

UTEC Training Center for Excellence

The Emerging Adult Reentry Grant Program Final Report



Introduction

In spring 2020, UTEC received a grant award to serve as the lead Training and Technical Assistance Provider on the Emerging Adult Reentry Project funded by the MA Office of Public Safety and Security. UTEC has over 20 years of demonstrated operational experience as a “provider” working with “proven risk” young adults, while also having experience as a trainer and TA provider utilizing multi-disciplinary approaches through our Training Center for Excellence (TC4E). In 2020, building on evidence-based research, UTEC established our TC4E EAJ Initiative with the primary mission of strengthening best practices for professionals and organizations working with young people who are the most difficult to serve (i.e., emerging adults who are gang- and criminally involved, also known as “proven risk”). The TC4E’s specific goals are to: improve the practice of serving proven-risk emerging adults for providers, regionally and nationally; share our research to inform the field in both practice and

policy; and build a Learning Network of community providers and system leaders to advance best practices and policies. UTEC has two lead partners in delivering training assistance. Our lead partner in delivering training and technical assistance has been Health Resources in Action (HRiA). Additionally, we are equally pleased to have the Columbia University Justice Lab's Emerging Adult Justice Project, widely recognized as the premier action research organization in the country, as a partner in this project in the delivery of best practices.

Background on Key Partners

Health Resources in Action (HRiA): As the primary implementer of capacity building assistance for UTEC's TC4E, Health Resources in Action (HRiA) has deep experience providing training and technical assistance to a range of stakeholders and communities, examining policy and systems approaches for healthy environments, and building capacity for these efforts, all within a health equity framework. HRiA has tactical experience in customizing in-person trainings and webinars around core competencies that are directly relevant to TC4E priorities, including: health and racial equity; youth development; coalition building; leadership; policy, and systems change; community health improvement planning; communications; strategic planning; and evaluation.

Examples of their Training/TA Experience: (A) For 20 years, HRiA has coordinated the BEST Initiative (Building Exemplary Systems of Training for youthworkers), a national training institute for youthworkers. Through BEST, HRiA has had an impact on nearly every youth-serving organization in Massachusetts, working with more than 5,000 youth and 500 youthworkers annually. Most recently, HRiA delivered the BEST training to all correctional officers in the PACT unit at Middlesex Sheriff's Office. (B) The Community Health Training Institute funded by the MDPH is where HRiA provides targeted skills development to individuals and teams working to build healthy communities through webinars and in-person training. (C) Working on Wellness, also funded by the MDPH, engages small to medium-sized businesses to implement worksite wellness initiatives to improve the health of their employees and communities. HRiA created a 10-month online training and technical assistance program in order to broaden the understanding among employers about what influences health. This program included regular training, group coaching, an online Learning Community, Healthy Workplaces Toolbox, and an annual Best Practices forum.

Columbia University Justice Lab's Emerging Adult Justice Project: The Emerging Adult Justice Project (EAJJ) is a national leader in this field and has significant experience in highlighting the issues impacting emerging adults in contact with the law. Having much experience in collaborating on various projects with UTEC, we are pleased to have them on this project as our partner in helping to amplify research throughout the country and best practices. They have had significant experience throughout the country, including working in Massachusetts. Nationally, they launched and organized the Emerging Adult Justice Learning Community, a collaborative learning environment that brings together researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and advocates twice a year over a three-year period in order to create more developmentally appropriate, effective and fairer criminal justice responses for youths ages 18 – 25. Last year, they collaborated with UTEC to help organize a learning exchange to San Francisco to see firsthand their emerging adult justice initiatives. EAJJ also has significant experience as an action research provider. As they describe it, "EAJJ acts as a facilitator, investigator, and synthesizer. We bring knowledge of the national landscape to catalyze local expertise and work with stakeholders to co-develop an operations plan, which facilitates buy-in and a shared sense of ownership over the final design."

UTEC, Inc: Since our founding in 1999, UTEC has built an evidence-based model that responds directly to our community's needs and strengths. UTEC is not interested in replicating our model in any other additional locations. Instead, through TC4E, we see an opportunity to build a center for dissemination of best practices and technical assistance supports while also strengthening our own organizational learning culture.

Knowledge and experience related to evidence-based practices and promising practices uniquely position UTEC to carry out the role of Training and TA Provider. For example, we have 20 years of providing operational experience of community based programming; we have varied experience providing technical assistance and evaluation services through TC4E in partnership with HRiA, Columbia University, and other external trainers; and significant experience implementing reentry programs in partnership with several correctional facilities with a research-based program design. We also have significant experience in building networks and coalitions across various sectors, including the very successful New England Streetworker Network which we have organized for nearly 7 years.

Summary of Activities in Grant Period:

The Emerging Adult Re-Entry Project is an initiative of the UTEC Training Center for Excellence. The goal of the initiative is to create a learning lab to strengthen relationships with key partners and get buy-in from stakeholders serving young adults ages 18-25 in pre and post release settings. The TC4E EAJ project provides stakeholders an opportunity for training and technical support using best practices and innovations with the ultimate goal of decreased recidivism and better outcomes for emerging adults in Massachusetts. With support from HRiA, a comprehensive needs assessment was conducted during this first year of the program to best assess interest areas from all key stakeholders in the project. With guidance from the Columbia Justice Lab and stakeholder participation, TC4E also developed and implemented a Learning Lab to convene leadership of institutions charged with overseeing emerging adult justice, while providing training in partnership with HRiA to outreach workers, corrections officers and other professionals working on the ground with this specialized population.

Upon receiving funding from EOPSS in 2020 in the midst of the COVID 19 pandemic, TC4E had to quickly pivot from our vision of hosting traditional methods of in person meetings to facilitating planning sessions, convenings, training, and peer exchange trips to an online platform. With support from leadership and the grants management team at EOPSS, ROCA and our training partners, TC4E was able to shift initial planning sessions to telephone calls and Zoom meetings. As TC4E was ramping up planning to provide training and technical support to UTEC, ROCA, Corrections, and other stakeholders, we had fully anticipated that the pandemic would be under control by Fall of 2020 and activities would somewhat get back to normal. Needless to say, as programs, corrections, courts, and probation made adjustments to policies and practices, to adhere to the state's COVID 19 safety guidelines, TC4E also had to establish a "new norm" by providing training and technical assistance remotely. TC4E met with Re-entry Programs (UTEC and ROCA) on a monthly basis to update, support and advise programs on best practices for remote engagement with young adults and community partners. TC4E met with grant partners HRiA and Columbia Justice Lab on a monthly basis (often more) to plan activities including the development and creation of a needs assessment in addition to coordinating training and convening for stakeholder partners.

