



Housing Career Pathways

A scalable workforce development program that creates systematic connections for New Yorkers who live in affordable housing with career opportunities in the affordable housing industry.



Final Report from the Program's Pilot Phase

Housing Career Pathways (HCP) is a groundbreaking workforce development program that empowers low-income New Yorkers — particularly those living in affordable housing — with the skills, training, and connections they need to launch meaningful careers in the affordable housing industry. The program leverages the affordable housing industry as an economic engine and offers a four-week skills training curriculum, followed by an 80-hour paid internship to prepare participants for entry-level roles in affordable housing administration.

With an employer-informed curriculum, wraparound support services and job search navigation assistance designed to set trainees up for success as they progress in their careers, almost 90% of HCP participants graduate the program. In turn, three-quarters (76%) of graduates go on to secure jobs that kick-start their careers in the affordable housing industry and bring meaningful gains in income and upward mobility.

Created by Enterprise Community Partners, in collaboration with Brooklyn Workforce Innovations (BWI), the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), Housing Career Pathways is rooted in close partnerships with more than 25 employer partners. With almost 90% of participants entering the program as residents of affordable housing, HCP integrates the relevant lived experiences of affordable housing residents with housing organizations and simultaneously meets a pressing staffing need in the industry, while empowering participants to build economic mobility through career-launching roles.

6

Pilot training cohorts between program launch in May 2022 and June 2024.

84

Low-income New Yorkers graduated from the pilot. HCP has since gone on to graduate more than 100 trainees.

3x

Increase in income for program graduates who secure job placements.

A Partnership Driven Workforce Development Program

Program Design & Operations

Housing Career Pathways was designed in 2019 to create a systematic link between low-income New Yorkers, especially those who live in affordable housing, with career opportunities in the affordable housing industry, while simultaneously supporting housing providers in finding a committed and skilled workforce.

Over the course of a year, Enterprise, HPD and NYCHA partnered with 18 housing providers and three workforce providers to design the program model. The work was informed by research that Enterprise commissioned from CUNY's Labor Market Information Service to identify job categories in affordable housing that have career trajectories and are projected to grow in the coming years. This research led the program partners to focus on creating a bridge to administrative roles in property management.

The program was designed based on the needs of affordable housing providers, with the expertise of workforce training partners, and with input from potential program participants. Implementation of the pilot phase of Housing Career Pathways started in early 2022.

Program Partnerships

Launched by Enterprise, the program is operated by **Brooklyn Workforce Innovations (BWI)**, a local nonprofit workforce development organization that specializes in creating living-wage employment opportunities and career paths to empower low- and moderate-income people. With Enterprise providing oversight and convening partners, the program's success is in part fueled by deep partnerships with the **New York City Housing Authority** and the **Department of Housing Preservation and Development**, which facilitates trainee recruitment directly from public and affordable housing and create connections to **affordable housing operators** who serve as critical employer partners.

Recruitment & Application Process

With teams from BWI, NYCHA and HPD conducting direct outreach to low-income residents and operators of affordable housing, HCP effectively reaches individuals who would benefit from upward mobility opportunities, while also bringing invaluable lived experience to the field of affordable housing. Over the course of the pilot program, almost 4,500 applicants were reached through a combination of strategies such as digital outreach (email blasts, social media), flyers, direct referrals and word of mouth.

Interested residents receive information about the program by attending information sessions, hosted virtually by BWI, before completing an online application. Applicants go on to complete an online readiness assessment, followed by an interview and selection process through which BWI staff identify a cohort of approximately 15-20 trainees.

Generous support for this program was provided by:

- ❖ Annaly Capital Management
- ❖ Capital One
- ❖ Flagstar Foundation
- ❖ Goldman Sachs
- ❖ Enterprise New York's Gotham Society
- ❖ Individual Donors Through Enterprise's Blue Sky Fund
- ❖ Public Housing Community Fund



Housing Career Pathways trainees begin their learning in a classroom, before being placed in an internship with an employer in the affordable housing industry.

Training Curriculum & Program Components

At the core of Housing Career Pathways is a **four-week, in-person training course** facilitated by BWI staff. With this as a foundation, trainees go on to complete a paid internship to gain hands-on experience and are aided in their job search. This positions trainees to be competitive in the affordable housing job market and prepares them for careers in the field.

