



URBAN UPBOUND

tackling poverty, changing lives.

Annual Report 2023

Dear Friends,

A Message from our CEO



As we reflect on the milestones and achievements of the past year, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the unwavering dedication and resilience of our Urban Upbound family. Together, we have forged new pathways, expanded our reach, and made a profound impact on the 25,000+ low income New Yorkers we have served this year.

In 2023, we saw tremendous growth and success. Our dedication to mental health remains steadfast, and I am delighted to share the advancement of our mental health program. Furthermore, I am thrilled to report that 100% of our college access students have graduated and enrolled in college. In line with our mission to strengthen individuals and communities, we have successfully expanded our citywide employment services. By providing comprehensive resources and fostering meaningful connections, we are empowering individuals to achieve economic independence and realize their full potential.

I extend my deepest appreciation to our dedicated staff, board members, partners, volunteers, and supporters for their tireless efforts and unwavering commitment to our shared vision. Your passion, dedication, and generosity inspire us all to reach higher and strive for excellence.

In the year ahead, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to empowering individuals, transforming communities, and building a brighter, more inclusive future for all.

With heartfelt gratitude and boundless optimism,

Bishop Mitchell Taylor
Urban Upbound Co-Founder and CEO

About Us

Urban Upbound's mission is to break cycles of poverty in New York City public housing and other low-income neighborhoods.

Urban Upbound, originally known as East River Development Alliance (ERDA), was co-founded in 2004 by Debra-Ellen Glickstein, a strong advocate of economic inclusion, and Bishop Mitchell Taylor, a lifelong resident of Queensbridge Houses, with the intention to develop high-quality services that address resident-identified needs. Since then, the organization has grown to serve thousands of youth and adults living in public housing and other low- and moderate-income neighborhoods annually.

We provide underserved youth and adults with the tools and resources needed to achieve economic prosperity and self-sufficiency through seven comprehensive, integrated programs.

Our Programs:

- Employment Services
- College Access and Youth Development
- Mental Health and Wellness
- Financial and Affordable Housing Counseling
- Tax Preparation and Income Supports
- Community Revitalization through Business Innovation, and
- Financial Inclusion services anchored by the Urban Upbound Federal Credit Union.



Employment Services

Urban Upbound's Employment Services team provides job readiness training and one-on-one counseling to help community members gain and retain meaningful employment in high-growth sectors. Our programs have helped thousands of individuals reach their long and short term success goals by means of employment, job retention and career advancement.

Our services include:

- **Job Readiness:** Creating resumes, writing cover letters, preparing for interviews, employment fairs, and soft-skills building.
- **Vocational Training:** Training in fields such as security, health care, administration, culinary arts and customer service.
- **One-on-one Counseling:** Personalized career and educational counseling and facilitated job placement services through our many partners.
- **Retention Services:** Continued support after securing a job, milestone rewards, career advancement, and networking support.
- **On-going Referrals:** Wrap-around services such as free tax prep and SNAP, among others.



Eunice Collado

Queensbridge Houses Resident

"I can't even say how much I love this program. It was just what I needed. I was able to turn something I did for fun into something I can actually have a career in."

For Urban Upbound client, Eunice Collado, cooking has always been a labor of love. While raising her children, she often found herself happiest in the kitchen, creating dishes that would bring joy to her family. It has always been a dream of hers to own her own restaurant or possibly even a food truck, but due to financial circumstances and lack of support, she never fully believed this dream could be a reality for her.

Eunice first found out about Urban Upbound through her son who recently completed our masonry training program through the Andromeda Community Initiative. She saw the change in him after working with our team and was inspired to start on her own journey. Eunice was originally searching for a job, simply to make ends meet. What she didn't expect, was how impactful her experience would be. "When I first came to Urban Upbound I was in a dark place. I was looking for a job so I could pay my bills and feed my family. This program gave me so much more... they were able to relight my fire. I was finally happy again and found my purpose."