After several weeks of planning and coordination, TC4E hosted a "Kick-off" session with program partners and EOPSS in late June of 2020. The purpose of this session was to begin to build relationships with program leadership; review the expectations for delivery of services; and to review the expectations for programmatic and financial

reporting. Furthermore, TC4E prepared a strategy for the development and implementation of a needs assessment in collaboration with Health Resources in Action (HRIA) and with consultation from Columbia Justice Lab for non-correctional partners and stakeholders providing pre and post release services to emerging adults in Massachusetts. Lastly, the session provided additional context for how programs could shift their models to serve pre and post release young adults safely, while adhering to the state's COVID 19 guidelines.

Needs Assessment:

As this was the first year of this new grant program, a primary focus for TC4E was the collaborative design and implementation of a needs assessment that will guide the training and program additions moving forward. The assessment was conducted by HriA.

The goals of the needs assessment were to: 1. Contextualize the working relationship between youth workers and correctional officers around emerging adult justice; 2. Identify the gaps and opportunities for training youth workers and correctional officers in positive youth development and emerging adult justice; and 3. Understand specific programmatic needs and barriers of partners involved.

Health Resources in Action engaged stakeholders from seven institutions. The team conducted interviews with individuals representing the following stakeholders:

- Probation
- A District Attorney's Office
- A Department of Corrections with a successful emerging adult program
- A public defender's office,
- A legal services agency serving with incarcerated individuals,
- A nonprofit serving currently incarcerated emerging adults.

The overall findings suggest that there is a need for training for direct service and correctional staff in two specific areas, positive youth development and racial justice training. The needs assessment also suggests recommendations for a shift in culture for stakeholders working with this population. Traditional protocols through the lens of solely safety and security measures are often counterproductive and many times do not support the needs of this specialized population. The findings will instruct the training approach with corrections officers and youthworkers; and furthermore promote opportunities for skill building and network building. The success of training will rely on buy-in at the highest level of each institution.

The training sessions will be based on emerging adult brain science and a positive youth development approach. Prioritized training topic areas include the following:

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- ☐ Emerging Adult Brain Science
 - ☐ Positive Youth Development
 - ☐ Trauma & Trauma-informed practices
 - ☐ Race, Racism, & Community Context

During Year 2, HRIA, will lead and facilitate all the training modules, with youthworkers and corrections officers (and eventually parole and probation) who will participate in training together. For now, training will be held online via Zoom. When appropriate training will be held in person and rotate between program sites (UTEC and ROCA) and correctional facility training centers. It is our expectation to launch the first training cycle in late March or early April. It is our hope based on the state's vaccination guidelines that community health workers and corrections officers would have the opportunity to be vaccinated.

A summary of the short and long-term recommendations are outlined below, and a full copy of the needs assessment is also attached.

Short-term recommendations

- ❑ **Engage with and attain buy-in from correctional leadership.** Given the insights shared by interviewees, the essential first step before initiating a training series is engaging with and attaining buy-in from correctional leadership. The training team should engage leadership directly and ensure that their buy-in is continuously communicated to correctional officers on the units.
- ❑ **Identify champions on the ground to act as implementation coaches.** The training team should work with staff on the units to identify champions on the ground who can reinforce the training outcomes and move the work forward post-training. Champions are key to assist during initial trainings in addition to during the implementation phase. If identifying champions in the units is not initially feasible, bringing in champions from the field who can act as credible messengers around emerging adult justice to correctional officers is essential.
- ❑ **Equip staff with an understanding of brain science that encompasses trauma and youth development.** Though there were many urgent training priorities identified by participants, training in emerging adult brain science, trauma, and youth development is foundational to the paradigm shift required of emerging adult justice. Interview participants highlighted the need to connect high-level concepts to concrete strategies, case studies, and examples. While training, it is recommended to start small, and acknowledge the considerable culture shift that adopting emerging adult practices requires.

Long-term recommendations

- ❑ **Reinforce and refresh concepts.** The team may consider offering continuous technical assistance and refresher trainings, and regularly checking in with staff on the unit

through correctional leadership to ensure the work is moving along. Ensuring that there are adult mentors on the unit who are trained alongside staff will assist with this recommendation.

- ❓ **Build on initial trainings.** Healthy masculinity and anti-racism were raised by participants as key training priorities. The success of these training topics, which can be more sensitive, may depend on the relationships that the training team is able to build with the correctional officers. This has implications for training sequencing, indicating that healthy masculinity and anti-racism trainings should follow the brain science and youth development trainings recommended in the short-term. However, toxic masculinity and racism were named as barriers to the implementation of a successful emerging adult program and to the success of young people upon re-entry, and must be addressed in the scope of this work.

New innovations during COVID: As a direct result of this EAJ initiative, many innovative strategies were administered by programs and correctional facilities to support the needs of young adults identified as being served by the Emerging Adult Re-entry Project. While TC4E planned phase two (development and implementation of the needs assessment), inreach and outreach launched at the program level to engage high need and high risk young adults as a part of the EAJ initiative. Justice partners such as Sheriff's Departments, Probation and courts leaned on ROCA and UTEC as a reliable community based solution for many young adult offenders as an alternative to incarceration during the Covid 19 pandemic. Together, UTEC and ROCA served a total of 133 young adults ages 18-25 from Suffolk County, Hampden County, Essex County and Middlesex County, as well as the Department of Corrections, in pre-release and post-release settings. Throughout the pandemic, correctional facilities were shut down to visitors intermittently based on rates of infection at the respective correctional sites. In comparison, under normal circumstances UTEC and ROCA staff, mainly street outreach workers, would work 2-3 days behind the walls in the form of individual visits and group facilitation but over the course of the past nine months both programs created innovative solutions to regular in-person contact.

The EAJ initiative aided in the creation of innovative opportunities for programs to connect with incarcerated young adults, corrections staff, and families. There are many key programmatic successes to highlight. ROCA provided incarcerated young adults laptops to support education, life skills, and employment readiness programming needs throughout the pandemic. This innovative programming idea allowed ROCA staff the opportunity to build and sustain relationships with young adults "behind the wall", during facility shutdowns. Other ROCA highlights include, ROCA-Rewire, which offers Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) for corrections staff

and other professionals in contact with the emerging adult populations. ROCA also successfully shifted their community healing circles to an online platform.

