

La Colaborativa

Chelsea Youth Employment Program

BIDMC Community-based Health Initiative Grant
Final Evaluation Report: Executive Summary

March 17, 2025



Executive Summary

La Colaborativa used the BIDMC Community-based Health Initiative (CHI) Jobs and Financial Security grant to expand their year-round Chelsea Youth Employment Program from January 2022 to December 2024. **The CHI funding allowed La Colaborativa to enroll an additional 23 teenagers and young adults (14-21) in the Chelsea Youth Employment Program each school year and each summer during the 3-year grant cycle.** The goals of the Chelsea Youth Employment Program are to:

1. equip participants with the hard and soft skills needed for success in the workforce;
2. connect participants with employment experience; and
3. empower participants to pursue a career path.

Over the 3-year grant period, activities to achieve these goals included, but were not limited to, intensive work-readiness training, 10-hours a week of paid work experience, supervision and mentorship support at their worksite, academic support with La Colaborativa staff, and leadership opportunities within the La Colaborativa program and Chelsea community.

Evaluation Methods

La Colaborativa staff collected program implementation data related to outreach and enrollment, participant characteristics, and program delivery. All participants were required to complete the Signal Success survey, Hope Scale, and Financial Capability Scale at the beginning and end of their participation in the Chelsea Youth Employment Program to **measure changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to professional skills, change in self-efficacy, and change in financial capability.** HRiA analyzed this implementation and outcome data and also analyzed data from one November 2024 interview.

Services Delivered and Participants Reached

67 Participants in the Youth Employment Program that were supported by BIDMC CHI funding. On average, participants were in the program for 287 days.



137 Internships youth participated in. The most common types of internships youth participated in were the arts (24.1%) and STEM/STEAM (20.4%).



337 Hours engaged in training on average per participant. Most training hours were spent in project-based learning (during their internships).



Of the 67 participants served, the median age was 16 years, all were Chelsea residents, over half identified as female (58.2%), and 100% were at or below 80% of the area median income. Most participants were Latino(a) (87.5%) and 40.3% spoke Spanish or Portuguese as their primary language. Additionally, La Colaborativa staff underscored that they work “*with the immigrant community.*” **At home, youth may be “dealing with a lot” including serving as heads of their homes if parents are incarcerated, living in crowded housing where it is challenging to find “peace and quiet,” and navigating food insecurity.** All participants are enrolled in school and while some youth are scholars who are “*doing amazing in school,*” others are struggling academically, possibly due to the ongoing impact of COVID and understaffed schools.

Of the 67 BIDMC CHI-funded participants who participated in the Youth Employment Program, 51 youth completed both baseline and endpoint data collection and were included in the evaluation sample.



Program Impact and Looking Ahead

Participants in the Chelsea Youth Employment Program **gained substantial internship and training experience, improved or maintained their professional skills, and improved financial behaviors related to budgeting.**

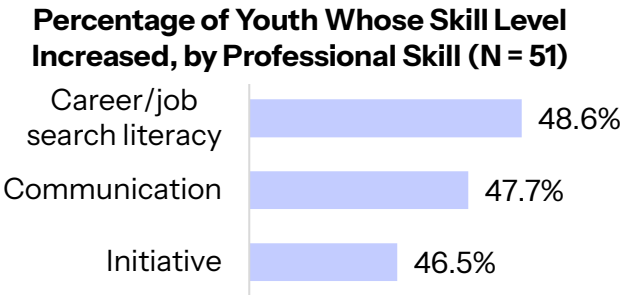
Professional Skill Development

Statistically significant improvements were achieved in self-assessed scores of some professional skills. There was a statistically significant increase between baseline and endpoint scores for these 7 skills:

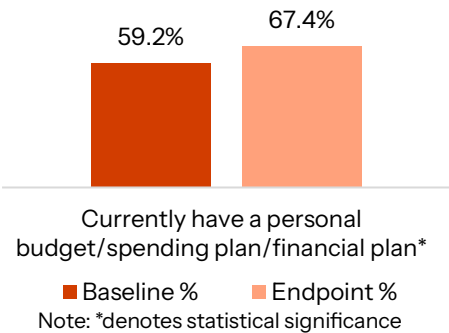
Initiative	Communication	Collaboration	Presenting Learning and Achievements to a Group
Goal-Setting	Career/Job Search Literacy	Professionalism	

Self-assessed scores for the other 11 professional skills (including skills related to dependability, learning, using resources and online skills for career growth, budgeting, and having a positive attitude) did not change significantly between baseline and endpoint. It should be noted that for many of these skills, **youth started out at a positive rating at baseline, and therefore maintenance of positive scores can be interpreted as a favorable result.**

Across the 18 professional skills assessed, the most improvements were seen in: *career/job search literacy skills, communication skills, and initiative skills.* Staff also described examples of how youth participation had impacted their professional skills: one youth recently shared that their experience with the Program had made “[a recent job] interview a lot easier.” This interview led to employment.



Financial Capability and Self-Efficacy



There was a statistically significant increase in the proportion of youth reporting they had a personal budget, spending plan, or financial plan, from 59.2% at baseline to 67.4% at endpoint (n=51). There were no statistically significant changes between baseline and endpoint in overall Financial Capability scores or self-efficacy scores. La Colaborativa has already started adding new financial literacy, budgeting and savings components to the program.

Other Impacts

There are additional potential impacts that may not be measured within the scope of this evaluation. La Colaborativa staff underscored the impact that the Youth Employment Program has on **youth confidence** and on **supporting the whole family**. Additionally, **the benefits of developing professional and financial skills may not be fully realized until future years**, as youth pursue careers and take on additional financial responsibilities.

*“When you help the youth out, you not only help that youth, but **you help the family.**”*