Our employment team was able to map out a plan that matched Eunice's strengths and long term goals. When our team discovered her passion for culinary arts, we were able to connect her to Hot Bread Kitchen's training program which provides hands-on instruction on basic culinary and baking techniques, food safety, and other kitchen fundamentals. Eunice loved the program and was eager to learn each day. She gained skills and confidence she never knew she was capable of.



At the end of the program, Eunice passed the NYC Food Protection Exam, earning herself a Food Protection Certification, a valuable, lifelong credential. Eunice was equipped with all the skills and certifications needed to begin her job search in the food industry job market. Not long after she completed the program, she found her new job as a cook at an upscale Italian restaurant in Brooklyn. As soon as she received the news, she stopped by our office to celebrate with our team.

"I am happy and thankful I have a place to come to. I was crying with pride walking in the doors. There are so many people at Urban Upbound who care about me and want to celebrate. They were able to take me in as family and I am so grateful for their love and support."

Eunice is now the Assistant Manager of a restaurant in Queens, earning \$60,000 annually.

Our Impact in 2023

2,528 new clients enrolled in 2023

634 clients secured employment

257

clients received vocational training and earned an industry-recognized certification

Average wage of

\$18.77

25% above minimum wage*

Tax Prep & Income Supports

Providing Quality for Free

In 2023, Urban Upbound ran **37** tax prep sites across NYC, in addition to offering virtual tax prep nation wide.

Urban Upbound filed **12,441 returns**, resulting in **\$14,480,117** returned to the community.



The Urban Upbound Tax Assistance program offers FREE year-round tax preparation to people who generally make \$85,000 or less, persons with disabilities, seniors, and taxpayers with limited English proficiency in need of tax return assistance.

For NYC families, Urban Upbound’s free tax services are a smart alternative to other available options that often cost hundreds of dollars. We enable qualified working families and individuals to take advantage of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) – which provides an important lifeline in tough economic times and the ability to utilize every dollar of an individual’s tax refund, thus increasing their purchasing power or allowing them to start a savings plan.

Our team also screens for public benefits such as SNAP (food stamps) and Fair Fares, and helps clients enroll.



Thank you. All tax preparers are IRS certified and trained to provide quality tax preparation services. Big thank you to the many VITA volunteers who helped prepare taxes in 2023.

Our client, Ronald Brown, filed his taxes with Urban Upbound and received a refund of \$14,561 in 2023.

“Community is all about helping people and that is exactly what Urban Upbound is doing. I would have never known about the thousands I was owed. We really needed this and we got it thanks to this team,”

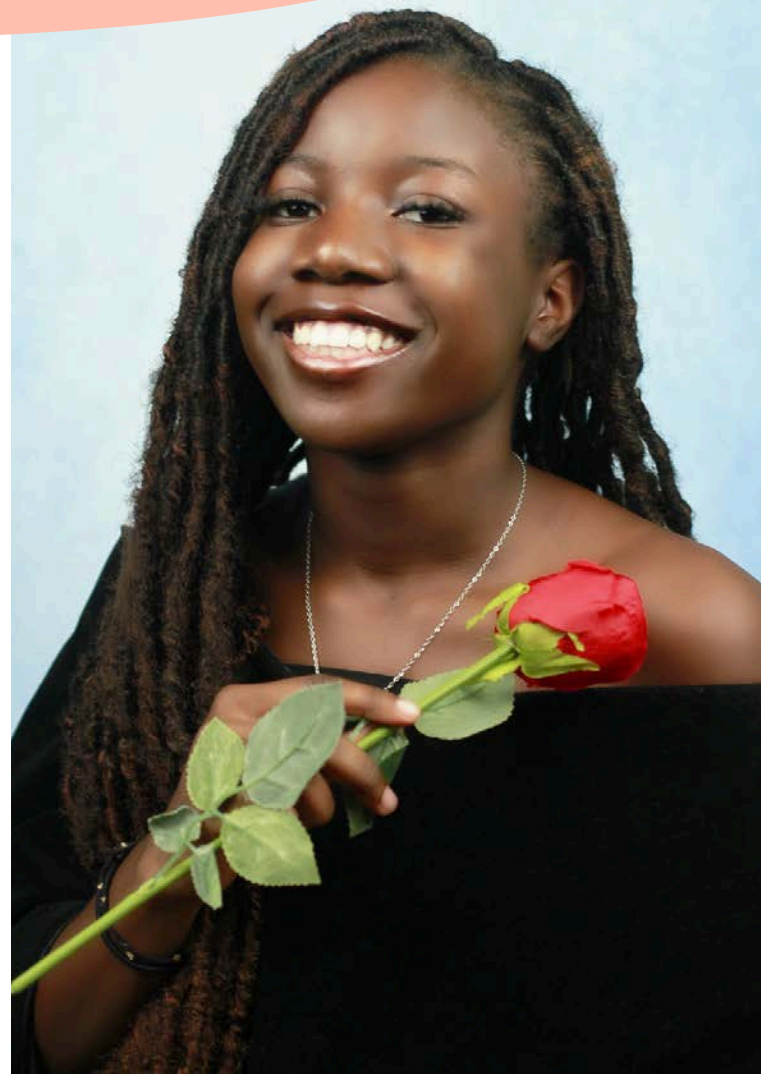
Ronald Brown, Queensbridge Houses Resident