UTEC also developed new strategies to support young adults in pre release settings. At the start of the pandemic, UTEC initially began supporting incarcerated young adults through a letter writing campaign and book delivery program. For example, funds were used to deliver 100 copies of Shaka Senghor's best selling book, "Writing My Wrongs" to inmates during a time period when visitors were not allowed. In the books, info and telephone numbers were provided for young adults to contact Streetworkers. Additionally, through support from the Good Plus Foundation (the personal foundation of Jessica and Jerry Seinfeld), pallets of diapers were donated to UTEC so that Streetworkers could deliver hundreds of diapers to the families of those currently incarcerated-- another method employed to continuously engage families of those incarcerated during a time when the jails were closed to all visitors. Streetworkers took pictures of these visits with family members and mailed them back to those incarcerated to keep ongoing communications, in addition to providing an opportunity for incarcerated young adults to be in a position to provide support for their families during this difficult time (through the delivery of diapers, hand sanitizers and other needed supplies). The goal was to make sure every young adult on the UTEC caseload felt like they had a supportive and caring adult in their corner throughout the duration of the correctional facility closings. UTEC continues to support families of young adults by providing meal prep boxes and other essentials such toiletries, diapers, and cleaning supplies on a weekly basis or as needed. UTEC Streetworkers also continue to support young adults by joining virtual court appearances and probation check-ins.

Challenges During this Grant Period:

As to be expected, the impacts of COVID were substantial. For the majority of the duration of this grant period, staff from both UTEC and Roca were not able to provide in-person programming, and protocols were not yet established for secure virtual programming. Although this was a significant challenge, both programs were able to identify innovative solutions to continue delivering services. Moreover, programs are now looking at the added capacity of having more virtual options in Year Two. For example, both programs are looking at added Polycom (secure videoconferencing capacities) in partnership with all correctional facilities that will help facilitate additional individual and group sessions via a secure line.

Overall Accomplishments During this Grant Period:

- ROCA and UTEC provided services to 133 Emerging Adults in four Massachusetts counties
- Established partnerships with all key Justice stakeholders, including Probation, Parole, Courts, District Attorneys, Health and Human Services, Department of Youth Services, Department of Corrections, Sheriffs, Committee for Public Counsel Services, ROCA and UTEC.

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- Developed and implemented a Needs Assessment
 - Enhanced Positive Youth Development Training to include some key findings from the Needs Assessment.
 - Provided regular technical assistance to program despite limitation with the pandemic
 - Conducted interviews with all key Justice stakeholders
 - Hosted a convening with leadership from all key Justice Institutions and organizations (see full listing in the section from Columbia University)
 - Program partners developed strategies to engage young adults behind the wall via video conferencing and telephone calls
 - Programs partners continued “inreach” behind the walls using safety protocols
 - ROCA facilitated ROCA Rewire remotely, which trained corrections officers and other community partners in CBT
 - ROCA and UTEC enrolled young adults in education and transitional employment programs

Data, Outcomes and Activities

The charts below highlight the varied outcomes and activities achieved over the nine-month period of the grant. As outlined in this data section, the accomplishments and activities achieved in this period are significant given the limitations in accessing correctional facilities and engaging young adults due to COVID. For example, as further described below, the initial recidivism rates for both programs are well below the average recidivism rates based on statewide data through the Council on State Governments. As the grant program continues, both agencies will be able to continue tracking impact areas that will be noteworthy to examine. It is expected that Year 2 of the grant will provide the opportunity to further advance all areas.

From April to December of 2020, ROCA served a total of 72 clients in its programming. Sixty percent of clients (n=43) served their sentence in a Suffolk County facility. Almost a third (29%; n=21) clients served their sentence at a facility in Hampden County. Ten percent (n=7) served their sentence at a facility in Essex County, and 1% (n=1) served their sentence at a facility in Middlesex County.

During this same period, UTEC served 66 young adults. An additional 94 were served via Streetwork contact only (those young adults who were only involved in the initial stage of outreach). Forty-three percent (combined intensive programming and Streetwork Only YAs) served their sentence in Middlesex County/Billerica (n=69/160), 31% served their time in Essex County/Middleton (n=50/160), 11% served time in a DYS facility (n=18/160), 8% served time in a DOC/State adult correctional institution (n=12/160), 2% served their sentence in a county or

state facility outside MA (n=3/160), .6% (n=1/60) served their sentence in a federal facility, .6% (n=1) served their sentence in Ludlow County, .6% served their sentence under house arrest (n=1), and 3% were known to have previously served time, but data for the facility was missing.

The following are some highlights about the previously incarcerated young adults served by their level of program participation. More detailed information on the n=66 young adults served intensively by UTEC and n=72 clients served by ROCA are provided immediately below.

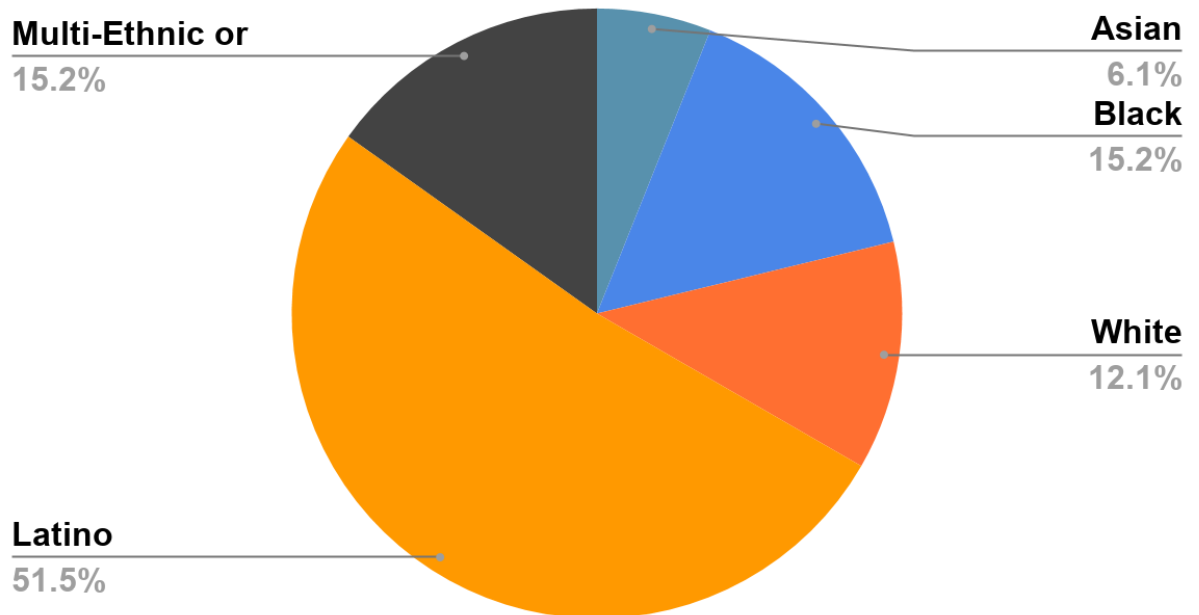
**Specific Data Regarding Young Adults included in EOPSS Reporting
(UTEC n=66; ROCA n=72):**