Classroom Training Curriculum

Refined with direct input from employer partners, the training curriculum provides the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary to prepare trainees for careers in affordable housing. The curriculum focuses on providing **digital skills training**, **soft skills training**, and **industry-specific training**, such as on the HPD Marketing Handbook. While the pace and content of the training may vary based on the collective needs and experiences of each training cohort, the primary topics are highlighted below:

Training Curriculum

Week One: Introduction to NYC Affordable Housing, Professional Communication & Computer Fundamentals; Intro to HPD Marketing Handbook

Week Two: Microsoft Office, Google Suite, HPD Marketing Handbook, Tenant Marketing & Compliance; Intro to LIHTC, and Time Management

Week Three: Customer Service & Identification of Income Documents, Fair Housing, Intro to Property Management, and Compliance

Week Four: Final Exam, Interviewing & Internship Preparation, Resume and Cover Letter Creation

The classroom curriculum integrates **site visits**, “**Day in the Life**” videos from program alumni, and **guest speakers or workshops** from relevant partners. This includes sessions from HPD such as **Introduction to Affordable Housing**, **Tenant Marketing and Compliance**, and a **Fair Housing training** that resulted in a Certification of Completion for cohort participants.

The training curriculum is continually refined based on feedback from both employers and trainees to ensure that program participants are provided adequate training to prepare them for their new careers.

Capstone Project

As a result of feedback from employer partners, trainees in later HCP cohorts completed a final project at the conclusion of the classroom training period. This project gives trainees an opportunity to act out the responsibilities of a Housing Lottery Specialist by **completing a mock tenant file for an affordable housing applicant** from start to finish.

Internship Placement

Following the classroom-based training, BWI places all HCP graduates in **80-hour internships** with participating employer organizations, with an **hourly stipend paid by the program**.

The internship serves as a supplement to the HCP training and offers an immersive learning experience in which trainees can refine their interpersonal and technical skills. In addition to this being a practical learning opportunity, participants are provided mentorship and career advice opportunities.

Common Job Titles of HCP Graduates

- ❖ Compliance Coordinator
- ❖ Leasing and Compliance Associate
- ❖ Customer Success Analyst
- ❖ Leasing Intake Specialist
- ❖ Junior Accountant
- ❖ Admin & Data Entry Associate
- ❖ Recertification Specialist

“Working with and mentoring the interns was such a pleasure, HCP did a great job teaching them the necessities to get started in this industry.”

— Zandria L, Infinite Horizons Management

Job Navigation and Assistance

Program participants are supported in their job search, including with guidance on how to create an effective resume and through mock interviews.

Importantly, program graduates retain access to these supportive career services even after they graduate from the program or find employment, including with involvement in a Job Club group where graduates from all cycles who are searching for new roles have an opportunity to connect with fellow alumni, share resources and stay motivated in their search.

Wraparound Supports

In addition to skills training and career development, BWI provides trainees with comprehensive wraparound services that address barriers to enrolling in or completing training and remaining employed long-term, including tax preparation support, free legal assistance, financial counseling, benefits access and advocacy.

In later cohorts, BWI strengthened these offerings by hiring a Contracts and Beneficiary Support Specialist focused on connecting trainees to supportive services and expanding its Tools of the Trade Fund. Through the Fund, trainees have access to cash assistance for work-related expenses (e.g., a computer or transit card), and emergency support with rent, groceries, and other essentials. With a rising cost of living and other economic shifts in New York City, these supports have become crucial for HCP trainees.



Cohort 2 graduates celebrate their completion of the training program.

“Choosing to attend HCP was the best decision I made. I can help New York residents with an opportunity of a beautiful, newly constructed home and I’m able to hear the excitement of getting approved. It was my calling to help, and I would like to thank the leaders who prepared HCP training and changed my life...”

Not only did the training help me gain skills to be prepared for housing careers and interviews, [it] enhanced my confidence in my career and personal life. I can now work a normal job and spend more time with my family.”

— Alisha B., Cohort 2 Graduate

Participant Spotlight: Alisha B.’s Story

A single mother and long-time NYCHA resident living in Rockaway, Queens, Alisha spent 20 years working in the food industry, sometimes working two jobs while attending school simultaneously. Alisha has always been passionate about helping others, and she saw HCP as an opportunity to make a positive impact. Through HCP, she secured a job as a **Housing Lottery Associate at Fifth Avenue Committee**.