Our Impact in 2023

12,441	Returns filed	150 Clients	enrolled in SNAP benefits
2,627	Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) filed	152 Clients	re-certified their benefits
2,945	Child Tax Credit (CTC) filed		

Youth Development & College Access

Making college dreams a reality



Urban Upbound addresses the education inequality and unemployment rates experienced by youth ages 14-24 through a comprehensive and individualized approach. Our program provides them with access to educational, employment and financial counseling services, including, educational training and college prep services, job readiness and placement assistance, as well as internships, mentoring and networking opportunities, plus wraparound supports.

Since our launch, the College Access Program has helped hundreds of low-income students prepare for the SAT, apply to and enroll in college, secure financial aid, and transition successfully from high school to college.

Our program involves direct instruction, guided group work, independent practice, individual counseling, and hands-on activities designed to make classes engaging and fun.

In 2023, our students toured to colleges including Hunter College, East Stroudsburg University, Fordham University and more!

Our Impact in 2023

60 sophomores, juniors, and seniors received college preparation assistance

15 seniors enrolled in a college of their choice

Students received an average aid package of

\$13,500

Juniors increased their SAT score an average of

141 points

Sophia Boutureira

Urban Upbound Class of 2023
University of Notre Dame Class of 2027



"University of Notre Dame has been my dream school for as long as I could remember. I went every week to SAT prep at Urban Upbound.

They helped me apply, write my essay, prepare for the SAT, and guide me on this journey. I am so happy to be admitted to my dream school, and to top it off... I received a full scholarship! Thank you!"



Abdallah Khamis

Abdallah is an Astoria Houses resident who graduated from our College Access program this year. He is currently enrolled in a pre-med program in Egypt on full scholarship and dreams of becoming a doctor.



"After seeing how much Urban Upbound helped me... my two younger brothers had no choice. My mom signed our whole family up for Urban Upbound's College Access Program. They are enrolled in the PSAT program and it helped us all tremendously."

Mental Health & Wellness

Bridging gaps to mental healthcare

Urban Upbound launched the Mental Health and Wellness Program to address the ongoing mental health crisis. Our vision is to develop resilient communities by offering individualized programs aimed at overcoming obstacles in mental healthcare access and delivery.

Urban Upbound is proud to offer limited FREE one-on-one counseling with mental health professionals. We are committed to being judgment-free, inclusive, and confidential. We address both the social and emotional needs of our clients through an integrated model focused on well-being and personal growth.

Our team of mental health professionals can help with:

- Anger and stress management
- Personal empowerment
- Post-traumatic stress
- Depression and anxiety
- Family dynamic issues
- Self-esteem & body image
- Loss of motivation
- Grief, and more.



Meet Our Mental Health Director: Quneetsha Minor



Quneetsha Minor has been a part of the Urban Upbound family for 11 years and recently took on the position of Director of Mental Health Services.