- **AGE:** The average age of previously incarcerated young adults served at UTEC was 22.3. The average age of young adults served at ROCA was 21.8
- **GENDER:** The vast majority of UTEC young adults (n=62; 94%) were male. 100% of ROCA young adults were male.
- **EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:** Twenty-nine (of the 66; 42%) UTEC previously incarcerated young adults participated in one or more of UTEC's social enterprises. Three UTEC young adults obtained external employment. Nineteen (of the 72, n=59%) ROCA clients participated in employment services; of these, 16 participated in Job Readiness Services and 3 participated in Employment Training Services.
- **MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES:** Twenty-nine UTEC young adults were seen by our licensed mental health clinician. Thirty-four ROCA clients were enrolled in either CBT (n=32) or outside mental health services (n=2.) (As a note, "seen" means individual, 1:1 counseling services were provided at least once to the UTEC young adult during the reporting period.)
- **EDUCATIONAL SERVICES:** Fourteen UTEC young adults participated in HiSET education classes. (As a note, all young adults at UTEC have access to educational programming including voter education, special seminars on topics such as socioemotional learning and/or other self-care topics, and special programming. UTEC only reports young adults specifically engaged in our HiSET programming here). Seven ROCA clients participated in educational services.
- **Graphs of RACE/ETHNICITY (UTEC n=65; ROCA n=72) and City Information (UTEC n=66; ROCA n=72) for previously incarcerated young adults for whom we have data are**

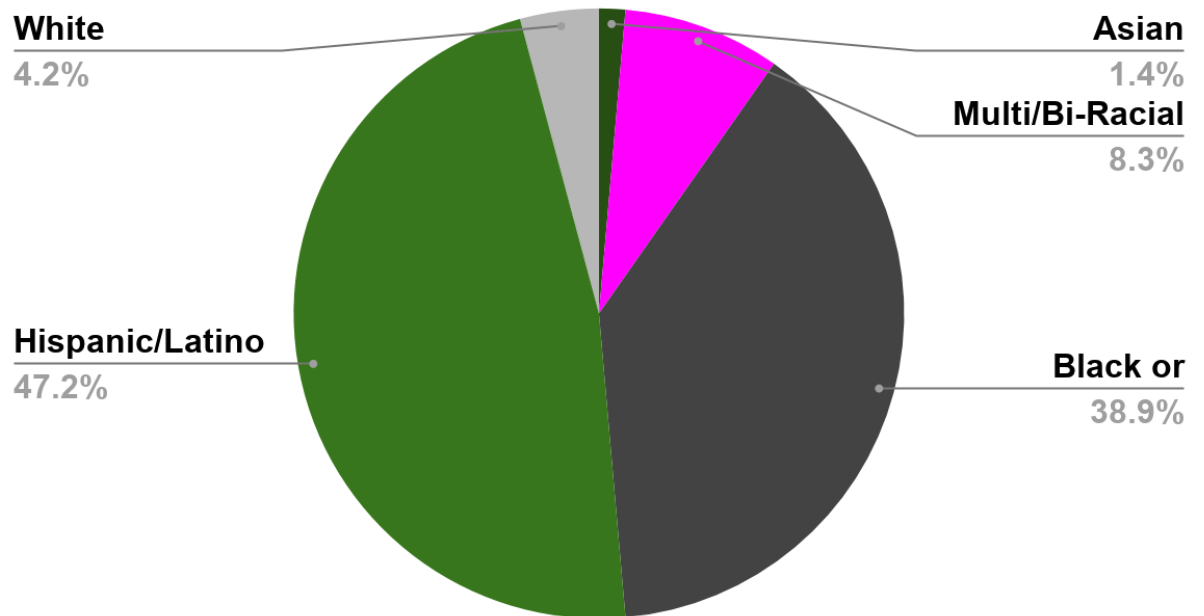
presented visually below. Graphs are presented separately for each program partner (i.e., UTEC and ROCA.). Latino young adults were the largest group served by both programs (51.5% for UTEC, and 47.2% for Roca).

- Graphs of Program Participation (e.g. in Employment Services, Education Services, and Mental Health Services) are presented visually below, for UTEC, ROCA, and both combined. UTEC Employment Services included Transformational Beginnings and Workforce Development Programming. ROCA Employment Services programming included Employment Training Services and Job Readiness Services. UTEC Mental Health Services included counseling sessions with UTEC's Mental Health Clinician. ROCA's Mental Health Services included CBT and outside mental health providers. UTEC's Education Services included HiSET programming.

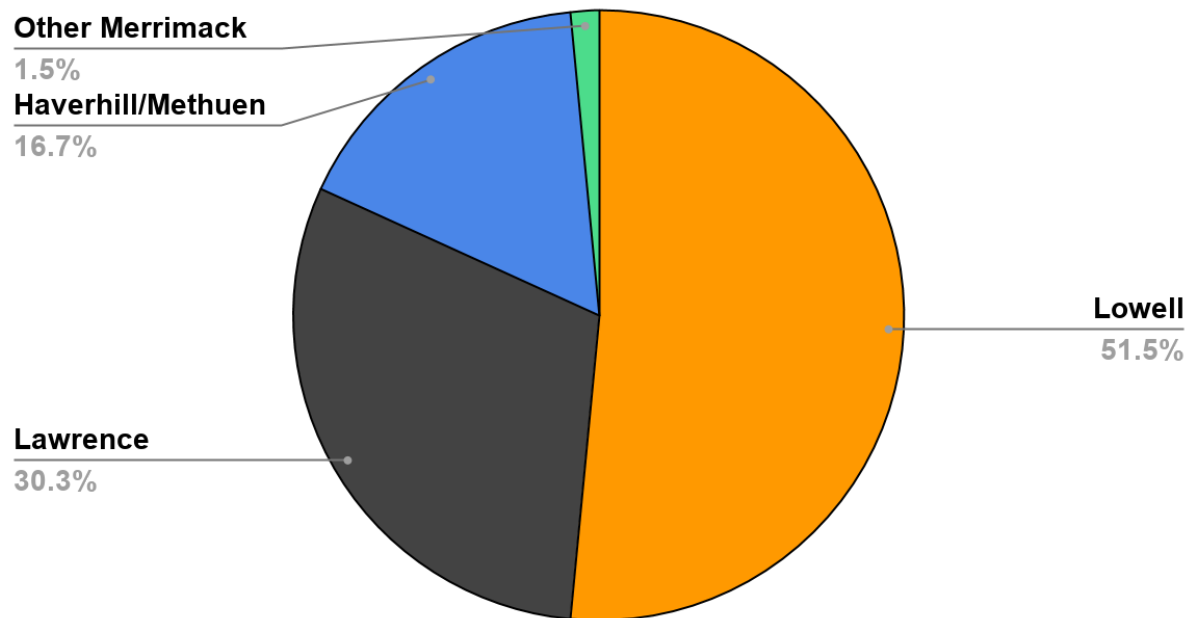
Race/Ethnicity (as % of UTEC Reported YAs)



