

# Boston HERC



**FOUNDED:** 1999

**CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET:** \$710,000

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The Boston Higher Education Resource Center (HERC), through its signature Passport to College Program, addresses the opportunity and achievement gaps that have haunted Boston Public Schools' (BPS) first-generation students for years. The Boston HERC matches first-generation students with Passport Coaches who arm them with 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills and the "Habits of the Mind" indispensable for success in college and careers. First-generation students are more likely to be Black or Latino, low-income, and English learners, demographics most impacted by the opportunity and achievement gaps.

- BPS students are 72% low-income, 32% English learners, 86% students of color.
- 18% of BPS students are off-track to graduate high school on time, 90% of those off-track are Black or Latino.
- First-generation students are twice as likely to drop out of college.
- The college dropout rate for Blacks and Latinos is 20% higher than for white and Asian students.

The Boston HERC equips first-generation youth to achieve a higher education, to break the cycle of poverty, and to become agents of change in their communities.

## Investment Opportunity

Boston HERC seeks an investment of \$700,000 over the next two years to increase the number of students served, grow the number of Boston Public School partners, and expand alumni services. The addition of BPS high school Coaches, alumni staff, development staff, along with expansion in technology is essential in supporting the projected growth, in depth and breadth, of Boston HERC's Passport to College program.

## Two-Year Goals

- Increase the number of BPS high school students served by 80% from 800 to 1,440
- Increase the number of BPS high school partnerships by 33% from 9 to 12 schools
- Increase the number of Coaches in BPS partner schools to serve more students
- Expand services for Boston HERC alumni who are in college and triple the number served from 150 to 450

## Ways to Invest

### FINANCIAL

- \$450,000 funds 9 Passport Coaches in BPS
- \$160,000 funds a full-time alumni program director and 2 alumni program Coaches
- \$60,000 funds a full-time development coordinator
- \$30,000 funds the expansion of technology

### IN-KIND

- Classroom volunteers
- Graphic designer
- Communications consultant
- College supplies, snacks, gift bags, Chromebooks

## Leadership & Governance

Samuel Acevedo has served as the founding Executive Director of the Boston Higher Education Resource Center since 1999. He holds a B.A. from Stetson University and a J.D., *cum laude*, from Boston College. Mr. Acevedo draws upon his various leadership roles in the City of Boston and schools to lead the Boston HERC. The 10-member Board of Directors is chaired by Dr. Roberto Miranda, Senior Pastor at Congregación León de Judá (and, himself, a first-generation college graduate). The Board brings a wide range of talents to guarantee the Boston HERC's success as it expands its ability to serve additional first-generation students of color in the coming years, representing diverse experience and expertise in law, education, religion, marketing, sales, and banking.

## BOSTON HERC'S PASSPORT TO COLLEGE MODEL



The Boston HERC's Passport to College Program is a Latino-led, culturally sensitive, college readiness program focusing on students who are first-generation, low-income, and attending under-resourced non-exam high schools. Passport targets first-generation students with a GPA between 2.0 to 3.0, who face generational barriers to success in college and beyond. It connects first-generation students with first-generation Coaches who serve as ambassadors to a host of social capital throughout their journey through college, enabling them to break the cycle of poverty and become leaders in their community.

“

“Passport gave me all the resources I needed, fought with me and for me every step of the way to get to college. I’m so grateful.”

”

ERICK JUAREZ  
Passport Student, Class of 2019



- **Passport Coaches** are the distinguishing hallmark of the Boston HERC's model. The majority of Coaches are former first-generation students, reflecting the target student population. Coaches receive intensive training, equipping them with skills to provide culturally sensitive services addressing students' unique needs. Coaches spend on average 15 hours a week in each partner BPS school, facilitating classroom workshops and supporting students individually inside and outside school. Students spend on average two years with their Coach, in relationships that endure into college, where students receive continued support from the Passport Alumni Program.
- **21<sup>st</sup>-century skills and “Habits of the Mind” curricula** are cultivated in the classroom and reinforced through individual coaching. These are skills first-generation students typically do not receive at home, and are not taught in high school classrooms; they are indispensable for success in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century workplace. Repeated exposure to the “Habits of the Mind”, reinforced in college through the Alumni Program, build on our Passport students' innate resiliency and agency necessary for them to map their own path to greatness in college and beyond.
- **College application and admissions support** is offered in the classroom and through one-on-one coaching. Coaches shepherd students through the often bewildering college application process, demystifying the process of identifying colleges, writing essays, completing financial aid forms, and more. Using their network of school and community partnerships, Boston HERC provides access to college tours and fairs, career panels, and SAT prep.