An Astoria Houses resident herself, Quneetsha has seen the impact of the mental health crisis in the public housing community. Determined to make a difference, Quneetsha went on to pursue a Master of Science in education from Hunters College, majoring in mental health counseling.

Since earning her degree, Quneetsha has become the Director of Mental Health Services with the goal of raising awareness of mental health, challenging the stigma, and providing resources to low-income communities.

"[Urban Upbound's Staff].. demonstrates an exceptional amount of empathy, active listening and communication skills. Beyond my counseling sessions, I will continue to benefit from the cultural competence, self awareness and problem solving assistance provided. I'm truly grateful for Urban Upbound."

Urban Upbound Client, 2023

Our Impact in 2023

1,066 clients received mental health & wellness services

44 mental health & wellness events held

Mental Health & Wellness

Events and Programming

Jazz Night

Jazz Night was designed to encourage community members to learn more about our services.

We hosted a free jazz concert in the park and invited our clients to come enjoy the show and learn techniques to “Decompress and Manage Stress.”



RISE
LIGHT & POWER

Meet Our Mental Health Champion Rise Light & Power

Our Mental Health & Wellness Program is championed by Rise Light & Power, who generously kickstarted our mental health initiative as a Diamond Sponsor for our 2023 Gala.

Rise Light & Power is committed to playing a leading role in accelerating the nation’s clean energy transition. Their vision includes redeveloping the Ravenswood Generating Station as a new renewable energy hub to a Renewable Ravenswood. This project will help New York State and New York City achieve their nation-leading climate goals in historically disadvantaged communities.

All of this with a focus on delivering environmental justice and providing pathways to clean energy jobs for our workforce. Learn more at [Renewable Ravenswood](#).

H.I.M (Healing Is Maturing) Events

We have created a safe space to address challenges faced by the modern and comprehensive man, sowing the seeds for community growth and understanding.

HIM Events are held monthly and focused on specific topics including Toxic Masculinity, and Fostering Peace in our Community. In 2023, 27 men have participated in HIM Events.

Tea & Talk

What started as a Mother’s Day Tea turned into a monthly recurring event focused on mental health and the importance of opening up.

A group of 20 women come to “spill the tea” and connect with our mental health team. Previous topics have included: Work Life Balance, Family Dynamics, and Mental Health for Women.



Financial Counseling

Urban Upbound's certified financial counselors provide low-to-moderate income individuals and families with a suite of financial services geared toward achieving financial literacy, stability, and success. As part of Urban Upbound's overall strategy for tackling poverty, we provide free one-on-one and group financial counseling.

Financial literacy is integrated into all Urban Upbound programs: Employment Services, Business Innovation, College Access & Youth Development, and financial inclusion through the Urban Upbound Federal Credit Union (FCU).

In one-on-one sessions and through workshops, financial counselors address strategies to reduce debt, repair credit, and build assets - all while safely banking online or at local financial institutions such as the FCU.



Kevin Jerkins

Queensbridge Houses Resident

"This program was what got me out of bed every morning. I liked coming down there and was excited to go each day. The Urban Upbound team was able to get the ball rolling and pave the way for success," says Kevin.

Kevin Jenkins first came to Urban Upbound in April of this year with a mission to find a full-time job after struggling financially. The first step to his success was attending a 3-day Job Readiness Orientation at our Jobs-Plus Long Island City office. During this three-day program, clients prepare to enter the workforce, complete a self-assessment, meet our team, work on resumes, discuss interview techniques, and learn about all the services Urban Upbound has to offer.

It wasn't long after finishing the orientation program that Kevin found a full-time job. He was able to use what he learned in orientation to ace his interviews and was fortunate enough to receive several job offers. While finding employment was Kevin's initial goal, his desire to succeed did not end there.

Understanding that financial stability goes far beyond a paycheck, Kevin attended a financial workshop where he met one of our financial counselors, Nicole De La Torre. After the workshop, Kevin set up a counseling session with Nicole to review his credit report and find out more information on safe banking options.

"We pulled his credit report and found he had no FICO score because of his lack of credit history for 20+ years," says Nicole. "We discussed secured credit cards and the FCU's credit builder loan to help establish and build credit." Soon after, Kevin opened up credit and debit accounts at the Urban Upbound FCU and is working with the team to develop and stick to a savings plan.



