

# BRIDGES TO SUCCESS ADULT MENTORING

by Action for a Better Community (ABC)

Region 2 • Rochester, New York  
abcinfo.org



Mentoring • Healthcare • Job Training • Financial Literacy

## INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

In the Bridges to Success Adult Mentoring Program (BTOS), professional mentors partner with participants to identify socio-economic needs and set goals and action plans for advancement across a comprehensive range of socio-economic determinants (i.e., family stability, health and wellness, skills and education, financial security, and jobs). The Mobility Mentor role cultivates a trusting relationship with the participant based on an agreed mentoring schedule. The program takes an asset-based approach, recognizing participant strengths and working to complement them by connecting the program participant with community resources. Further, the program provides incentives to support the participant's goal achievement.

The core BTOS team consists of three partner nonprofit agencies: Catholic Family Center, Community Place of Greater Rochester and Action for a Better Community (ABC).

## LOCAL NEED ADDRESSED BY INITIATIVE

The City of Rochester contains areas of entrenched poverty where economic mobility and the achievement of self-sufficiency are hindered. Individuals and families living in poverty need support in the following areas: financial management planning, safe and affordable housing, access to stabilizing healthcare, strong social networks, education at the secondary level or higher, and living wage jobs with benefits and opportunities to advance. Improvements in individual and family self-sufficiency also positively impact the larger community.



## ROLE OF CSBG FUNDS

CSBG has provided funding for this program since its initial planning in 2016. Once private funding was secured, CSBG no longer funded the program. Currently, partial CSBG funding has been allocated in the 2020/2021 budget to continue the initiative until additional funding is secured.

## TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT

BTOS has used evidence-based data to implement the project. This has allowed us to demonstrate quantitative and qualitative data on several levels. BTOS has been effective in the areas of employment and income growth throughout Monroe County. Using the self-sufficiency ROMA matrix, BTOS is able to meet people where they are and measure personal growth throughout the process. Community-wide improvement is measured in the following areas: transportation, labor force, housing, education, dependent care, debts paid, and savings increased.

## EVIDENCE-BASED OUTCOMES

BTOS Cohort 1, our three-month pilot program, demonstrated numerous positive gains upon completion of the program.

- The amount of participants who are employed increased 98% among participants who graduated.
- Graduated participants experienced a 90.48% increase in full-time employment.
- Graduated participants experienced a 143.75% increase in part-time employment.
- A total of 64, or 53.3%, of graduated participants gained a new job after enrolling in Bridges to Success.
- 41 or 34.17% of graduates experienced employment engagement.
- 50 or 41.67% of graduated participants retained a job for at least 90 days.
- Graduated participants experienced a \$0.65 or 5.51% increase in average hourly wage from intake to current assessment.

## EQUITY LENS

Bridges to Success has three key design elements that advance equity: an evidence-based framework for economic mobility, action-planning process for achieving goals set by the participant, and a mentor dedicated to the participant's success. All three work synergistically towards a common overarching goal of economic mobility and well-being.

However, these elements are personalized to the unique needs of the participant through the guidance and support of their Mobility Mentor. Program guidance involves understanding the unique barriers each participant faces in making progress towards economic mobility. Program support involves identifying and facilitating access to the unique combination of resources each participant needs to overcome those barriers

Finally, using the CSBG Demographics Report, program staff and participant enrollment reflects the racial and ethnic makeup of our community. Because BTOS collects the demographic data of our

participants, we are able to monitor program impact for different racial and ethnic groups.

## CUSTOMER VOICE

Action for a Better Community uses several forms, including surveys, the ROMA matrix, and focus groups, to give us feedback on our services and all participants an opportunity to apprise us of what's not working.

Staff also encourages customers to tell us what works or does not work for them after each meeting. A good example is the ROMA matrix tool: some of our customers could not find themselves on the spectrum of the matrix. With their input, the tool was re-written to accurately reflect their status.

We have also created and implemented regular surveys and focus groups specific to the program and services offered. ABC has a Planning and Evaluation team responsible for amplifying customer voice by analyzing customer data to ensure programming is based on the community's needs.

## Contact

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This publication was created by the National Association of Community Action Agencies – Community Action Partnership, in the performance of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Community Services Grant Number, 90ET0469. Any opinion, findings, and conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.