Alisha reached her two-year employment milestone in November 2024. Since completing the program, she has actively pursued professional development, earning her Notary license. Leveraging her skills and continued education, Alisha transitioned into an **Occupancy Specialist role at Wavecrest Management**, earning a 50% wage increase compared to when she started her career two years ago. Additionally, she has moved her family out of public housing and into a new apartment.

Employer Partners

Partnerships with affordable housing organizations are a vital element of the Housing Career Pathways program. HCP offers a pipeline of qualified talent from which employers in the industry can address their unmet staffing needs, and employer partners provide necessary feedback on the training curriculum to ensure that program graduates are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in their new roles.

HCP has engaged more than 25 affordable housing organizations as employer partners since the program was developed. Many contributed to the initial program design and informed the curriculum development, with others frequently serving as internship hosts or regularly hiring from the pool of HCP graduates.

Trainees are matched with internship placements at a participating hosting sites across the city to gain hands-on experience in a paid role. In turn, employer partners receive guidance and assistance from the BWI team over the course of the internship and are surveyed to inform continual program refinement.

Internship hosts are not obligated to hire interns, though **almost two-thirds of internships convert to full-time positions**, and **more than half of employer partners have hired more than one program graduate**.

Measures of Employer Partner Satisfaction

- **27** companies hosted **at least one HCP intern**
- **63%** of internship providers **hired at least one HCP graduate**
- **65%** of internships **converted into permanent employment**
- **30 unique employers** hired graduates
- **53%** of employer partners **hired more than one graduate**
- In a survey, internship providers rated HCP interns an average of **8 out of 10 on knowledge of the affordable housing industry** compared to other entry-level hires

Employer Partners

- ❖ Essence Development
- ❖ Fifth Avenue Committee
- ❖ Fordham-Bedford Housing Corporation
- ❖ Housing Opportunities Unlimited
- ❖ Pronto Housing
- ❖ Related Companies
- ❖ Settlement Housing Fund
- ❖ S:US
- ❖ Wavecrest Management
- ❖ And many more!

Employer Partners save an estimated

\$9k

on recruitment costs per hire from HCP training cohorts.

Employer Spotlight: Wavecrest Property Management

“The Housing Career Pathways program is essential for bringing new talent to this vital industry, and each graduate brings something special to our team.”

— **Christina H., Wavecrest Property Management**

Christina H., Director of Leasing and Compliance has been a key supporter of HCP since its inception. She participated in focus groups and discussions that shaped the program’s launch and first cohort. Since then, Christina and her team have hosted and hired 12 graduates across 6 cycles, providing invaluable feedback to refine the curriculum. As a dedicated employer partner and member of the HCP Advisory Group, Christina continues to play a vital role in the program’s success.

Outcomes from the Pilot Program

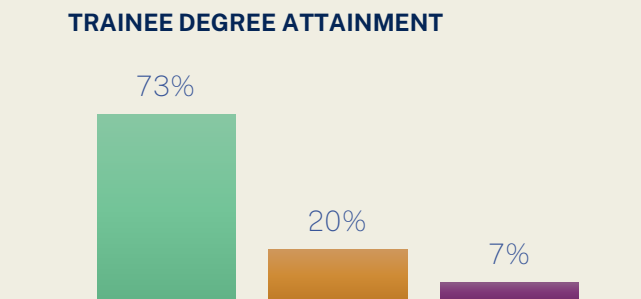
The Housing Career Pathways Pilot Program successfully fostered upward mobility and positive economic outcomes for **84 program graduates**, including more than tripling the average annual income of trainees who secure positions after graduation, and significantly boosting access to employer-sponsored benefits.

With the vast majority of participants being residents of affordable housing, this means significant gains for graduates and their families.

A summary of participant demographics from the pilot program (Cohorts 1-6) is presented in the tables below.