Over the past three months, our team has been inspired by Kevin's dedication to lifting himself out of poverty. Kevin has been working diligently to get back on his feet and taking full advantage of our wraparound support services. Since April, Kevin has been able to find a full-time job with the help of our employment team, begin building credit and savings thanks to our financial team, find affordable housing with guidance from our housing counselors, and open up a credit and checking accounts at the Urban Upbound Federal Credit Union. He was even able to refer his daughter, who is now working with financial counselor Nicole as well!

"Urban Upbound is really a one stop shop. You have everything right in one place and it couldn't be easier," says Kevin. "I was looking for solid ground. I came to Urban Upbound and everything started coming together for me. People should take advantage of it — If I can do it, so can you!"

Our Impact in 2023

2,371

clients received a total of

3,735

hours of financial counseling

64%

of clients attended 2 or more sessions with a counselor

86%

of clients completed a financial milestone such as creating a budget, reviewing their credit report, or developing a debt payment plan

Business Innovation

Creating and maintaining sustainable jobs while generating wealth in the community

In order to advance our community revitalization efforts, Urban Upbound creates initiatives that increase assets, resources, and economic opportunities in the communities we serve. Our Worker Cooperatives Program works with local entrepreneurs to incubate worker-owned businesses.

Our objective is to create and maintain sustainable jobs, and to generate wealth in order to improve the quality of life of workers while at the same time promoting community and local development. Through our program, we have been able to incubate several cooperative businesses, including: OnPoint Security, OSHA Solutions, and Sunlight Ecoservices; and to provide technical assistance and educational services to over a dozen more.

We take our clients from start-up to six-figures enterprises by offering technical assistance services in several areas of business development including:

- Governance
- Marketing and design
- Financial planning
- Strategic planning
- M/WBE certification
- Back office support
- Access to capital through the Urban Upbound Federal Credit Union



An in-person SST Class by OSHA Solutions at our Steinway Street location. All participants received their Site Safety Training (SST) certificates.

Our Impact in 2023

9 Small Businesses	65 Entrepreneurs
received a total of 95 technical assistance services combined	attended a workshop or educational info session

Urban Upbound Federal Credit Union

The Urban Upbound Federal Credit Union offers affordable and relevant financial services including access to capital, asset-building vehicles, and ownership stakes to its members. The credit union is located across from Queensbridge Houses, the largest public housing development in the country, and down the street from Ravenswood Houses.

It serves as an economic anchor, ensuring that the continual growth of Long Island City benefits the community by keeping the neighborhood's assets locally owned and controlled.

The Urban Upbound Federal Credit Union offers membership to any Urban Upbound client across all five boroughs — Queens, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Staten Island and the Bronx — and to anyone who lives, studies, works or worships in western Queens (Long Island City, Astoria, Sunnyside, and Woodside).

Urban Upbound Federal Credit Union services include:

- Checking & Savings Accounts
- Personal Loans
- Small Business Loans
- Share Certificates
- Free NYCHA Rent Payments
- Credit Building Loans
- Credit Cards
- Mobile Banking
- ATM Cards



Urban Upbound Federal Credit Union Client Second Branch Coming Soon!



We are thrilled to announce that the Urban Upbound Federal Credit Union will be opening a second branch at our new Steinway location.

Urban Upbound FCU Member Regina shares, “I am so excited about the expansion to Steinway Street. This is symbolic and gives us all a home on the other side of town. This opens up a whole world of resources to people who may not even know about Urban Upbound.”