**I know from personal experience, as a first-generation student, that with every Passport student we impact, we are making a difference in the whole family of that student.**



**DAZLEE ALVERADO**  
Boston HERC Donor

### Key Investors

- AMELIA PEABODY FOUNDATION
- BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- CUMMINGS FOUNDATION
- IMAGO DEI FUND
- LIBERTY MUTUAL FOUNDATION
- STATE STREET FOUNDATION
- THE BOSTON FOUNDATION

### Partners

- BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- BOSTON PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL
- COLLEGE ADVISING CORPS
- UASPIRE



## IMPACTING SOCIETY

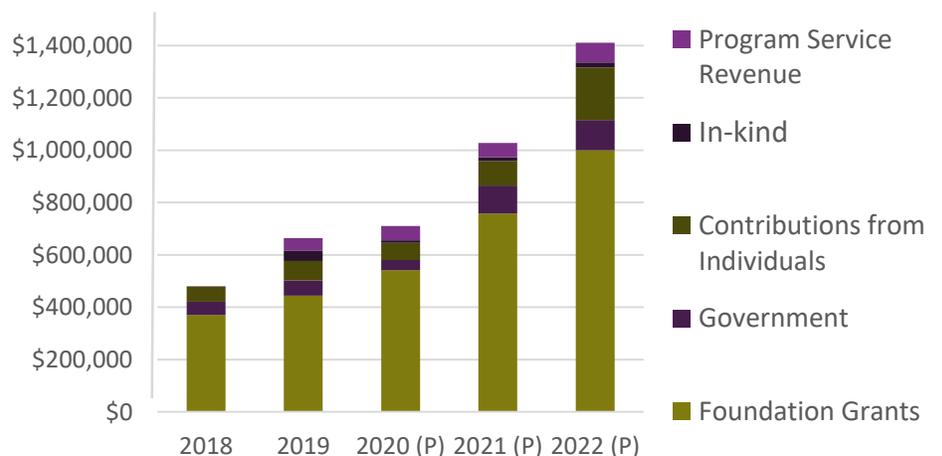
The “Habits of the Mind”, core to the Passport experience, are skills first-generation students typically do not learn in high school, and do not pick up at home. The absence of those skills is one of the main reasons they do not graduate from college, even when they succeeded in enrolling. Particularly in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century, failure to earn a degree can relegate you to lifelong socioeconomic disparities. Those facing these intractable disparities (limiting access to a livable wage, to the professions, and to levers of influence), are overwhelmingly black and brown. Already, unemployment rates for Blacks and Latinos in Boston are more than double the unemployment rate for whites. The impact of the loss of this potential workforce is all too real. Between 2016 and 2018, losing these potential young professionals cost the Massachusetts economy half its growth for lack of enough college-educated workers to fill high-demand jobs. The Boston HERC Passport Program addresses these disparities by:

- **Facilitating an Escape from the Cycle of Poverty:** Passport Students graduate and have viable career options that allow them and their families to move into a higher income level. These changes improve the trajectory of their children’s wealth, education, and social capital.
- **Strengthening Neighborhoods and Communities:** With an increase in highly skilled, educated, and employed citizens, neighborhoods see greater economic growth, more robust civic engagement, and a deepening sense of emotional ownership and community pride.
- **Diversifying the Workforce Landscape:** Employers diversify their workforce and its leadership, driving innovation and economic growth.

## FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Boston HERC has delivered high-quality programming with a small staff over the last twenty years. In order to continue to serve its students well, expand the services offered, and accommodate the increasing needs of first-generation students, the Boston HERC will need to increase its revenue. In the next two years, the Boston HERC is focused on expanding its capacity. The Boston HERC projects continued growth of support from foundations, government, and individual donors to help the organization achieve this goal.

### Revenue by Source



### Success Story: Florecita

Florecita Carías Mejía arrived in Massachusetts from Guatemala at the age of six. After connecting with the Boston HERC in her sophomore year, she considered college for the first time. “There wasn’t anyone in my family who knew about college, it was a subject that never came up,” she says. Florecita shared her hopes with her guidance counselor, but he laughed and dismissed her. With the persistent help and encouragement of the Boston HERC, she persevered, diving into SAT classes and college applications. In her senior year of high school, Florecita received a full scholarship to Gordon College. Today, as Vice President at BNY Mellon, Florecita is 10 years into a successful business career, gives back to her community through volunteering, and has transformed the economic trajectory of her family for generations to come.



## PROGRAM PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Below is a summary of the key measures that the Boston HERC will track to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, incorporate lessons learned, and adjust strategy as necessary.

	FY 2020	FY 2021(P)	FY 2022(P)
<b>PROGRAM PERFORMANCE</b>			
BPS high school students served	800	1,000	1,440
BPS partners	9	10	12
Passport alumni served	150	300	450
Total coaching hours	10,000	14,300	20,700
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH/CAPACITY-BUILDING</b>			
Full-time equivalent staff	11	17	24
Expand Board of Directors	10	12	15
Establish Friends of the Boston HERC	Recruitment, planning	6	9
Expand technology	Hire salesforce consultant; augment salesforce	Invest in technology to support virtual coaching	Provide upgraded laptops and technology for Coaches
Total Revenue	\$710,00	\$1,027,400	\$1,410,00

## SOCIAL IMPACT

Despite city-wide efforts to close the opportunity and achievement gaps, particularly confronting BPS's first-generation Black and Latino students, those gaps stubbornly remain. The Boston HERC exists to address these gaps and unlock the greatness within our first-generation BPS students. Each first-generation youth who earns a degree achieves a socioeconomic “escape velocity”, transforming their lives, and the generations that follow them, as well as the communities they inhabit. At its core, the Boston HERC believes their *Destination is Greatness*. And the Boston HERC will not rest until they each achieve it.

INDICATOR	2020
Passport high school seniors who enroll in post-secondary education	83%
Passport students who persist into their second year of college	81%
Number of coaching hours	10,000