Trainee Demographics & Baseline Data

AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS AT ENTRY	
\$13,707	
AVERAGE AGE	
39 Years Old	
TRAINEE DEMOGRAPHICS	
RACE	
African American	67%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1%
Asian	2%
White	6%
Biracial or Multiracial	6%
Other Races Not Listed	8%
Prefer Not to Say	10%
ETHNICITY	
Hispanic	32%
Non-Hispanic	62%
Prefer Not to Say	6%
GENDER	
Male	12%
Female	86%
Non-Binary	2%



■ HS Diploma or GED ■ Associate Degree ■ Bachelor's Degree

FOREIGN BORN	
Yes	21%
No	79%
IDENTIFIES AS LGBTQ+	
Yes	9%
No	76%
Did Not Disclose	15%
HOUSING STATUS AT ENTRY	
Residents of NYCHA Housing, Section 8, or via HPD Voucher	89%
Non NYCHA Or HPD Affordable Housing Residents	11%
WORK EXPERIENCE IN PRIOR YEAR	
Yes	64%
No	36%
RECEIVING CASH ASSISTANCE AT ENTRY	
Yes	34%
No	66%
HEALTH INSURANCE AT ENTRY	
Medicaid	82%
Uninsured	2%
Other Insurance	8%
Did Not Disclose	7%

Program Outcomes

Positive outcomes from Housing Career Pathways point to program participants overwhelmingly seeing significant growth in income, opportunities for career advancement, and experiencing upward mobility.

Overall, pilot program participants graduated at a rate of 87%, three-quarters of whom (76%) secured positions in relevant roles.

Almost 80% of graduates who secure a job placement have retained that role for 6-months, or are on track to do so. Among graduates of earlier Cohorts (Cohorts 1-4) who secured employment, **85% have achieved a 6-month retention milestone, and 73% are on-track for their 1-year job retention milestone.**

Additionally, **22 alumni have advanced their wages** further since their initial job placement upon graduating from the program.

BWI continues to track outcomes and provide job search assistance to program alumni for at least two years after graduation and as they establish their new career paths.

Among program graduates who have been in their role for at least 6 months,

86%

are on track or have reached their 1-year retention milestone

CUMULATIVE PILOT OUTCOMES	
TRAINING	
# of Training Cohorts	6
# of Enrollees	97
# of Graduates	84
% of Graduates	87%
JOB PLACEMENT	
# Placed into Jobs	64
% Jobs Placement (of Graduates)	76%
Average Hourly Wage (Initial Placement)	\$21.96/hour
% Job Placement W/ Benefits	92%
JOB RETENTION RATES*	
90 Day Retention	93%
180 Day Retention	79%
1 Year Retention	54%
2 Year Retention	47%
CAREER ADVANCEMENT	
# With Wage Advancement	22
Average Wage Advancement	\$2.69/hour

**Numbers represent those who have reached a given milestone and those who are on track to reach the milestone by hitting each previous milestone.*

Participant Spotlight: Gabriel D.’s Story

Gabriel immigrated from Venezuela in 2017. Though he had some work experience, it was difficult to secure employment in the U.S.

By completing the HCP program, Gabriel is now a **Community Engagement Coordinator at Housing Opportunities Unlimited**, enabling him to help other New Yorkers connect with affordable housing.

“My life changed after BWI gave me the opportunity to study [through this program]... The evolution happened fast — now I have more confidence and can leap at the things I want.”

— Gabriel D., Cohort 2 Graduate

In February 2024, Gabriel celebrated his one-year employment milestone and is on track to reach two years in February 2025. He plays a key role at Housing Opportunities Unlimited by training and mentoring new HCP interns and employees.

Learnings & Recommendations

Housing Career Pathways has driven significant outcomes for program participants in New York City, and has potential for replication or scaling in other markets. Key learnings from this pilot program are detailed below.

Leverage Partnerships and a Range of Outreach Tactics for Recruitment

Effective recruitment for Housing Career Pathways hinges on reaching low-income residents who are eager to pursue upward mobility. Strong partnerships with HPD and NYCHA have been instrumental in streamlining outreach efforts.

These partnerships also allow the program to tailor recruitment geographically — whether by focusing on tenants living in affordable housing near internship host sites, or broadening the geographic reach as needed. Casting a wide net through flyers, social media campaigns, email blasts to residents and word of mouth ensures the program reaches a diverse pool of motivated participants, setting the stage for their success.