Our Impact in 2023

1,321
total members

3,861
NYCHA rent payments

180
new members

34
loans totaling \$91,959

Community Support

Events and Programming

Turkey Drive

1,500

turkeys distributed at
Queensbridge, Ravenswood,
Woodside, Astoria, East
Harlem, and Far Rockaway



Holiday Toy Giveaway

1,500

toys distributed to children in
Queensbridge, Ravenswood,
Woodside, Astoria, East
Harlem, and Far Rockaway



Back to School Events

1,500

backpacks distributed

1,250

school supply bundles
distributed

500

new books distributed

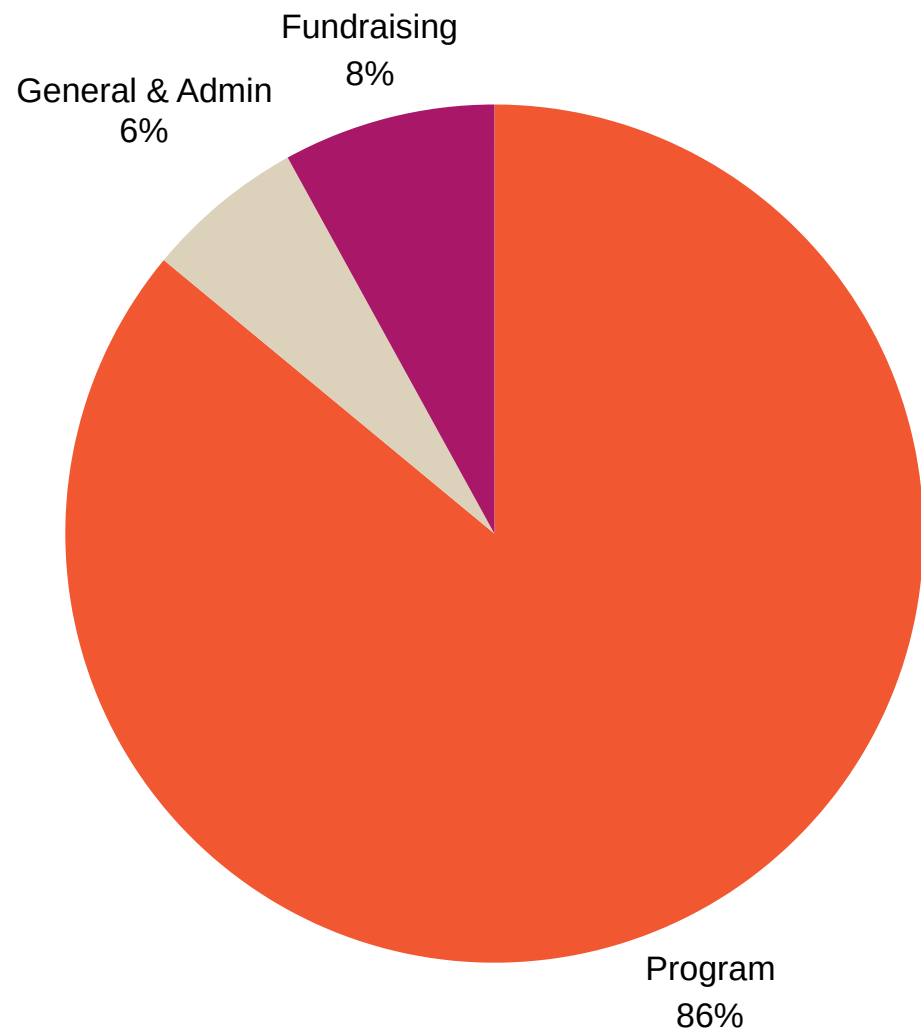


Our Financials

Funding Sources

Total Assets: \$10,825,675
Total Liabilities: \$5,666,328
Total Net Assets: \$5,159,347

