**Introduction**

Mobility Mentoring® is the professional practice of partnering with clients so that they may acquire the resources, skills, and sustained behavior changes necessary to attain and preserve their economic independence. This innovative approach is integrated throughout EMPath services. This report shares the reach of Mobility Mentoring and its effects on the families and individuals engaging in this transformative practice at EMPath’s program sites in Greater Boston.

**About EMPath**

EMPath is a national non-profit that dramatically improves the lives of people struggling to make ends meet. Because creating economic opportunity is multifaceted, our approach is too. We offer a unique combination of direct service, learning exchange, and research and advocacy for what works:

- **We work locally:** In the Greater Boston area, we serve families grappling with economic insecurity and the challenges that come with it. Our model, called Mobility Mentoring, is based on the science of what it takes to problem solve and plan for the future when you are living with intense trauma and stress. The one-on-one relationship between participants and their coaches is based on what research—and common sense—tells us about what people need to get ahead in life.

- **We work nationally:** Across the U.S., we share what we’ve learned with others who work directly with families struggling to get by. With the Economic Mobility Exchange, our learning community, we offer training and a network to share practices for continuous improvement. Our members include publicly- and privately funded non-profits, human service agencies, educational institutions and more: the common thread is our shared commitment to moving people out of poverty for good.

- **We work systemically:** We refine our practice through evaluation and translating the latest research into action. Then we use what we’ve learned to advocate for taking what works to scale.
Families are struggling, even those living above the poverty line. Parent income continues to be too strong a predictor for child outcomes ranging from early literacy and health to college attendance rates. If we want to give children the best opportunity for their futures, we need to make sure their parents are doing more than just scraping by. We must look at long-term solutions to help families not only meet their basic needs, but also achieve their biggest goals. Our work at EMPath has shown that families desire individualized support on how to leverage additional resources to move themselves forward.

Our approach to economic mobility coaching – Mobility Mentoring® – was developed in acknowledgement that it is a stressful and complex journey out of poverty. Mobility Mentoring was specifically designed to help participants to deal with all the stresses that come along with trying to get out of poverty, and to provide them with the support they need to persevere in the journey. Our participants need this kind of support as they try to maintain their families and rebuild post-COVID.

Unless otherwise stated, metrics in this report cover participants across all of EMPath’s programs in Greater Boston:
An essential tool used by Mobility Mentoring programs is the Bridge to Self-Sufficiency®. The Bridge to Self-Sufficiency is a multi-faceted tool, serving as a conversation guide as well as a means for assessment and tracking progress. Bridge assessments identify strengths and obstacles to success in each of the five pillars: Family Stability, Well-Being, Financial Management, Education & Training, Employment & Career.

A participant’s Bridge score is a measure of their overall self-sufficiency; higher scores indicate higher self-sufficiency. Of those participants active in FY22 with a valid, comparable Bridge score at least one year apart, 72% experienced an increase in score. The average Bridge score for participants with two Bridge assessments at least one year apart increased by 8.5 points (50.4 at first assessment to 58.9 at last assessment).

### Self-Sufficiency Takes Time: Changes in Flagship Program Participants’ Bridge Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Average change in Bridge score from program start</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 5</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Earnings ≥ 80%+ AMI (Family-Sustaining Wage)

- **Household Size of:**
  - 2: ≥ $72,550
  - 3: ≥ $81,600
  - 4: ≥ $90,650

### Earnings = 50% - 79% AMI

- **Household Size of:**
  - 2: $51,200 - $72,549
  - 3: $57,600 - $81,599
  - 4: $63,950 - $90,649

### Earnings = 30% - 49% AMI

- **Household Size of:**
  - 2: $30,700 - $51,199
  - 3: $34,550 - $57,599
  - 4: $38,350 - $63,949

### Earnings < 30% AMI

- **Household Size of:**
  - 2: < $30,700
  - 3: < $34,550
  - 4: < $38,350

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**Not currently employed**

*Income ranges are for Suffolk County, MA.*

Data from HUD’s 7/1/20 AMI tables
GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

What types of goals are participants achieving?

Goal Examples

**Financial Management Goal:**
Organize bills by completing monthly and weekly budget sheets.

**Education Goal:**
Contact X College to find out the status of my application, which credits I can transfer, and whether I will be able to attend full-time.

**Career Goal:**
Obtain full-time pharmacy tech position at X Hospital.

Goal Achievement Rate

One metric we pay careful attention to is our Goal Achievement Rate. Our mentors strive to support our participants in achieving the goals they set during their time in our programs.

In FY22, our overall goal achievement rate for adult goals was **72%**. One external study on goal achievement found a **32%** goal achievement rate among university students. Below are the goal achievement rates for our individual pillars. This graph shows the number of goals set in each pillar; as well as the percent achieved.