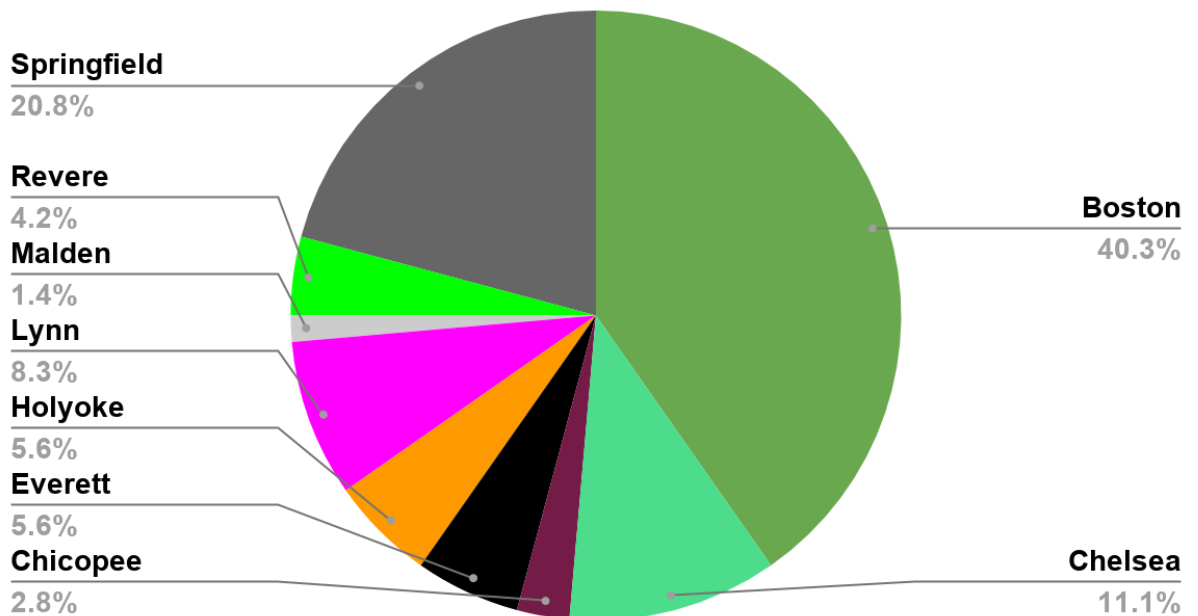
Race/Ethnicity (as % of ROCA Reported Clients)



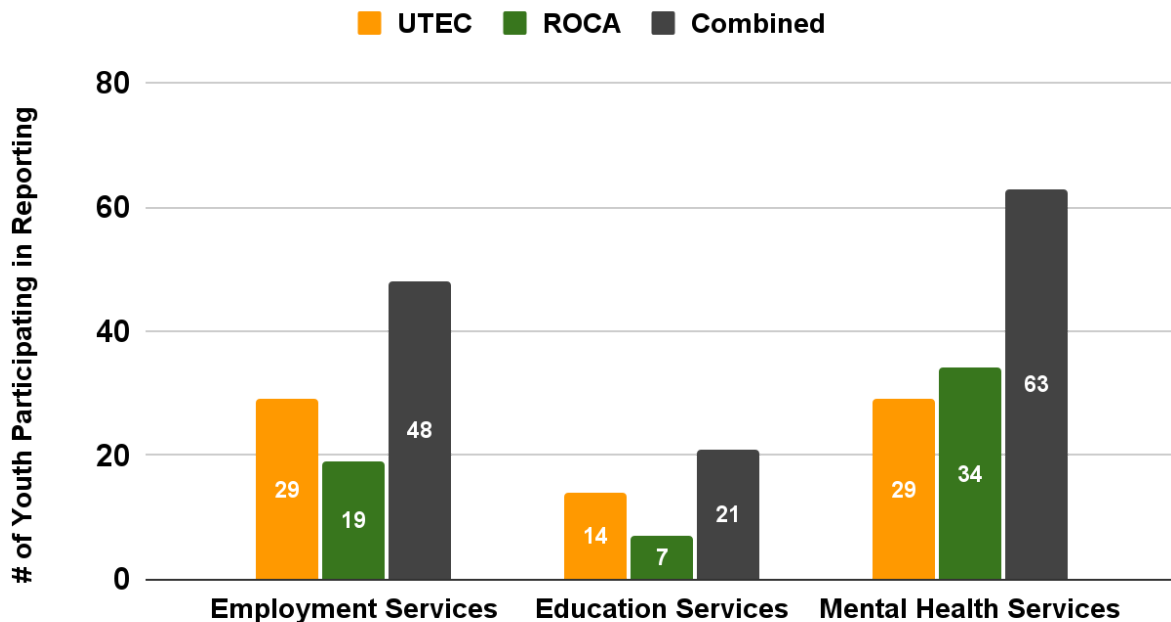
City (as % of UTEC Reported YAs)



City (as % of ROCA Reported Clients)