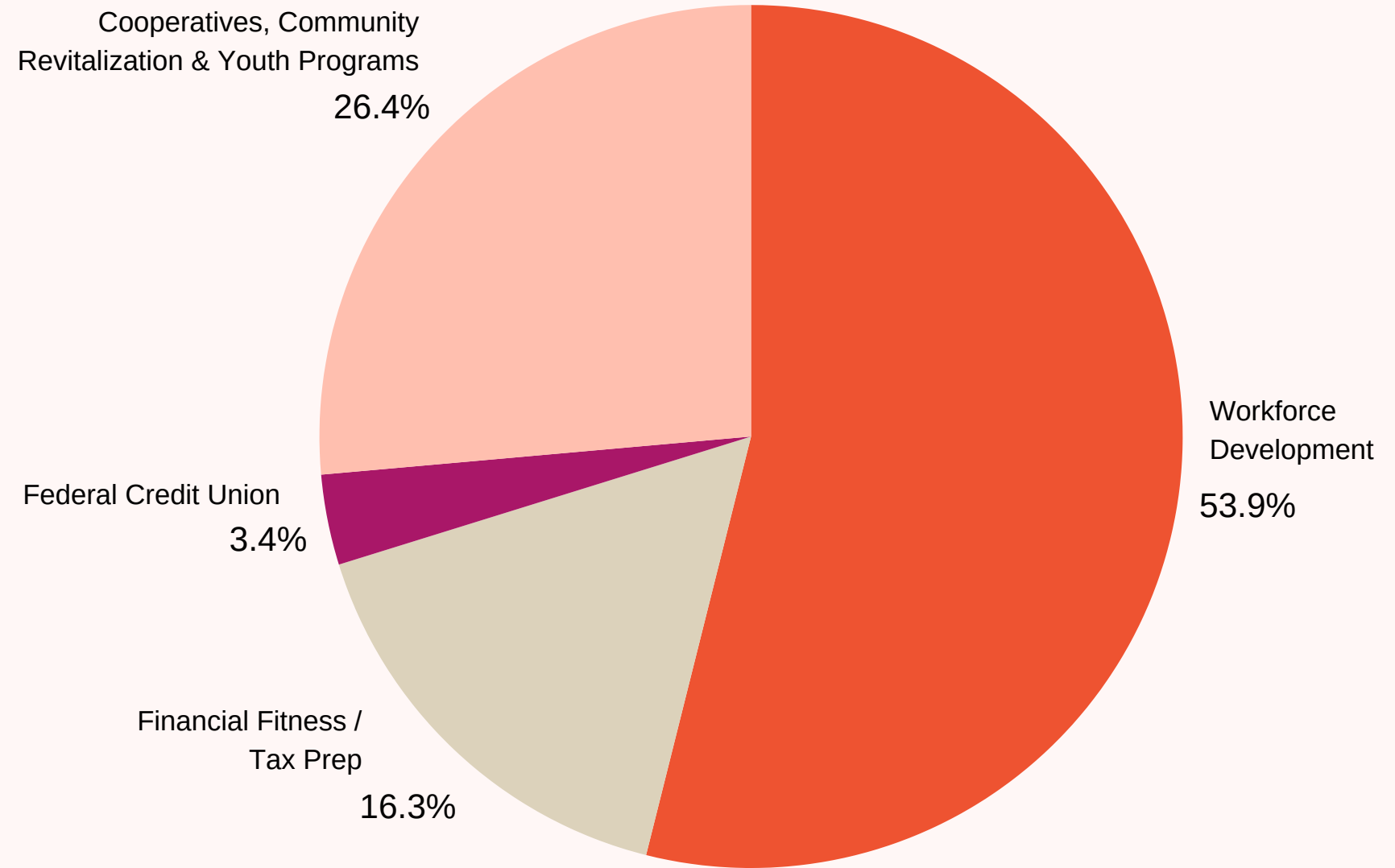
Overall Expenses



Program Expenses

Total Revenues : \$13,965,045
Total Expenses: \$10,817,752

Workforce Development **\$4,994,526**
FFP/Tax Services **\$1,509,612**
Federal Credit Union **\$313,795**
Cooperatives, Community Revitalization &
Youth Programs **\$2,446,965**



Our Valued Partners & Sponsors



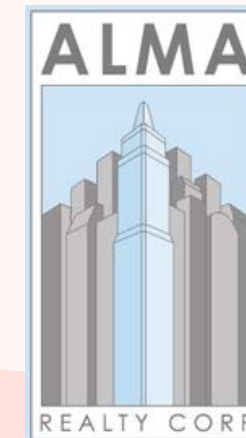
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Irene Kalergios
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Andrew Kramer

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Lynn Raynault
Adrian Noriega
Aaron Weaver
Chaka Adams
Carlos Cano
Alessandro Rapana
Fran Carpentier
Abe Garcia

Thank
you!