![Number of Goals Closed by Pillar, and Percent Achieved](image)

- **Family Stability:** 973 goals set, 76% achieved
- **Well-Being:** 744 goals set, 77% achieved
- **Finance:** 350 goals set, 66% achieved
- **Education:** 456 goals set, 62% achieved
- **Employment:** 394 goals set, 72% achieved
PILLARS ONE AND TWO

Family Stability & Well-Being

During early childhood, poverty has significant effects on future outcomes, including health and mental health, education, and cognitive development. Increases in parent income have consistently been shown to have greater impacts on child outcomes than almost any other intervention.

Mobility Mentoring supports parents’ journeys to full economic independence. Parents attain the education and career training necessary to get a job that pays a family-sustaining wage, save money for the future, and find a safe and secure home to live in; all while taking into consideration their children’s needs.

Stable housing is the primary goal for the majority of EMPath’s participants, who are living in our family homeless shelter programs. Even during this difficult housing market, the vast majority were able to exit to permanent housing—way more than the average across the U.S. And for those who are stably housed, far more were able to pay their rent on time than the norm.

| Self-ratings of current well-being for participants who exited in the year: | At entry: | 5.8 | | | | At exit: | 7.0 | | |

How are families making gains at home & wellness?

Community Comparison: Housing

85% of participants exiting EMPath shelter programs in FY22 moved to stable housing, compared to 67% of homeless participants in the US Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program who were stably housed at program exit.³

| 85% | 67% |

EMPath participants in permanent housing programs (Housing Stabilization and Abbot MRVP) paid rent on time 94% of the time in FY22, compared to 77.1% of U.S. renters who paid rent on time in December 2021.⁴

| 94% | 77.1% |
Financial Management

Financial management is key to moving out of poverty: people must maximize savings while paying down debts and building credit. In FY22, despite the challenging environment, EMPath participants were able to make big strides with their finances.

**EMPath Participants Build Savings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average amount in savings for shelter and stabilization participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>at start</strong></td>
<td>$286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>at exit</strong></td>
<td>$1,192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

81% of participants opened bank accounts

62% of participants exiting in FY22 increased their credit score while at EMPath
PILLAR FOUR

Education & Training

Education is oftentimes key to getting a career that will pay a family-sustaining wage. And in our flagship program, an impressive number of participants completed college degrees.

51%

of participants who exited in FY22 newly enrolled in an educational or training program

FLAGSHIP PROGRAM GRADUATES

34%

flagship program participants with college degrees at entry

72%

flagship program participants with college degrees at exit

“(Estoy agradecido por) todas las vías y recursos que busca para ayudarme a obtener y realizar mis objetivos”

“(I really appreciate) all the routes and resources that my mentor searches for to help me obtain and achieve my objectives”

(Participant)
Participants made employment and income gains during a year in which the labor market improved, but economic inequities persisted. The unemployment rate in the first quarter of 2022 was 6.5% for Black workers and 4.6% for Latino or Hispanic workers, compared to 3.0% for white workers and 3.4% for Asian American and Pacific Islander workers.²

Flagship program: Income Gains Compared to Community Norms

- Average participant income at entry: $18,960
- Poverty line for family of 3 in Boston: $23,030
- Full-time minimum wage pay: $29,640
- Average participant income at exit: $48,888

This is more than a 2.5 x increase!

- 40% of participants increased their incomes by 10% or more
- 158% increase in income among flagship program graduates
- Employment rate for EMPath participants went from 38% to 45%

40% of participants increased their incomes by 10% or more

158% in FY22 increase in income among flagship program graduates

45%

38%

Employment rate for EMPath participants went from 38% to 45%
EMPath Cares

In addition to the outcomes our participants experience during the time in our programs, there are also some intangible effects. Each year we conduct a Participant Satisfaction Survey to see what our participants think about our services, and to see how we can improve.

In 2022, 92% of participants surveyed said they would recommend EMPath to others in similar situations. Since we started surveying participants in 2018, an average of 93% of participants surveyed said they would recommend EMPath to others.

“My mentor treats me with respect”

96% agree with the statement, “My mentor treats me with respect”

“I trust that, as an organization, EMPath is here to help me”

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“As a participant, I feel safe when interacting with EMPath staff”

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“My mentor) helps me work through the mental barriers that paralyze me and helps me break things down into actionable steps. (He) listens to my fears/anxieties; helps me create effective action steps that are doable in spite of the fears/anxieties; (and) keeps me focused on my goals. His can-do attitude and encouragement/positive reinforcement of reached goals helps me feel like positive change is possible.”

“(My mentor) reminds me every trip that I can do this and that I shouldn’t give up. She encourages me to continue being the great person that I am. She reminds me that even when the storm is hard it doesn’t last forever.”
The Economic Mobility Exchange™

EMPath’s human services network boosts economic mobility across the country and around the world. The Exchange shares EMPath’s coaching approach, fosters learning, and enhances existing human service programs.

Network Members

- Nonprofits
- Schools
- Colleges
- Healthcare providers
- Child care centers
- Human service programs
- Government agencies

The Impact of the Exchange:

- **343,700** individuals served with the model via the network since 2014
- **98%** would recommend the Exchange
- **189** organizations trained since 2014
- **6,200+** Individuals trained since 2014

United Kingdom
Netherlands
Belgium
Australia
Canada

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