Positive Youth Outcomes: Program Participation

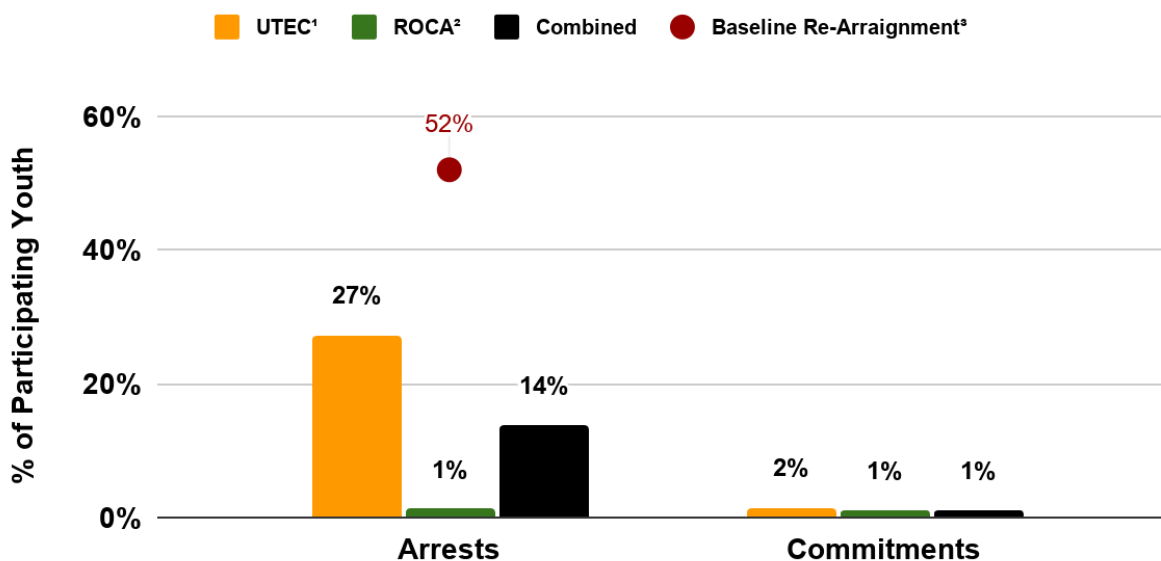


Additional programming highlights:

ROCA leads weekly CBT groups in the Middlesex House of Corrections focused on teaching seven key emotional regulation skills along with brain science. It is expected that the first group of participants behind the wall will complete the full CBT curriculum. In addition to this work, Roca is supporting the behavioral health and emotional regulation of young people by expanding the number of correctional and criminal justice staff working with them that have the tools critical to supporting their growth, development and reentry. Roca does this through the delivery of Rewire by Roca.

UTEC's employment services combine varied workshops along with on-the-job-training in their social enterprises. Of the twenty-nine served through employment services, fourteen of these young adults were engaged at the Workforce Development level (enrollment in their culinary or woodworking enterprise), while the other fifteen participated in UTEC's more foundational Transformational Beginnings (mattress recycling) program. Two UTEC young adults participating in our Culinary WFD program obtained their ServeSafe Food Safety Certification during this grant period. In addition to those YAs that were served intensively, UTEC also served an additional 94 young adults through Streetwork contact. Examples of Streetwork contact might include: writing letters to young adults Behind the Walls, dropping off urgent supplies during periods of hardship, or meeting the young adult only on an as-needed basis, less frequently than once every month.

Positive Youth Outcomes: Recidivism



¹Probation ²DCJIS ³CSG Justice Center, September 2016

RECIDIVISM BASELINE DATA/COUNTERFACTUALS: Young adults with serious past criminal involvement have critical impacts on public safety and public health – and are often recognized among the most difficult populations to successfully serve. As reported by the Council of State Governments’ ongoing analysis of the Massachusetts criminal justice system, young adults represent the highest rate of incarceration among any age group. Nearly one-quarter of the house of correction (county jail) population are between the ages of 18-24. This age range has the longest length of stay and the highest costs of incarceration. Most critically, young adults demonstrate the highest rates of recidivism. Within one year of release, more than half of all young adults (ages 18-24) recidivate: 52% of young adults from jails and 56% released from state prisons will be re-arraigned within 12 months (Mosehauer et al, 2016). *As outlined in the above chart, both ROCA and UTEC reported re-arrest rates significantly below the one-year baseline rates in Massachusetts (CSG Justice Center, September 2016).*

Please see the Appendix Section for a listing of various press articles that highlight some of the accomplishments of both UTEC and Roca during this grant period.

Emerging Adult Justice Learning Lab Kick-Off Convening:

TC4E is incredibly pleased to share that we were also able to design and kick-off a convening of leaders throughout the state to help further advance the work of emerging adult justice issues. We see this as a core component of our training and technical assistance work moving forward. The focus of the group is three-fold: 1. Network building with those institutional partners that both UTEC and Roca work with; 2. Identifying and delivering a common set of trainings that specialize in serving emerging adults for all partners that can help further strengthen a continuum from pre-release to post-release; and 3. Having the opportunity to learn more from leaders across the country with the opportunity of designing any new innovations that can be modeled in our region. Please see below for a full listing of all leaders involved in this convening.

Emerging Adult Justice Kickoff Convening Participant List

True-See	Allah	Director of Re-Entry	Executive Office of Public Safety
Anthony	Benedetti	Chief Counsel	Committee for Public Counsel Services
Paula	Carey	Chief Justice	Executive Office of the Trial Court
Nicholas	Cocchi	Sherriff	Hampden County
Kevin	Coppinger	Sherriff	Essex County
Joshua	Dohan	Director, Youth Advocacy Division	Committee for Public Counsel Services
Ed	Dolan	Commissioner	Probation
Peter	Forbes	Commissioner	Department of Youth Services
Anthony	Gulluni	District Attorney	Hampden County
Kevin	Keefe	Executive Director	Parole Board
Peter	Koutoujian	Sherriff	Middlesex County
Carol	Mici	Commissioner	Department of Corrections
Gloriann	Moroney	Chair	Parole Board
James	Morton	Senior Assistant Judicial Policy	Executive Office of the Trial Court
Andrew	Peck	Undersecretary	Executive Office of Public Safety
Rachael	Rollins	District Attorney	Suffolk County
Marian	Ryan	District Attorney	Middlesex County
Scott	Taberner	Special Advisor for Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice	Executive Office of Health & Human Services
Steven	Tompkins	Sheriff	Suffolk County
Thomas	Turco	Secretary	Executive Office of Public Safety

In the remaining pages of this report, you will find recommendations from our partner, Columbia University's Justice Lab, based on all of their work on the project during this period.



Final Report

UTEC & EAJP – EAJ MA Reentry Project

In the frame of our subaward agreement with UTEC for EOPSS' (Executive Office of Public Safety and Security) Re-entry Training/TA Grant ("Reentry Project"), the Emerging Adult Justice Project (EAJP) at Columbia University's Justice Lab supported UTEC and Health Resources in Action (HRiA) from June 1, 2020 through February 28, 2021 in their efforts to assist community reentry programs and correctional partners serving justice-involved emerging adults in Massachusetts.

In this report, we will first present key information on justice-involved emerging adults in Massachusetts and the Commonwealth's groundbreaking interventions in this burgeoning field, then summarize key accomplishments of EAJP's collaboration with UTEC & HRiA for the Reentry Project during the reporting period, and conclude with our recommendations for future emerging adult reentry grant programs.