Our Team

Corporate Office

Bishop Mitchell Taylor
Co-Founder & CEO

Dave Miller
Chief Finance Officer

Carlos Cano
Chief Operating Officer

Pintso Topgay
Chief Program Officer

Telisha Lee
Human Resources Director

Alex Malescio
*Senior Director of
Government Relations*

Jasmin Rodriguez
*Finance Administrative
Assistant*

Billy Robinson
*Outreach and Community
Partnership Manager*

Development & Communications

Cliff Cohen
*Impact and Evaluation
Manager*

Tori Kammer
*Development and
Communication Manager*

Felix Alarcon
*Programs and Partnerships
Manager*

David Merrell
Grant Writer

Malik Harris
Program Coordinator

Jobs-Plus Astoria

Natasha Peterson
Director

Nicole Williams
Assistant Director

Nyah Satchell
Career Pathways Manager

Shanelle Grant-Lewis
Clinician

Pamela Thomas
*Clinical and Wellness
Coordinator*

Xavier Gillard
Employment Coordinator

Iilda Dibrani
Employment Coordinator

Gabriela Mendez
*Career Development
Specialist*

Zimere Doolittle
Community Coach

Adreanna Ortiz-Cox
Community Coach

Jobs-Plus East Harlem

Gilberto Agosto
Director

Natasha Edwards
Assistant Director

Malick Soumano
*Community Outreach
Coordinator*

Aisha Stackhouse
Intake Coordinator

Darwin Lewis
Career Counselor

Latoya Sweezer
Career Counselor

Julia McCall
Retention Specialist

Steven Thomas
Maintenance

Rebeca Mendoza
Community Coach

Tyler Dupont
Community Coach

Jobs-Plus Long Island City

Bashkim Syla
Jobs-Plus LIC Director

Phillip Galeazzi
*Jobs-Plus LIC Assistant
Director*

Sarah Taylor
Intake Specialist

Corwin Mason
*Clinical and Wellness
Coordinator*

Ben Salom
Education Specialist

Natalie Thomas
Employment Coordinator

Desara Kume
Employment Coordinator

Kyle Sager
Employment Coordinator

Anekqua Toyloy
Employment Coordinator

Ashley Cunningham
*Career Development
Specialist*

Nicole De La Torre
Financial Counselor

Citywide Workforce Development

Van Holmes
Director

Tia Lafortune
*Community Engagement
Manager*

Rhonda Murphy
*Curriculum & Job
Developer*

Rosie Estrella
*Curriculum & Job
Developer*

Christopher Wilkinson
Employment Coordinator

Denik Syla
Data Coordinator

Youth Career Pathways

Patricia Saenz
Director

Nicole Walker
Assistant Director

Gwen Kincaid
Program Assistant

Brian Gaugler
*Career Advancement
Coach*

Evan St Germain
*Career Advancement
Coach*

Jamison Ellis
*Education & Training
Manager*

Shyvone Blunt
Youth Facilitator

Tynassia Gardner
Engagement Specialist

Vismary Vargas
*Far Rockaway Site
Manager*

College Access

Queentsha Minor
Program Manager

Nadia Ahmed
Program Coordinator

Business Innovation

Shafrana Carpen
Program Manager

Matias Almada-Diaz
Program Coordinator

Natalia Chamorro
Program Coordinator

Financial Fitness

Petra-Ann Younge
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Pedro Salazar
Assistant Director

Junaid Abdin
*Special Projects Program
Manager*

Dhrupad Mamun
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Tony Mei
Senior Financial Counselor

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Financial Counselor

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Mark Williams
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Steven Ventura
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Amy Cao
SETP/Tax Preparer

Zakia Ali
Tax Preparer

Shama Housseen
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Andy Arellano
Tax Preparer

Christina Forlong
Tax Preparer

Natalia Chavez
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Tax Preparer

Federal Credit Union

Marlon Elliot
*Director of Credit Union
Operations*

Chhanda Sutton
Branch Manager

Daniel Orozco
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Latia Fowler
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Representative*