹To protect the identity of this individual some details of their story, including their name, have been altered.

STRIVE Boston, a program of JRI
FY18 Projected Budget
 FOR THE PERIOD 7/1/17 to 6/30/18

	PROJECTED YTD
<u>PROGRAM INCOME:</u>	
TRAINING INCOME	2,500.00
UNITED WAY	48,046.25
STRIVE JUVENILE JUSTICE INITIATIVE GRANT	296,210.33
CDBG GRANT	55,000.00
OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS	250,000.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 651,756.58
 <u>PERSONNEL COSTS</u>	
PAYROLL	277,980.00
FRINGE ALLOCATION	95,903.10
TOTAL PERSONNEL & FRINGE	\$ 373,883.10
 <u>OTHER DIRECT COSTS</u>	
EQUIP RENTAL & MAINTENANCE	15,000.00
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	6,000.00
RENT AND OCCUPANCY	85,000.00
TELEPHONE EXPENSE	12,500.00
TRAVEL EXPENSE	7,500.00
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION	24,200.00
CLIENT INCENTIVES	35,000.00
COMPUTER/IT UPGRADES	12,100.00
DEPRECIATION FACILITY	16,092.00
OTHER	7,700.00
TOTAL OTHER DIRECT COSTS	\$ 221,092.00
OVERHEAD	56,522.63
TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES	\$ 651,497.73
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY)	\$ 258.85

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In reply refer to: 0438059736
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JUSTICE RESOURCE INSTITUTE INC
160 GOULD ST STE 300
NEEDHAM MA 02494-2300



031809

Employer Identification Number: 04-2526357
Person to Contact: Exempt Organization
Toll Free Telephone Number: 1-877-829-5500

Dear Taxpayer:

This is in response to your May 07, 2012, request for information regarding your tax-exempt status.

Our records indicate that you were recognized as exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code in a determination letter issued in February 1975.

Our records also indicate that you are not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Code because you are described in section 509(a)(2).

Donors may deduct contributions to you as provided in section 170 of the Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers, or gifts to you or for your use are deductible for Federal estate and gift tax purposes if they meet the applicable provisions of sections 2055, 2106, and 2522 of the Code.

Please refer to our website www.irs.gov/eo for information regarding filing requirements. Specifically, section 6033(j) of the Code provides that failure to file an annual information return for three consecutive years results in revocation of tax-exempt status as of the filing due date of the third return for organizations required to file. We will publish a list of organizations whose tax-exempt status was revoked under section 6033(j) of the Code on our website beginning in early 2011.

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JUSTICE RESOURCE INSTITUTE INC
160 GOULD ST STE 300
NEEDHAM MA 02494-2300

If you have any questions, please call us at the telephone number shown in the heading of this letter.

Sincerely yours,



Sharon Davies
Accounts Management I