Emerging Adults in Massachusetts' Criminal Justice System

Research shows that emerging adults, youth ages 18-25, are disproportionately represented in Massachusetts' state prisons and county Houses of Correction (HOC). While they make up 10% of the general state population, they make up 29% of arrests and 20% of individuals sentenced to incarceration in state prisons, and 23% of individuals sentenced to incarceration in HOCs. The rate of incarceration of emerging adults is more than double the incarceration rate for residents over age 25. The impact of incarceration within the traditional adult corrections on emerging adults is indicated by their particularly high recidivism rates: Data shows that 3 out of 4 emerging adults released from adult prisons and jails

will be rearraigned within 3 years. Justice outcomes are particularly tragic for emerging adults with opioid addiction and other substance use disorders. In Massachusetts, the risk of fatal opioid overdose of an emerging adult after release from incarceration is 10 times higher than adults over 45 years old released from incarceration. This is on top of the already high risk of opioid-related death for those formerly incarcerated persons of all ages, which is 120 times higher than the rest of the general adult population.

Black and brown emerging adults experience the worst racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal justice system. Black and Latinx emerging adults are incarcerated at a rate 2.9 and 5.6 times higher than their white peers in Massachusetts.

Fortunately, there are more effective ways for the justice system to respond to this age group. A flurry of reform initiatives and experiments are underway at a national level. Massachusetts is home to some of these developmentally appropriate, groundbreaking interventions.

Current initiatives for emerging adult justice reform in Massachusetts

A highlight of the 2020 for emerging adult justice in Massachusetts was the release of Task Force on Emerging Adults in the Criminal Justice System's Report. The Task Force acknowledged that emerging adults are a distinct developmental group that is uniquely amenable to rehabilitative programming and that punitive adult criminal justice system is not meeting the needs of this distinct group. Notably the Task Force affirmed that a positive youth development (PYD) approach should be taken with emerging adults, as currently used by the Department of Youth Services. The Task Force made a number of systemic as well as programmatic reform recommendations.

Among systemic reform initiatives in Massachusetts, legislative reform to raise the upper age of juvenile jurisdiction and expungement of criminal records for emerging adults takes the lead. Among programmatic reform initiatives, the work of UTEC and ROCA as nationally recognized community-based programs focusing on justice-involved emerging adults alongside the launch of specialized correctional units, specialized courts, and specialized probation in Massachusetts are all noteworthy.

The Reentry Project to enhance capacity of community reentry programs and correctional partners with specialized emerging adult units adds a critically important element of the exciting package of emerging adult justice reform initiatives in Massachusetts.

Accomplishments

Within the framework of our subaward agreement for the Reentry Project, EAJP supported UTEC & HRiA's work to prepare for a series of trainings for front-line correction officers serving emerging adults in the following key ways:

- Developed strategies to create buy-in from high-level justice administrators and other key state agencies for implementing the trainings and other program innovations for successful reentry of emerging adults after a period of incarceration;
- Assisted in developing content for the trainings;
- Advised on formation of a key stakeholders' group;
- Advised UTEC & HRiA on new research and emerging evidence-based practices in emerging adult justice.

Throughout this reporting period, EAJP had virtual monthly planning meetings, regular phone calls and email exchanges with UTEC and HRiA. In these meetings and other correspondence, EAJP reviewed and revised an interview guide for HRiA & UTEC to be used as a need-assessment tool to determine the content and scope of re-entry trainings. EAJP also helped create a pool of experts and key justice stakeholders in Massachusetts and other jurisdictions with experience in emerging adult justice reform for the need-assessment interviews. These need assessment interviews were used to inform HRiA's training curriculum and serve as a means to create further buy-in from high-level officers for the trainings.

Of critical importance to EAJP's collaboration with UTEC & HRiA for the Reentry Project is EAJP's separate joint venture with UTEC on creating a *Learning Lab for Justice-Involved Emerging Adults in Massachusetts* ("Learning Lab"). The Learning Lab is an action research project also funded through DOJ's Second Chance Grant and aims to create a wider community of cross-agency stakeholders that promotes active learning on best practices for serving emerging adults and to build partnerships to codevelop and pilot innovations in Massachusetts. The participants of the Learning Lab are a wider group, including Massachusetts probation service, the Committee for Public Counsel Services, Department of Mental Health, and District Attorney Offices in addition to county Sheriff's departments. Although being a separate venture, the Learning Lab is critical to UTEC's Reentry Training/TA project in a number of ways. First, high-level officers of the county Sheriff Departments that receive support through the Reentry

Training/TA project, also participate in the Learning Lab. This enhances institutional buy-in for the reentry trainings that front-line corrections staff receive. It also strategically places reentry project partners within the context of the wider, systemic emerging adult justice reform in the state, paving the way for new, cross-agency partnerships necessary for any successful reentry initiative. On the flip side, the Reentry Project provides an opportunity to implement and study innovative policies and practices that arise from the Learning Lab and thus the two projects enhance each other simultaneously.

For this reason, UTEC & HRiA & EAJP curated a virtual “joint kickoff” for the Reentry Project and the Learning Lab with high-level participation from all county Sheriff departments (Reentry Project partners) and other key stakeholders participating in the Learning Lab. This joint meeting, initially planned for the fall of 2020, had to be postponed to February 2021 due to COVID-related developments. On February 10, 2021, a well-attended joint kickoff was held over Zoom. The goal for this joint meeting was to give an introduction to county Sheriff departments about HRiA reentry trainings that will be provided to their frontline staff, level the playing field among other participants of the Learning Lab by closing any gaps in their foundational knowledge of emerging adult justice, and set the expectations for the Learning Lab going forward. EAJP gave a presentation on recent research and national trends in emerging adult justice practice and policy reform, followed by a discussion on opportunities for emerging adult justice reform in Massachusetts in 2021. The group shared valuable observations that shed light on the future of reentry work in Massachusetts and emerging adult justice reform in general.

Recommendations for future reentry grant programs

Performance evaluation of community reentry programs and correctional partners serving emerging adults is a crucial step in making informed decisions and policy changes

Recidivism has long been a central concept in the assessment of justice policies. However, recidivism is not a comprehensive measure of success for criminal justice in general or for initiatives that focus on justice-involved emerging adults specifically. Recommendations have been made in the literature to improve recidivism as a performance measure.[1] These include, for example, measuring time to failure (how long do people released from prison remain crime free?) and seriousness of new offense (are the crimes of those who reoffend less or more severe than their previous offense?).