Foster Collaboration with Employers

A cornerstone of the program's success is identifying organizations that are committed to the growth and development of interns. Open and honest communication with host organizations is essential — not only to help them understand participants' existing knowledge, but also to clarify their responsibility to provide support and guidance throughout the participant's 80-hour internship.

Employers have also played a crucial role in program development since its inception, and they continue to be key contributors to refining the curriculum and ensuring it aligns with the real-world needs of a rapidly evolving industry.

Focus on Deliberate Matching

Strong partnerships thrive when there is a deliberate and thoughtful approach to matching internship host organizations with program participants. Aligning the needs, values, location, and desired work culture of participants with the characteristics of employer partners ensures a more productive and fulfilling experience for all involved. This extra attention to compatibility helps maximize learning opportunities for participants while fostering positive relationships with host organizations.

Adopt a Flexible Curriculum

A nimble and adaptable curriculum has been essential to the program's success. Throughout the pilot, the curriculum was refined based on participant feedback, incorporating more one-on-one activities, enhanced administrative skills training, and digital literacy instruction. This flexibility allowed the program to meet the unique needs, preferences, and learning paces of each cohort, ensuring a more effective and engaging experience.

Significant program enhancements introduced in later cohorts included the addition of a capstone project and more individualized career coaching. The application process also evolved, incorporating a second interview and a "Try Out Day" to ensure the program was a mutual fit. This additional step allowed staff to assess readiness for training more thoroughly, including having discussions about adequate childcare and transportation plans or to identify potential barriers.

While these changes required a greater time investment, they proved invaluable and correspond with improvements in program completion rates: Cohort 5 achieved a 93% graduation rate, and Cohort 6 celebrated a perfect 100% graduation rate, underscoring the value of an adaptive approach.

"We have been so thrilled with the quality of the interns and the level of knowledge the interns came in with from [HCP] training classes. We are excited to continue to partner in the future!"

— KC Crosby, Pronto Housing

Moving Beyond the Pilot Program

With the program's impact demonstrated through the pilot, Housing Career Pathways has transitioned to ongoing operation by Brooklyn Workforce Innovations. Enterprise, NYCHA and HPD remain engaged as members of an Advisory Committee, along with representatives of employer partners and program graduates, ensuring continued collaboration and support.

In Fall 2024, HCP celebrated the milestone of graduating its **100th trainee** with the conclusion of the 7th cohort, and the 8th cohort graduated in February 2025. The program will continue with its **9th training cohort later in 2025**. BWI will continue to refine the program curriculum and assess the long-term impacts, job retention and career advancement outcomes of graduates.

As HCP continues to grow, its impact reaches far beyond individual job placements. The program empowers participants to build stable, fulfilling careers that transform their lives and contribute to their communities. **By fostering opportunity, equity, and resilience, Housing Career Pathways serves as a powerful example of what can be achieved when we invest in people and their potential.**

Participant Spotlight: Jon S.' Story

Jon is one of the Housing Career Pathways (HCP) program's first graduates. He is a lifelong New Yorker who, prior to the program, spent 16 years making ends meet in various retail management positions to provide for his family. He has always been passionate about housing and when he saw a social media post promoting Housing Career Pathways, he believed that it was the perfect opportunity to pivot to meaningful work that is in line with how he would like to make a difference — both for his family and for the city he loves.

Soon after training, Jon started his career as a **Project Compliance Specialist for Wavecrest Management**. He immediately felt inspired by the work that allowed him to help vulnerable New Yorkers maintain their affordable homes. Jon has now worked in affordable housing for more than two years and has worked to support homeless individuals and families living in shelter transition into a new place to call home.

"Not only has this program helped my family by connecting me to a fulfilling career that I can be proud of, but it's helping all the New Yorkers that I'm going to have the opportunity to work with in the coming weeks, months, and hopefully years to come. I cannot wait to bridge the gap between the tenants and the property managers and be a true advocate for those of us living in affordable housing."

— Jon S., Cohort 1 Graduate

Since graduation, Jon moved his own family of four from a small basement apartment to a beautiful, affordable home. As a dedicated advocate for the Housing Career Pathways program, Jon represents participant voices on the new **HCP Advisory Board**.



Jon S., representatives of HPD and NYCHA, and program partners celebrating with the graduates of Cohort 3.