While incorporating these elements could improve recidivism measures, they nevertheless remain focused on negative rather than positive outcomes. This is especially problematic in the case of

measuring outcomes for justice-involved emerging adults, whose desistance is linked to developmental milestones they have yet to achieve and support systems they need for healthy transition to adulthood. The first step to develop better outcome measures for justice-involved emerging adults is, then, to shift the focus of evaluation from preventing recidivism to supporting desistance. The positive youth justice model (PYJ or sometimes also known as Healthy Youth Justice) that is increasingly being adopted in youth justice systems should also guide the thinking on how we measure success of emerging adult policy initiatives. A PYJ model focuses on protective factors, strengths, and prosocial skills. In a PYJ model, the goal of intervention for youth is to facilitate their successful transition to adulthood, which in turn will reduce or end law enforcement contact. To assess the effectiveness of youth justice interventions, the PYJ model suggests that state and local governments measure activities and outcomes by factoring progress in two core assets needed by all youth (learning/doing and attaching/belonging) within six key life domains (work, education, relationships, community, health, and creativity).[2] This matrix model allows for a significantly more comprehensive set of outcome measures that are more sensitive to change in emerging adult justice interventions.

In this context, we recommend that going forward, the re-entry project start to develop performance evaluation models and outcome measures in line with the positive youth justice framework adapted to the distinct needs of emerging adults. Any future reentry grant program of EOPSS would benefit from developing such a comprehensive model for measuring performance of emerging adult initiatives.

Improving life-outcomes of the Commonwealth's most vulnerable youth and improving public safety would ultimately require close, cross-sectoral collaboration of key stakeholders in addition to promotion of learning and information sharing across agencies. This is no simple task and requires a long-term commitment. Reentry Project and Learning Lab are important first steps. We trust that EOPSS' continued support of emerging adult justice reentry initiatives will help realize this timely endeavor.

[1] King, R. & Elderbroom, B. (October 2014). Improving Recidivism as a Performance Measure. Available at <https://bja.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh186/files/media/document/UI-ImprovingRecidivism.pdf>

[2] Butts, J. & Schiraldi, V. (March 2018). Recidivism Reconsidered: Preserving the Community Justice Mission of Community Corrections. Available at: https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/wiener/programs/pcj/files/recidivism_reconsidered.pdf



APPENDIX:

ADRIAN WALKER

Still fighting the violence

No one had ever seen a peace vigil quite like the one that snaked through Haverhill last Saturday.

Instead of the familiar candle light march, a caravan of around 35 cars — decorated with anti-violence slogans — made a statement about two homicides last week that shook the hard scrabble community in the Merrimack Valley. Even as crime seems to have plummeted in Massachusetts, with most residents spending as little time as possible on the streets, two men in their late teens — Carlos M. Rivera and Efrain Maisonet, both 19 — were slain in separate and unrelated incidents.

So streetworkers and community activists took to the streets in the most effective way they could think of to remind their neighbors that violence was still present, and still a scourge. The caravan was greeted with cheers from residents lining the streets as it made its way from the outskirts of town to downtown. A video of the event has been shared hundreds of times on social media.

"The community went crazy," said Jose Rivera, a streetworker in Lawrence for UTEC, a program for teens and young adults. "People in the community started blowing their horns. It was to show that we're still here, that violence is not normal and to come out with that quick response for the community."

The event was largely the brain child of Gregg Croteau, the chief executive of UTEC, a Lowell nonprofit dedicated

in nonviolence work. He's had to spend a lot of time the past months pondering two competing realities: One, that the work his organization does remains vital. Two, that doing it in the ways it has made successful aren't really possible right now.

"We just want to make sure that we send a message," Croteau said. "The biggest challenge is when we become desensitized to it. Even in the midst of this virus, we want to make sure people aren't desensitized." Even before the homicides, Croteau had been worried about how his organization would manage through the crisis.

He employs young people between the ages of 17 and 25 in a range of jobs designed to help them avoid incarceration or to reenter society after release. Croteau's workforce is made up of people who've been in gangs and been in jail. He says it's a program of second, third, and fourth chances — an approach he summarizes as "mad love."

They work in a range of programs, all designed to offer options to a life in the streets. UTEC works with inmates "behind the wall" to support them and their families. Croteau never harbored any illusions that all of the needs UTEC serves would suddenly take a holiday because of the corona virus. People will still go to jail and come out. Violence may wane, but it won't go away.

But UTEC's catering business has gone away. Its prison visits aren't the same. And fundraising was likely to slow down,

A worker at UTEC in June 2018. The center's catering business has gone away amid the coronavirus pandemic. THE BOSTON GLOBE/ GLOBE FREELANCE

too. Altogether it was a huge problem for an \$8 million operation.

Croteau vowed at the start of this crisis not to lay off any of his workers, and so far he has made good on that. His streetworkers still visit homes of troubled young adults, while trying to maintain social distance. People who have been making food or delivering it are instead delivering meals and diapers to families of people who are in jail. Croteau is working on a major fundraising push, with the goal of raising \$250,000 by the end of April and \$500,000 by the end of June.

Amid the countless challenges

the pandemic presents, one of the greatest is that people who were already barely visible, on the margins of society, will be forgotten. Even in this insane time, the homicides of two little-known young men registered as a danger worth addressing. Even now, their neighbors sat up and took notice.

"The same struggles other people have, gang-involved young people have," Croteau said. "How do we deliver MaddLove when we still have to be distant? The guys we work with, we want to make sure they're not forgotten."

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<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2020/04/14/metro/doing-antiviolence-work-time-social-distancing/?event=event12>

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CRIMINAL RECORD EXPUNGEMENT

UTEC leads way on bill

By Aaron Curtis
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Lowell » With children of her own to care for and a desire to have a job she would be proud of, Manoushka “Money” Gaston decided years ago to pursue a career as a certified nursing assistant.

The 27-year-old Lowell resident said she worked toward the position and received her nursing assistant certification roughly four years ago. Despite the achievement, she points out she can’t get a job at a nursing home or other health care facility.

This is due to the four misdemeanor charges on her record that Gaston said are from before she was 21.



unfulfilling positions and minimum wage jobs.

“We all make mistakes as a child,” Gaston said. “We shouldn’t get a life sentence for them.”

expungement law, said Susan Le, program manager for the coalition. Le has been with the campaign since it began in 2012 when she was a youth organizer.

After the bill was passed in 2018, it was realized most of the population UTEC serves would not be eligible due to the interpretation of the law as restricting eligibility to those with only one charge before the age of 21. Many also had charges that were among the 15 — including assault and battery — that would not be eligible under any circumstances, even if they had not been convicted.

Le said the expungement provision under the Justice, Equity and Accountability law would allow an individual to be eligible to expunge up to two offenses. It would also clarify that multiple offenses charged as part of the same incident will be considered as a single offense. Previously, multiple offenses within one incident counted as separate offenses.

According to the new legislation, time would need to have passed between the time of the crime and the petition to expunge.



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Thanks to the [Good+Foundation](#), our team is able to use diapers and wipes as tools to serve and engage with the families of young incarcerated fathers while they can't visit their incarcerated loved ones. Appreciate all the suppo ...see more



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